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Mexico's Political Transition
Articles by Gutiérrez, Salazar and Curzio

Mexicans in the United States
An Incipient Diaspora
Carlos González Gutiérrez

Manuel Felguérez, An Inward Gaze
Juan Villoro

The Claw
A Short Story by José Emilio Pacheco



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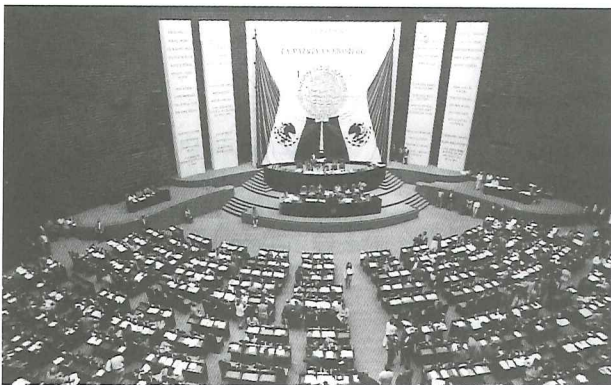
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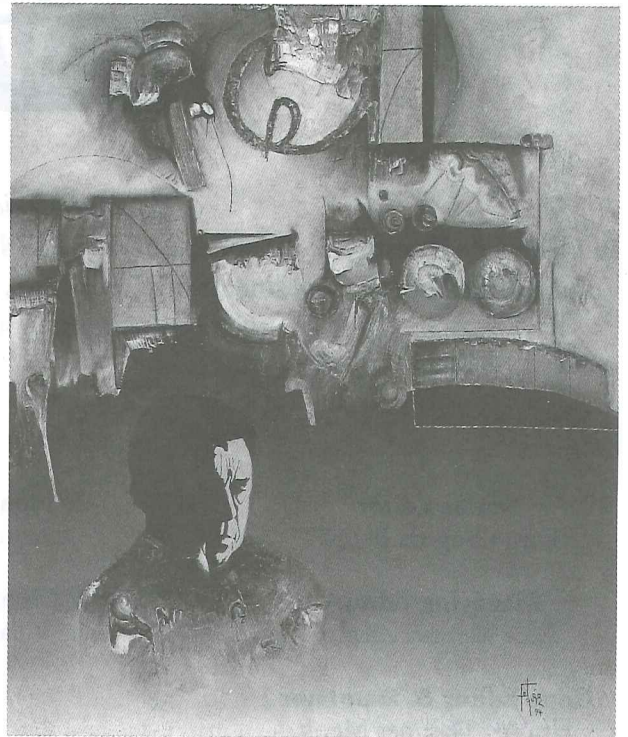
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Cover: Manuel Felguérez, *Fire at rest* (detail),
115 x 135 cm, (oil on canvas).

OUR VOICE

Last January 15, President Clinton gave his State of the Union Address to the 105th Congress of the United States. On a personal level the context was the absolute worst imaginable, though publicly the situation was quite different. Everyone, those actually present at the speech and those watching it on television, was trying to pinpoint the truth about recent developments: in a look, in the tone of voice or in the president's hesitation over words. The crucial thing was to find out if the president had tried to obstruct justice. If he had, private matters would become public. To everyone's surprise —both his supporters and his opponents— the State of the Union Address was a success, particularly if we take into account that the president of the world's foremost power was giving his annual report at the same time that his integrity was being questioned. Despite that, President Clinton was able to show total control as he read a well-written speech.

Clinton described the United States in the new millennium as a land of opportunity where with hard work people could prosper and where everyone would have a college education. He emphasized the need to renew "the idea of America by widening the circle of opportunity and deepening the meaning of our freedom."

In speaking of his own achievements, he stressed the creation of a "leaner and more flexible government"; the reduction of the federal bureaucracy; the forging of a third way out of the discussion between those for and those against big government: a smaller, but more progressive, government. He underlined the inflation levels attained under his administration, the lowest in the last 30 years.

The projected budget deficit at the beginning of Clinton's administration was U.S.\$357 billion, while in 1998, it dropped to only U.S.\$10 billion. In his address, the president explained that for 1999, it would be zero, making it the first balanced budget in 30 years. Also, for the first time in history, it is a bipartisan budget. Clinton also recognized the need to prepare the American people for meeting the new challenge of the global economy, summing up his position on the matter with the phrase, "Shape it and not shrink from it." Underlying the opportunities in new markets, he mentioned the 240 trade agreements signed to end trade barriers worldwide. In that context, he made his position clear that creating a Fast Track Negotiating Authority was fundamental to speeding up the signing of agreements with Latin America, Africa and Europe.

The president's address also mentioned the significant drop in crime and drug use, stressing the importance of the United States continuing to be a country where talent is rewarded with opportunities and in which its citizens share the same values: family, faith, freedom and responsibility. He also referred to the importance of promoting scientific research for the future, promising government support for it.

Undoubtedly, all the figures supported Clinton in what was the best State of the Union Address of his two administrations, even though the public continued to waiver between believing him or Special Prosecutor Starr. The support Hillary Clinton gave her husband was also a determining factor in the president's image. Those who predicted disaster for the 1998 State of the Union were wrong.

In terms of bilateral relations the U.S. government decision to jointly deal with such thorny

topics as drug trafficking and immigration has had in Clinton one of its main defenders. One example was his recognition of the Mexican government's efforts in the fight against drugs during the U.S. Congress' certification discussions. In any case, it is to Mexico's advantage that the United States have a strong presidency, with an executive who, regardless of founded or unfounded objections to his personal life, has been sensitive toward our nation's problems in his performance in public office.

Clinton's address also dealt with the presidential initiative to create an Area for Free Trade in the Americas (AFTA), which will have an important impact on the future of the hemisphere. We therefore include in our "United States Affairs" section an article by U.S.-Mexico relations specialist María Cristina Rosas, who analyzes the AFTA from the geostrategic point of view, emphasizing the different actors' contrasting conceptions of the proposal. On the one hand, the Mercosur countries, headed by Brazil, have serious doubts about the project's viability. And on the other hand the United States itself is aiming for an agreement that would transcend trade to include environmental questions and the fight against drug trafficking.

The Team Canada visit to Mexico should be put in this very context of economic globalization. NAFTA has made trade relations between Mexico and Canada closer, as shown by specialist Abel Escartín Molina in his article about the visit in our "Canadian Issues" section.

A question which continues to concern Mexican public opinion is the country's so-called political transition. Despite significant changes in favor of a more democratic political system, specialists continue to state that the transition has not concluded. The "Politics" section in this issue is dedicated to this topic.

Sociologist Roberto Gutiérrez looks at the new make-up of Mexico's Congress, which for the first time in history is not dominated by an absolute majority of the party in office, and its possible consequences for the nation's political future. He emphasizes the quest for political consensus among the different caucuses as the only way that the new Congress will be able to contribute effectively to perfecting democracy in Mexico. Next, in "Mexico, the Difficult Transition," political analyst and philosopher Luis Salazar examines in detail the different moments of Mexico's political transition, stressing that it cannot be completed by changing only the electoral system. Lastly, university researcher Leonardo Curzio, in his article "Mexican Chiaroscuro. The 1998 Scenario," offers an overview of possible developments in Mexico in three basic areas: the economy, politics and the justice system and public safety. He stresses the favorable economic achievements of President Zedillo's administration, recognizing, however, the continuing plight of the poor, a problem which, if left unsolved, will undermine full justification of the president's economic model. Politically, while Curzio recognizes the steps forward in democratization, he also points to the conflict in Chiapas as one of the main questions to be solved.

The solution of the conflict in Chiapas is a strategic national priority. Both parties to the negotiation, the government and the EZLN, will have to adopt flexible positions in order to return to the negotiating table. The break-off of talks were partly the result of the different interpretations of the San Andrés Larráinzar Accords. However, the events of December 1997, concretely the massacre of 45 indigenous people by paramilitary forces in the town of Acteal, show that a change in strategy is needed. Acteal aroused indignation among Mexicans. Today, the public is not only waiting for solutions to the conflict in Chiapas, it is demanding them. *Voices of Mexico* thought it necessary to provide its readers with the text of President Zedillo's January 23 speech made in Yucatán, in which he sums up his position about the conflict.

In this issue, the editors decided to dedicate a special space to the city of Zacatecas, a jewel of colonial Mexico that boasts monuments, museums and artistic and historical treasures, and is the cradle of some of the most important painters this country has produced.

We begin with a look at the painting of Zacatecas-born Manuel Felguérez, written by art critics Juan Villoro and Luis Ruis Caso. Felguérez is one of the most widely recognized Mexican painters nationally and internationally. His visual proposal is not only original but also foundational, as writer Juan García Ponce says.

“The Splendor of Mexico” includes a photoreport on the city of Zacatecas, declared by the UNESCO a World Heritage Treasure for its beauty and the conservation of its colonial monuments. But since Zacatecas is also renowned as a center for silversmiths, we have included an article about the city’s Silver Center.

Our “Museums” section is dedicated to Zacatecas’ Francisco Goitia Museum, whose permanent collection includes works by the most prestigious, internationally known, Zacatecan artists, each of whom has a special room in the museum: Francisco Goitia, Julio Ruelas, José Kuri, Rafael and Pedro Coronel and, of course, Manuel Felguérez. In this issue, we also specifically review the museum’s Manuel Felguérez Room.

In the “History” section, we include a piece of this surprising city’s history: the article “The Taking of Zacatecas” explains the incident that redefined the course of the Mexican Revolution of 1910.

In our “Science, Art and Culture” section, we include an interview with well-known Polish-Mexican stage director Ludwik Margules, recognized for the creativity and dramatic impact of his proposals. Among other questions, theater critic María Tarriba asks Margules what the deepest meaning is of stage direction, what his strategies are for effectively communicating with the audience and what the current state of affairs is in Mexican theater.

We also present our readers with an article by Janet Long about a basic part of the Mexican diet: chili peppers. Her original focus explains the properties that make chili peppers hot, the trait that explains why so many people are fanatical chili pepper lovers. Lastly, Néstor García Canclini looks at the globalization of artistic production. He maintains that the priority should be supporting initiatives like the U.S.-Mexico Fund for Culture, that seeks to propitiate mutual understanding between cultures that for geopolitical, historical and economic reasons, must necessarily interact.

In our “Economy” section, the reader will find an article by Professor Jorge Vargas explaining what is involved in determining property rights over the vast oil reserves in the triangle known as the “Western Gap” or the “Doughnut Hole” in the Gulf of Mexico. The rights to these territorial waters are not clear under the existing treaties, resulting in over 20 years of high-level bilateral negotiations.

The situation of women in Mexico is always a timely topic. With the close of the millennium nearing, gender discrimination persists in both people’s attitudes and their actions: the problem is, above all, cultural. Graciela Hierro, in her article in the “Society” section, solidly defends the most advanced and serious feminist positions from a theoretical point of view.

Also in this section, Carlos González contributes an article about the Mexican diaspora in the United States. His approach is novel in that it questions the generally accepted idea that Americans of Mexican descent constitute a solid national group, centered around their forebears’ culture.

One of the most widely known pre-Columbian traditions in Mexico is the ball game. Mexican anthropologist María Teresa Uriarte looks at this tradition and the mythical and religious roots that made it spread throughout the Mesoamerican indigenous cultures, a ritual of honor in which the very lives of the players were at stake.

The “Ecology” section is dedicated to the maguey plant, one of Mexico’s best known and most interesting, not only because it has become a symbol of Mexico in cinema and the visual arts, but also because it is and has been basic to the economy and nutrition of broad sectors of the population since pre-Hispanic times.

Voices of Mexico reaffirms its interest in translating and making available to its English-speaking readers the best pens of Mexican literature. On this occasion, we present a short story by one of our country’s best contemporary poets and short story writers, José Emilio Pacheco.

Lastly, the editors could not close without paying homage to Don Arnaldo Orfila Reynal, an exceptional man in all respects, known in cultural and publishing circles in our country as the “dean of editors in Mexico.” This issue’s “In Memoriam” section is dedicated to him.

Paz Consuelo Márquez Padilla
Director of CISAN

Mexico's Political Transition And the Congress¹

Roberto Gutiérrez*



Javier García / Imagenlatina

Session of the Joint Legislative Committee in the Chamber of Deputies in February 1998.

Today's analysis of Mexico's political transition is taking on new contours due both to the new balance of forces expressed in the July 1997 elections and to its effects in the sphere of public office.

To correctly situate the Mexican transition process, its obvious achievements, its pending items and the particularities of the current phase, some of the main aspects of our social

and political history must be taken into consideration. Undoubtedly, the Mexico of today is a product of its historic development, its formation as an independent nation, of the fundamental definitions that laid the basis for the republic in the nineteenth century and of this century's different social movements for democracy, social justice and sovereignty.

Because of the particularities of this historical process, there is no general agreement about when the political change that aimed for complete democratization of power relations began.

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Some political analysts trace it to the revolutionary movement of 1910, saying that it unleashed a process of political liberalization vis-à-vis the Porfirista regime,² especially through the Constitution of 1917. Others pinpoint its beginnings in the 1968 student movement³ because of its demands and long-term effects on Mexico's public life. Still others think it began in 1977 when Don Jesús Reyes Heróles⁴ championed the political reform that permitted the legalization of the Mexican Communist Party. Some think the transition began with the political events of 1987-88,⁵ and finally, there are those who say it began July 6, 1997.

But, no matter what the starting point, there is clearly broad consensus that in the last 20 years fundamental changes have been made in the rules of the political game—a basic characteristic of any transition—and that new models of relationships between the state and society have paved the way toward the consolidation of democracy. There also seems to be agreement that one of the distinguishing features of the Mexican experience is that it is qualitatively different from the cases of some South American countries, Eastern Europe or even Spain, which in its time was so often admired and seen as a model.

Certainly, the Mexican case is different. It has its own characteristics and its central driving force is not the need to refound the political regime—like in those other countries—but rather to renovate and expand the rules of living together, political interaction and competition that have progressively been built throughout the contradictory, uneven process that gave rise to a political system that, while clearly top-down and centralist in many ways, was liberal and democratic in others.

As a result, it should be specified that in the Mexican case, neither theoretically nor practically can the transition mean inventing a new regime, given that the basic principles underlying the contemporary Mexican state and laid out in its Constitution defining it as a representative, democratic, federal republic and establishing its basic freedoms and guarantees are not under discussion.

In that context and in contrast with other countries, the political transition Mexico has gone through has not meant a radical break since it

has followed the complex and tortuous—but finally productive—road of reforms typical of public institutions.

It is on this basis that the balance sheet must be drawn about the implications and consequences of the July 6 federal elections. Everyone undoubtedly recognizes the institutional solidity underpinning the organization of an electoral process characterized by intense campaigns, a level playing field for competition and the public's high expectations about the outcome. Therefore, the political transition can be deemed practically concluded in terms of establishing and operating under rules of the game that permit a real contest for power.

The voting results created an unprecedented balance of forces in the Chamber of Deputies. The fact that the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) does not enjoy an absolute majority is no mere electoral statistic; in many ways, it expresses the singularity of the historical-political moment we are living through.⁶

Of course, an incorrect reading of the meaning and intention of the election results would have profoundly negative effects on Mexico's political life. In today's conditions, party interaction would be grievously damaged if competition were viewed as a zero-sum game among irreconcilable adversaries. If this were the dynamic, we would see not the victory of one side or another, but the questioning of a party system that has recently begun to incorporate the notion of competitive pluralism among various, clearly differentiated parties, each with its own profile. In addition, it should be considered that the public's expectations do not run to confrontation or paralysis, but to the orderly, productive modification of some aspects of the political structure and dynamic that existed at another time and under other circumstances.

During this decisive phase of its political transition, Mexico would pay a very high price if the political players held on to

An incorrect reading of the meaning and intention of the 1997 election results would have profoundly negative effects on Mexico's political life. In today's conditions, party interaction would be grievously damaged if competition were viewed as a zero-sum game among irreconcilable adversaries.

polarizing attitudes that would distort the meaning of the public's will expressed at the polls. Through its vote, the citizenry decided on a plural Chamber of Deputies and called on its representatives to run it in an inclusive fashion. It was not the public's will that there be an absolute majority but a number of forces with different political weights that would have joint responsibility for the chamber.

If incorrectly managed, the pluralism of the Fifty-seventh Congress could lead to unending bickering among political elites, with negative effects on governability. For government as a whole, the consolidation of democracy would be very difficult to achieve if short-term temptations and individual interests are not overcome in favor of new long-term consensuses.

To understand how the Chamber of Deputies has operated recently, we should recall that the new internal balance of forces had to be dealt with in a legal framework inadequate for regulating the legislative dynamic with order and flexibility.⁷

Therefore, since no party had the absolute majority needed to make the Chamber of Deputies functional and governable under current legislation, a stage of relative uncertainty opened up that led to a series of decisions that were not always made in the spirit of democratic conciliation and political and administrative rationality.

As a result, a tendency emerged of trying to make tests of strength, polarize the Chamber of Deputies even at the sacrifice of party identities and win ballots by forming an "opposition bloc" made up of the National Action Party (PAN), the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD), the Labor Party (PT) and the Green Ecologist Party of Mexico (PVEM). This began to be a pattern of parliamentary behavior; its main object was to oppose any and all initiatives of the executive branch and the PRI, which holds 48 percent of congressional seats. In this way, what the opposition had justly criticized as the PRI's mechanical use of its parliamentary majority in the past became its own norm of operation.

The repercussions of this climate of polarization became clear in no time. Things became very tense on the floor of the chamber, and the most visible results were very damaging to legislators' public image.⁸ Unfortunately such important issues as how to open the session of the lower chamber and distribute the chairmanships of its commissions and committees among the different parties were decided on the basis of quite questionable criteria, more according to partisan interests than parliamentary effectiveness.



A new internal balance of forces has to be reached in the Chamber of Deputies since for the first time no party has an absolute majority.

International experience shows that in advanced democracies, the heads and members of legislative committees are decided mainly on the individual profiles of the legislators themselves, taking into account their legislative knowledge, ability and experience: in a nutshell, taking into account their technical expertise in a specific field.

In fact, we should not forget that in Mexico, just as in many other democratic countries, there is a certain parallel between congressional committees and areas of federal public administration and that therefore the committees become true bridges of communication between the legislative and executive branches of government. In that context it is clearly disadvantageous to exclude people with the necessary skills for being effective in legislative tasks strictly on a partisan basis.

During the session that closed in December 1997, the executive sent several bills to the Chamber of Deputies and the Mexico City Federal District Legislative Assembly sent one. The chamber's docket also included a series of other bills presented from the floor and those that were pending from the previous session.

Of particular importance was the bill passed in November 1997 amending the Mexico City Federal District Charter, considerably increasing the Mexico City mayor's prerogatives. This poses a challenge for the political relationship between local and federal government since the current mayor is from a different political party than the president.⁹

The bills that elicited the most debate because of their undoubted priority in this first session of the Fifty-seventh Congress involved taxes and the budget. The political dynamic on the floor suffered a considerable upset when the so-called "opposition bloc" split, with the PAN deciding to vote with the

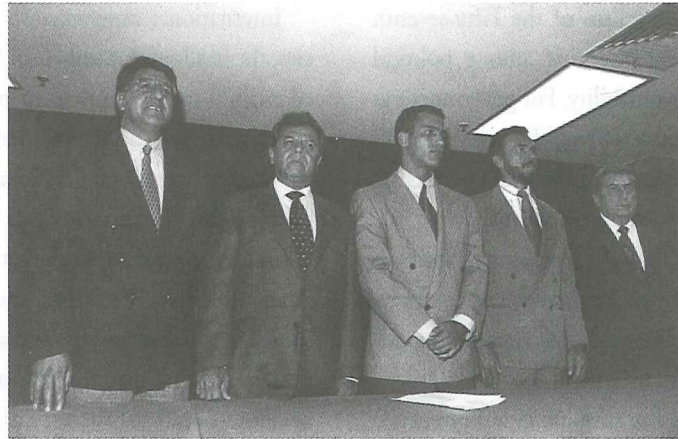
PRI to approve the budget, called the Federal Law on Income and Spending. The PAN based its decision on the fact that many of its own central proposals had been included in the bill the executive sent the Congress.

Following the break-up of the opposition alliance, the future trend will probably no longer be one of confrontation between two large

groups, but a dynamic of coming to specific agreements between different parties around concrete political objectives.

Congress' importance in the transition and the consolidation of democracy in Mexico is widely recognized today. Its centrality can be observed both in the way it contributes to structuring the national norms and in its contribution to establishing behavioral models linked to legal certainty, mutual respect, rational dialogue and the quest for agreements that are of collective benefit among legislators.

The centrality of the legislative branch has to do with the dual function it is called upon to fulfill today: on the one hand, it is an essential driving force behind the political reform of the state, key for the consolidation of democracy in Mexico, and, on the other hand, it is the author of its own transformation with an eye toward bringing its norms up to date and strengthening its independence. This is the case because at the same



Leaders of the Chamber of Deputies party caucuses. From left to right: Alejandro González Yáñez (PT), Porfirio Muñoz Ledo (PRD), Jorge Emilio González (PVEM), Carlos Medina Plascencia (PAN) and Arturo Nuñez (PRI).

Gustavo Graf / Imagenlatina

time that it is an autonomous branch of government, it shares responsibilities with the other branches.

Undoubtedly, the Congress will have to go through a stage of learning and adapting to the country's new political conditions. The speed at which it moves forward and the specific outcome will depend on the political maturity of its members. In this sense—and even taking into

account the pre-modern, non-democratic traits still present in all Mexico's political parties—a favorable contribution to political change in Mexico can be expected from this institution.

The current atmosphere created by a demanding public admits of neither delays nor negligence on the part of Mexico's professional politicians. The sheer size of the problems confronting society leaves no room for attitudes that are unproductive or hinder the effective functioning of the legislature; rather, it encourages greater institutional responsibility and accountability to the public. ■■■

NOTES

¹ The author wishes to thank Rubén García Clarck and Karla Knepp Olay for their comments which aided in writing this article.

² Porfirista refers to the 30-year regime of Porfirio Díaz which ended with the Mexican Revolution. [Translator's Note.]

³ Like in other countries, the 1968 student movement had a broad impact on society. Unlike other countries, however, Mexico's movement was brutally suppressed, leaving an important number of dead, political prisoners and people wanted by the police in its wake. [Editor's Note.]

⁴ Jesús Reyes Heróles was then Minister of the Interior and one of the most important liberal ideologues of the PRI. [Editor's Note.]

⁵ The main political events in those two years were the split from the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) of an important group of leaders headed by Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas and Porfirio Muñoz Ledo, organized in the PRI Democratic Current. In alliance with a spectrum of left parties (the Popular Socialist Party [PPS], the Cardenista Front for National Reconstruction Party [PFCRN], the Authentic Party of the Mexican Revolution [PARM] and the Mexican Socialist Party [PMS], this group ran Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas for president in 1988 in a race that became the most disputed and controversial in recent Mexican electoral history. [Editor's Note.]

⁶ The PRI won 239 seats in the Chamber of Deputies; the Party of the Democratic Revolution, 125; the National Action Party 121; the Green Ecologist Party, 8; and the Labor Party, 7.

⁷ Today federally, we operate to a great degree on the basis of constitutional precepts dating from 1917 which have only been partially modified by reforms like those of 1963, 1977, 1987, 1990 and 1996, that dealt with very specific points of the internal organization of Congress. The lag is also very clear with regard to the law governing the internal functioning of Congress since this legislation was passed in 1979 and a few amendments made in 1994. The Internal Regulations of the Congress is even older: it was passed in 1934. This shows just how urgent it is to bring internal congressional norms up to date around such important questions as the Congress' internal governing bodies, its different commissions, what tenure their chairs should have, schedules for presenting bills and the length of sessions, the format for the president's annual report to the nation, the structure and functioning of special investigative commissions and how monitoring and watch-dog bodies should be set up.

⁸ This refers to incidents on the floor of the Chamber of Deputies including blows between deputies, taking over the speaker's podium, personal attacks, etc. [Editor's Note.]

⁹ On December 5, 1997, the new mayor of Mexico City's Federal District, Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas Solórzano of the PRD, elected July 6, took office. [Editor's Note.]



Angela Torrijón / Imaginalina

Mexico, the Difficult Transition

Luis Salazar*

The singular evolution of Mexico's political system has disconcerted insiders and observers alike. Analysts as well as experienced politicians of different persuasions have so far been unable to agree on the nature and meaning of that evolution and take very different and even counterposed positions. Their stances range from those who, on one extreme, refuse to attribute any democratizing significance to the process and see it at best as a series of cosmetic adjustments of an irremediably authoritarian regime, to those on the other extreme, who say that what is happening is that the democracy founded with the 1917 Constitution is being "perfected." In both cases, they consider it inappropriate to speak in terms of Mexico's "transition to democracy," at least in the sense used by Huntington to describe other experiences in what he called "the third democratizing wave."¹

Despite these reservations, the majority of the players in Mexican public life have gradually become convinced that the country is going through a process of democratic transition.

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This is particularly true since the important progress of the opposition National Action Party (PAN) and Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) in the 1997 mid-term federal elections, which led to a federal Chamber of Deputies where no party has an absolute majority. After that, government forces and main opposition leaders alike seemed to recognize that Mexico was going through a period marked by "the beginning of the dissolution of the authoritarian regime and...the establishment of some form of democracy."² However, this consensus breaks down when an attempt is made to determine not only when the transition began, but, above all, the moment and forms of its possible and desirable culmination.

Thus, while some trace the origins of our democratization to the 1968 student-people's movement, others prefer to fix on the 1977-78 political reform. Some say that it was not until the electoral clashes of the 1980s that we can see the beginnings of the transition. And still others would like to situate its inception in 1994, with the emergence of the Zapatista National Liberation Army or even in 1997, with Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas' electoral win in Mexico City. Most of the time pinpointing the

moment when democratization began has a heavy partisan flavor that tends to identify democracy with specific public personalities or supposedly decisive events as “watersheds,” the radical breaking point between the old authoritarian regime and the birth of Mexican democracy.

However, while there is no agreement about the beginnings of this strange transition, neither is there any about its nature, and —what is more serious— about the end desired.³ In this same sense, partisan polarization has done damage by inducing many analysts and leaders to confuse the configuration of a new democratic regime with the advance and/or victory of this or that party or candidate. Not a few, then, have tried to put an equal-sign between the victory of democracy and the defeat (or even the extinction) of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), without stopping to think that while this would undoubtedly make way for a situation unheard-of in post-revolutionary Mexico, that of parties alternating in office, it would not necessarily be synonymous with the consolidation of a new democratic political regime.

What I will attempt to argue here is that, first, Mexico’s transition to democracy cannot be thought of as analogous to other experiences of democratization; second, that it can only be understood by taking on board the specificity of its starting points, that is, the peculiar nature of the regime that emerged from the Mexican Revolution; third, that these characteristics presuppose understanding the transition as a gradual, non-linear process and not as a break, the product of some specific event; and fourth, for all of the above reasons, the most desirable way of arriving at a full democracy or culminating this very long transition is through a national agreement among our country’s fundamental political and social forces.

The majority of the world’s recent democratic transitions began with authoritarian regimes that were either military or personal dictatorships or totalitarian systems. In the case of dictatorships, what was needed was that the army return to barracks by setting up freely elected civilian governments or filling the vacuum left by the death of the dictator (Franco in Spain and Salazar in Portugal) with a new democratic constitutional pact. In societies dominated by totalitarian systems, in contrast, the problem was to dismantle the logic of the state party, the sovereign party, to the benefit of the plural, competitive expression of civil society until then controlled from the top down. In both cases, the holding of free, competitive elections

was the more or less precarious point to which these transitions arrived, despite the fact that the consolidation of the new democracies is still uncertain.

Now, the regime born of the Mexican Revolution cannot be understood either as a military, personal or state party dictatorship, or as a totalitarian system; rather it is a singular combination of a system with a political constitution defining a federal, representative democracy, and an authoritarian, but inclusive, corporatist system in which municipal, state and national elections have been held systematically since the 1920s. Given this, it would seem clear that the Mexican transition has had to take on very particular forms and goals. In effect, in contrast to other authoritarian systems, Mexico’s never excluded certain respect for the principles and forms of liberal democracy.⁴

The authoritarianism of the Mexican state had two mainstays: an extreme form of presidentialism, constitutionally endowed with “extraordinary and permanent” prerogatives,⁵ and an official, revolutionary party constituted on the basis of the power of the state itself to contain and discipline the postrevolutionary political elites and able to vertically incorporate most of the country’s worker, peasant and community organizations. This party machine was the essential instrument that made it possible for all presidents since Lázaro Cárdenas⁶ to concentrate and centralize practically unlimited power, making the system of checks and balances and federalism itself a mere facade for a vertical logic according to which all relevant public decisions were exclusively in the hands of the chief executive, including the designation of his successor. The biggest limitation on this enormous presidential power, which somehow kept it from becoming dictatorial in the strict sense of the term, was the norm precluding reelection, a norm —a few momentary vacillations notwithstanding— maintained from 1934 until today.

What made this institutional design very solid and turned the presidents into the supreme, unquestioned arbiters of national life was its ability to integrate, articulate and negotiate the interests of the different sectors of society organized according to a series of unwritten, but very effective, rules. Under what was called “stabilizing development”⁷ an economic model was established that was protectionist and centered on the state and promoted economic growth, charged with “watching over” the interests of the poorer classes. The agrarian reform (meted out in doses and manipulating peasant demands), labor legislation

(regulating and watching out for the demands of private and public sector employees) and the social security systems were able to function as mechanisms to ensure “revolutionary” hegemony and legitimacy, thus promoting a passive but strong consensus around the governments that “arose out of the Revolution.”

By controlling the immense majority of the country’s mass organizations, regulating economic growth through public expenditure and using protectionism to discipline and subject the business communities, this system could allow itself the luxury of regularly holding elections on all levels without its monopoly on public posts being threatened by the weak opposition parties. And, if by some happenstance a candidate did emerge who might be able to break that monopoly, the system also completely controlled the organization of the elections and vote count, and thus could change or camouflage any unfavorable results. In practice, then, the elections operated more to validate the “revolutionary” legitimacy (that of the supposed heirs of the Revolution) than as a real possibility for the public to decide with their ballots who should govern. This explains the indifference and apathy with which the immense majority of Mexicans regarded elections, as well as the quasi “Soviet” election results. As if that were not enough, the government gave itself the right to “register,” or recognize the legality of, the opposition parties and therefore, to admit only those useful to it, to keep up the “democratic” facade.

The first signs that this authoritarian arrangement was wearing out came with the 1968 student mobilization and its tragic end, the massacre of Tlatelolco. Paradoxically, the urban middle classes, in fact privileged because of unequal economic development, were the first to protest against the repressive authoritarianism of the PRI governments, demanding respect for the basic freedoms of assembly, expression and demonstration. In a show of its worst authoritarian reflexes, incapable of responding in a civilized manner through dialogue and negotiation, the Gustavo Díaz Ordaz government⁸ resorted to the ruthless use of force, enraging the illustrated sectors of the urban middle class.⁹



Today, the Federal Electoral Institute is completely autonomous.

From then on, later administrations would try to close that wound, but, whether because of the very nature of the system or because of authoritarian stubbornness and ineptitude, they always ended up outraging broader and broader sectors of the public. As part of its efforts to recover legitimacy, the José López Portillo administration¹⁰ promoted a decisive political

electoral reform in 1977 that, though limited and limiting, would put elections at the center of the majority of subsequent political conflicts. To top it all off, the state-centered development model, the real basis for the quasi-single-party system, also began to show signs of severe exhaustion despite the discovery of immense oil deposits and the prodigious earnings they brought in.

The 1982 financial crisis and subsequent nationalization of the banks were the swan song of the old authoritarian regime.¹¹ After the government had promised “the administration of abundance,” devaluations and inflation would make enormous inroads into the standard of living. This, together with the damage to the business community, would make for new interest in local elections in the 1980s; a large part of the public would express its discontent and frustration by casting its ballot for the National Action Party (PAN), making it truly competitive thanks to the support of important sectors of the middle class and business community. Despite initial promises to respect the vote of the citizenry, the government of Miguel de la Madrid¹² would soon go back on its word, making use of all kinds of tricks and fraudulent manipulation to make sure the PAN did not sit in the governor’s seat in the border state of Chihuahua.

Adding to the unhappiness created by the 1982 crisis, the De la Madrid administration’s efforts to apply structural adjustment policies to change Mexico’s development model (implemented as emergency measures for an economy in danger of collapsing and, therefore, without the least discussion with any relevant sectors of society) generated new and even more widespread outrage, not only among the public at large, but also among the very cadre of the official party itself, the PRI. The Democratic Current, founded by important members of the PRI like

States That Will Hold Local Elections in 1998

	Governor	Deputies	Municipalities	Election Date
Yucatán		25	106	May 24
Baja California		25	5	June 28
Chihuahua	1	33	67	July 5
Durango	1	25	39	July 5
Zacatecas	1	30	56	July 5
Aguascalientes	1	27	11	August 2
Oaxaca	1	42	570	August 2, Oct. 4
Veracruz	1	45		August 2
Chiapas		40	111	October 4
Tamaulipas	1	32	43	October 25
Sinaloa	1	40	18	November 8
Michoacán		30	113	November 8
Tlaxcala	1	32	60	November 8
Puebla	1	39	217	November 8
TOTAL	10	465	1416	

Source: Federal Electoral Institute, February 1998.

Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas and Porfirio Muñoz Ledo, began to question both the PRI's internal rules and official economic policy. Met with intolerance and hostility, the Democratic Current finally split from the PRI and ran Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas (son of President Lázaro Cárdenas, perhaps the country's most popular president since the Revolution) for president on the ticket of old satellite parties of the PRI.

Together with other events that had exposed the increasing incapability of the government and the system itself to satisfy the demands and interests of society (above all the terrible earthquake that laid waste to Mexico City in 1985 and its aftermath, or the 1986-87 student movement),¹³ everything seemed to point to the 1988 federal elections being the moment of a true anti-government civic insurrection expressed in a landslide vote for the candidate who symbolized many of the outrages suffered by the populace: Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, the candidate of the National Democratic Front (FDN).¹⁴ For the first time in postrevolutionary Mexico, the government candidate, Carlos Salinas de Gortari, would receive only 51 percent of the vote according to official figures, while, with much smaller resources, Cárdenas would garner 33 percent. Worse still, shaken by unexpected results, the government-controlled electoral system would lose all credibility due to its efforts to doctor the results, to the extent that many people thought it was obvious that the real winner had been Cárdenas.¹⁵

The new Salinas government did recover the lead, however, thanks to a series of spectacular initiatives and to a long,

obscure and costly alliance with the PAN. However, the development model itself would strike at the basis for the PRI corporatist system, which operated on the premise that economic reform took priority over political reform. Attempts were still made to adjust electoral rules through two legislative reforms agreed upon with the PAN, which undoubtedly did permit some steps forward in terms of greater transparency and credibility in counting the votes. However, it would be the unexpected appearance of the Zapatista National Liberation Army in January 1994 that would force a third legislative reform, this time agreed upon by the country's three main political parties, the PRI, PAN and PRD.¹⁶

The assassination of PRI presidential candidate Luis Donaldo Colosio in March 1994 created an extremely charged pre-electoral political atmosphere. But, despite apocalyptic prophecies about imminent political crises, the 1994 elections, the most transparent and well-documented in our history until then, would give a relatively easy victory to the new PRI candidate, Ernesto Zedillo Ponce de León. Only a few days after the new president took office, a new and painful economic crisis exploded, forcing the new government to make an unprecedented break with its predecessor and to approve an urgent political electoral reform aimed at creating more equal conditions for party campaigns and making the body that organizes elections and counts the votes completely autonomous.

The new legislation and institutional framework agreed upon after intricate negotiations fraught with tension over different conflicts¹⁷ brilliantly passed the test of the 1997 federal

congressional elections. The organization and the voting results seemed to have left behind the usual controversies about the quality and credibility of Mexican elections. The make-up of the new Chamber of Deputies, the Cárdenas win in Mexico City, as well as the victories of non-PRI candidates in several states, confirmed that pluralist competition had come to stay in Mexico and that laws and institutions existed that were capable of appropriately processing that pluralism.

However, it is much too soon to say that our very prolonged democratic transition is over. Many factors continue to indicate that simply holding credible elections with real competition does not complete the checklist of items needed for building a complete democracy: it is not enough for each vote to be counted and counted honestly, nor is it enough that the public freely

express its political preferences. In the last analysis, democracy is not only a method for authorizing governments: it must also be a method that conditions the exercise of government. In that sense, both parties and government have recognized the need to go on to a political reform of the state which will make it possible to generate a new governability to substitute for the old authoritarian, arbitrary way of governing.¹⁸ This means something which I can only make mention of here: in contrast with the Spanish transition, which began with a pact (the Moncloa Pact) and ended with the elections that put the Socialist Workers Party of Spain (PSOE) into office, Mexico's complicated transition, which began some time ago with agreements to make elections more and more competitive and equitable, will hopefully end with a new pact of governability. ■■■

NOTES

¹ Samuel P. Huntington, *La tercera ola* (Barcelona: Paidós, 1992).

² Guillermo O'Donnell and Phillipe C. Schmitter, *Transiciones desde un gobierno autoritario, conclusiones tentativas sobre las democracias inciertas*, vol. 4 (Barcelona: Paidós, 1988), p. 19.

³ On a visit to Mexico, the well known Italian political scientist Giovanni Sartori said in a television interview that he had encountered a great deal of enthusiasm for the democratization underway, but few ideas about its institutional goals.

⁴ This respect stems from two sources: the origins of the Mexican Revolution, whose leader Francisco I. Madero's main banner was "effective suffrage and no reelection," and Mexico's geopolitical situation, which, like it or not, made it impossible to consolidate a "revolutionary dictatorship."

⁵ As Arnaldo Córdova has emphasized in his analysis. See, for example *La Revolución y el Estado en México* (Mexico City: ERA, 1989).

⁶ President from 1934 to 1940, elected on the National Revolutionary Party (PNR) ticket, which he later reorganized and renamed as Party of the Mexican Revolution (PRM) in 1938, the direct predecessor of the PRI. [Editor's Note.]

⁷ Under the one-party system "stabilizing development" was understood as the period between 1954 and 1970 in which the state guided the economy; the official party was, without exception, the only road to power and for satisfying any and all private interests; a corporatist model in which all social actors accepted the rules of the political game as delineated within the party in exchange for quotas of power, and the party was consolidated using the argument that it was the ideal instrument for guaranteeing social peace. [Editor's Note.]

⁸ Gustavo Díaz Ordaz was president of Mexico from 1964 to 1970. On October 2, ten days before the inauguration of the Mexico 1968 Olympic Games, Díaz Ordaz ordered the repression of a student rally at Tlatelolco Plaza in Mexico City, which resulted in a large number of dead and wounded, as well as the arrest of many who spent long years in jail as political prisoners. The exact number of dead and wounded has never been revealed. The official version is that there were no more than 30; other sources talk of hundreds of dead. [Editor's Note.]

⁹ It is only now that the Chamber of Deputies has approved setting up a commission that will supposedly try to investigate and get at "the truth" about what happened.

¹⁰ President of Mexico from 1976 to 1982. [Editor's Note.]

¹¹ Until then, nationalizations had been a symbol and expression of the redeeming strength of the state born of the Revolution. The nationalization of the banks, however, did not awaken much popular support.

¹² President from 1982 to 1988. [Editor's Note.]

¹³ In 1985, the government, slow in responding to the earthquake that claimed more than 4,000 lives according to official figures, was bypassed by the civilian population, which took rescue work and solidarity into its own hands during the first few days of the emergency. The 1986-87 student movement arose in opposition to a university reform that, among other things, aimed to eliminate the right to free education in the country's main public institution of higher learning, the National Autonomous University of Mexico. The government reacted intolerantly and was clearly incapable at the negotiating table. As a result, and given the enormous strength of the student movement, the reforms had to be thrown out. [Editor's Note.]

¹⁴ The FDN was formed by the Authentic Party of the Mexican Revolution (PARM), the Popular Socialist Party (PPS), the Party of the Cardenista Front for National Reconstruction (PFCRN) and, later on, the Mexican Socialist Party (PMS), in addition to other, marginal groups.

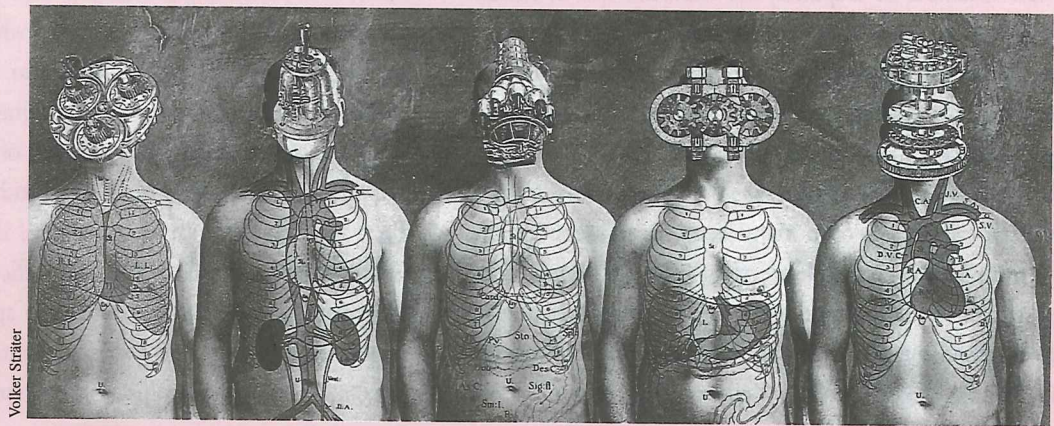
¹⁵ One of the foundational myths of the PRD is precisely that Cárdenas had won the election and was cheated of his victory. Like all myths, it is just as impossible to demonstrate as to refute.

¹⁶ This reform created the Federal Electoral Institute (IFE), presided over, however, by the Minister of the Interior just as previous federal electoral bodies had been.

¹⁷ The amendments to the Constitution passed with an unprecedented unanimous vote. For reasons of the moment, the PRI voted the accompanying legislation into law by itself, despite having negotiated its terms with the other two parties.

¹⁸ Unfortunately, once this agenda has been set, everyone seems to have found good reasons for postponing any substantive debate or negotiations.

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Volker Straeter

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Mexican Chiaroscuro

The 1998 Scenario

*Leonardo Curzio**

The administration of President Ernesto Zedillo went into its fourth year in 1998, and it is perhaps the first time in Mexico's recent past that the nation's state of mind is not reflected in the barometer of official speeches. Under previous administrations, at the beginning of the fourth year of the six-year presidential term, the government's propaganda machine was operating full blast. All possible means were used to bombard the country with the success story of administration policies in every conceivable aspect of public life. The abuse of governmental optimism as a mechanism of political propaganda has increased Mexican society's distrust of official statements.

The 1998 display of optimism has been cautious. The drop in oil prices that kicked off the year sparked a cut in public spending, and the international recessionary context has cast a somber tone on the official landscape for the year that is just beginning.

In any case, the public now receives government information with greater caution than before. It no longer lets itself get carried away as it used to by illusions designed to put a clean face on reality. Today, the public is less apt to be seduced by official propaganda because under previous administrations it was only a harbinger of disappointing crisis.

Today, Mexican society views the beginning of the year with a King Solomon-like combination of moderate optimism and prudent skepticism. There are clear signs of advances. The

most concrete is that the economy has registered high growth rates since the second quarter of 1996. Inflation has slowed and the peso occasionally rises. In the political sphere, also, enormous progress can be seen. Democracy has begun the process to get full naturalized citizenship and, as if that were not enough, a real balance of powers has made its debut.¹ There are things, however, that, while not overshadowing the whole, do provide for a brutal contrast. The most vulnerable layers of the population still have not recovered their income levels, and the nation watches with concern as public safety and the administration of justice deteriorate. Both these concerns reach colossal proportions in the case of Chiapas. Let us examine each one of these issues in detail.

THE ECONOMY: BETWEEN SUCCESS AND THE SOCIAL DEBT

Mexicans are no longer forced as in the past to look to the severe speeches of Finance Ministry officials or public statements from the lofty heights of the business leaders—who have

been shown sorely wanting in accurate predictions—to see signs of improvement in the economy. Indications of economic recovery are now more visible and more believable. Employment rates are rising and collective bargaining agreements tend to be more stable.² The purchasing power of the peso is stabilizing and the double demon of devaluation/inflation has stopped being an immediate concern.

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During the last few months, the pressure on interest rates has lessened, thus lightening the burden for individual and corporate debtors, and, although the banking system crisis continues to affect the nation's economy, some banks have allowed themselves the luxury of offering substantial discounts to mortgage holders, a very significant symptom. If a banker eases his clients' debt, it is not a sign of altruism; it means that economic conditions have changed radically.

And the recovery is not only noticeable in macro-economic indicators. The luxury consumption to which Mexicans are so prone has reactivated. The nation's fleet of automobiles is being renewed; airports are attracting more crowds; and lines are getting longer at malls.

Besides what they can see around them, Mexicans can feed their optimism with international opinion about their economy, which has also improved. After being seen as a patient dying from the "Tequila Effect" in 1995, at the end of 1997, covered with the mantle of success, Ernesto Zedillo allowed himself luxuries undreamed of a few short years before, such as offering up informational capsules for Asian market consumption about the Mexican lesson on how to deal with a financial crisis at the Vancouver APEC meeting.

There is, however, a flip side to the coin. The economic policy is not very popular since it has been Draconian, even rigid, in certain aspects. The main criticism of Zedillo's handling of the economy is that he has used the perverse mechanism of socializing the losses and privatizing the gains. The public sector

has acted as a hospital for the private sector by transferring enormous resources (subsidies) to bail out the banking system, convert the pension system and come to the rescue of companies licensed to build and run the nation's highways.

Despite the criticisms and the government's bad showing in the 1997 elections, the economic policy passed its trial by fire when the Finance Ministry convinced the right-wing National Action Party (PAN) deputies to vote with the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) to approve its proposal for 1998 government revenues and spending. This had a dual impact. In the sphere of the economy, it meant that a PRI-PAN majority supported the fundamental lines of government economic policy. In the sphere of politics, it meant the break-up of the opposition bloc that had been the source of so many headaches to the administration since the beginning of the legislative session, September 1, 1997.

The fact that today's economic prescriptions have gotten the country out of the crisis does not mean they are effective in other areas. Real wages continue to be wretched. The average wage that the Mexican Social Security Institute (IMSS) based its contributions on in 1997 was under U.S.\$300 a month.³ But if average wages are low, the income of less skilled workers bor-



Members of the congressional Chiapas Peace Commission (COCOPA).

Guatavo Graf / Imaginalia



Members of the National Intermediation Commission (CONAI), headed by Bishop Samuel Ruiz (bottom left) negotiate with the government delegation, headed by the Minister of the Interior (bottom right).

der on the most dramatic possible. Minimum wage is under U.S.\$120 a month and almost half the economically active population earns less than U.S.\$240 a month. In an open economy most of whose prices are level with international prices, wages are extraordinarily low.⁴

In many other spheres, like the declining peasant economy and migration both within the country and abroad, arguments are to be found that question the merit of the economic model. The real challenge to the Zedillo government is to show that as of 1998 poverty in Mexico is on the decline. If the administration does not manage this, the president's stubborn defense of his economic policy will have served for little.

There is, then, a new vision of the national economy that combines the serenity of seeing the light at the end of the tunnel with the expectations of an improvement in the living standards of the poor. Recovery for the middle and upper classes would be insufficient for a country on the verge of finishing up the century with social and economic indicators on a level with those of the 1960s.

It is harsh to say so, but we must not forget that according to the United Nations Development Program, Mexico is one of

the countries which has not shown any per capita growth in the last 30 years.⁵ The social debt cannot be put off, particularly because an economy that does not create social well-being is an exclusionary economy.

POLITICS: BETWEEN CIVILIZATION AND BARBARISM

In politics, things can also be looked at from two angles. Many positive developments have occurred in the political transformation of Mexico. Local and federal elections have become consolidated as mechanisms for conflict resolution. The Mexican electoral system, which in the past aroused deep, well-founded suspicions, today has reasonable social support and permits international observation. The culmination of the process of credibility in the electoral system was the July 6, 1997 election.

The dark side of Mexican politics continues to be the southeastern part of the country. It is in the South where the most intense conflicts exist. In Yucatán, a traditional form of government that includes gubernatorial reelection still survives. In Tabasco, 1994 PRI campaign financing gave rise to one of the longest post-electoral conflicts in recent times, a conflict which was never resolved. The state of Campeche is run with a polarized, mutually exclusive bipartisanship between the PRI and the PRD that causes uncertainty and makes governability difficult. But the region that inspires by far the greatest disquiet is Chiapas.

Chiapas is one of the most backward areas in Latin America. Although the area had already been in a state of embryonic



Gustavo Graf / Imagenlatina



Gustavo Graf / Imagenlatina

Left to right: cocOPA member Luis H. Alvarez, Minister of the Interior Francisco Labastida and government Commissioner for Peace in Chiapas Emilio Rabasa.

rebellion for the last few years, since 1994 the situation reached new, alarming levels. By declaring war on the federal government, the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN) brought the area's problems under international scrutiny. Since then, Chiapas has been the thorniest problem the Salinas de Gortari and Zedillo administrations have had to face.

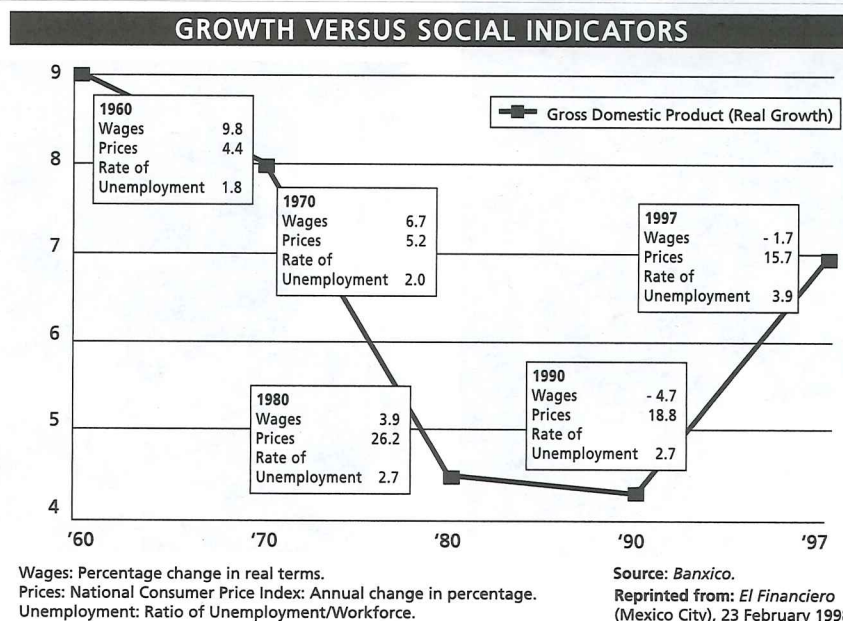
Although always recognizing that marginalization, discrimination against indigenous people and poverty gave a certain legitimacy to the Zapatista uprising, the fact is that the government has not been capable of confronting the problem. Six perfectly distinct, and even contrasting, phases of government treatment of the situation can be clearly discerned:

1. The armed response, which lasted only the first few days of 1994.
2. Political negotiations combined with a political and social public relations offensive to buy the public's good will (1994-95).
3. The police offensive combined with a political media and propaganda campaign against the EZLN, after revealing the supposed identity of Sub-commander Marcos and issuing a warrant for his arrest (February 1995).
4. The halt of the police offensive and the beginning of the negotiations that would lead to the San Andrés Larráinzar agreements on indigenous autonomy (1996).

5. The debate about the constitutionality of the San Andrés Agreements and an attempt to let time lessen the importance of the problem (February 1997 to December 1997).
6. The explicit renunciation of the use of force and the decision to give legal form to the Larráinzar agreements (January 1998).

After the Acteal massacre on December 22, 1997, which reactivated the conflict, the Mexican government has paid a very high price in terms of its image. It is unimportant to the international observer whether the federal government was neither directly nor indirectly responsible for the massacre or not. The lack of consistency in how the case has been dealt with and the sluggishness of the negotiations have made the Mexican government lose credibility in the international arena.

To compensate for this, a change in the focus of the negotiations and some of the negotiators was devised. The exit of Minister of the Interior Emilio Chuayffet and Chiapas Governor Julio César Ruiz Ferro reopened the road to a political solution to the conflict. President Zedillo established a new policy for Chiapas in his January 23 speech (see p. 23), the main features of which are the non-use of force, the non-internationalization of the conflict and the development of the San Andrés Larráinzar Accords in legal form.



This new governmental offensive opens up the possibility—and the hope—that in 1998 a way out of the Chiapas conflict will finally be found. If existing tensions in Chiapas do not drop, all the political advances will be overshadowed and the public will come to the conclusion that the government is gravely lacking in political creativity. And Zedillo's political legacy, electoral normalization, will lose significance because a democracy incapable of generating harmony is an ineffective democracy.

THE JUSTICE SYSTEM, UNFINISHED BUSINESS

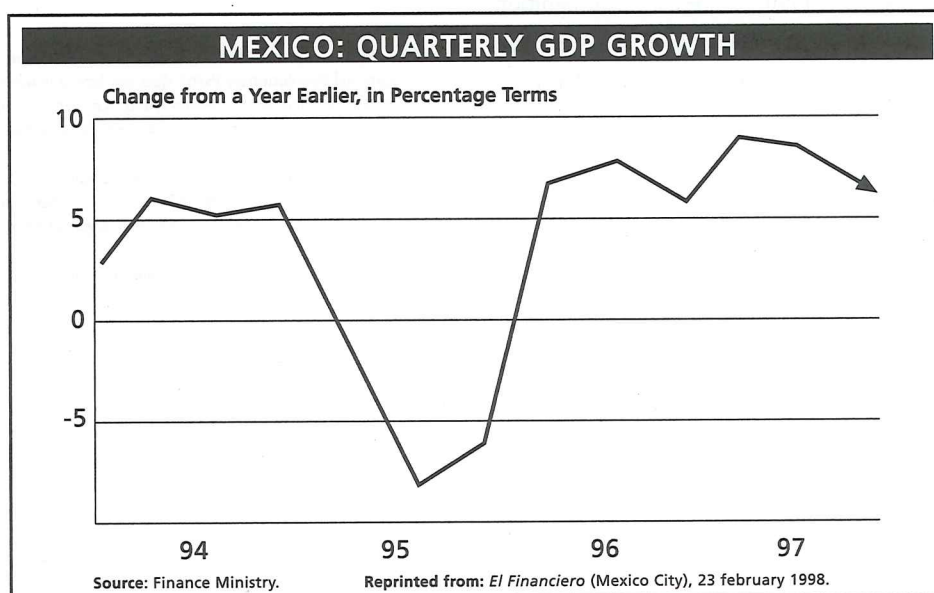
While in the fields of politics and the economy optimism is gaining over caution, in questions of public safety, the panorama is much darker. The question of the justice system has been the brick wall against which the government has knocked its head time and time again. One of the demands most widely voiced by the Mexican people is around public safety. Crime rates have increased significantly nationwide. Some cities such as the capital, Guadalajara and Ciudad Juárez, are caught in a permanent atmosphere of apprehension and fear. The growing number of crimes is reflected in official statistics. About 60,000 investigations were opened in 1994 and by 1996 the figure had risen to 73,418, a 24 percent jump.⁶

But, beyond figures is the fact that issues related to the justice system and public safety hurt the Mexican government's image the most at home and abroad. The administration has made an effort on three levels to alleviate the problem, but up to now the results have been contradictory. The first level is the legal-institutional one. In the sphere of the administration of justice, the contrast between proposals, laws and government restructuring on the one hand, and the poor results, on the other, has been enormous and very bad for the government's image. The reforms themselves have been important. The most outstanding among them are the following:

1. Reform of the judicial branch of government;
2. The creation of the System of Public Safety;
3. The passing of the Law Against Organized Crime;
4. Placing military commanders in some police forces.

People do not have the impression, however, that things are changing. The institutional reform have not had a positive influence in solving the problem.

On a second level, official efforts have gone into fighting high-impact crime, concretely the fight against drugs. This is where the profile is better. The government decided to continue to use the armed forces in the fight against drug trafficking and, despite all the problems and scandals (the most significant





Alfonso Marzano / Imagenética

Public safety is one of the most widely voiced demands of Mexican society.

of which was the arrest of General Jesús Gutiérrez Rebollo, head of the anti-drug efforts) the results seem to be more positive. Important drug lords have been caught (Juan García Abrego, among others) and politicians like Jalisco ex-Governor Flavio Romero jailed for alleged links to the trade. Recognition from abroad of the successes in the fight against drugs has also become more manifest. In the last few years, Mexico has been “certified” by the U.S. government, which—whatever the criticisms aimed at the procedure—shows that in Washington’s eyes, it is on the right road.

The third level is the solution to crimes of high political impact. In this area, things have not worked as well as could have been expected. The investigations into the 1994 assassinations of Colosio and Ruiz Massieu⁷ are still open. Different people have headed up the Attorney General’s Office and the Special Investigator’s Office and the results of the investigations are still inconclusive.

In brief, there is an overall perception of impotence in the areas of public safety and justice. From the beginning of his administration, President Zedillo has said that Mexico must be

a country where the rule of law operates. If he does not ensure that this begins to become a reality in 1998, justice and the justice system will continue to be his unfinished business. ■■■

NOTES

- ¹ This refers to the fact that for the first time in history, the party in power (the Institutional Revolutionary Party) does not have a majority in the legislative branch, concretely the Chamber of Deputies, and that therefore federal deputies now have an unprecedented opportunity for independent decision making. [Editor’s Note.]
- ² The number of workers on the rolls of the Mexican Social Security Institute (IMSS) went from 8,501,119 in 1995 to 9,385,970 in 1997. In other words, almost 900,000 new stable jobs were created. See IMSS, *Trabajadores asegurados permanentes* (Mexico City: 1997).
- ³ *Tercer Informe de Gobierno, Anexo estadístico* (Mexico City: Poder Ejecutivo Federal, 1997), p. 58.
- ⁴ The price of gasoline is a good indicator. In Mexico a liter of fuel costs 41.6 U.S. cents; in Canada, 37.5 U.S. cents; and in the United States, 31.2 U.S. cents. *Reforma* (Mexico City) 20 January 1998, p. 1.
- ⁵ Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo, *Informe sobre el desarrollo humano* (Madrid: Ed. Mundiprensa, 1996).
- ⁶ Poder Ejecutivo Federal, *Tercer Informe de Gobierno* (Mexico City: 1997), p. 8.
- ⁷ Luis Donaldo Colosio was the PRI candidate for president when he was assassinated in March 1994. José Francisco Ruiz Massieu was PRI general secretary until the day of his assassination in September 1994. [Editor’s Note.]

Chiapas, Our Agreements And Disagreements

Speech by President Ernesto Zedillo*

There is much, much more that identifies and brings us together than divides and distances us from one another.

Today, I want to reiterate that, even given complex and painful conflicts like the one in Chiapas, we Mexicans can and want to come to the agreements that ensure respect and harmony for all, opportunities and progress for all, dignity and justice for all.

* Friday, January 23, 1998, Kanasín, Yucatán.

With that conviction, I want to restate here what the federal government does not agree with and what it does agree with in order to solve the conflict in Chiapas.

The federal government does not agree with, nor can it agree with, violence.

Violence does not lead to harmony; it generates more and worse violence. It does not lead to progress, but to destruction and backwardness. Neither does it lead to justice or dignity.

Violence never solves problems; it only makes them worse.



Angela Torrijón / Imagenlatina

Poverty and marginalization of indigenous people are at stake.

For that reason, the federal government will never agree with any form of violence, no matter what its origin.

It is unacceptable to defend a just cause—that of finding a solution to poverty and abandonment—by using the threat of arms, which is the same as the threat of violence.

In this same fashion, regardless of the threat of arms or the threat to someone's property or interests, whether legitimate or not, a violent reaction is also unacceptable.

Anyone who resorts to violence or arms, and equally, anyone who threatens to do so, is attempting to take justice into his own hands, is trying to put himself above the law and judge others.

This is unacceptable. Neither the federal government nor society can accept it.

Trying to take justice into your own hands is a crime against both the law and democracy. It is a crime that must be punished.

The federal government does not believe that it is the force of the state that should resolve the conflict in Chiapas.

That is why the federal government has neither used nor threatened to use that force. That is how it has been since the first day and that is how it will be until the last day of my administration.

Those who speak of a threat from the federal government, those who speak of the government seeking confrontations or encouraging violence, know perfectly well that they are not speaking the truth.

They know perfectly well that there is no such thing as inevitable confrontations and that the federal government neither follows nor has a strategy for war in Chiapas.

They know that their words aim to win supporters, to maintain approval, to back up their propaganda in Mexico and abroad.

The truth is that the federal government has repeatedly shown in practice that it does not believe that the use of force is the solution in Chiapas.

Those who for reasons of strategy, propaganda or political interests are falsifying the truth know perfectly well that during these three years, the federal government has not used force in Chiapas, despite the provocations, falsehoods and threats.

They even know that, no matter what they do, the federal government will not use repressive force. It will only defend the law and institutions of all Mexicans.

And certainly, those who are not speaking the truth know that they are taking advantage of the tolerance of the federal

government, of a tolerance that, even if irritating to part of the public, is an aspect of authentic democracy.

But they must also be aware that when they act in this way, instead of hastening a solution, they are prolonging the conflict; instead of being part of an answer of justice and dignity for all, they become part of the problem.

In that sense, those who utilize the Chiapas conflict, or even the tragic events that cause us all pain and indignation, to further their cause, to promote group interests, or to confuse public opinion, know perfectly well that they are not contributing to the solution of the conflict.

It is unacceptable that the Chiapas conflict be used to favor political aims unrelated to the solution of the profound origins of the just grievances of the indigenous communities.

Those who do so are betting on discord and confrontation; they are betting on whatever mobilizes people of good faith, regardless of whether it is true or not, to support their political aims, instead of betting on working together to solve the basic causes of the injustice and abandonment.

The federal government also disagrees with those who desire, seek, motivate, invoke or facilitate foreign interference to do what we Mexicans can do ourselves.

Down through our history, never, absolutely never, has any problem among Mexicans been solved by foreigners or from abroad.



A view of San Cristóbal de Las Casas, Chiapas.

Intervening, even in good faith, in the domestic affairs which are the business only of Mexicans, is unfair to a country that has always distinguished itself for its respect for the internal life of other nations. It is unfair to a country like Mexico that has striven for respect for the self-determination of all nations, large or small, weak or powerful.

For all Mexicans as well as for the federal government, it is inadmissible that there be those who in violation of our laws, although they argue humanitarian reasons, are directly involved in the conflict in Chiapas. We are especially concerned with their conduct when their own countries still suffer from division, conflict and even terrorism born of colonialism or authoritarianism in their not-too-distant-past.

Many of those who interfere from abroad, not to help solve the conflict but to raise it as a banner, would do better repairing the injustices that authoritarianism and the exclusion of their own ancestors have left as a legacy.

The federal government can never agree to either violence or foreign interference.

But it has agreed and will continue to agree that the only way to establish peace with justice and dignity in Chiapas is through dialogue, through negotiation.

The federal government has agreed and will continue to agree that the only fast, peaceful and definitive solution to the

conflict is in satisfying the demand of indigenous people for a new relationship with the Mexican state.

That is why the federal government agrees that it is necessary to build a new relationship among the indigenous peoples, Mexican society and the state.

As the San Andrés Larráinzar Accords say, a new relationship which addresses and solves the problems of poverty, exploitation and political exclusion that for years and years has harmed and continues to harm indigenous peoples.

A new relationship in which the federal, state and municipal governments promote in their respective spheres, together with the indigenous peoples themselves, their equitable, sustainable development, as well as the struggle against all forms of discrimination.

The federal government has agreed and always will agree with complying with a fundamental commitment to fostering the elimination of discriminatory mentalities, attitudes and behavior toward indigenous people.

It agrees that to forge a new relationship between the state and indigenous peoples, a culture of plurality and tolerance must be developed. A culture that accepts the world views, life styles and ideas of development of indigenous peoples.

As the San Andrés Larráinzar Accords say, the federal government agrees to promote legal and legislative changes that broaden the political participation and representation, both locally and nationally, of indigenous peoples, maintaining respect for their different situations and traditions, and strengthening a new federalism in Mexico in a constitutional framework ensuring national unity.

The government agrees that the call for the voices and demands of indigenous peoples to be heard and duly attended must carry with it the recognition of the political, economic, social and cultural rights of indigenous peoples within the framework of the Mexican nation.

The federal government agrees that it has the duty to guarantee full access of indigenous people to state institutions, with the recognition and respect for cultural specificities and their internal systems of norms, guaranteeing at the same time full respect for human rights and the principles of the Constitution.

The federal government agrees that during all trials and legal proceedings, indigenous people have the right at all times to be assisted by interpreters and counsel for the defense familiar with



Antonio Turok / Imageniatiina

their languages and cultures whether private or government appointed.

The government also agrees to recognize the cultural diversity of indigenous peoples; to ensure their greater and better education and training, an education that, if provided by the government, will be public and intercultural, and training that can improve production.

The federal government agrees with the San Andrés Accords in the sense that the state must guarantee to indigenous peoples conditions which will allow them to satisfactorily procure their own food, health and housing, and at the same time the state must promote a federalist, integral, participatory social policy that attends to basic needs, especially those of women and children.

The federal government agrees to promote production and employment among indigenous peoples, as well as to foster specific policies to protect indigenous migrants both within our borders and abroad.

The federal government agrees with the San Andrés Larráinzar Accords. But it would not be able to accept interpretations of the accords that threaten national sovereignty and unity or put individual guarantees, freedoms and human rights at risk. It would not be able to accept exclusionary statutes or privileges or disdain for minorities.

It seems to me that whoever truly wants a solution to the conflict in Chiapas will agree with the government on these points. Therefore, let us formalize the San Andrés Accords.

Let us formalize the San Andrés Accords so that all of us, beginning with the authorities, can open up roads to progress and democracy vis-à-vis cultural diversity and political pluralism.

Let us formalize the San Andrés Accords in order to genuinely advance in the recognition, inclusion and encouragement of indigenous peoples so that democracy, freedom and justice can be for all, so that never again in Mexico is there a Mexican who does not feel part of the nation.


Ours is a great nation.

Nothing and no one must divide it. Nothing and no one must put its sovereignty or its territorial integrity at risk.

Nothing and no one must undermine the pride that each Mexican feels simply in being what he or she is, being, first and foremost, Mexican.

For this reason, let us take advantage of the fact that there is more, much more, that unites us as Mexicans, to join our determination, our creativity and our efforts and thus heal the wounds that give us so much pain.

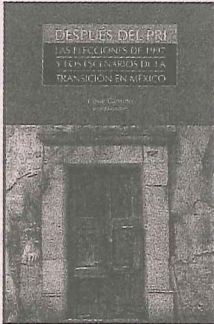
Thank you.

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PRESENTAN

LA REINDIANIZACIÓN DE AMÉRICA,
SIGLO XIX

LETICIA REINA (COORDINADORA)

“Nunca más un México sin nosotros”... así se expresaron los indígenas de Chiapas, es decir, “nunca más una historia sin nosotros”. Porque ¿cuántas historias se han escrito suponiendo que en el devenir de los acontecimientos no influyeron para nada los indígenas o lo hicieron como una rémora, un lastre del que la buena sociedad criolla y meztiza nunca se ha logrado deshacer? *La reindianización de América, siglo XIX*, analiza el modo en que los regímenes liberales latinoamericanos de ese siglo pretendieron negar, exterminar, o asimilar a los indios a la sociedad nacional.





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Barking from the Stage

An Interview with Ludwik Margules

María Tarriba Unger*

Ludwik Margules, with a long and distinguished career, is considered one of the most brilliant directors in Mexican theater. While we can detect certain recurring topics and obsessions in his many productions, Margules is an untiring explorer of the means whereby he may, as he says, “bark from the stage.”

Born in Poland in 1933, Margules lived in Europe until the age of 24, surviving World War II and the Russian invasion of his homeland. When he arrived in Mexico after studying journalism at the University of Warsaw, he tried his hand at very different occupations: he was a school prefect; he worked in a brick factory; he was a photographer’s assistant and a film student. Finally he decided to dedicate himself completely to directing in the theater.

Beginning in the 1970s, Margules became a teacher and started producing plays distinguished by a style simultaneously severe, original and imaginative. A myth began to grow around him: actors and students complained of his being excessively demanding, although at the

same time they expressed their extreme admiration for him. His productions have always been controversial both with audiences and theater critics. “Talking about Margules” became one of the main amusements of university theater students. And, truth be told, throughout his career, Margules has logged up impressive achievements like the productions of *Faust*, *King Richard the Third*, *Uncle Vanya*, and *The Life of the Marionettes* by Bergman.

In 1996 he staged *Quartet*, a National Theater Company Production, by Heinrich Müller, which was a smash hit.

The play, based on a novel by Laclouis, was later adapted for the screen to make *Dangerous Liaisons*. Ludwik Margules used the story to explore the difficult terrain of the links between eroticism and power.

This interview for *Voices of Mexico* took place at Margules’ home. The director speaks in such a low voice—it is almost inaudible—that it creates the impression of someone used to being listened to with great attention. He expresses himself vehemently with extremely long pauses, making it seem that he is concerned with communicating his ideas with great precision.



Margules during a rehearsal of *Quartet*.

Photos by José Jorge Carreón

* Theater critic.

Photos reprinted courtesy of the Theater Department of the National Institute of Fine Arts (INBA).

María Tarriba: Before coming to Mexico, you spent a large part of your youth in Poland. What meaningful experiences do you remember from that period of your life?

Ludwik Margules: I came to Mexico at the age of 24. I studied journalism in Poland. At that time, the Journalism Department of the University of Warsaw was very vibrant politically. I'm referring to about 1956, a time of great events... Stalinism, Hungary. It enveloped us all in

an atmosphere of great artistic and cultural ferment. There was a great flowering of Polish theater and European theater in general. Brecht in Warsaw. The great Polish theater unfolded thanks to a permanent atmosphere of spiritual growth.

MT: I understand you lived through both World War II and the Russian invasion. How did those events affect your perception of life?

LM: Yes. In the first place, those events meant I spent six years in exile in Russia.

The experience of the war and the invasion also made for a twisted childhood, or rather, the absence of a childhood in the conventional sense of the term. When I returned to Poland in 1946, I found a country that had been invaded by the Nazis and then subjected to Soviet totalitarianism. All of that made me skeptical, very skeptical about Man and the possibility of being able to create some kind of organization among human beings. And, I would say, it also was the source of a redoubled essentialist quest.

MT: A redoubled quest? Could you elaborate on that?

LM: Yes, yes. It was precisely because of my skepticism about the goodness of Man that I became interested in a redoubled quest for his essential values. During the war, I saw things no one should ever see. That was what turned me into a mature person, I would say, my greater knowledge of the world and the human condition.

MT: Among your actors, your students and the people you work with in general, you have the reputation of being a "hard man." Were the experiences you mentioned about the war somehow the cause of that personality you are said to have?

LM: No. That has nothing to do with the war. Rather, it is related to being very demanding of myself. The myth of the "hard man" was propagated by people who are not very demanding of themselves. It is like saying that you are demanding because you try to get the most out of everyone who collaborates in putting on a play, and that's not being hard. Not at all.

MT: Why did you start doing theater?

LM: I have always said that the answer to that question is treacherous and manipulative. The thing is, [by this time] one



Quartet was a smash hit.

has already developed an “over-rationalized” answer, which may well have something to do with vanity itself, since whenever you try to explain why you work in one art and not another, you become slanderous. Perhaps the answer is that I work in the theater because of intuition or compulsion or certain tendencies. You see, I’ve seen a lot of theater. I don’t have the perfect answer to the question. But besides that, I think that the difficulties of adapting to Mexico—another climate, another way of life, with both great obstacles and attractions—may well have contributed to opening up something that had already been there since childhood. In any case, I have always been tremendously attracted by the theater. Perhaps I went into the theater because I couldn’t do film. I wanted to do cinema. I think that having been immersed in a theatrical culture also had an influence. I have seen *commedia dell’arte* without knowing it was *commedia dell’arte*. I have seen German expressionist theater, the great Russian theater and also the theater of the Russians who, in their own way, imagine that it is universal theater. I have seen a great deal of theater—American theater, too. My whole life I have been nourished by the theater. I am very grateful to Mexico for how difficult it was to adapt to it; that may well have to do with my being in the theater. But, for me, the most important thing is the need to speak, or, as I say, the need to “bark” from the stage.

MT: How would you situate Mexican theater within the context of international theater?

LM: I think that in terms of the organization of the theater, we are totally in the dark. But in terms of talent, I would say we are the same or better than other

countries. However, very often talent is squandered and wasted for the lack of a full theatrical life, quality theater, that would have some kind of continuity from one generation to another. Edward Gordon Craig once said that the theater is the highest expression of human intelligence since it manages to fuse all of human experience together through the different arts that go into making a production.

MT: You once referred to the director’s job as an attempt at “playing God,” Why?

LM: The director creates life on the stage. To that extent he becomes omnipresent. Besides, it just could be no other way if we think of directing as authorship in which all the elements are recodified. Then, I would speak, rather, of a poetic endeavor, of a director who shapes a poetic endeavor through his fiction, through a narration on stage. In that sense, the director is really a god, a creator who discovers worlds to shape a fiction through which poetry is expressed. This is the way the director works.



In *Quartet* Margules explored the links between eroticism and power.

MT: How would you define stage poetry?

LM: It is the maximum capacity of synthesis for expressing something. Of synthesis and purity in articulating words and other theatrical elements.

MT: What does the theater give you?

LM: A reason for living...the most important reason.

MT: While you are directing, what kind of relationships do you try to create among your collaborators?

LM: Relationships of teamwork. Relationships where each person contributes with his or her abilities to develop the collective task. It is a concert of the individual values of each artist who is part of the community of creators to develop the piece.

MT: What behind-the-scenes problems do you have with your collaborators during rehearsals?

LM: Different problems. But in general, you confront the difficulty of orga-

nizing different sensibilities, sensibilities that often do not find expression in collective work. This sometimes manifests itself as a need for individual self-affirmation or, rather, self-centeredness. We sometimes have diametrically opposed personalities who, although they are in the same field, have great difficulty contributing harmoniously to putting on a play. You have logistical conflicts, personal explosions, conflictive situations, but, all in all, thanks to the artists' and the technicians' sensibilities coming to the fore, even if in conflictive form, they finally all participate in making theater; they do it, they build it and they conform.

MT: In putting on a play, different languages are used: the script itself, the scenery, blocking, etc. How do you manage to combine these different languages?

LM: I talk to the person in charge of each of the different disciplines involved in the language of his or her discipline.

Woe be it to any director who is not better than his set designer or who doesn't understand the processes of actors' assimilation better than the actor himself. All this is part of the theatrical, cultural baggage that directors must have.

MT: You often use the term "organicity" when talking about putting on a play. What does an "organic" performance mean to you?

LM: It means lack of ornament, the merger of all the elements in the performance in a single style, a language in itself. It is the preponderance of the structure of the performance, conceived in terms of the maximum economy of means. In the last analysis, organicity is finding the linkages. I would add that ornament, adornments, wordiness, fireworks, histrionic excess are all factors opposed to organicity in a performance. It is, then, the triumph of a style over rhetorical dispersion.

MT: You have taught directing for many years. What character traits do you think favor the vocation of director?

LM: First of all, more than character traits, the conditions have to exist. One of these is having something to say about art, the world, and having a vital need—instinctive and necessary for survival—to speak from the stage and to create fictions. Character traits? You need to have poetic imagination, which includes sensibility, wanting to speak truths through the mouths of others and stick to the story, which is very hard. Having organizational ability, leadership and charisma.

MT: Doesn't being a director, insofar as it necessarily implies domination, sometimes encompass a hidden ambition for power?

LM: The ambition for power, which frequently appears while preparing a



Margules' productions have always been controversial. Here a scene from *Don Juan*. A National Theater Company production.

piece, is an obstacle to getting the job done. It's not a question of governing; it's a question of producing a work of art. There is a director, who directs a group of people involved in putting on a play, and this group must necessarily express the artistic vision of the person who creates, who puts into movement the work of the theater. In that sense, the director is the leader, the leader of a group which cannot and must not betray the idea of an artistic project, and, at the same time, each collaborator in putting on the piece has to develop his or her discipline contributing his/her own sensibility. The director has to take care that the project not get distorted and is enriched by the contributions of everyone involved. The tone or styles of communication the director uses with his group frequently vary. Some make the group's communication easier, others make it more difficult, but they are only different tones, ways of approaching teamwork. You should never confuse directing with a political event or a fight: in the end, it is an authorship. It is a question of articulating the stuff of the director's dreams through the participation of a group of people, of his ability to express his ideas through the performance.

MT: In your work as an artist, do you identify recurring themes? Or, more clearly put, what are your obsessions?

LM: Oh, yes. I would say that a theme that has interested me for many years is how power works in Man's behavior. Man in the sense of a being, a doer and a victim of power, the kind of power that can make Man's misery possible, the presence of both the magnificent and the miserable in human beings and their behavior. I have always been interested

in the grotesque, in human degradation. Obsessions? I would also mention a permanent obsession for speaking in the most precise manner in every play, for avoiding dispersion, avoiding digressions, for communicating the stuff of dreams without ornament, for communicating its essence. I am extraordinarily attracted to the encounter of the tragic spirit and discovering the different facets of its behavior. Sensual things, the erotic world, violence. Trivializing the erotic has always interested me in my productions.

MT: How do you understand the conflict between eroticism and power?

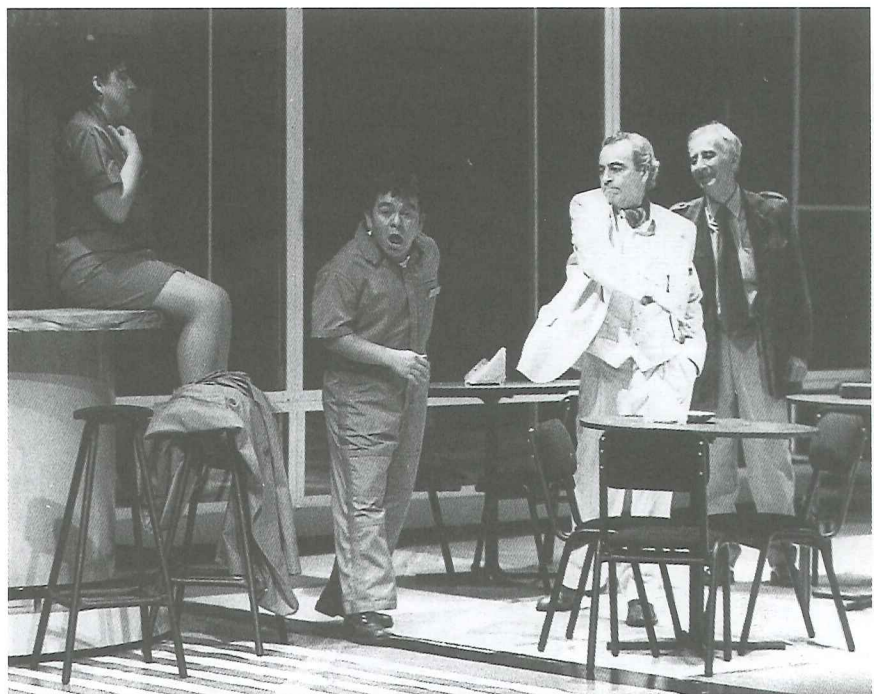
LM: That conflict is always present and I see it as the essence of the tragic spirit. I believe that the imperious need of being realized in love turns into acts of power.

MT: Could you say something about the process that goes from the first idea about a general topic to its crystallization on the stage?

LM: It's all related to having the right strategy for organizing the work that goes into staging a piece. In the end, besides all the analytical work that comes before going into rehearsal, the strategy consists of never breaking the bridges of communication with your own sensibility under pressure; the most terrible obstacle to this is being demanding of yourself. And secondly, the ability to create a strategy that permits effective communication among the collaborators, the aim of which is the performance itself.

MT: What about the search for an effective strategy for communicating with the audience?

LM: There are no recipes for that. There is only experience, and in every work, in every audience's coming together with the performance, the experience is different. The director sets himself the task of seeking mutual participation with the members of the audience. Putting



One of Margules' obsessions has been discovering the different facets of human behavior.

himself in the same range of ideas, of sensibility. In the end, he aspires to finding the same latitude, the latitude of perception, the same latitude of the ability to be amazed. This is essential for building fictions on stage.

MT: To what point are you interested in being understood by a given audience?

LM: Naturally, there is a desire to be understood by an educated, sensitive audience. I'm interested in the most sensitive member of the audience and it is with that person that I try to communicate. If on the way it turns out I am understood by another person, or many other people, I consider myself lucky. The "general public" does not interest me. There is no such thing. Audiences are defined by tastes, aspirations, desires, their situations. There is no "audience" as such. There are carnival audiences, and vaudeville audiences, and "cultured" audiences (the narrowest minded of all). And, of course,

there is the sensitive audience, which is not highly educated but which is a wonderful audience. There is also the better educated audience, which has the theatrical culture that allows it to be the most open, the most sensitive. It is this audience which wants to communicate with the director's internal world, with the performance, even though this implies a certain level, aspirations, selectivity and critical ability. Above all, there is an audience which wants to join emotions and intellect, and not separate these human qualities.

MT: What is your opinion of the new forms of art presented on stage like dance-theater and performance, among others?

LM: I am a great enemy of all that. I am an enemy of multimedia in the theater. Sophocles doesn't need multimedia and all that.

MT: Then, what is the theater for you?

LM: Well, it's a staged operation of time and space that requires the presence of actors, movement, space, the script and other elements that create images that condense into meaning.

MT: What currents do you see in Mexican theater today?

LM: I would say that, above all, there is a search for identity in general, and specifically, the search for theatrical identity, through the use of the raw material that is Mexican history. I'm referring here to the work of Vicente Leñero, or David Olguín, for example. I would also mention attempts at sensorial communication clearly in detriment of intellectual values. In the last few years, there have also been what you could call pamphleteering productions, although I can also see great acting talent bursting onto the scene, particularly among women. I would mention the search for contemporary values in the classics. There is also a lot of "didactic" work, in the pejorative sense. But I would also say there is a great flow of talent. We have a great set designer like Alejandro Luna. I think there is a tendency toward enormous use of the plastic arts in theater production. There is really nothing revolutionary in our theater. Commercial theater is generally badly done. It would be nice if they had real professional aspirations.

MT: Hobbies?

LM: Photography, cooking, skin diving. Diving is very special; it is the maximum sensation of freedom, of beauty.

The interview ends when Margules, characteristically brusque, abruptly turns off the tape recorder. ■■■



When putting on a play, Margules strives to communicate the essence without ornament.

MANUEL FELGUERAZ

AN INWARD GAZE¹

*Juan Villoro**



Photos reprinted courtesy of Manuel Felguérez

Self-portrait, 120 x 100 cm, 1994 (oil on canvas).



First Nature, 100 x 120 cm, 1993 (oil on canvas).

DEVIATIONS TOWARD THE GOAL

The first thing that surprises us about Felguérez' extensive, versatile body of work is that it depends on very few figures. For almost 40 years, the painter has repeated curves and rectangles, as though he were rehearsing the patient solution to a theorem. The idea of approximation is essential to his inventiveness: you must get as close as possible to the goal without ever

reaching it. His recent work, brought together under the title "The Limits of a Sequence," alludes to the final destination, the forbidden point of any journey. For Felguérez, all advances include variations. Elias Canetti shared this same impulse, saying, "There is no uniformity in true knowledge. All authentic jumps are lateral, like the moves of a knight in chess. That which develops in a straight line is predictable and irrelevant. What is decisive is twisted knowledge." This image helps explain the continuity of an iconoclastic route chosen: a fixed limit, obses-

sive, besieged by slanting blows, unexpected deviations toward the goal.

THE INWARD GAZE

In Felguérez, a sense of order coexists with refined rebelliousness, the discipline of form with the vertigo of textures and delirious signs representing sounds. As in Rothko, Felguérez requires a map for his abstraction: if for Rothko, the dominant form is the rectangle cut in two, the metaphysical clay field, for Felguérez, an ordi-

* Mexican writer and editor of *La Jornada Semanal* cultural supplement.



Snail Without Moon, 125 x 150 cm, 1992 (oil on canvas).

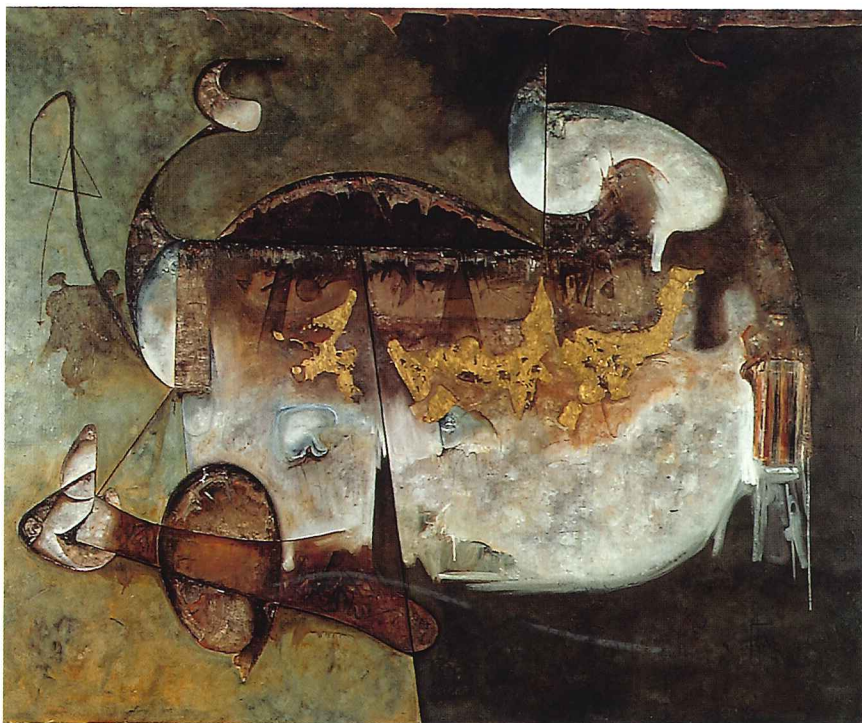
nary line requires small pairs of circles, like watchful eyes, the square (or better, an unfolded cube), organic curves that look like kidneys, French beans, buttocks, snails.

Felguérez' figures are a kind of control panel of instructions: they show the way but they are not the way. The wheels, or squares are necessary for understanding the composition of the painting and, above all, to know what the painter "overcame," the references he turned into parallel realities. We are witnessing a detective novel in reverse, in which recognizable clues become mysteries.

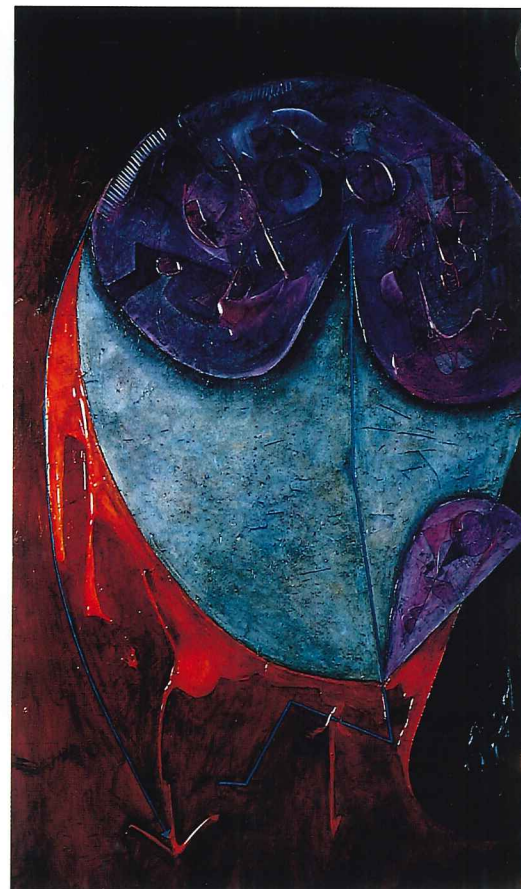
Felguérez'
geometric abstraction
depends not on a rejection
of the concrete, but on
inventively going beyond it.
His abstraction is not
born of someone
who repudiates objects,
but rather someone who
understands them too much.

In most exhibitions, the viewer encounters paintings dominated by emotion or paintings that are the product of serene calculations; a brush in paroxysm or an intelligent abstraction. Both mixed together is quite rare.

Can the textures of Bacon or De Kooning coexist with the geometric rigor of Mondrian? Felguérez' work is the very, very personal union of these two extremes. "Conventional," recognizable silhouettes are perturbed by the brush and palette knife until they are transformed into interior states. If in a test of perceptions geo-



The Rite of the Stars, 200 x 240 cm, 1994 (oil on canvas).



Immobile Nocturne II, 150 x 180 cm, 1990 (oil on canvas).

metric drawings represent the order we agree with, in the painting of Felguérez they represent reality prior to the canvas, the world of defined concepts that gave birth to the painting and disappeared with it.

Felguérez' oils should be seen inwardly; his bloody textures, the squirts that resemble secretions, the gold and black dust that look like they have been dug out of some fantastic mine indicate a radical anatomical, psychological, mineral introspection: entrails, hallways of the mind, fillings.

THE NEGATIVE RELIEF

A painter of the internal, Manuel Felguérez cannot get away from emotion. While

Morris Louis tried to make sure that his colored serpentines lacked any trace of humanity—never the nervous imprint of a brush!—Felguérez is a passionate participant in his canvases. He leaves greedy marks, surrendering his symbols to the conflagration of temperament.

With the exception of his geometrical period in the 1970s, in which colors followed strict outlines, Felguérez uses coloring to discuss, and almost deny, his formal principles. A psychotic brush advances against the initial reality of the canvas and creates overflowing, uncomfortable, surprising paintings. Robert Hughes wrote of Robert Motherwell's rich emphasis on black, "In Motherwell, color is not an adjective; it's a noun." The same can be said of Felguérez. His palette, which has never

contained many different colors, makes color the generic topic; the careful composition sinks under challenging surfaces: the calcareous landscapes of the early 1960s; the reddish, lively consistencies, between vegetable and gastric, that dominate his daring canvases of the 1980s; the pale vapors, contrasted with earthy masses and gushes of liquid gold of the 1990s.

What does a surface mean to a master of relief? Sculptor, set designer, creator of artifacts, accidental architect, Felguérez has created paintings that look like construction maps.

In an obvious way, certain of Felguérez' compositions allude to the third dimension. They are unfolded structures, negative reliefs. However, this has not stopped him from exploring the view. Whoever



The Temptation of Saint Anthony, 150 x 180 cm, 1994 (oil on canvas).

looks at *The Rite of the Stars* (1994) or *Roving Form* (1996) will find a painter who dims his materials until he attains the perturbing interior of dreams.

Manuel Felguéz is the most intellectual painter of his generation. He has frequented kinetic art, urbanism, computing, mathematical models applied to the visual arts, and his book *El espacio múltiple* (The Multiple Space) offers a discourse unusual in a craft usually guided by intuition.

BEYOND WHAT IS "MEXICAN"

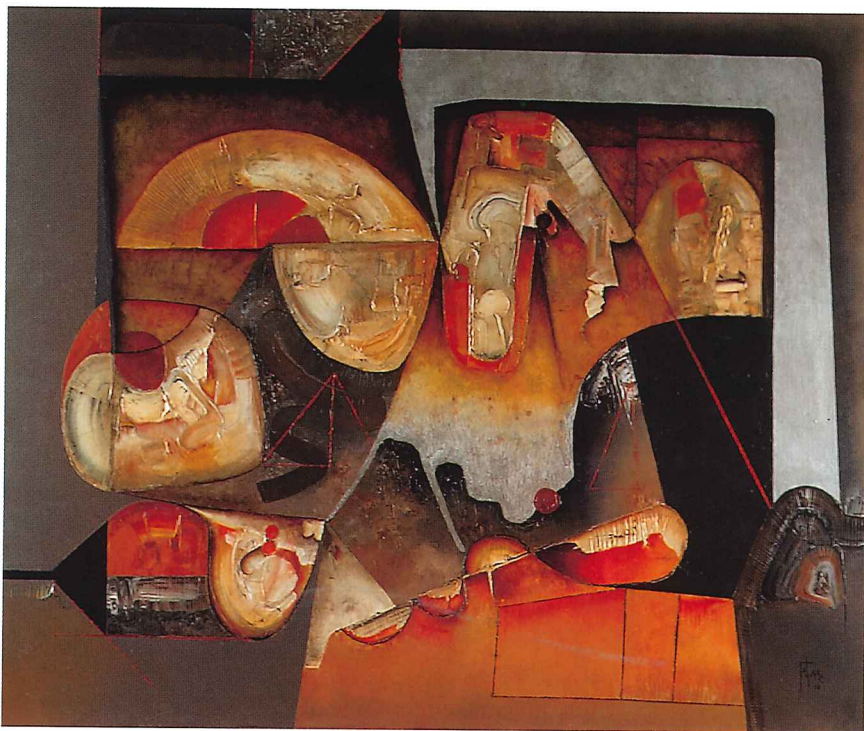
It is no exaggeration to say that the painters of "the generation of the break" (Vicente Rojo, Lilia Carrillo, Manuel Felguéz, Alberto Gironella and Fernando García

Ponce, among others) were able to supercede the localist culture in the same manner that the "Contemporaries" group² did in poetry and the essay. An artist's borders often differ greatly from those of the country he is from and Felguéz' generation established an intelligent dialogue with the avant garde and movements elsewhere that reaffirmed their personal proclivities. Like in that "gathering of the tribes," Felguéz would disdain the easy road of those who tried to show with shoe-banging if necessary that they are "typical" Mexicans.

The work of the Zacatecan painter could come only out of this country, but one of its greatest merits is that it escapes all picturesque definitions.

"THIS IS NOT A PIPE EITHER"

Felguéz' geometric abstractionism depends not on a rejection of the concrete, but on inventively going beyond it. In a masterful short story, "Signs and Symbols," Vladimir Nabokov talks about the "referential mania" plaguing a character: all objects tell him something. A spoon is an allegory; a thimble, an oracle; each new item transmits excessive information. Most abstract painters turn their backs on reality "as it is" because it does not stimulate them much. Felguéz, like Nabokov's character, knows the secret message of things; his abstraction is not born of someone who repudiates objects, but rather someone who understands them too much.



Between Two Wings, 100 x 120 cm, 1992 (oil on canvas).

In painting, Felguérez distrusts his many utilitarian abilities, his ability to dominate recognizable objects and forms. This makes his gamble on abstraction all the more significant.

“The function of painting,” writes John Berger, “consists of filling an absence with the simulation of a presence.” What absence does Felguérez’ work fill? In a century of rationalist arrogance, cubism, surrealism, informalism, abstract expressionism and other non-conformist currents painted what was unintelligible at first glance and fulfilled the mission that Mallarmé assigned poetry: to recreate not an object, but the effect it produces. Felguérez contributes to this refounding of the gaze in a special way. He starts from geometry, machines, the equations of Kepler and Mozart, the nature of the senses, full of insects, to make it (dis)appear in colors that, as Diego de Mesa observed, exist only on his canvases. Few abstract painters have over-

come so many concrete reference points; his paintings always transmit a profound tension: the smothered, submerged reality.

Felguérez is both mathematician and repairman. A friend to paradoxes, he will often chop up a cigar to smoke it in a pipe and, in the manner of Magritte, say, “This is not a pipe.” His work, revealing and elusive, moves between distant poles: immediate reality within reach of a Swiss army knife (sometimes the traveler cannot contain his enthusiasm and sticks a snail on a dragonfly on the canvas), and the metaphysical mists that predominate in “The Limits of a Sequence.”

VELOCITY OF MULTIPLICATION

Intentionally or unconsciously, abstract painting has carried on a polemic with the technologies of our century. Painting what the camera cannot see is a way of alluding

to photography. In a world full of apparatuses designed to copy reality (from the cinema to holograms, including video), abstractionism offers mental landscapes divorced from the principles of redundancy of the Polaroid culture.

A decisive impulse for non-figurative composition has been velocity. In the twentieth century, Man discovered the things that went fast; in an airplane cabin, in the glass and steel cage of an elevator, in a streetcar or a motorcycle, he spies new “instantaneous.”

Manuel Felguérez’ work is a reflection about the use of time in abstract painting. In his paintings, the slow thicknesses alternate with spiraling vertigo. Sharp geometries are suddenly contemplated; they are stopped, fixed spaces; by contrast, the seething areas suggest spinning vanes, maelstroms, greedily sucking drains; they have not stopped moving.

RUFINO TAMAYO AND POETIC LANGUAGE

Juan García Ponce, an unsurpassed observer of Manuel Felguérez’ development, has written that, from the moment of his 1958 exhibition in the Antonio Souza Gallery, García knew that he was witnessing “an artist the value of whose work did not lie in any model that existed previously to the works themselves.” An explorer without maps.

It is worthwhile stopping and thinking about this statement. The originality García Ponce detects in Felguérez is not that of a cultural recluse who ignores his contemporaries. Quite to the contrary, few painters have such a clear sense of the historical nature of their work. Felguérez’ work could hardly exist without his fertile dia-

logues with abstract expressionism, with the sculpture of Ossip Zadkine, whom he studied under in Paris, with Mexico's "generation of the break." We should also stress his relationship with Rufino Tamayo. In the 1960s, when Felguérez was defining his style, Tamayo was Mexico's main renovator of visual art. He was also the Mexican painter most admired by the "generation of the break."

Felguérez shares his interest in public art with Tamayo in a special way. As Octavio Paz has said, "Since Tamayo's rebellion against ideological muralism" there have been few examples of truly creative muralism in Mexico. The clearest exception to this is Manuel Felguérez who "has created another, truly monumental mural art, in which painting is allied to sculpture." In August 1997, Felguérez was the first Mexican painter to have an exhibit at the Tamayo Museum.

CELESTIAL GRAVITY

The discoveries that Juan García Ponce discerns in Felguérez are not some kind of pictorial patent—a vain sense of anticipation: being the first abstractionist—but rather a language of his own, a personal attitude toward visual art. It is impossible to look at these paintings without entering into dialogue with them; looking at them is always an act of criticism. Although viewer participation is an integral part of all abstract painting, in the case of Felguérez, the active role of the viewer is enlarged by the variety of stimuli: each canvas demands a truth from him and not infrequently makes him uncomfortable.

A few years ago in *La constelación secreta* (The Secret Constellation), a mono-



Only the Air Answers, 1993-94 (oil on canvas).

graph about Lilia Carrillo, Jaime Moreno Villarreal emphasized Felguérez' interest in aerial outlines, geography and cities seen from a distance that disfigures them and allows the eyes to drop sharply. In the 1990s, the painter seems to be following the exact opposite principle: on the ground, he brings his gaze upward. Manuel Felguérez has become a painter of mists, winds at high altitudes. Although they are always based in the earth, a definitive black or brown, the paintings gravitate upwards toward the clouds or smoke. The repertoire of golden dust, liquid ochres, the explosion of a wine-colored gas, make us think of Gerardo Diego's title *Manual de espumas* (Manual of Foams). Nothing strains more against precepts and tranquility than foam; nothing is more attractive for those who seek surfaces where the unspeakable is ordered. From his balcony in Puerto Vallarta, Felguérez observes and collects surf. But, it would be banal to attribute to that

the breadth and lightness of his recent textures: his landscapes are emotional, the foams of his manual come from interior breakers.

Cézanne said, "All painting is yielding to or resisting the air." "The Limits of a Sequence" is a profound reflection about the solidity and fragility of painting. From the pierced depths of the earth the viewer's gaze rises to the frenzy of the airy heights. We already know that the goal is unattainable. We are always on the edge of what the naked eye can see. Behind, begin the stars. **MM**

NOTES

¹ Short version of Juan Villoro's book, *Manuel Felguérez. El límite de una secuencia* (Mexico City: Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes, 1997).

² A group of Mexican poets and writers who proposed, among other things, a quest for universal art. The best known among them were Xavier Villaurrutia, Gilberto Owen, José Gorostiza, Jaime Torres Bodet, Salvador Novo, Carlos Pellicer, Bernardo Ortiz de Montellano, Enrique González Rojo and Octavio G. Barrera. [Editor's Note.]



Photos reprinted courtesy of Manuel Felguérez

Clock Awake, 115 x 135 cm, 1994 (oil on canvas).

MANUEL FELGUÉREZ

THE CONSTRUCTION OF A VISUAL POETICS

*Luis Rius Caso**

For me, thinking about the relationship between a concrete piece of work and the poetics that originates it is one of the most enjoyable ways of approaching Manuel Felguérez' art. Each of his pieces stands alone thanks to the forcefulness of his artistry, always secure, unquestionable. It could be said that it is permeated with that aureate hue that imposes a distance on the viewer, the dis-

Manuel Felguérez art stands alone thanks to the forcefulness of his artistry, always secure, unquestionable.

tance needed to understand the special conditions created by the artistic experience. But each piece also refers us to an original poetics that sustains it in its own conceptual order, in which personal world views are framed, views of art and of esthetics, that as a whole signify a proposal of specific, original knowledge. This poetics is verified on a long trajectory that—to my mind—has been in large part characterized by a play of tension, an opening toward the possibilities that a dialectical conception of life and creation offers, in

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Submerger Shadow, 160 x 180 cm, 1997 (oil on canvas).

which opposing categories and registers come to synthesis: order and chaos, forms of continuity and breaks, systematic proposals and lyrical treatments.

Writer Juan Villoro puts it this way:

In Felguérez, the sense of order coexists with purified rebellion, the discipline of form with the vertigo of textures and delirious graphics. As in Rothko, Felguérez requires a map for his abstraction: if for Rothko, the dominant form is the rectangle cut in two, the metaphysical clay field, for Felguérez, an ordinary line requires small pairs of circles, like watchful eyes, the square (or better, an unfolded cube), organic curves that look like kidneys, French beans, buttocks, snails.

Therefore, we have each canvas, each sculpture, each object produced by Felguérez fraught with this poetics, always

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imposed as the immediate reference. Looking at one of his recent paintings, for example, the viewer can keep in mind the poetics that points to the limits of a series worked on for years by the artist, using his own parameters as a starting point to move toward greater formal synthesis or an admirable satisfaction of the model with which he began the series. He or she can also note the artist's breaks and his returns to previous points in his own work—in the expressionist vein, to mention one example—and thus witness the interior codes of his creative adventure.

On the other hand, it is important to underline that this adventure has concentrated on exploring art proper and on expanding the limits of art, within the autonomy that this form of knowledge has won throughout the century. We find,



The Reading of Silence, 150 x 180 cm, 1995 (oil on canvas).

then, that in contrast with other artists who have taken into account social, political or strictly speaking esthetic questions in their art, landscape painters, for example, Felguérez has used the conceptual and technical possibilities of art to express, experiment and find links in this terrain as well as in others, like science and technology, that presuppose other forms of knowledge. This is borne out by different experiences like his integrating sculpture and non-figurative mural painting, and alloying art and science, among others. Regarding this alliance, Felguérez opened up a road now very traveled by artists who create with computers. Octavio Paz wrote the following about his exhibition “The Multiple Space”:

Felguérez’ proposals do not come in through our ears, but through our eyes and

our sense of touch: they are things we can see and touch. But they are gifted with mental and animal properties, not by some mechanism, but by a logic. The multiple spaces do not speak: silently, they unfold before us and transform themselves into another space.... Art with all the rigor of a demonstration that, nevertheless, produces unexpected objects on the borders between chance and necessity. Felguérez’ objects are visual, tactile proposals: a logic of sensibility that is also a creative logic.¹

This creative logic, on the other hand, is what defines his career, which, if it had to be classified, we would say belongs to the openly pro-active family of artists. This is the case from that mythical beginning, that initial moment in which Felguérez established himself on the Mexican scene as one of the young artists of the break of the 1960s. Those were times for propos-

ing new models, for reaffirming an artistic pluralism that broke with the hegemony of the ill-named Mexican School of Painting, whose foundational myth had been left behind at least 40 years before.

Like few representatives of that “generation of the break,” Felguérez can be singled out as one of the artists who successfully met the challenge of the avant garde: breaking onto the artistic scene with a fresh, original, pro-active language, conditioned to the consolidation over time of a body of work exemplary in both conception and execution, the body of work of a true master. ■■■

NOTES

¹ Luis Mario Schneider, “La obra de Manuel Felguérez o la anatomía del vértigo,” *Catálogo Manuel Felguérez, Muestra Antológica* (Mexico City: INBA, 1986), pp. 14-15.

THE MANUEL FELGUÉREZ ROOM

IN THE FRANCISCO GOITIA MUSEUM

Between 1967 and 1973, Felguérez was on his way, timidly at first and later at full tilt, toward the application of geometric forms in his compositions. Geometry in a whirlwind, geometry at rest, creative geometry, aggressive geometry to irritate or testify to its determining, absolute presence. If the human body is volume and line, why should the triangle, why should the circle, why should the square not also be forms that create spaces? Forms that generate forms and demand their own space, and, what is more, demand their independence in the new form they have acquired, as well as their scale and dimension.

On that long journey, that torturous road had to end in a poetics and an action, both of which were revealed in Felguérez' December 1973 exhibition "The Multiple Space" in Mexico City's Modern Art Museum. Some of the works from this exhibition are now shown in the Manuel Felguérez Room of the Francisco Goitia Museum in the city of Zacatecas.

The painter himself has conceived of the process, defined the road and the result thus:

Start with a few simple geometric concepts, like the circle, the triangle or the square; organize them until you produce an idea-form. Then, with a pencil, draw this idea-form on paper, giving it an order. Think of the color silver and surround it with a few cold colors; think of the color gold and surround it with a few warm colors; in both cases, organize the color, give it an order, a logic. Take the brush and apply the color over the sketch, creating a design formed by planes.

Every plane contains potentially infinite volumes. Choose one and create a relief; the color will also take this dimension. Then, take the volume and development in space and show that the concept painting-relief-sculpture is obsolete, worn out; that form-color is one within relative spaces.

I would like to make of the form—not the form in space, but the form that creates space—the movement that creates space, the multiplication of the scale the multiplication of the object to penetrate multiple spaces; permute the forms, combine, use displacement. In short, describe, invent, show the living form within the multiple space.

This intimate relationship between art and science, given that there is not a sharp dividing line between the two, but rather a continuum, had ample impact in artistic circles. Octavio Paz said,

Felguérez' proposals do not come in through our ears, but through our eyes and our sense of touch: they are things we can see and touch. But they are gifted with mental and animal properties, not by some mechanism, but by a logic. The multiple spaces do not speak: silently, they unfold before us and transform themselves into another space. Their metamorphoses reveal the inherent rationality of form. The spaces literally make and fashion themselves before our very eyes with a logic that, at bottom, is no different from the seed becoming root, stalk, flower, fruit. The logic of life. Idea-forms, says Felguérez, his own excellent critic. But there is nothing static in this world: forms, images of finite perfection, produce through the combination of their elements infinite metamorphoses. Not a space for contemplation, but a space for building other spaces. Art with all the rigor of a demonstration that, nevertheless, produces unexpected objects on the borders between chance and necessity. Felguérez' objects are visual, tactile proposals: a logic of sensibility that is also a creative logic. **MM**



Dante Barrera

Pungent

What could cause that strange sensation of warmth you feel in the pit of your stomach after eating food made with hot peppers? It is usually followed by an immediate perception of sheer pleasure that spreads throughout the entire body and that some psychologists attribute to the release of endorphins in the brain. Is it caused by the same thing that creates a burning sensation in the mouth and irritation in the throat, brings tears to the eyes, gives you a runny nose and makes beads of perspiration break out on your forehead and back of the neck when you eat peppers that are too hot?

These contradictory sensations are caused by capsaicinoids that determine the spiciness in peppers and are unique to the chili species. Peppers contain seven different capsaicinoids, usually referred to as “capsaicin” after the most prevalent of them. Capsaicin, the source of 60 percent of the heat in peppers, is a colorless, odorless, flavorless compound and found principally in the placenta and cross-section of the pepper. The glands that produce this substance are found in the upper part of the pepper, where the placenta connects to the walls of the fruit. Despite the popular belief that the seeds are the hottest part of a pepper, they do



* Researcher at the UNAM Institute for Historical Research.
Unless otherwise specified all photos by Dave Dewitt and Paul Bosland.

Peppers¹

Janet Long*



Jorge Pablo de Aguirre

not contain capsaicin. When they are perceived as hot, it is because they have come into contact with the placenta during harvest, transportation or in the general handling, when capsaicin can be distributed throughout the fruit. Capsaicin is a very stable alkaloid unaffected by heat or cold; it retains its original pungency over time and during the cooking or freezing process as well.

The heat in peppers causes a sensation classifiable somewhere between pleasure and pain. Anna Krajewska and John Powers, research associates from the University of Georgia, carried out a study that analyzes how the human body perceives the effects of chili peppers in the mouth and throat. The experiment demonstrated that the body registers the intensity of the pungency and experiences the effect of different capsaicinoids in different ways. In spite of the observation by several researchers that capsaicinoids have no flavor, Krajewska and Powers detected slight flavors associated with some of them.

Of the seven capsaicinoids, the least irritating is nordihydrocapsaicin. This substance registers pungency in the front of the mouth and palate, causing a mellow warming effect. Its effects are immediate, but the warm feeling recedes rapidly. Krajewska and Powers describe the flavor as slightly sweet with a fruity, spicy taste. Two capsaicinoids, capsaicin and dihydrocapsaicin, are responsible for 89 percent of the heat in peppers. They are

irritants that cause a sharp, stinging bite. The sensation is registered in the mid-mouth and mid-palate, as well as the throat and back of the tongue. The sensation develops rapidly and lasts longer than that of other capsaicinoids. A fourth capsaicinoid, homodihydrocapsaicin, turned out to be the most irritating of the seven and mainly affects the throat, the back of the tongue and the palate. Krajewska and Powers describe the sensation as a numbing burn which does not develop immediately after swallowing but is longer-lasting than other capsaicinoids and difficult to rinse out. The other three capsaicinoids are present in minimal quantities and do not significantly affect the pungency of peppers.

The research team points out that the differences in character, duration and location of pungency can only be observed when solutions of low concentrations are examined. At higher concentrations, the pungency of all capsaicinoids develops rapidly all over the mouth and throat and is too strong to detect any differences in perception. The investigation concludes that it is a combination of the seven cap-

Repeated consumption
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and can eat increasingly
hot foods.

saicinoids that produces the heat that characterizes each type of chili pepper.

The sensation of warmth caused by capsaicin is registered on the pain receptors in the mouth and nose; the taste buds do not register it. Cells in the mouth and nose receive an impression of heat and pain and begin to release substance P, a chemical messenger that signals pain to the brain. The body's nervous system responds to the call, sending a message to the brain to release endorphins towards the affected nerve endings. The release of endorphins suppresses the pain and provokes a sensation of pleasure throughout the body. Paul Bosland, a pepper special-

ist from the University of New Mexico, believes that the endorphins act like a natural, safe morphine, without causing permanent damage to the body, much like the "jogger's-high" runners get from participating in a marathon. Repeated consumption of hot peppers can desensitize the receptors, which explains how some chili pepper lovers create a tolerance for spicy food and can eat increasingly hot foods.

Various factors determine the heat of a pepper. Certain types of chili peppers are known to be hotter than others. As a general rule, small chilies are more pungent than larger ones. This is caused by the relation of the placenta, where the heat is located, to the walls of the pepper. Small peppers have more placenta in relation to the walls of the fruit than large ones. The placenta of a *serrano* chili pepper, for example, makes up a very high percentage of the fruit, causing it to be very pungent. Dry chilies, with thin, transparent walls, like the *costeño* pepper, tend to be hotter than the thick-walled varieties.

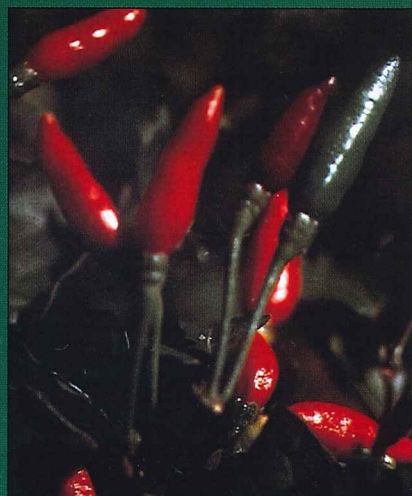
The environment plays an important part in determining the pungency of pep-



Piquín chili pepper.



Serrano chili pepper.



Tabasco chili pepper.

pers. Minerals and salts found in the water and soil are components that influence a pepper's heat. An extreme climate, with periods of intense heat or drought, affects the amount of capsaicin produced in peppers. It has been noted that, under harsh atmospheric conditions, peppers become hotter than those grown under ideal conditions. Chili producers have observed that high nocturnal temperatures produce hotter peppers. Tales of hot pepper seeds transported and planted in another country that suddenly turned into mild peppers are common. The environment may be one factor that plays a role in this. In addition, peppers of the same species can be crossed easily with the help of bees and other insects, which may explain the change in pungency. Bell peppers and hot peppers belong to the same botanical species.

A chili pepper can contain different levels of capsaicin, depending upon its stage of ripening. Capsaicin begins to develop in the fruit during the fourth week after the flowering of the plant and reaches its maximum level just before maturity.

The same pepper plant can produce fruit of different pungency levels. The lo-

The environment plays an important part in determining the pungency of peppers. Minerals and salts found in the water and soil are components that influence a pepper's heat.

cal variation of a pepper on the plant can also affect its heat; the fruit that forms on the lower level of the plant tends to be hotter than those that form at a higher level of the same plant.

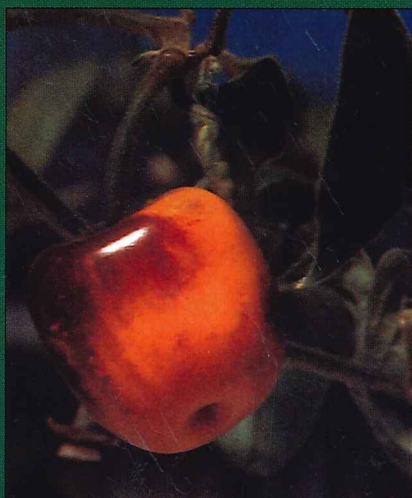
Chili peppers dried in the open air are not as hot as those dried in industrial ovens, where they are exposed to a stream of hot air with a minimum of light.

Canned chilies are hotter than fresh ones due to the volatilization of the capsaicin during the heating process, when this substance is distributed throughout the entire fruit and in the pickling solution in the can.

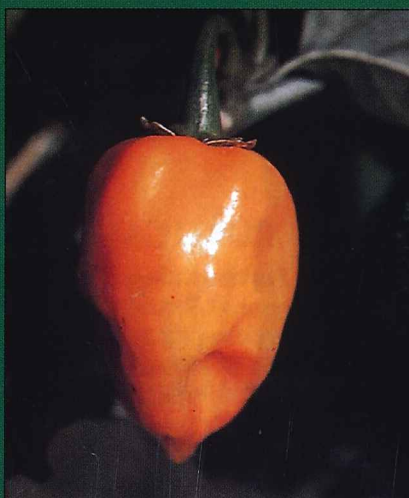
It is not easy to measure the heat in a pepper since capsaicin is generally des-

cribed as being flavorless, colorless and with no distinguishing aroma. Nonetheless, it is such a potent substance that one drop of capsaicin can be detected in a solution of water at a proportion of one to fifteen million.

The original method for measuring the heat of peppers in a laboratory was based on the Scoville Heat Method, developed by a pharmacist of that name in 1912. The Scoville Method is based upon human taste and employs a panel of professional tasters who are not habitual consumers of peppers. Three of the five tasters must agree on an evaluation before assigning a number of Scoville units to the pepper. Using this method, bell peppers receive a value of "0" Scoville units, while *habanero* chilies register between 100,000 and 300,000 Scoville units, making them the hottest chili peppers in the world. The Scoville Method is now being replaced by a more sophisticated laboratory technique called High Pressure Liquid Chromatography which measures the amount of capsaicin in a specific pepper and converts the results into Scoville units. **NM**



Manzano chili pepper.



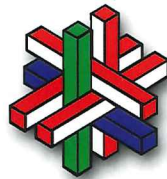
Habanero chili pepper.

NOTES

¹A longer version of this article was published in the March 1988 issue of *Nexus* magazine.

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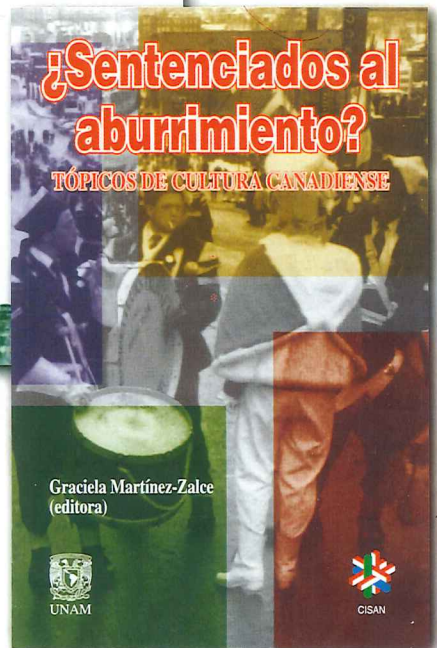
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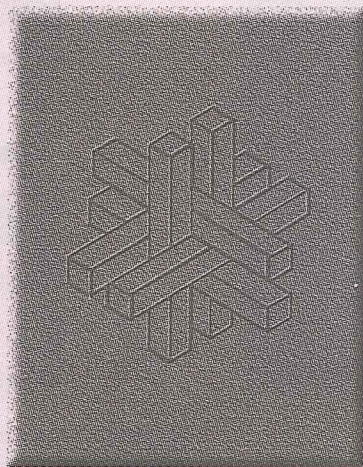
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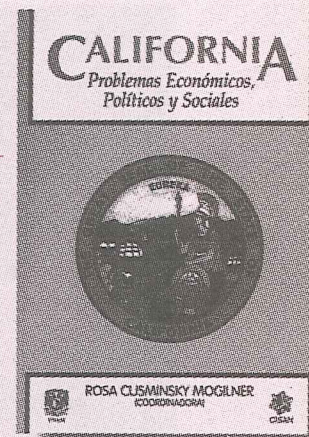




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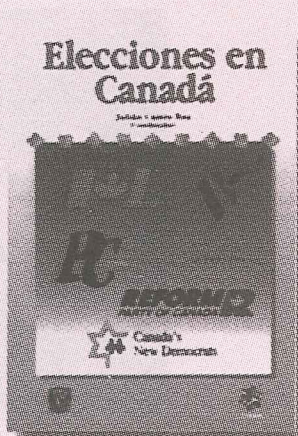
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Rosa Cusminski (coord). 291pp.

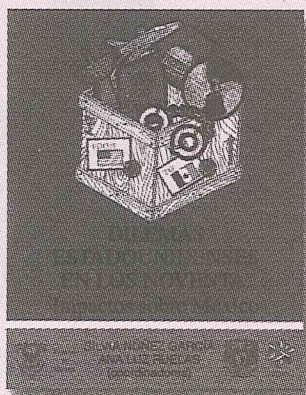
Despite its recent crisis, California is still one of the strongest economies in the world. Moreover, because it is a heterogeneous society, which concentrates immigrants from all over the world, especially Hispanics and the fact that it shares a border with Mexico, makes it of special interest to Mexico. Specialists from Mexico and the United States analyze different aspects of its social, legal, historical, economic, and political life.



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On November 4, 13, Liberal Party leader Jean Chrétien took office as Canada's twentieth prime minister.

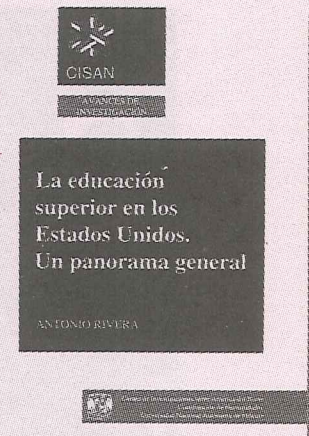
CISAN asked seven academic and journalistic specialists from Canada's key provinces of British Columbia, Ontario and Quebec to analyze the changes expected from the new Liberal government. This publication is on the few works in Spanish on Canadian politics and repercussions for Mexico.



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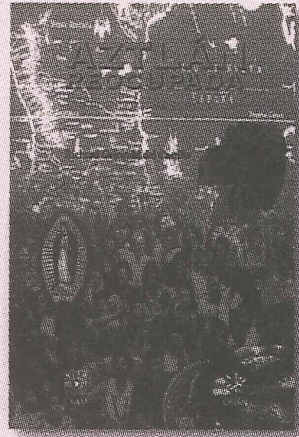
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in Mexico**

Claire Joysmith (ed). 350pp.

"The chicanas...crossed the 3,000-mile border that separates us from the most powerful country in the world with the Virgin of Guadalupe, the Malinche, the Llorona and Coatlicue on their backs, and they gave them new meaning and an identity they hadn't had before." Elena Poniatowska.



**Aztlán Reocupada
A Political and Cultural History
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Mexico on Mexican American
Society in Post War America.**

Richard Griswold. (bilingual edition). 106pp.

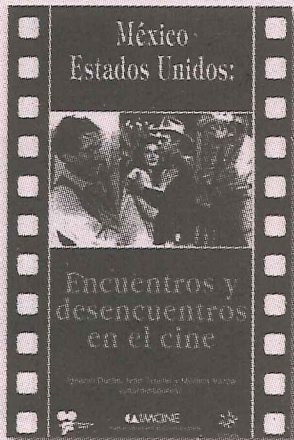
Historic overview of Chicano society from 1945 to the nineties. A retrospective analysis of political, economic, social and cultural elements that have determined Chicano cultural heritage and its present situation.



**Me voy pa' Pensilvaia
por no andar en la vagancia.
Los ferrocarrileros mexicanos
en Estados Unidos durante la
Segunda Guerra Mundial**

Bárbara Driscoll. 278pp.

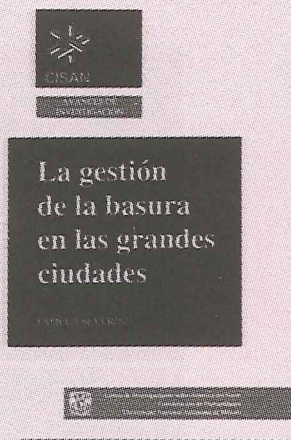
A look at the little known story of nonagricultural Mexican migrant workers in the United States under the Railroad Bracero Program instituted during the Second World War by both the Mexican and U.S. governments.



**México - Estados Unidos:
Encuentros y desencuentros
en el cine**

Ignacio Durán, Iván Trujillo y
Mónica Vereá (coords.). 196pp.

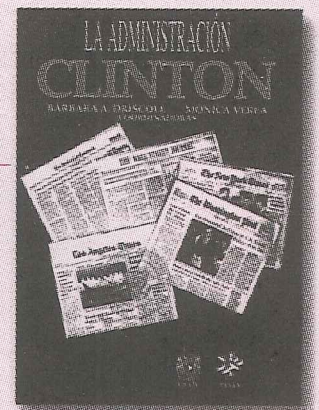
Twelve Mexican and American specialists on art and cinema look into sociocultural problems such as migration, racism and Chicano issues throughout history, from the perspective of American and Mexican films. They analyze the influence of distorted images on both sides and how these stereotypes effect mutual conceptions and misconceptions.



**La gestión
de la basura
en las grandes
ciudades**

**La gestión de la basura
en las grandes ciudades**
Pamela Severini. Avances de
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Bárbara Driscoll, Mónica Vereá
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An analysis of the beginnings of the Clinton administration. A basic sourcebook to explain the transition to a Democratic Administration and to evaluate current political events.

Cultural Policies for Times of Globalization

A Balance Sheet of the U.S.-Mexico Fund for Culture

*Nestor García Canclini**

One of the main changes today in the production and circulation of cultural goods is the growing role of international networks. Much of the news and entertainment we see daily comes from abroad and, sometimes, from entertainment and informational systems with no specific location. Most of Hollywood's profits do not come from movie theaters and television in the United States. In Europe, films are frequently co-produced by three or four countries. Until recently, legislation in several European and Latin American countries required that 50 percent of the time in movie houses and half the music played on radio stations be produced domestically; today, it is generally accepted that these measures taken to protect local culture are obsolete given current production conditions and audience tastes.

Will national cultures disappear? Many studies about this question contend that, even in processes like that of the European Union, which go beyond free trade to continental integration,

national traditions are strong and will continue to exist. What is happening, rather, is that national cultures are being resituated in much more fluid relations with other countries than in the past thanks to the effects of advanced technology, migration and massive tourism, which make more intense and continuous communication among them possible.

THE LAG IN CULTURAL POLICIES

Cultural policy, however, is still understood as the responsibility of nation states. Very few cultural programs have been created to accompany free trade and regional integration agreements, even in international institutions. That is why it is important to evaluate one of the most ambitious efforts of this kind, the U.S.-Mexico Fund for Culture.

In 1991, the United States' Rockefeller Foundation and Mexico's National Fund for Culture and the Arts, a public institution, and Bancomer Cultural Foundation, founded by a bank, created a binational body to "enrich the cultural exchange" between the two countries. While the United States already has its

National Endowment for the Arts and Mexico its National Council for Culture and the Arts, these two bodies each concentrate mainly on their respective domestic activities. But, throughout the twentieth century, both physical proximity and reciprocal interests have spurred Mexican and U.S. writers, painters and sculptors, film makers and scientists to exchange activities and reside for different lengths of time in each others' countries. Then, the expansion of radio and television and, more recently, electronic communications has continued to stimulate intense exchange.

This interaction has been uneven in accordance with the unequal economic and sociocultural development of the two countries. The asymmetry is particularly manifest in other kinds of contacts arising from the constant massive migration from Mexico to the United States, which has led to well known conflicts in the differences and difficulties of interaction between the two societies. The importance of these encounters and clashes has accentuated in the last 15 years since Mexico's economic opening and globalization tendencies made the exchange between both countries greater and greater.

* Professor and researcher at the Autonomous Metropolitan University.



Photos by Eric Shimm

From left: Robert Stearns, curator; artists Carlos Aguirre and Gerardo Suter, and Agustín Arteaga, INBA, at the opening of *México ahora: punto de partida* / *Mexico Now: Point of Departure*.

The fund's support to publications, cultural studies, different arts and media experiences, as well as libraries and interdisciplinary work, is boosting mutual awareness in the two countries in very different areas.

Despite the free trade agreement among Mexico, the United States and Canada having been conceived of only as an economic instrument and not a tool to regulate social or cultural relations, it has favored reciprocal interest and communications between the two nations through educational and scientific agreements and cultural exchanges. The fund has sought to foster this process by providing yearly financial support to binational projects involving libraries, publications, music, dance, museums, visual arts, media art, theater, cultural studies and interdisciplinary work. Of the 2,605 requests for funding received between 1992 and 1997, 349 were granted, thus

showing the impact this initiative has had in two countries which, despite the intensity of their interaction, had no tradition of carrying out joint programs, partly because of the lack of cultural institutions to sponsor them.

The difficulties that many applicant artists and institutions confront in conceiving binational programs, overcoming stereotypes about the other society and relating artistic and cultural endeavors to each country's different traditions as well as those of their different regions become exceedingly clear when you follow the grant requests and the criteria the fund uses to award its financing. Grantee artists and institutions inter-

viewed as part of an evaluative study I did with George Yúdice in 1996 agreed that these experiences of "interactive collaboration" and the construction of a collective artistic imagination vis-à-vis a day-to-day relationship with their counterparts were useful. They also requested that the fund, besides giving financial support, organize workshops, symposia and other activities to foster more awareness of the culture of each country in the public spheres of the other, to contribute to intercultural understanding differences and to stimulate "community and ethnically rooted art," multicultural reflection and experimentation that the market or conventional institutions leave aside.

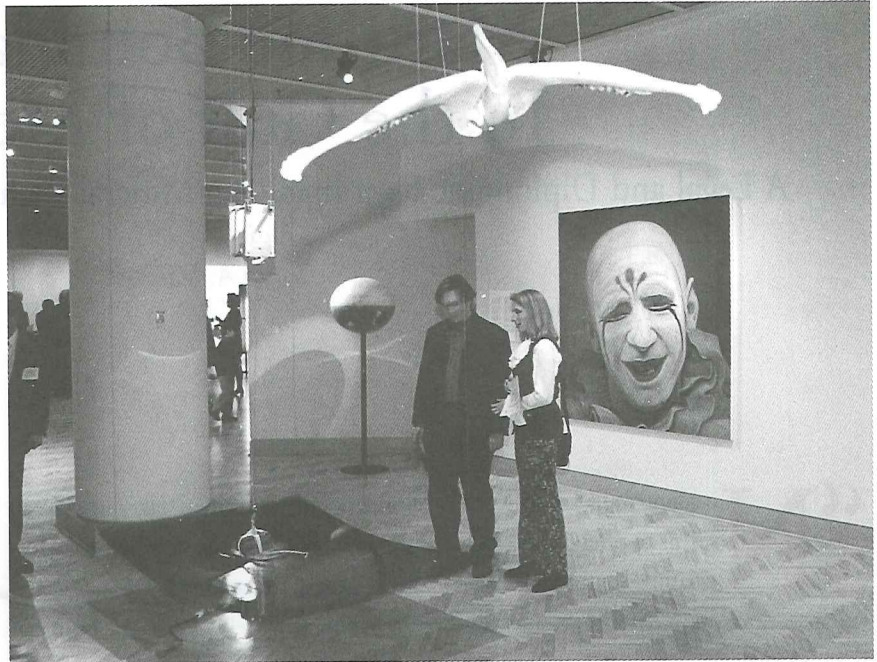
It was also interesting to observe that these encounters, in addition to producing shared experiences between different cultures, also lead to working on the differences in the concept of diversity itself. While the character of U.S. civil society was formed in relation to the rights of the individual beginning in the Civil Rights Era, democratization is understood as the access that different groups have to culture, which is conditioned by the characteristics that make them a group (race, ethnicity, gender, etc.). "Diversity" is also an important criteria in the administration of social goods in Mexico, but it is understood differently. It usually alludes to differences of class, regional origin and ethnic group, the latter with reference to indigenous communities in Mexico (in contrast to the multiplicity of ethno-racial definitions in the United States).

Another significant point came up with regard to the value that each society places on the art of the other. While Mexicans—and Latin Americans in gener-

al— see the United States as the home of the most advanced artistic and scientific trends, much of the U.S. public and many of its institutions tend to value Mexico's past, but resist considering contemporary Mexican art competitive in today's world. Folk culture is seen as what is most representative of Mexico. Several artists interviewed made the critical observation that the exhibition "Thirty Centuries of Splendor," Mexico's most important international exhibition this decade, presented in New York, San Antonio and Los Angeles, only included items up to the 1950s. One officer in charge of international relations at the National Council for Culture and the Arts said that in the United States, as elsewhere, "the tried and true pieces are pre-Hispanic art, Frida, Diego, Orozco and Siqueiros." Programs like the fund's can change this limitation of Mexico to its past, giving visibility to more recent cultural studies and creativity. Overcoming prejudices and nurturing deeper knowledge between different national communities is a cardinal task.

OVERCOMING THE CLASHES

The fund's support to publications (the area which receives the most financing), cultural studies, different arts and media experiences, as well as libraries and interdisciplinary work, is boosting mutual awareness between the two countries in very different areas. The regional distribution of grantee projects, both in the United States and Mexico, sheds a revealing light on the places in each society most inclined to interchange, as well as the asymmetries within each country.



Opening of *México ahora: punto de Partida/Mexico Now: Point of Departure*, at the Riffe Gallery in January 1997.

In the United States, the projects approved are concentrated in New York (39), California (40) and Texas (25), the areas with the highest proportion of Spanish-speaking inhabitants. Some other regions which have large Latino populations, like Chicago, are not very prominently represented.

South of the border, Mexico City's Federal District predominates overwhelmingly (130), followed by Jalisco (8), Chiapas and Morelos (6 each) and Veracruz (4), with the remaining 18 grants scattered over many regions. This enormous disparity between Mexico City and the rest of the country has to do with the high concentration of both the population and artistic and cultural facilities in the nation's capital. However, the proportion of applications and grants worsen the inequality already reflected in Mexico's demographics and cultural resources. In the last few years, better dissemination to more institutions and through the In-

ternet of the fund's public call for grant applications is bettering the situation.

Of course, an exchange program which is only six years old cannot produce substantial changes in trends in the development of society and culture that have been structured over periods of many decades.

What is already significant is that binational efforts are being promoted and the cooperation between groups of artists and cultural and art scholars in both countries fostered. Undoubtedly, continuity in this vein will make it possible for the two countries to gradually transcend the limitations of cultural policies centered within the confines of their national borders. Both societies will be able to live together and understand each other better to the extent that they are familiar with each others' traditional and modern art, and comprehend how it is produced amidst the new risks and opportunities for international interaction. **MM**

Maritime Boundaries In the Gulf of Mexico

A Legal and Diplomatic Saga Involving Mineral Riches and Undefined “Gaps”

*Jorge A. Vargas**

“No country in Latin America seems to offer a more fascinating, complex and varied history of its territorial boundaries than Mexico.”

This statement written by César Sepúlveda,¹ my international law professor at the National Autonomous University of Mexico, seems to take on special significance today. Although Mexico’s concerns with the demarcation of its national borders have traditionally centered on its land boundaries, in recent years attention has been directed at its vast and rich marine spaces.

Occupying the first place in Latin America because of its 7,205 miles of coastline along the Pacific Ocean, the Gulf of California, the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean, and endowed with a total of 3,067 islands, cays, rocks and reefs, Mexico may be finally focusing on the oceans.

According to a technical study produced in 1981 by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), Mexico’s most fabulous marine wealth lies in the deepest submarine region of the Gulf of Mexico. That area, designated in the study as the “mar-

itime boundary region,” takes up 58,940 square miles, and its mineral resources have been estimated at between 2.2 and 21.9 billion barrels of oil and from 5.4 trillion to 44.4 trillion cubic feet of gas.² Ostensibly, then, this is the fourth largest oil and gas deposit in the world.

This Mexico-U.S. binational issue becomes more intriguing when you discover that a number of fascinating questions are directly associated with it: for example, the waters in that part of the gulf plunge to the tremendous depth of 10,000 feet. This clearly poses an extraordinary challenge for the drilling and extraction of oil and gas. The bilateral Maritime Delimitation Treaty (May 4, 1978) that should have established the maritime boundary in the Gulf of Mexico where those gigantic mineral resources lie did not establish any boundary in the submarine area in question. Amazingly, where the oil and gas riches are located, the treaty simply left two undefined, mysterious gaps! Furthermore, although signed in 1978 and approved by the Mexican Senate in early 1979, 20 years went by before the U.S. Senate ratified it October 23, 1997. It finally entered into effect in November 1997 during the official visit of President Zedillo to Wash-

ington, D.C., when the instruments of ratification were exchanged.

A LONG AND COMPLICATED MARINE STORY

From the standpoint of the law of the sea, Mexico first attracted global attention in 1976 when it became one of the world’s very first nations to establish a 200-nautical-mile Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).³ The establishment of the zone predated the conclusion of UNCLOS III and the signing of the 1982 United Nations Convention of the Law of the Sea (U.N. LOS Convention).⁴ Twenty years later, Mexico and the incalculable mineral resources located in the deepest part of the Gulf of Mexico attracted international attention again.

This time, U.S. sources reported in early 1996 that four major U.S. oil corporations (Shell, Amoco, Texaco and Mobil Oil) had drilled a prospective commercial well at a depth of 7,625 in the Gulf of Mexico in the submarine region of the “Alaminos Canyon,” located 200 miles southeast of Corpus Christi, Texas.⁵ Almost immediately, the issue became a question of the highest diplomatic priori-

* Professor of law at the University of San Diego School of Law.

ty between Mexico and the United States for two reasons: first, the deep submarine area where the drilling—known as the “Baha Project”—was taking place is among the world’s few “supergiant” oil and gas deposits. Second, the submarine region of the “Alaminos Canyon,” although situated on the U.S. side of the Gulf of Mexico, is actually located only a few miles away from the Mexican side of the Gulf.

As soon as these reports reached Mexico, the Mexican Senate and Tlatelolco⁶ raised voices of concern, especially when it became clear Mexico did not have a definite and final maritime boundary with the United States in this most important region of the Gulf.

MEXICO’S DELIMITATION OF ITS EXCLUSIVE ECONOMIC ZONE

Mexico’s establishment and demarcation of the outer boundaries of its EEZ⁷ required it to negotiate maritime boundaries (see Map 1). Cuba, the United States and other neighboring countries were affected by the delineation of this ocean area. Thus, within a few months, Mexico reached an agreement with Cuba to delimit its EEZ in 1976.⁸

Armed with this diplomatic experience, Mexico then proceeded to negotiate the corresponding boundary with the United States, which at that time had established a 200-nautical-mile Fishery Conservation and Management Zone.⁹ Applying the “principle of equidistance” and utilizing the newly coined definition of “island” included in the 1982 U.N. LOS Convention, Mexico and the United States agreed to a “provisional,” rather than a definite, maritime boundary in

the Pacific Ocean and the Gulf of Mexico in late 1976.¹⁰ More than the “legal question” of its provisional character, the 1976 agreement had a more serious, “technical problem”: it established an incomplete maritime boundary in the Gulf of Mexico.

THE INCOMPLETE BOUNDARY IN THE GULF OF MEXICO

The major objective of the Mexico-U.S. agreement was to establish a mutually agreed-upon, precise and complete maritime boundary between the 12 and the 200 nautical mile-limits in the Pacific Ocean and in the Gulf of Mexico. Regarding the first 12 nautical miles, it should be recalled that on November 23, 1970, the two countries had already signed a treaty “for the creation of maritime boundaries between the claimed 12-n.m. Mexican territorial sea and the territorial sea and contiguous zone of the United States.”¹¹

More than the
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provisional character,
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in the Gulf of Mexico.

The establishment of the boundary in the Pacific Ocean basically involved the demarcation of a lateral, maritime line, in the area of Tijuana and San Diego, where the land boundary commences pursuant to Article V of the 1848 Guadalupe Hidalgo Treaty. Although the presence of islands on each side of the land boundary—Santa Cruz, San Nicolás and San Clemente on the U.S. side, and Guadalupe on the Mexican side—complicated the definition of the binational maritime line, the resulting boundary was technically perfect, precise and complete. Unfortunately, this was not the case in the Gulf of Mexico.

In principle, the boundary in the gulf should have been established as a continuous line across the entire basin: this line would have started from the Rio Grande, where the land boundary exists today, in the Tamaulipas-Texas area (at the western side of the basin), then go across the gulf and end in the area between Yucatán and Florida on the eastern side. In theory, this line may be envisioned as the simplest maritime boundary. However, the geographical configuration of the basin, as well as certain aspects of the law of the sea and technological considerations, did not allow for this elegant simplicity.

TWO “GAPS” IN THE GULF OF MEXICO BOUNDARY

If you draw two 200 n.m. zones on the waters of the Gulf of Mexico, one Mexican and the other belonging to the U.S., you discover that because of the basin’s shape, there is a resulting area placed beyond the outer boundary of both. Since this area technically resembles a triangle,

it has been called “the submarine triangle” or the “Western Gap.”

The “gap” —referred to in Mexico as the “Doughnut Hole”— is the interruption of the binational line demarcating the maritime boundary in the area. Rather than establishing a continuous binational boundary, the 1978 treaty only established two short boundary segments,¹² with two “gaps” between them. This incomplete binational line may be aptly described as a strangely discontinued maritime boundary.

This gap applies not only to the waters in the Gulf of Mexico (which are part of the high seas) but also to the basin’s seabed and ocean floor (including the subsoil). The area of this triangle covers approximately 25,000 square miles. According to the U.S., this “Western Gap” consists of “a 4.5 million acre unexplored area which was left undivided in the [1978] Treaty.”¹³

While the Mexico-U.S. bilateral negotiations were taking place, UNCLOS III had categorized this submarine area, located beyond the 200 n.m. of national jurisdiction, as the “common heritage of humankind,” an area whose resources were to be utilized to benefit the entire world’s population, in particular that of developing countries, administered by an International Seabed Authority. No country was supposed to own or be able to appropriate these resources unilaterally because they belong to humankind. The 1982 Convention on the Law of the Sea included this submarine area in Part XI, naming it “The International Area.” Mexico supported this legal position. For Mexico, therefore, the submarine area beyond the 200 n.m. outer boundary in the Gulf of Mexico was a part of the International Area, subject to the control of the International Seabed

Authority, created by the 1982 LOS Convention.

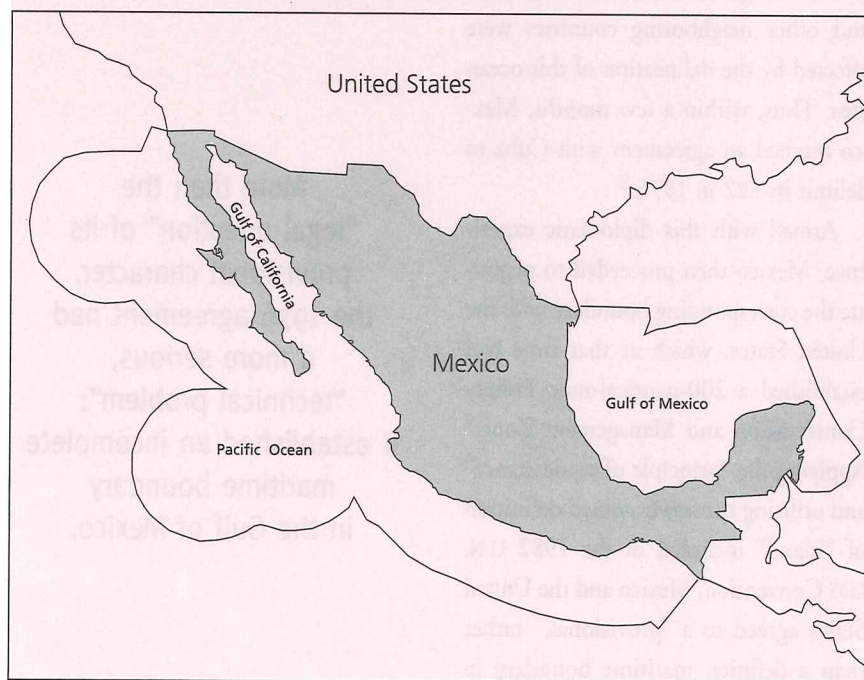
The United States took a diametrically opposed position. According to the U.S., the International Area should be subject to the principles governing the high seas: there should be freedom of navigation, of fishing, of laying submarine cables and of scientific research. Therefore, according to the U.S., any resources located in the International Area (i.e., the “submarine triangle” or the “gaps”) would be legally owned by the individual or corporation with the technology to appropriate them, whether those resources were fish, oil, gas or polymetallic nodules. Thus, extracting oil and natural gas from any submarine area located beyond the outer boundary of the 200 n.m. would be legally equivalent, say, to catching fish on the high seas.

Today, this two-segment boundary consists of two unequal binational lines,

separated by two empty spaces, or “gaps”: the first, located at the approximate latitude of the Rio Grande (Brownsville, Texas, and Matamoros, Tamaulipas), north of Laguna de Términos in Campeche and south of Morgan City, Louisiana, is 129 nautical miles long. The second gap is of undetermined length and lies on the median line between Yucatán and Florida. According to more recent technical surveys, the “Western Gap,” closer to Texas, is the area with the best prospects for the commercial exploitation of oil (See Map 2).

If you apply the U.S. position to the Gulf of Mexico, it becomes clear that the four major U.S. oil corporations involved in the drilling of the “Baha Project” would encounter no legal obstacles to drilling in the submarine triangle beyond the 200-n.m. limit and, more importantly, commercially exploiting any mineral resources located there simply because the

Map 1
Mexico’s Exclusive Economic Zone established in 1976



mineral riches of the “Western Gap” lie beyond that limit. Furthermore, from a legal standpoint, it simply does not matter whether there is no maritime boundary in that submarine region. Accordingly, the only limitation to the unilateral actions of these U.S. corporations was, and continues to be, the constraints imposed by deep-sea drilling technology.

As a consequence of these legal and technical considerations, the provisional boundary established by Mexico and the United States in the Gulf of Mexico by means of the Exchange of Notes of November 24, 1976, was bound to be incomplete.

Interestingly, no one in Mexico was curious enough to inquire about the reasons for the establishment of this incomplete and unorthodox maritime limit, prior to the launching of the “Baha Project” by the four U.S. oil companies.

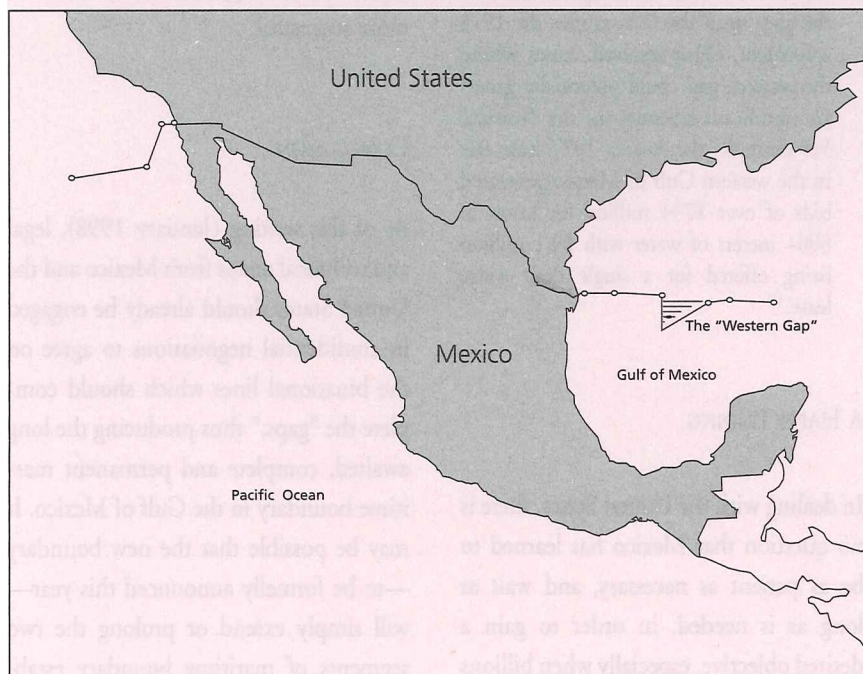
FROM AN EXCHANGE OF NOTES IN 1976 TO A FORMAL TREATY IN 1978

Soon after the Exchange of Notes of 1976, Mexico may have become increasingly concerned about the fact that this agreement had established only a “provisional and incomplete boundary” in a submarine area rich in mineral resources in the deepest region of the Gulf of Mexico. Although no oil company at the time had the technology to drill for oil and gas at such depths, marine technology was encroaching into deeper areas every year; it was anticipated, however, that Gulf of Mexico resources were going to be up for grabs around the year 2000. From another angle, Mexico may have also questioned the degree of “legal protection” that the Exchange of Notes was giving it, vis-à-vis an eventual intrusion of U.S. oil companies to unilaterally tap those mineral riches.

In this context, Mexico went ahead with the official decision of substituting the 1976 Exchange of Notes for a more solemn and formal “treaty.” Accordingly, during the visit of U.S. Secretary of State Cyrus Vance to Mexico City, he signed the Maritime Delimitation Treaty between both countries on May 4, 1978, in Tlatelolco. As expected, the Mexican Senate approved the treaty after a brief, cursory debate. Substantively, the treaty merely reproduced the maritime boundary drawn in the 1976 agreements. Unfortunately, it also included the “gaps.”

To Mexico’s surprise, the U.S. Senate did not give its consent to the Maritime Delimitation Treaty, even though the Gulf of Mexico boundary was originally drafted and proposed to Tlatelolco by the United States. Under tremendous pressure from the oil industry, in 1980 the U.S. Senate indefinitely postponed consideration of the treaty when questions arose regarding the presence of rich hydrocarbon and natural gas deposits in the deepest region of the Gulf of Mexico.¹⁴ The Senate commissioned the U.S. Geological Survey to conduct a study to scientifically ascertain whether that submarine area contained any mineral resources. As indicated earlier, the USGS confirmed the existence of vast mineral deposits.

Map 2
Boundary established by the 1978 Maritime Delimitation Treaty that went into effect in November 1997



LATEST LEGAL, POLITICAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENTS

On October 23, 1997, after a disquieting impasse of 19 years, the U.S. Senate finally approved the Mexican Maritime Delimitation Treaty of 1978.¹⁵

During the discussion of the treaty by the Foreign Relations Committee, Sen.

Frank Murkowski, Chairman of the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, stated that pursuant to the Deep Water Royalty Relief Act, which governs the exploitation in the U.S. Outer Continental Shelf,

...four lease sales in the deep water of the Gulf [of Mexico] have brought \$2.3 billion to the U.S. Treasury. The last two lease sales alone have fetched more than \$1.2 billion in cash bonus bids. As a result, oil and gas production in the Gulf is expected to double, new jobs will be created, and substantial economic benefits will be realized....Settling a permanent international maritime boundary in the Gulf of Mexico will enable the U.S. and Mexico to delimit an area in the Western Gulf commonly referred to as the "Doughnut hole." This area...believed to contain significant oil and gas resources, lies outside of each country's waters. We are hopeful that the resolution of the permanent boundary will facilitate agreement over division of that area of such a great promise.¹⁶

At the same hearing, Mary Beth West, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Oceans and Space, U.S. Department of State, who strongly supported the treaty, said:

Mr. Chairman: You may ask why we hope the Treaty will be acted upon now, after almost 20 years. In the early 1980's our offshore and gas industry focused on areas relatively near the shore. This situation has changed significantly in recent years. *Not only are the oil and gas companies interested in leasing blocks adjacent to the 1978 boundary, but interest extends to the area beyond 200 miles in the western Gulf of Mexico—in the "gap."* Thus, now is a time when, for commercial reasons, *industry needs the certainty provided by a boundary agreement*, and we understand that the U.S. oil and gas industry supports ratification.¹⁷

Finally, the American Petroleum Institute, in a written statement endorsed

by five major petroleum industry bodies,¹⁸ declared that "the oil and gas industry fully supports ratification of the Treaty" based on the following reasons: 1) The 1978 treaty is consistent with principles of international law; 2) It uses "islands" off the U.S. coasts to the benefit of the United States; 3) It also benefits the U.S. economic and energy interests, emphasizing that "Today, industry has the technology to explore for oil and gas in water depths up to 10,000 feet and to produce hydrocarbons in over 5,000 feet of water." Regarding the diplomatic negotiations to complete the maritime boundary between both countries, thus eliminating the "gaps," the institute wrote:

Senate ratification of the Treaty will clear the path for further negotiations...on the western gap, a 4.5 million acre unexplored area more than 200 miles from either country's border which was left undivided in the initial Treaty. The Mexican government has indicated informally to the U.S. Department of State that it will not entertain negotiations over the gaps until the U.S. ratifies the 1978 agreement. Once resolved, leases within the western gap could potentially generate significant revenues for the Treasury. For example, the August 1997 lease sale in the western Gulf of Mexico generated bids of over \$734 million for leases in 800+ meters of water with \$9.1 million being offered for a single deep water lease.¹⁹

A HAPPY ENDING

In dealing with the United States, there is no question that Mexico has learned to be as patient as necessary, and wait as long as is needed, in order to gain a desired objective, especially when billions

of dollars are at stake. Since 1980, when the U.S. Senate refused to ratify the 1978 Delimitation Treaty, Mexico decided that the best policy in this case was simply to wait and see.

Tlatelolco knew that when the advances in drilling technology were inching closer to commercially exploiting the oil and gas in the deep waters of the Gulf of Mexico, the powerful U.S. oil industry—which in fact was responsible for stopping the ratification of the treaty in 1980—was now going to be the unstoppable lobby pressuring the U.S. Senate to ratify the treaty and, in particular, to fill out its "gaps," that is to say, to have a complete and mutually agreed-upon maritime boundary in the area. It is obvious that the U.S. oil industry, with existing marine technology, is not going to invest billions of dollars to drill for oil in a submarine area in the Gulf of Mexico—the Western Gap—which remains loaded with legal uncertainties clouding the boundary issue. Mexico's diplomatic strategy could not have been more successful.

CONCLUSION

As of this writing (January 1998), legal and technical teams from Mexico and the United States should already be engaged in confidential negotiations to agree on the binational lines which should complete the "gaps," thus producing the long awaited, complete and permanent maritime boundary in the Gulf of Mexico. It may be possible that the new boundary—to be formally announced this year—will simply extend or prolong the two segments of maritime boundary estab-

lished by the 1978 treaty, thus filling in the current "gaps."

The legal and technical solution to this impasse could have not been accomplished if Mexico had continued to support the position that the submarine triangle (now known as the "gaps" or the "doughnut holes") was part of the International Area. Evidently, practical reasons prevailed and Mexico abandoned that view and quietly moved to embrace the position advanced by the United States.

"No hay mal que por bien no venga," is a well-known Mexican adage. It means that when something bad happens, something good is likely to come out of it. It is true that Mexico patiently waited for almost 20 years to see the U.S. Senate complete the constitutional ratification process of a treaty technically perfect and signed in good faith by both countries in 1978, a legal and diplomatic impasse that Mexico considered unfair, unnecessary and unfriendly.

However, as a result of this old 1978 treaty recently coming into force and the imminent completion of the maritime boundaries in the Gulf, Mexico will soon enjoy the rewards of its patience: first, 1998 will be the year not only marking the 150th anniversary of the Guadalupe Hidalgo Treaty of 1848 but the completion of all boundaries between both countries. And second, the bountiful Gulf of Mexico will become an ocean basin divided between Mexico and the United States.²⁰ **MM**

NOTES

¹César Sepúlveda, *La Frontera Norte de México* (Mexico City: Editorial Porrúa, 1976), p. 9.

²Richard B. Powers, ed., *Geological Framework, Petroleum Potential...and Deep-Water Drilling Technology of the Maritime Boundary Region in the Gulf of Mexico*, U.S. Department of the Interior, Geological Survey, Open File Report 81-265 (Washington, D.C.: n/p, 1981).

³Mexico established this vast maritime area, the world's 17th largest, by adding a new eighth paragraph to Article 27 of its 1917 Constitution. See *Diario Oficial*, February 6, 1976.

⁴U.N. CONF 62/122, 21 I.L.M. (1982). Agreed at Montego Bay, Jamaica, December 10, 1982, it went into effect November 16, 1994. Mexico is a signer, but as of this writing, the United States has not ratified the convention.

⁵See Jorge A. Vargas, "Oil and Natural Gas. A Legal Dispute Brewing in the Gulf of Mexico," *Voices of Mexico* 36 (July-September 1996), p. 76 (Part 1) and no. 37 (October-December 1996), p. 65 (Part 2).

⁶Mexico's Foreign Affairs Ministry (SRE) is located on Tlatelolco Plaza and therefore is referred to as "Tlatelolco." [Editor's Note.]

⁷Mexico's establishment of the EEZ's outer boundaries was done by means of a presidential decree published in the *Diario Oficial* June 7, 1976, that went into effect July 31, 1976. See Jorge A. Vargas. *La Zona*

Económica Exclusiva de México (Mexico City: Ed. V Siglos, 1980), p. 65.

⁸See Exchange of Notes to Delimit the EEZ Between Mexico and Cuba (July 26, 1976).

⁹See Fishery Conservation and Management Act, Pub. L. No. 94-265, 16 U.S.C. §1801 (1976) (reprinted in 15 I.L.M. 634).

¹⁰See Exchange of Notes Effecting Agreement on the Provisional Maritime Boundary, November 24, 1976, U.S.-Mexico, 29 U.S.T. 197, T.I.A.S. 8805.

¹¹Treaty to Resolve Pending Boundary Differences and Maintain the Rio Grande and the Colorado River as the International Boundary Between the United States and Mexico, signed in Mexico City November 23, 1970. Published in the *Diario Oficial*, July 12, 1972. 29 UST 196; TIAS 8625.

¹²These two boundary segments were established by means of a series of "straight baselines" which united imaginary points whose precise situation was given based on its coordinates of latitude and longitude, in conformity with and according to the 1927 Datum of North America. See Article I of the *1978 Maritime Delimitation Treaty*, I.L.M., Documents (1978) at 1073-1075.

¹³"New Press (sic) on in U.S. to Ratify Gulf Treaty with Mexico," *Platt's Oilgram News*, vol. 75, no. 187 (September 26, 1997), p. 3.

¹⁴*Three Treaties Establishing Maritime Boundaries between the United States and Mexico, Venezuela and Cuba*, Hearings on S. Exec. Rep. No. 96-49 before the Committee of Foreign Relations, 96th Cong., 2d Sess., pp. 28-33.

¹⁵See 143 Congressional Record—Senate 11165. 105th Congress, 1st Session, October 23, 1997.

¹⁶Statement of Frank H. Murkowski on the U.S.-Mexico Maritime Boundary Treaty before the Committee on Foreign Relations. Federal Document Clearing House Congressional Testimony (September 25, 1997).

¹⁷Testimony of Mary Beth West, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Oceans and Space, U.S. Department of State. *Idem* (Emphasis by the author).

¹⁸The Domestic Petroleum Council, the Independent Petroleum Association of America, the International Association of Drilling Contractors, the Mid-Continent Oil and Gas Association and the National Ocean Industries Association. These six trade associations, including the American Petroleum Institute, represent virtually the entire oil and gas exploration and production and service industry in the Gulf of Mexico.

¹⁹Testimony of the American Petroleum Institute. *Idem*.

²⁰Jorge A. Vargas, "The Gulf of Mexico: A Binational Lake Shared by the United States and Mexico," *The Transnational Lawyer* vol. 9, no. 2 (fall 1996), pp. 459-482.

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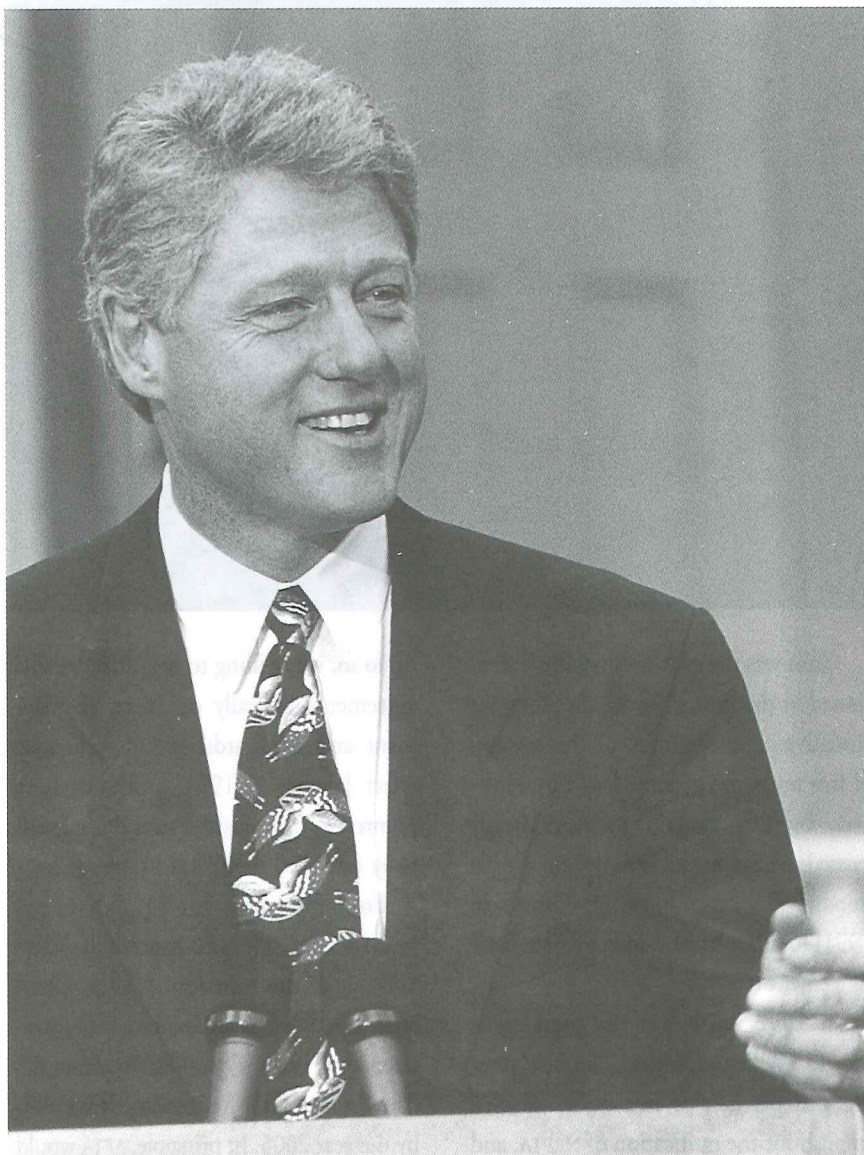
U.S. Trade Policy

At the Second Summit of the Americas

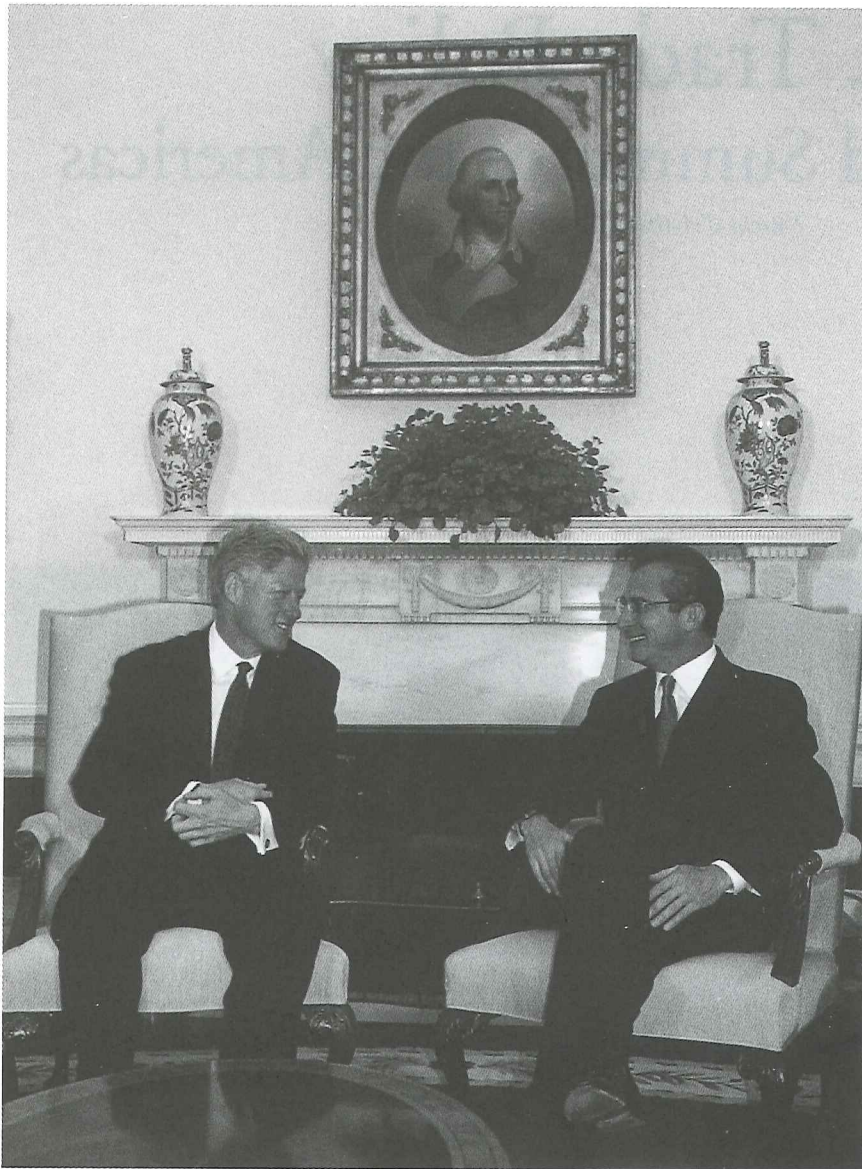
*María Cristina Rosas**

The Second Summit of the Americas will be held April 18 and 19 in Santiago, Chile. Thirty-four heads of state or chief executives from the Western Hemisphere will meet with the aim of hastening the creation of a free trade area from Alaska to Tierra del Fuego, ostensibly to begin operating in the year 2005. The negotiations process began in 1990 when then-President George Bush proposed the Enterprise for the Americas Initiative, as Latin America was emerging from the so-called “lost decade” of the 1980s. Bush’s proposal included three basic items: debt reduction, investment and free trade. It should be pointed out that the fundamental aim of the proposal was to reactivate Latin American economies in the framework of the stagnation of the Uruguay Round of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). Faced with that, Washington opted for regionalization, as could already be seen in the 1985 Accord for the Establishment of a Free Trade Area between the United States and Israel.

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Chile was the only country Bush mentioned in the Enterprise for the Americas Initiative as an example of the benefits of free trade and structural reform. However, by that time, consensus already existed around the need to begin negotiations with Mexico (joined by Canada in 1991) to sign a North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).

In 1992, Bush lost the presidential race to William Clinton. The new president, a partisan of free trade, decided to push for the ratification of NAFTA, and

to do so, was willing to negotiate parallel agreements basically on labor, environment and safeguards. NAFTA went into effect January 1, 1994, and everything pointed to these instruments being gradually extended to the rest of the region.

From December 9 to 11 of that same year, Miami, Florida, hosted the First Summit of the Americas. Chile's adherence to NAFTA was announced at the conference, as was the proposal to create the Area for Free Trade for the Americas (AFTA) by the year 2005. In principle, AFTA would

include practically all the economies of the hemisphere (34 countries in all), with the notable absence of Cuba.

In June 1995, in the framework of the First AFTA Ministerial Meeting in Denver, seven working groups were set up to deal with market access; customs procedures and rules of origin; investment; norms and technical barriers to trade; sanitary and phytosanitary measures; subsidies, anti-dumping and compensatory rights; and smaller economies.

In March 1996, AFTA's Second Ministerial Meeting was held in Cartagena de Indias, Colombia. At that meeting, four new working groups were set up (government acquisitions; intellectual property rights; services; and competition policies). The meeting also named coordinators for each working group: El Salvador heads market access; Bolivia, customs procedures and rules of origin; Costa Rica, investment; Canada, norms and technical barriers to trade; Mexico, sanitary and phytosanitary measures; Argentina, subsidies, anti-dumping and compensatory rights; Jamaica, smaller economies; the United States, government acquisitions; Honduras, intellectual property rights; Chile, services; and Peru, competition policies.

However, at the Cartagena de Indias meeting, open differences between Brazil and the United States emerged on hemisphere-wide free trade. For that reason, the Third Ministerial Meeting was slated for Belo Horizonte. So, in May 1997, Brazil hosted a tense debate in which Washington's opposition to the Southern Cone Common Market (Mercosur), based on its opinion that its objectives are incompatible with AFTA, became very clear. This made Belo Horizonte the scene of the near collapse of the U.S. hemispheric model,

Major Trade Agreements in Effect in the Americas



Cardoso went so far as to suggest that his country was not interested in participating in the design of AFTA since the Mercosur had a different dynamic and other objectives. Naturally, the Clinton administration, which, through its spokesperson Secretary of State Madeleine Albright had stated that free trade in the Western Hemisphere is of central importance to Washington and an essential part of its government policy, was not pleased by Cardoso's criticisms. Since Brazil is the hemisphere's third economy in size, surpassed only by the United States and Canada, its participation in AFTA is considered a necessity. Therefore, at the end of 1997, when President Clinton made his first visit to South America since taking office, he visited Venezuela, Argentina and, naturally, Brazil.

Although, of course, the Summit of the Americas' main agenda does consist of taking the necessary steps to establish a vast free trade zone in the Western Hemisphere, it is not only part of a plan to liberalize trade. It also has other aims, such as inter-American cooperation in the following spheres: strengthening democracy; human rights; social welfare; cultural values; the fight against corruption; the struggle against drugs and the criminal activity surrounding drug trafficking; mutual security questions; liberalization of capital markets; hemispheric infrastructure; cooperation on energy questions; telecommunications; science and technology; tourism; access to education without discrimination; provision of health services; women in society; micro-companies; the special troops known as the "white helmets"; sustainable use of fuels; preservation of biodiversity; environmental cooperation; and sustainable development.

put in question by the differences of opinion with the Brazilian government.

At the end of June and the beginning of July of that year, the Washington-Brasilia confrontation was very noticeable at the Third World Bank Conference on Development in Latin America and the Caribbean held in Montevideo. Several World Bank analysts, as well as U.S. academics, accused Mercosur of diverting trade to the detriment of the United States, arguing that, according to their sources, trade within Mercosur was growing more

rapidly than trade between Mercosur countries and the rest of the world. More objective analyses presented by officials of the World Trade Organization showed, in contrast, that while it was true that trade among Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay had grown significantly, their trade with countries outside the Rio de la Plata basin had increased even more.

The United States' criticisms were apparently sparked by declarations that Brazilian President Fernando Henrique Cardoso had made about the future of AFTA.

In May 1997, Washington's opposition to the Southern
Cone Common Market (MERCOSUR), based on its opinion
that its objectives are incompatible with AFTA,
became very clear.

This very heavy agenda gives the Summit of the Americas special significance which transcends the specific sphere of trade. Specialists of the Latin American Association for Integration (ALADI) and the governments of the Mercosur countries (visibly Brazil) argue that there are important differences between fostering access to markets and promoting Latin American integration, with the understanding that AFTA would favor the former, while Mercosur, following the ALADI lead, would seek the latter. However, the Summit of the Americas is, in fact, proposing and fostering a new relationship between the United States and the rest of the Western Hemisphere on the eve of the twenty-first century.

The success or failure of the Summit of the Americas will depend on the advances or reverses the AFTA project has suffered by the year 2005. In that sense, there has already been an important delay, not only because of Brazil's position, but because of the way U.S. foreign trade policy is shaping up around these questions.

For AFTA to become a reality, the U.S. president needs "fast-track" authorization from the U.S. Congress, which would allow him to negotiate trade agreements with other countries of the world. Once treaty negotiations have finished, the accord is presented to Congress, which can only pass or vote down the proposal, without making any changes in it. Fast track was created to make it possible for the United States to carry out negotiations

with its trade partners without Congress being able to change the terms of the agreements, which could take decades to decide.

The 1985 Agreement for the Establishment of a Free Trade Area Between the United States and Israel, the 1989 Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement and NAFTA (1994) were negotiated with fast-track authorization. However, free trade with Mexico sparked such intense debate in the United States around questions of whether it was advisable or not to sign important commitments with a country so unlike the U.S., that subsequent attempts by the Clinton administration to get fast-track authorization have had to be postponed.

In fact, last January 28 it became public that the White House had decided to indefinitely postpone its fast-track request given that it considered other topics on Washington's international agenda requiring congressional support more important. High-ranking Clinton administration officials have stated that the fast track will not be an important priority in 1998; de facto, this means a step backward with regard to the goals stipulated at the First Summit of the Americas and in making AFTA a reality. Apparently, President Clinton is willing to sacrifice fast-track authorization in exchange for Congress giving the go-ahead to broadening out the North Atlantic Treaty Organization; paying back contributions to the United Nations; and, of course, Asia's financial bail-out, an item to which

Washington plans to dedicate around U.S.\$18 billion through the International Monetary Fund. In addition, in a congressional election year replete with political scandals surrounding the U.S. chief executive, it would be even more difficult to get approval on Capitol Hill.

Without fast track, the Clinton administration will not be able to make any trade commitments at the Second Summit of the Americas, given that it will not have the negotiating authority it needs to do so. Looking more closely at the question, it is clear that U.S. foreign trade policy has shifted its international priorities. Suffice it to recall that the trade negotiations that led to major accords with Israel, Canada and Mexico took place in the context of the breakdown of the GATT's Uruguay Round, the deepening of European integration through both the 1987 European Union Act and the 1993 Treaty of Maastricht and the increasing U.S. trade deficit in the 1980s. At that time, Washington thought the bilateral free trade agreements would allow it to correct its trade deficit. With that same logic, it expected the multilateralism that had fostered GATT to fail at the Uruguay Round, which would then disappear, and that therefore the United States needed a bilateral alternative, at least with its main trade partners. Lastly, European integration seemed to be consolidating since, during the Uruguay Round, Spain, Portugal, Sweden, Austria and Finland became full members of the European Common Market; Washington, therefore, needed to strengthen its presence in its natural area of influence, the Western Hemisphere. This is how regionalism became one of the pillars of U.S. trade policy, and everything seemed

to indicate that the accords with Canada and Mexico would be the model for creating AFTA.

Does this mean that the United States is reconsidering the regionalist option with regard to the Americas? To answer this question we have to take a look at the current trade situation. For starters, the predictions of the failure of the Uruguay Round were wrong, and the negotiations inside GATT not only culminated satisfactorily but the international community reached a consensus to create a replacement for GATT that would meet the needs of international trade at the end of the millennium: the World Trade Organization. On the other hand, European integration has not moved forward at the speed expected, and the application of the Treaties of Maastricht and Amsterdam has met with some obstacles. Finally, the agreements of selective trade liberalization that the United States signed with Israel; Mexico and Canada have not corrected the structural deficit in the U.S. trade balance. All this shows that given the new conditions of the world economy, the U.S. government may be emphasizing other resources in its foreign trade policy, such as unilateralism and multilateralism.

Latin America's relatively small specific weight—with the exception of Mexico—among U.S. trade partners should also be taken into account. Four countries top the list of U.S. trade partners: Canada, Mexico, Japan and the People's Republic of China, in that order. While for some Latin American countries the exchange of goods and services with the United States is important (like Venezuela, the Central American countries and Colombia), the Southern Cone countries have very diversified trade relations internationally, particularly among the members of Mercosur.

Without fast-track negotiating authority the Clinton administration will not be able to make any trade commitments at the Second Summit of the Americas.

The only Latin American country important to the U.S. economy is Mexico: it is said that a little over a million jobs in the United States depend directly on trade with Mexicans. We should not forget that a broad range of topics on the bilateral agenda—like the fight against drug trafficking, ecocide and undocumented migration—also put Mexico at the top of Washington's list of items to be taken care of, before any other Latin American nation. Otherwise, we would be unable to understand why Chile, a country Bush mentioned explicitly in his Enterprise for the Americas Initiative as the economic model for Latin America, still has no trade agreement with the United States, despite the fact that at the First Summit of the Americas Mexico, Washington and Ottawa came to a concrete agreement to make Chile the fourth NAFTA partner. Regardless of how well the Chilean economy has looked to Washington, in practice, even given the so-called Tequila Effect, Chile just does not have the economic and political significance of Mexico.

Ironically, the Second Summit of the Americas will be held in Santiago, headquarters for the United Nations' Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), which is celebrating its fiftieth anniversary. ECLAC was born 50 years ago despite U.S. opposition, to make Latin American integration possible. A few decades later, ECLAC was at the vanguard of international economic bodies as it made the development of depen-

dency theory possible. Today, ECLAC has come under sharp criticism by reformer groups which suggest restructuring the U.N. The Commission on Global Governance has insisted on the need to eliminate ECLAC and the other U.N. regional commissions given that their functions could perfectly well be performed by other bodies. With regard to ECLAC, the idea is concretely that the ideal body to substitute it could be the Organization of American States (OAS), with support from AFTA in questions of trade. Of course, the OAS, which is also celebrating its fiftieth anniversary in 1998, is an institution which, in contrast with ECLAC, was born with U.S. blessings. Given this state of affairs, everything seems to point to the debate in Santiago de Chile next April dealing with something more than the creation of a hemisphere-wide trade zone. The community of interests between ECLAC and Mercosur will clearly be part of the agenda, and the debate over access to markets (Washington's priority) and genuine integration (broached by partisans of ECLAC and Mercosur) will give rise to a new confrontation which could be headed up by the United States and Brazil, given their foreign policy interests. However, given the priorities of the Clinton administration, everything seems to indicate that the U.S. chief executive will come to Santiago in a debilitated state, without even being able to offer the hope that the U.S. Congress will give him fast-track authority by the end of 1998. ■■■

Gender and Democracy¹

Graciela Hierro*

If democracy had to be defined, we could say that it is a society in which it is not only permitted to be a person: it is required.

María Zambrano

Gender is the social construct imposed on a sexed body. As Simone de Beauvoir says in *The Second Sex*, we are not born men and women: society makes us into men and women. That is, it creates an identity for us according to what each culture expects of men and women.

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This is the concept of gender, central to feminist theory because it makes it possible to discern the creation of the cultural role of the sexes. In doing so, it opens up the possibility of critiquing it and transforming it according to the needs, interests and ideals that every social group at each moment in history considers desirable.

Gender theory is the tool underpinning feminism as the political ideology

that aims to positively change relations between the genders. It holds that men and women should have the same roles in society and highlights the fact that discrimination and inappropriate social institutions have denied women support in the home and access to development.

Despite women's going out to work in what has traditionally been considered men's world, they continue to shoul-



Angeles Torrejón / Imagenialma

der “their” tasks while men have not entered into the world of women. That is why it is said that we have a double work day.

EQUALITY

Let us first of all address the question of equality between the genders because equality is a necessary condition for talking about social and political democracy. Democracy involves equality in wielding private and public power, the participation in the decisions that concern all of us and the idea that each individual is worth just as much as another and has the same rights. Let us look first at gender and equality in the personal sphere, which means accepting gender equality in all interpersonal relationships.

In today’s world, men are almost universally more highly valued than women. Both custom and social and political institutions subordinate women to men. This does not mean, though, that women have no importance in a world in which they give birth, care for children and work. However, the imposition of patriarchal power—the power of the father, the boss and the eternal father, which dominates the political, social and economic life of human organizations—means that men the world over evolve into playing a central role and women are left on the sidelines. Patriarchy did not form overnight: it was a process that took almost 2500 years, from about 3600 B.C. to 600 B.C., and in some societies it formed at a different time and speed (Lerner, 1990).

To achieve gender equality, it must be maintained that women are human

beings; that the two genders are equal in the most important ways, and different as sexes and individuals; that this equality must be publicly recognized; that those qualities traditionally associated with women—what can be called “the feminine principle”—are at least as valuable as “the masculine principle;” and that this equality also must be publicly recognized.

Finally, it also must be maintained that the personal is political. This means that the value structure of a culture is identical in both the private and public sphere, that is to say, everything that goes on in the bedroom is totally relevant to what goes on in the halls of power, and equality demands that both genders control both the bedroom and the halls of power (Hierro, 1994). In brief, in the political sphere, equality and gender mean the struggle for democracy.

DEMOCRACY

In most countries, the discourse on democracy does not put a priority on the question of women. This darkens the achievements of freedom movements the world over and makes it difficult to come close

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to a real democracy because it does not take into account the interests of half of humanity, women. Gender democracy is realized when important groups of women attain a humanist feminist consciousness. When that happens, the reforms they champion tend to free them from oppression within the family, the locus of patriarchal power. They also fight for the right to equal participation at all levels of society, the right to control their own bodies, that is, the right to freely decide about their own maternity, to good health, and to change legislation on marriage and divorce as well as work, etc. All of this means equality in gender privileges.

The fight is for real equality retaining gender difference. We women do not want to be men, but women. We do not want to govern like men or create like men or love like men. We want to live our lives from inside the woman’s body we have. We want to work, love and share with men the creation in Mexico of the “other form of being human and free,” as Rosario Castellanos proposed, in the spheres of the family, society and politics in our country (Hierro, 1992). To do that, a change in consciousness is needed, a change that supports personal and political development, for example taking part in social movements. The political women’s movement is the expression of widely shared suffering. However, people take political action when they feel that the government has some responsibility to help them solve their problems. A great many hopes and fears, however, are never given a political voice because people tend to visualize their problems as personal, and they look to themselves or their relatives or friends for solutions instead of demanding action by public officials.

THE PERSONAL IS POLITICAL

Changing beliefs consists of turning personal problems into political ones and, as that occurs, both women and men must fight and demand economic, social and political opportunities even if they have never done so in the past, since just having a difficult life and being part of an oppressed or exploited group does not bring with it an interest in politics. People tend to blame themselves for their problems. It is only when they become aware that their problems are shared by others like them that the group is able to attribute the source of their concerns to social conditions like discrimination or oppression and decide to seek political solutions.

Women and men had to recognize that they have certain problems precisely because they are women and men in order for the feminist movement to emerge. However, for psychological identification with a group to develop there must also be a rejection of the traditional def-

inition of that group's status in society. Another prerequisite is the emergence of a new identity for the group itself based on a critique of the old identity.²

When the traditional image of the oppressed group has been rejected, it is possible to accept its alternative, based on gender equality. This occurs, first, because the social context for learning is not static: periods of rapid change follow one after the other caused by different social conditions like economic disasters and war. Technological change, like the existence of contraceptives, also have an influence. All of this fosters new forms of behavior to better adapt to changing conditions.

CONCLUSIONS

The meaning of being a woman has changed in the course of this century. The changes in families and work have caused gender politics to emerge, politics that involve non-traditional women's

identities and social changes that foster two regulatory tendencies: gender equality and social and political democracy as basic conditions for being able to speak of humanism in our time. **MM**

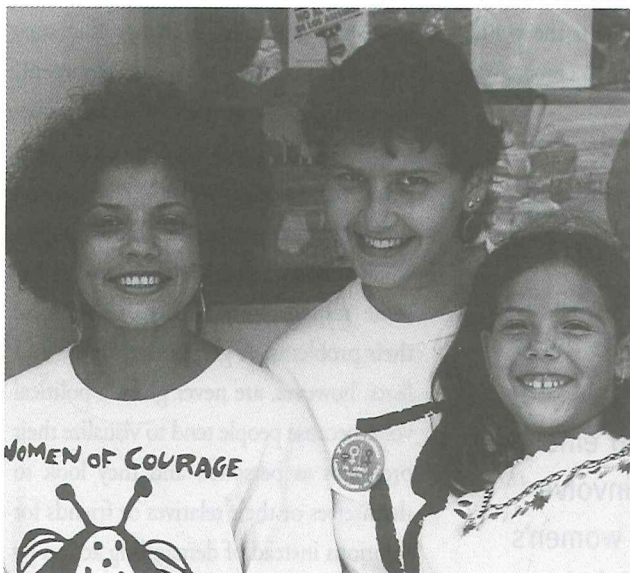
NOTES

¹This article is part of a larger piece published in *Participación política de la mujer* (Mexico City: Cambio XXI- Fundación Mexicana, A.C., 1992).

²Here, it is important to mention a political movement that has emerged in different parts of the world around the struggle for a "new masculinity" for the same reasons that the feminist movement arose.

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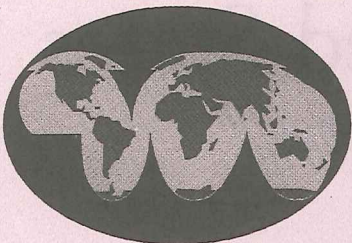


Gaceta UNAM / Juan Antonio López / DGI

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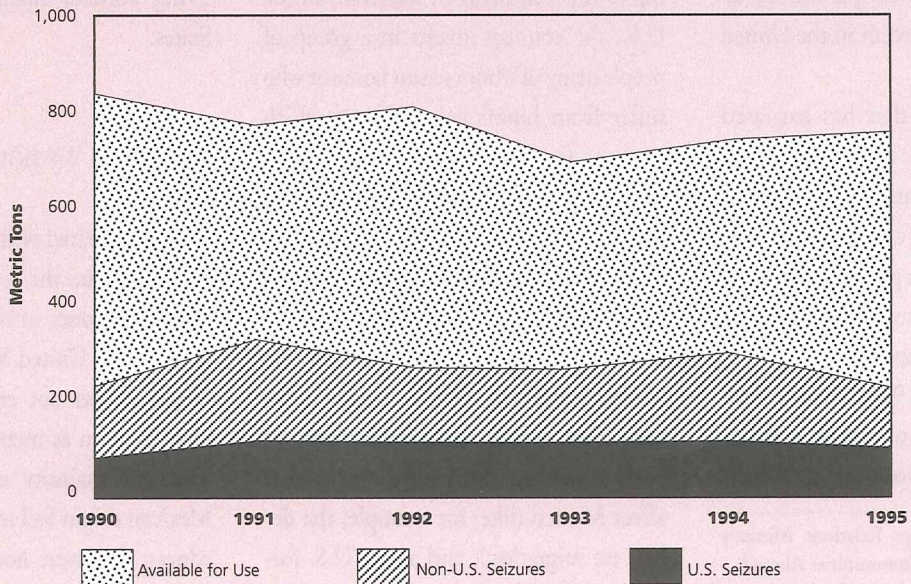
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Errata

The graph "Cocaine Seizures Versus Production" included in the article "Drug Trafficking and Continental Geostrategic Control" (*Voices of Mexico* no. 42, January-March 1998, p. 63) contains an error. Therefore we are printing this corrected version here.

Cocaine Seizures Versus Production



Source: National Narcotics Intelligence Consumers Committee, Drug Enforcement Administration, 1996.
Taken from: *The National Drug Control Strategy, 1997*.
(Washington, D.C.: Office of National Drug Control Policy, Executive Office of the President, 1997), p. 53.



Mexicans in the United States

An Incipient Diaspora

Carlos González Gutiérrez*

Approximately 18 million people of Mexican origin were living in the United States in 1996 according to the U.S.-Mexico Binational Study on Migration. Of these, 7 to 7.3 million were first-generation immigrants, born in Mexico, while more than 11 million were U.S. citizens of Mexican descent. The 7 million Mexican emigrants make up 3 percent of the U.S. population and are the equivalent of 8 percent of Mexico's population and 40 percent of all people of Mexican descent in the United States.¹

As a population that has migrated from its home to live in a foreign land, "which maintains sentimental or material links with its land of origin,"² people of Mexican origin who permanently reside in the United States can be thought of as part of a modern diaspora.

At least since the 1960s, the Mexican government has tried to expand and cultivate long-term relations with the Mex-

ican diaspora in the United States. Mexico wants to contribute to improving the living standards of Mexican families in the U.S. for reasons of immediate national interest: solidarity with Mexicans abroad is a moral government obligation toward our compatriots who feel no less a part of our nation for living abroad and continue to support Mexican development with their investments and the cash remittances they send home. Also, by contributing to the well-being of Mexicans in the U.S., the country invests in a group of people many of whom return home or who suffer from binational problems which know no frontiers, for example, problems related to public education or health, like the AIDS epidemic. Finally, through international cooperation projects, Mexico strengthens its ties with Mexican American organizations and leaders in the United States who have increasing influence in the U.S. decision-making process, both regarding domestic policies that affect Mexico (like, for example, the debate on migration), and actual U.S. foreign policy vis-à-vis Mexico.

In 1990, the Program for Mexican Communities Abroad, an office of the

Foreign Affairs Ministry, was created by presidential decree. Its aim: to coordinate the efforts of different government bodies regarding Mexicans abroad. Its fundamental mandate was to create awareness among Mexicans the world over that "the Mexican nation extends beyond the territory within its borders," as the 1995-2000 National Development Plan puts it, and to implement Mexico's international cooperation to the benefit of Mexicans living abroad, mainly in the United States.

A DIASPORA WITHOUT CONSCIOUSNESS

When compared with the life experience of others, like the Jewish, Armenian or Greek diasporas, in the case of the Mexicans in the United States, political mobilization has not ensued from its self identification as members of a diaspora. The vast majority of U.S. citizens of Mexican origin feel no founding uprootedness; they were not expelled from the promised land, nor did the feeling of being a "dispersed people" precede in any way the formation of the nation-

* Director of the Foreign Relations Ministry Program for Mexican Communities Abroad. Photo reprinted from the book *500 years of Chicano History in Pictures* (Albuquerque, New Mexico: Southwest Organizing Project [SWOP], 1991), p. 177.

state we today know as Mexico. As a result, practically no one has done consciousness raising about diaspora identity inside the community.

The nature of the U.S. political system has done much more to politically activate Mexican Americans than any feeling of being part of a diaspora. The main precedent was the civil rights struggle of Afro Americans which netted the mid-1960s civil rights legislation and gave them the status of a protected minority, a status later extended to other minorities.

To the extent that ethnicity is something attributable, situational and strategic when politically and socially defined categories exist that emphasize a particular affiliation (for example, "Hispanic," which is a pan-ethnic category), and when the members of the group identified as such perceive economic or political rewards (affirmative action programs, for example) associated with adopting that particular affiliation (instead of categories referring to national origin like "Mexican" or "Chicano"), then it is highly probable that there will be mobilization on the basis of that designated identity.³

On the other hand, until very recently Mexico did not cultivate a consciousness of a "dispersed people" among its emigrants. After the 1847 Mexican-American War, Mexican national feeling, based to a great extent on the trauma of losing half the country's territory, was defensive and anti-American. This meant that, despite the massiveness of the exodus to the United States, Mexico's national culture was not very sensitive to the situation of emigrants. Instead of promoting the image of the emigrant

who goes abroad to make good for his family and homeland, our national character developed collective guilt feelings whereby assimilation or multiculturalism was synonymous with disloyalty and treason.

The term "pocho" symbolizes the disdain felt for emigrants. According to the Larrouse dictionary, the Spanish word "pocho" means something that is "too ripe, spoiled," and says that in Mexico it is used to describe Hispanics "who imitate Americans." In Mexico, from the 1930s until at least the 1960s, the word "pocho" was synonymous with Mexican American, despite being a disparaging term that attributes to people of Mexican origin a desire to forget their roots in order to assimilate into U.S. society and a superior attitude with regard to their homeland. In the immigrant communities themselves in the United States, "pocho" is a noun used to "designate those Mexican Americans who, when becoming Americans, forget their society of origin."⁴

STRATEGIC—NOT EMOTIONAL— CONSIDERATIONS

For all the reasons mentioned, it is difficult to pinpoint in the political activity of Mexican American leaders any consciousness of a diaspora, at least if this is specifically understood as a function of the level of priority that Mexican American leaders give the interests of Mexico in their efforts to influence the U.S. decision-making process.

Undoubtedly there are common interests between homeland and diaspora, such as the repudiation of Mexico-

bashing by U.S. conservative politicians, or a rejection of extreme migratory controls that directly or indirectly propitiate xenophobic or discriminatory attitudes against the general population of Mexican origin, regardless of their nationality or migratory status. However, in contrast with Cuban Americans' attitude regarding the Castro government in Cuba, or with Jewish Americans' feelings about Israel's security in the Middle East, Mexican Americans' emotional attitudes regarding their homeland play a secondary role in their efforts to influence U.S. policy toward Mexico, and come after rational calculations or the interests of different organized groups in the community.

Using opinion polls as a parameter, Mexican Americans are ambivalent with regard to a broader trade opening toward Mexico and decidedly oppose more undocumented migration to the United States.⁵ If we analyze, for example, Mexican American lobbying efforts during the negotiations leading up to the North American Free Trade Agreement, it is clear that class loyalties and strategic considerations were given much more weight than inter-ethnic solidarity by the main Mexican American organizations and Hispanic congressmen in deciding their positions. Some of them made the satisfaction of a series of domestic demands, more related to furthering group privileges and/or rights than to trade policy toward Mexico, a condition for their support for the treaty.⁶

Given the nature of U.S.-Mexican relations, marked by geographical proximity and an agenda in which it is difficult to distinguish the dividing line

between internal and external items (on questions like immigration, trade, employment, environmental protection, etc.), it is hard to expect relations between Mexico and its diaspora to develop in any other way.

A LONG TERM CHALLENGE

Today, the government of Mexico is making an effort to remedy the disdainful tone with which it has traditionally visualized the sense of identity of emigrants and their descendants regarding their nation of origin. In late 1996, the Mexican Congress approved a constitutional amendment whereby the voluntary acquisition of another nationality would no longer mean Mexicans would lose their Mexican nationality.

With this amendment, legislators sought to explicitly establish the right of people of Mexican origin to participate in the national project that Mexico represents, with the understanding that feeling part of the Mexican nation is not counterposed to the genuine desire most of them have to contribute to the prosperity of the country where they live. In that sense, while the lawmakers sought on the one hand to strengthen the ties that link emigrants with their homeland, at the same time they acted with an eye to facilitating the integration of Mexican migrants into the societies that take them in, in an attempt to contribute to eliminating discriminatory practices against them and their families.

However, the change in attitudes on the part of the populace will necessarily have to be gradual and very long term. An indicator of just how deeply rooted

in the national make-up the lack of sensitivity to emigrants' situation is can be found in a September 1997 survey of Mexico City metropolitan area residents. To the question, "What is your opinion of Mexicans who go to work in the United States?" 47 percent of those polled replied "negative or very negative."⁷

To encourage the sense of belonging to the Mexican nation among emigrants and their descendants, we must ask ourselves the kind of belonging they are being offered. The aforementioned constitutional amendment is practically the starting point for a debate which in Mexico is only just beginning. Broadening out and consolidating government programs like the Paisano Program —created in 1989 to combat extortion, the abuse of authority and deficient procedures for official paperwork which Mexicans residing abroad are often victims of when they temporarily return home— is fundamental for giving concrete content to the feeling of belonging the Mexican government is promoting abroad. Other support programs which are only very recently being regularly discussed in Mexico will also be fundamental: how should the situation of Mexican Americans be included in school textbooks? What kind of preferential treatment can be given to foreign investors of Mexican origin? How and to what extent can they be formally included in Mexican elections?

For Mexico, the ultimate goal in approaching the Mexican community abroad must not be that of stopping the process of aculturalization of Mexican Americans, nor of aspiring to creating a situation whereby, like in other countries, emotional attachment to the

homeland takes precedence over strategic rational calculations and the self-interest of the different sectors of the diaspora. In the long run, the ultimate goal must be solely creating a legitimate space that situates relations between Mexico and its diaspora on a different plane, a plane on which the efforts of the Mexican state to better living standards of the communities abroad, or to generate support in its diaspora for development of the homeland, can be seen as a logical result of native born Mexicans or people of Mexican descent feeling they belong to the Mexican nation. ■■■

NOTES

- ¹ Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores (Mexico) and Commission on Immigration Reform (U.S.), *Estudio Binacional México-Estados Unidos sobre Migración* (Mexico City: SRE, 1997). A review of this study by Remedios Gómez Arnau was published in *Voices of Mexico* 42, p. 55. [Editor's Note.]
- ² Milton Esman, "Diasporas and International Relations," *Modern Diasporas in International Politics* (London: Croom Helm, 1986), p. 333.
- ³ Joane Nagel, "The Political Construction of Ethnicity," Norman R. Yetman, ed., *Majority and Minority: the Dynamics of Race and Ethnicity in American Life* (Needham Heights, Massachusetts: Allyn & Bacon, c1986, 1991), p. 78.
- ⁴ Richard Rodríguez, *Hunger for Memory: the Education of Richard Rodríguez* (New York: Bantam Books, c1982, 1988), p. 29.
- ⁵ Rodolfo de la Garza and Louis DeSipio, "Interests, Not Passions: Mexican American Attitudes Toward Mexico and Issues Shaping U.S.-Mexico Relations" (paper, 1997), pp. 7-12.
- ⁶ Patricia Hamm, "Mexican American Interests in U.S.-Mexico Relations: The Case of NAFTA" (working paper # 4, University of California, Irvine, Center for Research on Latinos in a Global Society, 1997), pp. 27-28.
- ⁷ "Visión de hoy, 1847: la guerra con Estados Unidos," *Enfoque* no. 192, suplement of *Reforma* (Mexico City) (Sept. 14, 1997), p. 14.

CNCA-INAH-MEX.



Marker for the Mayan ball game.
Chichén Itzá Site Museum, INAH, Yucatán.

The Mesoamerican Ball Game¹

María Teresa Uriarte*

The preservation of the pre-Hispanic Mesoamerican ball game down through the centuries in many parts of Mexico despite cultural changes as violent as those brought about by the Spanish Conquest undoubtedly demonstrates its profound significance. As a human activity, it can be studied from very diverse viewpoints. One of these is play,

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Translated by Jacqueline Buswell.

In the complex pre-Hispanic cosmology, sacrifice and self-immolation allowed man to participate with the gods in cosmic survival.

examined on the basis of the archeological context or the iconographic content of the many objects that in sculpture, painting or relief work depict this sacred game.

As a literary, linguistic and anthropological manifestation, the analysis of the text of the Popol-Vuh is popular among researchers. The game court —its size, layout, orientation and other characteristics— is a research topic among architects and archeo-astronomers. In fact, the very number of studies on the ball game from the most diverse points of view illustrate the game's significance.

Is the ball game solely a playtime activity? A sublimation of social violence through sacrifice? A ritual marking ascension to power? A means to resolve territorial conflicts? A pretext for gambling? The only action carried out on the court, with other ceremonies before and after the game held somewhere else, perhaps next to the hieroglyphic staircases? An allegory for war? A fertility rite related to the Sun, the Moon, Venus, the calendar, hallucinogenic plants, the underworld, life or death? The ball game contains these elements and many more. Perhaps we can understand it better if we begin with a systematic, comparative and universalized study that deals with the constants and variables of the game. Let us see.

We know that the game was played with a rubber ball as early as the Olmec era in Manatí on the Gulf Coast, according to the discoverers of this site. From those early times a symbolic system began to develop, enriched with the passing of the centuries.

Researchers calculate that the first courts appeared during the middle formative period [about 1200 B.C.]. We can imagine that the ritual celebration, both of the game and other related ceremonies, were originally held in spaces marked only by mobile indicators, without a special area reserved for the game.

In 1981, Eric Taladoire published the results of very complete research into the form, elements and spread of the ball courts. It was already known that rings and other kinds of markers were used in the ancient games, while yokes, palm leaves and axes formed part of the apparel worn by the players. Several studies address whether the ball passed through the rings or whether the stone instruments

that obviously reproduce the theme of the game were worn by the players.

The survival of the ball game has provided a substantial vein of research for ethnologists and anthropologists. The varieties played in different parts of Mexico, the players' clothing, objects associated with the game and the making of the rubber ball are aspects that have greatly interested researchers for several decades.

MAINTAINING THE COSMIC ORDER AND PRESERVING LIFE

The diverse astronomical alignment of the courts correlates with the different times when they were built. Researchers have concluded that the oldest courts face north-south while, from the middle classic period onward, this changed to east-west. This is not as clear-cut as it sounds, however, because some sites are aligned between one point of the compass and another. We cannot imagine, however, that the precise alignment of the setting sun with the ring of the court in Xochicalco during the spring and autumn equinoxes is mere coincidence.

Researchers have speculated a lot about the links between the ball game and astronomy. The clearest astronomical relationship is with Venus, since symbols associating the game with the planet appear at many sites. In the illustrations of the Borgia Codex and some other codices, the victims of the game appear painted with red stripes on their bodies. Researchers have observed that victims sacrificed in honor of Tlahuizcāpantecuhtli-Quetzalcóatl were painted like this, and Quetzalcóatl is associated

with Venus as the morning star. The counterpart of Tlahuizcāpantecuhtli is Xólotl, Venus as the evening star. For the Mexicans, Xólotl was the patron god of the ball game.

The profound significance of pre-Hispanic cosmology, so bloodthirsty to Western eyes, becomes clear when examined in its own context in which man is a participant in maintaining the cosmos through the offering of his blood (López Austin, 1967). Aveni (1980) has demonstrated that the equinoxes announced the coming rainy season to pre-Hispanic peoples. Abundant rains and the subsequent growth of vegetation were possible thanks to man's sacrifice. In this way, the pre-Hispanic world linked astronomy and the fertility of the land.

Thus we find two interrelated aspects in their cosmology: the first is the maintenance of cosmic order, the victory of the Sun in its struggle against the gods of the underworld, possible only through the immolation of human beings; that is, the triumph of light over darkness is only possible through human sacrifice. The second is also linked to human offerings: the different moments of the solar year, solstices and equinoxes and their relationship to the dry and rainy seasons and the rebirth of vegetation. Man must participate through a holocaust in all these events, or the Earth cannot survive.

The ball game was one means whereby the human offering of blood and death was consummated; from the pre-Hispanic perspective, the sacrifice of life was necessary to ensure its continuation. The game offered the loser in war and conquest the opportunity to be sacrificed with honor and to fight against the adversary. Like the Sun that conquers the night with



CNGA-INAH-MEX.

A panorama of the southern ball game court in El Tajín. More than 15 courts were built at this site.

every dawn, the sacrifice of the player in the game, the offering of his blood, allowed the plants to germinate and thus assured the people's sustenance.

In the complex world of pre-Hispanic cosmology, sacrifice and self-immolation allowed man to participate in cosmic survival with the gods. Were the gods not all-powerful? Did the rite of sacrifice confer to man the power of the gods? Did man sacrifice himself out of fear, generosity or vanity? What was he like, this man depicted in paintings or stone sculptures participating in bloodthirsty rituals? He was a

stranger to our culture, invested with non-earthly attributes and yet a man, with fears, hopes, doubts and ambitions.

Thus the ball game is related to the universe through sacrifice, decapitation and mutilation that we see represented in the reliefs of El Tajín, Chichén Itzá, El Baúl, Vega de Alatorre and Izapa, among other sites. The illustrations of the codices, meanwhile, associate the sacrificed players with rain, vegetation and fertility and with the victory of the Sun over darkness.

The ball game also had a social function: the enemy conquered in war main-

tained his honor, because he was allowed to die in the game. This profound sense is reflected in the *teotlachtli* of Mexico-Tenochtitlan: the gods become human and play. Playfulness becomes sacred, or the divinity plays like men.

Today, the ball game has as many forms as regions where it is still played. We can suppose that this was also the case when the Spaniards arrived in Mexico. Therefore the size of the ball itself, the fields where the game is played and the dress of the players vary enormously, an extremely extensive universe of symbols that appear again and again, constantly repeating themselves without limit.

Why is the game associated with agriculture? How is it possible that it is simultaneously linked with the cosmos? Why are certain plants, the butterfly and the water lily present in the symbolism of the Olmecs, Mayas and Zapotecs, in Teotihuacan and among the inhabitants of the Gulf Coast?

I think we should try to enter into this way of perceiving the world, cross the barriers of specialized studies—that are necessarily fragmented—to try to reach the hearts of the men who played the ball game and search the symbolic evidence for the ideological meaning behind this mythical celebration. To do this we must try to experience that world just as did the man whose close contact with nature gave him a pragmatic knowledge converted through oral tradition into myths, legends and religion.

THE PRIMORDIAL CONCEPT

It is nothing new to say that the ball game symbolizes the struggle between

opposites, and that the representations of plants, trees and stick figures link it with fertility, the sustenance of the cosmos through sacrifice, life and death. When we look at the research on the topic, however, we find what at first appear to be unrelated elements.

One of these mentioned most frequently is the union of adversaries on the playing field; the meeting obviously synthesizes unification through conflict. Nor is it new to point out the way these opposites are joined in the sacred game, just as the path to the underworld was at the same time the path for the sun's daily rebirth. The cosmos and the depths of the earth existed as a dual concept.

Neither is it a novelty to speak of the duality of the Mesoamerican gods; researchers of the pre-Hispanic world have known about the dialectical concept of fusion through the conflict of opposites for a long time. Those of us who seek to understand the world of the Mesoamerican man take this basic concept for granted.

Snakes, crocodiles, toads, turtles, shells and shellfish are common themes in representations of the ball game or in objects related with the game. These are themes we could call paradigmatic, because their constant and wide-spread appearance has charged them with meanings and associations with other themes. At the same time, this has given the ball game an ever more closed symbolic root.

Another symbol that appears frequently is the butterfly. Whenever associated with the ball game, the butterfly symbolizes change. Some of its metaphors are transformation, initiation, the spirit that has abandoned the body.



Ball game player, Maya (ceramics), National Museum of Anthropology, INAH.

The jaguar is also frequently used to represent the players. It is probably the most often depicted feline of the pre-Hispanic world. A nocturnal animal, its skin bears the marks of stars seen by ancient Mexicans; it lives near bodies of water, submerges itself to fish and eats fish and shellfish. It is associated with the underworld, shamanic practices, ancestry and the setting Sun. Some cultures associated the jaguar with the ball game and with other symbols like the water lily.

A generally accepted truth about pre-Hispanic art is that decoration was not an end in itself. Therefore the symbols constantly associated with the ball game in their paintings and sculptures necessarily have to contain a common denominator that identifies them.

What do the butterfly, the water lily, daturas (thorn apples), toads, crocodiles, snakes, turtles, shellfish and the jaguar have in common? The lily is a flower, but unlike most flowers it grows in water, not in earth. It is a dual being, like the butterfly, toad, crocodile and the turtle.

The union of opposites is inherent in all the symbols I have mentioned. The turtle, crocodile and the toad are obviously dual. The duality of shellfish is less evident: they are aquatic animals, but they do not swim; rather they move along the marine floor.

The profundity of the duality concept is confirmed in many allegoric figures. One of them is the union of the jaws of a batrachian or of a jaguar, like the doors to the underworld. Water, or rather, the link between water and earth, again becomes the entrance to the world of the dead.

Another fact is also important: the roots of the water lily are hallucinogenic. This little known property leads us to another duality: the use of consciousness altering substances to reach a different reality. When we examine the perception of interacting nature, we find that the use of psychedelic substances is very common. Attempts to enter a different reality are a common human quest, regardless of time or place. Substances that alter consciousness provoke unity in the duality; that is, different worlds unite in a sole reality through the mystical experience.

Perhaps this is why the water lily was for the Mayas, and maybe also for the people of Teotihuacan, the symbol of access to this different reality, induced by its psychedelic effects,² and at the same time the symbol of tranquil waters in the path to the underworld.

Among the Mayas, the water lily also appears associated with the jaguar. Some authors suggest that it symbolizes the night Sun, that is, the Sun on its path through the underworld. The lily opens its leaves at dawn and closes them at night, reinforcing its symbolism.

SEARCHING FOR HARMONIC DUALITY

According to Gerard W. van Bussel, the ball game court is an allegory of access to the underworld. He bases this hypothesis on several pieces of evidence. One is the fact that in the Quiché language of Guatemala the word *hom* means “tomb” and also “ball game court.”

On the other hand, the game at the same time implies the possibility of rebirth. Indeed, death dies, or, what amounts to the same thing, life lives and the cosmic order emerges. The Sun and the stars descend to the underworld, but they come back.

The scenes of the ball game frequently include cords or ropes. The cord holds the head above the playing field. Does this cord, connected to the head, which in turn symbolizes inherited power, refer to the continuity of hierarchic succession through the ball game?

It is interesting to add that Bussel analyzes the fact that the words for “blood” and “rubber” are the same in Mayan: *k'ik*; and its similarity to the word for “semen”: *k'ik'el*. He concludes that the ball game could be an allegory of life through dynastic succession.

Perhaps we could infer another symbolic relation. The snake that substitutes for blood, associated with the earth's fertility, also becomes an allegory of power.

A last symbol I wish to analyze is that of *ollin* (movement) that has the same origin as the word “rubber” in Nahuatl.

The synthesis of the primordial concept, as the last and most evident symbol, is movement, *ollin*, *ulli*, the movement of the ball, the movement that emerges in the unity of opposites on the playing



Ax from El Tajín used in the ball game (basalt), Xalapa Anthropology Museum, Xalapa, Veracruz.

field, the point of access to human and divine realities.

The harmonic duality, the equilibrium that man seeks and finds in nature and all its manifestations, is, finally, only the reflection of the duality of his own inner being, of the search for the unified being, the aleph, the last absolute that unifies the contradictory forces of yin and yang.

The symbol *ollin* is the clearest graphic sign of the pre-Hispanic world, equivalent to the Chinese symbol that unifies opposites. It marks the existence of a quest by all human beings on the planet. Two opposite directions are the underlying

ing primordial concept of Mesoamerican culture, demonstrated in one of its most interesting manifestations: the sacred ball game. ■■■

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NOTES

¹Abbreviated version of the introduction to the book compiled by María Teresa Uriarte, *El juego de pelota en Mesoamérica: Raíces y supervivencia* (Mexico City: Siglo XXI and DIFOCUR-Sinaloa, 1992) pp.21-35. Reprinted courtesy of Siglo XXI.

²The roots of the water lily are also a powerful emetic; they could have been used during a prior stage of purification.

All pictures except the ball game court are reprinted courtesy of the Old San Idefonso College, from the catalogue *Dioses del México Antiguo* (Mexico City: UNAM-CNCA-DDF, 1995).



Yoke from Veracruz (green stone),
National Museum of Anthropology, INAH, Mexico City.

The Ball Game

A Ritual of Pride

The ball game was one of the complex rituals that colored the religious lives of the pre-Columbian peoples. This ancient tradition is one of the many cultural traits that made it possible to unify the vast territory from what is now central Mexico to Central America. Playing courts have even been found in the southern part of the United States. *Tlachtlī*, as the game is called in Nahuatl, was not played for mere sport.

So important was the game in spiritual life that more than 600 *tlachtli* courts have been found so far in Mesoamerica, in most of the ceremonial centers discovered until now.

The court, shaped like a Roman numeral "I", was called *teotlachco* and represented the universe with its high walls and markers through which the ball was thrown. The courts are aligned with the stars astronomically depending on when they were built. The oldest point north-south and those built during and after the middle classical age face east-west. The chroniclers of the ball game describe it as follows: the players stood at either end of the field and threw a small, hard rubber ball (about the size of a man's head); the players could hit the ball with their hands and feet, using a mallet or stick, and with their shoulders and hips (this particular technique, called *ullamalitzli*, was the most common). Since it is quite difficult to get the ball through the hoop, there may well have been other

ways of scoring points on the field. Some of the markers are intricate animal-shaped statues with a round cavity through which the ball can go.

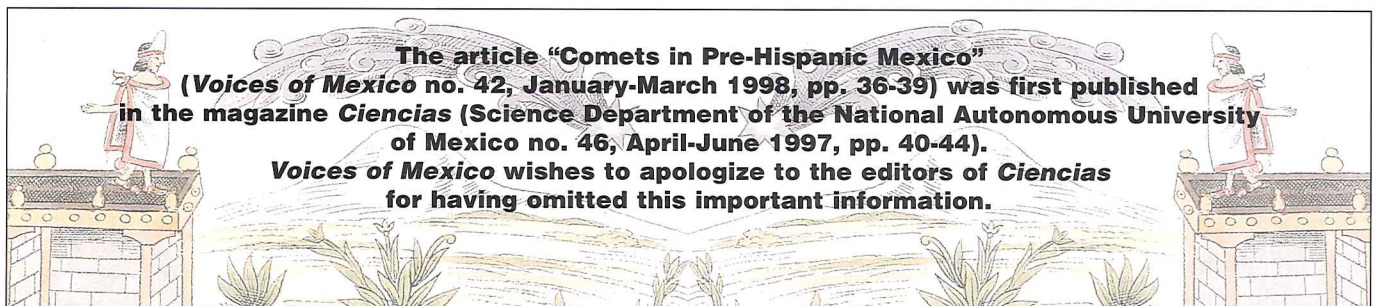
The *ollamani*, or player, was supposed to train to perfection, become highly specialized, and acquire a following and popularity which brought him recognition in the group.

According to Spanish chroniclers, the ball court's central field was 43 x 12 meters and each of the end fields was 35 x 12 meters. They can be reconstructed because of the essential similarity that they maintained for thousands of years in all of Mesoamerica, with only slight variations given the architectural style prevalent in each culture.

The stands were filled with expectant spectators, anxious to see the end result of the contest, which was consummated with an offering of human blood and death. From the pre-Hispanic perspective this represented the sacrifice of life to perpetuate life. The enemy vanquished in war kept his honor because he was allowed to die in the games.

Raquel Villanueva
Staff Writer

Sources: Catalogue "Dioses del México Antiguo" (Mexico City: UNAM- CNCA-DDF, 1995), pp. 57, 60, 63, 65.
María Teresa Uriarte, comp., *El juego de pelota en Mesoamérica. Raíces y supervivencia* (Mexico City: Siglo XXI-DIFOCUR Sinaloa, 1992), p. 48.



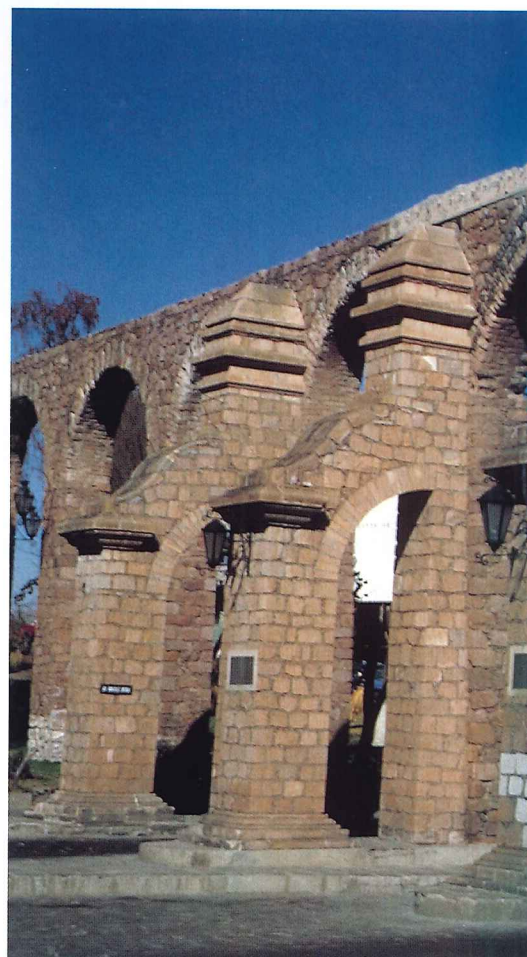
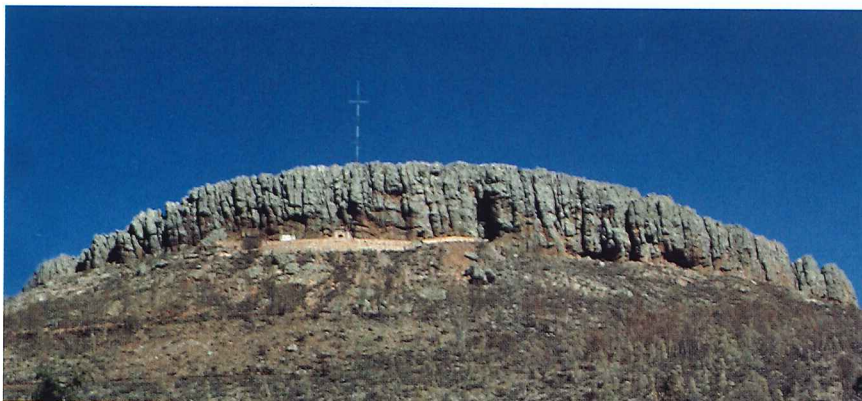


Zacatecas

Baroque architecture carved in pink stone gives the city of Zacatecas its distinguishing magic, noble touch. The mid-eighteenth-century cathedral, described by historian Guillermo Tovar de Teresa as “the most beautiful and exuberant example of the baroque on Earth,” is one of the city’s many testimonials to architectural creativity and incessant cultural activity.

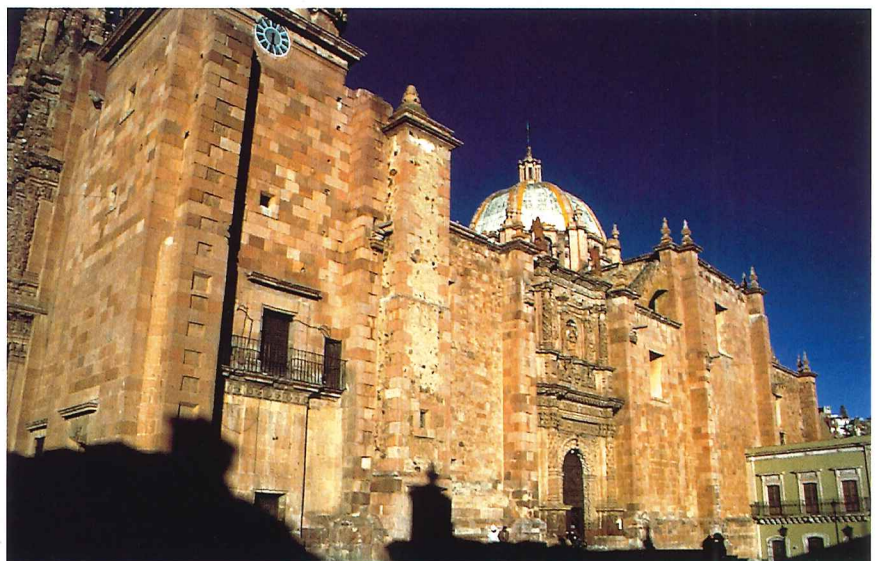


The city proper of Zacatecas has been preserved just as it evolved from its founding until 1914 due to an unfortunate fact of history: after the revolutionaries took Zacatecas in 1914, about five of every six of its inhabitants abandoned the city. For almost 45 years there was no construction at all; but there was also no destruction of houses or buildings abandoned in the historic downtown area.





As the population began to grow again, a very advanced legislation was passed for the protection and conservation of the city's monuments. Passed in 1965 on the initiative of the illustrious Zacatecan Federico Sescosse, state laws have since protected both buildings and their surroundings, specifying, unlike other legislation nationwide, that all original period "buildings and follies" alike are to be preserved in the historic center.



Churches and convents built in the heyday of colonial times, together with public buildings and private residences, put their distinctive stamp on the city.

The chapel-sanctuary of Our Lady of Protection on La Bufa Hill, the city's oldest, built in 1739, and the former churches of San Francisco and San Agustín, are only a few examples.



The Santo Domingo Church.



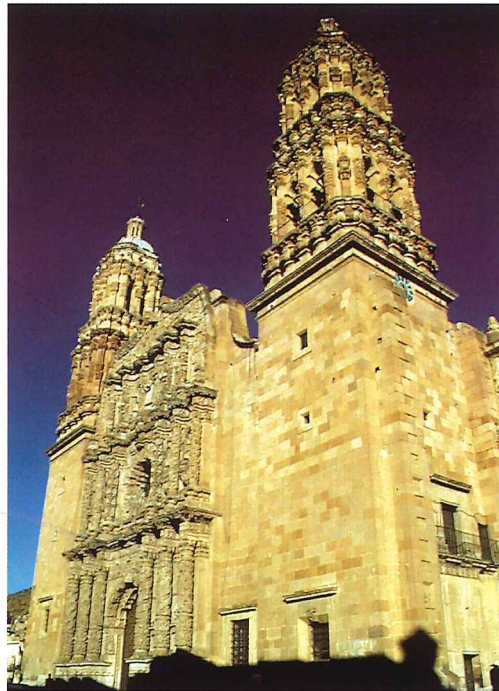
Side entrance to the former San Agustín Church.



The Chapel-sanctuary of Our Lady of Protection on La Bufa Hill.



Fountain located on Juan de Tolosa Street.



The cathedral.

Declared a World Heritage Treasure by the UNESCO in 1993, Zacatecas proudly unfolds 450 years of history in streets, plazas and buildings. Later generations have protected and preserved the marvels wrought by the flow of riches from the city's mines in the past for the enjoyment of natives and visitors alike.



The San Francisco Cloister at the Guadalupe Museum.

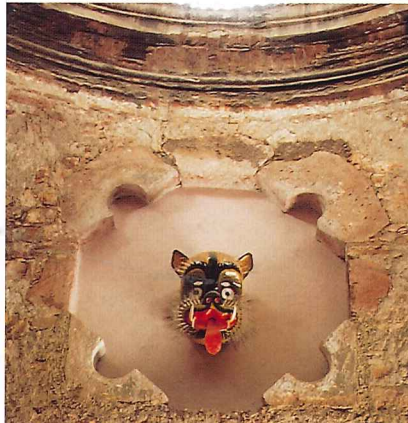
The museums are part of everyday life, living and breathing spaces always within reach of the city's inhabitants, where they go to enjoy the marvelous unfolding of the architecture, art and culture the centuries have bestowed on their city and that its inhabitants have placed in dignified, regal surroundings. Its treasures go from priceless examples of old art, like at the viceregal gallery of the Guadalupe Museum, probably the most complete in Latin America, to representative pieces of universal art, crafts and Mexican and foreign art work.

Text: *Elsie Montiel.*

Photography: *Dante Barrera.*



Zacatecano Museum.



Mask on exhibit at the Rafael Coronel Museum.



The Pedro Coronel Museum's facade.

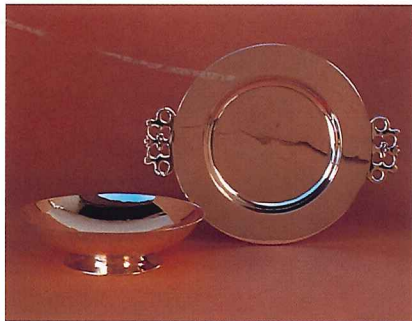


Rafael Coronel Museum, located at the former San Francisco Church.



The Silver Center Of Zacatecas

Master craftsmanship is back in all its glory among the teachers, apprentices and students of the Silver Center of Zacatecas. Original, exclusive designs with local animal and plant motifs, as well as typical Zacatecas wrought-iron products and facades, are the trademarks of a school that is reviving the tradition of training first class craftsmen, specialists in jewelry making and silversmithing.



The Silver Center

A LITTLE HISTORY

The school occupies the Bernárdez ore-processing ex-hacienda in the eastern part of the city of Zacatecas. Captain Ignacio de Bernárdez, a prominent miner in the early eighteenth century, had the building constructed at the mouth of the shaft of the La Cantera mine to process silver ore. The outdoor amalgamation process used required water to



Dante Barrera

separate out the metal, so a dam and a series of canals were also built to store and transport the water.

Bernárdez' nephew, a very pious Catholic, had a church built on the spot, with an altar covered in gold. Later, the property fell into the hands of an ambitious Spaniard named Zarachago, who, convinced there was a treasure buried in the walls, had the building destroyed and the altar melted down for the gold. The building, a ruin no longer used for its original purpose, was then forgotten for many decades.

It was not until 1981 that the state government began to remodel it. Only two columns on one end of the building survived, and they were used as the guide for reconstruction. In 1988, the building was loaned to the Silver Miners Foundation to house what is now the Silver Center.

A PROJECT WITH A FUTURE

Zacatecas' first mine was discovered in 1546. Shortly thereafter, the area's great

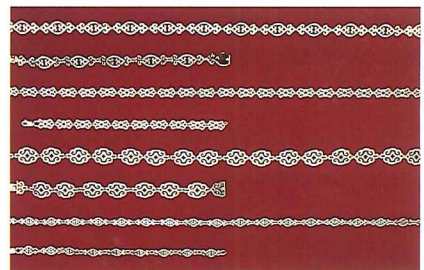
underground riches would attract large numbers of people and begin to produce vast earnings for the Spanish Crown. Only three years later, 34 mining companies were already operating in the city and their owners became "the silver aristocracy."

A swift jump in the population, enormous riches and the establishment of important religious orders who did widespread missionary work and accumulated many books in their convent libraries, helped make the city—dubbed "The Civilizer of the North"—the second most important in New Spain.¹



The Silver Center

Increasingly well known, the Silver Center now has students from other parts of Mexico, as well as several other Latin American and Caribbean countries.



The Silver Center



Dante Barrera

Several centuries later, Zacatecas continues to be Mexico's foremost silver producer and some of its mines are among the world's most productive, part of why the investment in the Silver Center was decided on. The school has three main objectives: 1) to create jobs in a region that is today one of the main starting points for migrants to the United States; 2) to offer training in a skill rapidly being lost; and 3) to make use of raw materials abundantly available locally.

The Silver Center opened with an initial investment of nearly U.S.\$1 million from a private foundation and the state government.² The foundation was created to monitor the center's operations and raise funds for it until it can be economically self-sufficient.

Students with interest, creativity and ability in metal working are recruited for training. After finishing their studies, they are encouraged to open their own workshops to provide work for family members or other craftsmen. This at the same time helps rekindle the silversmith tradition with all the quality and value of small-scale production.

The pilot project was to train five smiths with year-long scholarships to work in the Mexico City Tane silver workshops. These five then became the center's teaching staff. The 20 artisans of the school's 1990 first graduating class along with the 70 more that make up for the following generations have already managed to set up 15 workshops throughout the state. Increasingly well known, the Silver Center now has students from other parts of Mexico, as well as several other Latin American and Caribbean countries.

Two items of note about the center: Since it is a non-profit institution, the only

entrance requirements are ability and creativity, regardless of ability to pay. Secondly, it has continuously focused on experimenting with ways for the students to really take full advantage of their training.

Initially, the center accepted students completely tuition-free, provided them with their tools and made a gift of the tools at the end of the course. However,



The Silver Center



Dante Barrera

since many ended up doing something else for a living and selling their tools, a symbolic tuition fee is now charged and the students provide their own tools.

Today the center has completely equipped jewelry and silversmith workshops where the students learn everything from wax casting to final polishing techniques. The jewelry-making course is 15 months long and the more complex silversmith course lasts 24 months. The two workshops cannot be taken simultaneously.

The center has no subsidies and supports itself by selling the items the students make. Producing articles with strict quality control is a permanent educational goal, and therefore no defective item of any kind is ever put up for sale. This guarantees the buyer quality wares, not only because they are exclusive, original designs, but also because they have undergone rigorous quality control inspections, unlike other places in Mexico where silver goods are produced in large quantities.

The Silver Center markets its stock exclusively at its own stores located at the school itself, in the city of Zacatecas and at the local airport. On your next visit to Zacatecas, don't miss the Silver Center. You may well contribute to its support by buying one of its original creations. We're sure you won't be sorry. **MM**

Elsie Montiel
Managing Editor

NOTES

¹ Manuel González Ramírez, "450 años de Zacatecas," *Artes de México* no. 34 (1996), pp. 18-19.

² The foundation includes the following institutions: the Zacatecas state government, Gutsa Construcciones, Industrias Peñoles, Minera Real de Angeles, Tane Orfebres, Probusa and the Friends of Zacatecas Association.



THE FRANCISCO GOITIA Museum

*José Alvaro Ortiz Pesquera**

The word “museum” is part of people’s daily life in Zacatecas. The baroque beauty and regal architecture that surprise the visitor at every turn of a corner are complemented by craftsmanship and artistry that over the centuries have produced a wealth of work, today displayed in magnificent venues. One such venue is the elegant pink stone mansion that houses the Francisco Goitia Museum, the permanent home of work by contemporary Zacatecan painters.

Only a ten-minute walk from the cathedral —itself a product of New Spain’s baroque period— the museum was orig-

used as a museum with a permanent collection of a splendid selection of works by Zacatecas’ most prestigious visual artists who occupy an important place in the Mexican art world and are widely rec-

The elegant pink stone mansion that houses the Francisco Goitia Museum is the permanent home of work by contemporary Zacatecan painters.

with agonizing Germanic romanticism. A brilliant student of Mexico City’s Academy of San Carlos, he was noted for being inventive, biting and an able caricaturist. Later, he traveled to Germany to complete his studies at the University of Karlsruhe Art School. He worked under painters Mayerbeer, Klinger and Stuck, and Arnold Böcklin was a decisive influence. On his return to Mexico in 1898, he had his first exhibition in the Academy of San Carlos. For a few years he was part of the group of notable intellectuals who published the magazine *Moderna*, which printed the most advanced modernist thinking. From then on, he con-



José Alvaro Ortiz, Pesquera

Self-portrait, Francisco Goitia (oil on canvas) 72 x 123 cm., c. 1955, Francisco Goitia Museum Collection, INBA.



José Alvaro Ortiz, Pesquera

The Starving Horse, Francisco Goitia (oil on canvas) 68 x 128 cm., c. 1955, Francisco Goitia Museum Collection.

inally planned and built by Spanish architect Máximo de la Pedraja, commissioned by then-Governor Leobardo Reynoso, as a governor’s mansion. Surrounded by vast, lovely gardens, the house was inaugurated in 1948 and was the official governor’s mansion until 1962 when it was transformed into the People’s House, used as a guest house for distinguished visitors, a dormitory for poor students and public offices.

In 1978, the building, property of the state government, was remodeled to be

* Architect and director of the Francisco Goitia Museum.

ognized internationally. In concert with the National Fine Arts Institute and some of the painters themselves, about 170 works by Francisco Goitia, Julio Ruelas, José Kuri, Rafael Coronel, Pedro Coronel and Manuel Felguérez were brought together to show over 100 years of contemporary Mexican art.

THE PAINTERS

Julio Ruelas (1870-1907). A master, his macabre, painful drawings are always treated with poetic sentiment coupled

centrated on illustration. In 1904, he went to Paris where he learned etching, his last, brilliant specialty.

Francisco Goitia (1882-1960). Goitia did not do a substantial amount of pictorial work, but his paintings have been classified as exceptional. The canvas *Grandpa Jesus Christ* (1927) has been recognized as a masterpiece of Mexican easel painting. From his first sketches to his last works, his palette was influenced by realism and expressionism, which he adopted for a long period, evolving later toward a typically Mexican classical expressionism.

He studied at the Academy of San Carlos with the great teachers of the end of the nineteenth century, José María Velasco, Julio Ruelas, German Gedovious and Saturnino Herrán. In 1904 he traveled to Barcelona, Spain, where he worked with Francisco Galí.

Upon his return to Mexico in 1912, he joined Pancho Villa's revolutionary forces. He later dedicated most of his life to working as a teacher and rural promoter among indigenous peoples, particularly with anthropologist Manuel Gamio. Together with the painter's work, the museum displays photographs showing the desolate studio in Xochimilco where he lived until his death.

Pedro Coronel (1923-1985). Coronel's work is part of an expressionism of simplified forms inspired by the colors of pre-Hispanic and primitive art. He studied painting and sculpture in the Esmeralda School, where he later taught. He lived some years in Paris where he fre-

quented the ateliers of the painter Breuer and the sculptor Brancusi.

His work has been shown in Mexico, Tokyo, Osaka, the United States, Italy, Brazil and Belgium. In 1983 he donated his international art collection to the city of Zacatecas, where it is now exhibited in another magnificent museum that bears his name in the Ex-College of San Luis Gonzaga, where his remains are also laid to rest.

José Kuri Breña (1913). Kuri studied at the UNAM National School of Visual Arts. Considered one of Mexico's most important contemporary sculptors, he has participated in many exhibitions nationwide. Most of his work—realist all—is life-size, with a preference for materials like onyx, bronze, marble and rock crystal.

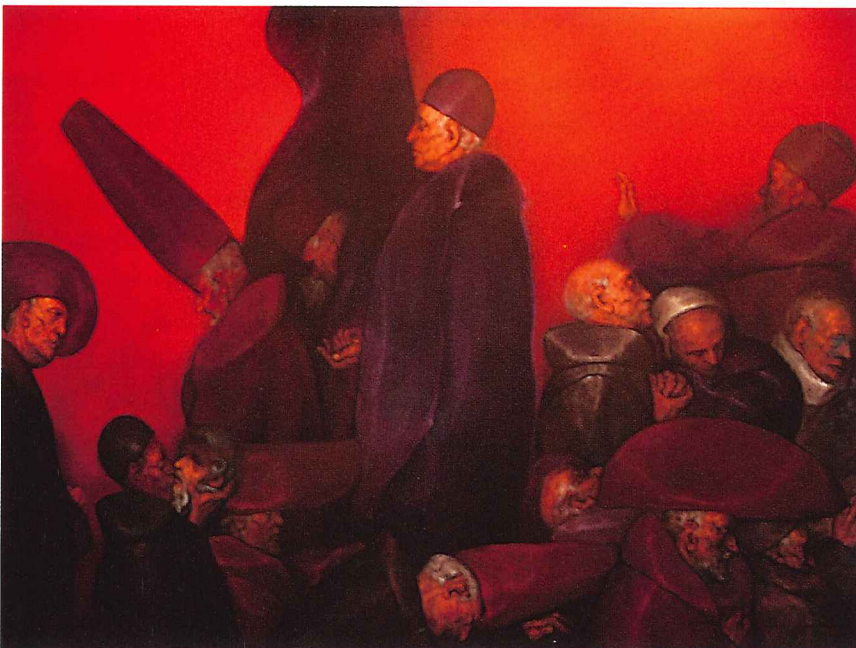
Manuel Felguérez (1928). Working in different mediums, Felguérez both paints and sculpts and is known as a creator of authentically avant garde originality. He

went to the UNAM National School of Visual Arts and studied sculpture in Paris with Ossip Zadkine. In 1954, he received a grant from the French government.

Among other distinctions, he is a full member of the Academy of the Arts of Mexico. In 1975 he was awarded the grand prize at the Thirteenth Biennial of Sao Paulo, Brazil and a Guggenheim fellowship. Officially made an illustrious

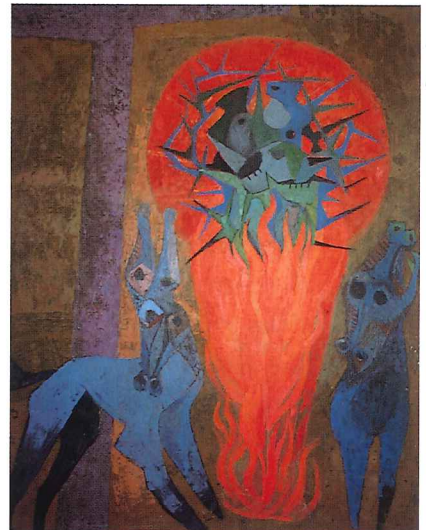


The Pilgrims, Rafael Coronel (oil on canvas) 175 x 250 cm., 1970, Francisco Goitia Museum Collection.



José Alvaro Ortiz Pesquera

Pedro Coronel, *Earth Weeping* (oil on canvas) 326 x 245 cm., 1975, Francisco Goitia Museum Collection, INBA.



Dante Barrera

citizen of Zacatecas by an act of the state Congress in 1987, in 1988 Felguérez received the National Prize for Art and in 1993 was designated creator emeritus by presidential decree. This year, Zacatecas will inaugurate a museum named after him.

Rafael Coronel (1941). Considered one of the clearest representatives of the new Mexican expressionism, Coronel aban-

doned his studies in architecture to devote himself entirely to painting. He studied at the UNAM National School of Visual Arts.

Through four decades of fruitful creative work, he has exhibited his paintings both individually and collectively on the five continents. Outstanding among the shows are the 1965 Eighth Biennial of Sao Paulo, which awarded him the Cordoba Prize for the best young Latin American painter, and the 1974 First International Biennial of Figurative Painting in Tokyo and Osaka, where he won first prize. In 1978, he and his brother Pedro were declared favorite sons by the state government and the Autonomous University of Zacatecas.

Like his brother before him, he decided to donate his collection of Mexican art to the city of Zacatecas in 1990 for the creation of the Rafael Coronel Museum in the exquisite Ex-Convent of San Francisco.

A LIVELY MUSEUM

Consistent with the tradition of making Zacatecan museums spaces open to the general public where people go frequently, the Goitia Museum has developed a far-reaching program of cultural dissemination. Therefore, in addition to the permanent collections on exhibition, it organizes temporary shows to make a place for new expressions of visual arts from Zacatecas, the country and the world. These shows are supplemented by an ample program of lectures, concerts and other artistic events.

The museum is open Tuesday to Saturday from 10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. and from 5 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. On Sunday, it is open from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. For the minimal entrance fee of 10 pesos, the visitor can enjoy both the wealth of the visual arts and the contrasts among Zacatecas' most noted painters, as well as the beautiful gardens that welcome him before he even enters the museum proper. **M**



José Alvaro Ortiz Pesquera

The Pedro Coronel Room. *Crucifixion and Apostles Series*.

The Manuel Felguérez Room.



Dante Barrera



Dante Barrera

The city of Zacatecas was the scene of one of the decisive battles of the Mexican Revolution. After the assassination of President Francisco I. Madero and Vice-President José María Pino Suárez, General Victoriano Huerta took power with the backing of U.S. Ambassador Henry Lane Wilson. But Huerta never had the public support needed to stay in command. Considered a traitor and usurper, his taking power prompted a reactivation in the struggle. Zacatecas was *huertismo's* last stronghold and when the revolutionaries took it, new roads were opened up in the fight for a constitutional government.

The Taking of Zacatecas¹

February 18, 1913, Victoriano Huerta and Félix Díaz signed the Pact of the Ciudadela (also called the “Embassy Pact” because of the role U.S. Ambassador Henry Lane Wilson played in the conspiracy), which put Huerta in the presidential seat. On February 22, President Francisco I. Madero and Vice-President José María Pino Suárez were assassinated.²

Many revolutionaries from Zacatecas, who after the signing of the Treaties of Ciudad Juárez³ had gone back to their normal lives, rose up in arms. A month later, with the exception of its capital, all of the state of Zacatecas was in the hands of the Revolution.

After destroying the main railway lines and isolating the garrisons in the North, General Pánfilo Natera, together with two other leaders, decided to attack the city. Faced with the rebel forces’ offensive, the Federal Chief of Zacatecas, General Jesús Aréchiga, with only 900 soldiers under his command distributed in garrisons throughout the state, asked for reinforcements. Alarmed, Huerta replaced Aréchiga with Colonel Miguel Rivero, who distributed 400 men and

four cannon in the city’s highest buildings and on the hills, particularly La Bufa Hill.⁴ Natera led 1,500 men against the flanks of La Bufa but was rebuffed and renewed the attack the next day.

Zacatecas was not in the hands of the revolutionaries very long: a force of 1,300 federal troops under the command of General José Delgado managed to recover the town. However, the city was besieged

for several months by the rebels in repeated attempts to take it back.

From June 10 to 13, 1914, Natera’s men attacked the surrounding hills, but were pushed back with heavy losses, particularly in Guadalupe,⁵ where *huertista* General Benjamín Argumedo, from San Luis Potosí, defeated them.

Meanwhile, another important rebel general, Francisco Villa, was racking up military victories at the head of the northern armies.⁶ His successes confirmed him as a triumphant leader feared by Carranza himself, the head of the constitutionalist army opposing Huerta.⁷ A little later, there was a break between them and Villa’s Division of the North moved into the war zone.⁸

On June 19, 20 and 21, revolutionary General Felipe Angeles, after reconnoitering and creating a reserve force of 5,000 men, surrounded the city with his troops. The *huertistas* held good positions: General Guillermo Rubio Navarrete and other artillery officers had fortified the area and their artillery, rifles and machine guns covered a radius of 6 kilometers.

At dawn on June 20, Villa’s Division of the North threatened several points; on



Photos by Dante Barrera

the 22nd Villa himself arrived, approved Generals Angeles' and Urbina's arrangements, and on the 23rd, ordered the attack.

THE BATTLE

Villa and Angeles based their plan of attack on simultaneously taking the hills surrounding the city where the *huertistas* were dug in. At 10 a.m., June 23, a single volley of the revolutionaries' cannon signalled the rest of the field batteries to open fire and cover the infantry's advance. The first objectives were the Loreto and Tierra Negra Hills. Twenty-five minutes after the attack began, the *villista* flag was flying atop Loreto Hill. The troops that took these hills then reinforced the infantry attack on the north of La Sierpe Hill with badly needed artillery support.

Both Villa and Angeles ordered a few pieces of artillery transferred immediate-



Gatting gun used in the battle.

ly so they could fire on La Sierpe Hill, which was taken a scant 15 minutes after the rebel cannon opened fire. To launch the attack on El Grillo Hill, the artillery had to be moved, an operation carried out under intense cannon fire from the federal troops, causing the revolutionaries many casualties.

While the artillery on La Bufa Hill battered the troops besieging El Grillo Hill, the infantry captured the *huertista* positions on Santa Clara, and General Urbina's forces drove the federal troops back to the La Bufa Hill itself. Natera, meanwhile, launched the attack against

the Lomas del Refugio and Cerro de la Virgen Hills, while other commanders were doing the same against the train depot and Padre Hill.

This simultaneous assault was successful: about 1:30 p.m., the federal troop withdrew from El Grillo Hill, allowing the revolutionaries a short respite while the artillery was strategically placed, since neither Villa nor Angeles thought that the defenders were willing to completely give up the position.

And they were right. About 2:45 p.m. fresh federal troops from the city began to scale the hill, pushing the revolutionaries back; however, when the rebel artillery began to give them support, they counterattacked and made a final assault after 5 p.m., at the same time that the final strike began against the La Bufa Hill and the positions in the south.

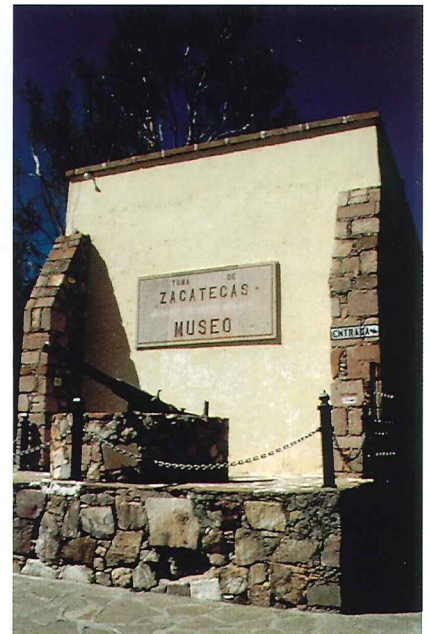
At 5:50 p.m., revolutionary flags waved atop El Grillo and La Bufa Hills while another part of their forces took



Monument to the revolutionaries and distinguished citizens of Zacatecas, on La Bufa Hill.



Two protagonists of the battle: Francisco Villa and Felipe Angeles.



Entrance to the Taking of Zacatecas Museum.

the train station and advanced on the center of the city. At that moment, the federal troops decided to blow up the Federal Palace building to keep the supplies and munitions stored there out of the hands of the revolutionaries.

Federal General Luis Medina Barrón understood that the defense of the city was no longer feasible and ordered a retreat to Guadalupe. Federal General Benjamín Argumedo led a cavalry charge with sabers drawn down Juan Alonso Street, allowing his troops to move forward along the stream, but they were driven back by the rebel reserves situated precisely to avoid the escape of any survivors.

The federal troops returned to the center of the city and attempted to escape by way of Jerez or Veta Grande,

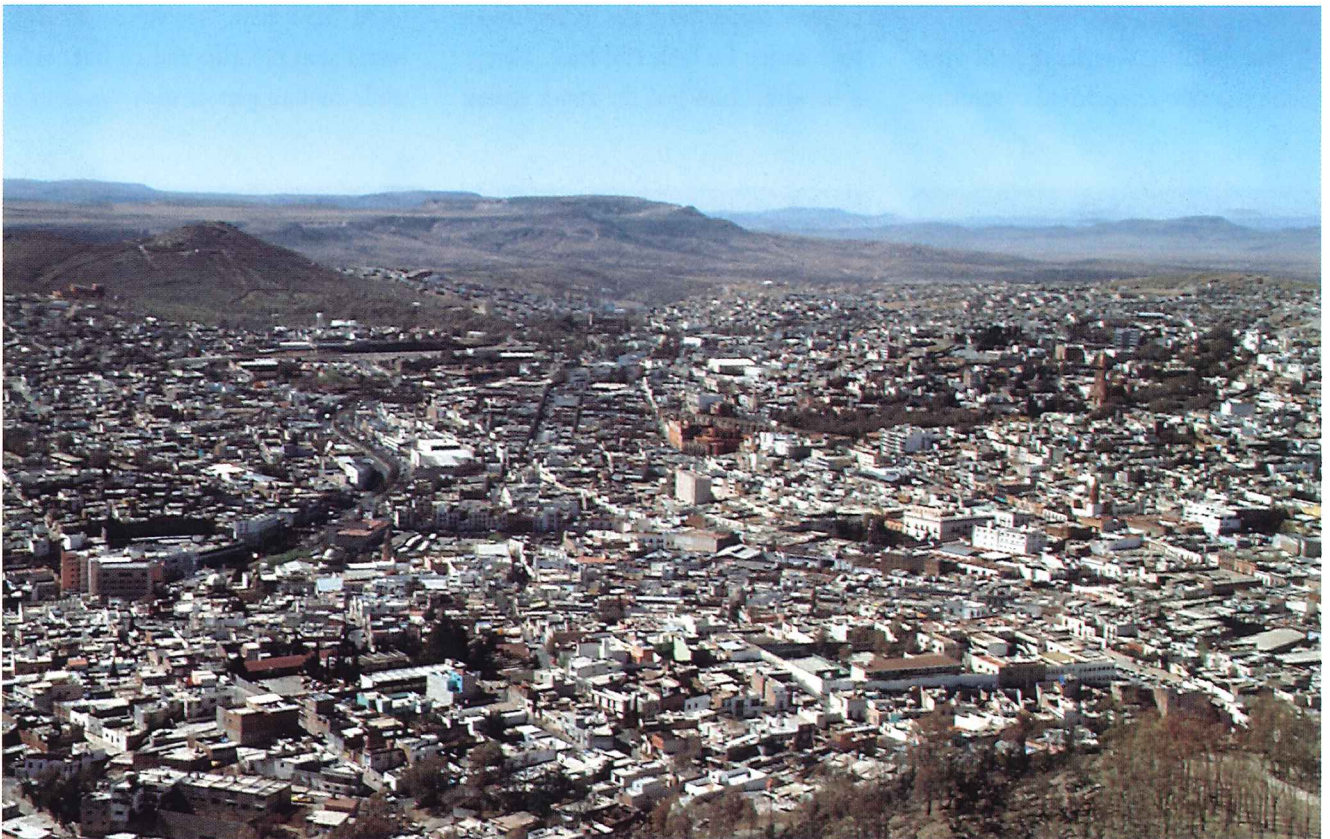
but there they were also driven back. With no choice but to try again by way of Guadalupe, and, at great loss of men and horses, *huertista* Generals Medina Barrón, Argumedo, Olea, De los Santos and Vázquez managed to reach safety in Aguascalientes.

EPILOGUE

The victory of the revolutionary forces was the death knell of *huertismo*, which is why Zacatecas was given the honorary title of Heroic City. However, the battle had been very bloody, and the dead lay strewn all along the city streets. Since they were too numerous to bury and the decomposing bodies could have caused an epidemic, the order was given to pile

them up, douse them with oil and set them alight. Other cadavers were thrown into the mines. Despite these measures, however, Zacatecas was hit by a typhus epidemic and a famine that made the year 1915-1916 be remembered as the “Year of Hunger.”

The disputes among the revolutionary generals were forgotten for a while when the United States invaded the Mexican port of Veracruz. In Mexico, the parties at war protested, as did the public worldwide. Argentina, Brazil and Chile offered to act as mediators and met in Niagara Falls to discuss terms. However, the U.S. government had already decided to support Carranza. Huerta resigned July 15, 1914, thus opening up another chapter in the struggle to reunite the country. ■■■



Panoramic view of Zacatecas from La Bufa Hill.

NOTES

¹ This article is based on information taken from the chronicle now exhibited in the Taking of Zacatecas Museum, written by city historian Professor Roberto Ramos Dávila.

² Madero took office in 1911 after having called for an uprising to depose Porfirio Díaz, in power for over 30 years. However, both society and the economy continued to be organized just as it had been under Díaz and Madero's own party had serious internal differences. Guided by his democratic zeal, Madero did not really comprehend how complex the situation was. This caused concern among those with economic power, who thought energetic action should be taken against the government. With the aid of the U.S. ambassador, the remaining *Porfirista* forces and the revolutionary generals Victoriano Huerta and Félix Díaz, the Pact of the Ciudadela was signed, which decreed the resignation of the president and vice-president and put Huerta in office. Despite Huerta's having sworn to respect

the life of his prisoners Madero and Pino Suárez, they were murdered. When news of this got out, the revolutionaries regrouped under Venustiano Carranza and began their struggle to restore constitutional order. [Editor's Note.]

³ The Treaties of Ciudad Juárez, signed May 21, 1911, established peace and a cease fire between the revolutionary forces led by Madero and the federal army under the Porfirio Díaz government, thus ending 30 years of dictatorship. [Editor's Note.]

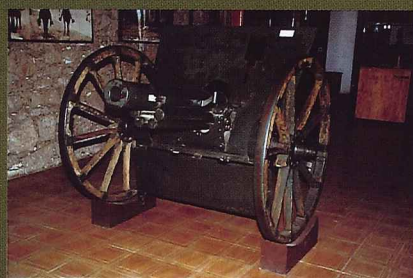
⁴ The city of Zacatecas is surrounded by hills, the most important of which is La Bufa, overlooking the whole town. Huerta's forces held strategic positions on all the hills, making the siege of the city more difficult. [Editor's Note.]

⁵ Guadalupe is a town a few kilometers east of Zacatecas. [Editor's Note.]

⁶ The rebel army had several divisions, each under the orders of its own strongman or revolutionary commander. A peculiarity of these divisions was the soldiers' loyalty to their own commander first, and to the interests of the overall armed struggle second. The most important rebel leaders, both because of their influence and their strategies, were Emiliano Zapata of the Division of the South and Francisco Villa of the Division of the North. [Editor's Note.]

⁷ Carranza was uneasy about the strength Villa's growing strength; Villa, in turn, distrusted Carranza because of his dictatorial behavior, which Villa thought was dividing the different states of Mexico.

⁸ The arrival of the Division of the North under Villa was decisive because it joined forces with the Division of the Center, creating a force larger in both armament and men than the federal forces.



Dante Barreira

A Museum With a Whiff of Powder

The Taking of Zacatecas Museum sits atop the La Bufa Hill, an open-air window on the city of Zacatecas. It is a small place with photographs, maps, weapons, furniture and other memorabilia of the passing of the revolution through the area. Mexican scenes from early in the century, remembrances of the days when the revolution dictated life and death. Showcases exhibiting the famous *bilinbiques*—the ephemeral currency printed by each revolutionary army—turned into *topillos*, or useless paper—to the misfortune of their holders—as soon as the winds blew against their issuers. The revolutionaries' favorite 30-30 carbines, the topic of innumerable popular *corrido* songs. A cannon that may have been definitive in winning the battle.

As you leave, you ask yourself how the city was able to save its many baroque treasures from the savage

battles. Outside, statues of the revolutionary generals, protagonists of the taking of Zacatecas and the death of *huertismo*: Pánfilo Natera, Francisco Villa and Felipe Angeles. Their horses recall the way the riders later died: Angeles' mount, relaxed, reminds us that his horseman died a natural death; Villa's steed hints at his dying in an ambush; Natera's horse recalls his master standing ramrod straight before a firing squad. Each June 23, homage is paid to these and other heroes of the battle.

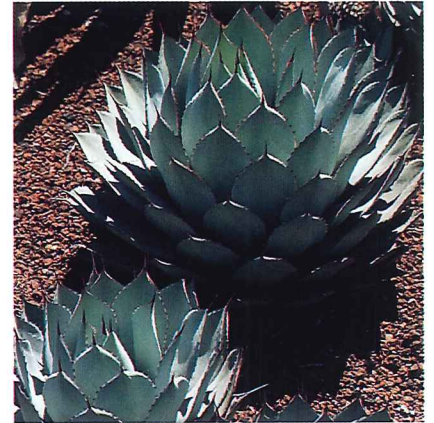
The visitor can also see the La Bufa chapel-sanctuary. Built in 1739 and dedicated to Zacatecas' patron saint, Our Lady of Protection, it is the city's oldest. To finish your visit, take the telfer slowly across to the other side of the city where you can admire its streets and buildings from another vantage point.

The Tree Of Wonders

*Edgar Anaya Rodríguez**

A good plant, of so many uses to Man!¹

Friar Diego Durán



It could be a scene from a Mexican movie, photograph or painting from the first half of the twentieth century: a Mexican *charro* horseman slowly rides his mount as the dying sun goes down, highlighting the silhouettes of the maguey plants like pointy crowns. The maguey: one of Mexico's most representative plants, most closely tied to the history, art and sustenance of its people, in a word, its culture. If the eagle on the Mexican national coat of arms is not perched atop a maguey plant, that is probably only because the nopal cactus allowed it more room to sit.

From the pre-Hispanic codices to modern art, the dark green skin of the maguey and its spiky appendages have given birth to innumerable images. In the 1930s, it was even planted in buildings and gardens in large cities as part of the art deco rage. But this agave, originally from Mexico's high plateau, thrives in its natural habitat, the broad plains that stretch from the southern United States to Central America and boast more than 250 varieties.

They vary from a few centimeters to two meters in height and there are three main types: textile magueys, used for fiber, like sisal hemp from Yucatan; the *mezcaleros*, from which tequila and mescal are made; and the *pulqueros*, tapped for making the famous fermented drink *pulque*. The archetypal maguey, called the *manso* (tame) or *pulquero* maguey (*Agave atrovirens*), grows at altitudes of over 2,000 meters in the semiarid, extremely harsh conditions of Mexico's central plateau covering the states of Hidal-

go, Tlaxcala, Mexico and Puebla as well as Mexico City.

The sinuous maguey has a broad trunk or *mezote* from which thick, concave leaves or *pencas* sprout, rimmed and topped with fierce thorns. Of note is the thin but resistant mesh, called *mixiote*, covering the *pencas* which retains water during the brief rains and impedes evaporation, thus allowing the maguey to survive the dry season.

Maguey plants flower once in their entire life-span. From their center bursts a tall stem, or *quiotte*, up to six meters high topped with sprays of white flowers.

One of the maguey's most noteworthy qualities is that the entire plant is useful, from the root to the very last thorn, a characteristic perhaps unique in the world's flora.

In the sixteenth century the Spaniards had already been surprised by how the bountiful maguey plant accompanied Mexico's indigenous people through their lives, from cradle to grave. Friar José de Acosta had no qualms, therefore, about saying, "The maguey is the tree of wonders...that provides water and wine, and oil and vinegar, and honey and syrup, and needle and thread and a hundred other things...In New Spain the Indians hold it in very high

esteem...and usually have one or several in their rooms...to help in their lives."²

Three centuries later, Humboldt concurred, saying, "The maguey is the most useful of all the products Nature has conferred on the peoples of the northern Americas."³ And praise in folklore was not wanting:

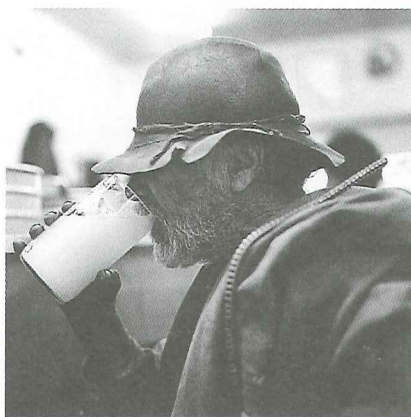
*From Cradle to grave
God wanted maguey
In Mexico to hold sway
Over even King Moctezuma the Brave.*

This may all seem overstated, but the list of items the maguey offers Man, the majority in use since pre-Hispanic times, dispels that impression.

A COMPLETELY USEFUL PLANT

Let us begin with the *pencas* or leaves. Their curved form makes them useful as roof tiles, recipients, shovels and drainage canals. In Mexico's poor, dry areas, like Mezquital, very poor indigenous communities still build their houses completely with maguey *pencas*.

The fiber obtained by toasting, scraping and eliminating the *pencana* pulp was of enormous importance in the past in making all types of cord, tape, nets, bags, sandals, blankets and clothing. *Pencas* were also used in crafts like feather art. Modern science has proven that among its other properties, its biochemical composition makes the soap-like substance it contains very effective and its sap very useful in healing sores and cuts as well as helping to ease sore muscles. During the colonial period, for example, maguey sap was rubbed on the back of people about to be whipped.



Marco Antonio Cruz / Imaginatina

Pulque, a source of protein when meat or milk products are unaffordable.

* Contributor to several tourism and cultural publications; author of the Reader's Digest book *Maravillas Naturales de México*, (Natural Marvels of Mexico) (Mexico City: 1997).

Opposite page photos: Dante Barrera.

The fiber continues to be used as a body scrub; when wet, it emits saponin, a soapy substance that removes dirt and makes suds like a detergent, but with the advantage of being more biodegradable. The fresh *penas* are used as cattle feed, and when dry, make good firewood. Even their ashes are useful: their high potassium content makes them good fertilizer and, mixed with water, they constitute a bleaching agent for washing. Finally, mutton wrapped in *penas* and buried in a pit oven transfer the magu

ey flavor to one of Mexico's most representative dishes, *barbacoa*.

The thin, waterproof epidermis covering the magu, the *mixiote*, was used to make clothing and the paper the codices were written on. This same fine mesh is still utilized to wrap the different spiced meats that are the ingredients in another typical Mexican dish, the *mixiote*.

The thorns that top each *penca* were made by the indigenous peoples into both utilitarian and ritual objects. They became awls, nails and needles for sewing the

fiber itself, as well as for perforating ears, arms and legs as a sign of penitence.

The *quiotes*, the long stems of the flower, were used as stakes in cremations and as ornaments for tomb offerings. Once dried, they could be made into beams or, hollowed out, canals for water.

The magu root is no exception. Its high saponin content makes it a good soapy brush. The seeds, too, are used for making personal ornaments and children's toys, like noisemakers. All of these items are a gift from the magu to Man to make his life easier. The plant itself, of course, is also ornamental, as well as being used to set boundaries in the countryside and cut down erosion.

FOOD FIT FOR A KING

A whole other chapter is the food obtained from the magu, nutritious, healthy and appreciated for its exotic flavor. For centuries it was the main source of sustenance for families in the countryside, and today it is the delight of demanding palates in fine restaurants.

The white flowers that bloom atop the *quiote*, waving over the magu, and the white mushrooms that grow at its feet, have a distinctive taste. The white worms that live on the inside of the *penca* and the red worms, *chiniculles*, that live in its root, are fit for a king's table, both in price and flavor. The inside of the *quiote*, roasted, is eaten as a sweet, but the best known product of this tree of life is the sugary, nutritious liquid concentrated at its center, *aguamiel*, which, when fermented, makes pulque and when condensed makes syrup, honey and vinegar. *Pulque* itself is distilled to produce the strong



Angeles Torrejón / Imageniata

The magu's fresh *penas* are used as cattle feed, and they make very good firewood when dry.

spirit *aguardiente*, and its residue and foam are used as yeast for bread.

It is important to mention the important role *aguamiel* and *pulque* have played in the nutrition of poor Mexican communities. *Aguamiel* is a tonic against anemia because of its vitamin and mineral content; it is also a diuretic and helpful in fighting some urinary problems. *Pulque*—all the folk tales surrounding it notwithstanding—is an irreplaceable source of protein for people who cannot consume meat or milk products.

At the end of the nineteenth century, attempts were made to industrialize some products of the maguey to make brooms, brushes, paper currency and other types of paper, alcohol, erasers, cellulose, animal fodder, yeast, non-crystallizing honeys, industrial-use saponin, fructose, etc.

But, if this large-scale use of the maguey was unsuccessful in its golden age, the *Porfiriato* (the 30 year regime of Porfirio Díaz) with its great *pulque* haciendas, it is even less likely to happen today, when maguey crops are being replaced by other, supposedly more profitable ones, and *pulque* is being supplanted by other alcoholic drinks.

The maguey has been forgotten; the appreciation and even veneration for the plant that led the pre-Hispanic peoples to mention it in at least 18 codices before and after the conquest has been lost. Some of the codices of Aztec origin show a woman with many breasts, a symbol of fertility, seated on a maguey plant: she is Mayahuel, goddess linked to the *metl*, the word for the plant in Nahuatl.

The term *metl* is combined with others to name different parts of the maguey, objects related to it and its different species (like *teometl*, *tlacametl*, *mexcalmetl*), as

well as places, like the town of Metepec, whose name comes from *metl* and *tepetl* or “hill,” and means “the hill of the magueys.”

The names and products of the “tree of life” are now unknown in Mexico’s cities; they are part of the ramblings of old men, more and more frequently heard only in the countryside. There is one exception, however: in some places, like the plains of the state of Hidalgo, there is still no better way to start the day than in the company of an aged, resplendent maguey, embracing its *penas* to extract the sacred juices

it holds in its vitals, together with part of the essence and history of the Mexican countryside. ■■■

NOTES

¹ Friar Diego Durán, *Historia de las Indias de Nueva España e islas de la tierra firme* (Mexico City: Editora Nacional, S.A., 1951), p. 272.

² José de Acosta, *Historia Natural y Moral de las Indias* (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1962), p. 182.

³ Alexander von Humboldt, *Ensayo político del reino de la Nueva España* (Mexico City: Porrúa, 1984), p. 281.



Angeles Torrejón / Imagenalima

The food obtained from the maguey is nutritious and appreciated for its exotic flavor.

Dibujo: Antonio Moroi



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Reseñas

14

Julio-diciembre 1997

Team Canada in Mexico

Abel Escartín Molina*



Photos reprinted courtesy of the President of Mexico's Press Office

The Team Canada concept is known as Partnerships for Prosperity, a joint effort between federal and provincial governments and the business community.

Over the last decade, Mexican-Canadian relations have made a colossal quantitative and qualitative leap. From being considered “distant friends,” today a “strategic society or alliance” is being talked about. We

should recognize that few countries in the world enjoy the favorable conditions for establishing a solid and mutually advantageous relationship that Mexico and Canada do in the context of regional integration processes.¹

First of all, because it is part of a common geopolitical area, Canada plays an important role as a starting point for

Mexico's policy of economic diversification, as well as being a factor for equilibrium in North America and in relations with the rest of the countries in the hemisphere. Mexico, for its part, has also become a central piece in Canada's foreign policy toward Latin America, not to mention that both countries border on the most powerful nation in the world.

* Subdirector for Canada at Mexico's Foreign Affairs Ministry.



Governor General Romeo LeBlanc and President Ernesto Zedillo with their wives.

The visit shows the importance that both Mexico and Canada assign to mutual trade relations four years after the North American Trade Agreement (NAFTA) went into effect.



LeBlanc and Zedillo during a visit to a Mexican elementary school.

Since 1995, Canada has sought to dynamize its foreign policy, diversifying its links to other countries and increasing its presence worldwide. The document *Canada in the World* expresses this, identifying the promotion of economic growth as one of the mandates of Canadian international policy.²

In that context, the backbone of the trade strategy of Prime Minister Jean Chrétien's government is diversification, aimed at competing in the fastest growing international markets. To achieve this, it has undertaken an ambitious program to promote foreign trade called Team Canada as a strategy for international business.

The Team Canada concept is known as Partnerships for Prosperity, a joint effort between federal and provincial governments and the business community. The aim is to coordinate actions and join forces to foster business abroad with an eye to promoting the competitiveness of its goods and services and with the understanding that private capital is the driving force behind economic growth.³

This strategy plays a dual role for the Canadian government: domestically, it seeks to strengthen national unity and the links between the provinces and the federal government; abroad, Canada is seeking a greater presence in markets like those in the Asian-Pacific and Latin American regions.⁴

Until now, Canada has sent five trade missions abroad. Three have gone to Asian-Pacific countries: China, Hong Kong and Vietnam in 1994; India, Indonesia, Malaysia and Pakistan in 1996; and South Korea, Thailand and the Philippines in 1997. Two have gone to Latin America: the Team Canada delegation

went to Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay, Argentina, Chile, Brazil and Costa Rica in 1995; and this January it made a second visit to the region, this time to Mexico, Brazil, Argentina and Chile.

It should be pointed out that this strategy has had excellent results since the fastest growing area of the Canadian economy in the last few years has been the production-for-export sector, and during the different trips a great number of agreements and private contracts have been signed. In fact, the first three Team Canada business delegations in 1994, 1995 and 1996 brought in U.S.\$20 billion worth of business, giving Canadian companies access to new markets.

Closer relations between Mexico and Canada are seen as an instrument to balance their ties with the United States. That is why the Team Canada visit to Mexico from January 11-14 has an economic and political underpinning: it shows the importance that both Mexico and Canada assign to mutual trade relations four years after the North American Trade Agreement (NAFTA) went into effect. It has also been seen as an opportunity for setting up businesses by entrepreneurs from both countries given the way their economies complement each other, as well as to make the best of the advantages offered by NAFTA.

The Team Canada trade delegation to Mexico, Brazil, Argentina and Chile, with

over 400 participants, has been one of the largest and most important that Canada has sent abroad. The trip was headed by the Governor General Romeo LeBlanc, and included the premiers of some provinces, the heads of two Canadian territories and prominent businessmen, as well as well-known academics.⁵

In the governmental sphere, the Mexican and Canadian teams met to discuss the main issues on the bilateral agenda and examine the steps forward in the relations between both countries around questions like trade and investment; energy and gas; environment and natural resources; education; communications and transportation; and agriculture. Five

Canadian Investment in Mexico by Sector*
(in thousands of dollars)

Sector	1994	1995	1996	1997**	Aggregate	Percentage
TOTAL	735,584.1	160,398.4	486,599.8	44,772.8	1,427,355.1	100.0
Agriculture/Animal Husbandry	15.5	0.0	0.0	3.2	18.7	0.0
Mining/Extractive Industries	66,626.7	14,783.2	65,696.0	68.2	147,174.1	10.3
Manufacturing	554,082.4	83,466.3	69,869.2	7,377.9	714,795.8	50.1
Electricity and Water	0.0	8.3	0.0	0.0	8.3	0.0
Construction	274.0	564.0	7,977.6	0.0	8,815.6	0.6
Retail/Wholesale	103,596.0	7,387.2	1,291.1	56.1	112,330.4	7.9
Transportation/Communications	22.5	11.7	9.6	0.0	43.8	0.0
Financial Services	9,097.0	49,495.5	360,305.5	36,975.3	455,873.3	31.9
Community/Social/Personal Services	1,870.0	4,682.2	-18,549.2	292.1	-11,704.9	-0.8

* This information does not include all foreign direct investment (FDI) by Canadian investors in Mexico because:
i) It only includes FDI destined to be part of shareholder equity, lease payments on real estate in the restricted zone and machinery and equipment imports by maquiladora companies;
ii) It does not include FDI made through reinvestment of profits nor intercompany accounts;
iii) It does not include investments by Canadian companies via their subsidiaries abroad, since investor countries are classified by the nationality of the foreign investor, not where their funds originate.

** Notified August 31.

Source: Mexico's Ministry of Trade (SECOFI), General Office on Foreign Investment.

legal instruments were also signed on such important questions as drug trafficking, health, education, cooperation and telecommunications. A joint statement was also signed recognizing the Model Forests Program which aims for the conservation and rational use of both countries' forest areas.

Probably the most important activity during the Team Canada visit was the Mexico-Canada Business Forum on January 12 and 13. Important entrepreneurs from both countries participated in the conference to exchange experiences and give a first-hand explanation of the potential of our markets as privileged partners in the framework of NAFTA.

The forum included ten seminars on questions as diverse as advanced manufacturing and services; agriculture and agricultural food production; education; energy; environment; health; technology

for telecommunications; mining, transportation equipment and services; and financial questions.

Participating companies and educational institutions signed 91 different contracts worth U.S.\$856 million aimed at fostering strategic alliances among companies from both countries. The agreements represent U.S.\$163 million in trade contracts and two accords for beginning construction on a gas pipeline worth U.S.\$265 million. Mexico's commercial banks and several companies set up 11 lines of credit for U.S.\$428 million with the Canada's Export Development Corporation to aid Canadian businessmen in finding opportunities to export to Mexico.

The success of the mission shows the understanding between both countries and the relation's potential. Knowing how to make the most of it is a challenge for Mexico for the third millennium. **MM**

NOTES

¹ See Harold P. Klepak, *Natural Allies* (Toronto: Carleton University Press, 1996), and Herman W. Konrad, *Los estudios sobre México en Canadá. Logros y nuevas direcciones* (Mexico City: Instituto Tecnológico Autónomo de México, 1996).

² *Canada in the World*, published by Canada's Ministry of Foreign Affairs in February 1995, outlines the central guidelines of its foreign policy: fostering economic growth and job creation; protection of national security in a stable global framework and promoting Canadian values and culture.

³ To do this Canada's International Business Strategy (CIBS) has been developed, which facilitates direct consultation between government and the business community. CIBS gives Canadian industries the room to have an impact on government plans vis-à-vis international business in order to jointly develop the industries key to the economy.

⁴ One of the priorities in Canadian trade policy has been finding alternative markets since up to now its main partner is the United States, upon whom it depends greatly and with whom it has a large trade deficit.

⁵ Originally, the mission was to have been headed up by Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chrétien. However, because of the climatic emergency in Canada at the time of the trip, neither Chrétien nor the premiers of Ontario and Quebec, the provinces most affected by the ice storms, were able to visit Mexico. It was not until a later leg of their trip that Ontario Premier Michael Harris was able to join the Team Canada mission.

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The Claw

José Emilio Pacheco*

The things you must have heard in the confessional. Father, and here in the sacristy....You're young, you're a man. It will be hard for you to understand me. You don't know

* *Mexican writer.*

First published in José Emilio Pacheco's book of short stories *El principio del placer* (Mexico City: Ediciones ERA, 2nd edition, 1997) pp. 59-64.

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Translated by Francisco Fenton.

Drawings by Lydia Peña.

how sorry I am to take up your time with my problems, but to whom can I trust myself if not you? I really don't know how to begin. It is a sin to find joy in the misfortunes of others. We all do it, don't we? Just look, whenever there's an accident, a murder, or a fire. Everyone is so glad because at least one of all the evils of the world did not happen to them.

You weren't born here, Father, you did not know Mexico when it was a

small city, beautiful, so comfortable, not the monstrosity that plagues us now in 1971. Then we came into the world and left it in the same place, without ever moving from the neighborhood. We were from San Rafael, Santa María, or La Roma. Nothing will ever be the same....I'm sorry, I'm just rambling, aren't I? I never have anyone to talk to, and once I get started....Oh, Father, I'm so ashamed, if only you knew, I've never





dared to tell anyone about this, not even you. But here I am. I'll feel more at peace afterwards.

You see, Rosalba and I were born in buildings on the same street, barely three months apart. Our mothers were very close. They would take us to the Alameda and to Chapultepec together. They taught us to speak and to walk together. Ever since we started school Rosalba was the prettiest, the funniest, the most intelligent. Everyone liked her and she was nice to everyone.

It was the same in elementary school and junior high school. She was the best student, she got to be the flag-bearer at ceremonies, she would dance, act or recite on special days. "Studying is easy for me," she'd say. "I only have to hear something once to learn it by heart."

Oh, Father, why are things so badly distributed? Why did Rosalba get all the good things and I the bad? Ugly, fat, dumb, uncongenial, rude, selfish, bad-tempered. Anyway... You can imagine what happened to us in high school,

when so few women got that far. Everyone wanted to be Rosalba's boyfriend. As far as I was concerned, you could throw me to the dogs. No one was even going to look at the beautiful girl's ugly friend.

In a small student newspaper they printed, "It is rumored that Rosalba hangs out with Zenobia all the time so that the contrast will make her unique, extraordinary, incomparable beauty shine all the more." Of course, the article wasn't signed. But I know who wrote it. I have never forgiven him, although more than a half century has passed and he is an important man now.

It is so unjust, don't you think? Nobody chooses their face.

If you're born ugly on the outside people find a way for you to become ugly on the inside, too. At fifteen, Father, I was already bitter. I hated my best friend and I couldn't show it because she was always good, kind, affectionate to me. Whenever I felt sorry for the way I looked she would say, "Don't be silly.

How can you think you're not pretty, with those eyes, and the lovely smile you have." But that was doubtless only youth. Who doesn't have a bit of charm at that age?

My mother had grown aware of the problem. To console me she would talk about how much beautiful women suffer and how easily they become lost. I wanted to be a law student, even though then people would laugh at the idea of a woman meddling in men's business. We'd been together all our lives, and I didn't have the courage to go to college without Rosalba.

We still hadn't finished high school yet when she married a rich boy she met at a charity fair. He took her to live on the Paseo de la Reforma in a very posh home that's long since been demolished. She invited me to the wedding, of course, but I didn't go. "Rosalba, what would I wear? Your husband's guests will think you brought your maid along!"

I had such high hopes but from the time I was eighteen I had to go to work, first at the Palacio de Hierro and then as a secretary at the Ministry of Finance. I was stuck in the apartment I was born in, on Pino Street. Santa María lost its turn-of-the-century splendor and got run down. By then my mother had already died after terrible suffering. My father had gone blind from the vices of his youth. My brother was a drunk who played the guitar. He would write songs and yearned for the fame and fortune of Agustin Lara. My poor brother: all his life he wanted to be worthy of Rosalba, yet he was murdered in some dive in Nonoyalco.

We went a long time without seeing each other. One day Rosalba came up to

the lingerie department, said hello as if nothing was amiss, and introduced me to her new husband, a foreigner who barely understood Spanish. Oh, Father, believe it or not, Rosalba was more beautiful and elegant than ever, in her prime, as it were. I felt so rotten inside that I would have liked her to drop dead at my feet. Worst of all, the most painful thing was that, for all her wealth and beauty, she was still as kind, as open as ever.

I promised to go see her at her new home in Las Lomas. I never did. Every night I prayed to God I would never see her again. I would repeat to myself: Rosalba never comes to the Palacio de Hierro, she buys her clothes in the United States, I don't even have a telephone, there's absolutely no chance of us bumping into each other again.

By this time almost all of our friends had moved away from Santa María. Those who remained there were fat, saddled with children, with husbands who shouted at them and beat them and would go off to fool around with all sorts of women. It was better to never marry than to live like that. I never married, although I wasn't lacking for opportunities. However down on your luck you are, there is always someone behind you, picking up what you discard.

The years passed. It must have been around when Avila Camacho was president, or maybe it was Alemán, when one afternoon, while I was waiting for the trolley in the rain, I spotted her in her big Cadillac, with an uniformed chauffeur and everything. The car stopped at the light. Rosalba picked me out of the crowd and offered me a lift. She was married for the fourth or fifth time, incredible as that may seem. In spite of the passage of time,



thanks to her efforts she was still the same: her fresh, girlish face, her svelte figure, her green eyes, her auburn hair, her perfect teeth.

She chided me for never visiting, although she had sent me Christmas cards every year. She told me that next Sunday the chauffeur would come and pick me up for dinner at her place. When we got to my apartment, out of courtesy I invited her in. And she accepted, Father, she accepted! Just imagine how ashamed I was to show her my home, to her who lived in such luxury, in such comfort. Although it was clean and neat, it was the same poky place that she had known when she was poor, too. All so old and miserable that I nearly cried with rage and humiliation.

Rosalba became sad. She had never come back to the place she had left. We talked about old times. All of a sudden she got to telling me how unhappy she was. And that is why, Father, and look who's telling you this, we must never feel envious. No one escapes its clutches. Life

is just as terrible for everyone else. Rosalba's tragedy was not having children. Men would catch her eye for a moment. Then, almost immediately, disappointed, she would turn to any of the other number of men who courted her. Poor Rosalba, they never left her alone, in Santa María or in high school or in all those rich and sumptuous places she went to later on.

She didn't stay long. She was going to a party or some affair and had to go home and get dressed. On Sunday the driver showed up at my door. He kept ringing and ringing the bell. I peeked out the window at him but didn't answer. What would I ever do in those rich surroundings? I was the ugly one, the fat one, the old maid, the spinster, the working girl. How could I let myself be compared with Rosalba again? I might be a nobody, but I have my pride.

That meeting is carved on my soul. If I went to the movies or sat down to watch television or to leaf through a magazine, there were always beautiful women

like Rosalba in them. At work I often waited on some girl who looked slightly like her, and I would be nasty, I would invent obstacles, look for some way to humiliate her in front of the other employees so I could feel, "I'm getting back at Rosalba."

You will ask me, Father, what Rosalba ever did to me. Nothing, really, as far as I can see. That was the worst thing, what made me the angriest. Remember, Father, she was always good and kind to

me. But she ruined my life, she made me less just by existing, by being so beautiful, so rich, so everything.

I know what hell must be like, Father. But, even so, people always get what's coming. That meeting must have been in 1946. So then I've waited a quarter of a century. And finally, Father, this morning I saw her on the corner of Madero and Palma. At first she was far off, but then I saw her up close. You wouldn't believe the sight, Father! that wonderful

body, face, legs, eyes, hair, were lost forever in a tub of lard, bags, spots, wrinkles, double chin, varicose veins, gray hair, make-up, blush, mascara, dentures, false eyelashes, inch-thick eyeglasses.

I hurriedly went to her and kissed and embraced her. What had separated us was past. Everything that came before didn't matter now. We would never be the pretty girl and the ugly one. Now Rosalba and I are alike. Now old age has made us the same. ■■■

JOSÉ EMILIO PACHECO

José Emilio Pacheco, novelist, short story writer, translator and editor, is one of the most outstanding and prolific writers of twentieth-century Mexican letters. Born in Mexico City June 30, 1939, Pacheco studied at the National Autonomous University of Mexico's Schools of Law and Philosophy and Letters. He went into publishing in 1956, making a name for himself particularly as managing editor of the magazines *Universidad de México* and *Diálogos*, as well as the "La Cultura en México" supplement of the daily newspaper *Novedades*, and as a writer for the cultural news program *Cine-Verdad* (Cinema-Truth).

His first book of poems, *Los elementos de la noche* (The Elements of the Night), was published in 1963, followed by *El reposo del fuego* (The Repose of Fire) (1966), *Irás y no volverás* (You Shall Go and You Shall Not Return) (1973), *Desde entonces* (Since Then) (1980), and *Miro la tierra* (I Look at the Ground) (1983), among others.

Part of his vast body of poems has been included in several anthologies, among them, *Ayer es nunca jamás* (Yesterday Is Never Ever) (1978), *Fin de siglo* (End of Century) (1984), *Alta traición* (High Treason) (1985) and *Selected Poems* (1987).

Among his books of short stories are *La sangre de Medusa* (The Blood of Medusa) (1958), *El viento distante* (The Distant Wind) (1963) and *El principio del placer* (The Pleasure Principle), for which he received the Xavier Villaurrutia Award for narrative in 1973. His most outstanding novels are *Morirás lejos* (You Will Die Far Away) (1967) and *Las batallas en el desierto* (Battles in the Desert) (1981), which has been translated into English, French, Russian, German and Greek.

Pacheco has published several anthologies, among them *La poesía mexicana del siglo XIX* (Mexican Twentieth-Century Poetry) (1965), *Antología del modernismo* (Anthology of Modernism) (1970), *Novelistas ingleses* (English Novelists) (1982) and *La novela histórica y folletinesca* (The Historical and Pamphleteering Novel) (1985).

Among the many works he has translated are *De Profundis*, by Oscar Wilde (1975) and *A Streetcar Named Desire*, by Tennessee Williams (1983).

During his long career, Pacheco has received many prizes and awards, like the Magda Donato Award (1967), the National Prize for Poetry (Aguascalientes, 1969), the Villaurrutia Award (1973) and the National Prize for Journalism (for the area of culture, 1980). In 1973 he and Arturo Ripstein shared an Ariel from the Mexican Cinema Academy for the best original script and the best film adaptation for the movie "The Castle of Purity."

Raquel Villanueva
Staff writer

Source: *Enciclopedia de México* vol. 10 (Mexico City: Sabeca International Investment Corporation c/o Enciclopedia Britannica de México, 1994), p. 6101.

A Century-Long Life, A Century of Books

Arnaldo Orfila Reynal

(1897-1998)

Arnaldo Orfila not only lived for a century.
He filled it with editorial valor, political courage, human color.

Carlos Fuentes

A teacher to uncounted generations of Mexican and Latin American publisher-editors, Arnaldo Orfila had the affection and admiration of anyone and everyone involved in the world of books. His death January 13, 1998 makes orphans of practically all the publishers, editors, writers and readers in the Spanish language.

Saying that Don Arnaldo Orfila was probably the world's best Spanish-language book editor is no exaggeration. Directly or indirectly, as a superior or as a role model, those of us who have chosen to dedicate part or all of our lives to the noble craft of publishing and editing owe him an enormous debt, not only because of his unending passion for books, but above all because he embodied more than anyone else all the attributes of a good publisher-editor.

Don Arnaldo was a simple man, intuitive and humble, who always clearly understood that a publisher's first commitment is to be a means of communication between the great thinkers and the reader. To be the conduit between the two, as another important contemporary Mexican editor, Sealtiel Alatríste, would say.

This is why at the two publishing houses he managed in Mexico, the Fondo de Cultura Econó-

mica, FCE (1948-1967), and Editorial Siglo XXI (1967-1987), his work was always guided by intellectual honesty, technical rigor and humanist and social concerns. He always thought it indispensable to link publishing with the widest possible dissemination of the important trends of economic, political, social and scientific thought of the moment.

Born in Argentina in 1897, Orfila Reynal moved definitively to Mexico in 1948, when the director of the FCE, well-known Mexican historian Daniel Cosío Villegas, resigned and invited him to take his place as head of the publishing house. Prior to that he had already been the executive director of Eudeba (the University of Buenos Aires Publishing House) in his native Buenos Aires.

By that time, the FCE was already an established publishing house in Latin America. It was known for its original aim of contributing to forging an economic culture, not in the sense of accessible and inexpensive, but in the sense of bringing the most recent and influential expressions of the science of economics to Spanish-speaking readers. Don Arnaldo preserved that tradition, but he also had the vision



Photos by Luis Humberto Castellanos

of broadening out FCE topics to include other areas like literature, history, the other social sciences, making them accessible to the public. Orfila always kept the reader in mind and defended his position arguing that broadening out the public's access to culture had to be both organic and integral, and that, therefore, low-cost massive runs dealing with all areas of human thinking, particularly those most closely related to society, politics and art, had to be made available.

In that sense, he conceived, designed and published series that have since become classics and very popular among the reading public in Spanish-speaking countries. Just to mention one example, the series "Letras Mexicanas" (Mexican Letters) has made all the works, from the very earliest, of Mexico's most important literary figures available to the public. These books, while they may not all be instant classics, have all, as critic and writer Carlos Monsiváis said, put their mark on a generation: *El laberinto de la soledad* (The Labyrinth of Solitude), *El llano en llamas* (The Plain in Flames), *Pedro Páramo*, *La región más transparente* (The Most Transparent Region) and *Casi el paraíso* (Almost Paradise), among others. The series "Breviarios de Cultura Económica" (Economic Culture Fund Pocket Books), offered books written in laymen's language about practically all the fields of human knowledge in abridged form and at low cost; "Tierra Firme"¹ was dedicated to making available the best philosophical and literary texts produced by Latin American thinkers and writers.

As an editor, Arnaldo Orfila always had sufficient ability, culture and intuition to identify the best authors and the most profound, innovative, original and transcendental philosophical, economic, social, political and scientific proposals. But he also had a special human sensibility that allowed him to unflinchingly recognize true literary talent. That is why he was the first to publish—often against the current and the opinion of advisors, critics and supposed experts—writers of the stature of Carlos Fuentes, a young unknown of 27 who gave him the manuscript of his first novel, *La región más transparente*. Other writers he promoted who with the years have come to be placed on the very top of the list of Mexican letters in this century include Juan José Arreola (*Confabulario* [Confabulatory] and

Varia invención [Various Invention]); Luis Spota (*Casi el paraíso* [Almost Paradise]); Edmundo Valadés (*La muerte tiene permiso* [Death on Leave]); Nobel Prize winner Octavio Paz (*La estación violenta* [The Violent Season]); Rosario Castellanos (*Balún Canán*); and Fernando Benítez (*El rey viejo* [The Old King] and *El agua envenenada* [Poisoned Water]).

Among the great qualities that made Orfila successful in directing the FCE were his systematic approach, his overall vision, his wide knowledge of Latin America, and, perhaps most importantly from a practical standpoint, his great ability to form and lead a team of the most highly skilled collaborators. This team was made up of writers, poets and editors who had already been successful in Mexican publishing circles. The most outstanding of these are Joaquín Diez Canedo, founder and director of Joaquín Mortiz publishing house; poet Alí Chumacero; short story writer and conversationalist Juan José Arreola; playwright Emilio Carballido; Antonio Alatorre; Manuel Andújar; Eugenio Imaz; and Elsa Cecilia Frost, all outstanding figures in Mexican cultural circles.

In 1967, Orfila's publication of Oscar Lewis' classic about poverty in Mexico, *The Children of Sanchez*, cost him his post as director of the FCE. President Gustavo Díaz Ordaz (1964–1970)—the same man who ordered the repression of the 1968 student movement that ended with the massacre of students at the Three Cultures Plaza in Tlatelolco and whose administration was noted for intolerance and authoritarianism—thought the book offended Mexican national sensibility, despite its having been translated into several different languages and its author being an internationally renowned sociologist who had worked on questions of urban poverty not only in Mexico City, but also in New York, London, Jakarta, Calcutta, etc.

Arnaldo Orfila always had sufficient ability,
culture and intuition to identify
the best authors and the most profound,
innovative, original and transcendental
philosophical, economic, social, political
and scientific proposals.
But he also had a special human
sensibility that allowed him
to unflinchingly recognize true literary talent.

¹ "Tierra Firme" literally means "dry land," but in this case refers to the Spaniards' arrival in what they considered the "New World" and therefore to all things Latin American. [Translator's Note.]

Orfila's firing caused a great commotion in Mexican intellectual and cultural circles and led to a movement in solidarity with him. Many of Mexico's most important writers and intellectuals expressed their repudiation of the authoritarian measure. Some, among them Elena Poniatowska, Fernando Benítez, José Emilio Pacheco and Carlos Monsiváis, left the FCE and together with Orfila and the majority of his collaborators, set up a new publishing house, Siglo XXI Editores, with an eye to maintaining and fostering an independent, critical industry in Mexico. Arnaldo Orfila headed up the new venture.

At Siglo XXI, Orfila continued to promote his principles and convictions. He created important series like the Library of Socialist Thought, which included works by the most outstanding socialist authors, and continued to promote the distribution of Latin American literature and universal thought. Siglo XXI was the first to publish and distribute authors like Alejo Carpentier, José Lezama Lima, Eliseo Alberto and Cintio Vitier, the most important exponents of Cuban literature. Orfila was also one of the first to discover the new trends in social sciences



and print them in Spanish. Siglo XXI translated and published Jacques Lacan, Claude Levy-Strauss, Michel Foucault, Louis Althusser and Jacques Derrida, among others.

Orfila was always very aware of social struggles, which is why he asked the eminent philosopher Don Wenceslao Roces, originally from Spain and exiled in Mexico after the Spanish Civil War, to translate Karl Marx' *Capital*. Orfila's progressive ideas led him to publish translations of the most influential theoreticians and ideologues of Western Marxism and the Latin American left.

In the 1960s and 1970s atmosphere of censorship and authoritarianism, he took the conscious risk of publishing literature about the Cuban and Sandinista Revolutions. And thanks to him, works like C. Wright Mills' famous *Listen, Yankee!* were made available to the Spanish-speaking public.

Mexico's public and government recognized the value of his work. In 1989 he was given the Aztec Eagle Medal, the highest decoration given to foreigners for their contributions to the Mexican people and nation. The UNAM also created the Arnaldo Orfila Prize in his honor, given yearly since 1993 to the most outstanding university publication.

Raúl Padilla, organizer of the Guadalajara Book Fair, perhaps the most important of its kind in Latin America, also recently announced that the 1998 fair would be dedicated to Don Arnaldo, in posthumous homage to his work and legacy, but above all in recognition of his spirit and attitude, the inspiration he is for all those who believe that the emancipation of Man, real freedom, can only be achieved through culture and education, and their main tools, books and reading.

Arnaldo Orfila not only lived 100 years. He was a good man who filled an entire century of culture and universal thought. For him, as a promotor of mass distribution of culture, there were no such things as nationalities, only languages. There were no frontiers other than those of human thought.

Perhaps this is why he always conceived of his contribution to publishing as the promotion of the values that unite mankind the most. For Arnaldo Orfila, being a publisher-editor always meant promoting and exercising tolerance and dialogue among peoples and individuals, authors and readers. **NMM**

Diego Bugeda Bernal
Senior Editor

PUBLICACIONES UNAM

VISIÓN DE LOS VENCIDOS

Relaciones indígenas
de la Conquista



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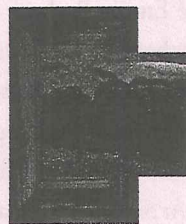
Miguel León-Portilla: Introducción, selección y notas
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Coordinación de Humanidades
Biblioteca del Estudiante Universitario 81
14a. edición revisada y enriquecida: 1997, 228 págs.
\$ 20.00

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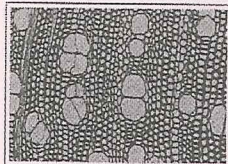
Clara Bargellini: Coordinación
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historia y arte

en un pueblo rural:
San Bartolomé,
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ANATOMÍA DE MADERAS DE MÉXICO: ESPECIES DE UNA SELVA ALTA PERENNIFOLIA I

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UNAM
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ÁNGEL MARÍA GARIBAY EN TORNO AL ESPAÑOL HABLADO EN MÉXICO



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CUENTOS y RELATOS INDÍGENAS



6

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Antonio Gómez Hernández y otros: Traducción
Centro de Investigaciones Humanísticas de
Mesoamérica y el Estado de Chiapas
1997, 372 págs.
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Helena Jordán de Balmori: Compilación
Coordinación de Humanidades
1997, 122 págs. ilus.
\$ 300.00

REFLEJO
DEL RITMO
ANTOLOGÍA
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COMPILADA POR
HELENA JORDÁN DE BALMORI



Reviews

México y Estados Unidos: un reto a la interdependencia económica

(Mexico and the United States

A Challenge for Economic Interdependence)

Blanca Esthela Lara Enríquez and

Lorenia Velázquez Contreras, comps.

Colegio de Economistas de Sonora, A.C.

Mexico City, 1997, 535 pp.

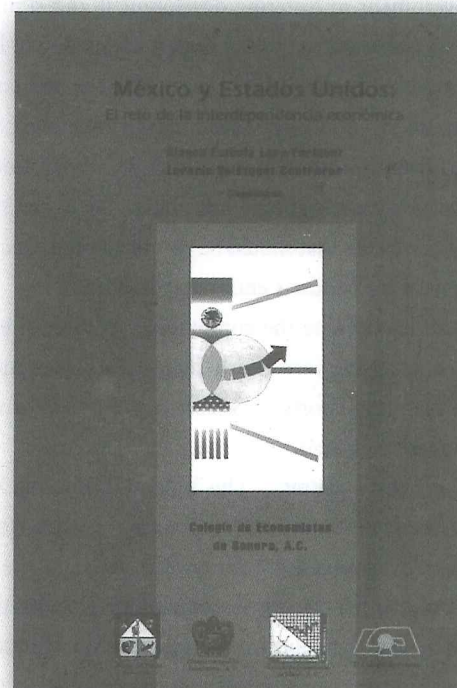
This book is the result of the First International Conference on Economics entitled “Mexico and the United States, A Challenge for Economic Interdependence.” The gathering’s aim was to analyze the impact of NAFTA-driven increasing economic integration and economic developmental trends in northwestern Mexico and southwestern United States. The basic premise was that in the current context of globalization, interdependence becomes particularly important due to the differentiated impact it can have on various regions and sectors of the economy. Since a great deal of literature dealing with the process of integration already exists, why is it advisable to read this book? For the following reasons:

1. It attempts to integrate theoretical focuses about the globalization process (which the authors call “worldization”) and the regional integration between Mexico and the United States, particularly that of Sonora and Arizona. This is not a simple exercise given the different levels of analysis it requires.

2. The book truly makes a contribution because it includes field research, its information is up to date and some of its authors are local decision-makers who shed an interesting light on the question from a hands-on perspective.

3. It includes several theoretical chapters about globalization, economic integration and the new role of the state, of interest to those who follow the new trends in world economics. It also attempts —with differing degrees of success— to bring these theoretical contributions down to concrete levels of analysis to understand what is really going on, particularly the situation in the state of Sonora.

4. It emphasizes important questions like the fact that comparative advantages (understood as given conditions) are insufficient today to guarantee an internationally competitive position. Today’s economic leadership is concentrated in dynamic comparative advantages (innovation and clusters), elements of



international competitiveness. In that sense, different states' quest for complementary clusters in specific economic niches, especially between Sonora and Arizona, are highlighted.

The book is organized in three sections. The first part, "Economic Globalization and Productive Integration," looks at the challenges posed by globalization including the new strategies in international trade and the development possibilities for regional economies. Among other interesting topics, this section also deals with environmental regulations and concepts used to analyze local industrialization, including learning processes and levels of specialization in production.

The second part, "Strategies of Regional Trans-border Development and the Impact of NAFTA," discusses sectoral and regional questions from the perspective of the trade opening. The section begins with what is basically a theoretical chapter analyzing the changes in the world's economic structure and the strategic relationships of city-regions as a response to the new trends in the economy. This chapter explains that technological changes have led to important developments in the geographical distribution of economic activity and employment patterns, which in turn require governmental innovation, both in supporting new organizational structures and in making its traditional functions jibe with the changing situation. The section deals with concepts like "border development without borders," or "trans-border development." It emphasizes the role of local government in fostering development and simultaneously pays special attention to the notion of "quality of life" in economic growth. On the basis of recognizing the new competitiveness paradigm, no longer cemented in static comparative advantages (given conditions), it analyzes the implications this change may have for designing local policy, like in the state of Sonora, and the tactics that should be part of an economic development strategy for Mexico's entire northern border.

Other studies evaluate the competitive position of each of the border states using very clearly defined variables and look at regional planning efforts in Sonora and Arizona as well as the evolution of their trade.

The book's third section, "The Role of Economic Agents and Social Actors in Economic Integration," analyzes regional strategies used by companies, businessmen, the state, the financial system and other agents to respond to globalization. It evaluates the new dynamic in the relationship between the state and private companies in the context of globalization and

regionalization, as well as how internationalization is beginning to redefine the roles of these actors under the umbrella of the theoretical legitimacy of neoliberalism. Applying these notions to the concrete regional level, this section of the book attempts to answer questions like what role regional economic groups are playing. Among other things, it shows that while local actors continue to seek close relations with those in power to make their businesses dynamic, outside actors ask only for good conditions for setting up business and do all the rest themselves. Outstanding among the latter are entrepreneurs from the large international corporations in the mining, maquila and auto industries, simultaneously protagonists and authors of integration with the U.S. market.

What could be improved in this book, in my opinion, are the chapters on the Mexican economy, which contribute little to the main topic and could even have been omitted. However, the book is worth the effort put into it. ■■■

Rosío Vargas

Researcher at CISAN

El futuro del libre comercio en el continente americano

Análisis y perspectivas

(The Future of Free Trade in the Americas.

Analysis and Perspectives)

Sergio López Ayllón, compiler

UNAM, Mexico City, 1997, 336 pp.

Globalization and international economic integration bring about the end of autarchic, monolithic economies understandable in terms of a few endogenous factors. At the same time, they make way for a new economic, legal and social scenario characterized by interdependent decisions and changing international geopolitics, which will attempt to leave behind the binary North-South, capitalism-socialism models to move toward a structure based on trade blocs which, while not completely closed, do try to be as homogeneous as possible.

The dilemmas and questions arising from the quest for economic and legal homogeneity in the trade bloc covered by the

North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) is the center of the thinking in the essays in this compilation. As the title indicates, they attempt to draw a balance sheet and trace some perspectives for NAFTA rather than come up with snap judgments that try to be the last word on the recent trade opening in a region traditionally marked by protectionism or a lack of competitiveness. The essays in this book are organized around four main topics: the tension between multilateralism and regionalism; the relationship between domestic policies and free trade; the legal and social impact of free trade; and the mechanisms for the settlement of disputes.

The first topic looks at the supposed contest between multilateralism and regionalism showing that far from being two opposing visions, multiculturalism and regionalism are not contradictory at all. On the one hand, regional development efforts only take on meaning and medium- and long-term possibilities of fruition if they are part of a broader strategy of international integration. On the other hand, the proliferation and expansion of free trade areas must be based on regional agreements giving rise to common plans which can be the basis for seeking more open integration. The process, then, consists of the gradual construction of multilateralism built out of regional agreements.

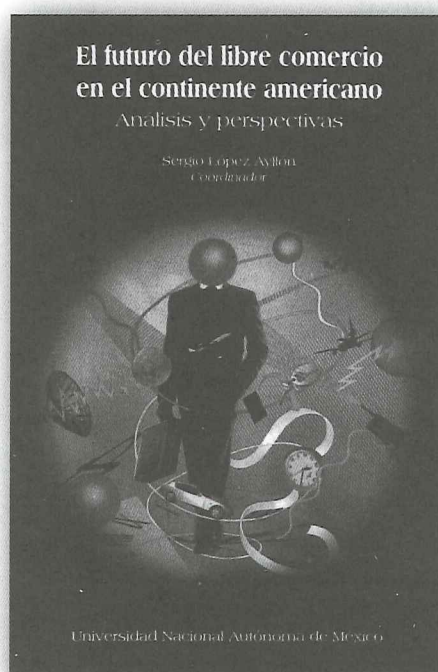
The second section of the book presents a less optimistic view than the first: it delineates the unevenness there has been

up until now between domestic policies and free trade, not only due to the lack of autarchy in decisions made by countries like Mexico—and, soon, Chile—in a globalized scenario, but also because of the hegemonic role played by the United States in the area. Unilateral—often restrictive—U.S. trade measures put a question mark over the complexity of trade competition among countries in the region. In that sense, Canada may be a counterweight to the United States and perhaps deflect the negative effect of U.S. unilateral measures.

The book's third section shows how economic interdependence has also had an impact on legal and social systems. Complying with the legal obligations stipulated in the trade agreements, particularly when they have been made with countries with a different legal tradition from Mexico's, makes it necessary to question the latter's formalism and provincialism and seek a more comprehensive focus. The book presents us with further unevenness between regional and multilateral social concerns: NAFTA's positive impact on better working conditions and employment in Mexico has been practically nil, which brings serious questions to the fore about the limits of economic integration.

The last topic is related to this, although it delves mainly into the more specific legal consequences of free trade: the mechanisms for dispute settlement, particularly those covered by NAFTA's Chapter XIX. Chapter XIX inaugurates an unprecedented mechanism for settling disputes: binational and multinational panels which review the final resolutions of national administrative officials in questions of dumping and compensatory quotas. These panels are important in that they are supranational bodies with real authority to implement their resolutions, thus offering weak countries a new legal instrument to exercise their rights in a context traditionally dominated by the strongest players on the field.

In conclusion, although not all the articles analyze the impact of free trade in the region with the same depth, as a whole they offer a plural vision that serves as a general introduction for those unfamiliar with the topic, and some articles pose questions and perspectives that experts will find useful. ■■■



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