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VOICES *of Mexico*

CISAN • UNAM

Exclusive Interview
With President
Ernesto Zedillo



Vicente Rojo
Fifty Years in Visual Arts
Articles by Lelia Driben
And Angélica Abelleira

**National Security
And Public Safety
Challenges for 2000**
Leonardo Curzio

Coyoacán
**The Cultural Heart
of Mexico City**

Hay pasiones que desconocen el tiempo.

10 AÑOS • 50 PREMIOS • 45 NÚMEROS

Artes de México cumple diez años y, como aquel día en que reinició su vida editorial, su vocación se alimenta de las mismas pasiones:

fascinación por los enigmas, complicidad con la innovación, debilidad por la belleza.

La pasión se comparte

ARTES
DE MÉXICO

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Editor-in-Chief
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Editor
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Assistant Editor
María Cristina Hernández Escobar

Copy Editor & Translator
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OUR VOICE

The changes in Mexico-United States relations in the last years of the century, changes denoting greater maturity than in the past, are particularly important for Mexico. The populist discourse that caused a confrontation between the two countries was not particularly beneficial. Above all, it was very prejudicial for the weaker of the two since, in the last analysis, the giant made its strength felt and its decisions had to be obeyed. It is healthy at this end-of-millennium that the discourse of confrontation has been left behind and that we have moved forward on the path of institutionalization.

Establishing bilateral relations based on institutions means the recognition of the equality of the participants. This sounds simple, but in practical terms, its instrumentation is very complex. Getting the most powerful country in the world to sit down to negotiate in terms of equality is, undoubtedly, a big step forward. For the United States it means showing that its policy goes beyond just imposition by force and, therefore, that it is based on its legitimacy. For Mexico, it presupposes a relationship between equals in which reason and understanding have the upper hand, signifying the possibility of clearing up differences, finding mechanisms for cooperation and, above all, identifying the sources of conflict for designing solutions with appropriate mechanisms that allow for making decisions acceptable to both nations. Undoubtedly, Mexican foreign policy should be understood today in the context of the fundamental changes in the foreign policies of the most developed countries. Nevertheless, it is important not to think that the contest has been won. Nothing guarantees that zero-sum policies have been definitively left behind in international relations. For now, we are hoping.

The populist discourse of decades gone by had more of an impact in creating domestic consensus than real benefits for the country. In fact, the country's real situation at the end of a period of open confrontation with the United States resulted in a political and economic deterioration vis-à-vis our neighbor to the north.

To try to acquire a more profound understanding of Mexico's relations with the United States and Canada, *Voices of Mexico* includes in this anniversary issue, our fiftieth, an exclusive interview with President Ernesto Zedillo Ponce de León, who describes, among other things, the policies that his administration has implemented to improve and make closer our bilateral relations with each of them, as well as the efforts to build bridges with the important community of Mexican origin in the United States.

On the very eve of the new century and the beginning of a new millennium, we must find the time to draw balance sheets and think about the possibilities for the future. For that reason, our "Politics" section also includes two articles about Mexico's political life today.

Roberto Gutiérrez, explains why the last 20 years have been fundamental for the transition to democracy in Mexico. This is shown by the changes in the electoral system, like the broadening out of party rights and prerogatives, the encouragement of electoral competition, the autonomy and independence from the

rest of the government of the body in charge of organizing and sanctioning elections, the proliferation of divided federal and state governments (an executive in the hands of one party and the congress controlled by another or others). Nevertheless, says Gutiérrez, changes must still be made to consolidate the democratic system, particularly to shore up Mexico's fragile political culture of respect for the law.

Then, journalist and political analyst José Agustín Ortiz Pinchetti examines the failed alliance of the opposition, mainly the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) and the National Action Party (PAN). His perspective as a member of the Citizens Council that was charged with seeking solutions to the differences that stood in the way of consolidating the alliance clears up some of the reasons for its failure, which, according to the author, opens up difficult scenarios for Mexico in the year 2000. At this writing, the two large opposition parties have established more modest electoral alliances with weaker parties: the PAN with the Green Ecologist Party of Mexico (PVEM), and the PRD with the Labor Party (PT), the Party of the Social Alliance (PAS), Convergence for Democracy (CD) and the Party of the Nationalist Society (PSN), mostly recently founded.

This issue's "Science, Art and Culture" section includes work by the extraordinary painter, editor, designer, typographer and sculptor, Vicente Rojo. Originally from Spain, he has spent the best part of his life in Mexico, his second homeland. Lelia Driben and Angélica Abelleyra write about his 50 years of artistic endeavors, celebrated in 1999. They look at his spirit of adventure and experimentation and the enormous capacity for geometric integration and disintegration that characterizes part of his vast body of work, as well as his intuition for breaking with all formal structures. This section also includes an article by Mexican architect Luis Ignacio del Cueto about the work of Félix Candela, himself a Spanish architect settled in Mexico, famous for his shell structures.

The "Economy" section presents an article by Paulino Arellanes who explains why he thinks that despite the many positive changes in the Mexican economy, it is still not possible to embark on an adventure like dollarization.

The Catholic friars and indigenous women during the colonial period is the topic of Caterina Pizzigoni's article in our "History" section. She describes her research into the clergy using indigenous women to transmit the values of Christianity and how in many ways, the arrival of the Spaniards meant reversals for women's condition compared to the pre-Columbian cultures.

This section also includes an article by researcher Arturo Santamaría Gómez about the support that existed in the United States for the 1929 presidential candidacy of José Vasconcelos, with the formation of social, political, religious and cultural clubs of Mexicans who wanted to defend their rights and have an impact on politics south of the border. This essay is particularly relevant today because it is part of the background for later movements that demanded, among other things, the right to vote for Mexicans residing abroad.

Leonardo Curzio, in the "Society" section, reviews what are undoubtedly two of the greatest challenges for Mexico in the new millennium: national security and public safety. The author argues that a new, diffuse and ambiguous conception of national security has emerged because of the rapid political and economic changes Mexico has been experiencing, particularly due to globalization. He considers it imperative that a policy for procuring national security redefine the old conceptions of sovereignty and that the new conception be based on a common idea by the majority of the political and social actors, recognizing public safety as a priority on the national political agenda.

Remedios Gómez Arnau presents us with the second part of her analysis of Mexico-U.S. relations at the end of the millennium. Her thesis is that, in contrast to the beginning of the century, today we have a bilateral relationship that has created solid institutions that make it possible to create a framework for more predictable, stable decisions. She situates this in the context of globalization, which demands domestic changes to reduce economic differences among Mexicans and thus stem the massive migration that destabilizes bilateral relations. Also in the “United States Affairs” section, Barbara Driscoll presents the second and final part of her review of Mexican literature about migration to the United States. She looks at the work by scholars and researchers in the last decades of the century, concluding that migration is of such magnitude that there are still many aspects of it which have not been studied in any depth and that, therefore, this kind of research urgently needs support. The section closes with Professor Jorge A. Vargas’ article about an old Mexico-U.S. border dispute centered on the San Diego Bay or port, citing the Pantoja Map to demonstrate the original dividing line.

“Canadian Issues” presents a historical balance sheet of Mexican-Canadian relations by specialist Julián Castro Rea spanning the period from the first European claims to Vancouver Island to the present day. Castro Rea’s article seeks to show that, while governmental and diplomatic relations are closer and more cooperative, it is also important to take into account the long history of other ties on a cultural and social level.

This issue of *Voices of Mexico* dedicates its “The Splendor of Mexico” section to a part of Mexico City rich in culture and tradition: Coyoacán, outstanding for its beautiful colonial architecture, monuments, plazas, churches, special art venues (galleries, museums and theaters), restaurants, libraries and crafts shops. This area of the city is also well known as a magnet for artists and intellectuals, men and women of Mexico’s cultural milieu, who have chosen to live there. We present our readers with articles by Luis Everaert Dubernard, chronicler of Coyoacán, Luis Felipe Sigüenza and Ana María Castro and Víctor Manuel Heredia.

This issue also includes articles about two important Mexico City museums: the National Museum of Interventions, also located in Coyoacán, in one of its most important colonial buildings, the Ex-Monastery of Churubusco; and the Old San Ildefonso College Museum, whose two most recent temporary exhibits we review, “The Mayas” and “Art of the Academies. Seventeenth to Nineteenth Century France and Mexico.”

In “Ecology”, we present an article by Gerardo Ceballos about one of the most symbolic animals in the Western Hemisphere: the jaguar. Ceballos alerts us about the risks of extinction to this species, at the same time that he takes us into the thrilling world of the scientific expeditions to study it.

This issue’s “In Memoriam” section pays homage to one of the most prestigious, renowned Mexican social fighters, respected not only by his colleagues and comrades, but also by his political adversaries. Railroad worker Valentín Campa spent his life fighting on many fronts, including the Communist Party of Mexico, to improve Mexican working class living conditions. We also pay tribute in this issue to one of the poets of the Spanish language who, although born in Spain, has had an enormous influence on poetry in Mexico and other Latin American countries. The admiration and respect that the work of Rafael Alberti, the last survivor of Spain’s legendary Generation of ’27, has always awakened in Mexican writers and readers alike moved us to bid him a fond farewell in the pages of *Voices of Mexico*.

Paz Consuelo Márquez Padilla
Director of CISAN

Mexico's Relations With the United States and Canada Interview with President Ernesto Zedillo



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

Voices of Mexico: *How would you define the current relationship between Mexico and the United States?*

President Zedillo: History and geography makes us neighbors unlike anywhere else in the world. Fortunately, today this relationship is developing through a new understanding based on cooperation, respectful dialogue and friendship. President William Clinton and I have fostered conditions that allow us to openly and maturely look at the differences inherent in two countries that, sharing a 3,200-kilometer border, have different cultures and levels of development. At the same time, the new political understanding we have promoted facilitates our taking advantage of the ample opportunities and interests we have in common to the benefit of our nations and peoples.

This political will has been reiterated in our 10 meetings to facilitate the systematic treatment of our entire bilateral agenda, particularly in high priority areas such as migration, cooperation in the fight against drug trafficking and border issues. Officials from our two countries frequently meet to consult; we have advanced a great deal in institutionalizing our relations, allowing us to discourage unilateral action and preserve the necessary respect for the sovereignty of both Mexico and the United States.

The most important thing about this new understanding is the conviction that we need to establish clear rules for interaction between our two countries. We have done this on the basis of an agenda that, though very complex, can be ordered and divided up and in which we can establish priorities so that when we differ, the discussion of

“Mexico has said that drug trafficking is a threat to all forms of civilization and demands, therefore, an answer from all the countries of the world.”



With Prime Minister Jean Chrétien.

one issue does not negatively affect the entire relationship.

Undoubtedly there will always be new challenges to face, but the most important thing is that we have the determination, the mechanisms and the energy to resolve them.

Proof of this are the periodic meetings over the last two decades of the U.S.-Mexico Binational Commission to dialogue about each and every one of the issues on the bilateral agenda. At the same time, President Clinton and I have made sure we meet at least every six months to personally go into the dynamics of our relations.

Drug trafficking is a global problem with grave repercussions for North America. What do you think about it?

Mexico has said that drug trafficking is a threat to all forms of civilization and demands, therefore, an answer from all the countries of the world. I had the opportunity to reiterate this position in June 1998 before the special session of the United Nations General Assembly proposed by Mexico to discuss drug trafficking and its implications.

There, I said that to deal with this problem, an integral, balanced global strategy is required. If drug trafficking is global, so must our answer be, excluding no one and, above all, without recriminations. An integral strategy means dealing with all the mani-

festations of the problem, from production, distribution, sale and consumption of drugs to other crimes closely linked with this terribly destructive activity. There must also be a balance in each country's participation in the fight against drug trafficking based on co-responsibility. This means that no one can set himself up as a judge of others; no one has the right to put his own law above the law of others.

Mexico and the United States have made significant bilateral efforts in the last five years to strengthen our cooperation in this field. The U.S.-Mexico High Level Contact Group against Drugs, which has operated since 1996, took a very important step with the development of a diagnostic analysis that determined our common focus on the problem of drug trafficking and, therefore, the definition of a bilateral cooperation strategy, which stipulates the principles and framework for our two countries' action in this area. The operation of this high level group has made it possible not only to strengthen cooperation, but also to successfully deal with delicate situations in the fight against drugs without damaging our bilateral relationship as a whole.

Canada has also renewed its cooperation with our country through its new focus on the fight against drugs. In December 1998, the first Mexico/Canada Binational Meeting on Cooperation against Drug Trafficking and the Prevention of Drug Abuse was held.

We also have mechanisms and agreements in this area with many other countries in Latin America and Europe.

The advances in international cooperation in the fight against drugs strengthen Mexico's commitment to join forces and present an effective united front around this international problem.

What do you think of migration in the context of global promotion of human rights?

Human rights must be respected everywhere in the world regardless of the individual's origins, nationality or migratory status. That is why the Mexican government is committed to the defense of every Mexican man and woman no matter where they may be.

In terms of bilateral relations, we have been working with the United States government toward a deeper understanding of the phenomenon of migration, which will help us overcome prejudices and find joint solutions. This is why both our governments promoted the U.S.-Mexico Binational Study on Migration to fully understand the structural dynamic of transborder labor markets and design better strategies using that precise, objective information.

Mexican migrants make an important contribution to the United States economy and we are convinced—and the study bears this out—that they don't go there to compete but rather to hold jobs that the U.S. work force doesn't cover.

What most offends Mexico is the violation of human and labor rights of Mexicans in the United States. That is why mechanisms were established in 1995 to strengthen the consular protection of our countrymen and countrywomen. This is also the basis for our two countries signing the U.S.-Mexico Joint Declaration on Migration in 1997, recognizing this as one of our highest bilateral priorities.

We have also sought accords to deal with specific conditions affecting migrants. This is the case, for example, of the Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation against Border Violence, the bor-

der liaison and follow-up mechanisms for dealing with serious violations of migrants' human rights, as well as the plans for cooperation included in the New Border Vision initiative.

Beyond bilateral relations, I would like to point out that the Regional Conference on Migration was established on Mexico's initiative with the participation of the United States, Canada, the Central American countries and the Dominican Republic, and that the United Nations Human Rights Commission approved by consensus the Initiative on Migrants' Human Rights creating the figure of a special relator.

Relations with Canada have intensified since NAFTA came into effect. What would you say about that?

Our bilateral relationship with Canada is one of the most dynamic in the hemisphere, and it is opening up the road to a true strategic alliance. Our two countries agree that free trade and international cooperation should mean reciprocal benefits that lead to shared development.

As you say, since the North American Free Trade Agreement came into effect, relations between Mexico and Canada have intensified, not only with regard to trade, but in all areas of interest to both our countries. In the five years since the treaty came into effect, trade between Mexico and Canada has grown more than 80 percent and now comes to somewhere around U.S.\$7.5 billion a year. Today, Canada is Mexico's third trade partner and vice versa. Canadian investment in Mexico has also grown considerably.

Along with this dynamic trade and financial exchange, we have also moved ahead in cooperation in other respects, such as in energy, mining, communications and transportation, agriculture, health, culture, education and science and technology.

In 1998, we hosted Team Canada, the most important Canadian trade mission that has ever

“We have been working with the United States government toward a deeper understanding of the phenomenon of migration, to overcome prejudices and find joint solutions.”

“Closer trade ties among Canada, the United States and Mexico have opened up spaces and established commitments for greater collaboration on environmental questions.”

visited Mexico, in the hopes of propitiating new trade and investment opportunities. When Prime Minister Jean Chrétien made his official visit to Mexico, we signed the document *New Directions: Mexico-Canada 1999, Declaration of Objectives and Action Plan* which is a reflection of our desire to respond appropriately to the lively bilateral dynamic. This all makes it possible for us to anticipate an ever greater complementary role for our two nations for the twenty-first century.

What is your view of ecological problems in North America for the new millennium?

Closer trade ties among Canada, the United States and Mexico have opened up spaces and established commitments for greater collaboration on environmental questions. This is very important for guaranteeing sustainable development in coming years in the region.

The Environmental Cooperation Commission, made up of the three NAFTA signers, has developed a triennial program with a view toward the year 2001. The plan proposes to stimulate environmental sustainability in a free market framework and its central areas of work are the environment, conservation of biodiversity and legislation and environmental policies.

The importance of the environmental issues that concern the region demand an unprecedented degree of binational and trinational cooperation among Canada, the United States and Mexico. For that reason, the commission is mandated to contribute to reaching consensus and a full understanding of the environmental challenge in North America. This common understanding will also provide a solid basis for more effective cooperation in regional actions.

Mexico and the United States are also working hard on the Border XXI Program that is stimulating joint efforts in the public, social and private spheres on both sides of the border to ensure development

compatible with public health and the well being of our ecosystems.

The North American Free Trade Agreement has been regarded both as a panacea and the cause of all our problems. What is your opinion?

I think that reasoning like that, on either of the two extremes, is a bit exaggerated. The North American Free Trade Agreement is simply a tool—a very important one no doubt, but only a tool—to better take advantage of the enormous commercial and productive potential shared by Canada, the United States and Mexico to the benefit of our peoples and respective economies. Fortunately, the trade agreement has shown itself to be fundamentally beneficial for the three signers. Almost six years after it came into effect, NAFTA has contributed enormously to the region's economic growth, beyond all original expectations. Intraregional trade grew 75 percent from 1993 to 1998, 12 percent a year on the average. In absolute terms, the value of trade among the three countries came to almost U.S.\$530 billion in 1998, U.S.\$227 billion more than in 1993. And the dynamism born of the trade opening continues to increase. This is shown by the fact that during the first eight months of 1999, trade among the three countries came to more than U.S.\$380 billion, over 11 percent more than in the same period in 1998. Last year, for the first time, intraregional exports were higher than the three countries' total exports to other regions of the world. From 1993 to 1998, Mexico increased its share of total regional exports from 14 to 19 percent.

On a bilateral level, since NAFTA has been in effect, our trade with the United States has grown more than 120 percent, an average of 17 percent annually. Today, Mexico is the United States' second trade partner. As I said before, Mexican trade with Canada has increased 80 percent in the same period. All of this has been very important, partic-



With President William Clinton.

“Almost six years after it came into effect, NAFTA has contributed enormously to the region’s economic growth, beyond all original expectations.”

ularly because of the thousands and thousands of jobs that have been created in our three countries.

The treaty has also been an encouragement to closer cooperation in other areas of importance like protecting the environment and in the spheres of labor and science and technology, among many others.

NAFTA has contributed to a more integrated North American market by strengthening trade, lowering barriers and guaranteeing access to the markets of each of its member nations. In that sense, and with regard to any problems that could derive from the accord, we should keep in mind that one of the greatest benefits of having trade agreements is having clear rules and procedures for resolving differences. Clear rules are always better than no rules at all.

I would like to emphasize that free trade represents more and better opportunities for development, and that, therefore, Mexico will continue to be a firm promotor of the trade opening in the hemisphere and with other regions of the world.

What policies do we have for drawing closer to the community of Mexican origin in the United States?

From the beginning of my administration I established the strengthening of a new relationship with Mexican men and women and those of Mexican origin who live and work beyond our borders, par-

ticularly in the United States of America, as one of our foreign policy priorities. To do that we have renewed support to the Program for the Mexican Communities Abroad, which in turn supports civic, cultural and sports activities of these Mexican men and women who for different reasons live far from our homeland.

It is very significant that most of Mexico’s state governments, hundreds of municipal governments and dozens of civic organizations that work both inside and outside of Mexico participate in this new link. The program is getting very good results in matters like adult education and the distribution of schoolbooks for their children, the organization of sports tournaments and preventive medicine.

I have said proudly that the Mexican nation goes beyond our borders and that Mexican migrants are an important part of it. That is why this administration promoted a constitutional amendment to allow Mexicans who wished to take on other nationalities to do so —if they were able— without having to renounce their Mexican nationality.

Any and all efforts to forge closer links between Mexicans living abroad and their country and to make people abroad understand what Mexico is like are and will continue to be welcome. In that sense, I salute the National Autonomous University of Mexico for maintaining an initiative as beneficial as the magazine *Voices of Mexico*. I congratulate those who make this publication possible and wish them every success in their important mission. ■■■

Building Democracy in Mexico

A Balance Sheet

*Roberto Gutiérrez López**

ABOUT THE ORIGINS OF THE TRANSITION

To appropriately situate the transition to democracy in Mexico —both its clear achievements and what remains to be done— we must consider some of the main characteristics of our social and political history. Today's Mexico is undoubtedly the product of long historical development, beginning with its formation as an independent nation, continuing with the struggles and fundamental definitions that were the basis for the republic in the nineteenth century and linked to the social and political movements of this century.

Precisely because of the particularities of this historical process, there is no agreement about the moment when our transition began. Some political analysts are so bold as to trace it as far back as the 1910 revolutionary movement, saying that this —particularly the recognition of individual and social rights and guarantees as established in the 1917 Constitution— was what unleashed a process of political liberalization with regard to the Porfirio Díaz regime. Others locate it in the 1968 movement because of the nature of its demands and the long term effects it had on Mexico's public life. Still others put it in 1977, with the political reform promoted by Jesús Reyes Heróles, or in

the political events of 1987-1988. Finally, there are those who say the transition began with the 1996 electoral reforms and the new balance of political forces that came out of the July 6, 1997 elections, in which the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) lost its majority in the Chamber of Deputies.

Regardless of the starting point, there is broad consensus that the last 20 years have been fundamental for the democratization of our political system. Apparently, there is also agreement that the advance of democracy in Mexico has been different from the transitions elsewhere, such as some South American countries, Eastern Europe or even Spain, so often proposed as a model and so admired for both its institutional forms and its speed.

The Mexican political transition has its own characteristics; its central driving force has not been the need to refound the state, like in those other countries, but in basically changing the common rules for political affairs and competition through a process of institutional and legal change that has not erased the past.

It should be pointed out in this vein that the Mexican transition has not implied the suppression of the basic constitutional principles that define the contemporary Mexican state as a republican, representative, democratic and federal system. These principles were already present in the 1857 Constitution and the Constituent Assembly of 1917 adopted them without any change whatsoever.

* Professor and researcher in the Sociology Department of the Metropolitan Autonomous University, Azcapotzalco campus.



The Federal Electoral Institute's General Council in session.

Reprinted courtesy of the Federal Electoral Institute

The 1996 reform stipulated that the Federal Electoral Institute (IFE) be entirely composed of respected, individual citizens; the federal government is now completely without representation in the IFE's highest decision-making body, the General Council.

But despite this continuity, the country's radical transformations in recent decades in the most varied spheres (from demographics to the economy, from education to politics and from communications to our links abroad) have made it necessary to institute broad political renovations. As Hermann Heller says, politics consists in activities aimed at transforming social trends into legal norms.¹

It is true that 1968 was especially important for political change in Mexico. The student movement and its immediate and medium-term repercussions made it very clear that it was necessary to reformulate relations between the state and society, particularly how to deal with differences and the political conflicts inherent to any complex nation.

To order the explanation of these changes and underline some of their fundamental elements, it is worthwhile using Giovanni Sartori's now classic distinction between electoral system, party system and system of government.² I will then finalize with brief comments on the political culture that has permeated and, to a great degree, both guided and limited the changes on those three levels.

CHANGES IN THE ELECTORAL SYSTEM

In all democratic regimens, the electoral system fulfills an essential political function: transforming the public will, expressed through regular, peaceful voting, into positions of power that make it possible to set up the legislatures as well as select the head of the executive.

Given the characteristics of the postrevolutionary state's political structure and the particular mechanisms for transferring political power—the central elements of which were the president's designation of his own successor within the context of PRI party discipline and the absence of significant political alternatives—the reform to the electoral system became the priority in Mexico's political transition. That is, since the authoritarian nature of the regime was expressed basically in the lack of a competitive party system, that was where change was urgent. Therefore, the transformation of the electoral system was very rapid after 1968. This both expressed the changes in the country's power structure and had an impact on it. The electoral modernization process has been the outcome of a cycle of almost three decades of reforms to relevant laws and institutions. These reforms have

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been aimed, above all, at establishing the necessary mechanisms for having free, transparent elections and creating trust among the political actors in the electoral structure and functioning.

With this aim, the changes in our electoral system have centered particularly on voter registration, the rights and duties of political parties, the parties' participation in the creation of electoral decision-making bodies and authorities, their presence in the Congress, the citizenry's participation in the organization of elections and in the establishment and functioning of representative bodies. In order to have a more precise understanding of the implications of this long reform process, we should enumerate some of its central characteristics.

The legal changes in the system of political parties have aimed at broadening out their rights and prerogatives. For example, the 1977 electoral law opened up the possibility for all the existing parties to legally participate, even those that had been banned, like the Mexican Communist Party (PCM). The reform also wrote the regulation of political organizations and their activities into the Constitution, conceiving them as entities of public interest and ensuring them both financing and permanent access to the media. Later reforms, including that of 1996, fostered greater party participation in elections and greater equality in the conditions for political competition.

The modification to the electoral system has also prompted broader representation in the legislative branch; thus, today Congress is made up of 500 deputies and 128 senators, compared to the 300 and 64, respectively, of the past.

The 1989-1990 reform is considered a landmark in electoral organization. It established the basis for today's electoral bodies, guided by the principles of independence, autonomy and professionalism, made up mainly of political party representatives and outstanding, individual citizens. Later, the 1996 reform stipulated that the Federal Electoral Institute (IFE) be entirely composed of well respected individual citizens; the federal govern-

ment is now completely without representation in the IFE's highest decision-making body, the General Council. Since then, independently of any other official body, all decisions have fallen to nine electoral councilors, none of whom have any government or partisan ties.

The construction of a trustworthy official electoral body, the creation of a system for challenging decisions and resolving controversies and a form of participation involving the co-responsibility of the citizenry, authorities and political parties were prerequisites for what President Ernesto Zedillo has called the normalization of democratic life, that is, the elimination of postelectoral conflicts that delegitimized governments.

We should underline that the changes in the Mexican electoral system introduced a key element for democratic systems: uncertainty about the outcome and therefore about the country's political map. I will return to this later.

CHANGES IN THE PARTY SYSTEM

These same reforms made it possible to strengthen partisan competition, fostering the change from a system of a dominant party to one of competitive pluralism, in which the most varied ideologies and political currents have a place.

The changes in the party system began with the 1973 and 1977 electoral reforms, which made it possible for a greater number of parties to compete. By the 1982 presidential elections, then, for the first time in the history of Mexico seven different alternatives covering the entire ideological and political spectrum, each with their respective candidates, were set before the public.

The 1977 reform, particularly, made it possible to narrow the gap between the legally recognized institutional sphere and what was happening in the heart of the country, where different forces and movements had significant presence in the increasingly complex structure of civil society.

On the other hand, the reforms to the party system promoted the merger or evolution of the parties themselves. This was the case of the 1982 transformation of the PCM into the Unified Socialist Party of Mexico (PSUM), which would later become the Mexican Socialist Party (PMS). In 1989, the PMS would then turn its legal registration over to today's Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) which would bring in, among others, the militants of the PRI's Democratic Current, headed by Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas and Porfirio Muñoz Ledo.

The evolution of the party system has spurred ever greater electoral competition, both federally and at a state level. On a federal level, the parties which occupy the most space are the PRI, the National Action Party (PAN) and the PRD, which has come to the fore in the last decade, creating a tripartisan setup. At the level of the states, political competition has been mainly bipartisan, with the PRI and the PAN competing in some cases and the PRI and the PRD in others.

The following figures are useful for understanding the magnitude of the change in the distribution of power in Mexico, linked to the functioning of the new party system: taking into consideration municipal governments, today the PRI governs 42.5 million people; the PAN, 27.5 million; and the PRD, 18.9 million. This means that more than half the population is governed by an opposition that to a great extent is no longer opposition. The PRI occupies 14 city halls of state capitals (the most important cities in each state); the PAN, 13; and the PRD, 5. This also gives some idea of the new regional bases the different partisan forces have. Another expression of the transformation of our party system is the emergence of the so-called divided governments, both on a federal and state level. These are instances in which one party heads the executive and another has the majority in the legislature. This is the case in the federal Chamber of Deputies and in the states of Baja California, Colima, Coahuila, the State of Mexico,

Guanajuato, Jalisco, Morelos, Querétaro, Quintana Roo, Sonora and Zacatecas.

Retrospectively, we can say that in the last 30 years, Mexico's party system has fulfilled the public's expectations by broadening out political options and fostering electoral competition among them. Today, with the legal registration the IFE has given to six new organizations, there are 11 parties in all. Given current rules for creating coalitions, these 11 will probably field four or five presidential candidates.³

After the 1996 electoral reform, whose constitutional features were approved unanimously by Congress, several items needed for fully consolidating the party system are still pending. Among them are financing and a level playing field, both during campaigns and in what today has become a fundamental component of political life, each party's primaries. Also receiving increasing attention are the issues of the possible reelection of legislators and a second round in the elections of the president.

CHANGES IN THE SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT

Changes in this sphere are not only linked to growing political pluralism and the negotiation among different elites to create new electoral and party systems. Rather, they are fundamentally connected to what historian Héctor Aguilar Camín has called "the structural trends in the country over the last decades," whose cumulative effect has made itself felt in the 1990s. Among these are a shrinking relative weight of the state and a growing weight of society; greater urbanization and higher educational levels; decentralization of public policies; the massive incorporation of women into the work force; the increasingly important role of the electronic media; Mexico's progressive integration into the world economy; changes in productive and commercial development patterns; diversification of social actors and interest groups;

With regard to checks and balances, in recent years the executive itself has drastically reduced both its constitutional and meta-constitutional prerogatives. The president no longer influences, the make-up of electoral decision-making bodies, nor the designation of Supreme Court justices.

and an increased polarization and socioeconomic inequality among Mexicans.⁴

So intense have these trends been that the Mexican political system has been forced into important reforms to modernize public institutions to make them democratic and to reformulate the relationship between them and society as a whole. Not doing this would have brought the survival of the regimen itself into question, and the country's political evolution would surely have traveled less institutional and more traumatic roads.

The magnitude of what has been at stake in the changes to the system of government is perhaps better understood if we make our analysis as Sartori suggests, starting from the importance of procedures and legal-political institutions for the political life of any nation.⁵

Sartori has quite rightly said that a country's legal norms structure and discipline their states' decision-making processes. From this viewpoint, reforming laws

and institutions becomes crucial in that, as he says, "It is clear that institutions and constitutions do not work miracles. But it will be very difficult to have good governments without good instruments of government."⁶

In this sense, the recent challenge to the entire Mexican political system has been to move forward in the creation of a legal, institutional structure capable of generating governability in the framework of a representative democracy. In other words, it has had to give form to a framework capable of maintaining order in the sociopolitical pluralism prevalent in the country and channeling and fostering—to use Sartori's metaphor—the creation of a roadway that circumvents the obstructions and makes for ordered, manageable traffic in the context of increasingly complex social interaction.

To a large degree, the Mexican political process of the last five years has been oriented toward

finding an appropriate balance between the principles of representation and governability. Seemingly, that is where the secret of achieving not only the transition to, but the successful consolidation of democracy lies. The recent experiences not only of countries now inaugurating democratic regimens, but also of those which have already consolidated them, indicate that the form of government that seeks stability and sustained development must harmonically combine institutional effectiveness with basic consensuses. This will make possible what Norbert Lechner has called "an order for all,"⁷ which also essentially requires, as we shall see later, a political culture based on the actors' self-control and willingness to come to agreements through political negotiation.

From what may be an overly optimistic perspective, we can say that Mexico's main political actors have assumed the importance and necessity of institutional transformations despite the

The party system has changed from a system of a dominant party to one of competitive pluralism, in which the most varied ideologies and political currents have a place.

fact that a good many of their actions continue to hinge on short-term political calculations framed by their strategies of winning power in 2000. The changes in the system of government, therefore, have led to a modification in the terms of both the division and balance of powers of the state, as well as the relationship between the different levels of government (federal, state and municipal) in the context of the national federal pact.

With regard to checks and balances, it should be pointed out that in recent years the executive itself has drastically reduced both its constitutional and meta-constitutional prerogatives. The president no longer influences, for example, the make-up of electoral decision-making bodies, nor the designation of Supreme Court justices, nor the naming of the head of the National Human Rights Commission (CNDH). In addition, an area of special importance in which the president no longer has any influence is

the designation of the head of government of Mexico City's Federal District. This post is now filled by direct elections, as will be the case in 2000 of the heads of the city's political demarcations or wards.

In fact, from the outset of this administration, President Zedillo explicitly proposed exercising the presidency limiting it to its constitutional prerogatives, which has allowed for a more balanced relationship with the other branches of government. This explains the aforementioned limitations on presidential prerogatives. In addition, the legislative branch has achieved a political influence without precedent in Mexican history. Its new central role is explained both by the legal reforms that since 1988 have made it impossible for a single party to pass

amendments to the Constitution and by the new political balance of forces in the Chamber of Deputies. In that framework, the legislative branch has radically changed its internal structure to adjust

it to the new circumstances and avert as far as possible constitutional crises and legislative paralyzes that could lead the country down the path to ungovernability. In 1999, then, a new congressional charter was approved formulating new bases for decision-making in both chambers.

The legislature has also approved the creation of the Federal Monitoring Bureau that will check and evaluate the public administration, thus contributing to strengthening the system of checks and balances. The judiciary has also been considerably reinforced, particularly with the 1994 constitutional amendments, by the broadening out of its attributes and independence with regard to the other branches of government. The organic strengthening of the judiciary has found an important point of support in the creation of the Federal Judiciary Council.

Also, the federal Supreme Court now has the power to review constitutional controversies that

arise among the different branches and levels of government. No less important is the creation of the Electoral Tribunal of the Federal Judiciary as the highest authority in electoral matters.

The changes in Mexican federalism have begun to have a considerable impact on the centralist tendency that for more than 50 years characterized the state born of the Revolution. In the 1980s, with the reform of Article 115 of the Constitution, a continual process of decentralization began in different spheres. The aim was to strengthen the municipalities' and the states' judicial, tax and economic capabilities and encourage balanced regional development.

We must not forget that the redistribution of resources among the states and municipalities has

always been the central issue in the discussion about the real functioning of Mexican federalism. Our political system's centralist tradition was directly reflected in the proportion of the

budget that went to the different levels of government, a proportion that has practically been inverted in recent years. A single example is sufficient to illustrate the magnitude of the change: in 1994, for each peso that the federal government spent centrally, the states and municipalities spent 78 cents. Today, for each peso spent centrally, the states and municipalities spend 1.5. This figure expresses what could be called a new economic balance of forces and undoubtedly is not unrelated to the new weight that local governments, particularly governors, have acquired in national politics.

The Mexican political process
of the last five years has been oriented
toward finding an appropriate
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THE CHANGES IN POLITICAL CULTURE

In light of comparative political analyses, we can say that for a transition process to be successful, serious de-synchronization between the changes

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No party has a majority in Mexico's Chamber of Deputies today.

in institutions and the prevailing political culture must be avoided. As several other experiences show, institutional revamping of democracy during accelerated political change is clearly more fragile when the cultural resources of both the society at large and the political elites are scanty. In that sense, theoreticians like Robert A. Dahl have said that at critical moments for the system, a culture favorable to negotiation and agreements is indispensable for successfully overcoming crises. If this is missing, most probably a collapse of democracy itself will ensue.

Of course, it would be equally prejudicial for the institutions to lag behind the public's demands, concerns and aspirations according to the prevailing culture. If this happened, the danger would lie in democratic institutionalism's loss of legitimacy, in that it would seem to the public incapable of generating ordered, constructive political life.

It is important to point out that in each of its moments, a transition process brings with it specific challenges to the political actors. Today, given the enormous social tasks facing us in the twenty-first century and a political situation marked by a relationship of forces without precedent in Mex-

ican history, among other things we must definitively leave behind the intolerance, vengefulness and authoritarianism that continue to exist in our political life and may seriously affect the possibility of arriving at basic national accords.

In this sense, the unilateral visions of exclusionary agreements can become barriers to the transition. Therefore, our current circumstances demand the promotion of a democratic culture that would allow all the actors involved to live up to the new political reality and respond to our society's profound concerns and demands.

Fortunately, today we can say that fundamentally, the revolutionary paradigm has been replaced by the democratic paradigm in our national political culture. This means moving from the understanding of political struggle as a violent confrontation, where the main objective is to eliminate your adversary, to a vision of the contest as a peaceful processing of differences and the conflicts derived from them.⁸

Dialogue and negotiations have gradually been given more weight as political tools for the kind of political life and competition in which there are no definitive victories or defeats, and adversaries can dia-

logue, make agreements and, of course, alternate in office, according to their ability to attract the voters. However, we should not lose sight of the fact that the consolidation of democratic political culture in Mexico still has a long way to go. Closely examined, clearly the main problem lies in the still fragile culture of legality, as well as the difficulties in completely assimilating the notions of the actors' co-responsibility and self-limitation. The long decades of pragmatism and the predominance of informal arrangements both in society and the political structure meant that in the collective imagination the idea prevailed that law and consensuses were not the fundamental mechanisms that ruled social and political relations. Today, the construction of the complete rule of law must include placing value on legal certainty and security and the recognition of the negative consequences of disobeying the law. We are starting out on the road to building a new civility both in terms of living together as a society and in political competition. Moving forward will depend on an enormous collective effort to foster attitudes and behavior linked to respect for the law and tolerance for others. In a complex, plural society, there is no other possible road for guaranteeing the stable and effective reproduction of the community itself.

Finally, Mexican political culture will have to take charge of what is expected of the new political regimen. We should remember, as Bobbio says, "In democracy, making demands is easy; finding answers is difficult,"⁹ because of the complexity of coming to agreements among all or almost all actors. This explains in part the public's dissatisfaction with the functioning of democracy in Mexico, as reported in different surveys.

Given this situation, the idea that we cannot expect democracy to immediately solve all the country's problems must be socialized. In effect, both the political actors and the public at large will have to completely assimilate the idea that democracy can contribute to making collective decisions on the basis of majority participation and in favor

of general interests, but it cannot, neither in and of itself, nor simultaneously, resolve economic, social or cultural problems. Each of these spheres has its own specific dynamics which democracy can have an impact on, but cannot substitute for. With that in mind, the national political institutions and actors today must carry out reforms to make it possible to exert a greater capacity for offering answers to society.

IN CONCLUSION

The process of democratization in Mexico has developed on the basis of two factors: the existence of historically unresolved problems on different levels of society and the particularities of our recent political situation. This is crucial for understanding the rhythms and spaces that have characterized Mexican political life and in order to not fall into the trap of expecting a generic, uniform transformation (or what some would call a refounding) and to respect the specificity of each level. With this kind of criteria, it is possible to understand that some of the spheres of the democratization process have merited a renovation of their legal-political structure or the creation of a new set of norms. Others have only needed measures to broaden out, strengthen or bring up to date the already existing structure and functioning.

In today's conditions, modernizing Mexico's political structures through new political-institutional arrangements and pacts has shown itself to be the only way to avoid the risks of progressive decomposition of the fiber of society itself. Of course, if this modernization is not speeded up, it will be increasingly difficult to stop the effects of the gap between social needs and the state's response. This gap can be clearly seen in the difficulties encountered in trying to effectively solve problems like the lack of public safety, which has reached alarming heights and has questioned the fundamental *raison d'être* of the state. In this same

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vein, if we closely examine the problems for which solutions have been sought during this process of political change, we can agree that they are not directly linked to one or another partisan view. Quite to the contrary, they are linked to the possibility of creating broad consensuses using an effective state position as a starting point to guarantee the country's long-term viability as a community structured around a legal and institutional framework arrived at by consensus.

Such a far-reaching process of institutional reform that aspires to being democratic must place the same importance on the creation of appropriate instruments of government and the sociopolitical and cultural conditions that determine the identity of the actors who use those instruments. Indeed, a basic priority of democracy, from the point of view of stability and governability, consists of making sure that a possibly desirable political model jibes with the sociocultural basis that can really make it work. To make sure this happens, Mexican democratization would have to continue to advance based on a delicate balance between institutional development and political culture. That balance requires

the continual forging of pacts and careful conciliation between particular interests and the political moment and a necessary, socially, economically and politically responsible vision of the future. ■■■

NOTES

¹ Hermann Heller, *Teoría del Estado* (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1978).

² Giovanni Sartori, *Partidos y sistemas de partidos, I* (Madrid: Alianza, 1980), and Giovanni Sartori, *Ingeniería constitucional comparada* (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1994).

³ Actually, the final number was six, two of them backed by coalitions: Vicente Fox, for the Alliance for Change (PAN and PVEM); and Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, for the Alliance for Mexico (PRD, PT and three smaller, new parties). [Editor's Note].

⁴ Héctor Aguilar Camín, *Después del milagro* (Mexico City: Cal y Arena, 1990), pp. 16-17.

⁵ Giovanni Sartori, *Ingeniería constitucional comparada* (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1995).

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

⁷ Norbert Lechner, *La conflictiva y nunca acabada construcción del orden deseado* (Madrid: Siglo XXI, 1986).

⁸ Ulises Beltrán, et al., *Los mexicanos de los noventa* (Mexico City: Instituto de Investigaciones Sociales, 1996).

⁹ Norberto Bobbio, *El futuro de la democracia* (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1991), p. 28.



Alliances, Counter-Alliances and Pending Outcomes

*José Agustín Ortiz Pinchetti**



Maria Ghilizza/AVE

Representatives of the failed Opposition Alliance (PAN, PCD, PRD, PAS, PT and CD).

Without a doubt, Mexican democracy will go through a crucial stage as the century begins. We political analysts watched with great interest the process that began with contradictory signs in spring 1999. We all knew that the transition was incomplete, that the relatively modest changes incorporated into the political structure did not guarantee its success, but were actually rather incomplete episodes, and that legitimacy and economic equilibrium were far from being assured.

The political scene was enormously dynamic. The Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) had

begun an internal process to choose its presidential nominee unique to its long history of hegemony. That process could have threatened the broad alliance on the basis of which the presidentialist system has always operated.

The president said he was giving up his traditional right of designating his successor through a secret, almost magical process, *el dedazo*, or “pointing the finger.” Although he decidedly supported Francisco Labastida, he had to deal with a rebellion that he probably did not expect when the process began in May: Roberto Madrazo challenged Labastida’s coronation. His campaign, bolstered with millions in funding of dubious origin, sowed the idea in Mexicans’ collective imagination

*Political analyst.

that if the PRI process did not come to a happy end November 7, there could be a break in the old, broad alliance that held it together. If Madrazo felt cheated—and he had the means to make the public, his supporters and sponsors believe it if he did—it could bring about a new rift in the PRI that could cost the nomenclature nothing less than the presidency itself.

Finally on November 7, after a campaign fraught with attacks and insults, Labastida won a “surprise” victory in 272 districts; Madrazo took 21; and Manuel Bartlett, 7. The whole process was a success for the PRI: none of the losers broke away and Madrazo acknowledged his defeat; the nomenclature could breathe

easy. Meanwhile, in the summer the opposition parties tried to build an alliance. Their quick success in writing a common platform and programs showed that it was not ideological dif-

ferences that would make it fail, but certain political factors. The supporters of the alliance had a great deal of difficulty in opening up room for negotiations, which, unfortunately, were broken off at the end of September. Despite their efforts, the alliance did not come about, and they missed the boat.

Probably neither of the two large opposition parties really wanted the coalition and Vicente Fox, the front runner for the National Action Party (PAN), despite his clear advantage in the race for an alliance nomination, demanded that if elected, his administration be given a free rein. This, of course, was incompatible both with the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) stance and with the very structure of a coalition.

Around mid-August, a public announcement was made of an invitation to Jaime González Graf, Miguel Angel Granados Chapa, Hugo Villalobos,

Gastón Luken, Antonio Sánchez Díaz de Rivera, Sergio Aguayo and myself to form a Citizen’s Council to develop a method for overcoming the two irreconcilable positions on how to select the alliance nominee: that of the PAN, to use opinion polls, and that of the PRD, to hold an open primary.

Our council—that the official press contemptuously, and later the public itself, called “the group of notables”—proposed a method that combined opinion polls and a primary (limited to only 2,500 closely monitored polling booths).

The PAN questioned the proposal arguing that the PRD had committed irregularities in its own March internal leadership elections.¹ What actu-

ally concerned the PAN was its organic weakness, since it is a party based on cadre incapable of maintaining any structure outside of election time. The proposal was accepted, however, by the PRD and six smaller parties. They

agreed that the results of the process would not be obligatory nor would it give priority to one method over the other, thus leaving in the hands of each of the parties the right to decide its stance once the results were known.

Despite the practical consensus and approval of the proposal in principle, the parties decided to expand the council. In the September 20 and 21 meetings, we were able to reach an overall consensus about an outline of a general agreement that we had arrived at with the parties in August, enriching it to strengthen the conditions of certainty that the PAN demanded. Unfortunately, however, the PAN began attacking council members, particularly Jaime González Graf and myself, saying we had not been able to find “the third road” and questioning our impartiality. The PAN finally rejected the council’s proposal and the Alliance for Mexico failed despite the fact that, as the polls

The PAN finally rejected the council’s proposal and the Alliance for Mexico failed despite the fact that, as the polls showed, it was the only chance the public saw of the opposition defeating the PRI in 2000.

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But, all speculation to the contrary and despite PAN statements, the alliance did not break up because the PAN or the PRD or the Citizen's Council were incapable of finding a method for selecting a common candidate. The real conflict always remained in the shadows. The alliance was a target for attacks by the PRI and its sympathizers and allies, yes. But resistance by the fundamentalist, radical or opportunist hard-liners in the PAN and PRD themselves was no less important. Former PRD President Andrés Manuel López Obrador and current candidate for the Mexico City mayor's office, at a splendid lecture about his book on the Savings Protection Bank Fund,² was right when he said, "The broad differences about the public policy a coalition government should pursue were the real cause of the break."

Nevertheless, the idea of alliances is still valid. The PRI's traditional, age-old alliance is a precondition for its own victory. The opposition can make different kinds of coalitions outside of the presidential race. They have innumerable agreements about the transition to democracy. In essence, those of us who support an alliance are right. This can be seen by the formidable popularity the alliance came to have. The idea that opposition unity would consummate the transition is something that will not be easily squelched. One way or another, this means that the alliance will reappear on the political horizon very soon, whether partial or complete.³

Thus, the relatively stable conditions that existed in spring of 1999 that previewed how the administration would end had become almost incomprehensible by the end of the rainy season. Today, without the opposition alliance, PRI unity may eas-

ily guarantee its candidate's victory. However, we still have to wait until the end of this extended, complex process in the six long months from now until the July elections. Then, we will have to wait until the loser and his supporters accept the results and the victor without raising a fuss. Otherwise, a dangerous, violent postelectoral process could begin.

The divisions in the PRI and among the opposition do not make for a clear scenario. Any form of segmentation of the political parties could take Mexico into a crisis of another kind. If the most reactionary forces of the system felt threatened by a weak government emerging from the July elections, they could use their political and financial

resources to try to destabilize the country.

The frustration of alliances by one group or the other are political phenomena whose impact is not yet completely clear. It may be insignificant and people may rapidly forget

or it could weigh on an already discouraged, bitter mood and lead to accusations that Mexico's "partyocracy" is responsible for the country's ills. We may be faced with episodes of civil resistance and political violence due to growing discontentment with the bad PRI administration and the long economic decline that could push people into a less passive spirit than they have displayed up until now.

In the economy, things are equally contradictory. Instability and political violence and the inevitable crisis that accompanies every change in administration force us to imagine a somber scenario for the end of Zedillo's mandate. The answer the government has sought to this possible crisis is what it has called financial "armor:" it has accumulated a great many resources, international reserves, loans, lines of credit and the hope of more loans to deal with the speculation that always occurs in an election year.

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The Zedillo administration will probably stand up under the pressure. The improvement in oil prices and the growth over the last two years, the increase it has achieved in hard currency reserves and the drop in inflation, as well as the maintenance of a stable exchange rate of the peso to the dollar are all positive signs. However, the economic legacy that the current administration will leave behind it as a consequence of the bank bail-out and other serious errors accumulated over the years continue to have an increasingly brutal effect on the Mexican economy, and their weight could quash any and all of the new administration's projects in the year 2001. Nothing assures us, however, that the "end-of-administration crisis" will break out before Zedillo hands over his office.

We cannot underestimate the importance that discontentment in broad sectors of society may have. Even if high economic growth rates are maintained, the trend toward the concentration of wealth and speculation will make it very difficult to reach the minimum levels of employment required, to generate wealth and systematically reduce

extreme inequality and poverty and, in general, overcome the dearth of real opportunities for development, a legitimate demand of the majority of the population.

It is difficult to know how Mexicans will react to these factors during the election campaign. The combination of a broad, complex, but also incomplete, political opening creates spaces in which disagreement can develop much more forcefully than through electoral channels. ■■■

NOTES

¹ In March 1999 the PRD had to declare its leadership elections null and void after many irregularities and examples of fraud were brought to light. [Editor's Note.]

² Andrés Manuel López Obrador, *Fobaproa: expediente abierto. Reseña y archivo* (Mexico City: Grijalbo, 1999).

³ In fact, in early December, two coalitions for the presidential elections were registered with the IFE: one led by the PRD, the Alliance for Mexico, including the Labor Party (PT) and three new smaller parties; and a second headed by the PAN, the Alliance for Change, that includes the Green Ecologist Party of Mexico (PVEM).

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Scenario with Dark Forms, 140 x 140 cm, 1993 (mixed technique/canvas).

VICENTE ROJO

Fifty Years of Constant Work

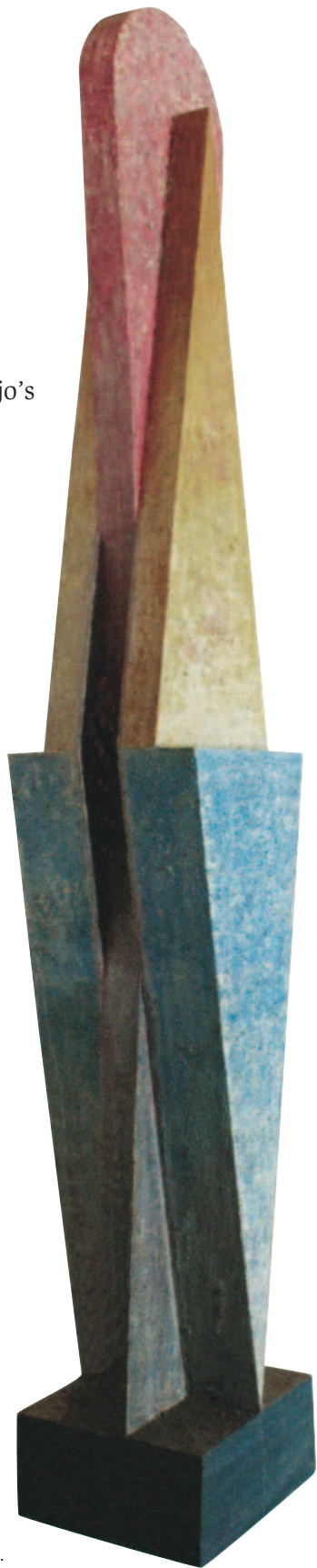
*Lelia Driben**

Vicente Rojo arrived in Mexico in 1949, when the twentieth century was just rubbing edges with its second half. The 1950s marked the emergence of the second international avant garde. It was a kind of birth, or rebirth, of

a multitude of pictorial proposals that took the baton from the century's first avant garde, made innovations and carried previous formal transfigurations to an extreme. In Mexico, the painters that most appropriated this turn by the international avant garde made their first appearance around 1960. Rojo was one of the active protagonists of the generation that introduced

*Art critic and narrator.
Photos reprinted courtesy of Vicente Rojo.

What is most remarkable is that after half a century of work, Vicente Rojo's art is vigorously sound.



Stela 12, 224 x 35 x 32 cm, 1996 (mixed technique/wood).

the avant garde as a group to his new home, Mexico. And since we are talking about births, we should remember that Rojo said more than once that he had been reborn in Mexico. He arrived at the age of 17 without a passport and, as a refugee, was immediately given Mexican citizenship. This is how, generously and fairly, President Lázaro Cárdenas welcomed the heirs of the Spanish Republic, banished by Francoism, inaugurating an invaluable tradition for other exiles.

In 1999, Vicente Rojo celebrated 50 years of living and working in Mexico. He began work as a designer, decisively renewing the discipline's forms as they were practiced here. He was director of the Madero Printing House and Era Ediciones publishing house, among other contributions to culture and cultural institutions. Here, he also began to paint. And for more than 40 years he has occupied an unquestioned place in the history of Mexican art. But what is most remarkable, and —why not say it— most visibly moving, is that after that almost half a century of work, his art is vigorously sound.

For Rojo, the articulation of his work in series means a moment of origin. And, in effect, it is that. There is, however, an entire body of work that dates from before and is completely unknown except to those who followed his painting from the very beginning, around 1958, and those who saw his Modern Art Museum 1996 retrospective.

He had experimented with figurative painting closely akin to realism. Some paintings and drawings remain from that learning period that show his natural talent, particularly considering that he is

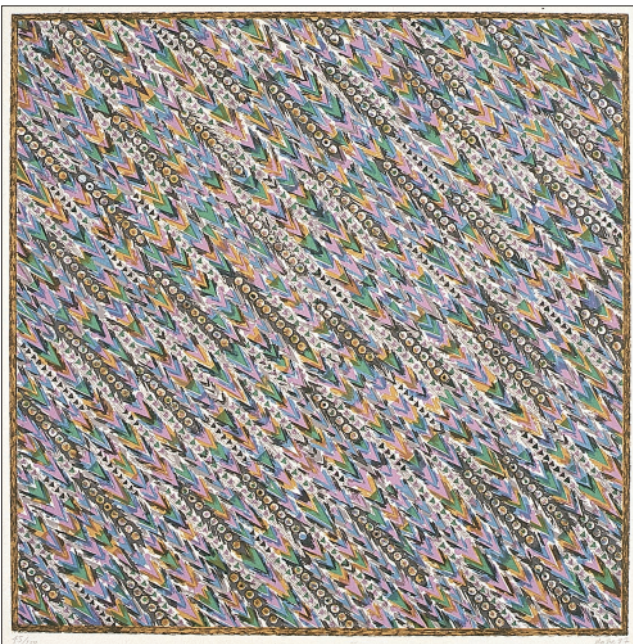
self-taught except for a few very poor sculpture classes in his native city, Barcelona, after the civil war, where there were never any materials for sculpting. Among the paintings from the first period are one impeccably done canvas of a guitarist and another, small and wise, of a flautist. But his first individual exposition, at the Proteo Gallery in 1958, centered around a set of paintings called “War and Peace,” if I remember correctly. The canvases alluding to war are marked by a strident, clearly expressionist palette, a world of difference with regard to his best known work. The paintings dedicated to peace, in contrast, with their measured images, are faithful to the topic.

A year later, the same gallery presented another Rojo show titled “Premonitions”, that heralds his later organization of series. In some of these paintings, Rojo seems to be slowly finding his way. *Fire*, for example, traces a soft, luminous, swirling

mesh of abstract forms whose poetic takes up the entire surface of the canvas. It is a poetic that will flower again polarized toward the void in many works of *Signals*, the first series.

But before *Signals* —although sometimes overlapping with it— between 1964 and 1966 approximately, came *Destructions of an Order* mainly made up of diptychs, in which Rojo contrasted regular structure with chaos in what seemed like reflecting mirrors. He also incorporated geometry and waste items adhered to the canvas just as they were, without any special treatment, thus shattering its two-dimensionality. In this stage prior to *Signals*, triangles dominated, almost as though serving notice that they would crisscross the series.

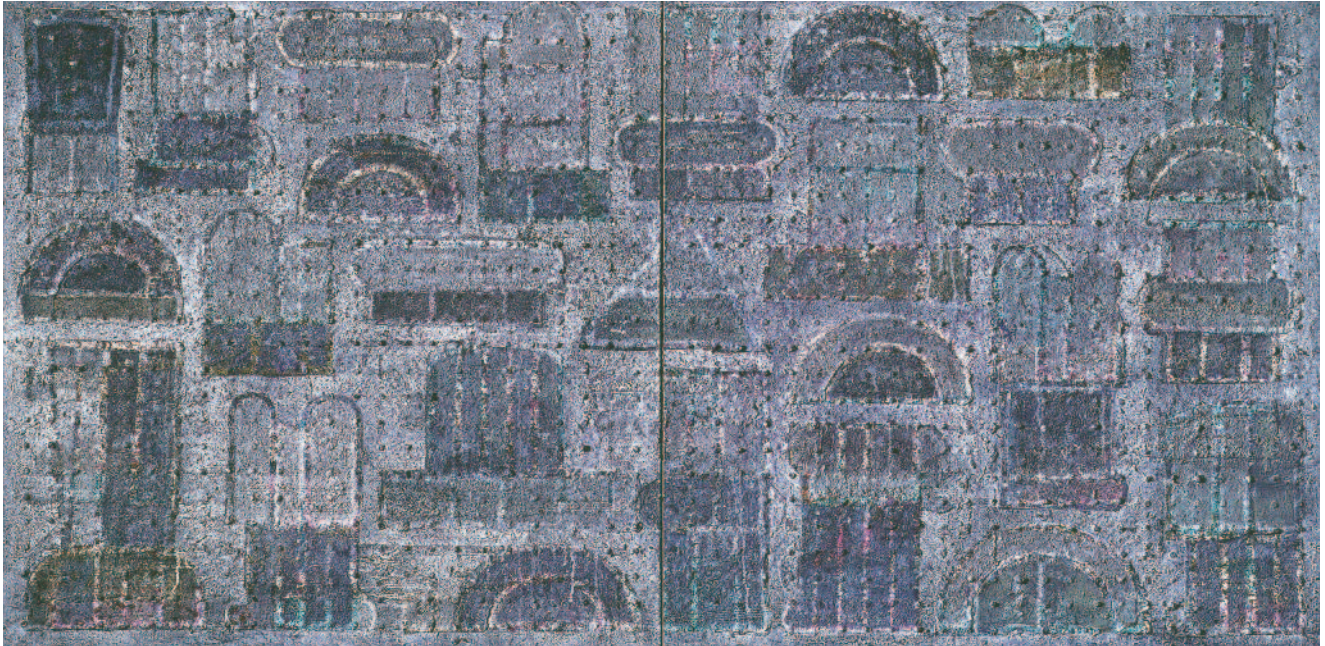
Signals was painted from 1965 to 1970, years in which the artist transits among images close to design and others that return to the viewer a pictorial-ness crammed with



Mexico Under the Rain S 13, 50 x 50 cm, 1987 (silk screen).



Mexico Under the Rain S 16, 50 x 50 cm, 1988 (silk screen).



Codex 26 (diptych), 130 x 260 cm, 1991 (mixed technique/canvas).

secret marks, suspenseful latencies, the speech of a naked space, naked and loaded with enigmas impossible to grasp. And there is the triangle, a unifying point, representing the signal, colored at times, inhabited by shadows at other times, to allow the gradations of light to unfold on the surface. For Rojo, the signal is nothing more than a simple element of geometry, the organizer of the structure. That is how he explains it. However, in his work the signal can combine many meanings that link up the non-decipherings of an enigma. They are signals drawn in upon themselves and upon the blaze or somber (somber from its lighting up) poetic inhabitableness of the image.

Then came the series *Negations* (1970-1975), sparked by the letter “T”, an element extracted from another cultural code, that of language. The analogy may seem somewhat forced, but it is not at all absurd to think that this man, whose activity spans several levels of knowledge (paint-

ing, design and the publishing that has made him an untiring reader) resorts to a small sign from writing, imbricating it with the other forms of the canvases.

Rojo plays with these intersections and will do it again in a third series, *Memories*. But, like with the signal, the “T” stops up another enigma, suspected but not revealed. The non-disclosure of that suspicion impels us to not be introduced onto the folds where certain imprints lie or oscillate.

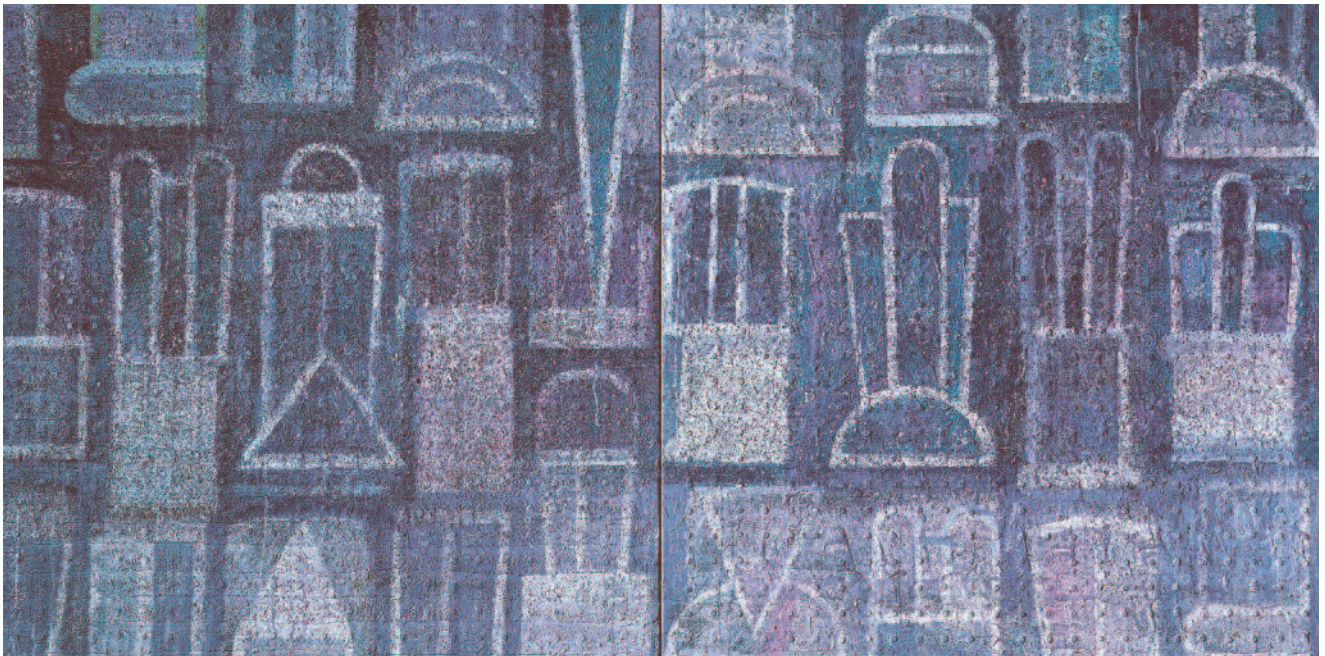
What does the title *Negations* deny and what does it keep? From the specificity of what has been painted a second moment of inflection is to be found in Rojo’s two-dimensional work: in 1969, almost at the end of the series *Signals*, he builds his *Artefact*, clearly a piece of object art. Rojo broke with flat surfaces between 1964 and 1966. Negating two-dimensionality at the same time that he consummated it is to put painting in parentheses, a questioning that still affirms

it, but in the context of a movement that alludes to it critically: the central nucleus concretized by the “T” does not constitute a traditional element of painting, but, I would emphasize, is extrapolated from another code.

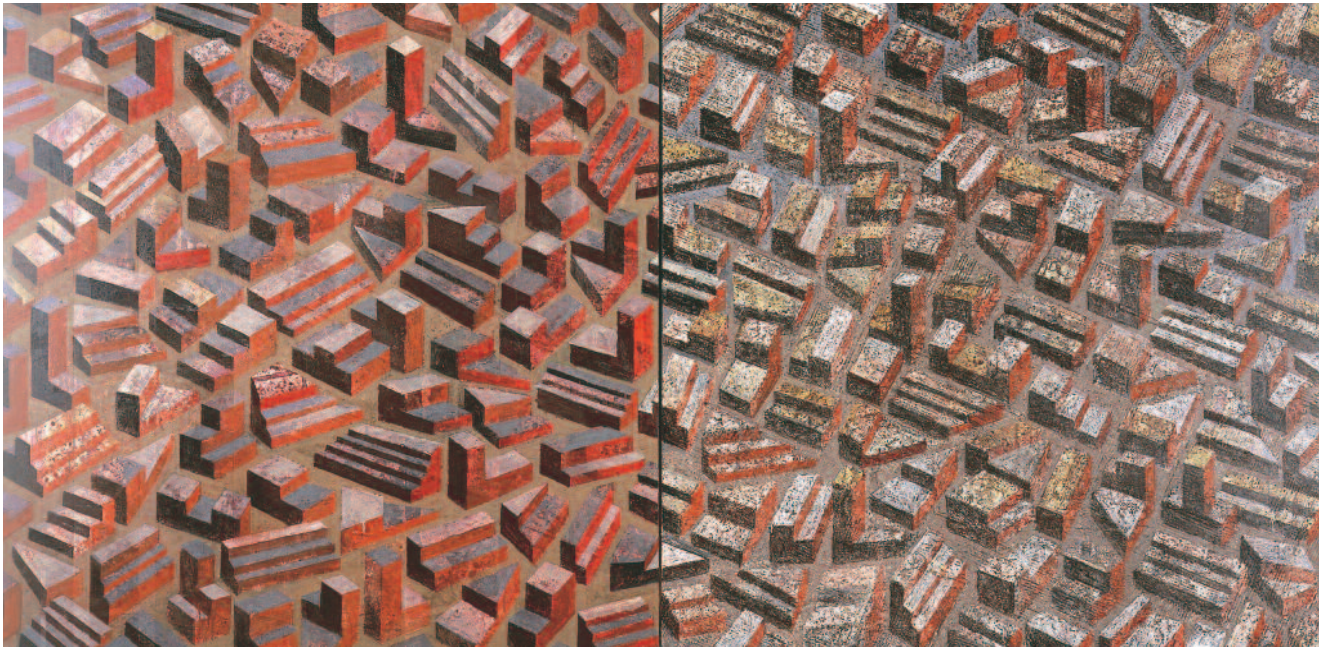
The series *Memories* (1975-1980) uses the square as its central image and here, the grid that was already insinuated in some “negations” emerges. The segmented square has an air of childhood notebooks. Then, like an elliptical turn, the artist introduces small geometric signs and signs of another kind, like the remains of childhood scribbles. He already had done this in some of the “negations” because his creative process includes both continuities and changes. In *Memory 113* (1977) the grid-like diagram disappears, giving way to a rich pictorial modulation. Other paintings of the same series, by contrast, are permeated by a colder, reflexive objectivity. These oscillations between lyri-

cal incisions and the conceptual is another constant in all of Vicente Rojo’s work.

Later, the moment came when he incorporated a paradigm of local nature in the series *Mexico in the Rain* (1980-1990), in which he introduced a multiplicity of diagonal lines that occupy the entire painting. The image changed here, crammed with bright colors and, in some cases, with objects like ribbons or cloth knots hidden underneath the paint, for example, that erode its flatness. At one point, around 1985, the little items adhered to the surface and pictorially re-elaborated acquire more drama thanks to their somber colors and the thickness of the relief, a thickness full of dark tonal gradations. The metaphor of the rain is transformed into earthly echoes, associations with walls, like a nocturnal, inverted sky. These, perhaps, are the best results of the series. On the other hand, in addition to the drawings



Codex 27 (diptych), 130 x 260 cm, 1991 (mixed technique/canvas).



Double Open Scenario, 140 x 280 cm, 1999 (mixed technique/canvas).

and graphic work included in all the series already mentioned, in 1985, Rojo began producing clearly geometrical sculptures, establishing a subtle relationship with the thick tissue of his last “rains.”

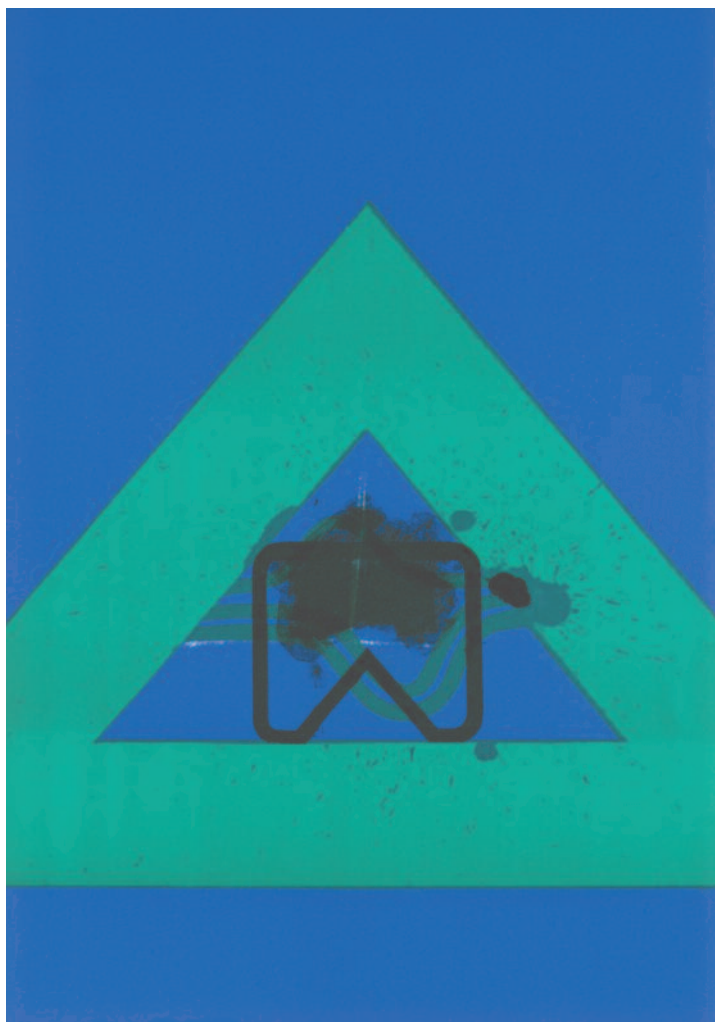
Scenarios, the series Rojo is currently producing, began in 1990 and engendered subseries called *Codices*, *Pyramids*, *Stelae*, *Volcanoes* and *Saint John’s Walk*. Like in *Mexico in the Rain*, certain paradigms blossom in them linking Mexico’s cultural past—that of its ancient peoples—with nature, obviously represented by the volcanoes, and with a street in Barcelona, Saint John’s Walk, painfully put away among the hollows of memory, put away and recovered. For the first time, *Scenarios* comes close to a slight neo-figurativeness at the same time that it maintains the density of Rojo’s previous stage, created through objects stuck to the canvas and pictorially reprocessed. As time passes, the combination of paint

and thickness becomes more vigorous, well merged, iridescent.

Let us go back to the beginning: in 1999, Vicente Rojo celebrated 50 years in Mexico and to commemorate it he had two exhibitions: *Secret Scenarios*, where he introduced a new component, hidden mirrors, and almost on the eve of the year 2000, *Open Scenarios* whose novelty consists in giving his geometric forms volume in the form of different labyrinths. *Secret Scenarios* was exhibited at the López Quiroga Gallery, which has been showing Rojo’s work for 10 years. *Open Scenarios* was shown in the Juan Martín Gallery where the artist has exhibited his work regularly since 1965, when he began sending out signals that his work would be consistent and ongoing. **NM**

SUGGESTED READING

Lelia Driben, *Vicente Rojo. El arte de las variaciones sutiles*, Círculo de Arte Collection (Mexico City: CNCA, 1996).



Sign in New York 3, 75 x 52 cm, 1969 (lithograph).

VICENTE ROJO

Work Fashioned of Mystery

*Angélica Abelleira**

CAN ORDER BE EMOTIONAL?

Many might answer in the negative. But Vicente Rojo, the maker of orders and emotions that he then shuffles, answers, “Yes,” with his work, marked by the counterpoint of rigorousness and creative madness, method and perturbation.

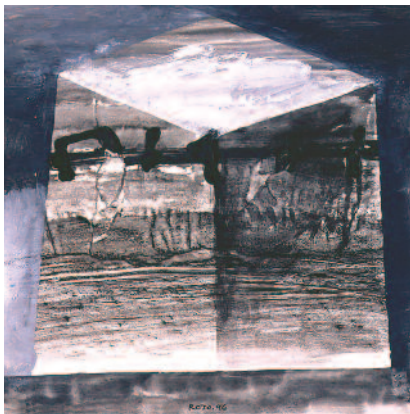
* Free lance cultural journalist.

Photos reprinted courtesy of Vicente Rojo.

“Creating doubts, uncertain elements and areas of mystery and shadow is what gives art meaning,” he says with absolute conviction.¹ And that is what he has been doing for the half century since he came to Mexico to be reunited with his father, who had fled political persecution in his native Spain. It was here, “the promised land,” where Vicente, “fascinated by the air and the light,” would build a wide ranging

pictorial body of work that expressed itself in graphic design, sculpture and publishing and has enriched Mexico’s main cultural enterprises.

Rojo was born in Barcelona in 1932, where his father Francisco was an activist of the Catalanian Communist Party and his uncle Vicente was chief of staff of the Republican Army. For these reasons, Francoist repression took its toll on his family



Scenario P9, 23 x 23 cm, 1996
(mixed technique/paper).



Scenario P22, 23 x 23 cm, 1996
(mixed technique/paper).



Stela 7, 130 x 77 x 56 cm, 1995 (bronze).

that had to flee to the south of France for safety. Four months later the family returned to Barcelona without Francisco Rojo, who decided to emigrate to Mexico.

From the time he was a little boy, Vicente used his hands to relate to the world. During the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939), before he knew how to read, he used colored pencils, scissors, glue and paper to make representations of what he saw out the window: people shouting in the streets carrying arms and flags.

He drew constantly, but the pressing economic situation of his mother and his brothers and sisters made it necessary for him to work as an apprentice in the

ceramics workshop of the Elementary Trades School where he was enrolled. He graduated as a sculptor/carver and learned to decorate, glaze and fire ceramics in wood kilns, although he did not learn to sculpt wood because in the postwar period materials were scarce and expensive.

He lived in Catalonia, but even as a young man he established ties to Mexico, not only because he missed his father, but also because he listened to *Bésame mucho*, by Consuelo Velázquez, and saw movies by Emilio *El Indio* Fernández and Gabriel Figueroa. Their work made him “intuitively feel that Mexico was a marvelous island where one day I wanted to

live,” as he wrote in his acceptance speech upon entering the National College five years ago.²

BOOKS: A CELEBRATION OF LIFE

He arrived to his “Mexican island” in 1949 when he was 17, and his desire to paint grew. Teachers Agustín Lazo and Arturo Souto gave him his first elements for understanding painting and from that time on, he stained, erased and recreated pictorial surfaces with secret scenes and landscapes full of rain. But 1950 was the year that marked him profoundly



Negation B, 58 x 58 cm, 1975 (silk screen).

when he met typographer Miguel Prieto from La Mancha, Spain, and joined his life inextricably to the universe of graphic design. Also a painter, Prieto was in charge of the publishing department of the National Institute of Fine Arts (INBA). He soon invited Rojo to work as his assistant in the cultural supplement of the *Novedades* newspaper, *México en la Cultura* (Mexico in the World of Culture), directed by Fernando Benítez. The work trained him to lay out a page and select type, vignettes and illustrations for the essays and novels published in the supplement. But his vocation for design also brought him into close proximity to

another universe that became his passion: the universe of books, “a permanent box of surprises, a reflection of the world and celebration of life. I love them not only because of the marvels they hold, but also as precious objects in themselves that you must know how to care for and preserve.”³

This love, together with the “visual democracy” that he learned from Prieto that made him give equal importance to lettering, colors, paper and images in the design of anything in print, led Rojo to work widely in Ediciones del INBA, the UNAM Cultural Dissemination Department, the Casa del Lago and the print

shop of the Madero Bookstore in the 1950s and the 1960s. He also designed *Artes de México* (Arts of Mexico), *Revista de la Universidad de México* (University of Mexico Magazine), *Plural* and *Vuelta*, among others. In addition, since 1960, he has been key to the Ediciones Era publishing house, and as its artistic director and a member of its editorial board, he designed books that have been key to our cultural universe: *Cien años de soledad* (One Hundred Years of Solitude), by Gabriel García Márquez; *Aura* (Gentle Breeze) by Carlos Fuentes; *Hasta no verte Jesús mío* (Not Until I See You, My Jesus), by Elena Poniatowska; and *Días*



Large Primitive Scenario (polptych), 300 x 720 cm, 1996 (mixed technique/masonite).

de guardar (Days to Observe) by Carlos Monsiváis.

PAINTING TO DISTURB

Together with design, which he sees as an act of creation, painting has been his main vehicle not for “saying,” but for “disturbing.” Together with José Luis Cuevas, Enrique Echeverría, Roger von Gunten, Fernando García Ponce and Alberto Giromella, Rojo founded “Rupture,” a group that in the 1950s and 1960s, when the muralists predominated in Mexican art, sought to open painting up. So, faced with the nationalism of the Mexican school, these young artists pushed for cre-

ativity and rebellion in profoundly personal ways, without a stylistic or ideological “line.”

Eight years after venturing into design, then, Rojo presented his first individual exhibition at the Proteo Gallery with the theme war and peace. “It was terrible. I realized that I should have eliminated things, taken elements out. I was caught in the trap of an excess of color, forms, rhythm, everything. That’s when I began a process of elimination.”⁴

This process signalled his entry into abstraction and a search for textures on the pictorial surface in *Premonitions*, a series of canvases he presented at his second exhibition in 1959. This would be the beginning of his mania for painting in

series and doing 10 to 15 canvases at a time: *Signals* (1965-1970), *Negations* (1971-1975), *Memories* (1976-1980), *Mexico in the Rain* (1981-1989) and *Scenarios* (1990 until today).

While his first work seems figurative, over the years, Rojo maintained his central concern with synthesis and order. On canvas, he expresses his signals, geometric marks and a visual alphabet that he reconstructs as volcanoes, pyramids, mirrors and codices on reticular surfaces, taking on the task of destroying one order to construct time and again his universe crammed with negations, scenarios and memories.

As a rigorous artist, however, he does welcome all the imperfections and unex-



pected elements that enrich his creative efforts, all with a well-developed sense of humor, as art critic Lelia Driben has noted.⁵ But, in addition to humor, his play with forms and color, his great love of poetry and his profound sense of friendship have motivated him to ample collaboration with poets, giving rise to object-books. José Emilio Pacheco, David Huerta, Alvaro Mutis, José Miguel Ullán and Alberto Blanco are a few names on the list of authors who have shared with Rojo the fashioning of these object-books, offering us kingdoms governed by surprise and amazement.

Rojo's contributions have been recognized with the National Art and Mexico in Design Awards (both in 1991); the

Fine Arts Medallion of Merit, from the Spanish government (1994); and his admittance to the National College (1994) and an honorary doctorate by the National Autonomous University of Mexico (1998).

"Where is Vicente Rojo's painting going that with such desperate intensity it searches for painting as such?" asked Juan García Ponce 20 years ago. And he answers the question himself, "Nowhere. That nowhere [that] is the natural place for painting as a work of art, as a creation of the spirit that seeks nothing more than itself and desires nothing more than its own reality."⁶

Vicente Rojo ratifies this intent in each and every one of his paintings, sculptures and designs, to the enrichment of our eyes and hearts. **MM**

NOTES

¹ *La Jornada* (Mexico City), 18 February 1999.

² "Los sueños compartidos," *La Jornada* (Mexico City), 17 November 1994.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Margarita García Flores, *Cartas marcadas* (Mexico City: UNAM, 1979).

⁵ Lelia Driben, *Vicente Rojo, el arte de las variaciones sutiles*, Círculo de Arte Collection (Mexico City: CNCA, 1996).

⁶ Juan García Ponce, *Las formas de la imaginación* (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1992).

The Shells of Félix Candela

*Juan Ignacio del Cueto Ruiz-Funes**

Architect Félix Candela became internationally renowned for his surprising, innovative reinforced concrete shells—known in Spanish as *cascarones*—built in Mexico in the 1950s and 1960s. He lived his life, marked by the Spanish Civil War and exile, in Spain, Mexico and the United States.

Born in Madrid, January 27, 1910, in his youth he was an outstanding student and athlete, a member of his country's

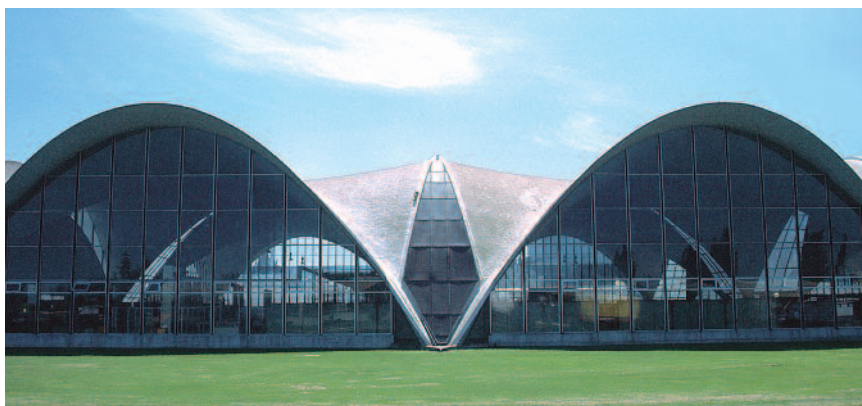
in France, Franz Dischinger in Germany and Eduardo Torroja in Spain. In 1936 he won a scholarship to study this specialization in Germany, but at the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939), he gave up those plans to volunteer for the army to defend the legally elected Republican government from Francisco Franco's fascist army.

Candela served as captain of engineers on different fronts. In February

The intellectual loss that Spain suffered after its civil war was sharply felt in the field of architecture. Under the Falangists, the postulates of rationalist architecture that the Republican government had begun to officially accept were banned. About 50 Spanish architects, among them those who subscribed to the most advanced, progressive ideas, went into exile. Twenty-five ended up in Mexico, many with long professional and political careers behind them, like Bernardo Giner de los Ríos, Francisco Azorín, Tomás Bilbao, Roberto Fernández Balbuena, José Luis M. Benlliure and Jesús Martí. The younger exiles, like Juan de Madariaga, Arturo Sáenz de la Calzada, Enrique Segarra, José Caridad, Juan Rivaud, Francisco Detrell, Esteban Marco, Oscar Coll, Ovidio Botella and Eduardo Robles Piquer, would develop most of their work in their new homeland.

Félix Candela, among the youngest of these, arrived in Veracruz June 13, 1939, aboard the *Sinaia* in one of the first of many expeditions prepared by aid organizations for the Spanish Republic that facilitated the transport of thousands of refugees to Mexico. When these architects arrived in the early 1940s, Mexico was experiencing an economic boom, which propelled the construction industry, thus favoring their integration into the milieu.

The first steps in Candela's professional career in Mexico were difficult. A month after he arrived he was appointed



Photos by Juan Ignacio del Cueto

The Bacardi bottling plant, Naucalpan, 1959.

national downhill ski and rugby teams. He graduated from the Madrid Higher School of Architecture in 1935 amidst the vibrant cultural upsurge Spain experienced during the Second Spanish Republic, from 1931 to 1939.

From his youth, Candela was attracted by the reinforced concrete shells being built in the first decades of the twentieth century by Eugène Freyssinet

in 1939, when the Falangist victory was practically complete, he led his battalion across the Pyrenees into exile. After several months of detention in Saint Cyprien, one of the concentration camps the French government had prepared for the thousands of Spanish refugees, he received the surprising news that a country he was totally unfamiliar with, Mexico, would admit him thanks to President Lázaro Cárdenas' administration policy to grant a great number of Republicans exile.

* Researcher in the UNAM Architecture Department.

head of construction for the Colonia Agrícola Santa Clara, in the northern state of Chihuahua, an attempt by Republican officials to found a model colony of agricultural production to be populated by Spanish exiles. The experiment failed a year later and Candela went to Acapulco, where he built part of the Papagayo Hotel, owned by Emilio Azcárraga Vidaurreta. In 1941, Candela became a Mexican citizen and was given his first stable job in the Vías y Obras construction company, headed up by his countryman Jesús Martí.

In late 1946, he left Vías y Obras and went into partnership with his brother Antonio, a technical architect, to put up some buildings in Mexico City, among them the Cathedral Hotel on Donceles Street. Fortune smiled on them in those years, and they also won the first prize in the lottery, but they lost the money venturing into the movie business with the Películas Paricutín production company, where they made two movies (Candela himself called them “two real bombs”): *La venenosa* (Poisonous Woman) and *La virgen desnuda* (The Naked Virgin).

Candela never lost interest in shells, and he devoured all the information he could get about them. In 1949 was able to put his dreams into practice when he built his first experimental shell. Encouraged by its success and convinced that a myriad of possibilities were opening up in this field, together with his brother Antonio, his sister Julia and Mexican architects Fernando and Raúl Fernández, he opened up the first Cubiertas Ala construction company to introduce concrete shells into industrial architecture. Acting as architect, engineer, consultant, calculator, contractor

and builder, Félix Candela put up the first shells that would make him world renowned: ruled surfaces (built using straight segments) with double curvature which, given their hyperbolic paraboloid geometric —or hyper— form, exclusively transmit compression stress, making it possible to create continuous surfaces of minimal thickness, in the form of a shell.

The covering most often requested from Cubiertas Ala by businessmen and architects was the “umbrella,” which consisted of four hyper segments held up by a central support that looked like an open umbrella. Quick to make —the same center framework was used to make



Los Manantiales Restaurant, Xochimilco, 1958.

several pieces— and effective, several “umbrellas” could be used to very economically put up buildings that required large covered surfaces, like factories, warehouses and markets. Many gasoline stations throughout Mexico have this kind of roof. But the shells that made Candela’s international reputation were those whose twisted forms were very complex, with spectacular, soft, sinuous forms.

Most of his coverings were 4 cm thick, although on special occasions he made them as thin as 1.5 cm. This is the

case of the University City’s Cosmic Rays Pavilion (built in 1951 in collaboration with Jorge González Reyna), the first to bring him prestige nationwide. After that, many architects approached Cubiertas Ala to include different kinds of shells in their projects. Thus, most of Candela’s work was done in conjunction with his Mexican colleagues as an advisor on their projects and proposals for coverings; they usually presented a general sketch that Candela then defined geometrically, systematized and turned into blueprints ready for building. All this won him the name of “the magician of the shells.” His collaboration was fundamental for the execution of these pro-

jects. His firm’s client list reads like a “who’s who” of contemporary Mexican architecture, including names like Mario Pani, Juan Sordo Madaleno, Enrique Yáñez, Pedro Ramírez Vázquez, Enrique de la Mora, Federico Mariscal, Alejandro Prieto, Max Cetto and Vladimir Kaspé. His reputation spread abroad and he carried out projects and construction in the United States, Cuba, Puerto Rico, Colombia, Venezuela, Honduras, Guatemala, Spain, Great Britain, Norway, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

One of Candela's emblematic works, and the only one considered completely his, is the Church of the Virgin of the Miraculous Medallion, built in Mexico City in 1953. This building, with a traditional, three-nave church foundation, is covered with a daring combination of twisted surfaces that create a fantastic interior space reminiscent of the spaciousness of the gothic and the work of Gaudí.

Outstanding among the constructions that he did in collaboration with other architects are the customs warehouses that he built in 1953 with Carlos Recamier; several Mexico City markets, done from 1955 to 1958 together with Pedro Ramírez Vázquez and Rafael Mijares; the Los Manantiales Restaurant, built in Xochimilco in 1958, with Joaquín Álvarez Ordóñez; and the Palmira Chapel, built in Cuernavaca in 1959 with Guillermo Rosell and Manuel Larrosa.

Candela's collaboration with architects Enrique de la Mora and Fernando López Carmona, beginning in 1955 with the roof of the Mexican Stock Exchange, deserves special mention. De la Mora's capacity for design and the analytical, practical minds of Candela and López Carmona combined to create innovative solutions for churches built between 1955 and 1960: the Altillo, San Antonio de las Huertas, San Vicente de Paul and Santa Mónica Churches in Mexico City, and the San José Obrero Church in Monterrey.

In 1963 De la Mora was commissioned to build the Our Lady of Guadalupe Church in Madrid, which was the first work commissioned to a Mexican architect in Spain and signalled the professional—though not personal—return of Candela to his country of birth.



Church of the Virgin of the Miraculous Medallion, Mexico City, 1953.

At the Bacardí plant in Naucalpan, built in 1959, Candela used different solutions to cover several buildings. Outstanding among them are the “umbrellas” that he put up over the open-air cask storage area and, especially, the bottling plant where he put up the largest shells of his career: six parabolic vaults, each clearing 30 meters on each side, covering more than 5,000 square meters. This work is on the same piece of land as the only building that the famous German archi-

tect Mies van der Rohe ever built in Mexico: the corporate headquarters of the “bat brand” (so named for its label), Bacardí.

Over the 26 years Cubiertas Ala served the public, from 1950 to 1976, its portfolio grew to impressive proportions: the firm designed almost 1,500 projects, more than half of which were actually built. The key to building the shells was the complicated construction of the wooden frame for the arch, made of straight pieces of wood that made a double-curved ruled surface that gave it its form. Above the frame, the concrete was poured into a fine rigging of rods, and after it set and the frame was removed, the shell took on its final form. Many low-paid, skilled construction workers were needed for this. A government decreed wage hike in 1964 made labor more expensive, at the same time that the price of construction materials rose, rendering shells unprofitable. At that point, Cubiertas Ala went into decline.

Candela's last important work in Mexico was the Sports Palace, built in collaboration with Enrique Castañeda and

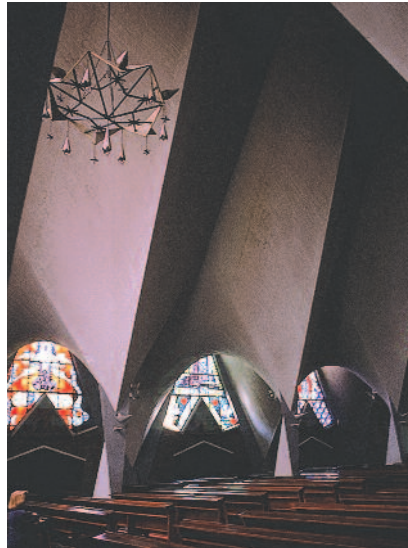


Palmira Chapel, Cuernavaca, 1959.

Antonio Peyrí for the 1968 Olympic Games. For that, they substituted concrete shells for a more economical, ingenious metal structure that made it possible to put it up in record time. From the time it was inaugurated, its great copper roof, reminiscent of an armadillo's shell, shining in the sunlight, became a symbol of Mexico's capital.

In their heyday, photos of Félix Candela's work were published in specialized magazines the world over. In 1961, the International Union of Architects gave him the Auguste Perret prize for excellence. That initiated an uninterrupted flow of prizes, homages and invitations to lecture throughout the world. The architects' associations of Spain and Mexico fought over his origins, each claiming him as their own, which he dealt with by saying he was an architect trained in Spain, but realized in Mexico.

In 1971, the University of Illinois at Chicago offered him a full professorship, something the UNAM National School of Architecture had never given him since he had begun teaching there in 1953. Candela, who had married his second



Interior, Church of the Virgin of the Miraculous Medallion, Mexico City, 1953.

wife, U.S. architect Dorothy Davis in 1967, decided to accept the offer. He went to live in the United States—in Chicago, New York and Raleigh, North Carolina—and acquired U.S. citizenship, his third.

Félix Candela remained faithful to the Spanish Republican cause and participated in many activities for the restoration of democracy in Spain. This led him to reject many invitations to visit the country of his birth, saying that he would

not step on Spanish soil as long as Francisco Franco was in power. In 1969, he decided to heed the voices that suggested that his return could help hasten the fall of the dictator, and he accepted an invitation from the Eduardo Torroja Foundation to attend an international congress on shell structures. Thirty years after being forced to leave it, then, he returned to his homeland. In 1977, once Spain's transition to democracy had been normalized, Candela bought an apartment in downtown Madrid in the neighborhood where he had grown up, and from then on he alternated between the United States and Madrid.

In the mid-1990s, his fervent admirer architect Santiago Calatrava invited him to participate in the project of the Oceanographic Park of the City of Arts and Sciences currently under construction in Valencia. This would be his posthumous work: Félix Candela died in Raleigh, the last of his many homes, in the early hours of December 7, 1997, just before turning 88.

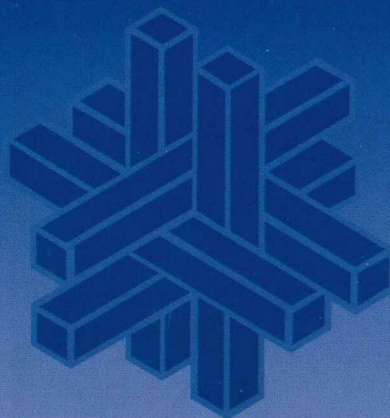
In 1964, at the height of his career, Candela wrote about his work, "My greatest satisfaction is not in having executed certain spectacular structures—although I must confess I enjoyed making them very much—but having contributed, even if minimally, to solving the prodigious problem of economically covering habitable spaces, demonstrating that the construction of shells is not an extraordinary feat that immortalizes its creators, but a simple, flexible construction procedure."¹ **NMM**



Sports Palace, Mexico City, 1968.

NOTES

¹ Félix Candela, "Arquitectura y estructuralismo," *Arquitectos de México* 21 (Mexico City) (January 1964).



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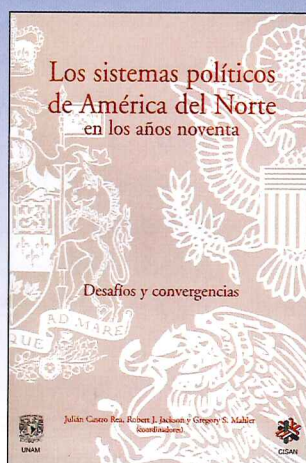
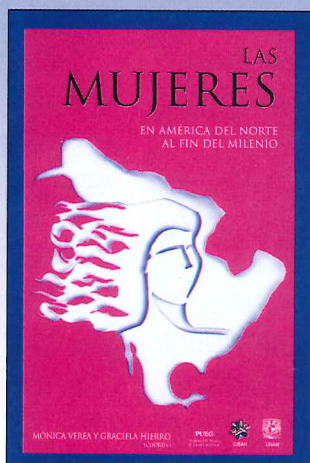
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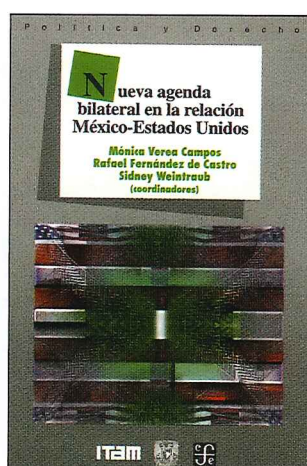
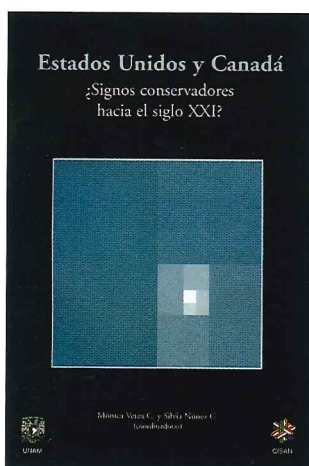
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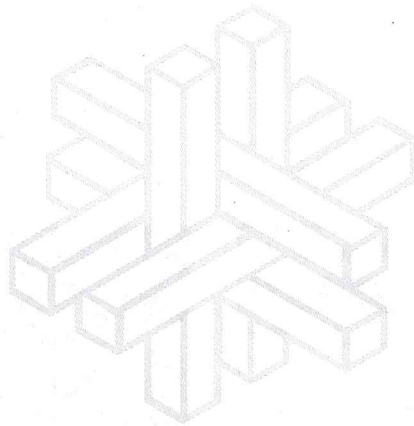
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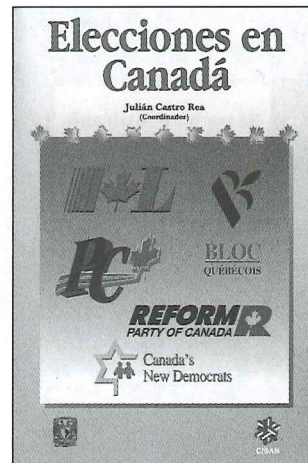
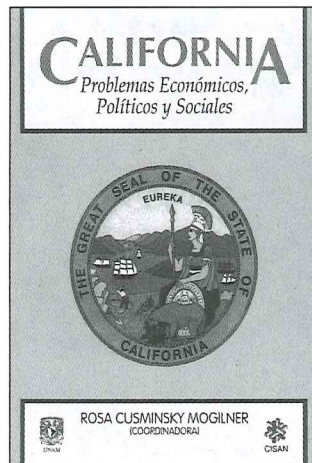
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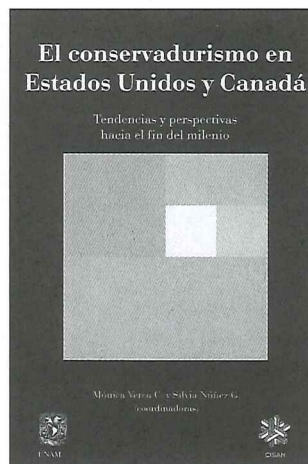
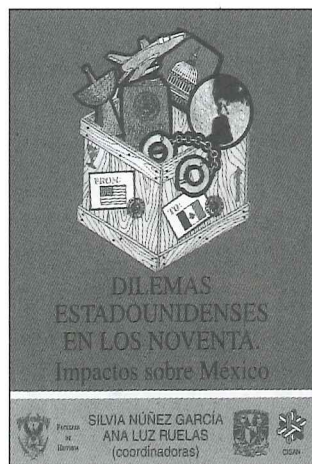
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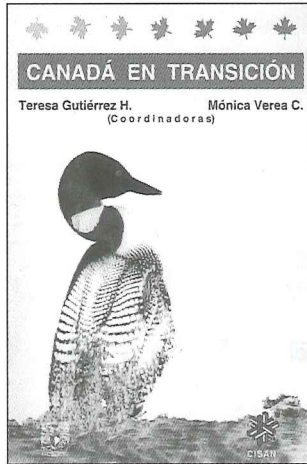
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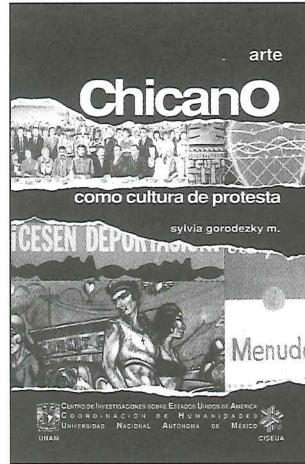
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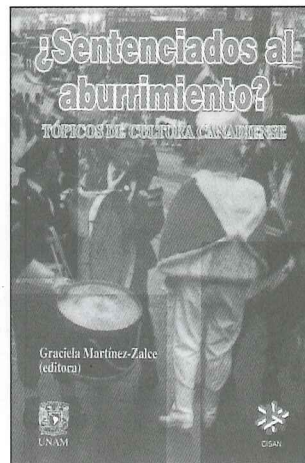
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Pamela Severini. Avances de investigación Series. 61 pp.

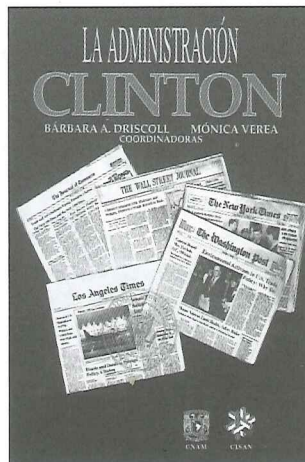
This book compares Canadian and Mexican programs on the treatment of solid wastes in Mexico City and Montreal. Severini states that the problem can only be explained by institutional, demographical and economic reasons and could soon result in some serious conflicts.



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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.



The Dollarization of Mexico

A Long Road

*Paulino Ernesto Arellanes Jiménez**

Some analysts think that the “dollarization” of the Mexican economy—the substitution of the U.S. dollar for Mexico’s national currency, the peso—might be the solution to the country’s monetary problems and financial instability. They argue that it would answer problems caused by Mexico’s speed in opening up to financial and banking integration (remember the 1994-1995 financial crisis); the peso’s instability vis-à-vis the dollar; pressure from businessmen who want a fixed dollar-peso ratio to protect their exports; dollar transactions in certain sectors of the economy, particularly real estate, by the elite; the de facto conversion of economic regions where dollar transactions are common (for example, tourist areas like Cancún); and the fragility of exchange rate arrangements in emerging markets, etc.

This essay will analyze, first, some theoretical factors involved in dollarization in an international or regional monetary system. Second, it will look at some practical considerations. And third, it will submit reasons why I think this is not the time nor are there favorable conditions for the dollarization of the Mexican economy.

THEORETICAL QUESTIONS

The variety of currency exchange systems is a reflection of the different economic circum-

stances of the world’s different countries or groups of countries. From a theoretical point of view, the selection of a currency exchange system is not a question of the first order for the economy’s fundamental variables. It may be useful for helping control inflation or other variables at particular moments. What is generally accepted is that the adoption of an exchange regimen is a manifestation of government policy for achieving greater credibility.

Since 1973, currency exchange agreements among International Monetary Fund member countries have included a wide variety of options, from the decision to maintain their exchange rates linked to a single currency or group of currencies to managed floatation and free floatation of their currency. In general, the exchange accords in the International Monetary System are of two main types: a) the formation of regional blocs of monetary stability; b) greater flexibility among the central currencies.

The European Monetary System (EMS) and most developing countries which link their currencies to another (like the U.S. dollar or the French franc) or to a basket of currencies, are part of the first group. Among all the exchange systems in today’s international monetary system, the EMS is set up as a cooperative agreement with limited flexibility and is part of a broader project of economic coordination and integration, whose most recent achievement is the confirmation of the European monetary union, the best example of an “optimum monetary zone.”¹

* Coordinator of the Political Science Master’s Program at the Autonomous University of Puebla Law and Social Sciences Department.

Several Asian economies, on the other hand, have parity systems or link their currencies to an “anchor” currency, in this case, the U.S. dollar. In the context of the international financial crisis experienced by countries like Mexico, those of South East Asia, Brazil and others, it is being debated whether it is a good idea to maintain the fixed parity with the dollar. In the best of cases, Hong Kong maintains a rigid “monetary council” system with a fixed parity to the U.S. dollar and, given the little manoeuvring room for its currency, cannot devalue to stimulate competitiveness when confronted with devaluations in the rest of Asia. This caused a sharp drop in its stock markets and a tremendous increase in interest rates as a reaction to the speculation against the Hong Kong dollar.

In order for dollarization to be both a de facto and a legal reality, a new institutionality would have to be created to resolve the dilemma: monetary council or monetary union?

The main differences between a system of currency linked to another and regional monetary union are: a) The lack of harmonization of monetary policies of the country whose currency is linked

and that of the “anchor” country. This is the case of Mexico vis-à-vis the United States; and b) The absence of an active market to determine the exchange rate of linked currency with regard to the world’s other currencies, against which it maintains a floating rate.

It is pertinent to make the following observations about regional monetary systems, which is where the dollarization of Mexico fits given its integration into North America, and more specifically with the United States. Adopting a plan for regional currency integration implies two prerequisites: 1) The different parties must sign a treaty on the question like the European Currency Integration Treaty; and 2) This treaty must create a regional system of central banks.²

In addition, certain stages must be complied with, such as the following:

Common currency. Utilization of a unified account in all interregional transactions, its emission to be utilized as means of payment in official regional transactions, the emission of the currency to use it as means of payment in regional transactions among private parties and the declaration of its parity before the International Monetary Fund.

Payment agreement. Broadening out coverage to all intra-regional transactions, including the rediscounting of titles of credit for financing said transactions, a regional system of financing the global balance of payments of all parties (that is to say, all the states participating in the integration process) and joint management of a growing percentage of members’ reserves in order to deal with the overall regional balance and to back up currency emissions.

Coordination of monetary policy. The establishment of a regional system of warning indicators and regularization of the voluntary process of periodic consultations, joint management of monetary instruments used to finance intra-regional transactions, regular mandatory reporting and consultation and, lastly, a regional monetary policy, whose relative importance would depend on the degree of interdependence achieved.

Each of these stages, in turn, requires a series of actions, including the establishment of a regional capital market, a common monetary policy of the central banks of member states, the trade integration that would back up currency exchange, etc.

PRACTICAL ASPECTS

Several months ago, the debate on the dollarization of Mexico generated a polemic in which many opposing views were aired.

Every time Mexico’s balance of payments goes down or has a deficit, exporters pressure the government to devalue the peso to reactivate foreign trade. The integration of the Mexican economy with the United States in financial and trade matters is deepening. Given this, at least a few argu-

ments in favor of dollarization should be taken into account, among them: It would maintain purchasing power; eliminate exchange rate risk; increase discipline in public spending; imply the disappearance of the influence of political criteria in fixing the parity of Mexican currency and of the link between political risk and economic crisis; and eliminate the cost of maintaining a central bank.

Now, in order for dollarization to be both a *de facto* and a legal reality, a new institutionality would have to be created that would resolve the dilemma: monetary council or monetary union? Both are forms of monetary institutionality. The first consists of establishing a minimum amount of dollar reserves and determining a fixed parity of the dollar and the peso. Then a monetary council mechanism is created whereby for each dollar that enters Mexico an equivalent number of pesos is put into circulation and vice versa: for each dollar that leaves the country, an equivalent number of pesos would be withdrawn.

Theoretically, a monetary council is characterized by: a) the establishment of a fixed exchange rate between local currency and a very stable foreign hard currency; b) a statement with the force of law that assures full convertibility between the local currency and the foreign hard currency; and c) a monetary rule to fix hard currency reserve levels and the amount of local currency in circulation (basically notes and coins). This rule consists of the monetary council only expanding or reducing the money supply through the purchase or sale, respectively, of hard currency, in all cases at the established exchange rate. In other words, the monetary council acts only as a currency exchange house.³

The other option, assessed in the theoretical section, would work in the same way as NAFTA, in which Mexico would irrevocably take on the dollar as its legal tender. Those who in the Mexican debate favor dollarization, favor monetary union as the consolidation of the North American bloc vis-à-vis the European or Asian blocs; in theory this would guaranty long run credibility, security and

monetary stability. However—and this “however” is infinite—here is where some critical elements appear: the dollarization of the Mexican economy is neither feasible nor do the appropriate conditions exist for it.

ARGUMENTS AGAINST DOLLARIZATION

Important technical reasons make dollarizations impossible today.

However, if certain macroeconomic, long range conditions were met, dollarization would be viable, particularly since they would formalize financial integration.

From the perspective of what the United States represents for Mexico, we should take into account the following: dollarization means Mexico’s total dependence on the U.S. economy, which is experiencing a boom today, but that could be reversed in the short or medium term. Another aspect of the debate is a possible rise in interest rates, something which has not been clarified.

Given this dependence on U.S. economic cycles, there is a risk of our northern neighbor changing its economic policy toward its trade partners. Mexico could also change its general economic policy, particularly with regard to financial matters, as it did with the 1995 financial bailout.

Both before and after NAFTA came into effect, analysts talked about the economic asymmetries between our two countries. As long as Mexico’s economic structure (production, infrastructure, wages, productivity, competitiveness, etc.) continues as it is, dollarization would increase the disparities between the two economies because of

Dollarization means Mexico’s total dependence on the U.S. economy, which is experiencing a boom today, but that could be reversed in the short or medium term.

differences in production, trade and the living standards of their inhabitants.⁴

We know full well that the Federal Reserve decides U.S. monetary policy and monetary integration would mean tacit acceptance of that policy. Even though a formal bilateral organism would be created to regulate monetary policy, it is to be expected that the Federal Reserve would be the real decision maker because of the great difference in the two economies.

In the long run, however, the dollarization of North America, including Mexico, is possible as a step in North American economic integration and the U.S. strategy to compete with the Japanese yen and the Deutsche mark, which, together with the U.S. dollar, are the world's three strongest currencies.

The Mexican perspective can be summarized as follows. The Mexican government requires revenue, but dollarization would imply a drop in income due to the loss of commissions normally obtained through the peso's participation in international markets,⁵ unless the legalization and institutionalization of dollarization included a distribution of the monetary costs and benefits through compensation funds that would favor the smaller partner as its macroeconomic structure was being strengthened. Also, undoubtedly, Mexico's central bank would no longer have complete autonomy in controlling the absolute value of the currency issued, even with the "legally existing central bank autonomy," because with dollarization, payments would have to be made for the right of issuance to the U.S. Federal Reserve as the currency's country of origin.

The real value of Mexican currency, then, or what is the same, the real exchange rate, linked to buying power, would be threatened, particularly because it would be in constant danger of devaluation or being overvalued. Dollarization, then, is not a good idea because the peso is not a competitive currency.

Another possible effect of a mechanically implemented dollarization would be that if the

Mexican economy required other structural adjustments, particularly negative ones, they would have an immediate impact of tending to lower production and employment levels.

Lastly, something not usually considered because of its ideological connotation is the loss of the sovereignty, both psychological and monetary, that Mexicans, as part of the state, have had since independence from Spain, and even more since the loss of more than half our territory to the United States: this has turned the Mexican peso into part of our national identity. This historic characteristic is dwindling because of the real integration with the rest of North America in which trade commitments and the economic dynamic have begun to lead to a de facto delegation of sovereignty.

For all of these reasons, both from the U.S. and Mexican perspectives, the following proposals may contribute to a possible dollarization some monetary policy factors that take into account the asymmetries between Mexico and the United States. Dollarization is not possible without taking them into account:

a) Real, not fictitious, inflation has to be maintained, which means ending trade intermediarism and monopoly-imposed interest rate hikes and activating production. As Carlos Slim, one of Mexico's most prominent businessmen, says, "The overvaluation of the peso means nothing if it is not linked to a drop in inflation. Now what is needed is lower inflation."⁶ Mexico would have to achieve an inflation rate similar to that of the United States.

b) Interest rates would have to be lowered to correspond to production needs and not just to attracting speculative capital. To achieve this, the entrance into Mexico of short-term, destabilizing capital would have to be stopped or control mechanisms established to benefit the domestic economy.⁷

c) The current account also must be balanced, for which medium and small exporters must be given incentives. Also, payments on the service of

the foreign debt should be reduced to no longer depend on external resources.

d) All external contracts and documents regarding international advertising must be denominated in Mexican pesos for a specific period agreed upon by the trade partners until regional prices can be standardized.

e) Productivity must be increased through wage hikes, since the wage gap among the NAFTA partners is enormous and unfavorable to Mexico. This would mean the United States' creating compensation funds to support and raise Mexican productivity.

f) For the only currency in North America to be the U.S. dollar, a high degree of financial stability is needed in Mexico. This implies price and exchange rate stability, the sustainability of public finances and a real convergence between the United States and Mexico.

g) Mexican businessmen and other economic agents as well as the factors of production all require a stable currency that would allow the former to safely enter into international and regional markets and the latter to grow and develop under equal conditions, especially in North American integration.

Dollarization is only possible as an agreed-upon, evolving process, a mature, long-term project of financial integration. ■■■

NOTES

¹ Krugman and Obstfeld, *Economía internacional*, 3rd edition (Mexico City: McGraw Hill, 1996), pp. 727-759.

² See Werner Weindenfeld and Wolfgang Wessels, *Europa de la A a la Z. Guía de la integración europea* (Brussels: Institut für Europäische Politik-Comisión Europea, 1996) and Christian Chabot N., *Understanding the Euro* (Toronto: McGraw Hill, 1999), pp. 91-117.

³ David Márquez Ayala, "La pugna por el patrón monetario. III" Reporte Económico, *La Jornada* (Mexico City), 15 February 1999.

⁴ "Pierde el salario casi 44% de su valor a partir del inicio del Tratado de Libre Comercio. Ningún resultado positivo para los obreros," *El Financiero* (Mexico City), 8 June 1999, p. 14.

⁵ Krugman and Obstfeld, op. cit., pp. 739-746.

⁶ "Absurdo, pensar que la dolarización terminará con los problemas del país. Urge corregir la situación monetaria: Slim," *El Financiero* (Mexico City), 29 April 1999, p. 6.

⁷ "Peligran las metas económicas pese a las señales de recuperación. Persisten las dudas en el extranjero sobre la fortaleza de México: CEESEP," *El Financiero* (Mexico City), 8 June 1999, p. 12.





Photos: Editorial Cilo Photo Archive

1929 rally for José Vasconcelos' campaign.

“Mexico Abroad”

The Vasconcelista Movement in the United States¹

Arturo Santamaría Gómez*

“The influence of my friends and supporters in the United States extends to the state of Michoacán. Supporters from California have sent letters as far away as La Piedad seeking support for my candidacy. That’s how far the influence of the North reaches. I expect so much from the North because there are so many real men there!” said José Vasconcelos² in an interview with José Cayetano Valadez, originally from Sinaloa but who was working in 1929 as a reporter at the Los Angeles daily *La Opinión*.³

When the author of *Ulises criollo* (Native Ulysses), *La tormenta* (The Storm), *La*

raza cósmica (The Cosmic Race) and other fundamental works of twentieth-century Mexican culture said, “the North,” he was referring to what many Mexicans living in the United States called “Mexico abroad.” “Mexico abroad” was a fashionable term among many Mexican exiles who were persecuted by the regimen that came out of the Revolution. Leader of the National Antireelectionist Party (PNA), Vasconcelos was intimately familiar with “the North,” having spent part of his childhood in Eagle Pass, Texas, and traveled widely there as an adult, venturing as far as New York. He had friends and followers in the states of Texas, Arizona and California, among them well known conservative writers like Victoriano Salado Alvarez,

Juan Sánchez Azcona, Nemesio García Naranjo, Primo Moheno, Ignacio Lozano (the editor of *La Opinión*) and others. While not all of them believed in the possibility of his winning the Mexican presidential elections, they did share his critique of the new regimen which, they agreed, “had failed.”

Ignacio Lozano, who systematically and conscientiously wrote in his editorials about the failure of the revolution, opened up the pages of his newspaper to Vasconcelos and the movement he created both inside Mexico and in “Mexico abroad.” Nowhere in Mexican territory did the media give Vasconceloism so much space and so many headlines as in Lozano’s daily. In fact, it became the only Mexican daily, written in Los Angeles, that in the 1920s

* Political scientist and historian.

escaped the control of the new regimen, and it was bought in different cities south of the border by both oppositionists and the sympathizers of the different revolutionary governments. In his analysis of the importance of Mexican newspapers in the United States, Juan Sánchez Azcona said of Ignacio Lozano's dailies,

La Prensa and *La Opinión* have become, spontaneously and automatically, the strongest links among all these Mexicans and their work in favor of "Mexico abroad" has surpassed the effectiveness of the work of all our border area consulates....These newspapers have shown Mexicans in Mexico the intensity of the life of Mexicans abroad. Without them, Mexicans inside Mexico would not know that thousands of fellow countrymen live abroad who have not lost their Mexican spirit or broken their spiritual ties with our homeland.⁴

In the 1920s, these newspapers, particularly *La Opinión*, published Mexican news mainly from south of the Río Grande. Seldom did a U.S. report feature centrally on its pages, except when a Mexican or a Mexican American was involved.

Similarly, the opinion and editorial pages frequently dealt with issues related to what was going on south of the border. The most notable exception was the daily front page column by Rodolfo Urange which invariably dealt with the lives of Mexicans in the United States and the relation of the Mexican and U.S. governments to them. Urange wrote about the life and work of Mexican Americans and immigrant Mexicans, although usually without distinguishing between them. More than anyone else, it was Urange who used the term "Mexico abroad" in



José Vasconcelos in 1929.

his column, titled "Glosario del Día" (Glossary of the Day).

Without a doubt, Ignacio Lozano had already been influenced by U.S. journalism philosophy. That is, he had no economic relations with official institutions, and his journalism sought to establish a critical distance from those in power and to strike a balance in the news.

Because of their distance from the power structure and their critique of corruption, Lozano's dailies gave free reign to opinions that unmasked the governments of the Revolution, but they also identified ideologically with the conservative critiques of antipopulist, antisocialist conservatives and with the challenging nationalism of Oaxacan-born philosopher José Vasconcelos. His nationalist theses fit perfectly into Ignacio Lozano's ideological profile. That is to a great extent why *La Opinión* gave a privileged place to the Vasconcelista movement both north and south of the Río Grande. In mid-June 1929, the Vasconcelista movement in the Mexican communities of Texas,

California and other states of the Union was already visible, and *La Opinión* began to reflect that in its pages.

In 1929, the L.A. paper sent a reporter (probably José Cayetano Valadez) to Mexico City to interview PNA President Vito Alessio Robles about José Vasconcelos' presidential campaign. Alessio Robles spoke extensively about the identification of many Mexicans in the United States with the Vasconcelista movement. "These Mexicans are all antireelection. They have joined together in the most far-flung corners of the state of Colorado and sent their support to the National Antireelectionist Party. They have shown their great civic responsibility; they have heartened us in our struggle, with encouraging words and pecuniary aid. I would like to send them our words of thanks and a fraternal greeting."⁵

At the same time, Vasconcelistas from "Mexico abroad" were organizing different activities to raise money for the campaign. In the months prior to the November 18 presidential elections, the Vasconcelistas kept up constant activities throughout California. June 22, 1929, they held their state assembly to elect delegates to the PNA national convention in Mexico City, where Vasconcelos would be nominated for the presidency.

The antireelectionist committees met frequently and debated profoundly what was going on in Mexico, both to the north and to the south of the border. *La Opinión* reported on their activities regularly. Judging by the newspaper articles, the Long Beach Vasconcelistas were the most enthusiastic, organizing many activities and making programmatic proposals for the PNA to adopt at its congress, July 1, 1929.⁶

They also announced that at the end of June they would hold a victory party with their colleagues from Long Beach, San Pedro and Wilmington to celebrate José Vasconcelos' win at the convention.

The efforts by the Mexican residents in Long Beach were undoubtedly taken into account by the state convention because their proposals are included in the program that the Californian Vasconcelista delegation took to the national meeting in the nation's capital after an enthusiastic send-off by more than 500 of their countrymen in the Los Angeles' Teatro México, according to the June 27, 1929, issue of *La Opinión*.

The program of the California delegation has great historic value. It is probably the first document—at least in the post-revolutionary period—from “Mexico abroad” that makes political proposals with clear cross-border content, reflecting the existence of a Mexican people in the expropriated territory who demand of the Mexican state both the rights and duties of citizens regardless of their living abroad. The entire 14-point program was published in *La Opinión* (see box).

This document reveals the kind of vision of a group of Mexicans who were very well informed and highly involved in their country's political life, but who directed their constitutional, social and political demands to the state which represented them in a land that was not their own. That is to say, these Vasconcelistas participated in the political processes of their country of origin from U.S. territory. They were part of a democratizing movement, but in contrast with previous generations of Mexicans in the United States, they did not seek only to defend their homeland, like the generation who

joined the fight against the French invasion, or those who resisted the Porfirista dictatorship and joined the different revolutionary currents of 1910. This group, in addition to participating in the historical movements that built and rebuilt the Mexican national state, included in the PNA government program the demands stemming from their own situation, that of the Mexican communities in the United States. With those demands, they aspired to the new state, reformed and democratized by the Vasconcelista movement, integrally representing “Mexico abroad.”

The program of the California delegation has great historic value. It is probably the first document from “Mexico abroad” that makes political proposals with clear cross-border content.

This postrevolutionary generation of Mexican immigrants in the United States, the third since 1848, had not integrated as fully into U.S. society as the descendants of Mexicans born north of the border, who had better assimilated the English language and U.S. social values despite the oppression and discrimination they faced, although simultaneously preserving certain aspects of their ancestral culture. However, the new generation clearly understood that the permanent community of Mexican immigrants north of the Río Grande deserved specific policies and legislation from the Mexican state.

The program of the Californian Vasconcelistas expressed the dual reality that Mexican immigrant communities have always faced in the United States. To defend their most immediate interests, they asked that if the PNA came into office, it have the state assume social and political responsibilities toward its citizens who, though residing in the United States had their hearts south of the border and dreamed of returning to Mexican territory, their homeland.

With regard to social organization, both the Vasconcelistas and the followers of Pascual Ortiz Rubio, the candidate of the official National Revolutionary Party (PNR), and the regimen of the Revolution north of the border had a corporatist vision of workers. The Mexican workers movement both north and south of the Río Grande had very rapidly assimilated an ideology that saw in the state its main organizer and the entity responsible for its social well being.

Inside Mexico, the Vasconcelista movement did not enjoy the support of the workers movement, but north of the border, organized Mexican workers divided their sympathies between Pascual Ortiz Rubio and José Vasconcelos. This was to a large extent because, although the most visible part of the Mexican exile community in the United States were professionals, businessmen, intellectuals and even religious leaders,⁷ the largest social group was undoubtedly made up of agricultural and factory workers. It is not that most emigrants to the United States between 1910 and 1929 were workers (the largest contingent was actually made up of peasants), but once in the United States many emigrants were proletarianized both in the countryside and the cities.

If Mexican workers in the United States thought the state should organize and protect them, they did not think the same of the official party. While in Mexico the state party formed a close relationship between the largest workers organizations and the regimen of the Revolution—a relationship that would culminate in the workers' movement becoming one of its corporatist sectors under the administration of Lázaro Cárdenas—in “Mexico abroad” this relationship was an objective impossibility.

“Mexico abroad” had a subordinate, almost hidden, existence with regard to society at large, the society of Anglo hegemony. Emigrants from south of the border tried to form exclusively Mexican unions (particularly in rural areas), encouraged and advised by Mexican consulates. Regardless of their success, however, on most of the occasions when they were noticed by the unions, their participation was generally secondary or ignored altogether because the white union majorities also discriminated against them.

Practically since 1848, the Mexican immigrants in the United States began to create a broad range of social, cultural, religious and political organizations, but no political parties of their own. They were closest to doing so when they gathered together to act around a political cause south of the border. Linking up to the Vasconcelista movement by founding clubs and committees with representatives and delegates, holding frequent meetings, carrying out fund drives and propaganda campaigns to support a presidential candidate who defended the need to reform a state-in-formation were the first activities in which “Mexico abroad” could be seen participating in partisan

electoral politics. The previous generation had contributed men and women who worked for the Mexican Liberal Party (PLM), headed by the Flores Magón brothers, but the PLM sought to defeat the Porfirista dictatorship through an armed insurrection led by the working class and not through an electoral struggle.

EPILOGUE

In 1929, Pascual Ortiz Rubio, presidential candidate for the National Revolutionary

These Vasconcelistas
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Party (PNR), the grandfather of today's Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), won the elections by a landslide with 93.55 percent of the vote. Only 5.33 percent of the ballots were cast in favor of José Vasconcelos, while Pedro Rodríguez Triana, running as the Mexican Communist Party (PCM) candidate, barely received one percent. After his defeat, Vasconcelos left Mexico to live in the United States, where he wrote a four-volume autobiography: *Ulises criollo* (Native Ulysses) (1935), *La tormenta* (The Storm) (1936), *El desastre* (The Disaster) (1938) and *El proconsulado* (The Proconsulship) (1939). The series

was completed by *La flama* (The Flame) (1959), a penetrating sociocultural study of modern Mexico written several years after his return in 1940. These historical-philosophical essays reflect the author's gradual evolution toward conservative positions. Another essay, *La raza cósmica* (The Cosmic Race) (1925), which praises native Iberoamerican values, based on the indigenous and mestizo tradition, “a bridge of future races,” inspired many Mexican artists like Rufino Tamayo (from Oaxaca like Vasconcelos) in their work. **NMM**

NOTES

¹ In Spanish, the original term, “México afuera”, or “Mexico abroad,” also implies the Mexico which is excluded. [Translator's Note.]

² José Vasconcelos was a Mexican intellectual who after participating in the Revolution, was named rector of the National University in 1920 and Minister of Public Education from 1921 to 1924. In 1924, he left the country because of political differences with the Plutarco Elías Calles regime. Returning in 1928, he ran for president in 1929. He coined the UNAM's motto, “The Spirit will speak for my race,” referring to his idea that our race will create a new, essentially spiritual and free, culture.

³ “Del período del caudillaje al del pelicismo,” *La Opinión* (Los Angeles), 1 July 1929.

⁴ Juan Sánchez Azcona, “La trascendental importancia de los ‘Periódicos Lozano,’” *La Opinión* (Los Angeles), 24 June 1929.

⁵ “Vito Alessio Robles explica a los mexicanos de E.U. cuál es la situación actual de PNA,” *La Opinión* (Los Angeles), June 1929.

⁶ “Programa de un club vasconcelista,” *La Opinión* (Los Angeles), 25 June 1929, pp. 5-8.

⁷ Just like the 1910 revolution, the Cristero War spurred a great deal of emigration to the United States, in this case for political-religious reasons. From 1926 on, Catholic nuns and priests fled the country to become part of “Mexico abroad.” *La Opinión* wrote on June 28, 1929, “After a Te Deum in the San Antonio Cathedral and a procession of thousands of Mexicans, the Catholic prelates and priests of Mexico, who had been in exile for more than two years, returned to their homeland.”

The Program Of the U.S. Vasconcelista Delegation¹

1. Social welfare programs should be distributed by Mexican organizations to our compatriots and their descendants.
2. Mexican citizenship and being a Mexican should be preserved according to our current Constitution.
3. All consulates should have diplomatic status so they can effectively demand for our countrymen the guarantees that the laws of the whole civilized world grant men and citizens. To this effect, a lawyer should be assigned to each consulate.
4. Mexicans should exercise their rights and duties as citizens from abroad.
5. Schools should be established for the nationalist education of Mexican children.
6. Schools for adults should be established to prepare them to educate their children, with an eye to repatriation and the elimination of unfair manifestations of hatred toward this country.
7. Superstition and fanaticism should be eradicated both inside and outside the country through education.
8. The working masses should be educated to avoid their being exploited by capitalists without conscience and to induce them to form cooperative, mutualist and resistance societies, etc.
9. Stipends should be given to all workers who distinguish themselves for their honesty, dependability and intelligence particularly so they may specialize in agriculture.
10. Ample protection should be extended to women who are exploited here and who therefore neglect their homes to the detriment of the race.
11. Restrictive regulations should be applied to our emigration, establishing exit quotas and monitoring of work contracts.
12. A direct tax should be applied to Mexicans living in the United States and used to finance the services demanded by "Mexico abroad" and therefore create the conditions to make it possible for them to not request help from our country.
13. The 3.5 million expatriates should be methodically and discretely reintegrated in order for our country to avoid the grave problem of workers.
14. We should respectfully request the withdrawal of that most noble motto, "Effective suffrage, no reelection," from official documentation.

¹ "Programa de la delegación vasconcelista," *La Opinión* (Los Angeles), 28 June 1929, p. 4.

Catholic Friars and Nahua Women In the Early Colonial Valley of Mexico

Caterina Pizzigone*

INTRODUCTION

When Hernán Cortés vanquished the Nahuas (1519-21), he could not have imagined that the role the Malinche and the other indigenous women had in his victory was only the beginning of a basic relationship between women and conquerors. The encounter of the indigenous and the Spanish was mainly “female-to-male”¹ in the sense that native women played a key role in helping the conquerors penetrate the New World. However, at the same time women developed alternative forms of resistance that favored the preservation of ancient traditions. This article aims to consider their controversial and complex role, specifically examining the new model for women the Spanish introduced into the Valley of Mexico through the Catholic friars.

I will analyze this change by initially looking at the conception of women the Spanish and Nahua societies had developed and how they interacted during the



Doña Marina, “La Malinche,” lithograph by Iriarte and S. Hernández.

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conquest through the key role played by the mendicant orders. Colonization led to a particular vision of indigenous women which will be considered in the third part. And finally, in the last section, I will examine the friars’ vision of indigenous women and the reaction their attempt to impose a new model prompted.

THE SPANISH CONCEPT OF WOMEN

The status of women under Spanish law is a starting point to show which rights and duties they were entitled to. Various laws and royal decrees were issued on the matter, but the main ones are the

Siete Partidas, a code from the thirteenth century issued under King Alfonso the Wise, and the 1505 *Leyes de Toro*. They stipulated that women remained wards of their fathers (who exercised *patria potestad*, or custody) until the age of 25, when they usually passed to their husband’s legal protection. Despite this, they retained control of their own property and dowry after marriage; they could inherit; and wives and children were considered the preferred heirs, with women’s rights protected by law.²

As this shows, women’s legal position in society was unequal to that of men. Actually, women were subordinate to men; they could not act independently, and at the same time they bore the burden of the household, child rearing and family life. Moreover, they were responsible for the family honor through their behavior, “since any breach in her behavior concerns not only her, but also stained the father or husband.”³ Husbands’ and fathers’ authority was so important that women’s mistakes or disobedience prompted punishment to restore men’s honor.⁴

* Italian historian.

Patriarchal authority was particularly strong for wives and daughters, directly subjected to men, while widows and spinsters could act more independently since they were outside the family, so their behavior did not affect a family's honor.⁵

Finally, women's activity remained confined to the domestic realm, and any kind of formal participation in political and religious affairs was strictly forbidden.⁶

Underlying women's position in society was a strong religious ideology stressing the importance of female honor and purity, which restricted them to a sort of confinement so both would be preserved. Women were deemed weak and subject to sin and the violation of religious commands. All this undermined their ability to hold positions of responsibility and authority.⁷

THE NAHUA CONCEPT OF WOMEN

In Nahua society, men and women also had separate spheres of activities, the latter being in charge of households and family care. But the Nahuas' conception differed from that of the Europeans in terms of the public and private realms. The house and related activities were considered a representation of the cosmos, so home life was seen as an integral part of social and public life. In their traditional realm, women's were "equally necessary roles" to those of men in politics and warfare.⁸

Women could occupy important public roles like supervisory and administrative positions in marketplaces or in guilds associated with craft production. Moreover, they could be priestesses and teachers for girls in the *tepochoalli* and

calmecac (schools for the youth). Of course, they did not reach the main positions of authority assigned to men especially in political and religious fields, but still their participation was important.⁹ When Tenochtitlan was founded (1325), the most important positions of



Detail, Yanhuitlán Codex in *La Jerusalem indiana* (Jerusalem of the Indies).

Biblioteca de Artes Ricardo Pérez Escamilla/Editorial Clio Photo Archive

authority had both male and female connotations, the main leader being described as a paternal and maternal figure. This may be interpreted as a sign of the importance women had in society: "Terminological references to females at the highest levels, although the posts were occupied by men, suggests that women may have played leading positional roles."¹⁰ Roles and labor were divided according to sex, but all in the framework of a kind of egalitarianism. However, women's situation changed with the rise of the military dynasty (Itzcóatl, 1429-1440) when their activity became more confined to the domestic economy, since they had no place in the new predatory economy. They were denied access to the military and bureaucratic hierarchies and

therefore excluded from new sources of wealth and prestige. Thus, the specialization of roles was reinforced.¹¹ However, they preserved their functions in various institutions like schools and temples, and their domestic activities continued to be highly appreciated, especially in a society where men were often at war so they could not work.¹² To sum up, despite the militarization of society which led to a kind of male dominance, native women retained their autonomy, confirmed by their contribution to work and the family's sustenance and by the fact that they continued to enjoy property rights.

This is why it can be said that the Nahua society was based on a kind of male-female complementariness. There was a gender hierarchy, of course, since men usually occupied positions of higher status, but in a way complementariness counterbalanced it. The key role of domestic functions was acknowledged and not considered less important than men's activities, as in Spanish society. Men and women acted inside parallel social structures, ceremonies and cultural conceptions, which did not create equality, but a kind of gender parallelism.¹³

Complementariness can be seen concretely in the equal importance given to home and battlefield, the two faces of a single reality: women who died in childbirth were comparable to the warriors who lost their lives on a battlefield fighting for their community.¹⁴ This parallelism can be explained by the Nahua duality-based forms of culture and ideology and by a kinship structure in which maternal and paternal ties had equivalent weight.¹⁵

But gender complementariness was destined to disappear in the encounter

with European culture and ideology which remodeled the native society starting from the basic unit, the family.

THE FRIARS' VISION OF INDIGENOUS WOMEN

Traditional knowledge was preserved through the family, so it was important for the friars to penetrate it to be able to convert the indigenous peoples. But here they found a problematic world to approach. Actually, while the public sphere seemed easier to convert, the domestic realm was more difficult to penetrate. Many objects of daily life that seemed innocuous to the friars hid an intrinsic value related to ancient beliefs. For instance, the broom was normally used to sweep and clean the house every morning, but at the same time this act of sweeping aimed to remove the night's spirits and dangerous forces.¹⁶ "The breaking of a pot, the creaking of a beam, the cinders of a hearth were so many signs to read, which joined the house to the universe of the cosmos."¹⁷ It was precisely their apparent irrelevance that protected them from destruction, and this helps explain why idolatry resisted better in the domestic sphere.

The indigenous woman held the key to penetrating this world since the home was a female space, and she controlled and organized domestic activities. As a consequence, the friars turned their attention to her, but they had an ambiguous and contradictory vision. On one hand, they were influenced by medieval theology, which perceived women as the source of all evil. They were often referred to as the instrument the Devil used to deceive

men, barring none, not even kings. As Friar Andrés de Olmos said, "That is how the Devil fooled a man, a great king called Solomon, through them, the women consecrated to the Devil."¹⁸ In addition, native women were both female and indigenous, so they were viewed as particularly



Spreading the Gospel, *La relación de Michoacán* (The Story of Michoacán).

weak and subject to temptation.¹⁹ On the other hand, they were able to act as cultural mediators transmitting new values to their children since "in the mother was recognized the natural educator of children because of the constant company they kept."²⁰ Moreover, they acknowledged native women had a good side. First of all, Motolinía stressed they were industrious and disciplined housewives, even better than Spanish women: "unlike many of our natives, who wish to rule in their homes more than their husbands.... They are confused and shameful and should take heed from these infidels who so obey and love their husbands and so serve them."²¹ Moreover, they were considered wise mothers for the care they took of their children and lent to their education.²²

As a result, the friars tried to relegate women's influence to the domestic sphere and to control it to instill new habits and beliefs. But they had little knowledge of women's domestic life and this, added to the suspicion of idolatry hanging over household rituals, generated fear and a sort of drastic approach.²³

The domestic realm became a front in the friars' battle for conversion, "the church's final frontier."²⁴ In their attempt to introduce the model of Christian mother and wife, they acted in two spheres, an intimate and private one, through preaching and confession, and a more public and structured one, the education of indigenous girls.

Intervention in the private sphere was essential since the bulk of the native population had no access to missionary schools but only to a more informal education within the family where values and knowledge were transmitted.

The friars tried to penetrate this world through preaching and confession, but the fact that they could never be sure about the survival of ancient rituals made the process very difficult.

Confession became a key instrument during the Counter Reformation. Through it the church could express what was approved or banned and introduce it into the New World, directly reaching the individual. In confessing indigenous women, the friars emphasized sexual behavior and fornication, introducing a new conception of the body. It was perceived as a sort of anti-soul, anti-reason, thus suggesting a dichotomy where the Nahua culture saw a series of multiple components. To resist the weakness of the flesh, the friars imposed Christian marriage and women's purity.²⁵ The pen-

etration into individual thoughts in an intimate sphere was often perceived as an attack, so many women reacted by withdrawing.²⁶

A complementary means to this was preaching. Through sermons, the friars tried to transmit the major points of the doctrine and the values indigenous women were supposed to instill in their families. Many books of sermons were written in Nahuatl; the first, by Friar Juan de la Asunción, appeared in 1577.²⁷ Usually they started with a quotation from the Holy Gospel and continued with advice on good behavior, proposing models to be used in the education within the family.

An examination of the education of young girls is another way to shed light on the friars' vision of indigenous women.

The Franciscans were the first to reach the New World (1524), and they showed interest in female education early. As Motolinía wrote, "It was not good that only men be cared for, since God made both sexes in the beginning and after the Fall, He sought out both of them, to heal and save."²⁸ Since their cultural and ideological background was European, their approach to women was similar to the Spanish conception presented above. In general, all mendicant orders considered women, and native women in particular, subordinate to men. For instance, the Jesuit conception of hierarchy a few decades later (1572) excluded women; only men could be appointed for religious duties and affairs. Indigenous women were considered unprepared for professing the faith. In fact, they did not share this experience with Spanish women and *criollas* until the eighteenth century, when

the first convent of indigenous nuns in Mexico City was built, the Franciscan monastery of Corpus Christi (1724), "the most important eighteenth century monument to the recognition of the equality of the daughters of God."²⁹



Conversion was not an easy task. *La relación de Michoacán* (The Story of Michoacán).

At the beginning, all native girls both *principales* and *macehuales* were educated in the patio of the convents, and only Christian doctrine was taught, but not reading or writing. It was difficult to intervene more deeply in women's education since there were no religious women to do it. Then, in 1529 the first *colegio* was founded in Texcoco, in the palace of Netzahualcoyotzin, by the Franciscan Toribio de Benavente Motolinía and, as was the case for the instruction of boys, only the daughters of the *principales* were admitted.³⁰

The Archbishop Zumárraga of Mexico strongly supported this change in the education of indigenous girls: "The thing which occupies my thoughts and which my will is most inclined to is that this city and every town of the bishopric have

a monastery large enough for a great number of girls, the daughters of the Indians."³¹ A few years later (1536), he asked for permission to forcibly separate the girls from their parents to be educated in schools.

The friars looked for Spanish women as teachers; they were called *beatas* and came from the third order of Saint Francis. The first *beatas* arrived in Mexico in 1531 and started working in the Mexico City *colegio* with 200 girls.

From 1530 to 1545 several *colegios* for native girls were founded in Mexico, Tezcoco, Otumba, Tepepulco, Huexotzinco, Tlaxcala, Cholula, Coyoacán, and later in Chalco, Cuauhtitlán, Xochimilco, Tehuacán and Tlalmanalco.³²

The task of this education was mainly to introduce the model of Christian wife and mother. Girls should marry boys instructed by the friars, so that the Christian conception of marriage could spread. But the *beatas* had also the task of teaching native girls how to protect their honor and form "a new awareness of their status as persons, so they would not allow themselves to be given away or sold by their parents to powerful Spaniards or indigenous *caciques*."³³ This intention was put into practice through the teaching of the Christian doctrine and of typical women's housework and activities.

But soon the *maestras* abandoned the schools to teach in private houses where they were better paid, one of the reasons the education of native girls started to collapse. In fact, it should be added that indigenous families, especially fathers, were not particularly well disposed to giving their daughters to the friars. Moreover, they were educated according to Spanish habits, so that the indigenous

boys they were supposed to marry refused them fearing they had lost the traditional skills a woman should have.³⁴ In particular, native girls were taught a different conception of relationships and work inside the family according to which the woman did not have to work to support her husband and children, as this responsibility was transferred to the man. Therefore, the attempt to educate native girls failed by the middle of the sixteenth century.

However, the penetration of Christian ideology had more lasting consequences. Female honor and purity, the nuclear family based on hierarchical gender patterns and a more marked division between a male, public sphere and a female, domestic one all contributed to modifying women's status by the seventeenth century.

In addition, women's legal identity became intertwined with that of their husbands; they did not act independently in legal cases, as they had before. Moreover, many of the social institutions in which they played a key role (like churches and schools) were disrupted.³⁵ As a consequence, they lost their status in society and their sources of authority outside the family.

WOMEN'S REACTION

By the second half of the sixteenth century, with the failure of education for indigenous girls, it seemed that women were denied equal opportunities with men for social mobility and social status.³⁶ In the same period, a few forms of reaction began to appear: Indian women were experimenting with new paths outside the former political and religious structures.³⁷

In general, female opposition was not aimed directly against the friars; however, it can be viewed partly as a result of the Christian ideology's model of women they had introduced, thus making a brief analysis worthwhile.

One response was witchcraft, through which native women tried to reverse the usual order imposed by men acting within the private sphere. They developed patterns of beliefs and acts as a sort of retaliation against the more open forms of male violence.³⁸ It was a kind of reaction that involved all women, since they all shared a subordinate position in society, but indigenous women played a key role because they held the secret of potions and herbal mixtures. Consequently, *mestizas* and *criollas* went to indigenous women for help. Being confined to the private sphere, women tried to use witchcraft to react against male dominance, especially at the most private level, that of sexuality. For instance, herbs were used for magical spells to make a man impotent, as the case of Magdalena de la Mata, a *mestiza* who received the following prescription from an indigenous woman: "Take an egg, pierce it with a straw, and place in it a few of her husband's hairs. Then bury the egg in the ground where her husband urinated," and he would become impotent.³⁹ This was seen as a blow against the main symbol of male power.

However, native women also manifested their response more publicly, in the courts. They frequently applied to the courts charging their husbands or other men for abuse or mistreatment, especially for adultery and battery. Moreover, they used lawsuits to defend their property, for which they even acted against

the Spanish on behalf of their husbands. Again, this was not used against the friars, but it proves a reaction and an active attitude vis-à-vis the model of passive woman the political and religious authorities were trying to impose. "Women's frequent participation in the courts, where all of the officials were men and proceedings were lengthy and complex, belies a passive and naive role."⁴⁰

The fact that native women crowded the courts may be seen also as a way to compensate for the lack of power and authority they suffered with the disruption of the ancient institutions like schools and temples.⁴¹

However, as we have seen before, during the seventeenth century the number of women who independently began a lawsuit decreased and their legal status became intertwined with their husbands'.⁴² This means that men were gradually gaining control over this instrument of female resistance, and in fact the number of men bringing cases on behalf of women later increased.

CONCLUSION

Women's reaction did not prevent the friars from continuing to interfere in indigenous family life. Despite everything, indigenous women offered a unique opportunity for penetrating the private sphere. But on the other hand, the friars were unable to disassociate the vision of the native woman from its negative component, her connection with the Devil. In practice, she continued to be conceived as His favorite instrument to deceive men due to her weakness and temperament. Few expressed this idea better than Friar

Andrés de Olmos when he wrote, "Women allow themselves to be dominated by wrath and ire; they are easily angered; they are jealous and envious; making others suffer, imposing torments on them, they try to quiet their own hearts and they easily long for sad, painful things to happen to others. This is why it is said that they follow the Devil, who aids them in doing what they desire."⁴³

This ambiguity in the friars' vision of indigenous women still leaves some points up in the air. It is not completely clear, for example, why the friars abandoned indigenous girls' education if it was so important to them for transmitting the new values to indigenous families through women. Moreover, how effective the friars were in instilling Christian ideology in the native private realm is still to be researched. The research area is open and the gap waiting to be filled with studies of local, concrete cases. ■■

NOTES

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² Silvia M. Arrom, *The Women of Mexico City 1790-1857* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1985), p. 55; Susan Kellogg, *Law and the Transformation of Aztec Culture 1500-1700* (Norman and London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1995), pp. 105-106; Asunción Lavrin, "In Search of the Colonial Woman in Mexico: the 17th and 18th Centuries," Lavrin, op. cit., p. 30. Two other bodies of law are worthy of note: the *Ordenamiento de Alcalá* and the *Ordenanzas de Castilla*.
³ Pilar Gonzalbo Aizpuru, ed., *Familias novohispanas. Siglos XVI al XIX*, Seminario de Historia de la Familia, Centro de Estudios Históricos (Mexico City: El Colegio de México, 1991), p. 12.
⁴ Susan M. Deeds, "Double Jeopardy: Indian Women in Jesuit Missions of Nueva Vizcaya," Susan

Schroeder et al., eds., *Indian Women of Early Mexico* (Norman and London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997), pp. 262-3.
⁵ Arrom, op. cit., pp. 93-97.
⁶ Kellogg, op. cit., pp. 105-106 and Susan Kellogg, "From Parallel and Equivalent to Separate but Unequal. Tenochca Mexica Women 1500-1700," Schroeder, op. cit., p. 140.
⁷ Kellogg, *Law and the Transformation...*, pp. 114-115; Asunción Lavrin, "Sexuality in Colonial Mexico: A Church Dilemma," in A. Lavrin, ed., *Sexuality and Marriage in Colonial Latin America* (Lincoln, Nebraska and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1989), p. 65.
⁸ Luise M. Burkhart, "Mexica Women on the Home Front," Schroeder, op. cit., pp. 25-6, 31-2, 52; Susan Kellogg, "The Woman's Room: Some Aspects of Gender Relations in Tenochtitlan in the Late Pre-Hispanic Period," *Ethnohistory* 42 (1995), pp. 564-6.
⁹ Kellogg, op. cit., pp. 565-569.
¹⁰ June Nash, "The Aztecs and the Ideology of Male Dominance," *Signs* 4 (1978), p. 353.
¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 361.
¹² Kellogg, *Law and the Transformation...*, p. 96.
¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 88-91.
¹⁴ Burkhart, op. cit., pp. 22 and 52.
¹⁵ Kellogg, "From Parallel and Equivalent...", pp. 125-126; Kellogg, *Law and the Transformation...*, pp. 164-165.
¹⁶ Burkhart, op. cit., pp. 33-34.
¹⁷ Serge Gruzinski, *The Conquest of Mexico* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993), p. 174.
¹⁸ Friar Andrés de Olmos, *Tratado de hechicerías y sortilegios* (Mexico City: UNAM, 1990), p. 19.
¹⁹ Schroeder, op. cit., p. 9; Burkhart, op. cit., p. 52.
²⁰ Josefina Muriel, *Las mujeres de Hispanoamérica. Época colonial* (Madrid: Editorial MAPFRE, 1992), p. 115. On the role of native women as cultural mediators, see Clara S. Kidwell, "Indian Women as Cultural Mediators," *Ethnohistory* 39 (1992), pp. 97-107.
²¹ Friar Toribio de Benavente Motolinía, *Memoriales o Libro de las cosas de la Nueva España* (Mexico City: UNAM, 1971), pp. 315-316.
²² Friar Juan de Torquemada, *Monarquía indiana* (Mexico: UNAM, 1977-79), Book 13, pp. 219 and 238.
²³ Burkhart, op. cit., p. 27.
²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

²⁵ For this and more detailed information about confession see Serge Gruzinski, "Individualization and Acculturation: Confession among the Nahuas of Mexico from the 16th to the 18th Century," in Lavrin, *Sexuality and Marriage...*, pp. 96-111.
²⁶ Deeds, op. cit., p. 261.
²⁷ Pilar Gonzalbo Aizpuru, *Historia de la educación en la época colonial. El mundo indígena* (Mexico City: El Colegio de México, 1990), pp. 222-224.
²⁸ Motolinía, op. cit., p. 258.
²⁹ Muriel, op. cit., pp. 138-139. Other references: Gonzalbo A., op. cit., pp. 25-26, 153-154; Lavrin, ed., *Latin American Women...*, p. 9; Deeds, op. cit., p. 259.
³⁰ Friar Gerónimo de Mendieta, *Historia eclesiástica indiana* (Mexico City: Porrúa, 1971), pp. 318, 419-420; Pilar Gonzalbo Aizpuru, "Paideia cristiana o educación elitista: un dilema en la Nueva España del siglo XVI," *Historia mexicana* 33 (1984), pp. 191-192; José M. Kobayashi, *La educación como conquista (empresa franciscana en México)* (Mexico City: El Colegio de México, 1974). The friars' intention was to educate the children of the noble families as an example to the whole society.
³¹ In date 1529; Muriel, op. cit., p. 73; Gonzalbo A., *Historia de la educación...*, p. 82.
³² Kobayashi, op. cit.; Muriel, op. cit., pp. 63-73; Gonzalbo A., *Historia de la educación...*, pp. 81-82.
³³ Muriel, op. cit., p. 64; Kobayashi, op. cit. An example of this is given in Motolinía, op. cit., p. 260.
³⁴ Kobayashi, op. cit.
³⁵ Kellogg, *Law and the Transformation...*, pp. 111-115, 205-210.
³⁶ Actually, indigenous girls went on to be educated only in the *patio* of the convents, while renewed interest in founding institutions grew during the eighteenth century (Muriel, op. cit., pp. 87-89).
³⁷ Kidwell, op. cit., p. 10.
³⁸ For witchcraft in colonial Mexico, see Ruth Behar, "Sexual Witchcraft, Colonialism, and Women's Power: Views from the Mexican Inquisition," Lavrin, ed., *Sexuality and Marriage...*, pp. 179-198.
³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 184-185.
⁴⁰ Lisa M. Sousa, "Women and Crime in Colonial Oaxaca," Kidwell, op. cit., p. 202. On the way native women used the courts in colonial times, see Kellogg, *Law and the Transformation...*, op. cit.
⁴¹ Kellogg, *Law and the Transformation...*, p. 107.
⁴² *Ibid.*, pp. 32-33, 87-88.
⁴³ Friar Andrés de Olmos, op. cit., pp. 48-49.



Photos by Antonio Nava/AE

National Security and Public Safety Challenges for 2000

*Leonardo Curzio**

A CHANGING COUNTRY

In the last 10 years, Mexico has undergone a series of reforms that have changed the foundations of its postrevolutionary political-economic model. The opening up of the economy and democratization have been accompanied by fresh ideas that have formed a new mesh of national interests, leading in turn to a new conception of national security. This conception, how-

ever, is still hazy and includes a series of points that must be clarified.

A renewed conception of Mexican national security must place more emphasis on the novel elements that today threaten the country's ability to produce itself. The new century and the administration that comes out of the July 2000 elections are a propitious context within which to answer three major questions: Regardless of political differences, what parts of the national project are vital for our survival as a national community now and in the future? What role does Mexico want to play on the world stage,

taking into account geographical determinism and our own room for manoeuvre? What factors could disturb or present difficulties or obstacles to achieving national goals?

Obviously, there is no single or easy answer to these three questions. What is needed in the new century is to arrive at consensus that strengthen the nation, making sure it is not rudderless at a time in which the redefinition of issues as delicate as the relative obsolescence of the nation-state and limited sovereignty are on the agenda. The idea of national security in the most general sense is related

* Political analyst and researcher at the UNAM Center for Interdisciplinary Research in the Sciences and Humanities (CEIICH).

to a process of achieving shared objectives, called the national project, by the community as a whole.

A NATIONAL PROJECT FOR 2000

Redefining the outlines of the Mexican national project is the precondition for broadening out the content of Mexican national security. The national project could be changed in four ways: through a revolution that would found a new national pact; the collapse of a form of national organization; a change in the international situation; or a succession of reforms decided by political pact that would make qualitative changes in national goals. In Mexico, the change of the postrevolutionary national project is due mainly to a change in the international situation with sharpened globalization. But it has also been determined by the exhaustion of existing economic, political and social forms of organization, which has led to a series of reforms. The direction of national politics, then, stems much more from the need to adapt internally and externally than from a deliberate project and strategy. It is now necessary to introduce the idea of national will into this process of change in order to establish new national objectives with a broad consensus and in this way visualize the conditions needed for this project to become a lasting reality. The recognition of these national objectives must be generalized and explicit, as must the geo-strategic priorities and the values that sustain them. If different sectors have discrepancies about the content of the national project, the project's potential for rallying public support around it will be weakened.

Mexico is forced to open an unprejudiced debate about the extent of the process of integration and everything it implies to define its position in the new world context.

INTEGRATION OR SOVEREIGNTY THE ETERNAL DILEMMA

One of Mexico's vital interests is to create consensus around the kind of integration it seeks with the rest of the hemisphere, today, when the issue does not seem to be taken with seriousness and depth it deserves. As Anthony Giddens recently said, "The strong state used to be well equipped for war. Today, it should mean something different: a profoundly secure state must accept the new limits of sovereignty."¹ Mexico, for example, has accepted the agenda that came out of the 1998 Summit of the Americas in Chile, but has not yet defined clear limits for its integration. Neither has there been a significant effort to develop the institutional framework to deal with issues that little by little are being taken over abroad, like the fight against drugs, to mention just one example. The redefinition of the concept of national security must inevitably include a reformulation of what sovereignty means in a globalized world. Without an agreement on this level, the national community could tear itself apart in a debate between integrationists and sovereignty conservationists that would only lead us into a blind alley.

From a global point of view, the creation of supranational spaces and institutions is a trend that cannot be ignored and about which awareness must be created



in a first phase. In a second phase, a political pact must be arrived at that simultaneously establishes limits, timetables and safeguards for the process of ceding sovereign decisions. In this scenario of a trend toward integration, of the redefinition of sovereignty and therefore of the very content of national security, Mexico is forced to open an unprejudiced debate about the extent of the process of integration and everything it implies to define its position in the new world context.

THE LACK OF PUBLIC SAFETY A DIRECT THREAT

Clearly, reaching consensus about national goals, national interests and their priorities is not sufficient for defining a nation's strategy. The adverse factors that keep a country from achieving its objectives must also be demarcated in order to find the means to reduce, contain or eliminate them.



The evolution of the risks to Mexican national security is marked mainly by the increasing lack of public safety, which directly threatens national life and harmony. The information about this is horrifying. Suffice it to say that kidnapping has become a cancer that threatens all sectors of society. Auto theft has also reached alarming figures. In the first 10 months of 1999, almost one million crimes were reported, an important percentage of which included the use of violence. Matters have become so serious that President Ernesto Zedillo himself has recognized it in presenting a rather bleak diagnosis of the situation in his last annual address to the nation.

It is with great regret that I recognize that the state has not dealt with this demand [public safety] of the Mexican people. And I am speaking of the state in its broadest sense, since in matters of public safety, clearly the three branches and levels (federal, state and municipal) of government share the respon-

Mexican national security is put at risk by the lack of public safety, which directly threatens national life and harmony.

sibility. More than 90 percent of all crimes committed come under the jurisdiction of the states. We have had to deal tenaciously with problems like inadequate legislation; obsolete institutions also tainted with criminal activities and corruption; and the lack of resources and good programs. Faced with these grave problems, the federal government has by no means been passive.²

President Zedillo has dealt with this grave threat with intensive organizational efforts. His listing of the government's legal, budgetary and organizational efforts is eloquent:

In the past five years there have been five reforms of existing legislation and eleven new laws have been passed dealing with public safety and the justice system. This year, the federal and state governments are investing 9 billion pesos in public safety. This is more than twice in real terms what was invested last year and almost triple the 1997 figure. In addition almost 70 percent of these resources are being administered by the state and municipal governments on the condition that they apply precise programs to clean up their district attorneys offices and police departments, to train their agents and to modernize their equipment. Simultaneously, the federal government is also strengthening its security forces. The Federal Preventive Police force has been created with new mechanisms for hiring, training

and control to detect and avoid the infiltration of negative elements. But we will begin to win the battle against crime very soon. Very soon we will begin to reverse the trend toward criminality and insecurity that we have experienced in recent years.³

The administration that will end in 2000 has been characterized, then, by its design of new structures, laws and police forces and by exponentially increasing the resources put into the fight against crime. These efforts may not bear spectacular fruit in the short term because many of the institutions —particularly the Federal Preventive Police— will have a maturation curve. Time, however, will undoubtedly be a factor that will up the pressure. The Zedillo administration started out proposing a body of municipal, state and federal governments to coordinate efforts in these matters, the Public Safety Council, and it is concluding by launching operations of the Federal Preventive Police. These efforts should show some first results soon, particularly with regard to cleansing government law enforcement agencies of corruption and in the fight against organized crime. Otherwise, the phantom of violence would become the main threat to national stability. If during 2000, people's perception of safety does not increase, public insecurity will become the worst threat to the stability of Mexico's young democracy and, therefore, the main driving force behind political involution. ■■

NOTES

¹ Anthony Giddens, *La tercera vía* (Madrid: Taurus, 1999), p. 154.

² Ernesto Zedillo, "Mensaje a la nación," *V Informe de Gobierno* (Mexico City: September 1, 1999).

³ *Ibid.*



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Presidents William Clinton and Ernesto Zedillo.

Mexico and the United States At the End of the Twentieth Century

Between Fear and Hope

(Part Two)

*Remedios Gómez Arnau**

INTRODUCTION

In part one of this article, I presented an overview of Mexico-U.S. relations, comparing the advances of today's bilateral relations with the beginning of the last century. However, while the creation of institutions and instruments for cooperation has strengthened the relationship, fears of destabilization and social unrest in Mexico continue to concern U.S. analysts, just as they did almost a hundred years ago. I also looked at the economic context, particularly in light of the changes

that NAFTA has brought: while trade has significantly increased, Mexicans' living standards have not improved sufficiently, and, therefore, migration, a determining factor in our bilateral relations, continues to mount.

THE BILATERAL AGENDA

Today, the main issues on the bilateral agenda are drug trafficking, trade, Mexican migration to the United States, oil, the environment and border relations. These points take up most of the attention of both countries' government offi-

cial, although there are other topics to be discussed bilaterally, like tourism, education and culture.

Relations between our societies are not reduced to what our governments discuss bilaterally, however. Today, contracts and negotiations between Mexican and U.S. businessmen play a larger role than they did in the past, as do relations between academics and students and between nongovernmental organizations. A new element has also emerged: the growing presence of Mexicans and U.S. citizens of Mexican descent in the economic and political processes on both sides of the border.

* Academic Secretary of the CISAN.

The population of Mexican origin in the United States has grown from 358,000 in 1910 to more than 18 million in 1996, a jump from 0.4 percent to 6.8 percent of the total population. This is due both to the birth rate of Mexicans residing in the United States, which is 35 to 40 percent higher than that of Anglos, and to the continual migration of Mexicans to the north. The same factors are expected to sustain the growth of the population of Mexican origin in the next century, and estimates put the increase from 18 million in 1996 to 48.018 million in 2040 if the proportion of Mexicans in the U.S. population remains constant, or to 54.031 million if it continues to grow by 1.5 percent a decade.¹ This kind of growth has implications for the labor market, the educational system, political life and the culture of the United States. It will also have important consequences for Mexico with regard to its population, the volume of migration to the north, the sending of remittances to Mexico, the export of Mexican products to the United States, the job Mexican consulates and other diplomatic missions have to do in the U.S., the activities of Mexican political parties in the U.S. and the economic support that political activities in Mexico could get from Mexicans in the U.S. All this will mean that in bilateral affairs, migration continues to be central.

THE CHALLENGES OF
INEQUALITY AND CHANGE

As I have already mentioned, Mexico's economic and political advances depend on old, still-unsolved problems. For exam-

U.S. supporters
of greater democratization
in Mexico are
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ple, according to a study by Mexico's National Population Council (Conapo), 80 percent of Mexican families saw their real income drop over the last two decades, while the remaining 20 percent continued in the same precarious situation they had in 1977. Therefore, "what Mexican households faced from 1977 to 1996 was a combination of growing poverty and ten years of increasing inequality from 1984 to 1994 ... [Therefore,] these households' real income is lower in 1996 than it was in 1977."² This clearly indicates that the poverty and inequality that have traditionally plagued Mexico not only have not been abolished, but have increased. Thus, although some of Mexico's social and economic groups have advanced, a large part of Mexican society has either stood still or retreated in this sphere, presenting important challenges both for the future viability of economic policies and for relations with the United States.³ In this vein, as the general secretary of Conapo said, "if the [Mexican] economy does not firmly move ahead in its ability to create sufficient job opportunities in adequately paid

positions, there will be substantial migration of workers to the United States."⁴ U.S. society has traditionally been concerned about uncontrolled Mexican migration. In addition, some sectors are very disturbed now about the possibility of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) no longer controlling the country and the great instability or even civil war they perceive to be a possible result. In this sense, U.S. supporters of greater democratization in Mexico are inevitably trapped between being convinced of the need to continue to do so and the fear of change and the instability that the process could bring about. This could even lead to retreating or canceling out the advances that have been made with regard to other issues in bilateral relations. There are, then, important dangers given what is still Mexico's immature democratic culture, the ample tolerance for illegality and the problems of unsatisfactory operation of law enforcement, the administration of justice and security, which would not automatically be solved simply by a change in the party which politically controls the country.⁵ However, there is also the hope that recent economic and political changes in Mexico are an important counterweight to the destabilizing forces that may emerge in the future.

What seems clear is that, regardless of which party or parties win Mexico's presidency and Congress in the year 2000, the economic policies put into effect when they come into office in December 2000 will have to include more than just the fight against inflation to counter the profound inequalities that plague Mexican society today. The type of actions taken will determine whether there will be a greater or lesser effect on the country's

political economy, which could in turn have an impact on the links to the United States.

As a result, it is to be expected that relations between Mexico and the United States at the dawn of the twenty-first century will be marked more by change than by the status quo. Change will continue to be inevitable, both as a result of the dynamic of the bilateral link itself and of the transformations in the world that are having an impact on them. Mexico's domestic problems, the changes in the United States and bilateral relations cannot help but be affected by the global transition toward a new civilization characterized mainly by the preeminence of knowledge, communi-

cations, interconnections and mergers.⁶ However, the great challenge that both countries will face—particularly Mexico—will be to ensure that the division of their inhabitants into two groups (those who benefit from global transformations and those who have not managed to link up to or have even been hurt by them) does not produce violence, destruction or chaos. **MM**

NOTES

¹ Figures were taken from Jennifer E. Glick and Jennifer van Hook, "The Mexican-origin Population of the United States in the Twentieth Century," in Mexican Ministry of Foreign Affairs and U.S. Commission on Immigration Reform, *Migration between Mexico and the United States Binational Study/Estudio Binacional México-Estados Unidos sobre Migración*. Research Reports and Background Materials vol. 2 (Austin: Morgan Printing, 1998), pp. 571-586.

² Consejo Nacional de Población, "El ingreso de los hogares de México. Una visión de dos décadas," *La situación demográfica de México* (Mexico City: Conapo, 1999) pp. 151-160.

³ In this sense, disquieting statements have been made by the vice president of Strategy Research Corporation, who said that no more than 15 percent of the 118 million households in Latin America can afford the kind of consumer products that U.S. companies associate with a middle class existence. In addition, he said that in Mexico, "the growth of the middle class has practically ceased." *Latin Trade* (August 1999), p. 18.

⁴ See the article about the Fourth Report on the Advances of the 1995-2000 National Population Program in *Reforma* (Mexico City), 11 July 1999, p. 17A.

⁵ For an analysis of Mexican society's current political problems, see the articles by Carlos Castillo Peraza and Héctor Aguilar Camín in *Nexos* (March 1999).

⁶ Erla Zwingle, "Un mundo unido," *National Geographic* (August 1999), pp. 6-33.

PORQUE LA POLÍTICA TAMBIÉN ES UN ARTE...

AGAPITO MAESTRE. *Como leer a los clásicos?*

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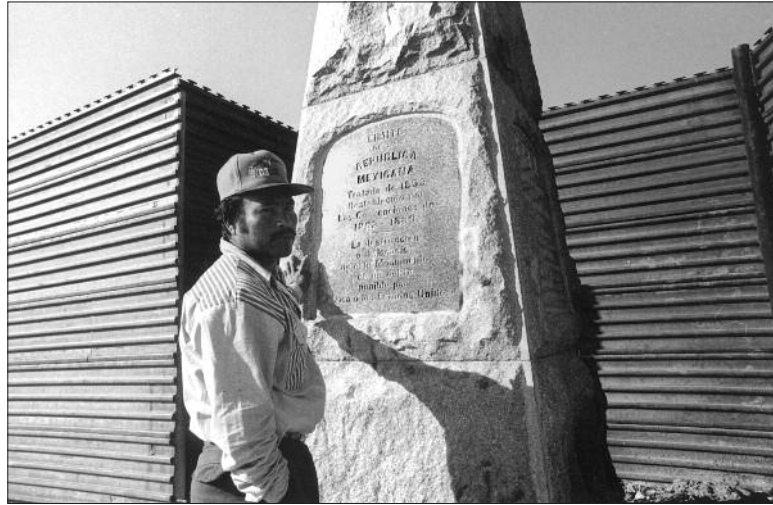
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CULTURA AL OTRO LADO DE LA FRONTERA

DAVID. R. MACIEL, MARÍA HERRERA-SOBEK
(COORDINADORES)

Cultura al otro lado de la frontera es el primer libro dedicado enteramente a analizar el amplio margen de manifestaciones culturales de la inmigración mexicana en Estados Unidos: arte, literatura, cine, canciones, humor. Muestra cómo los inmigrantes mexicanos han sido y son pintados por la cultura popular tanto en México como en Estados Unidos y cómo los artistas, escritores e intelectuales mexicanos, chicanos y otros han utilizado los medios artísticos para protestar contra el injusto tratamiento dado a los inmigrantes por las autoridades de Estados Unidos.

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La Libertad neighborhood of Tijuana.

Views from South of the Río Bravo

Migration to the United States as a Field of Inquiry

(Part Two)

*Barbara A. Driscoll**

INTRODUCTION

If the dramatic upsurge in Mexican literature about migration that we discussed in Part One of this article became obvious by the late 1980s, Mexican academic research in the last 10 years has evolved enormously and has increasingly been instrumental in redefining migration as a national priority. Moreover, the cohort of researchers both in Mexico City and nationwide has diversified to include many more perspectives and disciplines. A great number of Mexican scholars addressing migration are still demographers but other disciplines are becoming more common.

Several factors converged in the 1990s to heighten public awareness about immigration in Mexico. Even though the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) did not directly address Mexican immigration to the United States, the conditions it imposed have done nothing to diminish movement north. On the contrary, some analysts have suggested that economic development along the border may have exacerbated migration by creating jobs and expanding the labor market there. What is certain is that the NAFTA's implementation fostered a much greater interest in the United States and the dimensions of Mexican participation in NAFTA among Mexican readers. Moreover, as part of a larger manifestation of nativism in some regions of the

United States,¹ the 1994 campaign around California's highly controversial Proposition 187 focused Mexican public attention on the community of Mexican origin in the United States as nothing else has at least since World War II. Not only did the Mexican public become keenly aware of the problems confronting both documented and undocumented migrants, but of migration as a multi-faceted national and international political issue. While Proposition 187 did not consistently receive appropriate or balanced treatment in the Mexican press, it did highlight the complex character of Mexican immigration and the lives of Mexican immigrants and their families in the United States.² The controversy Proposition 187 generated marked

* Researcher at CISAN.

a turning point in Mexican perception of immigration and provided the Foreign Relations Ministry with justification for proposing and jointly implementing the Binational Commission that outlined the parameters of Mexican immigration as a binational issue.

The following literature review traces recent significant lines of academic inquiry in Mexico regarding the increasingly complex question of migration and its implications. Space limitations prevent a comprehensive survey, but such an exercise does point to some research priorities.

ACADEMIC RESEARCH IN MEXICO

Given their predominance, we begin our survey with demographers. Demographer

graphy and Data Processing (INEGI) to sketch the parameters of Mexican immigration, particularly for Guanajuato, and then to place its implications in the context of individual households.³ We might add that Colef has a team of demographers and others who deal with migration regularly. Rodolfo Tuirán, currently the director of the National Population Council (Conapo) and a demographer trained at the University of Texas, has also emerged as an articulate observer of Mexican immigration. A member of the Binational Commission, his position in Conapo affords him the visibility to address migration in many public fora.

In 1998, Colef and the Mexican College published *Migración y fronteras* (Migration and Borders), coordinated by Manuel Angel Castillo, Alfredo Lattes and

posits their exploitation and substandard working conditions within a profound restructuring of the regional economy.⁷ Moreover, Sergio Zendejas-Romero of the Michoacán College explores the *ejido* as a focus not only of agricultural production but of the affection and political and cultural identification for migrants from a local rural community.⁸ Jesús Arroyo Alejandre and Jean Papail of the University of Guadalajara propose that for some towns in traditional migrant-sending areas of Jalisco the patterns of migration may be stabilizing or even diminishing due to changing employment conditions in the United States. Those immigrants who return to their hometowns in Jalisco do so under very different circumstances, often becoming small businesspeople or local entrepreneurs.⁹

Gabriel Estrella Valenzuela of the Baja California Autonomous University studies an unanticipated effect of the 1986 Simpson Rodino Bill and the austerity of the Mexican government on the phenomenon of commuters, based on research he conducted in 1991 funded by the Mexican Population Association. His study shows that after 1986 the origin of commuters (including temporary residents in the United States, called “rodinos”) in Tijuana and Mexicali broadened to include a more diverse socio-economic group. He concludes that the lack of employment opportunities in Mexico combined with the increased difficulties of crossing illegally into the United States generated a new cohort of more highly educated commuters. Estrella identified several areas of concern for commuters, including fiscal matters and voting and property rights.¹⁰ The migration of women has received increasing attention. In 1994, Ivonne Szasz published “Migración y relaciones socia-

Even though the North American Free Trade Agreement did not directly address Mexican immigration to the United States, the conditions it imposed have done nothing to diminish movement north.

Rodolfo Corona of the Northern Border College (Colef) has emerged as a most articulate academic interpreter of statistics on the movement and residence of Mexican immigrants in the United States. A member of the Binational Commission, he has published extensively in many fora. In “Dimensión de la migración de guanajuatenses a Estados Unidos desde la perspectiva de los hogares” (Aspects of Migration from Guanajuato to the United States from the Perspective of the Household), for example, Corona interprets the 1992 National Demographic Survey conducted by the National Institute of Geo-

Jorge Santibáñez, an anthology of articles written for a 1995 meeting of the Latin American Sociology Association (ALAS) in Mexico City. The continental focus of the meeting meant that the volume includes articles not only about Mexican immigrants in the United States, but also international migrants in Argentina⁴ and the Caribbean (Santo Domingo),⁵ as well as Mexican immigration policy toward undocumented Central American immigrants.⁶ The same volume contains a study of Mexican immigrant maintenance workers in California’s Silicon Valley by the Colef’s Christian Zolniski, in which he

les de género: aportes de la perspectiva antropológica" (Migration and Social Gender Relations: Contributions from an Anthropological Perspective), focusing attention on social inequality and gender in the migration process both within Mexico and to the United States. The author posits that an interdisciplinary approach (anthropology, sociology and demography) is more necessary to the understanding of labor markets in the places of origin and the final destination of women than for male migrants. The article is unusual in that it gives equal weight to migratory movements within Mexico and to the United States.¹¹ In an article about the role of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the development and implementation of NAFTA, published in the Mexican College's *Foro Internacional*, Cathryn L. Thorup discusses how NGOs in Tijuana and San Diego such as California Rural Legal Assistance and Friends of the Immigrants, concerned with the plight of Mexican immigrants in San Diego County, have promoted discussions about human rights and the development of networks. Nevertheless, Mexican organizations must seek to formalize and institutionalize their contacts and relationships with U.S. groups to maximize the benefits and anticipate the sometimes unreliable interest of the Mexican government.¹²

The trend that I noted in the first part of this article about the increasing attention directed toward local and regional variables and consequences in Mexico generated by emigration has continued. Paz Trigueros Legarreta, a sociologist at the Azcapotzalco campus of the Autonomous Metropolitan University, and a member of the Binational Commission, has been following the consequences of migration

for a small town in Michoacán for over 20 years. In "Los migrantes laborales mexicanos en EU y su inserción en la economía informal" (Mexican Migrants Workers in the U.S. and Their Participation in the Informal Economy), Trigueros argues that Mexican workers who migrate to U.S. cities tend increasingly to stay there, thus contributing to the formation of new networks.¹³

Agustin Escobar Latapí, a sociologist in Guadalajara, has not only published extensively about migration to the United



Migrants trying to cross the border at Nido de las Aguilas, in Tijuana.

States, but also about local labor markets and rural-urban migration in the Guadalajara area.¹⁴ In 1999, together with Frank D. Bean and Sidney Weintraub of the University of Texas, Escobar Latapí published *La dinámica de la emigración mexicana* (The Dynamics of Mexican Emigration) in which they correlate the increase in Mexican immigration with economic, social and demographic changes in Mexico, and the composition of the Mexican-origin community in the United States.¹⁵ In 1998, the state government of Guanajuato published selected proceedings

of a December 1996 conference, "Mexican Migration to the United States." The original program contained presentations on a number of topics including women and families, legal protection and human rights, economic issues, social and political change, the border region and other studies focused on the migration from Guanajuato.¹⁶ I should note that the Guanajuato state government has an office dedicated to immigrants living in the United States. In *Migración y fronteras* (Migration and Borders), Manuel Angel Castillo contri-

butes an analysis of Mexican immigration policy as it relates to Central American immigration. Mexican treatment of undocumented Central American immigrants along the border with Guatemala and the migration route north is a pivotal, albeit relatively unknown, aspect of migration north to the United States. A researcher at the Mexican College, Castillo is exploring a difficult yet necessary aspect of the immigration process to the United States.¹⁷ Indeed, anthropologist Carlos Flores A., in an article published in 1993 a little before NAFTA came into effect, sug-

gests that the incorporation of Mexico into a regional economic arrangement alters the role of Guatemalan immigration to Mexico. Central American immigrants are not just migrating to the United States using Mexico as a corridor, but are migrating to the NAFTA countries. Moreover, Mexican economic development acts as a magnet for migrants from the much poorer and less developed Central American republics.¹⁸

In 1995, Ana Alicia Peña López, of the UNAM Institute for Economic Research, published a comparative study of international labor migration, considering migration to the United States and Canada, but also to the other major geopolitical regions of the world, such as Europe and Australia. Although she devotes only one chapter exclusively to the

determine the extent of AIDS among migrants. The incidence of AIDS in Mexico obviously brings with it public health dilemmas for Mexican society.

Although few historians in Mexico research migration, we can include some interesting contributions. In *Franjas fronterizas México-Estados Unidos. Tomo I* (Mexico-United States Border Areas, vol. 1), published by the UNAM Institute for Economic Research, author Angel Bassols Battalla approaches the conflicts and dynamics of northern Mexico as part of a long process of integration of the border region. The author recognizes that the Mexicans who were incorporated into the United States through the conclusion of the Mexican American War (the first migration, in a way) suffered the loss of property and painful consequences of the denial of

Distinct lines of inquiry have emerged in Mexico regarding very different implications of migration. These contributions to migration studies are different and complementary to what has been published in the United States.

United States, an analysis of migratory movements in such a broad context is unusual in Mexico.¹⁹

The advent of AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases among the transient migrant population has serious public health implications for Mexico, and the possibility of contracting AIDS while a migrant dramatically alters consequences of migration. Some estimate that 25 percent of AIDS patients in Mexico may have contracted the disease during their experience as migrants.²⁰ Nelson Minello of the Mexican College conducted fieldwork in both the United States and Mexico to

basic human rights.²¹ Historian Fernando Alanís Enciso recently published *El primer programa bracero y el gobierno de México 1917-1918* (The First Bracero Program and the Government of Mexico, 1917-1918) as a way of understanding Mexican immigration during World War I and the actions of the Mexican government.²² *Me voy pa' Pensilvania por no andar en la vagancia: Los ferrocarrileros mexicanos en Estados Unidos durante la Segunda Guerra Mundial*, by the author, discusses the little known recruitment of Mexican workers for U.S. railroads during World War II.²³

NEW DIRECTIONS

In conclusion, distinct lines of inquiry have emerged in Mexico regarding very different implications of migration. These represent contributions to migration studies different and complementary to what has been published in the United States and underscore the bilateral nature of northward migration and its attendant analysis.

Although not yet as common in the United States as in Mexico, the National Human Rights Commission has been very successful in applying the concept of human rights to conditions that Mexican migrants encounter while crossing the border. In 1991, the commission published a report detailing various forms of human rights violations on the Mexican side of the border based on data generated by the Colef's Cañón Zapata Project, such as extortion by Mexican authorities and assaults, and on the U.S. side based on information provided by Mexico's Foreign Relations Ministry, the American Friends Service Committee, Center for Support of Migrant Workers, the Center for Migratory Information and Studies, as well as its own surveys conducted in San Diego. Human rights violations in the United States, concentrated in San Diego County, are mostly committed by law enforcement officers and include mistreatment, abuse of authority and illegal detention.²⁴

In 1993, the National Human Rights Commission published a diagnostic of the consequences of migration on Mexican children who had been repatriated to Mexico. Based on data from Mexican consulates along the border, as well as the Northern Border College and NGOs, the report pre-

sents a profile of the Mexican child who had migrated and returned to Mexico, and further, lays out the web of institutional relationships in Mexico and the United States that participate in some aspect of these children's welfare, from the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service to Mexico's National System for Integral Family Development (DIF) and the UNICEF.²⁵

The 1994 campaign for and approval of California's Proposition 187 provoked more discussion and debate in Mexico than any one issue since the *bracero* program. The discussion centered in the mass media but it created a public and political awareness about Mexican immigration and immigrants that nothing else has, and a consensus emerged that Mexican immigrants who have traditionally avoided U.S. citizenship so as not to jeopardize their Mexican citizenship should be able to participate in elections that affect them. Thus, one long-term consequence of Proposition 187 has been the amendment of the Mexican Constitution to allow for dual citizenship. CISAN founder Mónica Vereá has explored the treatment of Proposition 187 in the Mexican press in a report commissioned by the Binational Commission.

Indeed, modifications to the Mexican Constitution now allow for dual citizenship and include the right to vote in Mexican elections while living outside the country, thereby introducing a new and relatively unexplored set of variables regarding Mexican immigrants in the United States. While these reforms will not be implemented until the presidential elections of 2006, the modifications have generated much discussion inside and outside academia. Indeed, the Federal Electoral

Institute conducted its own year-long analysis about extending the vote to Mexicans living abroad, which resulted in a multi-volume study released in December 1998. The requirements for voting in Mexico involve much more red tape than in the United States, and normally each voter is provided with a detailed national voter registration card. Applying those requirements to a wide diversity of living conditions of Mexican citizens residing in the United States presents formidable political, logistical and economic obstacles.

A conference held at CISAN March 19, 1999, to discuss the issue illustrates the logistical and legal complexities of extending the vote to Mexican immigrants in the United States. Since the notion of absentee balloting as we know it in the

they live. Nor is it clear how extending the vote to Mexican immigrants will affect their potential participation in U.S. electoral politics. Discussions about the political culture of Mexican immigrants in the contexts of both countries are inevitable. Leticia Calderón, a sociologist at the Mora Institute, explored this issue in her Master's and doctoral theses.

As one avenue to address migration comprehensively, former Colef director Jorge Bustamante espouses the establishment of a bilateral commission to undertake independent studies of the border region with a view to eventually developing a permanent treaty to regulate migration. Such a treaty would involve as much negotiation as NAFTA, given the longevity and the complexity of the phenomenon.²⁶

In spite of the overwhelming importance of migration issues for Mexico and the research we have discussed here, Mexico does not have a single academic research center dedicated to studying emigration to the United States or its consequences.

United States is not contemplated, questions such as how to administratively issue voter registration identity cards, how to establish physical conditions for voting and how to conduct political campaigns among Mexican immigrant communities become important. Moreover, the extent to which the Mexican government is willing to actually guarantee immigrants the right to vote is not clear. Urban immigrants living near Mexican consulates present fewer difficulties than isolated rural families and individuals. Yet some have interpreted the regulation to include all Mexican citizens, regardless of where

Incredibly, in spite of the overwhelming importance of migration issues for Mexico and the research we have discussed here and much more, Mexico does not have a single academic research center dedicated to studying emigration to the United States or its consequences for emigrants living in the United States and those who return to Mexico. The broad scope of academic researchers throughout the country, as demonstrated by the Mexican participants in the Binational Commission, clearly shows that the time has come for Mexico to grapple with the issue as forcefully as possible. **NM**

NOTES

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- ² This information comes from an unpublished report for the Binational Commission by Mónica Vereá on the Mexican press's reaction to Proposition 187.
- ³ Rodolfo Vázquez Corona, "Dimensión de la migración de guanajuatenses a Estados Unidos desde la perspectiva de los hogares," *Coloquio internacional sobre migración mexicana a Estados Unidos* (Guanajuato: Gobierno del Estado de Guanajuato, 1998), pp. 11-48.
- ⁴ Alicia Maguid, "La migración internacional reciente en la Argentina. Características e impacto en el mercado de trabajo," Castillo, Lattes and Santibáñez, eds., *Migración y fronteras* (Tijuana: Colef/ALAS/ El Colegio de México, 1998). Maguid is a researcher in Argentina affiliated with the National Council of Scientific and Technological Research of Argentina.
- ⁵ Marina Ariza, "Migración, familia y participación económica. Mujeres migrantes en una ciudad caribeña." Castillo et al., op. cit.
- ⁶ Manuel Angel Castillo, "La política de inmigración en México: un breve recuento," Castillo, et al., op. cit. Castillo is a Guatemalan researcher working at the Mexican College studying Central American migration in Mexico.
- ⁷ Christian Zlolski, "Reestructuración industrial y mano de obra inmigrantes. El caso de los trabajadores mexicanos en la industria de la limpieza de edificios en el Silicon Valley, California," Castillo, et al., op. cit.
- ⁸ Sergio Zendejas-Romero, "Migración de mexicanos a Estados Unidos y su impacto político en los poblados de origen. Redefinición de compromisos con el ejido en un poblado michoacano," Castillo, et al., op. cit.
- ⁹ Jesús Arroyo Alejandre and Jean Papail, "Los cambios recientes en la migración internacional de las ciudades medias del estado de Jalisco," Castillo et al., op. cit.
- ¹⁰ Gabriel Estrella Valenzuela, "Migración internacional legal desde la frontera norte de Mexico," *Estudios demográficos y urbanos* vol. 8, no. 3 (September-December 1993), pp. 559-597.
- ¹¹ Ivonne Szasz, "Migración y relaciones sociales de género: aportes de la perspectiva antropológica," *Estudios demográficos y urbanos* vol. 9, no. 1 (January-April 1994), pp. 129-150.
- ¹² Cathryn Thorup, "Diplomacia ciudadana en América del Norte," *Foro Internacional* 35, 2 (April-June 1995), pp. 155-218.
- ¹³ Paz Trigueros Legarreta and María de la Paz Rivera, "Los migrantes laborales mexicanos en EU y su inserción en la economía informal," *Sociológica* vol. 13, no. 37 (May-August 1998), pp. 165-187. *Sociológica* is the academic journal of the Social Sciences and Humanities Division of the Azcapotzalco campus of the Autonomous Metropolitan University. Triguero's 1986 master's thesis is entitled "Migración y transferencia de valor" (Migration and the Transfer of Value).
- ¹⁴ Agustín Escobar Latapí, "Movilidad, reestructuración y clase social en Mexico, el caso de Guadalajara," *Estudios Sociológicos* vol. 13, no. 38 (May-August 1995), pp. 231-259. Also, "Autoempleo e informalidad en Guadalajara: 1975-1982-1990," mimeo (Guadalajara: CIESAS-Occidente, 1993).
- ¹⁵ Agustín Escobar Latapí, Frank D. Bean and Sidney Weintraub, *La dinámica de la emigración mexicana* (Mexico City: CIESAS, 1999).
- ¹⁶ Margarita Ortega, José Hernández H. and Laura González-Martínez, *Coloquio internacional sobre migración mexicana a los Estados Unidos* (Guanajuato: Gobierno del Estado de Guanajuato, 1998).
- ¹⁷ Manuel Angel Castillo, "La política de inmigración en México: un breve recuento," Castillo et al., op. cit. A reflection of his earlier work, "Políticas de refugio y políticas de inmigración ¿posibilidades de conciliación?" published in 1995 in *Foro Internacional*, deals with the politics of refugee policy in Latin America. The movie *El Norte* directed by Gregory Nava provides a fascinating visual image of undocumented Central American immigration through Mexico to the United States.
- ¹⁸ Carlos Flores A., "La frontera sur y las migraciones internacionales ante la perspectiva del Tratado de Libre Comercio," *Estudios demográficos y urbanos* vol. 8, no. 2 (May-August 1993), pp. 361-376.
- ¹⁹ Ana Alicia Peña López, *La migración internacional de la fuerza de trabajo (1950-1990): una descripción crítica* (Mexico City: Instituto de Investigaciones Económicas, 1995).
- ²⁰ Juana Imelda Herrera Pérez, "Migración y SIDA: binomio impostergable en la agenda del educador comunitario," *Coloquio internacional sobre la migración mexicana* (Guanajuato: Gobierno del Estado de Guanajuato, 1998) pp. 69-77. Herrera Pérez works with the Regional Center for Cooperation on Adult Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (CREFAL).
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- ²² Fernando Saúl Alanís Enciso, *El primer programa bracero y el gobierno de México, 1917-1918* (San Luis Potosí: El Colegio de San Luis Potosí, 1999).
- ²³ Barbara A. Driscoll, *Me voy pa' Pensilvania por no andar en la vagancia: Los ferrocarrileros mexicanos en Estados Unidos durante la Segunda Guerra Mundial* (Mexico City: Conaculta-CISAN, 1996). A later version was published in English: *The Tracks North: The Railroad Program of World War II* (Austin: CMAS Books, 1999).
- ²⁴ Comisión Nacional de Derechos Humanos, *Informe sobre la violaciones a los derechos humanos de los trabajadores migratorios mexicanos en su tránsito hacia la frontera norte, al cruzarla y al internarse en la franja fronteriza sur norteamericana* (Mexico City: Comisión Nacional de Derechos Humanos, 1991).
- ²⁵ Comisión Nacional de Derechos Humanos, *Informe sobre el menor mexicano repatriado desde Estados Unidos* (Mexico City: Comisión Nacional de Derechos Humanos, 1993).
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Is the San Diego-Tijuana International Border in the Wrong Place?

*Jorge A. Vargas**

The international boundary between Mexico and the United States was first set by the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848. Almost since its signing, voices in Mexico have claimed that it gave the United States more territory than was intended in its Article V, which established the limits between both countries. It has been alleged, for example, that the line separating the states of California, in the United States, and Baja California, in Mexico, is placed further south than it should be.¹ This article attempts to provide a legal answer to this old but still intriguing question.

BOUNDARIES AND INTERNATIONAL LAW

The establishment and demarcation of international boundaries are among the most important and delicate questions in international law. Boundaries play a crucial role in bilateral relations between states because they define the specific areas—territorial, fluvial, oceanic, submarine and aerial—under the sovereignty of a given nation. Whereas in the past boundary questions mainly centered on land and rivers, scientific and technolog-

The history of Mexico's territorial boundaries with the U.S. and the chronology of the events that led to the final establishment of these limits in the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo and the Gadsden Purchase of 1853 is a story still waiting to be properly told.

ical developments in recent decades have expanded and diversified the notion of boundaries. Today, all countries realize the technical complexity associated with international limits and with their political and, especially, their economic implications.

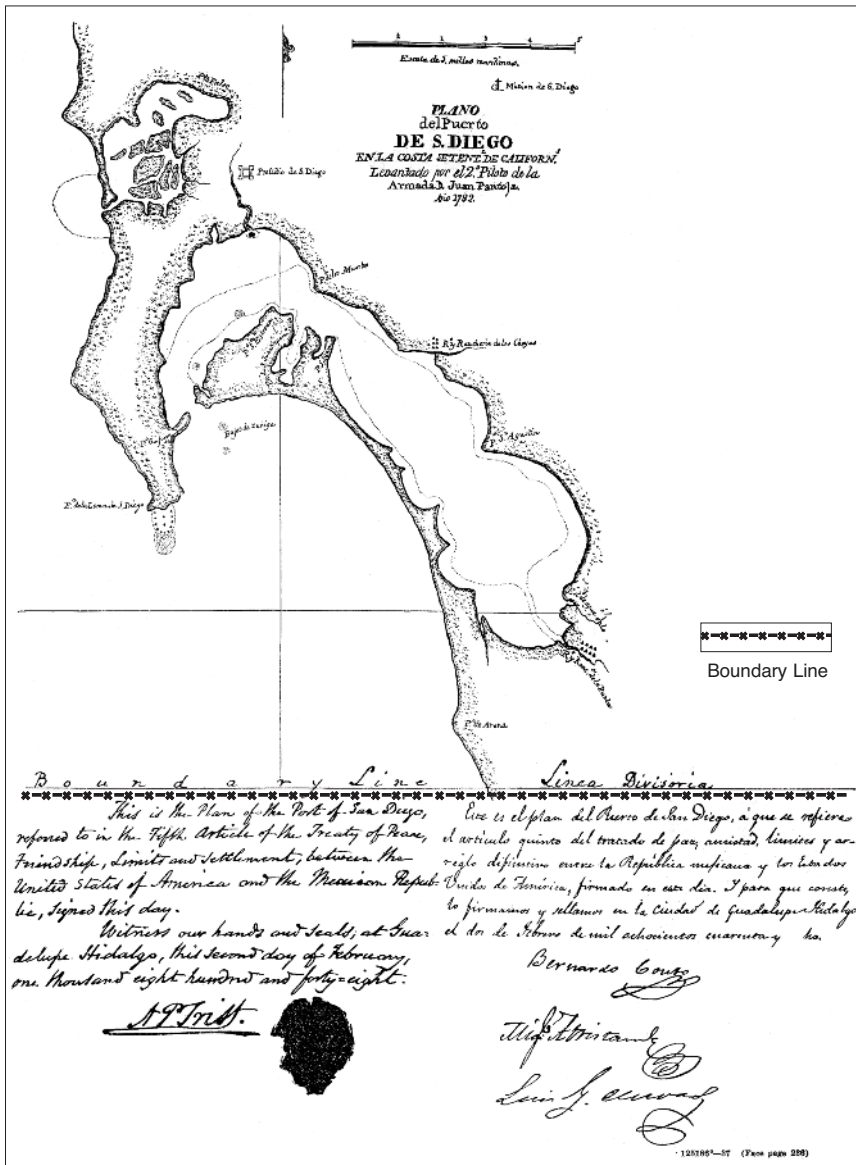
Boundaries are established by international agreements between nations (treaties) and delimit not only that traditional portion of the land mass upon which each individual nation is located but also other contiguous physical spaces, such as rivers, or more recently included spaces such as oceans, submarine regions, the seabed and ocean floor and even the air space above the territory of a given state.

In the case of Mexico, the history of its territorial boundaries with the United States and the chronology of the admirable and almost heroic events that led to the final establishment of these limits in the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo and the Gadsden Purchase of 1853 is a story still waiting to be properly told. Notwithstanding the 151 years that have already elapsed since the signing of the first of these two treaties, Mexico's legal, diplomatic, historic and technical literature on this fascinating subject remains scanty.²

MEXICO'S BOUNDARIES WITH THE UNITED STATES

Mexico and the United States share one of the oldest, longest and most complex boundaries in this hemisphere. According to the International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC), the official length of this border totals 1,951.36 miles, divided as follows: 1,253.69 miles of the Río Grande; 697.67 miles from El Paso, Texas, to the Pacific Ocean, and 23.72 miles of the short stretch of the Colorado River.³ From the viewpoint of international law, this binational limit consists of two different types of boundaries: 1) natural boundaries, formed by rivers and mountains, such as the Río Grande, the Colo-

* Professor of law at the University of San Diego.



The Pantoja Map. *Treaties and Other International Acts of the U.S. of America*, Hunter Miller, ed., Washington, Government Printing Office, 1937, p. 428.

rado and the Tijuana; and, 2) artificial boundaries, consisting of straight lines connecting the Río Grande with the Pacific Ocean that follow certain parallels and meridians in degrees of latitude and longitude. These artificial lines were also marked astronomically. Examples of these boundaries are the segments running west from Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua and El Paso, Texas, to the Pacific Ocean.⁴ Although the original intention of the boundaries' negotiators was to consider

them (including the natural boundaries) as “fixed and definite,” i.e., eternal, the sudden changes and gradual movements of the international rivers in question, subject to natural phenomena such as floods and droughts, proved them wrong. Eventually, this resulted in the signing of a bilateral convention in 1884 to establish the rules applicable to the movements of these rivers and the establishment of a binational body to implement them, the International Boundary Commission (IBC).

Created in 1889,⁵ the IBC's functions were expanded in 1944 to include jurisdiction over the waters of the international rivers.⁶ Currently, the International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC), made up of a U.S. and a Mexican section each headed by a respective commissioner, is empowered to decide matters affecting boundary questions as well as the utilization and allocation of the waters of international rivers.

ABSOLUTE POWERS
OF THE JOINT BOUNDARY COMMISSION

Article V of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo⁷ established the boundary between both countries. The article reads:

The boundary line between the two Republics shall commence in the Gulf of Mexico, three leagues from land, opposite the mouth of the Río Grande, otherwise called Río Bravo del Norte...; from thence, up the middle of that river... to the point where it strikes the southern boundary of New Mexico (which runs north of the town called El Paso) to its western termination; thence, northward, along the western line of New Mexico, until it intersects the first branch of the River Gila;... thence down the middle of the said branch and of the said river, until it empties into the Río Colorado; thence, across the Colorado, following the division line between Upper and Lower California, to the Pacific Ocean.⁸

While working out the treaty, the U.S. and Mexican negotiators faced a serious problem: they did not know where “the dividing line” between Upper and Lower California was. This was mainly due to

the remoteness and inclemencies of the area, where relatively few explorers had ventured prior to 1848, and to the lack of accurate maps.⁹

The determination of this boundary was a particularly crucial issue for the United States. Upon this decision depended whether the port and the bay of San Diego would be included as part of the territories to be “ceded” by Mexico to the United States, pursuant to the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. In addition, the U.S. had already made plans to take advantage of its military victory over Mexico to acquire certain territories which would be used to build a much needed transcontinental railroad across the southwest United States.¹⁰ To solve this problem, the negotiators of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo used three strategies: first, they included a specific provision agreeing to the limit between the two Californias; second, they annexed a copy of an old Spanish map sketched in 1782 by the Second Sailing Master of the Spanish Armada, Juan Pantoja y Arriaga, known as the Pantoja Map, which they used to depict the newly agreed California limit; and, third, they gave the government officials who were later appointed to establish and demarcate the international binational boundary (i.e., one commissioner and one surveyor from each country, who formed the original Joint Boundary Commission) almost absolute powers to resolve any questions pertaining to said boundary. Furthermore, it was formally stipulated that the agreements reached by the commissioners and surveyors were to have the same weight as the treaty itself.

The language of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo addressing these three matters reads:

In order to preclude all difficulty in tracing upon the ground the limit separating Upper from Lower California, it is agreed that the said limit shall consist of a straight line, drawn from the middle of the Río Gila, where it united from the Colorado, to a point of the Pacific Ocean, distant one marine league due south of the southernmost point of the Port of San Diego, according to the plan of said port, made in the year 1782 by Don Juan Pantoja, second sailing master of the Spanish fleet, and published at Madrid in the year 1802, in the Atlas to the voyage of the schooners *Sutil* and *Mexicana*: of which plan a copy is hereunto added, signed and sealed by the respective plenipotentiaries.

In order to designate the boundary line with due precision, upon authoritative maps...the two governments shall each appoint a Commissioner and a Surveyor, who... shall meet at the Port of San Diego... They shall keep journals and make out plans of their operations; and the result agreed upon by them, shall be deemed a part of this Treaty, and shall have the same force as if it were inserted therein.¹¹

In essence, this empowering language is one of the peculiar aspects of the 1848 treaty. Knowing that the physical and topographical data regarding those vast tracts of land where the new boundary was to be established was clearly missing or grossly inaccurate, the treaty negotiators empowered the joint commission to reach an agreement on the precise location of the boundary or on any other aspect pertaining to it. By having these ample powers, the U.S. and Mexican teams had the ability to, say, “adjust” the boundary described in the treaty to the physical contours imposed by the topog-

raphy of the land. If the physical features depicted in one of the official maps was incorrect or inaccurate, the joint commission had the power to translate the map and treaty language into a concrete reality, into an agreed physical boundary marked on the land.

Another unique aspect of this empowering language was the formal understanding that any boundary line expressly agreed upon by the two sections of the joint commission formally became the official international boundary, *de jure* and *de facto*; and this legally binding language, as a consequence, was deemed part of the treaty itself. Thus, every important decision regarding the location of the boundary was couched in terms of an agreement, i.e., a legally binding contract. By adopting this *modus operandi* the boundary agreed by the joint commission became final and definitive, subject to no later changes.

OFFICIAL DEMARCATON OF THE INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY

The Joint Boundary Commission convened for the first time in San Diego, California, on July 6, 1849.¹² The Mexican government appointed General Pedro García Conde and José Salazar Ilarregui and the U.S., John B. Weller and Andrew B. Gray, as commissioners and surveyors, respectively. Three days later, the commission agreed to conduct surveys and define on the ground: 1) the southernmost point of the Port of San Diego, and 2) the two ends of the straight line between the Pacific and the junction of the Gila and Colorado Rivers.

The “initial point” on the Pacific Ocean, situated one marine league due south of the southernmost point of the Port of San

Diego, according to the Pantoja Map, was officially ascertained on October 10, 1849. A written statement in English and Spanish was placed in a hermetically sealed bottle and deposited in the ground and signed by the U.S. and Mexican commissioners and surveyors in the presence of two witnesses.¹³ It was agreed that this point was in North latitude 32°31'59".58, and the longitude thereof 7h. 48 min. 21.10 West of Greenwich. On January 30, 1850, the joint commission agreed to place a monument at the initial point on the Pacific Ocean.

IS THIS BORDER WRONGLY PLACED?

The central argument advanced by Mexican authors¹⁴ to claim that this portion of the boundary is placed south of where it should be is based on the interpretation of the words “port” and “bay.” As seen earlier, the treaty stipulates that the initial point should be placed “one marine league due south of the southernmost point of the port of San Diego.” However, the official reports of the joint commission clearly indicate that the marine league was measured not from the “port” of San Diego, at that time located some 9.5 miles north, but from the southernmost coastline of San Diego Bay.

According to this argument, the boundary should have been measured from the then “port” of San Diego, which in 1848-1850 was located in the area known today as Ballast Point. This point was labeled “Punta Guijarros” on the Pantoja Map and is currently located in the inland area of Point Loma, slightly northeast of the Cabrillo National Monument and across from the North Island Naval

Air Station in Coronado. Ballast Point and the top of Coronado make up the mouth of the channel used by vessels to enter into San Diego Bay from the Pacific Ocean today.

The difference between the initial point measured from the “port” and measured from the southernmost coastline of the “bay” is some 9.5 miles. Now, when one considers that the straight line that separates California, U.S., from Baja California, Mexico, is 146.9 miles long to its Eastern Terminus¹⁵ (at the confluence of the Gila and Colorado Rivers), the territorial loss affecting Mexico seems considerable.

However, legal and technical realities seem to refute this allegation. First, we should remember that the 1848 treaty conferred almost absolute powers upon the members of the joint commission to reach an agreement among themselves on the location of the boundary. Accordingly, as documented in the joint commission’s official minutes dated October 10, 1849, the Mexican and U.S. members of the commission agreed on the location of the initial point of the boundary on the Pacific Ocean.¹⁶

Second, there is an even stronger argument to dispose of this claim. The precise location of the current international boundary between both countries was marked in red ink on the Pantoja Map when it was added to the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. Furthermore, in order to avoid any future discrepancy regarding the location of this portion of the boundary—especially from the U.S. perspective—, the Pantoja Map was signed by each of the three Mexican plenipotentiaries: Bernardo Couto, Miguel Atristáin and Luis G. Cuevas, and by Nicholas P. Trist,

the U.S. commissioner, and an official seal was affixed to it. Thus, the U.S. and Mexican plenipotentiaries not only indicated that this was the map referred to in the treaty’s Article V, but, more importantly, expressly recognized that the line in the San Diego-Tijuana region had been personally drawn in red ink as the agreed “dividing line” (*línea divisoria*) between both countries. Accordingly, the technical work of the joint commission merely consisted of tracing upon the ground the boundary line depicted in red in the Pantoja map. (See map.)

In closing, it should be acknowledged that during the slow and technically challenging process of establishing and demarcating the binational boundary by the joint commission—an admirable joint effort that took from 1849 until 1857—, many technical mistakes were made. Most of them were due to technical defects affecting the operation and accuracy of the commission’s scientific instruments. When these mistakes or the resulting technical inaccuracies went beyond the reasonable standard agreed by the commission, they were immediately brought to the attention of the other party and, when deemed necessary, corrected. However, when the discrepancies of the technical readings between the Mexican and the U.S. sections were considered tolerable, given the hostile environmental and technical working conditions when the boundary was being established, these discrepancies were solved by agreement between the two sections.

In the relatively few cases where one of the contracting parties considered that a gross misreading or a gross mistake had taken place, the affected party submitted the case to the International Boundary

Commission or even the International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC) for its technical analysis and final decision. In this regard, for example, Mexico brought up a number of important cases, including Rancho de Sásabe, Mina Oro Blanco, La Tinaja, Tres Bellotas, La Noria, El Durazno (in Sonora), Ascensión (Chihuahua), etc.¹⁷ However, no formal claim has ever been submitted by Mexico regarding the initial point on the Pacific Ocean or the Eastern terminus at the confluence of the Gila and Colorado Rivers, or any other point along the straight line that separates California from Baja California.

The fundamental principle that has guided, and continues to guide, the work of the IBWC is that the boundary established by Article V of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo of 1848 and Article I of the Gadsden Purchase of 1853 is to be respected by both countries, and that no change shall ever be made to the international boundary, “except by the express and free consent of both nations, lawfully given by the General Governments of each, in conformity with its own Constitution.”¹⁸ There is no question that this lucid and sound principle of international law, established 150 years ago, will continue to be in force for many years to come. ■■■

NOTES

¹ Another claim advances the thesis that the California Channel Islands (eight small islands off California) still belong to Mexico. See Jorge A. Vargas, *El archipiélago del Norte. ¿Territorio de México o de los Estados Unidos?* (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1993) and “California’s Offshore Islands: Is the “Northern Archipiélago” a Subject for International Law or Political Rhetoric?,” in *Loyola of Los Angeles International & Comparative Law Journal* 12, no. 13 (May 1990), pp. 687-724.

² Traditional sources include César Sepúlveda, *La frontera norte de México. Historia y conflictos, 1762-1975* (Mexico City: Porrúa, 1976); Alberto María Carreño, *México y los Estados Unidos de América* (Mexico City: Jus, 1962); and Luis G. Zorrilla, *Historia de las relaciones entre México y los Estados Unidos de América, 1800-1958* (Mexico City: Porrúa, 1977). Analytical works discussing Mexico’s territorial or maritime boundaries with other countries, like Guatemala, Belize, etc. appear to be simply non-existent.

³ Leon C. Metz, *Border* (El Paso, Texas: Mangan Books, 1990) no pagination.

⁴ Ocean and submarine boundaries, such as the territorial sea, the continental shelf and, more recently, the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), may be traced based on the straight-baseline system, following agreed points of latitude and longitude. See, for example, the Treaty on the Delimitation of Maritime Boundaries between Mexico and the United States, signed in Mexico City on May 4, 1978.

⁵ Convention to Avoid the Difficulties Occasioned by Reason of the Changes which Take Place in the Beds of the Río Grande and the Colorado River, signed in Washington, March 1, 1889; it came into force on December 24, 1890. 26 Stat. 1512; TS 232; 9 Bevans 877.

⁶ Treaty Relating to the Utilization of Waters of the Colorado and Tijuana Rivers and of the Río Grande, and Supplementary Protocol Signed on November 14, 1944. Signed in Washington, February 3, 1944; it came into force November 8, 1945. See 59 Stat. 1219; TS 994; 9 Bevans 1166; 3 UNTS 313.

⁷ Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. Treaty of Peace, Friendship, Limits, and Settlement, signed in Guadalupe Hidalgo on February 2, 1848. Ratified by the United States, March 16, 1848. Ratified by Mexico on May 30, 1848. Ratifications exchanged in Querétaro, Mexico, May 30, 1848. Proclaimed July 4, 1848. Treaty Series No. 207. *Treaties and Other International Acts of the United States of America*, Hunter Miller, ed., vol. 5, Document 129, U.S. (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office 1937), pp. 204-428.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 213-214. Also see *Tratados y convenciones sobre límites y aguas entre México y los Estados Unidos* (Ciudad Juárez: Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores (SRE)/ Comisión Internacional de Límites y Aguas [CILA], 1957), p. 9.

⁹ The lack of accurate and technical information regarding the lands where the boundary was to be

established affected many other stretches along the difficult binational boundary. Mexican and U.S. authors have written extensively on the mistakes and technical inaccuracies that plagued the Pantoja and, especially, the Distumell maps. These two maps were officially added to the Guadalupe Hidalgo Treaty. See *Treaties and Other International Acts...*, pp. 340, 362-371.

¹⁰ See, for example, A. Gray, Survey of Route for the Southern Pacific R.R. on the 82nd Parallel, Southern Pacific Railroad (Railroad Record), 1856.

¹¹ Article V of the treaty, *Treaties and Other International Acts...*, p. 215.

¹² Report of the Secretary of the Interior, Senate Executive Document No. 199, 32nd Congress, 1st Session (Serial 626), p. 56.

¹³ In part, this statement read: “Be it remembered that, on the 10th day of October, A. D. 1849, the undersigned, Commissioners and Surveyors, duly appointed and commissioned by their respective governments, being satisfied with the results of the survey made, did agree that the demarkation (sic) of the boundary between the United States and the Mexican Republic shall commence at this point.” *Ibid.*, p. 59.

¹⁴ See, for example, the pamphlet by Guillermo Ortiz Zamora, *The True Border between the Californias, North or South? Port or Bay?* (Tijuana: 1987).

¹⁵ According to its Minute of January 28, 1850, the Boundary Commission agreed that the geographical position of the point “marking the middle of the Gila River, where it unites the Colorado” was at 32° 43’ 32” and 7 hours, 38 minutes. Thus, the straight line separating the two Californias, between the monument at the initial point on the Pacific Ocean and the confluence of the Gila and Colorado Rivers, was 148.689 miles long. However, the U.S. and Geodetic Survey in 1936 “re-computed” this distance, according to the North American Datum of 1927, to be 146.994 miles. See *Treaties and Other International Acts...*, p. 415.

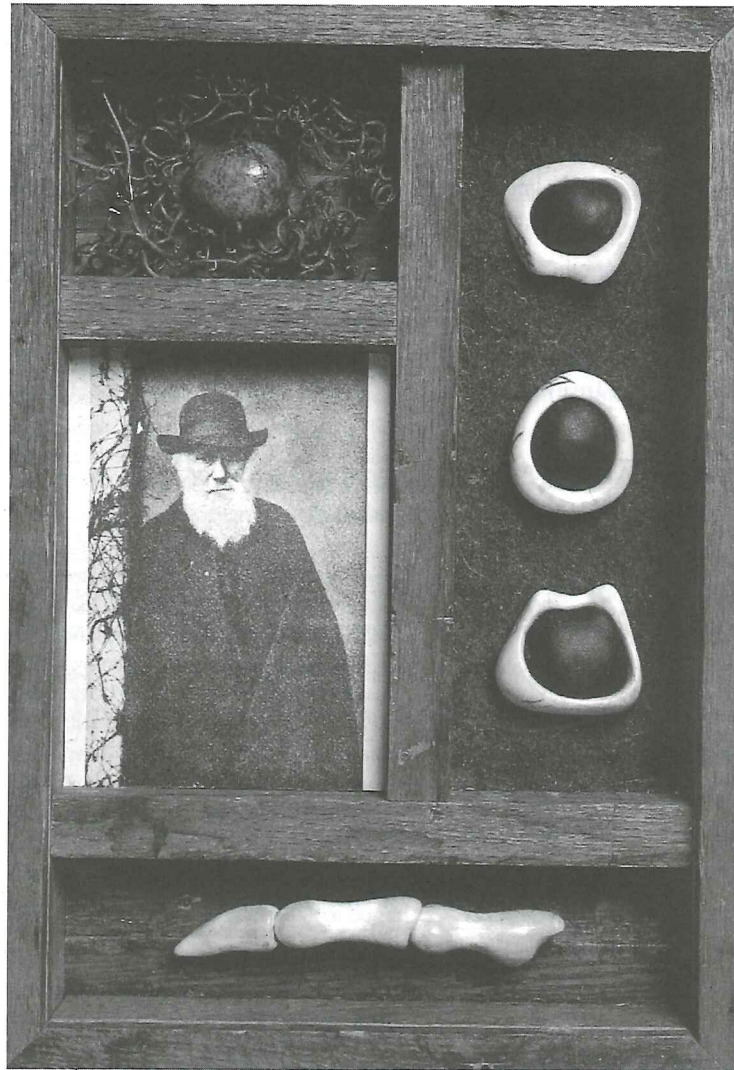
¹⁶ See note 13 and the corresponding text.

¹⁷ Most of these cases are discussed in Luis G. Zorrilla, *Monumentación de la frontera norte en el siglo XIX* (Mexico City: Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, 1981).

¹⁸ Article V, Guadalupe Hidalgo Treaty, *Treaties and Other International Acts...*, pp. 215-216.

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From Nutka to Nunavut Why Canada Is Important to Mexico

*Julián Castro Rea**

What immediately comes to mind when the reader sees the title of this article will probably be formal diplomatic relations between Mexico and Canada, government to government, managed from Mexico City and Ottawa. Naturally, these are important because they are the institutional and most visible side of the exchanges between both our countries.

But, in this article, I would like to deal with some less well known aspects, specifically underlining that 1) the relationship between Mexico and Canada is older and more complex than it seems and 2) making relations closer could be enormously beneficial for Mexico.

Formal diplomatic relations were established in 1944, only 55 years ago. But the first contacts between what is now Mexico and what is now Canada date back more than 400 years.

In the 1570s, explorers Juan de Fuca and Bartolomé Fonte left the port of San Blas, Nayarit, heading north in search of a passage to link the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans. Venturing north of California they arrived at what they thought was

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their much sought-after channel. What they christened the “Fuca Channel” was actually the body of water south of Vancouver Island on today’s western U.S.-Canadian border. It was then decided that the northwestern Pacific Ocean limit of New Spain was that enormous island.

Nevertheless, although Spain theoretically established sovereignty over this vast territory, it did not do much to truly integrate it into the rest of New Spain. Two hundred years later, in 1774, a new expedition explored Vancouver Island and christened a small island adjacent to it, San Lorenzo de Nutka. The Spanish estab-

lished a post there and began to exchange European goods for otter skins with the indigenous peoples of the region.

However, other actors would soon come on the scene. In 1778, English explorer James Cook crossed the Pacific and landed on what is now Vancouver Island, claiming it as an English possession. He was also motivated by the trade in otter pelts that the English traders sold in Asia for big money. Aware of the need to make the Spanish presence in the region more categorically felt, the Crown sent a military detachment under the command of Juan Francisco de la Bodega y Quadra.

In 1788, the conflict sharpened. Great Britain declared war on Spain over the possession of Nutka Island. The war never broke out, thanks to a diplomatic agreement between Madrid and London finally arrived at in 1791 and according to which both powers would share not only Nutka but also the large adjacent island. London sent George Vancouver to execute the peace treaty. By common consent with the commander of the Spanish garrison, they christened the island “Vancouver and Quadra Island,” which remained its official name until Mexican independence rendered Spain incapable of exercising its sovereignty in the area.

* Researcher and coordinator of the CISAN Canadian studies area.

Today, the capital of the Canadian province of British Columbia, Victoria, is located on Vancouver Island. There, across from the provincial House of Parliament, a small historical monument has been placed: a bust of Juan Francisco de la Bodega y Quadra. Also, the channel south of the island continues to be called Juan de Fuca Strait.

Two years after the diplomatic agreement, in 1793, Spain sent a scientific expedition to the region, mainly to make

Mexico published the complete report, including drawings and etchings done by Mociño and his assistants of maps, places and people.¹

So, relations between Mexico and Canada go much further back than the establishment of formal diplomatic relations. Actually, contact has been constant for the simple but fundamental reason that Mexicans and Canadians share the same North American continent. The actual distance between Mexico and

If contacts are not often noticed, it is due to something just as important for Mexico as for Canada: the presence of our common neighbor, the most important economic and military power in the world.

an inventory of its natural resources. The 13-year-long expedition ventured even further north along the Pacific Coast, all the way to Alaska. The expedition's only survivor was Mexican José Mariano Mociño y Losada, born in Temascaltepec in what is now the State of Mexico. On his return, he wrote a detailed account of the region's natural resources—flora, fauna and minerals—as well as of its inhabitants. That is, long before Canadians interested themselves in studying Mexico, a Mexican was studying Canada.

Mociño went to Spain to write his report, which he called “News from Nutka.” Given the political turmoil unleashed by the invasion of Napoleon's armies, Mociño's manuscript was never published, and it languished for two centuries in the royal archives in Madrid. But, last year, the National Autonomous University of

Canada is smaller than that between Mexico and Europe. It is also more easily traveled because it can be done by land. If these contacts are not often noticed, it is due to something just as important for Mexico as for Canada: the presence of our common neighbor, the most important economic and military power in the world.

I would like to illustrate this idea with an example. As I have indicated, the two countries have had diplomatic relations since 1944. But the first 45 years of those relations were basically what I call “friendly indifference”: a cordial, but not very substantial, relationship. In 1971, formal mechanisms for consultation between executive branches were established and in 1975, for consultation between legislative branches (the so-called Mexico-Canada Ministerial Commissions and

Interparliamentary Meetings). These meetings, however, were sporadic and their final agreements not very important for either country's international agenda.

It was only with the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) that this began to change. Suddenly, both countries discovered that their priorities overlapped on common issues: access to the U.S. market and an interest in attracting more U.S. investment. It was through this common interest that Mexico and Canada “rediscovered” each other and made sure the trade agreement benefited both of them.

This idea, however, was not new. There is an interesting precedent that could be considered the “grandfather” of trade relations between Canada and Mexico.

In 1854, Canada established a treaty for mutual trade with the United States granting both parties trade preferences. The accord was beneficial for both countries because Canada provided mainly raw materials and the United States, manufactured products. However, the U.S. Civil War changed things. The U.S. economy, distorted by the war, concentrated on the production of arms and was forced to import basic supplies and consumption items. This benefited Canada more than U.S. interests thought prudent. True to the behavior that it continues to display today of being for free trade when it has the advantage and protectionist when it has deficits, the U.S. government unilaterally canceled the treaty for trade reciprocity.

As is only natural, this affected Canadian interests, which at the same time were dealing with the abolition of Great Britain's Corn Laws, which established the mother country's trade preferences

for her colonies. The Canadians then conceived an alternative trade strategy: approaching the Latin American markets, particularly that of Mexico, to establish a confederated trade council. With the support of London, in January 1866 a Canadian trade mission left for Latin America. Although it had initially included Mexico on the itinerary, it did not actually travel there because its members thought—quite rightly so—that any agreement made with Maximilian’s imperial government, at that time in outright decline, had no possibility of being applied. In the end, the initiative’s promoters realized how difficult it was to come to preferential agreements with Latin America because Canada’s small market made reciprocal trade with these countries unviable.

Nevertheless, the Canadians did not cease their attempts to foster trade with Mexico. A. W. Donly, the first Canadian commissioner of trade visited Mexico in 1905. Between 1920 and 1940, and then at the end of the 1960s, efforts were made to increase trade between Mexico and Canada. These efforts were formalized in agreements in 1931 and 1970. In 1931, Mexico’s Minister of Communications and Public Works, Juan A. Almazán, made an official visit to Canada. On his return, he wrote a letter to President Emilio Portes Gil saying,

There are probably no two countries in the world so susceptible to complementing each other as admirably as Canada and Mexico...[being located as they are] on the same continent with the facility of communicating by both oceans.²

This statement, that almost 70 years later sounds prophetic, is no more than

the express recognition of a potential that has yet to be completely realized. As I have written elsewhere, Canada is the “indispensable alternative” and, indeed, the most immediate one for the diversification of Mexico’s foreign relations, both on a governmental and a societal level.

The main, recurring obstacle to this deepening of the relationship occurs when it is mediated by another country, first Great Britain and later the United

With the U.S. executive’s hands tied by the House of Representatives, where protectionist proclivities are most clearly expressed, Mexico and Canada have become the champions of free trade in the Americas.

States. Even today, many Mexican products are exported to Canada via the United States and vice versa. This distorts Mexican-Canadian trade figures, particularly with regard to Mexican exports.

This situation also exists around political issues. It is time we became aware of Mexico’s and Canada’s common interests and explored the enormous potential for cooperation between the two in order to take maximum advantage of it. The following are some of the fields in which that cooperation could be particularly fruitful:

a) *Foreign policy.* The way in which Mexican and Canadian international activities coincide (literally) is amazing. The two countries have always voted quite similarly in the United Nations. For example, neither broke relations with

Cuba, for the same reasons: a desire to mark their differences with U.S. policy.

Initially it was just a coincidence: each party acted on its own, but arrived at the same result. A convergence of policies, truly concerted action, is very incipient. I will mention two very important instances: the common opposition to the Helms-Burton Act and a joint effort to establish a free trade zone including all countries in the Americas. Ottawa and our Foreign Affairs Ministry

are quite right in opposing the extraterritorial application of a U.S. law that, in addition to its political implications, would attempt to stop the profitable business dealings with Cuba that they are able to carry out because they did not break diplomatic relations. With the U.S. executive’s hands tied by the House of Representatives, where protectionist proclivities are most clearly expressed, Mexico and Canada have become the champions of free trade in the Americas.

b) *Education,* particularly higher education. Canada has a first-rate, world-class university system that is an interesting alternative for Mexican students who want to study abroad. In addition to its excellent academic level, students can study in English or in French, or, depending on the location, in both; tuition

is much lower than in the United States and is controlled by provincial governments. On the other hand, Canada is a safe and pleasant place to live. This is especially important for Mexicans because Canadian do not have the same prejudices against us as Americans do, which spark unpleasant experiences there.

c) *Academic exchanges.* These are important because they favor better mutual understanding between our two countries. I sincerely believe that Mexicans can learn many important things from Canadians, particularly with regard to the advancement of democracy and development. Canada has not only developed its formal democratic institutions, but it is also an example of civility and tolerance. In addition, Canadian capitalism is different in that it combines the economic system with solidarity, with a state commitment to its people's well being. Historically, we Mexicans have been obsessed with following the political and economic example of the United States. This obsession is very powerful today despite the signs of decomposition in U.S. society and politics and the structural inequalities of its economy. I think it is time to look closer at the Canadian example.

For this reason it is important to promote Canadian studies in Mexico. Several universities in our country have created centers for Canadian studies, included courses on Canada in their curricula or established graduate programs to train specialists in Canada. Special mention should be made here of the Masters program in U.S. and Canadian studies at the Autonomous University of Sinaloa.

A concrete, very timely, example of how Canada can be a source of inspira-

tion for solving current problems in Mexico is Nunavut. Last April 1, Canada's territory went through an important transformation. Nunavut, a new territory, was created in the extreme northwest part of the country. Nunavut means "our land" in Inuktitut, the language of the Inuit (incorrectly known as Eskimos).

Nunavut is the result of a long negotiation process that began in the 1970s between the Canadian Arctic indigenous

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peoples and the federal government. Led by an organization legitimized by consensus, the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada, the Inuit were able to overcome federal resistance and fears of their self-government. They accepted in exchange not requesting exceptional status or a different kind of government to those that already existed in Canada (federal, provincial and municipal) and being a territory under federal jurisdiction, whose government would be elected according to the rules that apply in the rest of Canada. Since they represent 85 percent of the territory's 22,000 inhabitants, how-

ever, they are assured of a majority in the legislature, where the government is elected. In addition, they introduced some innovations in their own organization that reflect Inuit ancestral customs:

* Members of parliament will not belong to political parties, but will come out of the communities and govern by consensus;

* The government will be highly decentralized; in addition to the capital, Iqaluit, nine regional centers will manage the public administration, dividing ministry headquarters among them.

* The official language is Inuktitut.

In addition, it is to be expected that the first legislature will approve laws that reflect traditional Inuit forms of government even further.

Concretely, the lesson of Nunavut for Mexico is that federalism is the solution for reconciling unity and diversity. The recognition of self-government for groups who differ from the majority national culture does not mean the destruction of the state, but its enrichment as a qualitatively superior democracy.

Now that Mexico is preparing to begin a new millennium, it can find inspiration in the Canadian example to solve some of its most pressing problems. ■■■

NOTES

¹ José Mariano Mociño y Losada, *Noticias de Nutka* (Mexico City: UNAM, 1998).

² C.M.Ogelsby, *Gringos from the Far North. Essays in the History of Canadian-Latin American Relations, 1866-1968* (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1976), p. 75.



Octavio Navarra/AVE

San Juan Bautista Church.

Portrait of Coyoacán

Luis Everaert Dubernard*

Although Man came to the southern part of the Valley of Mexico, particularly the lake region, almost 25,000 years ago, today only a few vestiges of his earliest presence exist. Traces of human beings from later periods are more frequent and abundant, indicating the high level of general development the communities had reached with the passage of time.

This rapid evolution is explained by several factors: on the one hand they had magnificent soil, abundant fresh water, a benign climate with a well defined rainy season and a wealth of rich and varied flora and fauna easy to gather and hunt, all of which were very kind to a low-density population.

These conditions favored the passage from nomadic groups to a sedentary lifestyle, with all its accoutrements: agriculture, basket weaving, pottery, textiles and architecture on the material side, and a religion, social organization, astronomy and some incipient visual arts on the intellec-



Unless otherwise specified all photos by Dante Barrera

Coyote Fountain, a symbol of Coyoacán.

tual side. A little before the Christian era, then, in the southern part of the valley, bordering on the foothills of the Ajusco, there must have been many population centers, prospering thanks to the favorable environment.

At that point, catastrophe struck: a series of eruptions of a small volcano on the Ajusco known by its Nahuatl name, the Xitle, meaning navel, so called because of the form of its peak and crater. Enormous quantities of lava covered the valley lowlands and plains, burying several human settlements. When dry, the thick layer of magma formed what is today

called the El Pedregal area, named for its stony crags.

Only two of the human settlements buried under the dried lava have been discovered and studied: Copilco el Bajo and Cuicuilco, both in what is traditionally known as Coyoacán.

A century ago, when the granite quarries were being mined in Copilco el Bajo, a cemetery was discovered with several graves that showed evidence of ritual burial, complete with very beautiful pottery. In Cuicuilco, in the 1920s, excavations uncovered what turned out to be the largest construction in the entire Western Hemisphere, the Cuicuilco “pyramid,” built 2,000 years ago, which is actually two or three large cut-off cones superimposed on one another. Other, lesser constructions were also found, along with pottery and, very importantly, small carved stone objects, outstanding among which is the first known Mesoamerican deity, the Old God of Fire, 1,000 years later called Huehuetéotl or Xiuhtecutli by the Nahuas. We still do not know what the original inhabitants of Copilco and

* Chronicler of Coyoacán.

Cuicuilco called themselves or their settlements, or what language they spoke.

The Xitle's eruptions extinguished what are called the Early Preclassical cultures in Coyoacán. Only five or six centuries later groups of the Teotihuacan culture appeared in the Pedregal area, but left little trace.

Around the year 1000 of the Christian era, and probably as a derivation of the creation of Culhuacán, the early

Meanwhile, the inhabitants of Coyoacán and its many neighborhoods practiced and perfected the art of stone carving. Ordered by their Mexica masters, they made the imposing monolithic statues of Coatlicue, the stone of the Sun or Aztec calendar and the gladiatorial sacrificial stones of Moctezuma I and Tizoc.

Coyoacán also makes an appearance in another of the manifestations of Mesoamerican art, the codices, with its char-

acteristic, engaging glyph that represents the full figure of a coyote with an enigmatic black circle to one side. Europe; received appointments from Carlos V and used them to make governmental decrees. In Coyoacán, Cortés would write his famous *Tercera Carta de Relación* (Third Report) to the emperor, a masterpiece of military history. But, he would also sully his name by torturing his prisoner, Cuauhtémoc, the last Mexica king.

The Franciscan friars established themselves tentatively in Coyoacán in 1526,

After the fall of Tenochtitlan, Coyoacán became very important. Hernán Cortés founded his capital and created the first *ayuntamiento*, or city government, in the highlands there.



Coyoacán's plazas are an invitation to contemplation.

Toltecs, who spoke a proto-Nahuatl language, founded Coyoacán and gave it its name. The correct name seems to have been "Coyo-hua-can," or "place of those who own coyotes."

Around the year 1200, the second or third wave of Nahuatl tribes entered the Valley of Mexico, the Tepanecs who founded Acapatzalco and successfully occupied and developed Coyoacán until their lord, Maxtla, was defeated and killed in 1430 by Itzcóatl, king of the Mexicas of Tenochtitlan. At that time the Tepanec capital was dominated by the Mexicas until the arrival of the Spaniards in 1520.

After the fall of Tenochtitlan, August 13, 1521, Coyoacán became very important. When Hernán Cortés created New Spain, he founded his capital and created the first *ayuntamiento*, or city government, in the highlands there. From there, for two years, he planned and carried out the conquest of Pánuco, Michoacán, Soconusco and Guatemala; discovered the Mexican coast of the Pacific Ocean; imported and adapted fruit trees, grains, vegetables and industrial plants from Europe; exported Mexican goods to

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The Conchita Church, on the plaza of the same name.

and the Dominicans took up permanent residence in 1528 when they began building the large church and monastery of San Juan Bautista.

When Hernán Cortés was named Marquis of the Valley of Oaxaca by Carlos V, he designated Coyoacán the capital of his state and marquisate.

During the three centuries of Spanish domination, Coyoacán's fertile lands propitiated the creation of haciendas and

agricultural ranches, but the Crown took care to also grant communal lands to the indigenous peoples to guarantee them their own land and water rights. In the town, spinning and weaving workshops were set up with free labor, slaves and prison laborers.

Very ambitious construction was carried out all over the area: seven or eight neighborhood and town chapels, the large San Juan Bautista parish church and mo-

the priest of Churubusco, was discovered and crushed. A few days after the Battle of Monte de las Cruces, the advance of the insurgents was defeated in Coyoacán.

Once independence was won and the republic established, the town became part of the State of Mexico. But, when the area called the Federal District was expanded, Coyoacán became part of it as a municipality, which it continued to be for



Interior patio of the Camilo Brothers rest home.



The San Antonio Panzacola Chapel, part of the San Juan Bautista parish.

nastery, ranch and hacienda main houses, avenues, a half dozen large bridges, hydraulic works and canals, public works of different kinds and semi-rural country houses. Of the latter, the El Altillo ranch house survives, as well as houses incorrectly named for conquistadors, like the Pedro de Alvarado house, the Diego de Ordaz house, Hernán Cortés and the Malinche house and the Camilos Brothers Haven.

In the early nineteenth century, at the time the independence movement began with the *Grito de Dolores* (the Shout of Independence in Dolores, Hidalgo), a conspiracy headed by Father Altamirano,

In the 1920s and 1930s many professionals, musicians, composers and painters moved into and worked in Coyoacán: José Clemente Orozco, Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera, among them.

a century until 1929 when all the Federal District's municipalities were abolished.

During the War of 1847, Coyoacán was the site of a major battle, the heroic defense of the bridge and Churubusco monastery, and later was occupied for 10 months by U.S. troops along with the rest of the Valley of Mexico.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, little by little, peace returned once again to Coyoacán. The last 25 years of the century marked increased migration and new prosperity. Many wealthy families from the city moved there, but, above all intellectuals, writers, poets, journalists, musicians, priests and politicians, among them Fran-

cisco Sosa, Mariano Ortiz de Montellano, Adrián Unzueta, Francisco de Olaguibel, Rubén M. Campos, Elena Piña y Aguayo, Francisco de P. Andrade and Jesús Galindo y Villa. In 1890, all of them attended the inaugural ceremony of the Colonia del Carmen neighborhood, opened officially by President Porfirio Díaz and his wife Carmen.

At the turn of the century, as Coyoacán was modernized with streetcars, electric street lights and paving, more Mexican and foreign families began making their homes there. New names were added to the list of resident intellectuals: José Juan Tablada, Julián Carrillo, Miguel Angel de Quevedo, Zelia Nuttall, Concepción Cabrera de Armida, Luis Cabrera, Aureliano Urrutia, Cecil O'Gorman, Guillermo Kahlo and the young Agustín Lara.

The 10 years of the armed Revolution (1910-1920) brought suffering, tribulations, sadness and reversals for Coyoacán, as it did for the whole country. In Coyoacán the troubles began to abate, symbolically, with the centennial celebration of independence in 1921 when the old atrium of the San Juan Bautista parish church and San Felipe Street were remodeled and renamed Centennial Park and Centennial Street.

Urban public works and construction slowly renewed as Coyoacán and the nation as a whole tackled the tasks and activities of the postrevolutionary period.

In the cultural field, this meant the founding of the First Open-Air School of Painting in 1923 by painter Alfredo Ramos Martínez, previous director of the San Carlos Academy. The school, first located in the San Pedro Mártir hacienda, later moved to the San Diego Churubusco Monastery. The new methods of painting taught and self-esteem imbued in the students awakened true artistic vocations. Among



Part of the original building of the former El Altillo hacienda.

the most outstanding examples are Fermín Revueltas, Francisco Díaz de León, Fernando Leal, Mardonio Magaña, Guillermo Toussaint, Everardo Ramírez, Gabriel Fernández Ledesma, Rosario Cabrera and Jorge Enciso.

In the 1920s and 1930s many professionals, musicians, composers and painters moved into and worked in Coyoacán: José Clemente Orozco, Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera. Political refugee Leon Trotsky took up residence there in the house where he was later assassinated, a house that is today

a museum. In the 1940s, many others came to live: Salvador Novo, the former King Carol of Romania, Dolores del Río, Robert Motherwell, Wolfgang Paalen, Aurora Reyes, Nabor Carrillo, José Chávez Morado, Olga Costa, Luis Cardoza y Aragón, Lya Kostakowsky, Jorge González Camarena, Roberto Cossío y Cossío, José Gorostiza, Fidias Elizondo and Angela Gurría.

The construction and 1952 inauguration of University City in the ward of Coyoacán was an outstanding event for Mexico. This attracted hundreds of UNAM



Monumentalism in modern architecture. National Center for the Arts.



The Alvarado House today houses the Octavio Paz foundation.

professors and academic researchers to the old town. At the same time, in the 1950s, Rufino Tamayo, Pablo O'Higgins, Angel Boliver, Gabriel Figueroa, Emilio Fernández and Antonio Castro Leal arrived on their own.

Salvador Novo established the La Capilla Theater and Restaurant in 1953, a major event in Coyoacán's development. It was the first hall for presenting serious theater established outside Mexico City's downtown area at a time when the capital's demographic explosion had already begun.

That change in demographics meant that from 1960 on, new neighborhoods and housing projects, educational and university centers, public works, including new boulevards, were constructed, often accompanied by the destruction of important monuments like four colonial bridges that were obliterated. At the same time, however, the building fever brought with it a series of very beautiful churches, large public and corporate buildings and urban works that occupied all the lands previously dedicated to agriculture.



UNAM University Cultural Center Library.

As the 1970s began, this process extended to the dozens of square kilometers of El Pedregal, with land takeovers by homeless people, which totally extinguished this exceptional natural park.

Coyoacán's land was practically saturated with urban development, and its picturesque nooks and neighborhoods continued to attract important figures from cultural and artistic milieus like Héctor Azar, who founded the Center for the Dramatic Arts, Raúl Anguiano, Luis Nishizawa, Arturo García Bustos, Humberto Peraza, Rina Lazo, José E. Iturriaga, Elí de Gortari, Adolfo Mexiac, Jorge Alberto Manrique, Clementina Díaz y de Ovan-do, Miguel León-Portilla, Jorge Ibarguengoitia, Rafael Solana and Sergio Pitol, among others.

The ward authorities took a very big risk in 1978 when they banned cars in downtown Coyoacán to reserve the two plazas, Hidalgo Gardens and the Centennial Plaza, exclusively for pedestrians. This abolished a central feature of traditional Mexican plazas because it eliminated their surrounding sidewalks, and turned the traffic into a nightmare by cutting off the throughway of the historical town's main street. The worst, thing, however, was that the inevitable happened: the 25,000 or 30,000 square meters of both plazas became an enormous weekend open-air market where anything goes.

Paradoxically, a 1990 presidential decree declared Coyoacán's Historic Downtown a protected monument, a concept not at all compatible with the degrading, devastating use that it is being put to today.

If a civilizing solution to this state of things is not implemented, historic Coyoacán's days are numbered. ■■■

Coyoacán

The Cultural Heart of Mexico City

Luis Felipe Sigüenza Acevedo*



Photos by Dante Barrera

Santa Catarina Plaza.

No one in Mexico City doubts that Coyoacán is one of its main cultural centers. It boasts a historical, cultural and artistic patrimony that is one of the most important in all Latin America. As recently as 50 years ago, Coyoacán still looked like a provincial village with its enormous viceregal parish church, its sidewalks paved with black volcanic stone, settled amidst cornfields, orchards and old colonial country houses, the ideal refuge for the intellect and the arts. In the 1940s Dolores del Río and Emilio Fernández, among other



The House of Malinche.

great figures of Mexican film, walked its streets; Frida Kahlo, Diego Rivera and Salvador Novo begat many of the scandals of their time in the midst of a conservative, religious society, that had a hard time understanding why it had to put up with Leon Trotsky living there.

Coyoacán was bursting with contradictions: the opulence of its mansions con-

trasted with the simplicity of its poorer neighborhoods, and the social classes, portrayed with irony and candor in Mexican film, took on very different forms, a philosophy and a way of living homogeneous only during the patron saints days fiestas and the biggest fiesta of them all, September 15, Independence Day.

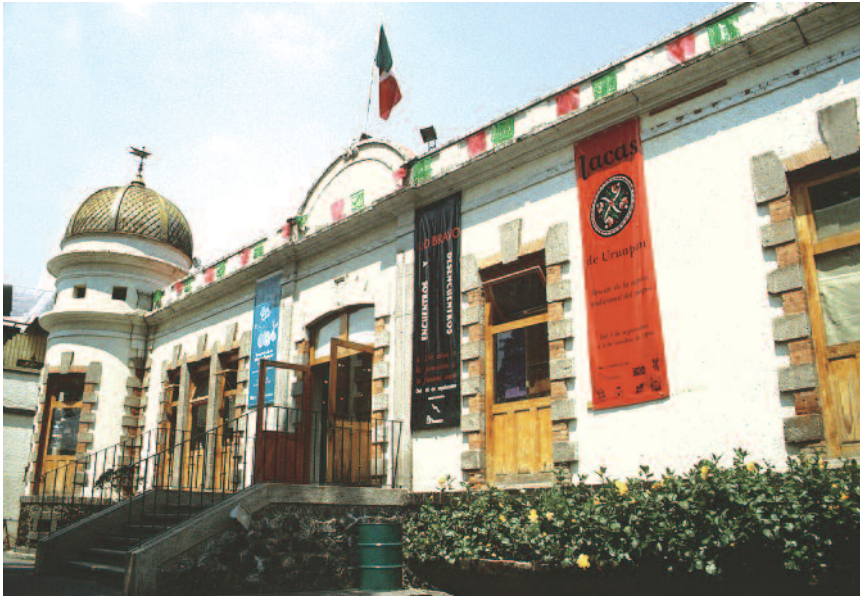
The *pedregales*, or stony crags, an area to the south of Coyoacán, the source of raw materials for four centuries of Mexican architecture, finally surrendered around 1950 to the building of the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) campus. This changed life considerably in Coyoacán, which was soon populated by academics and scientists from other

* Tourism Promotion Coordinator for Coyoacán Ward.

parts of the city and even abroad, thus substantially raising the demand for the cultural goods that had been developing simultaneously. Since then, the university has been one of the most important axes

Two other national museums, the Museum of Foreign Interventions and the National Watercolor Museum, also have their own documentation centers. The Museum of Foreign Interventions also

situated in one of the annexes to the Leon Trotsky House Museum; the library and recording collection of the UNAM National School of Music; and the UNAM Institute of Bibliographical Studies.



The National Folk Cultures Museum.



The Blue Circle Gallery's patio.

of Coyoacán's social, economic, demographic and, of course, cultural development. Today, for example, the area has more than 100 bookstores, many specializing in technical and scientific books, and at least 20 public libraries, some as important as the National Library itself, the National Publications Library and the University City Central Library, which together boast four million tomes, one of the most important collections in the world.

Recently, the Center for Information and Documentation on Folk Cultures opened there, an annex to the National Folk Cultures Museum, itself founded in 1982 by the federal government, just off Coyoacán's central plaza. This space has been key to the promotion, dignification and recovery of Mexican culture.

has a library focusing mainly on Mexican foreign policy. This museum is located on the same site as the National Manuel del Castillo Negrete Conservation, Restoration and Museography School, in the historic ex-monastery of Churubusco.

The National Watercolor Museum, moved from the more centrally located Roma neighborhood to Santa Catarina de Coyoacán after the 1985 earthquake destroyed its original building, has a large library that Alfredo Guati Rojo, its founder and lifelong director, has put at the service of the community. It also has a magnificent international collection of watercolors which makes it the foremost of its kind in the world.

Also located in Coyoacán are the Rafael Galván Library of the Institute for the Right to Exile and Public Freedoms,

But not only are books sold and collected here; Many nationally known writers also live in Coyoacán, like Fernando Benítez, Luis Everaert —the chronicler of Coyoacán— Germán Dehesa, Rafael Ramírez Heredia, David Martín del Campo and Jaime Labastida. Important publishing houses have their headquarters here, among them Siglo XXI Editores, founded to promote research and publishing in the social sciences, philosophy and the humanities; Editorial Clío, that prints mainly historical and anecdotal texts, particularly about recent Mexican history; and Ediciones Paulinas, specialized in religious works.

In the area around Río Churubusco, or the Churubusco River —today channeled into pipelines and covered by a main thoroughfare—, the federal govern-

ment set up the National Cinematheque in 1968 to preserve Mexican films which flooded the world market after World War II. Its location was not haphazard: the cinematheque was built right next door to the Azteca Churubusco Studios, opened in 1945. Together with Latin American Film Studios, founded in 1934 in San Pablo Tepetlapa, and Cuauhtémoc Studios, later replaced by Studios America opened in 1945 in the Coapa countryside, they made Coyoacán the center for full length feature film production in the golden age of Mexican cinema.

Fire broke out in the cinematheque in March 1982, and it was moved to the nearby town of Xoco. However, the land where the Azteca Churubusco Studios stood was used to build the National Center for the Arts, an enormous complex that houses the University of the Arts and documentation and informational centers for music, theater, dance and the visual arts.

Two other institutions enrich the life of Coyoacán with their presence: the UNAM National School of Music and the Higher School of Music of the National Institute of Fine Arts. Other schools also make cultural contributions, like the Autonomous Metropolitan University Xochimilco campus, located in the ward of Coyoacán, and the cultural extension program of the National Polytechnic School, with its campuses in Culhuacán, in the eastern part of the ward.

The UNAM Cultural Dissemination Office has played an important role in making aspects of universal culture available to Mexicans and in projecting our own artistic and cultural proposals worldwide. Under its aegis are the UNAM University Cultural Center, with its concert



The National Watercolor Museum.

halls and first rate fora, the University Museum of Contemporary Art and the theater, dance, music and visual arts programs that promote artistic creation among the university's almost 300,000 students, teachers and administrative workers.

Besides writers, Coyoacán has been home to visual artists like Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo, who are part of a tradition that some historians date back to

pre-Hispanic times, when dance and music filled the religious fiestas of the *tepanecas coyohuacas*, or the Tepanec residents of Coyoacán. Rufino Tamayo also lived there at one time, and today artists like Raúl Anguiano, Diego Rosales, Geles Cabrera, Arturo García Bustos and Vicente Rojo make their homes there.

The visual arts are displayed in many different kinds of venues: private homes,



Leon Trotsky's study...



and grave.



The National Center for the Arts' office tower has become a landmark in Mexico City.



The Theater of the Arts in the National Center for the Arts.

galleries, plazas and on the street. Galleries also often house other forms of art. For example, Isabel Beteta has come to the fore with her Workshops Cultural Center, which also presents dance performances. Raúl Grifaldo keeps oil painting alive next to the San Juan Bautista atrium, while Alexis Covacevich graces a corner of Francisco Sosa Street with his gallery, the Blue Circle. Rina García Lazo, from her seventeenth-century Red House, also makes her contribution to these efforts at dissemination of art. The Coyoacán Gallery, managed by Olivia Mejía, is an example of good taste in the La Conchita neighborhood, and the San Angel Gallery shows good art in the El Rosedal area.

Coyoacán is synonymous with good theater: Salvador Novo became an important forebear of today's vigorous theater tradition when he founded La Capilla in the Colonia del Carmen neighborhood. Today, there are 34 theaters and fora in Coyoacán, some experimental and others commercial. The University Cultural Center has the Juan Ruiz de Alarcón Theater and the Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz Forum; the National Center for the Arts has its Theater of the Arts, the Antonio López Mancera Forum and the Salvador Novo and Raúl Flores Canelo Theaters; a few steps from Coyoacán's central plaza is the Dramatic Arts Center and the General Society of Mexican Writers' Rodolfo Usigli Theater is located in the San Mateo Churubusco neighborhood.

Living in Coyoacán means enjoying its historic and cultural resources; it means taking a delicious walk on which you can capture the creative spirit of its residents of yesterday and today. Coyoacán is alive in its culture and gets prouder and prouder of it every day. **NMM**

MÉXICO ETERNO

arte y permanencia



DICIEMBRE 1999 - FEBRERO 2000 PALACIO DE BELLAS ARTES

CONACULTA
INAH · INBA



Indalecio Hernández

Flower portals, La Candelaria.

Patron Saints Days in Coyoacán

Ana María Castro*
 Víctor Heredia**

The fiesta is a cosmic operation: the disorder, the bringing together of the contradictory elements and principles to cause a rebirth... The fiesta is a return to an estate both remote and undifferentiated, prenatal or presocial...

Octavio Paz

Coyoacán is a place with its roots sunk in the depths of time. It has developed through different complex processes, with breaks and continuities, emerging out of the struggle and integration of diverse cultures down through history. Today, Coyoacán is a vast, heterogeneous, modern place, where the traditional coexists side by side with the cosmopolitan; the community with the academic; the simple with the complex; the mestizo, the indigenous, the Spanish and much more. This synthesis can be seen not only in historical archives and monu-

ments, but also in one of the richest, most complex and creative manifestations of our culture: the popular fiesta.

The fiesta is the result of a fusion of pre-Columbian indigenous practices, the popular Hispanic Catholicism of the early colonial period, official Church postulates

and the incorporation of cultural elements that have come out of the process of transformation that Mexico City has gone through right up until today.

Whether we are talking about a religious fiesta or a popular celebration, the issue is keeping the memory alive through traditional folk wisdom that, although not tangible, is experienced, felt and enjoyed daily.

This tradition gives Mexico City its own countenance. What is paradoxical is how tradition lives side by side with the cosmopolitan, modern facets of this great metropolis. In that sense we can speak of a multicultural society in which conflict and cultural exchange coexist.

On the ruins of what the Church considered pagan temples, it built hermitages, chapels, churches, parish houses and cathedrals. But a new culture of mestizos also took root there and today, more than five centuries after the arrival of the Spaniards,



Indalecio Hernández

Sawdust painting in the Santo Domingo neighborhood.

* Researcher at the Office for Research and Preservation of Cultural Heritage, Coyoacán Ward.

**Coordinator of the Office for Research and Preservation of Cultural Heritage, Coyoacán Ward.

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Catholic services form part of the popular festivities in the town of Los Reyes.

it is still alive and kicking to the amazement, delight and admiration of Mexicans and foreigners alike.

Down through the centuries in Coyoacán, just like in many other parts of our capital city, a particular form of expression of the towns and neighborhoods developed: the patron saint's fiesta.

This is something more than a simple celebration. It is a ceremony of participation, cooperation, unity and fraternity, an explosion of jubilation, drunkenness and breaks, an expression of faith and, above all, a space for catharsis. With the merger of the Catholic tradition and pre-Hispanic beliefs and rites, the fiesta acquired a magical religious meaning, a sincretism closely linked to our roots that at the same time has become one with modern times.

"The Spaniards brought with them a way of understanding gods, temples and sacrifices that did not take into account that the fiesta was the basis of the indigenous religion: the opposite of idolatry was not the successful imposition of orthodox Catholicism, but a de facto sincretism that mixed indigenous practices and

beliefs with the Catholic liturgy and iconography."¹ The most classic example is Our Lady of Guadalupe.

Let us look at a couple of other examples of this hybrid culture: Xolotl and Micailhuyontli, two Tepanec gods, were worshiped in a similar way to what we now know as the Day of the Dead. Their ceremonies even had a similar name: the Fiesta of the Dead, or Fiesta of the Little Dead. Catholic festivities did not manage to eliminate the entire pre-Hispanic celebration, which gave rise, for example, to what we know today as the "greased pole" game (*Xocoltl*) that in the past represented a ritual of sacrifice and offering to the gods.

Salvador Novo wrote, "The fiesta of the Tepanec god was one of the 18 main fiestas of the solar year... and most probably it took place in that part of Coyoacán that because of its fertile orchards was called *Xoco(tl)*, or fruit."² The Tepanecs were one of the seven Nahuatl tribes who left Aztlán in search of the promised land and settled in the Coyoacán area.

The *andas*, structures for carrying the statue of the patron saint, adorned with



Easter Week in Los Reyes.

flowers and seeds, the personalization of the gods (which today could well correspond to any number of existing patron saints), and the processions were already practiced in fiestas as old, for example, as that of the offering to the goddess Xilonen, goddess of sweet corn.

In this way, celebrations, beliefs and rites all joined hands and dressed up the streets of Coyoacán in bright lights and colors, music and dance and flavors and aromas.

MOST FREQUENT ASPECTS OF COYOACÁN'S PATRON SAINTS FIESTAS

Coyoacán's patron saints fiestas last anywhere from a few days to more than a week.



Jaime Chailita

The "greased pole" in Santa Ursula Coapa.

Each celebration is planned, generally for a year beforehand, by a *mayordomía* or council of sponsors or stewards (a form of organization handed down from the viceroyalty, whose functions have changed over time), or a celebrations commission. Participants in the commission take charge of distributing posts and tasks, for example, by naming a commission in charge of hiring the fireworks and the musicians, another for buying flowers, one for making the food, the multicolored sawdust and the floral portals, another for collecting donations, etc. Anyone taking on the responsibility of one of these commissions enjoys certain prestige in the community and often, the *mayordomías* become little strongholds of power, making them coveted positions in many places.



Jaime Chailita

Aztec dance in the Cuadrante de San Francisco neighborhood.

Popular urban Catholicism pays little attention to the liturgical ritual during these celebrations. The priest is seen as a minister of the Church, but not as a mediator before God. That role goes to the patron saints.

The images and sculptures that represent them and around which all the festivities turn are the means to establish contact with the realm of the sacred.

In most cases community and religious authorities come to a certain understanding: the community is in charge of the popular fiesta and the priests of the strict religious services.

In the neighborhoods and towns where these fiestas take place, there are really two complementary, interrelated celebrations going on at the same time. On the one hand is the religious celebration, including masses, the classical Catholic ceremony, prayers and chants and the processions of the patron saints, who, when they parade through the main streets create an atmosphere of fervor and mysticism. Then there is the popular celebration, filled with sounds, colors

and smells in its music, dance, theater and folk art, food, fireworks, the "greased pole" game and the fairs.

At all the patron saints fiestas mariachi bands, or brass bands or, more recently, Norteña music groups sing *Las Mañanitas*, along with other popular songs, from midnight to 6 a.m.

Dancing cannot be forgotten either: the "Aztec dance," a modernized version of a ritual dance invokes ancient Mesoamerican deities; the colonial *chinelos*, with their colorful outfits, half indigenous, half Spanish; and the dances of the Moors and the Christians that symbolically and visually recreate the desperate struggle between these two enemy bands several centuries ago in which Christianity would come out the victor over the "infidels." Popular dances with more modern, catchy rhythms like the *danzón*, *salsa*, the *cumbia*, among others, reflect the incorporation of new proposals into the dynamics of the fiesta.

Another constant is the traditional burning of *toritos*, *canastas*, *castillos* (gigantic metal structures covered by hand with

fireworks), whistlers and *guirnaldas*, that all burst out into a thousand colors and briefly light up the evening or dawn sky.

The rivalry between sister towns is another outstanding characteristic of these fiestas and a big tourist attraction. This is the kind of singular duel of art and creativity between the people of La Candelaria and Los Reyes, both towns with pre-Hispanic roots. They compete in the manufacture of different items used in the celebration. There are the *andas*, monumental bases for carrying the images of the patron saints in the processions, made of wood, steel and other resistant materials, totally covered with flowers and seeds; the *tapetes*, pictures of passages from the Bible relevant to the fiesta made of flowers, seeds or colored sawdust; and portals, large arches placed at the entrance of the town's main street or to the church, covered with the same materials, congratulating the patron saint or welcoming him/her during his/her visit to neighboring saints. They also compete with each other to see which town or neighborhood sets off more rockets during their celebrations.

We cannot leave out the ceremony of the "hurrah," the loudspeaker announcement to music in the town's main streets, passageways and alleys of the celebration of the fiesta for a week before it begins. In some of the fiestas of Los Reyes, like the celebration of the Three Kings, January 6, and of Saint James the Apostle, July 25, this announcement is made together with a procession headed up by



Sawdust painting and flower portal in La Candelaria.

Isaias Noguez



Aztec dance in Santa Ursula Coapa.

Jaime Chailia



Our Lord of Mercies in Los Reyes.

Indalecio Hernández

a musical group known in the town as the *chirimía*, or Aztec band, hired from the nearby town of Texcoco, State of Mexico.

The tradition of the *chirimía* came to Mexico with the Spanish soldiers in the sixteenth century and still maintains the original structure, though with time a pre-Hispanic instrument known generically as a *huéhuatl*, a kind of low-pitched drum, has been included. So the *chirimía* band is made up of two *chirimías* (a double reed wind instrument), a snare drum and a *huéhuatl*. Its ease of movement as it plays and its broad, strident sound makes it impossible for anyone to not know that the fiesta is being announced.

Carnival rides and the contest to see who gets the prize at the top of the greased pole complete the celebration, while food and crafts stands offer the passerby all manner of snacks and sweets.

The saints day fiestas go on all year round in most of the neighborhoods and towns. The dates vary, however, since if the saints day falls during the week, the fiesta is held on the previous or following Sunday. **MM**

NOTES

¹ William Rowe and Vivian Schelling, *Memoria y modernidad*, Los Noventa Collection, no. 80 (Mexico City: CNCA-Grijalbo, 1993), p. 87.

² Salvador Novo, *Historia y leyenda de Coyoacán* (Mexico City: Editorial Diana, 1995), pp. 24-25.

Mexico City's National Museum of Interventions



CONACULTA-INAH-MEX

The National Museum of Interventions in the Ex-Monastery of Churubusco offers a unique opportunity to look at the history of a city and a country that constantly examine the past to explain their present and build their future.

The former monastery's walls are seeped in 400 years of experience, and its rooms take us through what have been perhaps the most difficult years of our history as an independent country, when



CONACULTA-INAH-MEX

The room of the first French intervention in 1838.

six times in a century we had to defend our sovereignty and territory from foreign aggression. The building itself even played a leading role in one of those battles, when it was the bastion from which the capital was defended against the advance of U.S. troops in 1847.

A BUILDING WITH HISTORY

During the conquest, the Spaniards vanquished not only with the sword but also with their God, for whom they built many

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hermitages, chapels and churches atop the demolished *teocallis* (temples) to the indigenous gods. So, what we now know as the Ex-Monastery of Churubusco was built on the foundations of a temple dedicated to Huitzilopochtli, god of war and principle deity of the Huitzilopochco people, whose name when interpreted by the Spaniards gave rise to the word Churubusco.

First, it was only a hermitage; then church, and finally, about 1538, a Franciscan monastery. In 1576, it was turned over to the order of the Diegan friars to train missionaries destined for the Philippines, China and Japan, an activity that continued for the entire colonial period. Later, the church was rebuilt from the foundations up and the monastery expanded.¹ By the end of the seventeenth century, the building looked much as it does today.

In the early nineteenth century, monastery operations slowed down. The war of independence interrupted links to Asia and both the religious orders and the secular clergy suffered from Mexico's political zigzags during its first years as

an independent nation. Liberals and conservatives both fought to impose their own idea of what the nation should be: the Liberals, eventually victorious, harshly questioned the privileges and wealth that the Catholic Church had accumulated during three centuries of Spanish domination.

At the same time, Mexico had to deal with different conflicts with foreign powers. The most costly, the Mexico-United States War (1846-1848), ended with the loss of a great part of our national territory, and would be the reason the Churubusco Monastery would go down in history. Located where the roads from Tlalpan and Coyoacán to Mexico City crossed, Churubusco was considered an ideal spot for defending the capital from advancing U.S. troops. The friars were evacuated and the National Guard under General Manuel Rincón fortified the site. The battle took place August 20 and is remembered in Mexican history for the courage of the Mexican troops, who fought until they ran out of ammunition and were forced to surrender. The Americans held Churubusco for 18 days and from there



Conaculta-INAH-MEX

Don Diego del Castillo and his wife were the patrons of the construction of the original monastery in the seventeenth century.

advanced on other strategic points and took the city.

Ten years later, a monument would be raised there to commemorate the bravery of those who fell in battle. The monument still stands, as do two of the Mexican cannon used during the battle, flanking the entrance to the museum. At the other end of the museum's park is a statue honoring Pedro María Anaya, remembered for his answer to the U.S. generals when they asked him where the ammu-



Conaculta-INAH-MEX

One of the cannon used to defend the ex-monastery during the Battle of Churubusco, August 20, 1847.



Conaculta-INAH-MEX

Inside entrance way to the museum.



Conaculta-INAH-MEX

preservation in its original state possible, although it deteriorated somewhat. In 1917, it was turned into the National Autonomous University of Mexico's Historical Museum, opening with an exhibit about the 1847 war. Finally, in 1939, when it was declared a historic monument, it came under the authority of the National Institute of Anthropology and History. In 1980, the building was restored to establish the National Museum of Interventions.

THE MUSEUM

A collection of lithographs, engravings, photographs, paintings, maps, weapons, flags, uniforms, furniture and other items displayed in 13 rooms explains the different armed invasions of Mexico during its first century as an independent nation. In an unusual museographical exhibit, the different objects, testimonies, letters and documents fit together to explain how the protagonists and witnesses thought and acted.

After an introduction about the difficulties Mexico faced in constituting itself as a nation, the visitor enters the room

dedicated to the first intervention, by the Spanish in 1829, who failed in their attempt to recover Mexico as a territory. Nine years later, in 1838, France attempted to get Mexico to sign a trade agreement favoring it over other countries like England; Mexico's Congress refused, at which point France positioned warships off the coast of Veracruz. The pretext was support for French citizens' claims against Mexico for losses during the independence movement. Mexico was able to successfully negotiate an end to the conflict, but its lack of military strength had been clearly demonstrated.

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This would have repercussions 8 years later when Mexico faced what was then already emerging as the leading world power. Both victors and vanquished have expounded their points of view about the reasons behind the Mexico-U.S. War of 1846-1848. For Mexico, the war meant the loss of more than 2 million square kilometers of territory, a wound that even today it is not clear if it has healed, and the awareness that the defense of national sovereignty and integrity must be pursued by means other than arms.



Conaculta-INAH-MEX

Outside entrance and facade.



Conaculta-INAH-MEX

Juárez and his government traveled throughout Mexico in this carriage during the second French intervention (1862-1867).

In 1862, Mexican territory would again be violated by foreign troops, but this time, with the collaboration of Mexicans. Mexican conservatives approved of the French intervention of 1862-1867

of the twentieth century. At that time, the economic modernization fostered for 30 years under the Porfirio Díaz' dictatorship was not accompanied by a similar political and social change, sparking

diplomatic negotiating ability got better results than guns.

The museum's last room sums up the lessons learned from these experiences and applied in the fundamental principles of Mexican foreign policy established in the 1917 Constitution: non-intervention, self-determination of all peoples and the peaceful solution of controversies.

The museum building alone is worth a visit. In contrast with the theme of the main exhibit, a walk through the cells, the rooms with their magnificent arches, traces of its original decoration and several patios manage to transmit the silence and interior peace that were so sought after in the original monastery. **MM**



Room dedicated to the Mexico-U.S. War of 1846-1848.



Throne on which Agustín de Iturbide was crowned emperor of Mexico in 1822.

and supported a foreign emperor in Mexico, Maximilian of Austria. The Liberals, led by Benito Juárez at the head of the republic, resisted until they ran the invaders out.

Here, the visitor pauses to situate the change Mexico went through at the turn

as a result the revolutionary movement of 1910.

The country would be threatened by invasion twice more. The first time, in 1914, in the middle of the Revolution, President Woodrow Wilson tried to influence events and ordered the invasion of Veracruz. Two years later, in 1916, punitive expeditions were mounted along the northern border with the pretext of capturing Pancho Villa and his bandoleros, seen as a security threat to the U.S. border. Again, on that occasion, Mexican

Text: **Elsie Montiel**
Photography: **Dante Barrera**

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Address: Between 20 de Agosto and General Anaya Streets in Churubusco, Coyoacán (Subway Line 2, General Anaya stop).

Open: Tuesday to Sunday, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Entrance Fee: 16 pesos; Sundays, free. Guided tours are available for groups and students. Reservations required.

The museum has a library and offers temporary exhibits, summer and extension courses and workshops, as well as lectures, round table discussions and book launches.

NOTES

¹ These amplifications were financed by Don Diego del Castillo, a silver trader from the city of Granada, Spain. It was very common for mine owners and others who made fortunes from the New World's minerals to invest part of their profits in building or opulently decorating churches and other religious buildings. The states of Guanajuato and Zacatecas have many examples of this.

The Old San Ildefonso College Presents “The Mayas” and “Art of the Academies”

Angela de la Riva*

The Old San Ildefonso College, one of Mexico City’s most important cultural venues, hosted the exhibit “The Mayas” from August to December 1999. More than 557 pieces, rigorously selected for their beauty and variety, testified to the fundamental achievements of this Mesoamerican civilization.


Organized by theme, the exhibition clearly illustrated the Mayas’ relationship to nature, the architectural and religious design of their cities, the social fiber of their civilization, the central characters of their society, as well as their inscriptions with their mathematical, astronomical and historiographic content. For the first time this exhibit gathered together works from the main cities of the Maya region, representing different periods of the civilization’s development with, however, considerable predominance of the classical period from A.D. 300 to A.D. 900.

Guatemala, Honduras, Belize, El Salvador and Costa Rica all contributed their national collections, which, together with the collections of 40 Mexican museums, brought the public the magnificence of Mayan art in an

* Journalist.

Photos by Michel Zabé.

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Detail of an incense holder. Late classic period, Palenque, Chiapas.
Alberto Ruz Lhuillier, Site Museum, Palenque.

unprecedented show that would be hard to replicate.

“Los Mayas” was a major success in Venice’s Palazzo Grassi before coming to Mexico. Historian Dr. Mercedes de la Garza, a Mayan culture specialist and current director of the National Museum of Anthropology, selected the works exhibited in Mexico. The special museographical infrastructure was donated to the Old San Ildefonso College by the Palazzo Grassi, which is why the project’s concept can be traced to Italian architects Agata Torricella and Giuseppe Caruso. On the Mexican end, architect Ernesto Betancourt coordinated the museography and directed the exhibit in close collaboration with the Italian team.

“The Mayas” presented a panorama of 30 centuries of civilization in a space, the Old San Ildefonso College, which allowed for the meshing of the venue’s monumental architecture and the majesty of the Mayan art.



- ❶ Disk from Chinkultic. La Esperanza, Chinkultic, Chiapas. Late Classic. National Museum of Anthropology.
- ❷ Ball player. Late Classic. Jaina Island, Campeche. National Museum of Anthropology.
- ❸ Anthropomorphic figurine. Classic. Jaina Island, Campeche. National Museum of Anthropology.
- ❹ Receptacle. Late Postclassic. Mayapán, Yucatán. Regional Museum of Anthropology, Cantón Palace, Yucatán.
- ❺ Leandro Izaguirre, *Academia*, ca. 1866.
- ❻ François-André Vicent, *Académie d'homme assis, le bras levé*, 1772.



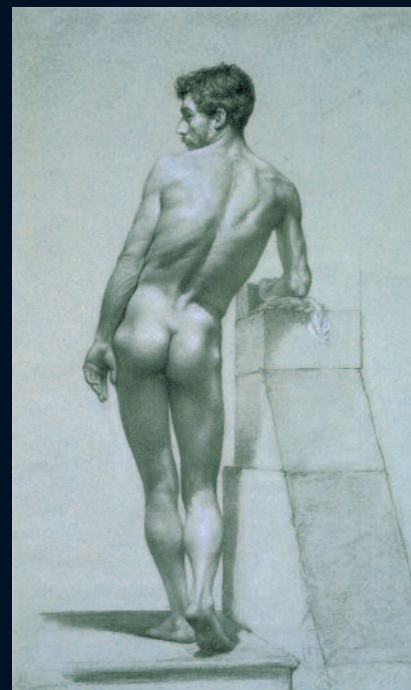
“ART OF THE ACADEMIES”

From October 1999 to January 2000, San Ildefonso presented another exhibit, “Art of the Academies. Seventeenth to Nineteenth Century France and Mexico,” the encounter of drawing and painting within the canons of the visual world of the academies.

Curated by Luis Martín Lozano, this exhibit follows the art academies from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries, paralleling the rise of the European nation-state; they were part of the

visionary educational and artistic projects that every nation undertook at the time: in the case of France, in the seventeenth century under Louis XIV and in Mexico, during the nineteenth century. Among the most important works in the exhibit are *Achilles Receives the Ambassadors of Agamemnon*, by Jean Auguste-Dominique Ingres, which earned him the Grand Prize for Painting in Rome in 1801. There are also exquisite works from the Louvre, which made an exception to its usual rule by letting some of its prize pieces be shown for the first time in the Americas.

Backing the exhibition are also the National Higher School of Fine Arts of Paris, the Museum of Decorative Arts of Paris, the Girodet de Montargis Museum, the Philadelphia Art Museum, the National Art Museum of Catalonia and several Mexican institutions like the San Diego Viceroyal Painting Gallery, the National Museum of Art, the San Carlos National Museum and the National Bank of Mexico (Banamex).



Among the Mexican contributions to the exhibit were drawings by students of Rafael Ximeno y Planes and Gerónimo Antonio Gil; by Pelegrín Clavé; preliminary sketches for compositions and oil outlines of the dome of Mexico City’s La Profesa Church. From Spain came several pieces from private collections that were shown for the first time.

“Art of the Academies. Seventeenth to Nineteenth Century France and Mexico” was dedicated to one of the most unfairly forgotten of the fine arts, drawing, and its importance to the creative process. It is both a way to generate ideas and a theoretical support for painting, sculpture and even architecture.

Visit Mexico City’s Old San Ildefonso College, located downtown at Justo Sierra 16, a cultural venue where you can enjoy national and international exhibits that will bring you a delightful taste of culture and entertainment. **NMM**



Fuivo Ecardi

The Vanishing Jaguar Lord of the Mexican Jungles

Gerardo Ceballos*

The clear winter nights in the jungles of southeastern Mexico are surprisingly cold. This morning, the wet cold wakes me. In the little cot where I spent the night, the sounds of the jungle are with me. The darkness is intense and my eyes take a while to get used to it and see—or guess at—strange forms. At the nearby water hole I can hear an animal drinking; maybe it's a badger. An owl shrieks relentlessly. It's two in the morning. I arrived at the camp a week ago to continue a study on the ecology and conservation of the jaguar in the jungles of the state of Campeche. Tonight my exhaustion makes me feel like the project began centuries ago.



Patricio Robles Gil

The still vast jungle of Campeche is one of the last refuges for many species of Mexico's tropical flora and fauna. To protect a part of this patrimony of humanity, in 1989 the federal government issued a decree creating the Calakmul Biosphere Reserve covering 723,185 hectares. This land, where 1,600 species of vascular plants and 550 species of vertebrates have been documented, still holds considerable populations of species

like the elegant eagle (*Spizaetus ornatus*), the tapir (*Tapirus bairdii*), the white-lipped wild boar (*Tayassu pecari*) and the jaguar (*Panthera onca*), which have disappeared in most of the rest of Mexico.

From the top of the Calakmul pyramid, the jungle's immensity is a joy to the eye. Its inaccessibility, the lack of a permanent water supply and the existence of illnesses like malaria have all contributed to the species' relative preservation despite the last two decades of activities by loggers, rubber tappers and hunters. The tropical climate makes for an average annual temperature of 25°C, from 1,000 to 1,500 mm of rain a year and a clearly defined rainy season between June and November. Calakmul is part of what remains of the huge tropical forest

* Researcher at the UNAM Ecology Institute.

north of Panama, from south of Cancún in the states of Quintana Roo and Campeche to Belize and northeastern Guatemala. The region is known as the Mayan jungle and covers more than two million hectares.

At three-thirty in the morning, just when I am getting back to sleep, our assistant comes to wake me. As I leave the tent, I wonder at the clear sky and its countless stars, the light of which has taken thousands, if not hundreds of thousands of years to reach us. I'm ready for my field work. In my knapsack I have my binoculars, cameras, my global positioning system, a bottle of water and some pieces of candy. The other members of the group include the guides, Pancho Zavala and Javier Díaz; Cuauhtémoc Chávez, a doctoral student; Antonio Rivera, an expert jaguar trapper; Carlos Manterola from United for Conservation, one of the project sponsors; and Steve Winter, a photographer with the National Geographic Society. We have a long day ahead of us, and we quickly down a frugal breakfast of coffee and cookies. The trucks are ready. Our pack of dogs is led by Sombra (whose name means "Shadow"), a bitch of undefined lineage, who seems anxious to start the difficult run in the jungle. One of the dogs has barked all night, as though he could sense the presence of a jaguar. Just after four in the morning, we start off on the only dirt road that goes into the jungle and begin our search for the jaguar.

Jaguars are among the most attractive and charismatic species of animals in the Americas, revered by the Mayas and Aztecs as powerful, mysterious deities. Until the beginning of this century, they ranged over vast expanses of land, from the holm oak forests and arid bush of Arizona and

New Mexico in the southern United States to the province of Misiones in northern Argentina. Unfortunately, the destruction of their habitat and indiscriminate hunting have eradicated them in many areas, to the point that the entire species has practically disappeared from the United States and El Salvador and is endangered in many other countries like Argentina, Mexico, Costa Rica, Ecuador and Panama.

A fundamental problem for establishing appropriate strategies for the conservation and management of the jaguar population is the lack of detailed studies about its ecology. It is actually one of the



Gerardo Ceballos

world's least known feline species. We know very little about its habits. How does it use its environment? What territory is required to sustain a single individual? Is there a difference in the territory needed by males and females? What population density is there? What is their social organization like? When do jaguars reproduce? What are their main prey? These are just some of the questions we want to answer with our study.

After several hours walk, we still haven't found any trace of a jaguar. About six in the morning, the first rays of sunlight tell us the dawn is coming. As the day goes on, the jungle comes to life. The warbling of the birds surrounds us; particularly noticeable is the song of the chachalacas. Pancho stops. He has found a fresh track that looks like a jaguar's. We quickly let the dogs out. Sombra runs around in circles trying to find the scent. Suddenly her howling tells us she has found it, and she dashes off madly, running through the jungle with the other dogs at her heels howling in unison. My heart



Patricio Robles Gil

seem to jump out of my chest with its pounding. Javier flies after the dogs, trying to keep as close as possible to make sure they don't get lost or the great cat doesn't hurt them. We try to keep up with them, but after a few minutes, we are left far behind. Their ever more distant baying is our only guide and we move forward slowly. Fortunately, there are few *nauyacac* (poisonous snakes whose bite under these circumstances could be deadly).

We walk more than three exhausting hours. When everything seems to indicate that we've lost the dogs, we hear them bellowing in the distance. They've stopped running. They've driven a cat up a tree!

Twenty minutes later, when we finally catch up to them, Javier meets us with a broad grin. We have an enormous male jaguar! Cuauhtémoc prepares the tranquilizer rifle and in a few minutes, we have the jaguar on the ground.

We put drops in his eyes to protect them and cover his face with a clean cloth. We measure his body, weigh him and take

give us the answers to some of the questions we posed at the beginning of our study.

Our technique for trapping the jaguars has been very successful. So far, we have trapped eight jaguars and four pumas, giving them names that, for Mexico, are exotic, like Shoe, Mitcha, Ron and Tony.

We have already learned that the jaguar in Calakmul is mainly a nocturnal animal; they rest most of the day in the shade of a tree or a cave. Their main prey are peccaries and *temazate* deer, although they do feed occasionally on other mammals like *coatíes*, armadillos and *tepezcuintles*. We

population of from between 241 and 482 jaguars in the whole reserve. One direct implication of this information is that the reserve, despite its enormity, is barely sufficient to maintain a viable jaguar population. An appropriate strategy for long-term conservation of the species in the area, then, would include protection against illegal hunting and of its habitat, both inside and outside the reserves. This means that the jungle outside the reserve must be appropriately managed to the benefit of local residents and to prevent the destruction of the reserve. Protected biological corridors should also be set up to connect the Maya region reserves in Mexico, Belize and Guatemala. The total jaguar population comes to several thousand, enough to reproduce itself in the long run with no problem.

Crouched in the shade of an immense ceiba tree, we watch the jaguar in silence, in wonder. His deep mysterious yellow eyes watch us closely. He has slowly recovered from the anesthetic. Very carefully, he listens, sniffs, watches. We may well be the first human beings he has ever seen. He tries to understand what's going on. The dogs have been led off a good while ago now. Their baying can be heard far off in the distance. Suddenly, he gets up, completely recovered from the anesthetic, and jumps over a large fallen tree trunk without making a sound even on the dried leaves. Imposing, he gives us a final look before disappearing, majestic, into the jungle. It's a scene that would be hard to forget. At that point I ask myself about his future, and I can't even imagine the world without this and many other endangered species. Their survival is up to us, and our own survival depends, paradoxically, on theirs. ■■■



blood samples, making sure of his sex and general physical condition. We constantly monitor his heartbeat for possible negative effects of the anesthetic. When we're done, we put a radio around his neck that will allow us to follow his wanderings for the next two years. The necklace has a transmitter that emits a signal that will tell us the animal's position. Our continual monitoring of the jaguar's position from horseback, trucks or planes and on foot will

also know that the jaguar requires from 30 to 59 square kilometers to survive, truly a large expanse of land. In Belize, Venezuela and Brazil, other researchers have documented a range between 15 and 72 square kilometers. The females usually need less territory than the males, who need twice as much or more. Because the areas partially overlap, the density of jaguar in Calakmul is one every 15 to 30 square kilometers. This makes for a total



Fabrizio León/La Jornada

Valentín Campa

Unbending Working Class Fighter

*I can die as I was born, be sure of it,
Pure, modest and optimistic,
Standing on the land like a tree
In the ranks of the Communist Party...*

Song to the Party

Witness to the century, a communist and a tenacious working class fighter: that was Valentín Campa Salazar. Born in Monterrey, Nuevo León, February 14, 1904, he writes in his memoirs, “All my primary education (1910-1916) took place in the atmosphere of civil war.”¹ This left a permanent mark on his personality. He worked on the line at the La Corona company, subsidiary of the Royal Dutch Company from 1920 to 1921, and from 1922 on at the National Railroad Company, whose union he led from 1943 to 1947.

In 1923 he joined the Communist Party of Mexico (PCM), and all his life he untiringly defended the demands for justice of the Mexican workers movement, particularly those of railroad workers, for which he was persecuted and jailed a dozen times. His first jail sentence was in 1927 for his participation in the railroad strike against the control by official union leader

Luis N. Morones and President Plutarco Elías Calles, who had him arrested and ordered him shot, an order later rescinded.

Almost all his life and especially in the 1930s and 1940s, he participated in the organization of independent unions. One was the United Union Confederation of Mexico (CSUM), which would be one of the initial founders of the Mexican Workers Confederation (CTM) in 1936, when the workers movement was on the rise.

He was expelled from the Mexican Communist Party in 1940 after opposing the assassination of Leon Trotsky, a position which brought him into conflict with painter David Alfaro Siqueiros, who later participated in the plot that eventually ended in the murder of the exiled Russian leader.

Campa was arrested along with another workers leader, Demetrio Vallejo, during the great rail strike of 1959, the most important attempt to break the state’s corporatist control over the unions. He was confined to the infamous Lecumberri Prison, known as the “Black Palace,” from February 1959 to July 1970. His release came after the crime he had been imprisoned for, “social dissolution,” was erased from the lawbooks thanks in part to pressure from the 1968 student movement.

From the “Black Palace” he continued to participate in the nation’s political life and emerged from prison once again a militant of the PCM. As a party leader he proposed a return to electoral participation. In 1976, he ran in a write-in campaign for the presidency against Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) candidate José López Portillo. After the legalization of the PCM, he was elected federal deputy, serving from 1979 to 1981. He witnessed the creation of the Unified Socialist Party of Mexico (PSUM), founded with the merger of the PCM with other left currents, and then the Mexican Socialist Party (PMS), which would later cede its registration to the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) after Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas’ 1988 presidential campaign.

He is remembered as firm in his convictions, unbending in the fight for workers’ demands, but kind and affectionate in his personal dealings. His co-activists agree in describing him as one of those men who prefer to leave his children no material goods but a legacy of honor; he always lived modestly and never took advantage of his union posts for personal benefit or to make himself rich. The consistency between his practice and his thinking is the unforgettable moral legacy that he left to

those who worked with him. He only slowed his activism due to a series of physical health problems that he said originated in his political persecution and imprisonment.

The author of innumerable political articles and pamphlets, he also wrote *Mi testimonio. Memorias de un comunista mexicano* (I Bear Witness. Memoirs of a Mexican Communist). Between 1979 and 1986, he regularly published in the daily *Excelsior* and the PSUM newspaper, *Así es*.

Valentín Campa was a fixture in many of the movements for human rights in Mexico in the twentieth century. His casket was draped with three flags on the morning of November 25, 1999: the flag of the PCM, the PRD and of Mexico.

María Cristina Hernández Escobar

Assistant Editor

NOTES

¹ Valentín Campa, *Mi testimonio. Memorias de un comunista mexicano* (Mexico City: Era, 1978).

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Rafael Alberti

A Sailor Ashore

*I took the mask off a word
and, dumb,
face to face,
we both remained.*

Rafael Alberti

“It’s 1902, a year of great peasant unrest in Andalusia; a year of preparation for the revolutionary uprisings of later years. December 16: the date of my birth, a night of unexpected storms.” This is how Rafael Alberti describes his arrival in the world in his autobiographical *La arboleda perdida*¹ (The Lost Grove), written in 1942.

A sailor ashore, painter, playwright, translator of Paul Eluard, poet. The last exponent of Spain’s legendary Generation of ’27 died the night of October 27 in his hometown of Puerto de Santa María, Cádiz, from where the young boy in love with the sea left for his “first exile” when his family moved to Madrid in 1917. This brutal change in his life was reflected in one of his most memorable works, the collection of poems *Marinero en tierra* (Sailor Ashore) (1925), which won him the National Prize for Literature at the age of 23.

POETRY IS A WEAPON LOADED WITH THE FUTURE

In the 1920s, Rafael Alberti decided to study art. He lived near the student dorms that was the birthplace of the Generation of ’27, a group including poets Federico García Lorca, León

Felipe and Luis Cernuda; the film maker Luis Buñuel; and painters Salvador Dalí and Pablo Picasso, among others. The group took its name from the 1927 homage organized to commemorate the 300th anniversary of the death of Luis de Góngora, the poet of Spain’s Golden Age. These young artists preached the break with bourgeois values; they were enraptured by the world of the cinema, the “city lights,” the art of realism and the ideal of “pure poetry” cultivated by the Spanish poets Luis de Góngora and Juan Ramón Jiménez; intoxicated by the notion of a political and aesthetic revolution and by the proclamation of the Second Republic (1931-1939).

Alberti and other members of his generation learned from Mexican writer Alfonso Reyes, a great connoisseur of Góngora’s work, who began to study and revive his legacy, bringing it to them. In Alberti’s case, Góngora’s influence is clear in his volumes of poetry *El alba del alhelí* (The Dawn of the Wallflower) (1927), *Cal y canto* (Lime and Song) (1928) and *Sobre los ángeles* (About the Angels) (1929).

Alberti, who identified with the intellectuals who saw in the Republic the solution for Spain’s future, joined the Communist Party (CP) in 1931 and founded the magazine *Octubre*. His work became openly political. In those years the Fifth Regiment was formed to defend Madrid and together with poets Antonio Machado, Luis Cernuda and Miguel Hernández, among others—practically the same ones who participated in the Antifascist Alliance of Intellectuals organized by Alberti and his wife María Teresa León—went into the Talent Battalion. In 1935 he traveled to Mexico seeking aid for Asturian miners who had risen up in arms. On that trip he met writers Andrés Henestrosa and

Salvador Novo and painters David Alfaro Siqueiros, Diego Rivera and Manuel Rodríguez Lozano, who illustrated his book *Verte y no verte* (Seeing You and Not Seeing You), an elegy dedicated to poet Ignacio Sánchez Mejía, exiled in Mexico.

In July 1936, the Falangist rebellion put Alberti's life in danger, and he fled to Madrid; when World War II broke out in March 1939, he went into exile. The Civil War and the fight against dictator Francisco Franco had broken the group: the murder of Federico García Lorca symbolized the death of an entire creative generation and the beginning of a process of transfiguration of lyric poetry into socially and humanly committed lyrical poetry in exile. Alberti's poetry changed. As Octavio Paz said, "It filled up with neo-Góngorisms; angels appeared in arithmetic class or in the ruins of houses; dreaming with your eyes open, political poems, civic elegies, poems about war and exile, odes to painting, satires....[However,] in all his metamorphoses, Alberti has been faithful to himself and his first books."²

The poet and his wife went to France, then Uruguay and finally Argentina, where they lived for 24 years, initially underground. After the death of Perón, when the military was preparing to arrest—in alphabetical order—Argentine and foreign intellectuals considered a danger to the regime, Alberti fled to Italy, where he lived 14 years, spending most of his time writing.

In 1977, after the death of Franco, Alberti returned to Spain with María Teresa and their daughter Aitana, born in Uruguay. His return caused jubilation among Communist Party militants, writers, politicians and friends who went to meet him. "I left with a clenched fist and I return with my hand open as a sign of goodwill," he said, moved by the singing of *The Internationale*. He later accepted running for office on the CP ticket and dove into his campaign with youthful enthusiasm. On July 13, 1977, two old comrades occupied the vice presidencies of Spain's legislature, the Cortes, in the first democratic session since the war as the oldest deputies: Dolores Ibárruri, *La Pasionaria*, the emblematic figure of the Asturian miners' struggle, and Rafael Alberti.

As he neared 80, tiring of political activity, Alberti decided to turn himself into "a poet of the street": he spent his time reciting his poetry, giving lectures and enjoying the total recognition of his literary work abroad and in his native land. He was given the National Theater Prize in 1981, the Cervantes Prize in 1983 and several honorary doctoral degrees; he was admitted to the San Fernando Royal Academy of Fine

Arts in 1989; and in 1993, he was given the Andalusian Prize for Letters.

THE LAST OF THE CLASSICS IN THE SPANISH LANGUAGE

Rafael Alberti's work was never overwhelmed by his political activity. It has traveled the world over thanks, to a great extent, to the loving welcome given it by poets from the most diverse literary and ideological tendencies. In Latin America it had its impact on Uruguayan writer Mario Benedetti, as well as Chile's Pablo Neruda and Mexican novelist Sergio Pitol and poets Jaime Labastida and Octavio Paz. Paz admitted Alberti's influence saying, "My discovery of modern Spanish-language poetry began when I was 16 or 17 in high school....One of the first things I read was Rafael Alberti. His poems took me into a world where old things and hackneyed situations both continue to be that, but were also something else."³ Singer-songwriters Paco Ibáñez and Joan Manuel Serrat have set Alberti's poems to music and sung them on five continents where his poetry is known.

In August 1990, Alberti was honored in Mexico City's Fine Arts Palace and the Julio Jiménez Rueda Theater.

"IF MY VOICE SHOULD DIE ON LAND, TAKE IT TO SEA LEVEL."

On his ninetieth birthday, he closed the cycle of his "first exile" in 1917. The city government of the port of Santa María gave him a house that Alberti called Maritime Ode, after one of his books of poetry, and he began to spend long periods there until his last and final stay. As he wished, his ashes will be scattered in the Bay of Cádiz.

María Cristina Hernández Escobar
Assistant Editor

NOTES

¹ Rafael Alberti, *La arboleda perdida* (Barcelona: Bruguera, 1980), p. 9.

² Octavio Paz as quoted in "Murió Rafael Alberti, último exponente de la Generación del 27," *La Jornada* (Mexico City) 28 October 1999, p. 29.

³ Octavio Paz, speech at a 1990 homage to Alberti in the Julio Jiménez Rueda Theater. "Murió el poeta Rafael Alberti," *La Jornada*, 28 October 1999, p. 29.

Reviews

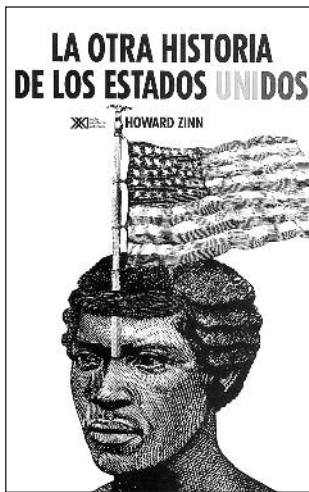
La otra historia de los Estados Unidos

(A People's History of the United States)

Howard Zinn

Siglo XXI Editores

Mexico City, 1999, 519 pp.



Howard Zinn's *A People's History of the United States*, originally published in 1980 and updated several times, was recently published in Spanish for the first time. The Spanish-language title, which translates "The Other History of the United States," is quite appropriate since Zinn tells the little known other side of many well known events. From the outset it is very clear that the lifestyle

of the Europeans who bumped into America on their way to the Orient was completely incompatible with the way the indigenous peoples lived. This became more and more evident as colonization proceeded in what is now the United States. The author has rescued from oblivion and presented the reader with some of the innumerable testimonies of what Buffy Saintmarie called, "the genocide basic to this country's birth."

He offers the reader some valuable insights about the other side of the United States' "peculiar institution," slavery, which, along with other elements in the book, make it clear that racism is also "basic to this country's birth." Zinn dispels the oft repeated myths of how African slaves passively submitted to their fate. After tremendous struggles and sacrifices, the civil rights movement, which emerged almost a hundred years after the Civil War, has only successfully eliminated the most obvious and overt forms of racial discrimination. The disproportionate number of incarcerated African-American males in the United

States today testifies to the fact that Martin Luther King's dream has not yet come true.

In addition Zinn tells of how women were oppressed in this new country that declared from the outset that "all men are created equal." He recounts the strong will and defiant deeds of both early and contemporary feminists. The author himself speaks out clearly in favor of every woman's right to "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" on an absolutely equal footing with men.

Mexican readers will certainly welcome this telling of how the Mexican-American War came about, which differs on several counts from the most widely disseminated U.S. textbook versions. However, we should also recognize that those north of the border were not the only culprits in the chain of events that led to the sale of what was at that time half of Mexico's territory. Our recent history also demonstrates that those in power often abandon the ones in whose name they govern to what is presumably "their fate."

Zinn shows that this is clearly the case for growing numbers of low income Americans today. He points to the contradiction that, at least according to public opinion polls, most people in the U.S. are in favor of "providing more help for the poor" even though they oppose any increase in government social spending. Furthermore, he recognizes that most Americans believe that poverty is the result of individual shortcomings, rather than of any basic fault within the existing social order.

Some of the horrors and atrocities of the Vietnam War are well known almost everywhere, but this story cannot be retold too often. Zinn's retelling is rich with moving and heart rending accounts. He tells the other side of the more recent Persian Gulf War as well. One of the most important lessons to be derived from Zinn's book—and something he states very early on in the text—is that none of the abhorrent and terrible events he relates, all perpetrated in the name of progress, were inevitable.

For this author, the villain in the piece today is corporate America or the richest one percent of the population that

owns about one-third of all the wealth. The lower classes are imprisoned by their poverty and, according to him, middle-class Americans are the jailers, albeit unwittingly so. Yet despite his severe criticisms of the existing economic, political and social order, and the emphasis he places on the untold episodes of American history, Zinn —like many other social critics both past and present— is highly utopian. He believes that it just might be possible, in tomorrow's America, to achieve something that "the system" has never been able to accomplish before: a great change with very little violence.

Given what Zinn adds at the end of the book about the Clinton administration, he clearly thinks that that tomorrow is still a long way off. However he himself maintains that such a possibility is not totally divorced from America's past, which provides some indications that it may be possible. Besides, in how many other countries would a seven-year-old girl write a letter to the nation's president —just before Bush ordered the bombing of Iraq— to reprimand him for his actions?

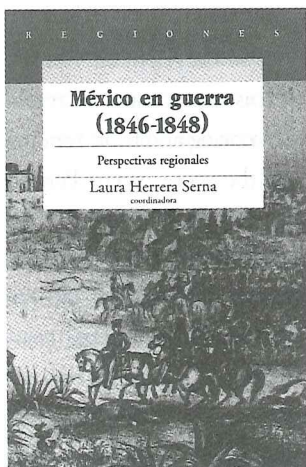
Elaine Levine

Researcher at CISAN

México en guerra (1846-1848), Perspectivas regionales
(Mexico at War [1846-1848], Regional Perspectives)

Laura Herrera Serna, comp.

Museo Nacional de las Intervenciones-
Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes
Mexico City, 1997, 744 pp.



The war with the United States seems to be unresolved for Mexican historians. Perhaps this is because it needs delicate handling and even today can become just another subjective examination that turns the main protagonists into heroes or victims of the circumstances. On the other hand, the episode can be conceived

unwholesomely and reduced to a question of U.S. imperialist ambition and Mexican ineptitude. Undoubtedly, the passage of time has made it possible to look at the facts with greater serenity, although that does not imply a constant interest in the Mexican-U.S. War.¹ The 150th anniversary commemoration of the war was the perfect reason to examine it again. Laura Herrera Serna thought of calling on different students of the topic to participate in the First Congress of Interventions "Mexico at War (1846-1848). Regional Perspectives," which gave rise to the book.

The book is the result of prolonged coordinating efforts: a first phase coupled with the organization of the congress and later, the gathering, correction and ordering of the papers presented there. *México en guerra (1846-1848). Perspectivas regionales* is a new way of looking at U.S. intervention into Mexico. In contrast with classic Mexican historiography, centered around the capital city and its perspective, and how that affected the rest of the country, this book takes a different tack. The war affected the different states that made up the republic at the time in very different ways. Not all were directly invaded, but none could really be divorced from the problems that national political life had to deal with. This is precisely the book's merit.

It is interesting to look at the scope of a work like this since it gathers together in a single volume articles by 32 Mexican and foreign authors. Each article is a unit in and of itself, but, simultaneously, forms part of the puzzle that was Mexico of that time. Reading each of the essays clears up the events of the years of clashes with our northern neighbor. The research unveils different geographical spaces, different problems faced in each state and, therefore, the different responses offered to a single event. It presents the visions and interests that, for example, promoted the defense of Mexican territorial integrity or, to the contrary, shrugged off a problem that was considered "national" in scope. After reading the studies, a very serious question becomes clear: did a nation exist? Simultaneously, it is important to see that there is a "before" and an "after" of this war; there is no doubt whatsoever that this clash left behind it both feelings of failure and of hope, since the conflicts arising out of the attempts at concluding the peace reflect both a fear of conceding defeat and a sense of belonging and involvement with Mexico.

The pens of renowned researchers, together with those of new scholars, both show interest in trying to "dot the i's" on this

episode in our past. The whole country is touched on, including, logically, what is now California, New Mexico and Texas, to give a fuller idea of the situation in the middle of the nineteenth century. All these articles are introduced by three keynote speeches that outline the overall significance of the war that left a mark yesterday which has lasted until today.

The articles examine many aspects: not everything can be reduced to politics. They also inaugurate a new way of dealing with events: the weight of the regions define the historical process; the capital city is only one more backdrop for the conflict. The way the states, cities and municipalities are dealt with is outstanding, and reveals the authors' interest in leaving behind that selective vision of history in which all events take place in capital cities and affect only those in power. This vision is more dynamic: new actors enter the stage of history and old themes are rethought.

México en guerra, an evocative title, invites the reader to find out about the positions adopted by different political, social, economic or diplomatic sectors involved in shaping the conflict's outcome. The book is enriched by watching as heretofore ignored representatives of the population file through its pages. For example, we discover how some government officials from the state of Jalisco contributed their wages to maintaining the troops, or how the general population in different parts of the country organized guerrilla bands. The way in which the "enemy" was imagined is also worth noting, since not all the states were actually invaded nor had the rhythm of their lives disrupted by enemy troops. Guanajuato is significant in this sense. Each state showed how it understood "national life" and used the terms "sovereignty" and "federation" differently: Oaxaca, Yucatán or the State of Mexico are good examples. The war was also the perfect pretext for power-seekers. The inclusion of the outlook of both residents and authorities of California, New Mexico and Texas is very fortunate since it supplements and enriches the panorama of the war.

Without a doubt, writing about Mexico-United States relations requires a critical, analytical review. A factor which has aided in bringing this intention to fruition was the way that a spectrum of first-hand sources were used, giving the different focuses originality. The inspection of official documents, memoirs, private correspondence, newspapers, pamphlets and much more, as well as secondary sources like regional histo-

ries, private testimonies or historical novels, brought other social actors into the picture. It also brought out the different reactions to the war, looked behind the scenes at the interests involved in the political and economic sphere, making it possible, in brief, to have very diverse visions by letting each author emphasize social, political, cultural or economic matters according to his/her preference.

México en guerra is not a single history. Quite to the contrary, it opens up new spaces for reflection and suggests multiple focuses, leaving to one side the classic interpretation of the war of '47. It managed to practically create the image of a whole, with its concern for diverse aims. The work recovers the many enthusiasms and daily life of most of the states in the Mexican republic. Colima, Nayarit and Querétaro are still pending, however; and Querétaro was key in the pacification process, making its omission significant.

This book is an important contribution to the new Mexican historiography; it is the first of its kind, which should be emphasized. The ample bibliography—from the U.S., and to a lesser degree, Mexico—would not have presented the overall panorama that the book offers. It also leaves us with many questions that will gradually contribute to understanding the process of the conflict itself.

Lastly, I should say that throughout the book, the complex relationship between Mexico and the United States is revealed. The border we share shows how difficult it was and is to be good neighbors. The power demonstrated 150 years ago has not disappeared; quite to the contrary, it has taken on new forms of appropriation, with more subtle but equally aggressive strategies that make us think that Mexico should keep its guard up.

Laura Suárez de la Torre

Researcher at the Mora Institute

NOTES

¹ Despite this, some scholars have enriched the historiography about the war from many angles, particularly Josefina Zoraida Vázquez, Carlos Bosch, Angela Moyano, Jesús Velasco, Luis G. Zorrilla.

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