

Our voice

Our magazine is beginning a new era with greater enthusiasm and broader objectives. The fundamental goal will be to present Mexico's "best voices," as well as our country's most beautiful images, for foreign audiences.

Mexico is going through a period of transition towards becoming a better country, and our journal wishes to assist in this process by publicizing the best ideas presently circulating in the media for the consideration of public opinion.

In addition to a cultural section dealing with our greatest artistic splendors, we are publishing innovative articles on the society, economics and politics of the North American region. The goal is to provide the readers with ideas, proposals and creative analyses which stimulate the imagination and assist in thinking constructively about social practices and institutions. This means showing views of Mexico which will help provide our readers, both in Mexico and abroad, with the basis for informed opinion.

José Woldenberg presents an analysis of the development of democracy in Mexico. He describes how social differentiation leads to a differentiation in voting patterns, which has strengthened the political parties and made elections an increasingly competitive process pitting different options against each other. Nevertheless, he believes that the party system continues to be plagued by large imbalances, which must be overcome so that democracy may really advance. He underlines the responsibility that the various forces face for overcoming their differences and conflicts in order to build a democratic system.

This issue also includes an essay by Alonso Gómez Robledo, offering an interesting analysis and proposals on dual nationality, an issue which has become part of the general discussion on immigrants to the United States, who face the tragic decision of having to choose a single nationality. He stresses the importance of having the full effectiveness of one of

the two nationalities be established as a clear criterion, since if the contrary were the case the result would be a juridical absurdity.

Ann Penner writes about the dilemma Canadians and Mexicans face in light of closer economic ties to the United States. This new closeness poses risks and raises fears about the loss of political autonomy, independence and identity. Yet it also presents opportunities: she believes that through NAFTA, Mexico and Canada were able to establish institutions and clear norms for handling trade disputes, thereby ceasing to be victims of U.S. protectionism.

Mónica Vereá points out that the immigration issue will preponderate in bilateral relations, especially in the 1996 elections. Thus, she enumerates the different strategies and decisions which have been made for limiting illegal immigration to the United States. In particular, she stresses the turn immigration policy has taken by attacking the fiscal deficit caused by the welfare state, through the exclusion of illegals and non-immigrant legal residents from health and education services.

David Maciel stresses that the communications media have, without a doubt, been the most influential factor in recent xenophobia and anti-immigrant sentiment. He presents an analysis of films which have touched on this issue, concluding that, with honorable exceptions, most deal with immigration in a prejudiced and superficial way.

María Luisa López Vieyra tells us about the important role the National Art Museum (Munal) plays in promoting Mexican culture. She explains how the museum seeks to show our culture's diversity and richness, from the 16th century through the 1950s.

Jean Meyer reflects on the concept of national identity. He thinks that history for the masses should not necessarily consist of "heroes of bronze." It is also necessary to take into account the version presented by those who were defeated; yet he alerts us

to the danger that the attempt to include minority groups may lead to a mythical view of these groups.

An essay by Lászlo Moussong makes an ingenious comparison between Mexico City, New York and Montreal and the place three women occupy in his life.

Maricela González Cruz Manjarrez tells us about muralism, as a vanguard nationalist movement in Mexican painting, which reacted against Eurocentrism and questioned the historic period in which it arose.

In a very special article, Lynn Wehnes invites us to visit part of Mexico's history through the Panteón Francés. On the basis of the tombstones and crypts located in this historic area, she describes the lives of some of Mexican society's most prominent families. It has been said that visiting a country's burial places tells us a lot about its culture, and in Mexico cemeteries are certainly of particular importance.

Julia Carabias refers to the richness of the biodiversity of Mexico's ecosystems and highlights the danger involved in accelerated tendencies towards the degradation of these systems. She points out that, for the first time in the nation's economic planning, environmental criteria have been included, thereby linking our development to that of future generations of Mexicans. For the conservation of ecological reserves, she proposes the creation of contracts through which the various affected groups (including society as a whole) will participate in long-term projects.

Robert Finbow considers that the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) leads developed and developing countries to recognize their interdependence, in terms of both economics and ecosystems. Nevertheless, he warns us of the danger that environmental protection may be used as a cover for U.S. protectionist interests.

Celia Toro takes on the theme of drug trafficking and indicates the need to consider new strategies for

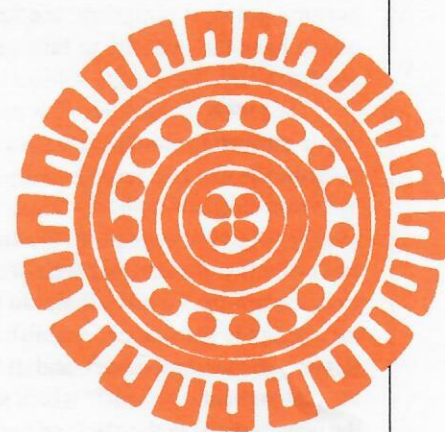
controlling the drug trade. She notes the possibility of forming small specialized bodies whose members would be adequately paid, rather than large and poorly paid groups, which are more susceptible to corruption.

The architect Francisco Pérez de Salazar V. relates the history of Mexico City, from its foundation as the great city of Tenochtitlán through our times. He describes the architectural traits which have taken shape over time. From the most ancient archeological vestiges through the Colonial period and up to the present, he explains how our city took on different characteristics in different eras. As a mix of pre-Hispanic, Colonial and Porfirian constructions, the edifices built by different social strata come together to give definition to Mexico City.

Rosalía Santín takes us through space and time to walk the astonishing streets of Morelia, whose architectural glory interweaves the Baroque, the Plateresque and the Churrigueresque, uniting with the area's natural beauty to produce a splendid whole.

This issue of our magazine includes an interview with the architect José de Yturbe, whose work has enriched "Mexican architecture."

Finally, we present reviews of two books: Eugenio Aguirre's *Los niños de colores (The Children of Color)* and *Imágenes de un encuentro (Images of an Encounter)*. ❧



Paz Consuelo Márquez Padilla
Editorial Director.