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both candidates reflected the search for a middle ground, a clear indication that the Cárdenas utopia and its radical vein were not going to be continued, either in practice or in purpose, in future years.

In spite of this shared search for moderation, the presidential campaign of 1939–1940 was far from orderly and calm. The clashes between the followers of Almazán and Avila were frequent, especially after January 1940, and the number of people killed and wounded for political reasons started to grow, climaxing on July 7, election day. On that day, there were shoot-outs, rock-throwing battles, and assaults on voting booths. Both the police and the army had to break up many clashes between rival political groups. Finally, in spite of the protests of Almazán's followers, Avila Camacho was declared the victor.

General Almazán left Mexico. His partisans insisted that he had been cheated out of his victory by fraudulent means and threatened with rebellion. There were, in fact, armed uprisings in the North, but federal forces could control them. Calm became more widespread when Almazán returned to Mexico in November and declared that he conceded and that he was withdrawing from politics. Many of his followers felt betrayed, but they could do nothing to stop the political disappearance of their leader. His withdrawal from active politics and his taking refuge in angry and nostalgic reminiscing closed a critical chapter of the history of contemporary Mexico, a chapter that is still awaiting a good historian to tell the true story of those elections, the most disputed and conflictive elections of revolutionary Mexico.

The 1938 expropriation was one of the brightest spots of the Mexican Revolution and of Cardenismo, but it had a high cost. After the expropriation, and due to economic pressures by foreign elements, there was a political and economic crisis of such magnitude that the program of reforms had to go more slowly and, in certain aspects, it stopped altogether. Cárdenas had to reach compromises with sectors of his own party that demanded an end to radicalism.

When Cárdenas handed the presidency over to Avila Camacho, the ruling party kept maintaining that class struggle was the engine of historical development, and that the ultimate goal of revolution was to build a society in which all means of production were under the direct control of the workers. The *ejido*, the cooperatives, and state property had to be the economic and social cores of the new Mexico. Opposing forces, however, were on the rise inside and outside the country, and by the end of 1940 the Cardenista plan was clearly on the defensive.

When General Avila Camacho assumed the presidency, it was clear to many people that the construction of a "Mexican socialism" had ended. The idea that with the end of the Cárdenas administration the Revolution had ended gained acceptance with the passing of years.

5. The Mexican Miracle: 1940–1968

The Revolution as a Legacy

The Revolution ceased to be a real force after Avila Camacho's term (1940–1946), but its historical prestige and the aura of the profound transformations it produced continued to lend legitimacy to Mexican governments in the second half of the twentieth century. After Cárdenas, the mythological and real brightness of the recent past allowed the status quo, although full of failures and injustice, to be presented to the country as a passing phenomenon, since the true Mexico was the one that had not yet appeared and was to be conquered in the future. This was an ideological leap of crucial importance, and its history is the history of a revolutionary fact transformed into a continuous present and a future that was just a promise.

The belief that the Mexican Revolution was only the culmination of the great nineteenth century movements—independence and reform—is common to all Mexican leaders, starting with Venustiano Carranza. The way this belief was assumed by the revolutionary governments changed remarkably. It ended by transforming the Mexican state not only into the heir and guardian of that history, but into its patriotic vanguard.

The Mexican Revolution and the constitution of 1917 gradually lost their condition of historical facts to become, as all the history of the country had become, a "legacy," that is, an accumulation of wisdom and achievements that guaranteed the revolutionary rightness of the present.

Until Cárdenas, the history necessary to legitimize revolutionary governments started with the insurrection of 1910. After 1940, official language started to reflect the government's certainty of being the true, and uninterrupted, heir to a former history, the history that started with independence.

President Alvaro Obregón (1921–1924) paid little attention to the events of the recent revolutionary past—his desire was that this past be seen as a fait accompli—for the opposite reason that would lead future presidents (Adolfo Ruiz Cortines, 1952–1958; Adolfo López Mateos,

1958–1964; and Gustavo Díaz Ordaz, 1964–1968) to dwell on it excessively and to make it include the wars for independence. Obregón did not doubt his legitimacy; he did not question the validity of his regime's origin, because nobody questioned the obvious tie between his government and the Revolution. It was a clear case of a "good revolutionary conscience." Thus, he could unblushingly speak of his "good faith" as a source of everything that his government did, including its mistakes: "The mistakes that are committed have no importance, because there will always be time to correct them. They will always be committed in good faith, and there is no problem in recognizing a mistake."

For Obregón, the "revolution" was the naked armed rebellion; his government did not "embody" it, but simply succeeded it in a legitimate fashion. With Calles, there is a change. The historian Guillermo Palacios summarizes the process:

> During the Calles period, the popularity of the Revolution was not, as before, due to its origins or incidental components but to its *future* . . . Calles was not concerned, as the former president was, with the obvious contrast between the revolutionary movement and the resulting government. It is important to keep this in mind to understand his concept of "Revolution." Revolution, viewed like this, is what would permit continuity, and would grant successive governments the assurance of revolutionary development . . . The concept of Revolution as consisting of successive stages liberates it from its dependence on the period of armed struggle. This armed struggle would be considered as just one moment of the process, "the simplest and easiest moment" (Calles, in his last Report to the Nation) . . . To our days, Revolution continues to be so conceived in the abundant presidential and official propaganda: "The Revolution is generous and dignifying, and it is always on the march." . . . Calles wants the concept of Revolution to go into the past, and from it to reaffirm its advances, assure itself that it is on the right road, and glory in its achievements . . . The future, thus, represents the real stage on which the Revolution was to be fulfilled, because until then, in Calles' words, it would be limited to mere "essays of realism and socialization." The future will be the time for revolutionary consolidation, and not as fragmentary political ideas, but as the thought by antonomasia.

An Eternal Future

If Calles discovered the future of the Revolution, Cárdenas somehow imposed its character of perpetuity. To the concept of continuity and

successive stages, he added that of "endless tasks," always renewed by history, which the Revolution would in each instance give an adequate solution. Looking backward, Cárdenas identified certain "stages" in the Revolution as *history*, which is connected to the present, but not simultaneous with it. A revolutionary tradition was thus established, with a progressive present and a future of continuous and ceaseless renovation. Cárdenas said: "Some had the duty of initiating the armed struggle and establishing the fundamental bases of our future. Others had to put into action the new doctrines, organizing the factors that could lead to triumph. We have to solve those problems that affect the process of our social life, and perfect our institutional regime." The Revolution completed, in this view, the integration of the nation adding economic emancipation to political independence (wars for independence) and ideological consolidation (reform, and the 1857 constitution).

The fervent concept of the nation as modern depository of an uninterrupted historical legacy, started, perhaps, with Avila Camacho. To the unsatisfied and polemical spirit of the initial Cardenismo, he contrasted the notion of a recent history full of achievement. In his inaugural speech, he stated that, for the unprejudiced mind,

> the Mexican Revolution has been a social movement, guided by historical justice, which has been able to satisfy, one by one, all essential popular demands. . . . Each new era demands a renovation of ideals. The clamor of the Republic demands now the material and spiritual consolidation of our social achievements, by means of a powerful and prosperous economy.

At the end of this speech, Avila Camacho benevolently reviewed the history of the nation, regarding it no longer as a struggle but as heritage, not as a source of social friction, but as a fraternal ground of concord: "I ask with all the strength of my spirit, of all patriotic Mexicans, of all the people, to keep united, banning all intolerance, all sterile hatred, in this constructive crusade of national fraternity and grandeur." The political ideal of national unity was the wineskin in which the idea of history and spiritual values of Mexico as a treasure to be joined to the struggles of the past, would age and ripen.

The Great Change of Direction

With this ideological baggage on their backs, the "governments of the Revolution" would gravitate, starting in the 1940s, toward a central decision to industrialize the country, by means of an import-substitu-

tion policy. This seriously displaced the traditional center of gravity, which had been the countryside, to the cities. The ranks of the proletariat, the bourgeoisie, and the middle class grew, and cities, which were their natural environment, expanded. The incipient Mexican bourgeoisie—industrialists, business people, and bankers—made their primacy firmer and eventually accepted foreign partners again. So much so that by the 1960s the Mexican industrial dependence on foreign capital and technology became, as in the Porfiriato, quite evident.

When industrialization started, in part as a reaction to the popular echo of Cardenismo, which ended in the division of the "revolutionary family," governments started to doubt the role of the state and the desirable degree of direct governmental intervention in the productive process. At the beginning, this intervention was justified as being just a series of exceptional and/or temporary actions. Later on, the policy that would rule relations between the state and the private sector for several decades was developed: The duty of the state was to create and maintain the economic infrastructure; it should intervene the least in the area of direct production for the market, and engage only in those activities in which private enterprises were disinterested, fearful, or unable to maintain an adequate presence. Little by little, in spite of the protests of entrepreneurs, governmental practice and private deficiencies resulted in what was called "a mixed economy," in a persistent state of conflict, and constant negotiations between the entrepreneurial state and the domestic bourgeoisie, increasingly more consolidated. Starting in 1940, the investment ratio has averaged one-third of government investment and two-thirds of private investment.

This compromise was extremely effective, and observers and analysts started to talk unblushingly about "the Mexican miracle." Between 1940 and 1960, production increased 3.2 times, and between 1960 and 1978, 2.7 times. Those years recorded an average annual growth of 6 percent. This meant that the Mexican economy had produced a real value equivalent to 8.7 times the production of 1940, whereas population had increased only 3.4 times.

The economy not only had changed but had suffered a structural change. In 1940, agriculture represented around 10 percent of the national production; in 1977, only 5 percent. Manufacturing, on the other hand, increased from a little less than 19 percent to more than 23 percent. Other changes that were decisive, although not of a strictly economic character, were demographic: population increased from 19.6 million in 1940 to 67 million in 1977, and more than 70 million in 1980; in 1940, only 20 percent of the population lived in urban centers, and in 1977, almost 50 percent. Together with the industrialization process,

the country experienced in forty years a spectacular change in its levels of urbanization and demographic growth.

The Immobile Zone

In contrast with these dramatic changes in the demography and economy of Mexico, some of the features of the political system inherited from Cardenismo were relatively unchanged. The political structures that the Revolution had created and perfected from Carranza to Cárdenas remained vigorous, with a few secondary changes.

In this system, the presidency was definitively the main piece. Neither the Congress nor the judiciary recuperated the ground they had lost up to 1940, and the autonomy of the states was as weak as before. No president promoted the disappearance of so many states' powers as Cárdenas, but all his successors acted against local governments when they fell from grace with the central government. Furthermore, with economic development, federal resources became so important that any regional or state project, in order to be carried out, depended on the decisions made in Mexico City.

The corporative official party also ratified its monolithic control, without adversaries that could challenge it. It kept in its hands all governorships and senatorial positions. The opposition was admitted only in the Chamber of Deputies, as a token minority that legitimized democratic forms without really having the ability to influence the behavior of Congress.

In December 1940, just after the administration of Avila Camacho had started, the military sector of the PRM definitively disappeared. It was a symbolic proof of the professionalism reached by the revolutionary army and of its institutional subordination to the president. This trend became a permanent political feature beginning in 1946, when Miguel Alemán (1946–1952), the first civilian postrevolutionary president, was elected. He initiated a long, uninterrupted list of nonmilitary presidents.

The PRM, as such, ended in 1946, but its transformation, like the preceding transformation, was painless and orderly. It abandoned its name and the programs that connected it to the Cardenista period, to become the present-day Institutional Revolutionary party (PRI), with interesting changes in its bylaws and platform, but very few changes in its real structure.

Economic capitalist growth based on the virtual immobility of a political system with strong authoritarian features resulted in a social structure that was very different from the one envisioned by a revolutionary government committed to social justice. Mexico joined the

Allied powers in World War II, and its remarkable economic growth produced a distributive scheme in which labor lost ground to management. The percentage of income available to the poorer half of families, in 1950, was 19 percent; in 1957, 16 percent; in 1963, 15 percent, and in 1975, only 13 percent of the total. As a contrast, the top 20 percent in 1950 received 60 percent of available income; in 1958, 61 percent; in 1963, 59 percent; and, in 1975, a little over 62 percent: a concentration of income that is very high, if we compare it to the figures for other Latin American countries, which do not distinguish themselves for fairness in the distribution of income and which have not had a revolution.

After Cárdenas, economic policy was based on the questionable idea, which came from the time of Obregón, that it was necessary to first create wealth to be able later to distribute it. Actually, there was much support for the first stage of this process and very little for the second, although in theory it was kept as a true and legitimate goal of the "revolutionary governments."

The Postwar Ally

Between 1910 and 1940, Mexico's role in the world was to clash profoundly and constantly with the great industrial powers, especially the United States and Great Britain. It was an unequal fight, and its results seemed to be the achievement of a greater independence by means of the constitution of 1917 and the destruction of the "enclave economy" through the oil expropriation of 1938.

When Mexico entered the war, however, its international situation changed drastically. Suddenly, the country found itself the ally of the country that until recently seemed to be the greatest threat to its sovereignty, and even its existence. The war created an exceptional atmosphere in which many of the problems between the two countries, such as the way to pay claims and the oil debt, could be speedily and definitively solved. The American government helped Mexico get its first international loans since the fall of Victoriano Huerta, to promote the production of raw materials required by the American war economy. To reciprocate, the Mexican government signed agreements concerning commerce, migrant farm workers, and military cooperation, although its participation in the war effort was mainly economic. Raw materials were sold to the United States at lower prices than to the free market, in exchange for which the Mexican government accumulated large reserves of dollars, which could not be easily used, since imports from the United States were rationed. Thousands of migrant workers worked on American farms, 15,000 joined the American army, and 1,492 lost their lives on the Pacific, European, and North African fronts.

When the war ended, Mexico found itself incorporated into the American area of influence. The possibility of European countries' acting as a counterweight to this influence had disappeared. The European presence in Mexico had been undermined by the nationalistic policies of the Revolution, and its international strength had seen itself weakened by the war. Furthermore, the project of industrialization that had started in Mexico during the war channeled Mexican trade even more toward the United States. Most of the raw material exports went there, and from there came most of the capital goods required by the industrial import-substitution process. Since then, between 60 percent and 70 percent of international trade by Mexico has had the United States as a source or as a destination.

To close the cycle of this decisive postwar transformation, a good part of the capital and technology demanded by the Mexican process of industrialization also came from the United States. Foreign direct investment in 1940 hardly reached $450 million; by 1960, it surpassed a billion dollars; by the mid-1970s, it reached the $4.5 billion figure, and in the 1980s it surpassed the $10 billion mark. The institutional appeasement of the Revolution facilitated this penetration by American influence in the economic, political, and cultural spheres.

In spite of the great dependence on the United States after the Second World War, Mexican foreign policy preserved a relative independence, especially with regard to hemispheric policies. Mexico did not welcome the overthrow of Jacobo Arbenz of Guatemala in 1954, did not support American aggression against Cuba starting in 1960, or the intervention in the Dominican Republic in 1965. In these and similar situations, Mexico defended the principle of nonintervention, rejected a permanent military alliance with the United States, and followed a road that was different from the other Latin American nations, but without ever reaching the direct confrontation that was typical of the revolutionary years.

From Enthusiasm to Repression

The difficult combination of economic growth and political stability that Mexico achieved after 1940 inclined many observers, in the 1960s, to present Mexico as a model to be followed by other developing countries. This enthusiasm cooled down with the political crisis of 1968, in which large groups of students challenged the legitimacy of the system and proved, by the bloody repression they suffered, that it had an authoritarian core. In a parallel fashion, from the beginning of the 1960s there were worrisome symptoms indicating that the import-substitution model of industrialization was not working well. In those years, it

was necessary to admit with regret that the industrial plant that had been built with so much effort was unable to survive without strong tariff protection, was not competitive in the market abroad, and could not grow at the pace demanded by the balance-of-payments deficit and the population growth. Agriculture also showed symptoms of stagnation, its productivity decreased, it became unable to satisfy the domestic food demand and to be a dynamic factor in international trade. Products that were exported before began to be imported, and the surplus turned into a deficit. A protracted economic crisis in international economy at the beginning of the 1970s topped the already difficult economic landscape and made clearer that the favorable conditions of the until-then "stabilizing development" had eroded and that a new model was necessary.

During the presidency of Luis Echeverría (1970–1976), the highest authorities publicly expressed their doubts on the viability of the Mexican development model as it had been applied until then. Changes were demanded for an alternative way of achieving a "shared development" that would create a more just society and a more efficient economic system. President Echeverría and his secretaries finished their term without having shaped this alternative course, in the midst of a climate of economic and political distrust. Much of the immediate past had been questioned, but the new way was not clearly delineated. However, the increase in international oil prices and the important findings of new fields in Southeast Mexico in the mid-1970s prevented the propagation of the politico-economic crisis of 1976, and permitted a breathing space for searching out new strategies.

The José López Portillo presidential term (1976–1982) would prove that even the most favorable conditions in the oil market could not solve the structural problem of the disintegrated and obsolete industrial plant of the country. After four years of unprecedented increases in the income from oil exports, the country relapsed, beginning in 1981, into a deep crisis of its finances and production, caused by the drop in international oil prices and the profound imbalances in taxes, production, trade, and foreign debt.

A Final Good-bye

Few observers foresaw the great impact that WWII was to have on the Mexican economy. Cardenismo outlined its great plans under the influence of the agrarian image that had been the historical core of the country for centuries. Foreign analysts who had closely observed Mexican evolution after the Revolution, such as Frank Tannenbaum, simply thought that the necessary elements for a jump to industrialization did not exist in Mexico. According to Tannenbaum, after the euphoria of the

1940s, Mexico would return to its social roots in the countryside and to primary activities, eschewing an industry grounded on false bases. But Mexico did not return to its agricultural roots, and the change in its production patterns that had taken place in the 1940s was lasting.

The unstoppable industrializing project coincided with the Second World War, but, in great measure, investments on which it was based were already there. From 1942 on, exports of raw materials grew noticeably and Mexico obtained the necessary hard currency to import the equipment that its factories started to need. Unfortunately, the sources of machinery—the United States and Europe—were absorbed by the war effort, and could not supply what Mexico needed and could buy at that time. The industrialization impulse was unleashed only after the war, under Alemán (1946–1952). In 1939, manufacturing represented 16.9 percent of total production; in 1946, it went up to 19.4 percent, and by 1950, 20.5 percent. By then, the goal of both the official sector and the large private companies was to build the industrial society promised in the postwar period as the only way to escape underdevelopment and magnify the possibilities of independent action by the country.

For Cardenismo, the dominant preoccupation had been to establish the bases of a more just society, a society consistent with the Revolution. For the young group of civilians that came to power with President Alemán, the obsession was first to create wealth by means of industrial substitution of traditional imports, and then distribute it according to the demands of social justice. Nobody set a date for this second stage, and public and private leaders of the country seemed interested only in the first stage: to accumulate capital. Figures show their singular enthusiasm.

Between 1940 and 1945, the industrial sector grew at an annual average of 10.2 percent. After the war, the rate diminished to an annual 5.9 percent during the following five years, but, after a period of readjustment, the rate increased, and the average of the 1950s was 7.3 percent. During the war, Mexican industry, taking advantage of the vacuum left by the great powers, started to export textiles, chemicals, food, and the like. With their return to international normalcy, many foreign markets were lost because of the lack of competitiveness, and new manufactures were produced mainly for the domestic market, where tariffs limited foreign competition. Protectionism allowed these new industries to affirm themselves and even expand, but without forcing them to be efficient. In the long run, this laxness made the Mexican economy turn to itself, and prevented Mexican production from going beyond its borders, a situation that hindered the growth of a truly modern and independent industrialization.

The new Mexican industrial plant, created without benefit of any

planning, required substantial imports of capital goods. However, since it did not export at the same rate, hard currency to finance them had to come from traditional agricultural and mining exports, money sent by emigrants, increase in tourism, and the inflow of foreign capital that came to share in the boom. Many foreign companies that before had to export their products to Mexico deemed it convenient to accept the government policy and establish assembly and production plants in Mexico, to avoid protectionist tariffs and not to lose their market, but almost never to export. Thus, direct foreign investment grew from $450 million in 1940 to $729 million by the end of the Alemán presidential term.

The emphasis on industrialization brought new and necessary investment in infrastructure—communications and energy—and in agriculture, the main source of exports that would finance the economic strategy. During the Alemán regime, large investments were made in irrigation and roads, which absorbed 22 percent of the federal budget. But in this instance, the developed lands were not mainly *ejidales*, but private, and this was justified in the name of efficiency.

The Stabilizing Development

By the end of Cárdenas's regime, inflation eroded the Mexican economy, worsening the unequal distribution of income and preventing the crucial expansion of exports. A consequence of this process was the 1948 devaluation in which the rate of exchange was allowed to float and went up from 5.85 pesos to the dollar to 6.80 and, the following year, 8.64. After a short boom in exports due to this devaluation and the Korean War, the problem of trade deficit reappeared, and, in 1954, a new devaluation was necessary that established the rate of 12.50 pesos to the dollar. At that time, as a reaction, the strategy of having a "stabilizing development" began, the main objective being to avoid new devaluations by putting a stop to the accelerated rise in prices and salaries. During the Ruiz Cortines regime, this strategy stopped the inflationary spiral. This spiral distorted the structure of exports and harmed wage-earners, provoking strikes, more or less violent clashes with the government, and a weakened control of official trade unionism, without which the kind of industrialization induced by the state would have been politically impossible to handle.

The immediate effect of the April 1954 devaluation was to exacerbate inflation even more, but, thanks to the political discipline imposed by their leaders and the government on the labor movement, and an improved balance of payments, the desired stability in exchange rates, salaries, and prices started to take form. In the following ten years, the wholesale price index rose by only 50 percent. The "stabilizing development" model was effective until 1973, when the convergence of a domestic and an international crisis put an end to it. The Mexican economy felt again the unpleasant effects of inflation and an increasing deficit in the trade balance. The era of devaluations returned in 1976, and the earnest search for an alternative model started. The discovery of vast oil fields in the Southeast in the mid-1970s provided a temporary solution to the country's economic problems: to become again an exporter of oil.

In spite of the differences in form between the stabilizing development model and the stage started in 1973, the basic tenets of Alemán's economics remained in force: to continue with import substitution, maintain tariff protectionist barriers, and revitalize investments in irrigation, railways, and energy. But, in fact, these measures had lost their effect. By the 1960s, the government had to revise its wage policies and admit the need to strengthen the purchasing power of majority groups. Voices were raised in alarm on the need to review industrial strategies decisively, because everything indicated that the relatively easy stage of substitution replacement was coming to an end. Those who saw clouds on the horizon thought that it was necessary to promote the substitution of capital goods, and this demanded substantial investment and larger markets. The solution would be to increase equally the domestic market and exports of manufactures (i.e., to start competing with the great industrial powers), by means of production that would make use of the most abundant Mexican resource: human labor. Mexico, then, decided to associate itself with the other Latin American countries in order to create a great regional market. This market would maintain protectionist measures vis-à-vis the rest of the world, but would be more relaxed within Latin America, in order to foster large-scale economies. The Latin American Association of Free Trade (ALALC) was created, but from the beginning it was hindered by fears of hegemony of Brazil, Argentina, and Mexico over the rest of the countries in the region. The pioneers in industrial development were not very willing to accept regional materials, because they doubted their quality and prices. Ultimately, this option was eliminated for Mexico, at least for the time being.

After the relative failure of ALALC, the Mexican government looked for markets in Europe, Asia, and Africa, but without much success. Without really planning it, the only solution seemed to be a greater participation of the state in the production process. The paragovernmental sector not only continued broadening the field of its basic activities and subsidizing private producers, but put more emphasis on the practice of assuming the control of failed companies and of creating enterprises in areas that private capital had previously neglected. For this reason, when

the 1970s started, the paragovernmental sector owned some eight hundred quite disparate companies, which ranged from Mexican Petroleum (PEMEX) and the Federal Electrical Commission (CFE) to a company that made bicycles. In 1970, 35 percent of gross fixed investment corresponded to the public sector, and in 1976—a year in which the private sector limited noticeably its investments—it surpassed 40 percent. The rate of economic growth increasingly depended on the action and decisions of the public sector.

During the 1970s, the contribution of manufacturing industries to the country's production was about 23 percent. Commercial activity had a larger percentage. If we add allied activities, such as oil and electricity production, industrial participation slightly surpasses commercial activity, and it is three times larger than traditional activities (agriculture, cattle, forests, and mining). Between 1940 and 1977, the manufacturing industry proper grew 7.4 percent annually, which is higher than the total production growth, of 5.9 percent.

Fissures and Chasms

Although global growth figures seem to indicate that post-Cárdenas economic planning had been successful, some facts seem to indicate the opposite. A good part of the investment in the most modern sector of manufacturing was of foreign origin. Of the 101 most important industrial companies in 1972, 57 had foreign capital participation. Of the $2,822 million of direct foreign investment, $2,083 million were in the manufacturing industry. From 1973 on, when the Mexican economy entered a crisis, there was an effort to substitute public expenses for the decrease in private investment. But most of these resources came from foreign loans, and, therefore, although direct foreign investment lost relative importance, indirect foreign investment (i.e., foreign debt) grew. By 1971, the foreign debt of the public sector was substantial: $4,543.8 million, which would be four times larger five years later: $19,600.2 million. The government could face the increasing trade deficit and the necessary investment to maintain the rate of economic growth by means of loans from international institutions and private foreign banks. This strategy could not last indefinitely, especially if one considers that the current-account deficit of 1971 ($726.4 million) had become $3,044.3 million five years later in 1976. That year finished with a drastic devaluation (50 percent) and the floating of the peso.

By the end of the Echeverría presidency, "stabilizing development" was history, economic growth had stopped, and national and international public opinion started to question the health and viability of the Mexican economy. People quit talking about the "economic miracle,"

and international financing organizations acted consequently. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) imposed conditions on the handling of the Mexican economy to give its guarantee vis-à-vis international credit markets. These measures included an end to budgetary deficits and to foreign indebtedness.

The indebtedness incurred in the 1970s cannot be explained only by the lack of dynamism of the private sector and the increasing role of the public sector as the engine of the economy. What happened is that the government could not or would not carry out a thorough tax reform, and found it easier to borrow from foreign sources to administer and promote an economic growth based on an industry that was not competitive. This industry, furthermore, demanded imported materials but did not generate the hard currency necessary to import them. In a parallel fashion, the systematic decrease in agricultural growth that started in the mid-1970s not only prevented traditional exports but forced the country to spend more dollars each time to import grains and other staples for satisfying the domestic demand. Mexico started to lose the relative self-sufficiency that it had achieved in the period of the "economic miracle."

The good news about oil—the confirmation of the existence of large additional reserves—began to improve the economic picture starting in 1977. With the change of government, and the possibility of tapping an enormous hydrocarbon source in the Mexican subsoil, the confidence of investors and the general public in the economy improved. In a very short time, oil became the basis of new and ambitious plans for industrial and agricultural growth, with a projected global growth of 8 percent annually. The increase in proved oil reserves was remarkable: from 3.6 billion barrels in 1973, they jumped to 16 billion in 1977, more than 40 billion in early 1979, and 72 billion in 1981, which placed Mexico in sixth place among countries with oil potential. The lucky coincidence of an unprecedented increase in oil prices led the government of José López Portillo (1976–1982) rapidly to increase the production of PEMEX so it could export about 1.25 million barrels of crude oil in 1982, devoting approximately the same amount to internal consumption at prices below world markets.

The economic emergency of 1976 was thus solved, but the real problem still had to be dealt with: in spite of its relative industrialization, Mexico continued to be an exporter of raw materials, vulnerable to external forces, and unable to compete in the international industrial markets. It was hoped that with oil and with the passage of time, this problem would be solved in an easy, painless way, in what could become a second "economic miracle." Actually, the problem became more acute, because tariff protectionist barriers in industrial nations, far from disappearing, became stronger.

Table 4. Gross Domestic Product by Category
(in millions of pesos at 1960 prices)

Period	GDP	Agri-culture	Cattle	For-estry	Fishing	Mining	Crude Oil	Refining Indus-tries	Manu-facturers	Con-struction	Electri-city	Trade	Commun. & Transp.	Govern-ment	Other Serv.	Bank Serv. Adjust.
1939	46,058	5,223	3,641	609	49	1,767	1,317	n/a	6,752	963	345	14,281	1,135	3,280	6,696	n/a
1940	46,693	4,672	3,703	626	56	1,736	1,253	n/a	7,193	1,169	354	14,439	1,187	3,348	6,957	n/a
1941	51,241	5,707	3,942	644	46	1,694	1,283	n/a	7,848	1,208	353	16,490	1,277	3,382	7,367	n/a
1942	54,116	6,433	3,968	828	62	1,939	1,189	n/a	8,461	1,287	367	17,121	1,405	3,370	7,686	n/a
1943	56,120	5,852	4,036	848	79	1,982	1,234	n/a	8,945	1,369	383	17,937	1,601	3,724	8,130	n/a
1944	60,701	6,423	4,051	836	87	1,722	1,246	n/a	9,643	1,656	385	19,988	1,713	4,399	8,552	n/a
1945	62,608	6,152	4,254	702	103	1,767	1,411	n/a	9,985	2,153	430	20,383	1,822	4,530	8,916	n/a
1946	66,722	6,220	4,566	803	110	1,363	1,581	n/a	10,925	2,571	464	22,881	2,030	3,734	9,474	n/a
1947	69,020	6,848	4,519	574	120	1,782	1,801	n/a	11,096	2,622	503	22,855	2,199	4,274	9,827	n/a
1948	71,864	7,393	4,934	579	151	1,645	1,966	n/a	11,794	2,540	555	22,986	2,371	4,559	10,191	n/a
1949	75,803	8,715	5,080	560	196	1,656	2,057	n/a	12,649	2,571	606	23,880	2,570	4,491	10,772	n/a
1950	83,304	9,673	5,194	913	188	1,739	2,467	n/a	14,244	3,028	619	26,300	2,728	4,825	11,387	n/a
1951	89,746	10,146	5,568	927	178	1,676	2,713	n/a	15,746	3,315	688	28,831	2,993	5,135	11,830	n/a
1952	93,315	9,702	5,767	726	149	1,861	2,861	n/a	16,440	3,736	748	29,722	3,302	5,468	12,833	n/a
1953	93,591	9,761	5,664	722	171	1,842	2,908	n/a	16,266	3,449	798	30,378	3,402	5,564	12,646	n/a
1954	102,924	12,202	5,935	785	191	1,734	3,128	n/a	17,855	3,712	880	32,207	3,652	5,823	14,840	n/a
1955	111,671	13,562	6,180	889	210	2,011	3,379	n/a	19,589	4,133	981	34,832	3,917	5,964	16,024	n/a
1956	119,306	12,779	6,452	886	249	2,032	3,600	n/a	21,813	4,774	1,095	37,082	4,337	6,311	17,896	n/a
1957	128,343	13,977	6,970	844	229	2,165	3,841	n/a	23,229	5,397	1,182	39,895	4,531	6,763	19,320	n/a
1958	135,169	15,189	7,297	781	264	2,154	4,287	n/a	24,472	5,214	1,272	41,958	4,671	6,844	20,766	n/a
1959	139,212	14,036	7,576	882	298	2,221	4,861	n/a	26,667	5,330	1,368	43,083	4,816	7,051	21,023	n/a
1960	150,511	14,790	7,966	882	332	2,306	5,089	39	28,892	6,105	1,502	46,880	4,996	7,399	24,852	1,519
1961	157,931	15,156	8,032	849	379	2,230	5,772	76	30,483	6,074	1,609	49,638	5,154	7,942	26,122	1,585
1962	165,310	16,187	7,913	871	368	2,429	6,080	160	31,890	6,471	1,753	51,344	5,393	8,956	27,154	1,659
1963	178,516	16,981	8,385	921	376	2,428	6,575	177	34,826	7,411	2,170	55,769	5,844	10,053	28,449	1,849
1964	199,390	18,738	8,643	921	367	2,482	7,168	251	40,887	8,663	2,529	63,254	6,257	11,102	30,336	2,208
1965	212,320	19,921	9,008	955	338	2,429	7,525	490	44,761	8,534	2,769	67,368	6,443	11,834	32,229	2,284
1966	227,037	20,214	9,202	948	376	2,498	7,898	604	48,990	9,762	3,157	72,385	6,920	12,749	33,976	2,702
1967	241,272	20,165	9,997	1,001	420	2,593	9,023	752	52,341	11,032	3,533	76,397	7,321	13,768	35,871	2,942
1968	260,901	20,489	10,671	1,024	374	2,651	9,798	1,005	57,641	11,844	4,228	82,920	8,113	15,087	38,063	3,009
1969	277,400	20,145	11,296	1,117	354	2,777	10,256	1,269	62,287	12,961	4,812	88,724	8,714	15,585	40,446	3,343
1970	296,600	21,140	11,848	1,149	398	2,859	11,295	1,380	67,680	13,583	5,357	94,491	9,395	17,097	42,495	3,567
1971	306,800	21,517	12,204	1,085	430	2,871	11,615	1,496	69,745	13,230	5,784	97,326	10,098	18,616	44,575	3,812
1972	329,100	20,955	12,832	1,173	445	2,865	12,532	1,750	75,524	15,558	6,297	104,041	11,102	21,134	47,049	4,157
1973	354,100	21,389	13,076	1,252	462	3,166	12,713	1,959	82,255	15,016	6,957	111,966	12,355	23,492	49,555	4,476
1974	375,000	22,019	13,297	1,332	467	3,626	14,524	2,319	86,341	17,[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
1975	390,300	21,931	13,762	1,337	481	3,406	15,749	2,427	90,506	20,[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
1976	396,800	20,352	14,202	1,395	510	3,474	17,462	2,642	92,492	19,[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
1977	409,500	20,840	14,642	1,439	527	3,504	20,740	2,558	95,785	19,[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

n/a: Not available.
Source: Banco de México, S.A., *Información económica. Producto interno bruto y gasto: Cuadernos 1960-1977*. México: Banco de México, 1979, p. 28.

By the end of the 1970s, it was clear that the average Mexican enjoyed a standard of living better than forty years before, but it was not possible to hide the fragile foundation of the economic system that permitted this new way of life: everything depended on oil's continuing to be an expensive commodity with large foreign markets. Unfortunately, until then, no oil-producing nation of the so-called underdeveloped world had succeeded in transforming oil into permanent wealth. In principle, official policy maintained that gas and oil exports should be moderate and never a substitute for the necessary reforms in the industrial, agricultural, and commercial economy. Between theory and practice, however, there was a great gap. Structural reforms were not produced—for lack of time and decision—and Mexico had to relive the cycle of imbalance, indebtedness, inflation, corruption, and depletion of resources that until then had characterized so many oil-producing countries.

Social Structure: The More Things Change, the More They Remain the Same

Changes in social structure in the four decades after Cárdenas are unprecedented in the history of the country. In 1940, Mexico was a relatively underpopulated country with 19.6 million inhabitants. After independence (in the second decade of the nineteenth century), population had increased only threefold, but after 1940 the rate of increase became inconstant. If the country had increased threefold from 1820 to 1940 (i.e., in 120 years), it took it only 35 years to multiply by three the second time, because, by 1975, Mexico already had more than 60 million inhabitants, and, in the early 1980s, more than 70 million.

As in the past, this population was not evenly distributed. The vast spaces of the North remained as empty as before, as did the hot lands of the Pacific and the Southeast. But urban centers grew at a surprising rate. In 1940, only 7.9 percent lived in cities of over half a million inhabitants; 20 years later the percentage was 18.4 percent, in 1970 it was 23 percent, and the trend continues. In 1940, only 20 percent of the population lived in towns with more than 15,000 inhabitants. By 1970, the percentage was 45 percent, and, by 1978, 65 percent. In 1984, the metropolitan area of Mexico City became the most populated city in the world. Beginning in 1940, then, Mexico's population increased very fast—at a rate of 3 percent annually, one of the highest rates in the world—but quickly lost one of its traditional features: its peasant nature. The remarkable population growth in the last decades has been due in part to better health levels, with lower infant mortality and increased life expectancy levels. In 1940, average life expectancy was 41.5 years; in 1970, about 61 years; and, in 1980, 66 years.

The "age pyramid" inverted itself. Contemporary Mexico—in contrast with highly industrialized nations—is a country of young people. In 1940, 41.2 percent of the population was younger than 15; 30 years later, 46.2 percent. By the 1980s, the percentage decreased slowly: 42.4 in 1983. An economically active population had to support an increasing number of dependents. In 1940, 32.4 percent of the population performed some paid work; by 1970, the percentage had decreased to 26.9 percent. The need to create jobs for the waves of young people who enrolled yearly in the labor market (between 700,000 and 800,000 in the 1980s) became a problem whose solution could not wait.

Observing more closely the composition of this labor force, one can see that in 1940 six million Mexicans performed paid work compared to thirteen million in 1970. In 1940, 58.2 percent worked in farm-related jobs, and, in 1970, 41 percent. In 1980, 18 percent of the economically active population worked for industrial companies. Commerce, finances, construction, mining, and services absorbed the remaining 41 percent, but the productivity of many of these activities was very low. In reality, one of the most important economic concerns was how to offer adequate, productive work to an ever increasing and changing labor force.

According to certain estimates, in 1970, 5.8 million people were underemployed, equivalent to 3 million unemployed (i.e., 23 percent of the economically active population). This was a rate three or four times higher than that of industrialized nations. Unemployment became worse as the economy eroded prior to the 1976 crisis, but with the oil boom it improved remarkably, only to suffer a dramatic relapse in the 1982 crisis, which was structurally worse than the crisis of 1976. Unemployment was one of the most serious consequences of the economic model adopted after WWII. Along with underemployment, it proved to be a structural reality, inherent to the model that had been chosen, and not a passing phenomenon, as was claimed in the years of optimism about development. What was to be done?

For some, the solution was to promote a kind of industrialization different from that of industrialized nations: a combination of productive factors where labor would be more important than capital and thus use in an intensive way the most abundant Mexican resource, labor. But this was easier said than done since labor can substitute for capital only up to a point, and an opposite view started to win supporters: since it was not realistic to try always to find labor-intensive techniques (as shown by the examples of India and China) it was better to fully enter the stage of capital goods production, using for this purpose a large part of oil revenues. The creation of jobs along with an increase of food production were the two priorities of the federal government on the eve of the 1982 crisis. The generation of productive work had become one of the great economic and political challenges for the leaders of Mexico.

The Middle Class as a Bridge

Just before the 1910 Revolution, Andrés Molina Enríquez pointed out that one of the great national problems was the extraordinary concentration of wealth—especially wealth derived from land possession—in a few hands. For him, Mexico was a misshapen society: "Our social body is a disproportionate, malformed body: from the chest up, it is a giant's body, from the chest down it is a child's body." It was necessary, said Molina, to create a middle class to serve as a bridge between these two extremes. According to the estimate made in 1951 by José Iturriaga, 90.5 percent of the population during the Porfiriato belonged to the lower class, and the middle class represented barely 8 percent of the population.

Everything indicates that the Revolution, in fact, favored the growth of the middle class and that this was, precisely, one of its great achievements. By 1960, the middle class had doubled its 1910 numbers. According to Arturo González Cosío, 17 percent of Mexicans could be considered to be middle class in 1960. Some people believed this proved irrefutably that Mexico was slowly becoming a more just society.

Data on monthly family income reveal that, after the Revolution, income increased in absolute terms for all social groups. These data show increases in the middle class, but they also show that the income increase was not proportionally equal for all sectors, and that Mexico was not on the path to social justice, if by social justice we understand balance and equity in the distribution of national wealth. This unequal distribution was disturbing since the search for equality was one of the legitimizing goals of the political system.

According to the social philosophy of the national policy of governments from Miguel Alemán (1946–1952) on, the priority of creating wealth required first to have an initial concentration as a form of capitalization prior to the distribution of wealth. Table 5 shows us that by the end of the 1960s the process of concentration was in full vigor, and redistribution processes were nowhere to be seen. By 1975, the 5 percent of families with the largest incomes held the same ratio of national income as in 1950.

Furthermore, changes recorded in favor of the middle class were counterbalanced by a relative loss of the lower class. At the beginning of the 1980s, the social deformity described by Molina Enríquez had not disappeared, it had only transformed itself, in spite of the insistence by the government's pronouncements that it was necessary to diminish the gap between social extremes.

Bad income distribution was due in part to industrial, agricultural,

Table 5. Average Monthly Family Income, by Deciles, and Average Annual Increase Rate (1950, 1958, 1963, and 1969, at 1958 prices)

	Average Family Income				*Annual Increase*			
Deciles	1950	1958	1963	1969	1950–58	1958–63	1963–69	1950–69
I	258	297	315	367	1.8	1.2	2.6	1.9
II	325	375	356	367	1.8	-1.0	0.4	0.5
III	363	441	518	550	2.4	3.2	1.0	2.1
IV	421	516	598	641	2.5	3.0	1.2	2.2
V	460	608	738	825	3.6	3.9	2.6	3.1
VI	526	789	834	917	5.2	1.1	1.6	3.0
VII	669	842	056	1,283	2.9	4.6	3.3	3.5
VIII	823	1,147	1,592	1,650	4.2	6.7	0.6	3.7
IX	1,033	1,820	2,049	2,384	7.3	2.4	2.6	4.5
X	4,687	6,605	8,025	9,352	4.3	3.9	2.6	3.7
5 %	1,693	2,866	3,724	5,501	6.8	5.4	6.7	6.4
5 %	7,679	10,339	12,324	13,203	3.8	3.6	1.0	2.9
Total	975	1,339	1,608	1,834	4.2	3.8	2.2	3.5
GDP					6.3	5.1	7.6	6.3

Source: Wouter van Ginnekin, quoted in Cynthia Hewitt de Alcántara, "Ensayo sobre la satisfacción de necesidades básicas del pueblo mexicano entre 1940 y 1970," in *Cuadernos del CES*, no. 21, 1977, p. 30.

commercial, and financial concentration. According to the 1965 industrial census, 1.5 percent of the 136,000 registered concerns controlled 77.2 percent of capital and 75.2 percent of production. According to the agricultural census of 1960, 1 percent of the non-*ejido* properties controlled 74.3 percent of private landholding. The same year 0.6 percent of commercial concerns controlled 47 percent of capital and 50 percent of income from sales.

After the euphoria of the Alemán period, several analysts proposed that the government intervene in the distribution of the gross domestic product among the different classes, by means of taxes. The resulting tax reforms were insufficient. Expenses by the federal government and parastate concerns went up from 23 percent of the total in 1970 to 42 percent in 1976, but this impressive jump was financed by foreign debt and greater taxes of a general character and taxes aimed at the middle class, which affected high-income sectors very little. The determinate opposition of entrepreneurial circles and the most conservative elements of the government bureaucracy prevented the progressive taxation of capital gains. It would seem that the way to diminish social inequality in Mexico should include changes in the rules that control taxation to capital gains.

Permanence

In contrast to the great changes experienced by Mexico from 1940 on in the field of economy and class struggle, the characteristic feature of political life was one of *permanence*, although not immobility. The structures on which power was based were essentially the same as those left by Cardenismo, although with a deeper impact on society. Very few Mexicans nowadays can escape state conrol. Actively or passively, the great majority of Mexicans are affected by the actions of the government, and this is a trend that is increasingly stronger.

From 1940 on, the central elements of the political system were more distinctly defined, and on some occasions they were enlarged, but very few changed, the presidency of the republic remaining always the cohesive nucleus. Its faculties, both constitutional and beyond the constitution, were not limited or hindered by the other federal powers with which it supposedly shared power, or by informal power centers. Congress, the judiciary, secretaries, state governors, army, official party, main popular organizations, the quasi-governmental sector, and even private economic groups and organizations recognized and supported the role of the presidency and the president as the ultimate arbiter in the formation of political initiatives and the resolution of conflicts of interest in the increasingly complex Mexican society.

It is true that changes in the social and economic structure after 1940 favored the accelerated concentration of capital, and, therefore, the concentration of material resources in the hands of a few powerful groups of private entrepreneurs. But this economic power did not always become political power, although the tendency existed. Between 1940 and 1980, entrepreneurial groups increased their political power at a rate greater than other political forces. Although they have not achieved direct control over government, they *have* achieved veto power over the initiatives of the so-called political class headed by the president. However, the surprising nationalization of private banks in 1982 showed that vis-à-vis a determined action of the government, the veto of the business elite does not work. In normal situations, of course, it is common that economic initiatives of the government are modified by the concentrated pressure exerted by the highest representatives of the private sector. Some observers believe that by the end of the 1970s the state had lost ground to the other main forces of the nation, especially big capital. According to this position, business interest groups—such as the "Monterrey Group" or the "Televisa Group"—had become increasingly more powerful politically. In fact, one of the main concerns of the federal government in the second half of the 1970s was to use oil revenues to fortify the government and avoid the loss of its character as the leader of

Mexican economic development. The 1982 crisis and its sequels greatly weakened certain business sectors, which had to appeal to the protection of the state to face such basic problems as finding credit and backing for the renegotiation of public debt.

As to formal political structures, the official party changed its name in January 1946, ceasing to be the Party of the Mexican Revolution to become the contradictorily named Institutional Revolutionary party (PRI). This change did not affect its nature or its broad control over the political life of the country. The PRI, as before it the PNR and the PRM, did not lose the presidency, or a state governorship, or a seat in the Senate. The few members of the opposition who became members of the Federal Congress were members of the House of Representatives and were never in a position to question official party control over the legislative power. The few municipal governments controlled briefly by the opposition invariably returned to PRI control. In fact, partisan opposition, in spite of having its own life and strength, has been able to act only to the extent that it is permitted to do so by the group in power. It could not have had even the modest position it has in the electoral panorama if it had been openly rejected by those who exert power in contemporary Mexico. A traditional method of lessening tensions in the Mexican political system has been, precisely, not to close the doors to expressions of dissidence. This was especially true after the 1960s, when the explo-siveness of opposition, almost without institutional channels to express itself, shook the system with the railroad strikes of 1958, the student protest of 1968, and the armed urban and rural guerrillas of the 1970s.

The Silencing Machine

The analysis of the presidential campaigns and their results can give a good idea of the nature of opposition in the Mexican political system and the reaction of the government. In 1946, after the Avila Camacho regime, three opposition leaders competed with Miguel Alemán, the official candidate. Of the three, only one was somewhat important—Ezequiel Padilla—because he had recently been a prominent member of the political elite. On the strength of his performance as foreign secretary during WWII, Padilla thought that he had enough power to challenge the decision of the official party, that is, Avila Camacho's decision about the future president.

The Mexican Democratic party (PDM) that supported Padilla in 1946 did not present a real alternative to the PRI platform. It only emphasized that Padilla had forged the successful alliance with the United States during the war and that he proposed to strengthen the new pro-Western internationalism of Mexican foreign policy. This was his only distinc-

tive contribution. Unfortunately for Padilla, his platform did not produce much enthusiasm in Mexico, and Americans did not find anything fundamentally negative in Alemán's candidacy. The official count was 77.9 percent for Alemán and only 19.33 percent for Padilla. The PDM immediately challenged the official victory as a product of fraud, but no meaningful political force supported this contention. In a short time, both the PDM and its candidate disappeared completely from the political panorama, without leaving any lasting trace.

In 1952, the phenomenon of "inside opposition" repeated itself, but this time with greater intensity. The PRI submitted the candidacy of the secretary of government, Adolfo Ruiz Cortines, and this decision by President Alemán disappointed the expectations of Gen. Miguel Henríquez Guzmán, a prominent member of the government, who thought he was entitled to the presidency because of his brilliant political and military record. The general's reaction to the presidential decision was to create his own party, the Federation of Popular Parties (FPP) to oppose the PRI monopoly.

What had happened to Padilla did not bother the followers of Henríquez, perhaps because they believed that a great part of the army and the Cardenista core supported him. Henríquez received the support of the Union of Peasant Federations, which had the slogan "Inviolability of the *ejido*, and respect to small landowners." No labor organization supported him, although his followers carried out a publicity campaign designed to appeal to the urban workers. The Henríquez opposition also counted on the always latent discontent of the middle class and the university students against the authoritarian character of the ruling party. Henríquez, as Padilla or Almazán, did not present an alternative to the official platform. On the contrary, the general insisted on the fulfillment of the political and social tenets of the Revolution, which, according to him, was impossible while the PRI was in power.

The official count gave Adolfo Ruiz Cortines 2.7 million votes (74.3 percent) and General Henríquez a little more than half a million; the PAN candidate received 285,000 votes, and Lombardo Toledano, the Popular party candidate, only 72,000. As their predecessors, the followers of Henríquez claimed that the true results of the election had been falsified, but their claims did not change the official decision or the political reality. The army remained loyal to the government, and tranquillity was disturbed only by some relatively violent demonstrations in cities of the interior and a long-forgotten massacre in Mexico City's Alameda.

For a year and a half after the elections, Henriquismo continued to be a relatively important political force, although many of its members decided from the beginning to forget their differences and rejoin the official party. Early in 1954, however, the government decided to forcibly dissolve the FPP, and the movement disappeared. In this typically authoritarian fashion, the last attempt of dissidence in the "revolutionary family" disappeared, and subsequently internal discipline in the party increased, because it became evident that there was no alternative to presidential will.

In the 1958 presidential elections, the candidacy went to the secretary of labor, Adolfo López Mateos, breaking, in a way very convenient to the president, the tradition of always choosing the secretary of government. There were no internal divisions, and the only significant opposition came from the outside, from the National Action party (PAN), which after orderly elections received only the bulk of the 10 percent opposition vote. The 1964 election had a similar character. The official candidate, Gustavo Díaz Ordaz, secretary of government, received 89 percent of the vote and the PAN candidate only 11 percent. The independent leftist opposition did not participate, and its presence in the election was practically nil (the Popular Socialist party decided to support the official candidate).

Reformed Opposition

The political crisis of 1968 did not seem to have any effect on the election returns of 1970. The PRI candidate, Luis Echeverría, secretary of interior, received 84 percent of the vote and Efraín González Morfín of PAN got 14 percent. Elections in 1976, again, did not offer any surprises, although there were some changes because the center-right opposition, the PAN, suffered an internal crisis, since a majority of its members did not want to continue playing the role of permanent minority. They thought that what they were actually doing was giving credence to the "democratic nature" of the official party. The PAN did not present a candidate. The other two registered parties, the PPS and the PARM, supported the PRI candidate, José López Portillo, who had been secretary of finance and not of interior, breaking once again the established pattern.

The only electoral opposition in 1976 was that of Valentín Campa, a candidate for the Mexican Communist party, which was not registered, and, therefore, votes for him were not taken into account. Formally, then, the official candidate was alone, and received 94 percent of the vote, an embarrassingly high percentage, which diminished even more the significance and credibility of the electoral process, since such a situation had not happened in Mexico since Obregón's election. By 1976, the supposedly pluralistic and democratic nature of the Mexican system was being questioned, even in its formal aspects. Signs were apparent everywhere of the authoritarian nature of the regime and the discourage-