

THE HARVEST HOUR

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Such a gigantic step toward democracy must be consolidated. Of course, what has been achieved up till now is not the final goal nor an indication that the struggle should be stopped. Nor is it a matter of making firewood from a fallen tree. However, between continuing to exert pressure with the same force and abandoning the struggle, there are other intermediary options that may eventually prove to be best.

The government is caught in a one-way street. It lacks credibility and any clear hopes of recovering it. Leaders of the official party and those of the system are more disconcerted than ever, but they maintain resources that in fact may be used brutally and without thought if pressure arrives at

limits that they consider intolerable.

Now is probably the moment of achieving what was not attained in 1986 with respect to new electoral legislation. Today, with the opposition's strength, it is possible to force the government to modify the code in effect and to adapt it to Mexico's new political reality. The code is bad, con-

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Victory sign in the Zócalo. (Photo by Angeles Torrejón)

pare 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

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tradictory, confused, labyrinthine, non-systematic, imprecise and open to abuses. The moment has arrived for the opposition to force the government to reformulate such an important law.

The main reforms are few in number. They may be formulated by good lawyers who can be found among party members or among members of the bar association which is beginning to show signs of new life.

A basic change is an electoral authority who has independence from the government in political matters, is autonomous in terms of administration and is made up of party representatives who are prepared to place their vocations for justice and for truth before party convictions. It would be terrible for Mexico if a new electoral organization absolved from the government, continued the vices of partiality and sectarianism. The risk is real and it must be cut short.

Another change should be made in the voting lists and in the voting identification cards. Moderns electronics will provide feasible and reliable solution. It should have the funding necessary by an independent electoral organization. It should have the funding necessary for its proper functioning. In times of economic crisis, democracy should have priority.

Also it will be necessary to modify the composition of electoral voting precincts. In all cases, residents and party representatives from each party should be in charge of the great responsibility of collecting and counting the votes. There should be a vote totaling document that is simple to fill out and easy to understand. There should be no more than 300 to 350 voters in each precinct and secrecy of the ballot must be fully guaranteed. These steps are indispensable to consolidate the advances that have been gained up till now, to harvest what has been planted with so much effort and patience. If the government, as it has offered, is prepared to hold a dialogue, then these are some of the points for the agenda.