

THE ELECTION'S LESSON

Enrique González Pedrero

The elections held in Mexico on July 6 mean more than the beginning of a new presidential administration where the economic and political structures are merely passed on from one regime to the next. The recent elections have been marked by a political struggle, not only between opposing political parties, but also between factions within the long ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI).

The social circumstances which Mexico faces, most visible in the economic crisis of a magnitude rarely seen in recent years, determined that the voting on July 6 would not produce the traditional results.

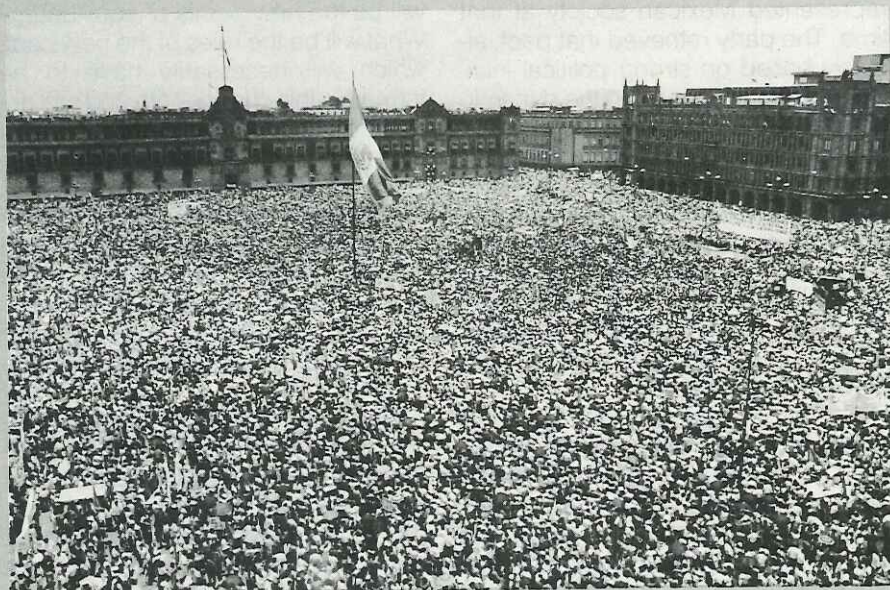
In this Special Section, we have sought to provide our readers with a wide range of opinions concerning the recent elections and what they will mean for Mexico's future.

"Does not the word knowledge come from to know, and is not madness the excess of a desire or of a power?"
Balzac

Everyone knows that national politics has changed since July 6; the election was a *lesson*. But didn't the same happen in May and October of 1968 and in September of 1985? Didn't we believe that all had changed only to find that the transformation would then seem dissolved, diffused, in the dizzy, daily succession of repeated inertias? Many hastened to venture that Cronos, the great devourer, had also swallowed the desire for change. Today it is clear that this was not the case. The desire for change is alive and it is time that has dangerously shrunk on us. The shagreen skin of Balzac's story, available time, has dried out and the deep desire of Mexicans for change demands fulfillment. "Present and past time/are perhaps present in the future..." The time of Mexico awaits answers. Whose answers? Yours and mine. From each and every one of us. From citizens, from society, from the parties, from the government. The answers of everyone, because we are all Mexico.

The Political and Social Pact

This is not the first time that Mexico finds itself at a crossroad. The coun-



Close of Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas' campaign in Mexico City's Zócalo.

try's history has been a continuous heroic feat in the search of justice and liberty. To construct what we have now, with its defects and its virtues, has been the arduous task of generations. It should not be forgotten that at the birth of independent life, Mexico fought for survival itself. To arrive at the creation of a national state cost Mexico almost half a century and more than half its territory. After the wars of the Reform and of the restoration of the republic, the plan of the liberals clashed with a reality of enormous so-

cial inequalities and political restlessness that finally had to be suppressed with the might of arms. The period of re-electionist peace achieved by Porfirio Díaz led to the Mexican Revolution. The country returned to face violence as an extreme recourse to achieve the change demanded by the majority of the people.

The 1910 movement was the continuation of a long revolutionary process. The people triumphed with arms; but along with the triumph arose the need to find new points of equilibrium between factions. Although the national plan was shaped in the Constitution as a synthesis of the aspirations shared by the vast majority, its

President of the PRI's Institute of Political, Economic and Social Studies
This article first appeared in *La Jornada*, August 5, 1988.

The desire for change is alive and it is time that has dangerously shrunk on us

political orchestration would take more time. Ideas had to pass into practice, to be confronted with reality, to become government action.

Plutarco Elías Calles and Lázaro Cárdenas imagined and organized what has been called the Mexican political system. At the death of Alvaro Obregón, the task fell to Calles of uniting revolutionary forces in the great political pact, which gave birth to the National Revolutionary Party (PNR). Later, it was up to Cárdenas to strengthen the party and to give it permanence. He transformed the Party of the Mexican Revolution (PRM) into an organization of sectors that clearly represented Mexican society at that time. The party retrieved that pact, already based on strong political institutions, and adjusted it to the dynamic of a country in the process of transformation. The political system created in 1929 has lasted more than half a century; this is no small feat. But throughout this time, the system has not been the same. Its duration has been linked to its capacity for adaptation and change and to the constant renovation of the pact that gave birth to the modern Mexican state.

For this reason, we should methodologically ask ourselves the following question: what would Calles and Cárdenas have done today now that the people's call for change has recovered force? What would they do in a much more complex country that, although still rural to a great extent, has been rapidly transformed into an urban culture that has the world's largest megalopolis as its center? Would they cease to take into account the events since 1929? The answer is no. If anything has characterized the great men of our history, it is their intelligence in guiding the transition between the past and the future. They understood the state, at that moment, as a bridge between times: as condensed time.

It is necessary to pause and reflect seriously on Mexico's possible future, to first review in our imagination the paths that must be traversed to perfect our political system without breaking with the best of the past. It is clear that since July 6, a transition toward full Mexican democracy has begun. What



Election day at the polls.

will be the new points of equilibrium? What will be the rules of the new pact, which will necessarily have to be formed in this change? No one can anticipate where the extraordinary dynamism catalyzed in recent days will arrive, but we all perceive that there is a need to consolidate new structures. It is necessary to extend and expand vision, conscious that we are in the presence of an exceptional opportunity to invigorate the country's political life and thereby to strengthen the nation's future.

Perhaps we are attending the announcement of an era comparable with that of the great moments that forged our country—the Independence, the Reform and the Revolution. There is an essential coincidence: the true protagonists are the people of Mexico. But there is a qualitative difference: the denial of violence, the rejection of any form of intransigence. It is not, then, a period of breaking with the past, but rather one of evolution. The desire is not to discard everything and to start anew, but rather to transform

It is necessary to pause and reflect seriously on the paths that must be traversed to perfect our political system without breaking with the best of the past

the old. To reform it in order to rescue what had been left behind in the demand of our people for a greater democracy. I think that this has to do with modernizing the social and political pact that has united us since the first quarter of this century, to take a decisive step on the basis of what has been constructed over the last eight decades.

The New Political Reality

The people are indicating the courses that politics are to take, not only with their vote, but also with their attitude. They are demanding dialogue and tolerance; Mexicans do not want intransigent measures. They have manifested their desire for change within the framework of the law and respect for the will to live in a more just country. Perhaps what the July 6 elections have revealed is that the center of the political arrangement has varied. If what was born precisely from an indispensable political and social pact, joining partisan action with the task of government was maintained within the party for almost 60 years, that center now has been displaced toward a more updated conception of the state.

Under this conception, the party has literally turned around to become part, and no longer the political synthesis of the whole. Its democratic proposal, which tended to confine itself to its internal life, finally hardened into the social whole. The party itself stimulated that evolution, but the crisis and internal deviations accelerated

the process. The displacement of the nucleus of the political and social arrangement does not mean, however, a break in the agreement on what is fundamental to all Mexicans. On the contrary, at a distance and with political vision, the Mexican state can consolidate the strength that it needs to undertake the great changes that the country's modernization demands.

Naturally, it is necessary to unravel the causes of change and to accept the new political reality of the nation without fears. Only in this way will it be possible to formulate new rules of the game and transcend Mexico's immediate difficulties in order to think

about its future with the peace of mind that the circumstances require. What is at stake is much more than the immediate competition for political positions.

It is clear that since July 6, three political tendencies were delineated and that in the short term, the three will confront the need to adapt to the new era inaugurated by the elections. This adaptation is not limited to electoral questions nor to a circumstantial evaluation of the government. The change demanded by the Mexican people will not affect only a part of the system. I want to say that it will not be enough to adapt the procedures of the majori-

ty party. There are multiple tasks to undertake in the opposition and in all aspects of the country's political life.

It is evident that the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) cannot remain behind in this process of adaptation. It is up to the PRI to undertake a long, self-critical examination that leads, with intelligence and courage, to a profound renovation. But the task has to be the product of a thorough, participatory revision of its structures and practices. The PRI is no longer the only front joining all political tendencies. Today, part of these options have become radicalized and have strengthened other political parties. It is necessary for the PRI to rigorously specify, in this hour of definitions, the new role that it will play as the party defending the theory and praxis of the Revolution. The PRI will have to become accustomed to living together with powerful minorities that have gained popular support. It has to transform itself, but without breaking with its long historical trajectory, which is equivalent to confirming its leadership with the ideas and proposals of the Mexican Revolution. This attitude will not only help to strengthen the party's internal vitality, but also the stability of the country. It would also be a spur for minority parties to transcend purely electoral circumstance and to consolidate their own political and ideological positions.

The PRI will have to become accustomed to living with powerful minorities that have gained popular support

The PRI will have to run the risk of abandoning many of its traditions and forms, to concretize its own platform as a political party, even above the particular interests of the sectors that constitute it. It will be necessary to work with them. The reason is clear. As I said before the elections, we change or things will get worse. Why? Because with real options to the left and to the right, voters who do not see their expectations for change satisfied will be able to vote in the next elections for the extremes and this would mean a split in the party that has promoted the advance of Mexico's modern history.



Citizen participation. (Photo by Renato Ibarra)

We should not forget that many voters cast their ballots against the PRI's postponement of its promises, rather than in favor of the options presented by minority parties. We have, then, three years to show our determination to fulfill our goals and renovate the party. In this lapse, the system will have to arrive at definitions that have hardly been sketched out as of yet.

But if it is true that the transformation has to be started by the PRI, everyone will have to make adjustments and be brought up to date. Everyone will have to update themselves to be at the level of the Mexican people—the PRI, as well as the leftist coalition that will have to evolve into a party and transcend the heterogeneous union caused by the urgency of its electoral participation. In that grouping, there are many different currents that will have to make an effort similar to that of the strategic and ideological grouping that awaits the PRI. And the National Action Party (PAN), for its part, will soon have to confront the dilemma of the tendencies that characterize it. The so-called "neo-PANism," represented by its presidential candidate, is not the same as the historical PAN linked to the ideas of Gómez Morín, nor is either current completely homogeneous with the ideas of a large part of the urban youth and of the the middle class.

The fact that many voters cast their ballots more against the PRI should not be lost from sight

Moreover, the opposition will stop being the opposition in broad terms, to convert itself into a co-responsible part of the future government's progress. That is the other face of the transition from a system of practically one sole party to a new system of a majority party with minorities of indisputable political weight. As a whole, the opposition has to genuinely change to consolidate itself in view of the new responsibility that the people have given it. It is no longer enough to intransigently resist all governmental measures. It will have to contribute to the creation of the new system of parties with fresh criteria, in which it will necessarily be co-

The opposition will stop being the opposition in broad terms, to convert itself into a "co-responsible" part of the future government's progress

responsible. The opposition can no longer be a mere reaction. Its electorate hopes that the parties that constitute it will be converted into the head of the sector of ideas and interests that they represent.

The dissidence will now have to spring from the coexistence of different, often contradictory, points of view. Each part, beginning in September, will be co-responsible to the whole. Initiatives can only prosper with the key of genuine popular support in the entire country. Without exception, the political parties are called upon to break inertias. They have to adapt themselves and to put themselves at the level of a people who voted, above all, for democracy. It is necessary to advance quickly toward the establishment of the points of consensus on what will have to be renovated in the economic and social pact between Mexicans.

The change, because it is to be evolutionary, does not require action by ruptures; it has to be gradual. The transformation of the common struggle against depoliticization into imprudent overpoliticization must be avoided. The opposition will have to gradually change from what it opposes to what it proposes. It will have to prove that it can not only organize protest marches, but rather that it can participate in the legislative task that is the government's task. Can it jump to—without suddenly attacking—power in an evolutionary way? This is something that remains to be seen in the immediate future.

On the other hand, the country's new reality should not be limited to competition between parties. In any event, they are a reflection of the anxieties and aspirations of society as a whole. The tripartite representation that sprouted with the elections will necessarily have to be carried to the review in practice of all political questions. The transformation that has been put into motion will also encompass the media, which will have to genuinely inform the

public about the life of a complex, heterogeneous society. Education, social life, economic policy, and foreign commercial relations will have to be altered to the rhythm of the new times. The problem is not then merely a matter of political parties, nor much less a problem exclusive to the PRI. It is everyone's problem. It is Mexico's problem.

Basically, it has to do with the transformation of a political culture that has lasted perhaps too long and that is the product of everyone if we are to be honest. Now we must transform this culture on all fronts. We all will have a role to play in the transitional phase. Inertias will have to give way to allow free passage to intelligent initiatives so that the state, as a whole, emerges strengthened from this challenge.

Some Reasons for Change

The democratic transition demanded by the Mexican people will largely consist in adjusting the political methods to society's concrete needs and expectations. But the currents that have lead us to our present disequilibrium have still not been carefully reviewed. We ought not jump to hasty conclusions nor attribute all reasons for change to the specific lapse of time during the electoral campaigns. What is certain in that the distance between political practice and reality has been in gestation for some time now. The elections, from that perspective, constituted a call for attention. It is time to reflect—and to act—on the real causes of the electoral phenomenon as the first measures to adapt to the new reality are put into practice.

Popular Reaction

Of course, it is easy to appreciate the prolonged influence of the economic crisis on the national spirit. The citizens' vote is, among other things, a type of popular reaction to concrete circumstances of daily life. The deterioration of income that the majority of people has suffered in the years of the crisis has undoubtedly influenced electoral preferences. Many blamed only members of the government and the PRI for the economic problems. The electoral response was, above all in this large city, voting against the ruling party. But to say that the crisis is the *only* reason for the changes that the country is seeing is an inadequate explanation. There are deeper causes that cannot be ignored. If we rely exclusively on economic explanations,

reality would soon pass us again, perhaps with greater vehemence.

Three years ago I said, and I repeat it now: the majority party, which is key to the political systems, has to update itself in accordance with the dynamic that the country is beginning to live. What did and does that dynamic consist of? It seems to me that there are at least four points that should be remembered now, because they have as much or more importance than they did in 1985.

1. I affirmed then that the Mexican Revolution was in reality a sum of revolutions. Of course, it was the last democratic-bourgeoisie revolution of the past century and the first social and popular one of the 20th century. But it was also a movement that bound together the different currents that arose within the regions of Mexico. In the north, democracy and liberalism were postulated as national plan; in the central and southern zones, the recovery of the property of the land in favor of the peasants was sought; and in the southeast, an advanced social state, promoter and rector of development, was proposed with an idea far ahead of its time. It seemed that such differences, manifest from the beginning, had been absorbed by a predominant, national criterion. We all know that unity within diversity was an indispensable requirement to permit the country to overcome its differences and to finally put into movement the allied plan that gave birth to the Mexican Revolution.

Centralism, at its time, was certainly a necessary tendency. But the concentration of power did not revoke regional life. It was not long ago that, led by President Miguel de la Madrid, we perceived the need to quickly reverse that centralist inertia that with time came to convert itself into a true point of strangulation for national development. The democratic demand is totally contrary to centralism. But the recognition of this regional diversity did not advance with the desired swiftness within the PRI nor in the political system as a whole. It is not an exaggeration to say now that the persistence of old methods rooted in the center undermined many of the foundations skillfully assembled by other political options.

If the electoral map is examined, it may be clearly noted that tendencies vary notably between different regions and even within each region. The center is not the same as the southeast



March for respect for voting.

nor is it the same as the north. In fact, it never has been so. Nonetheless stubborn centralism has formed generalizations, especially based on the electoral results from the nation's capital. In the country, the PRI has continued to be the option preferred by the majority of the electorate. In 27 states it retained a majority position not only in rural areas but also in almost all urban zones. Nevertheless, the PRI lost in the Federal District and its metropolitan zone which has contributed to magnify its defeats, since the capital is a great resounding box.

It is common that life in Mexico City, the seat of federal and national media powers, is confused with that of the entire country. But it is certain that there is no room for general explanations arising from partial visions. In spite of its evident demonstrations of strength, the opposition must not fall into that same error. If it wants to consolidate its power, it has to transcend its regional condition, participating truly and everyday in all states, something that has still not taken place.

2. This reflection goes hand in hand with the specific problem of Mexico City, the other face of centralism. On the one hand, the importance of regional activity has been ignored, on the other hand, excessive concentration has come to suffocate the world's largest metropolitan zone. In the capital, reality appears heavily distorted while relations with the rest of Mexico have been diluted by the magnitude of the capital's own problems. Being the capital, the Federal District and its metropolitan zone ironically live re-

moved from the rest of the country. The diagnosis of the difficulties confronted by the megalopolis have become clearer in recent years and it can help us to understand some of what is happening.

We know that its future is closely linked to the success of decentralization. Its future prosperity depends to a good measure on the autonomous development of other regions. But, in spite of the enormous efforts that are made daily to keep the great city functioning, dwellers of the capital feel and resent the fact that we have offered them a distressing panorama as their destiny.

Compounding the economic problems experienced all over the country, Mexico City dwellers face problems of safety, pollution, transportation and overcrowding. The inhabitants of the capital also faced the traumatic consequences of the 1985 earthquake and have suffered, or they feel this way, a type of "political marginalization."

As an immediate response to these accumulated problems, many have thought that the capital's congestion could be relieved by inviting capital residents to abandon their homes. But isn't that asking people to leave their original roots or those that they have already created? Decentralization, although well planned by the government, has been poorly translated on more than a few occasions as an aggression against those who live in Mexico City and make up the close to one quarter of the national population. The gist of decentralizations lies not only in the exit

of those who inhabit the capital, but in the strengthening medium-sized cities. In the Mexico City metropolitan area, there is still a lack of organizational imagination necessary to respond to the everyday problems of overcrowding. It is necessary to create more opportunities for life outside of the metropolitan zone, but it is also necessary to rescue the cohabitation in many urban communities throughout Mexico City.

3. The third point that has been influential in the modification of national political life is the confusion between the roles of the government and of the majority party. On several occasions I have indicated that the majority party's evolution from the PRN to the PRM and, later to the PRI, demonstrated the system's capacity to adapt to changes that the same system was promoting. In 1985, I emphasized the advantages of taking a new step forward by separating the tasks of the party from those of the government. We should seek a party in the government, but not a party of the government. Confronting the crisis, it was evident that society would demand renewed proposals and that it would be better if those proposals arose from the constant mobilization of the party in power. Undoubtedly the extensive and intensive political campaign undertaken by the triumphant candidate of today, Carlos Salinas de Gortari, constituted the outlet for that mobilization. But I fear that a good part of the electorate also hoped for a renewal at all levels of the party, with a clearer separation of governmental agencies.

**The future is closely linked
to the success of
decentralization: its future
prosperity depends to a
good measure on the
autonomous development of
other regions**

The demand of the party's membership was to strengthen the methods and structures from below and from within the party itself. Their goal was to prepare the party in advance in different sectors and in state, district, municipal and sectional committees for the elections. They wanted to strengthen internal democracy and to invigorate true militancy. Many advances have been

made in that sense, but much has been left behind by the weight of inertia. Profound changes are always met with equally profound resistance. And in this case, in spite of the efforts of national leadership and a good part of the members at the grassroots level, the dynamic was slower than it should have been. The confusion between party and government has not been resolved. And before public opinion, the PRI bears the weight of almost all its failures and very few of its successes. The time for the complete transformation of this less than virtuous relation was brief and after the July 6 elections the time for change has been reduced even more.

4. The desperation of some and the confrontations between different viewpoints in difficult times for the country make the risk of an internal split foreseeable. Three years ago I said and I quote to the letter: "Just as Mexico is many Mexicos and the Revolution, many revolutions, the PRI is many parties. Thus democracy is carried out within the PRI and then spreads to the entire country. And so the PRI will have its own internal opposition. In Mexico, the formal opposition still does not win the majority. Or, said in another way, in Mexico until now the real opposition has always won. Thus Reyes Heróles said that the opposition's victories are more self defeats of the PRI. He indicated that from here arises also a serious danger: a division. In order to avoid them, we always keep in mind that the schisms of Almazán and Henríquez were at the point of provoking a rupture. They were oppositions that sprouted within the party. A heterogeneous force, when it is not careful, becomes a weakness." Today, unfortunately, the consequences of that split are evident: the leadership of the second electoral force of the country has arose from the ranks of the PRI. And the risk of further divisions persists. The departure of Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas and of those who followed him did not eliminate the possibility of other separations. I immediately add that neither did it annul the party's capacity for cohesion.

The analysis of the factors which have called for change are not exhausted in the four points that I have commented on. It is necessary to reiterate, on the contrary, the need for further reflections to fully analyze those transformations which await

Mexico. But it is appropriate to note, nevertheless, the most evident traits of

what could be the beginning of a new political era in the country.

The Perspective from Close-up

Realistically defining the methods and instruments of renewed pluralism will have to be a collective task. I do not claim to know them beforehand. They will have to be derived, as I have already said, from dialogue and intelligent reconciliation. Nevertheless, it is clear that what is beginning to appear in the Mexican future is a new democratic trilogy. The first signs of its shape are already visible: the formation of three strong political options that, surely, will be reorganized in light of election results.

It will be a collective task to realistically define the method and the necessary instruments of renewed pluralism

As a member of the PRI I must be concerned primarily with my party. It is necessary to work on its organization, returning to its origins. If the PNR was born from the union of what was dispersed, the PRI now confronts the challenge of uniting 32 state parties into one great national party with a solid regional and local support. Recognizing the country's diversity, the party will be able to undertake the principal changes that are needed to regain its strength. It is necessary to rebuild the PRI from its foundations, from the sectors, in a simple and yet at the same time difficult move: the democratic selection of leaders and candidates. Consultation with the bases, a method already successfully employed in certain local elections, has to return to be an everyday task at all levels. With this sole decision, it will be possible to maintain the entire party structure in constant activity, to revitalize the internal consensus and above all, to recuperate the indisputable leadership in each state and in the country as a whole.

It has been said that this method is opposed to the apparent rigidity of the sectors, that is to say, of the "corporate" part of the PRI. I think that the opposite is the case: party sectors are



Election day in the countryside. (Photo by Lucio Blanco)

also confronting the dilemma of transforming or weakening themselves and the logical path that lies ahead is a reorganization of intermediary forces, based on the double support of internal democracy and of the negotiatory capacity of its leadership. We cannot ignore the importance of the relative independence that characterizes the sectors. Each one represents a segment of the national reality. To ask them only for discipline is to lead them to their own defeat. They exist in order to defend their constituents' interests and this should be seized with greater combativeness. Internal democracy should not be incompatible with class leadership. Of course vices such as imposition which have damaged our great organizations have to be rejected. But the party's different sectors—fundamental columns of our party—must strengthen themselves in order to survive.

Democracy in the entire structure of the party and greater autonomy for the sectors will require a new relation between party and government. The party must once again be a vanguard of social organization. Its responsibility is to surge ahead, but also to be attentive to the public mood: to indicate the paths which should be followed and to denounce errors and deviations. Thus it has to be advanced, it must grasp public demands and make sure the government fulfills its promises to meet such demands. If desired, the party has to convert itself into a type of popular "comptroller general." The party should also con-

vert itself into the brightest forum in the political arena as an honest service to the public.

The second shape in Mexico's political future that is becoming visible is the Mexican people's reaffirmation of the obsolescence of criteria that assume that all that emanates from the center is national.

Now it is clearer than ever before that the particular problems of each region of the country require a definition of different political tendencies. I do not want to say that the elections have divided the country. Rather, the July 6 elections ratified Mexico's diversity in all its dimensions. If prior to the elections there were clear traces of the need to urgently eradicate what remains of centralism—which is no small feat—after the elections it is obvious that the states must participate more liberally in the future political development of the nation. I do not refer so much to state governments as to the social and political organizations of each entity.

The Role of Municipality

Decentralization is linked to democracy and it has to be profoundly carried out as was clearly expressed in the electoral mandate. It is almost unnecessary to underscore the importance of recuperating municipal life. In the future democracy, municipalities will play a key role: each municipality should have the power to tip the scales in major decisions, perhaps as never before in the history of Mexico. The

reason is very simple: the most direct form of popular representation resides in the municipalities.

The third aspect of the democratic trilogy that may be assessed is perhaps the most complex and most debated. I refer to the new relations between federal powers. I believe that the era of preeminent presidentialism will have to step aside for a new system characterized by a stronger legislative branch and a more independent judicial branch as indicated by Carlos Salinas de Gortari in his discourse in Puebla. In particular, the Chamber of Deputies will have to convert itself into the vanguard of the party system. What begins in September will be a legislature of historic dimensions. In good measure whether democracy advances with fluidity or is stagnated in infinite discussions will depend on the new Chamber of Deputies. The new Chamber of Deputies will be divided into practically equal parts between PRI and opposition deputies. The Senate will include four representatives of the Cardenist coalition—two of them representing Mexico City with all that this entails. With regard to the composition of the new Chamber of Deputies, the first observation that stands out is the virtual equivalence of forces. However, this is a matter of a precarious equilibrium by virtue of the fact that the majority will only be possible by a few votes. The new structure will require, then, the search for a tactical alliance to carry out governmental programs, to legitimate legislative resolutions and to perfect judicial action.

We are looking at a situation in which many parties are still in the process of being born, a process which will take time. Mexico's pluralistic representation in Congress which reflects Mexico's political reality, will begin to resemble the intense parliamentary life of other countries. Many of the decisions of the executive branch will have to pass through the sieve of the Congress. For example, what will occur when the proposals of a minister of state are met with objections by a number of deputies? The response reveals the transitional regimen that must govern Mexico in the coming years and, of course, the role that the majority party will have to play as a type of sieve prior to the inter-party debate.

The party system can only mature, however, in light of the responsible action of the political actors. The process

of transforming the three parties will rely, to a large extent, on negotiations between parties and on the social might that they represent. Pluripartisanism must overcome the electoral competition to institutionalize itself in Congress, in executive decisions, and in judicial measures.

It is up to the political parties to follow the example of maturity set by the people. We must establish new rules of the game. We must renew the political and social pact between Mexicans. I see some qualities in that process that should be taken into account: tolerance, respect, prudence and intelligence. It is necessary to make a profound effort to find points of equilibrium and to establish a basic consensus to begin the dialogue required by national unity. All of this will show us how to delve deeper into democracy or better yet: to lay the foundations for a new democratic culture.

Final Considerations: To Transcend the Immediate

Mexico should not get bogged down in "maximalist" tactics of all or nothing which are contrary to democratic life. Sticking to the law, we will have to overcome the critical moment of electoral evaluation and look ahead. It does little good to subject yourself to the law and then immediately deny it in declarations and rallies. The law must be respected on the principle of political ethics and in all parts. If the norms that have made this phase essential for the history of Mexico possible are nevertheless unsatisfactory,

there will be time and room to perfect them. The law must be changed by the law. The course of the country was not detained on July 6. The cruder the mutual accusations become, the more the patrimony of popular trust—indispensable for the nation's political health—will be exhausted. The people want something else. They did not vote to see their will destroyed. They voted, I insist, in favor of democracy, in favor of the rule of law.

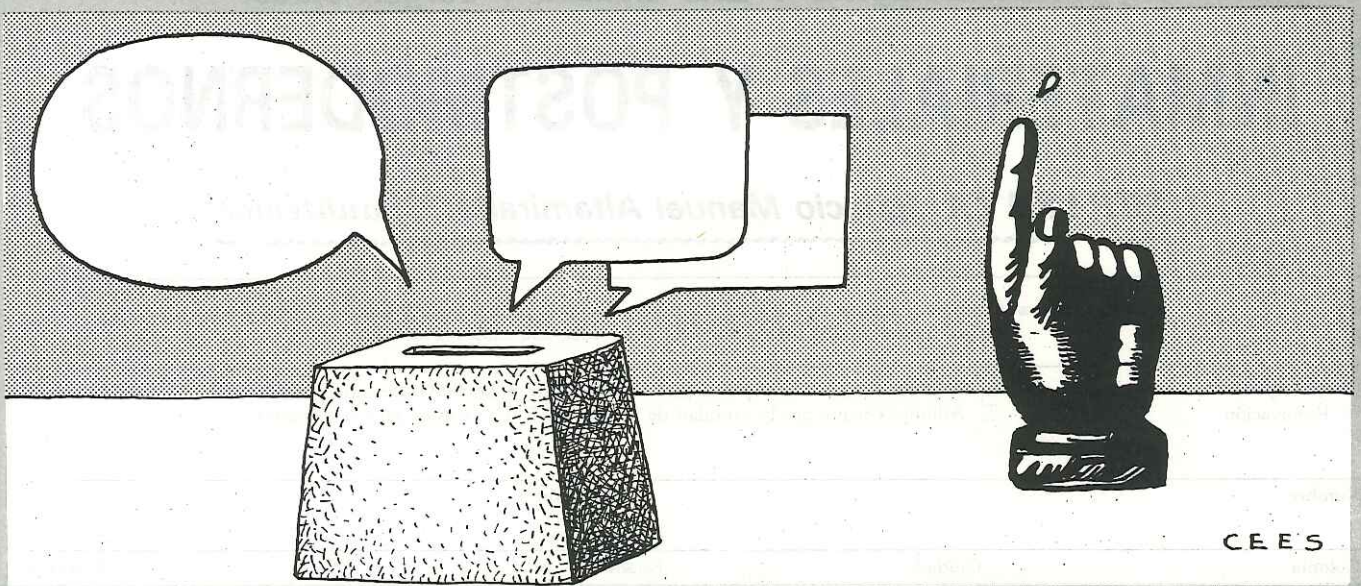
I do not speak of overlooking electoral irregularities where they occurred, but rather to avoid generalizations that confuse the issue and that take away from the transformations that are already being announced. It is an error, perhaps the products of inertia, to believe that the strategy of discrediting the elections will affect only the PRI.

At the moment, the basis for the full emergence of democracy lies in the recuperation of the system's credibility. No party should betray the people's confidence, because the country's weakness benefits no one. It is necessary to undertake the democratic modernization of Mexico, searching for consensus beyond electoral speculations. Legality has to cease to be only a political banner and convert itself into the guide for action: a legality that means respect for electoral laws and the petitions derived from those laws.

We must transcend the immediate difficulties of the electoral process, illuminating its dark sides with information and blending in the arguments regarding the respect of the will of the people. The slowness of the handing

in of election results has been criticized. Based on that reasonable criticism, arguments have been put forth that seek to invalidate the totality of the elections. The press of some countries widely disseminated those arguments and it has helped contribute to the confusion that hampers the birth of the country's new political era. We must return to the law in order to give clarity to the process: votes were counted, ballot after ballot in each voting booth, and in each one, the corresponding reports were written up and signed by the representatives of the different political parties. The reports and ballots were sent to the District Committee for ratification or rectification. It is perhaps an excessively slow procedure, but it is the one established by the law. Delays cannot be attributed to the will of a single party, since all participated in the scrutiny and later ratified it in each electoral district.

In dealing with more than 54,000 voting booths, it is natural that irregularities might occur. Voting is carried out by fallible human beings, in good or bad faith and of any ideological bent. We are not in the presence of the infantile reductionism of the good guys against the bad guys, but rather of a complex process that, in spite of everything, has legal outlets to settle controversies that may arise. I know only too well that many will remain unsatisfied in any case, but I also know that the parties knew the rules of the Federal Electoral Code and it is precisely now when they have the patriotic obligation to respect them. Consequently, the partial failures of the electoral procedure that undoubtedly



exist, do not totally disqualify the entire process. Even where sufficient evidence supporting inconformities exists, we will be talking about only parts of the process which in no way should be carried to hasty generalizations nor to preconceived judgments. Who should come out ahead in this process are the Mexican people.

The attitude of some representatives of the foreign press, on the other hand, is not surprising. I avoid, naturally, falling into generalizations, of which I disapprove. There are objective serious correspondents who fulfill their job of collecting information with professionalism, but how many times have other special correspondents predicted the beginning of an armed revolt in Mexico? How many times have they come in search of alarming news? How many times have they come out with incomplete versions of stories? It is not unusual, then, that the possibility of announcing a great electoral fraud attracted them. Separate mention, however, should be made of

the Spanish press. Its growing interest in the situation in Mexico speaks well for the identity that joins us with Spain. But the anxiousness with which they view our democracy merits special attention. Perhaps they do not know the difficulties that people must face to peacefully move from one political system with deep roots to another, more dynamic, more open, more pluralistic one. I do not claim to compare the Spain of Franco with Mexico in transition: we all know that our post-Revolutionary system has always renounced the dictatorial temptation, but the transition toward a strengthened democracy is, for any people, a challenge that takes time. Our friends in Spain and in the world can considerably help us if they understand July 6 with objectivity and they recognize the efforts that we as Mexicans are making to transform our political system without altering social stability.

The coming days will be a challenge to Mexico's capacity for adaptation in confronting entirely new

situations. We all have to learn quickly and collaborate in the full emergence of a new political culture. The challenge is of enormous proportions, because although it has begun due to partisan questions, it cannot be reduced solely to this level. It encompasses much more than this. Society as a whole must adapt itself to the new ways of carrying out and understanding politics. We must break with old methods which over time have turned into custom. Democracy, a statement which must be repeated as many times as necessary, is way of life that begins in the elections but must later reach all levels of social life. The media, universities, businesses, unions, civil associations, rural organizations, and the life of the entire country will be reasons for changes in this step toward democratic renovation. Modernization necessitates a change in mentalities. As Mexicans, we must adapt ourselves to the new historical position that we ourselves have put into motion. □

Nombr

Cdad

Esado

País

léfono