

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*.

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