

* *the economy after meltdown:* Mexico is far from monolithic, its economy characterized by very uneven rates of development. The peso crisis and the actions which contributed to it had significant winners and losers, the implementation of the NAFTA has benefited the growth of significant sectors of export-oriented manufacturing while decimating other producers. Whether in the manipulation of massive privatization schemes or in the phenomenally risky and ultimately disastrous issue of *tesobonos* during the Salinas government, there were Mexican -- an often foreign -- investors who benefitted royally, while majority wages plummeted in value. From the point of view of the historians of Mexico's foreign debt, the 1994-95 crisis was something new on the global scene, full of portents for the future of the highly integrated global financial system. For the purposes of this paper, however, its importance is in demonstrating the chronically unequal effects of the policies implemented by the Salinas and presently the Zedillo governments together with the apparent inability of these policies to address and correct historic inequalities in Mexican society.

* *the marginalized 50%:* Mexico has been chronically subject to inequality and appears to have had a greater concentration of income sixty years after the revolution than it had in 1910. (Cornelius, Mexican..., p. 100) While poverty was reduced from 1963 to 1981, it increased between 1982 and 1992, with the proportion of the population classified as poor rising to 66%. Between 1979 and 1989 the incidence of severe malnutrition among rural children increased by 100 percent. Other indicators of persistent impoverishment included 46% rate of school drop-out in elementary education, and roughly 50 percent of dwellings lacking either piped water and sewer connections. Seventy percent of those classified as living in extreme poverty live in rural Mexico. By 1990 the percentage of people living below a mere subsistence level (equivalent to two official minimum salaries) ranged from 40 percent in Baja California to 80 percent in Chiapas. The effect of the economic crisis of the mid-nineties on an already poor population has not yet been adequately dealt with. The value of the official minimum salary has been reduced by more than 60% since the beginning of the decade.

* *the increase in generalized violence and insecurity:* As one community human rights centre described the local atmosphere: "Ultimately, for many people, the sense of insecurity is not so much the gangs of organized delinquents (drug-dealers, professional kidnapers, assaulting gangs), nor the impunity of high politicians, nor the corruption of the police, but the daily violence which hits the common citizen with greater frequency: house-breakings, physical aggression, assaults..."