

in comparison with its past heyday, Mexicans will likely continue to have a strong office of the president under a new system of governance.

Revolutionary nationalism. Long after the Revolution ended, it was customary to pay at least frequent lip service to the ideals of that watershed event. In this regard, Salinas made a definitive break with Mexico's revolutionary heritage. Revolutionary nationalism was officially replaced in 1992 by "social liberalism". Under the new official ideology, the country undertook a *rapprochement* with the United States, culminating in the signing of the North American Free Trade Agreement. Article 27 of the Constitution, which had enshrined Mexico's agrarian reform tradition, was reformed in 1992 in order to privatize communal land holdings, permit their sale, protect private property and promote private sector investment in agriculture. Under the new ideological rubric, the state took a clear back-seat to the market as the country's principal agent of development.

Social contract. Alongside the demise of revolutionary nationalism, the country's social contract has also eroded. Since the debt crisis of 1982, the public resources necessary for the PRI-government to keep its side of the bargain have sharply declined in comparison to the high-spending days of the Echeverría and López Portillo presidencies. Where once favoured under populism, labour and peasants have been hit hard by painful structural adjustment measures. Consequently, the social bases of state power have narrowed.

Corporatism. The corporatist institutional framework has also come under attack. Given the resistance of their leadership to economic reform, Salinas attempted to circumvent the traditional corporatist sectors and forge a new model of state-society relations which linked the president more directly with popular groups. The resulting social spending programme, the National Solidarity Programme (PRONASOL), became one of the cornerstones of the Salinas reform effort. As part of PRONASOL, some 250,000 local "Solidarity Committees" channelled federal funding into community development projects and served as the president's "ear to the ground".²⁰ On the other hand, Solidarity's other function must also be recognized: to serve as a compensatory programme meant to shield the poor from the harsh social impact of economic restructuring. Following the peso crisis, PRONASOL's efficacy as both a neo-corporatist instrument and a social buffer has waned thanks to fiscal austerity.

²⁰On the National Solidarity Programme, see Wayne A. Cornelius, Ann L. Craig and Jonathan Fox, eds., **Transforming State-Society Relations in Mexico: The National Solidarity Strategy** (La Jolla, CA.: Centre for U.S.-Mexican Studies, University of California, San Diego, 1994).