

# Our voice

October's meeting in Washington between presidents Ernesto Zedillo of Mexico and Bill Clinton of the United States was an undoubted success. A team spirit characterized the speeches and meetings, talks with political and economic leaders, as well as those invited to the ceremonies and perceptions on the part of the mass media. This is one more demonstration of the fact that relations between our two countries have reached a level of maturity beneficial to both. We have learned to be friends, both in times of euphoria and during periods of redefinition.

In Mexico and the United States, we finally recognize our differences while respecting the grandeur of our identities. We know that the world has entered an era of globalization, when it behooves us to find mutual windows of opportunity at the same time as we understand, and are prepared to discuss, our disagreements. There is a consciousness that the problems confronting us today go beyond borders and therefore demand a search for joint solutions.

Drug trafficking, migration, human rights and ecology are issues that require broad vision and the willingness of nations' leaders to cooperate, to listen to each other, to create a new consensus. Above and beyond the origins of these problems, only conceptions formulated by leaders of great vision can lead to strategies which demand teamwork in order to provide solutions. We have gone from the stage of assigning blame to the level of perceiving the urgency of beginning to imagine long-term bilateral solutions.

Miguel Mancera writes about the key role played by Manuel Gómez Morín in founding the Banco de México in 1925, during the era when Alberto Pani headed the Secretariat of the Treasury. The Banco de México, Mancera tells us, is a financial institution which was fundamental

in backing a single form of currency after the uncertainties of the post-Revolution era.

Ambassador José Juan de Olloqui stresses the need to diversify our markets towards the Pacific Rim. In his opinion, we should not seek conflicts with our neighbors to the north, but should try to consolidate significant trade relations in new markets.

In his essay, Emilio Coral invites us to admire the five "Turriana medallions," 18th-century allegorical paintings whose themes allude to history, archeology, hydraulics, navigation and music. Their pictorial majesty currently graces the National Library, which is part of our country's highest educational institution (UNAM).

Some countries have to exploit their limited arts and crafts in order to attract tourism. In contrast, Mexico displays a wealth of arts and crafts admired around the world, which has translated into a renewal of that which is profoundly Mexican. Nevertheless, Romero Giordano warns us of the danger that our ethnographic legacy may disappear. He shows how the nation's textile art, which continues to use natural dyes of great beauty, has been admired since the arrival of the first Spaniards. However, male garments have almost ceased to exist, while those for women increasingly tend to disappear.

In the article on Frida Kahlo, Martínez Zalce tells us about the painter's *Diario íntimo* (Intimate Diary). He invites us to enter the writings and images of a unique woman who was a mixture of genius, passion and suffering.

The doors of the National Archive at Lecumberri are opened to us by the archive's Director, Patricia Galeana. She mentions some of the invaluable documents safeguarded there, among them Hernán Cortés' "Judgement of Residence" (1526).

Roberto Torres Escalona's article refers to a Renaissance masterpiece entitled *De humani corporis fabrica libri septem*, by Andreas Vesalius, a book which contains a very beautiful collection of engravings explaining the functioning of the human body. Vesalius had a thorough knowledge of the human body, since he was the first to dissect cadavers.

We should not forget that the National University is an institution from which men and women of great value have graduated. Mario Molina, who received the 1995 Nobel Prize for Chemistry, is one of them.

In "The Forgotten Muralists," Julieta Ortiz Gaitán tells us how José Vasconcelos supported the development of muralism in Mexico. In line with his great goal of educating the illiterate masses, he conceived of a project in which painters would be able to give free rein to their imagination on the walls of public buildings. The result is the majestic work of painters such as Revueltas, Zalce, Anguiano, González Camarena and O'Higgins. According to Ortiz Gaitán, while some painters' work highlighted more universal values—as was the case with Montenegro, Mérida and Rodríguez Lozano—all of them expressed a sense of nationalism and social conscience. He also reminds us that, on our National University's campus, we can admire impressive works by Eppens, Chávez Morado, O'Gorman and Mérida, artists who were all greatly influenced by the muralist movement.

We also include an interview with one of Mexico's most important contemporary painters, Arturo Rivera, whose work is distinguished by its highly symbolic and conceptual content.

In this issue we pay a visit to the Museum of Cultures, where we can find artistic collections of great value from almost every corner of the planet.

Héctor Aguilar Camín locates the origins of Mexico's crisis in the reforms which had to begin in 1982. Nevertheless, he points out that, unlike the bankruptcy occurring in that year, today there is no deficit and exports have increased.

In the article "Poverty and Health: Two Challenges for Mexican Social Policy," Silvia Núñez mentions the efforts made in Mexico with regard to health care. She points out, however, that much remains to be done. She considers that all possibilities should be discussed and analyzed, and that privatization should even be considered, in order to find the most effective social policy in this field.

In her article "Women Clearing New Paths," Gabriela Delgado describes what happened at the Fourth World Women's Conference. She emphasizes the fascinating diversity of the women who attended from the world's most distant countries. She comments on the difficulty of reaching agreements, due to the diversity of ideologies, cultures and religions which were represented. Despite the obstacles, consensus accords were reached on the human rights of women and girls, access to education, jobs and defense of the family, among other issues.

Rafael Segovia tells us about the history of political parties in Mexico. He stresses the fact that in the case of Mexico the government has been a fundamental player in the formation and consolidation of the party system. In his opinion, the great beneficiary of the 1977 electoral reform was the PAN (National Action Party), while he considers that in contrast the PRD (Party of the Democratic Revolution) has been losing followers over the years due to its internal strife.

Our university is in mourning. In this issue, Voices of Mexico pays tribute to the Mexican historian Edmundo O'Gorman, who passed away in September after having produced an important body of historical work on our country.

Our university's Rector, José Sarukhán, introduces us to the fascinating world of biological diversity, whose magnitude is such that recent estimates state that we know less than ten percent of the species inhabiting the earth. He reminds us that Mexico is one of the five countries with the greatest number of species within their territory, and adds his voice to those fighting for conservation of our planet's rich biological patrimony.

Julián Castro Rea notes that Canada's foreign policy has always reiterated that country's support for multilateral institutions. Nevertheless, he indicates that since the Liberals were reelected, foreign policy has become more pragmatic, focusing on Canada's economic development.

Finally, in the review section, Alberto Ruy Sánchez invites us to savor Octavio Paz's book *Vislumbres de la India* (*Glimpses of India*), and we find ourselves sharing his experiences in that country. Claire Joysmith reviews Norma Elia Cantú's book *Canícula: Snapshots of a Girlhood en la Frontera* and helps us better understand what it means to live on the border. ❧