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William F. Foote is an Institute Fellow examining the economic substructure of Mexico.

Tourist Traps and Housing Flaps *The Unsettling Settlers of Monte Albán*

OAXACA, Oaxaca

May 30, 1996

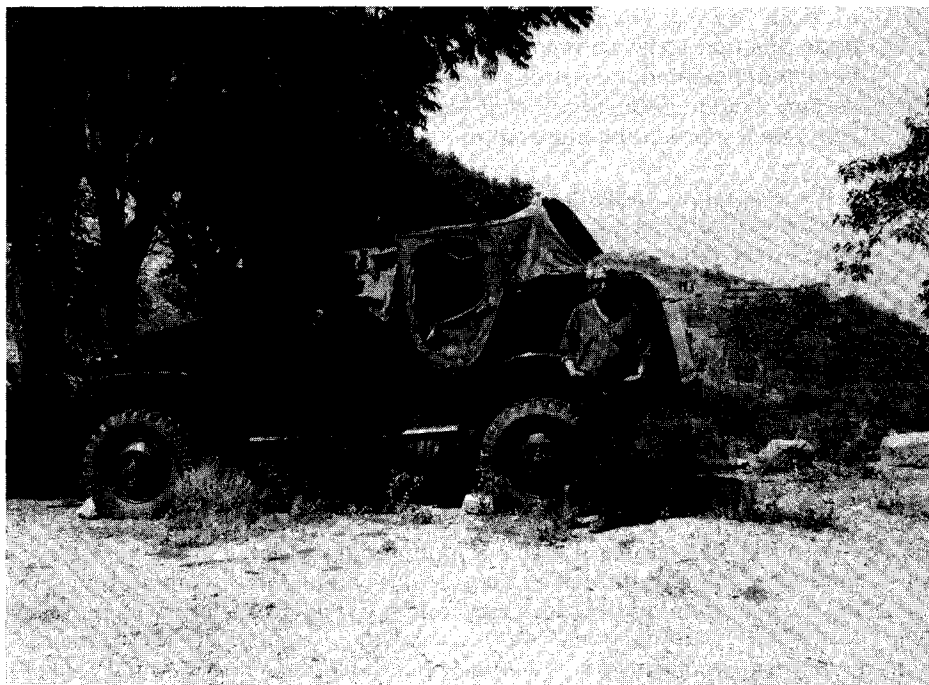
By William F. Foote

In the endless folds of the Sierra Madre, at a place called Monte Albán, Zapotec priests abandoned their sacred city of towering pyramids and commanding mountain views for unexplained reasons in 700 A.D.

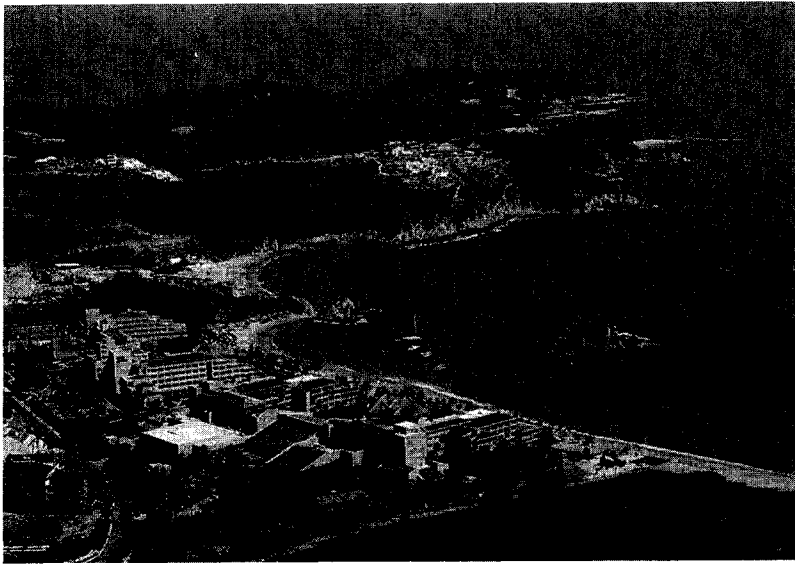
In 1931, a Mexican archeologist, Alfonso Caso, arrived looking for buried tombs and untold treasure. As the excavations began, he would drive his Dodge four-wheeler up the steep escarpment to the ruins on the leveled hilltop. Rattling along the road cut through dense ground cover that had concealed the site for centuries, Caso could not have known then what riches he would soon discover. And while his story has aged 65 years, the tale repeats itself to this day.

Today, however, the bounty Monte Albán offers is neither gold masks nor dancercarved stela, but tourism revenues. And the overgrowth that threatens again to enshroud the mountain's wealth is neither cacti nor trees, but the flimsy houses of irregular human settlements.

"The shanties are choking the protected zone," said Arturo Libero, head archeologist at Monte Albán for the *Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia* — National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH). "With every new invasion we lose important archeological evidence. Short of demolishing the houses, we will have no way



Arturo Libero leaning against the antique four-wheeler of Alfonso Caso, who began formal excavations of Monte Albán in 1931.



Less beach, more culture: One of the bays of Huatulco, Mexico's latest mega-beach resort located on the Pacific coast of the state of Oaxaca

of knowing what kind of pre-Hispanic settlement existed there."

Statements like these worry Mexico's post-Hispanic leaders. With little else to brag about, President Ernesto Zedillo and company are hailing the record profits of the tourism industry in 1995. Avoiding the crippling effects of economic crisis last year, Mexico's principal vacation spots generated U.S.\$30 billion (just behind the oil and manufacturing sectors), playing host to a record 20 million tourists.

True, most visitors came for the sea and sun, not archeology. Oceanside megadevelopments like Cancun, Puerto Vallarta and Acapulco remain the backbone of Mexican tourism. In recent years, however, as the trade-offs that come with commercially successful — but environmentally disastrous — beach resorts have become evident, industry officials have begun to campaign for less beach and more culture.

It's about time. In the past 25 years, huge beach resorts have gobbled up miles of Mexico's coastline, paved over thousands of acres of sensitive wetlands, obliterated sand dunes and forced fish and vacationers alike to swim at their own risk. Consider Acapulco, the Pearl of the Mexican Pacific. It sorely lacks the basic urban infrastructure needed to absorb some 500,000 tourists that visit annually. Its famed cliff divers leap one hundred feet into a once sparkling-clean bay now contaminated by the untreated waste waters of dozens of high-rise beach hotels.

To offset the excesses of such hot spots, programs are underway to reinvent Mexico's tourist fare, highlighting the country's cultural, historical, and archeological

sites. On all three fronts, the city of Oaxaca has few rivals in Mexico or Latin America. Hence the desire to repeat Alfonso Caso's example, untapping the hidden treasures of Monte Albán all over again. Indeed, such archeological attractions represent one ingredient in a new cultural cuisine designed to make Mexico wealthy *and* healthy. But there's one problem: this city appears to be swallowing the menu.

OAXACA'S CHAOTIC EXPANSION

With a song that predates the ruins of Monte Albán by a few million years, countless cicadas croaked from the trees that line the rim of the flattened hilltop. Not far from its edge stands the one-story office that Alfonso Caso built in the thirties. Renovated last year, its front porch sits 400 meters above the valley floor, nine kilometers west of

Oaxaca. On a recent misty morning, I waited there for Libero to arrive, just yards from the stone terraces of the Ball Court where Zapotec athletes once competed for their lives. Far beneath me, a busload of the modern inhabitants of Monte Albán descended a dusty road between ramshackle buildings hugging the foot of the mountain.

"In Mexico and across the world," said Libero, "archeologists study what happened thousands of years ago, but most haven't a clue about contemporary issues that come to bear on those physical remains."

Libero has worked with INAH for 32 years. He takes pride in being an archeologist from the Third World, since the most important centers for mankind's ancient cultures happen to be located in developing countries: Egypt, India, Peru, Greece, Mexico. Hence the need for himself and his colleagues to educate themselves about the modern problems of economic underdevelopment. Otherwise, Libero warned, "the present may overrun the past."

In the city of Oaxaca, that danger stems from two related problems: demographic explosion and unplanned urban expansion. In a world of lightning change where historic trends are measured in decades and not centuries, Oaxaca began to transcend its original limits 30 years ago. For much of this century (1900-1960), local population had held steady at about 40,000. Since the seventies, however, that figure has jumped to nearly 450,000.¹

The basic story repeats itself across Mexico (and Latin America). Pushed by rural poverty and official neglect of the countryside, pulled by the hope of a better life in

1. The National Statistics Institute (INEGI) claims the city of Oaxaca has 244,727 inhabitants, according to its 1995 census. However, the general consensus amid local academics and community activists places that figure at around 450,000.



The glory that was the Zapotecs: A panoramic view of the ruins of Monte Albán

the cities, millions of people have joined the swelling urban slums. Consequently, the combined population of Mexico's largest 25 cities increased from 17 percent of the country's total population in 1940 to 39 percent in 1980.²

Where do all the newcomers live? Good question. From the outset, the existing housing stock could not cope. Generalized poverty, a monopolized land market and a building industry geared toward formal construction combined to place a 'proper' house out of most poor people's reach. So Mexicans took the next logical step, building homemade houses wherever humanly possible. More often than not, that implied the semi-legal, and sometimes totally illegal, occupation of rural land contiguous to urban areas; *i.e.*, in the boondocks.

On the one hand, changing technology made this possible: first, the advent of mass transportation (*e.g.*, public buses); second, the introduction of better building materials (*e.g.*, bricks, concrete blocks, new kinds of roofing). Over time, suburban commuting from so-called "self-help" neighborhoods on the outskirts of town became a way of life for more than half of the population of Mexico's cities.³

On the other hand, the government turned a blind eye. After all, self-help neighborhoods represented a means by which the poor could be accommodated at little cost to the state. Hence, local authorities have tended to ignore planning regulations and changed their attitude toward informal methods of land occupation. In most cases, in fact, city officials have not only

tolerated illegal land invasions, but encouraged the clandestine settlements through the gradual introduction of infrastructure and services — usually in exchange for votes.

"In the city of Oaxaca," explained local environmentalist Gustavo Esteva, "our state governors always wanted to prohibit irregular settlements. Every so often they would take action — mostly symbolic — by demolishing shanties, violently evicting land invaders. However, if we analyze even the most repressive administrations over the past 30 years, not one managed to slow the inevitable march of the city."

You wouldn't know it sitting in the *zócalo* (main square). A stroll through old downtown reveals an orderly grid pattern built at the center of a verdant river valley alongside the state's largest waterway, the Rio Atoyac. Spanish facades and cobblestone streets are mostly intact. According to Esteva, who runs the *Comisión Oaxaqueña de Defensa Ecológica* — Oaxacan Commission of Ecological Defense — the architectural integrity of the colonial district has been jealously guarded by the city's conservative elite.

As far back as the 1940s, when rural immigrants began to trickle in, the town elders took great pains to force them out of the valley. With few options available, the settlers occupied the surrounding mountain slopes. "The fruits of that segregation effort are evident," said Esteva, gesturing toward his typical downtown offices: green limestone courtyard, trickling fountain, thick wooden doors, purple bougainvillea. "But as for our urban outback," he added, "that's another world."

2. Alan Gilbert and Ann Varley, "From Renting to Self-Help Ownership? Residential Tenure in Urban Mexico since 1940," in Alan Gilbert (ed.), *Housing and Land in Urban Mexico*, (Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies, U.C. San Diego) 1989, p.16.

3. Alan Gilbert, *The Latin American City*, (Latin American Bureau) 1994, pp. 28 and 80.



The ex-Convent of Santo Domingo, part of Oaxaca's colonial heritage that city elders have guarded jealously

In the 1980s, Oaxaca's hillside settlements proliferated. Among other things, a new governor adopted a stance that favored the consolidation of these marginal communities. "For once, the authorities didn't consider the settlers to be enemies," said Laura Irene, a sociology professor at the University of Oaxaca who spends much of her time interviewing people in low-income neighborhoods.

From the start, she explained, Governor Heladio Ramirez Lopez (1986-1992) acknowledged his administration's inability to attend to these marginalized groups. Instead of antagonizing the settlers as his predecessors had, he helped them to help themselves — namely, by regularizing and recognizing land claims as well as by introducing basic services. "Without fear of expulsion," Irene concluded, "many people could begin to invest in their homes and surroundings."

How else might settlers improve their living conditions? Well, if one must reside on a steep mountainside, how about a view? Maria Ramirez Santiago, 47, has one. Her self-help home — corrugated tin roof, mud brick walls, two rooms, poured cement floors — is perched in the city's precipitous outskirts. In 1976, recently married, she moved there from San Juan, a tiny rural town. Her husband built on an elevated spot in a sparsely-polluted ravine that would later become the neighborhood of *Vista Hermosa* (Beautiful View). "It was nice being high up," Ramirez remembered thinking: "quieter, cleaner air, a better view of the city."

In the past 18 years, like most of Oaxaca's self-help

communities, *Vista Hermosa* has filled with neighbors, noises and smells. Meanwhile, Ramirez has raised three daughters; lost her husband; secured services like electricity, water, garbage collection; and, watched in horror as the view across the gully turned into a police shooting range.

"They come every Sunday and fire into the mountainside," Ramirez said, exasperated. "I hate it." Asked where she would rather live, she pointed across the valley toward a less populated, more tranquil place: the slopes of Monte Albán.

And so it goes. In a life of poverty that offers few aesthetic choices, Oaxaca's urban poor are no different from the rest: they appreciate scenic vistas. And around here, the best one is at Monte Albán, hands down. Hence the number of houses up?

"It's a gorgeous place, no question, and it's close to downtown," said Bricio Arturo Espinosa, a private tourism consultant. "All the more reason," he emphasized, "for INAH to have protected the sacred city years ago. With a coherent excavation plan, they could have avoided this mess."

Back at the ruins, Libero admitted to a certain lack of vision on INAH's part. Qualifying that view, however, he argued that the original excavators could not have imagined the need to protect the site from eventual urban expansion. "We're nine kilometers from downtown Oaxaca," he stated. "Sixty years ago, Alfonso Caso wouldn't

have dreamed the city might one day reach here."

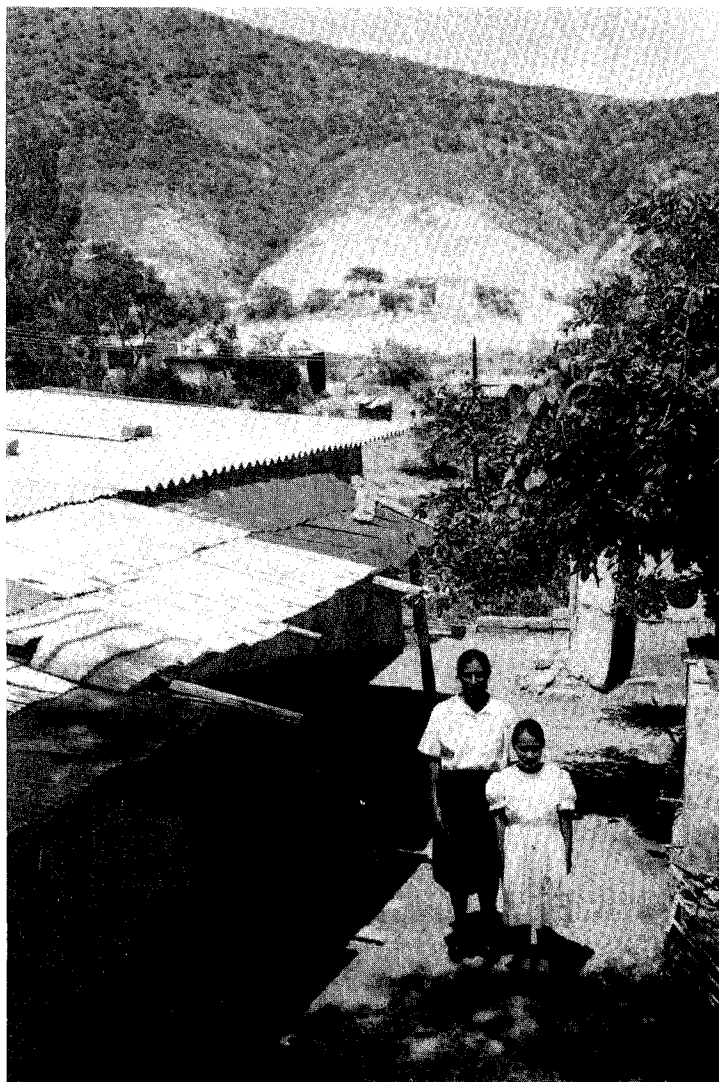
As I left Monte Albán *en route* to Oaxaca, the pyramids gave way to dusty clusters of cacti. At the base of the mountain, an ugly blue housing project of INFONAVIT (low-income housing fund) emerged. I followed a road sign back up toward the town of San Juanito. Re-entering the archeological zone, I drove south, snaking along the deforested waist of the mountain. Rounding an arroyo, I pulled over to observe a half dozen families shoveling earth at a steep incline, leveling tiers on which to build plywood houses. Just down from them, several for-sale signs quoted the going lot price: 12,240 pesos, or 1,632 U.S. dollars. Not bad for a piece of land that UNESCO considers to be a Patrimony of World Humanity.

SPECIAL PROJECT MONTE ALBÁN '92-'94

In October 1992, as part of a larger campaign to bolster Mexico's tourism industry, former President Carlos Salinas de Gortari inaugurated a dozen programs to renovate the country's major pre-Hispanic ruins. Establishing the National Archeological Fund, the federal government allocated some U.S.\$4 million to Special Project Monte Albán 1992-94. Under the aegis of INAH and the guidance of U.S. archeologist Marcus Winter, the site underwent great changes: major excavations; the construction of a new museum; the building of a modern access road from the city of Oaxaca; and — for the first time ever — the establishment by presidential decree of a federally-protected archeological zone.

It was an ambitious program — too ambitious, in hindsight. Granted, the first three projects came to fruition. An army of 300 archeologists excavated, mapped and documented the ruins. A crush of construction workers built a large on-site museum, which drew fierce criticism for being unnecessary and wildly extravagant. Less controversial, a paved highway replaced a slow, dangerous access road. Taken as a whole, these were necessary improvements at best, fairly standard pork-barrel investments at worst. Indeed, they would probably have gone unnoticed had the projects not drawn unprecedented funding and attention away from the only problem that could not wait: the climbing shanties.

"The Special Project was misguided," acknowledged Libero, who assumed control of the archeological zone from Marcus Winter in 1994. Inside his office, he illustrated on a map exactly how far the settlements had crept in three years. At present, an estimated 12 communities have illegal squatters inside the protected zone. "Frankly, with the money available then," said Li-



Maria Ramirez Santiago standing with her daughter beside their self-help house in Vista Hermosa (Beautiful View). In the background, the police shooting range occupies the white patch on the mountainside.

bero, "I would have hired fewer archeologists and more lawyers and sociologists to resolve the conflicts once and for all."

What exactly are the conflicts? Basically, the communities abutting Monte Albán still legally own much of the 2,007 hectares of land inside the archeological zone. With the declaration of the protected area, they lost the right to settle there, yet maintained the right to plant crops. Nevertheless, the locals feel insecure, suspecting that with the feds around, they will eventually lose all claims to the protected land. Hence, their reliance on a well-tested device for safeguarding disputed land in Mexico: pitching houses. The strategy is not based on laws, but logic: few governments are willing to pay the political price for demolishing private homes.

"By building houses, you see," Libero explained, "they have tried to turn the issue into a moral one." In other words, instead of being cast as desecrators of

Mexico's cultural patrimony, Monte Albán's settlers can assume the role of victimized defenders of hearth and home from a hostile government. To fight this 'moral' battle, moreover, several of the communities have allied themselves with Mexico's most radical peasant organizations, called *grupos de choque* (attack groups).

"I have detected the presence of *Antorcha Campesina* (Torch of the Peasants) in several communities," said Libero, who complained that their involvement undermines all efforts toward dialogue. "They send their wives to scream at us, to whip up opposition in the neighborhood. It makes things very difficult."

Consider the failed attempts to implement a program called *Muralla Verde* (Green Wall). Planting trees to delineate the protected zone border, INAH personnel would return the next morning to find that the seedlings had been mysteriously uprooted. In addition, irate settlers allegedly chased away American graduate students undertaking topographical studies on the perimeter of Monte Albán last year.

Successful border inspection, however, has uncovered an odd fact: most irregular houses are empty. So claimed Maria de la Paz Padilla, a state-employed agronomist who has visited many of the settlements. "They're just there to secure land claims," said De la Paz, who manages relationships with all *ejidal* (communal) landholders within the city limits of Oaxaca on behalf of the Procuraduría Agraria (farm support agency that addresses

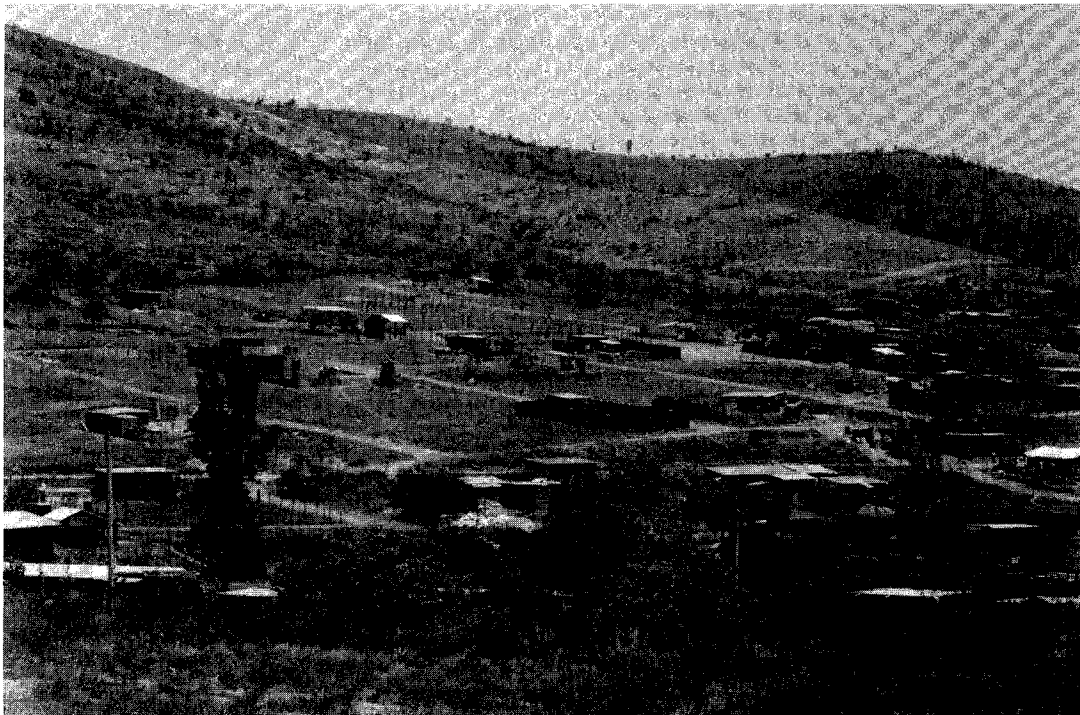
land-tenure disputes, among other things).

De la Paz, which means "of the peace," has spent much of the last year trying to find just that at Monte Albán. At present, however, she is still denied access to several communities, so tense is the situation. What really irks her, though, is that it all could have been avoided.

"The INAH should have expropriated the land from the beginning," she argued. In order to do that, she believes the Special Project funds could have gone toward indemnifying the settlers for their land, instead of financing the construction of a superfluous museum.

"It was a typical story," the official continued. "A big, centralized institution descends upon Oaxaca, carries out its study and issues a decree without the slightest coordination with our state and municipal authorities. Three years later, we're still picking up the pieces."

For a panoramic view of Monte Albán's modern points of conflict, I scaled the western staircase of Mound J in the Great Plaza. The upward climb offered relevant perspective as I passed the famous stela depicting brutal mutilations of captives by the ancient Zapotecs. At the top, the afternoon rain clouds threatened. Starting my descent, I heard a strange voice. Beside me, a stone-carved warrior writhed in agony. Peering downward, I spotted the *campesino* far below, standing beside a wobbly-kneed donkey, shouting into the wind: "Chu want to buy authentic treasure?"



Securing land claims on the slopes of Monte Albán. Inside the protected archeological zone, dirt roads form a grid pattern drawing lot lines for the imminent and illegal sale of land.



Phony artifacts vendor. Alvaro Jimenez and his mule, Catrine, stand on the edge of the flattened hilltop of Monte Albán.

Come down, I sell you real artifacts."

Alvaro Jimenez and his mule, Catrine, live in the town of Arrasola, which straddles the western slope of the archeological zone. As a school boy, Jimenez remembers finding pre-Columbian figurines and clay shards in his backyard. As a young man and construction worker, he uncovered more while digging foundations for houses. At 52, he now works as one of 40 people permitted by INAH to sell phony Zapotec stuff inside the ruins. He nearly jumped when I told him Dr. Libero himself has prohibited such vendors from claiming to sell authentic goods.

"I'm sorry," he said emphatically. "I didn't know you knew." Asked whether he would partake in real-life art smuggling, he predictably said no. The explanation that followed, however, defied all pretense. "I am a Zapotec. These were my people who built these monuments — *my* people." Whilst speaking, he pivoted around like a matador, slowly surveying the mountains, the ruins, smelling the wind. Before he and Catrine departed, disappearing over the edge of the plateau to gather firewood, I promised not to tell Libero anything.

Following that encounter, two things stuck in my mind. Not only did Jimenez show a deep respect for and appreciation of Monte Albán, he also did not bristle at the mention of INAH, the protected zone, or the federal government. Why? Because he benefits directly from the tourist trade at the archeological site, as do 39 other men and women who have permits to sell fake artifacts. But what about the rest?

"Due to the economic crisis," said De la Paz, "the set-

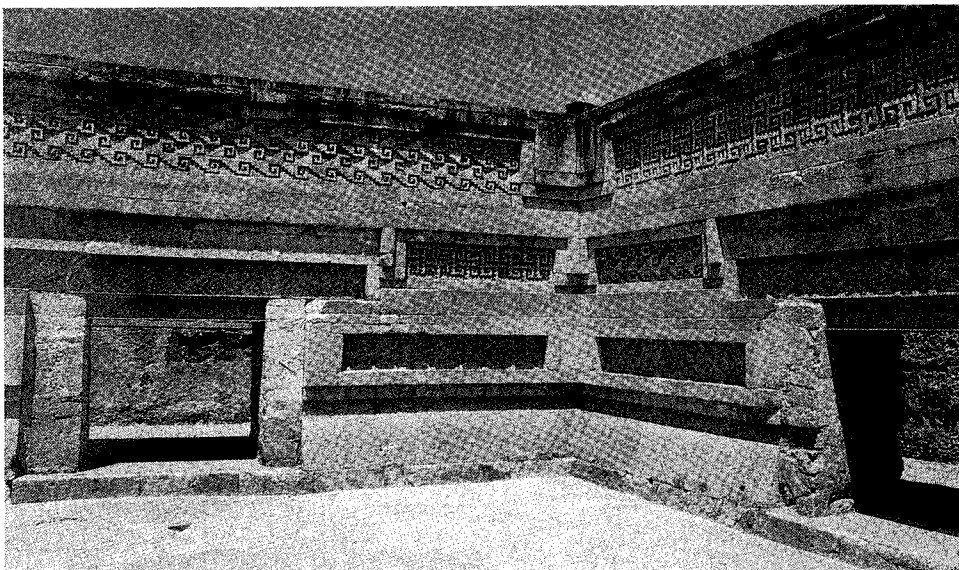
tlers find it hard to appreciate anything about Monte Albán other than its rich tourists."

With little success, she has participated in official campaigns to try to sensitize local residents — most of whom are of Zapotec descent — to the cultural importance of the ruins. During those meetings, however, something else has become evident. The community leaders already know how to realize the value of their cultural heritage at Monte Albán: through the construction of a permanent crafts market at the heart of the protected zone. In fact, they are prepared to help freeze the growth of irregular human settlements in exchange for access to the tourists in the form of guaranteed stalls beside the pyramids.

Problem is, INAH would like nothing less. "No way, not while I'm here," stated Libero. "Too many sites have already suffered that fate in Mexico. It would be a disaster, the end of Monte Albán as we know it."

HOW TO RUIN YOUR RUINS: MITLA

Entering the town of Mitla, located about 45 minutes due east of Oaxaca, one can't help but notice the mescal for sale on nearly every street corner: clay containers shaped and painted into topless Zapotec women. In countless other ragtag shacks, these bawdy bottles join pornographic whistles and Guatemalan imports to compete with mostly machine-made local rugs and blouses. Preying on sightseers hauled here every day by smoky buses, the vendors set up just inches from the main attraction. So congested are their stalls, one can easily walk past Oaxaca's second most important archeological site and never know it.



Geometric designs adorning the walls of the Zapotec ruins at Mitla

Since the beginning, the ruins of Monte Albán and Mitla have been opposites. While the former scrapes the sky from a mountain plateau, the latter lies flat in a valley. While the Zapotec kings worshipped life (save for a few sacrifices) at Monte Albán, Mitla housed a cult of death. Even the graceful lines of Monte Albán's stone-carved dancers contrast with Mitla's intricate geometric designs. Indeed, their only real similarity seems to be a resistance to the passage of time.

Today, that inverse relationship lives on. Consider the markets. Monte Albán's modern authorities refuse to build one on-site to prevent vendors from overrunning the ruins. Meanwhile, at Mitla, the same officials *built* a permanent market in order to draw the sellers away from the ruins.

In 1983, INAH constructed an arts-and-crafts shopping center located 60 yards from the ruins. Window-

less and stuffy, the market nevertheless promised local vendors continued access to tourists — the bus parking lot abuts the building — while improving the site's shabby appearance. Aware that their stands were ugly and disrespectful of the grandeur of Mitla, the vendors agreed to relocate. Soon after, however, sales dropped and the market miraculously burned down.

"They organized the accident," said Libero with disgust.

Restored in 1984, the market has since remained largely empty. Today, Mitla is encircled by about twice as many vendors, many of whom have one stall inside the shopping center and another flush against the ruins. For the merchants, who sell the same low-quality products, proximity to the monument and its tourists affords the only comparative advantage. Hence the increasingly aggressive and dishonest market environment,



Ragtag stalls crowding the road into Mitla

according to Libero, who concluded sardonically: "Mitla offers us lesson on how to turn history into hell."

Significantly, Mitla's problems with tacky surroundings are shared by many of Mexico's principal archeological sites. In recent years, ramshackle cities, sometimes larger than the pre-Hispanic ruins themselves, have sprung up at Tulum and Chichen Itzá (Mayan ruins in the Yucatan Peninsula), Teotihuacan (Aztec pyramids northeast of Mexico City), and, of course, Mitla.

In all cases, the threat of the present overrunning the past underscores a basic question for developing countries that are rich in history but poor in resources: how do you strike a balance between revering the past, and using it to turn profits? To date, the answer has eluded Mexico. For people like Libero, in charge of dignifying the historic sites, that must change.

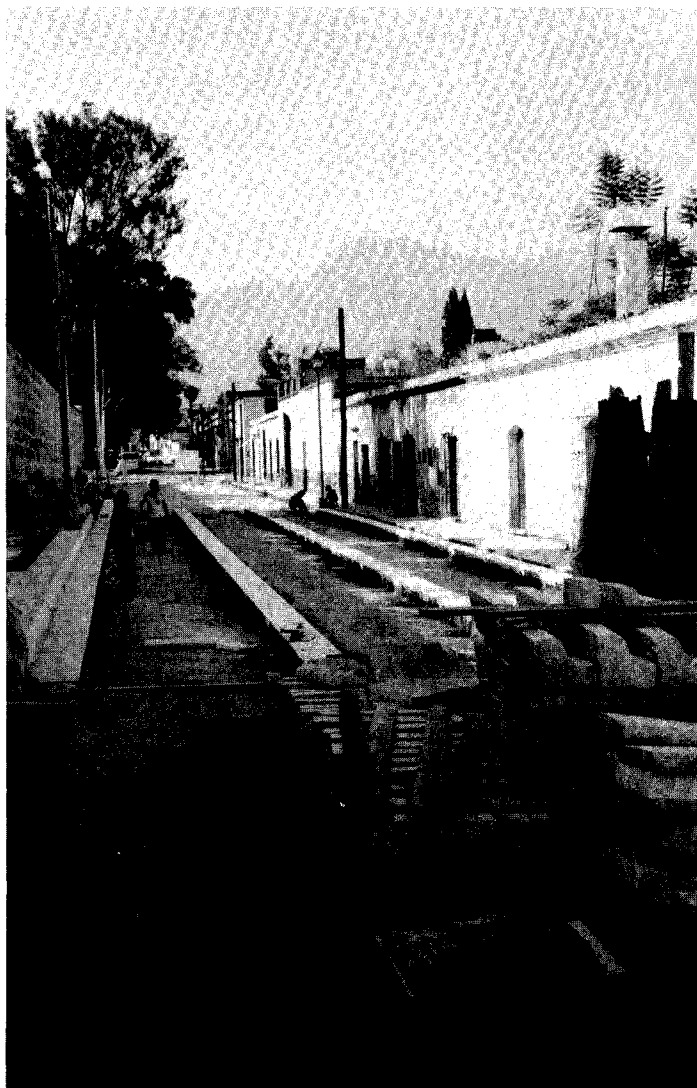
For people like Jorge Enrique, however, a 29-year-old Mitla street vendor, hawking history may not be pretty but it's a living. "You have to be pragmatic," he said, rocking his tiny daughter to sleep inside a cement stall located across the street from the ruins. Enrique, who spent two years flipping burgers in L.A., wore a Chicago Bulls baseball cap, dark sunglasses and a goatee. In the piles beside him, bright colors of Guatemalan vests clashed with those of wool carpets and 'I Love Mitla' bumper stickers. Tiring of my questions, Enrique said, "To heck with the past, man," thrusting his hand forward like a U.S. rap singer. "We're poor here, understand. I'm tired of watching other people get ahead."

Statements like these find echo amid the irregular settlers of Monte Albán. As for building a Mitla-style market there, however, INAH's opposition remains unflappable. And as the shanties continue their upward march, the situation may turn ugly.

"If we don't take concrete measures this year — and I'm not referring to building a market — circumstances may spin out of control," warned Libero. "And when negotiations fail, drastic actions will follow." Asked what that meant, the archeologist predicted the physical expulsion and relocation of settlers followed by a demolition of the illegal settlements. "Unfortunately," Libero concluded, "this could spark conflicts that may damage the city's entire tourism industry."

PERMANENT FESTIVAL OF WORLD PEACE

"Lest we forget, there's more to Oaxaca than Monte Albán," asserted the director of Oaxaca's Municipal Tourism Office. Jose Gil Calzadiaz Corona, a heavyset

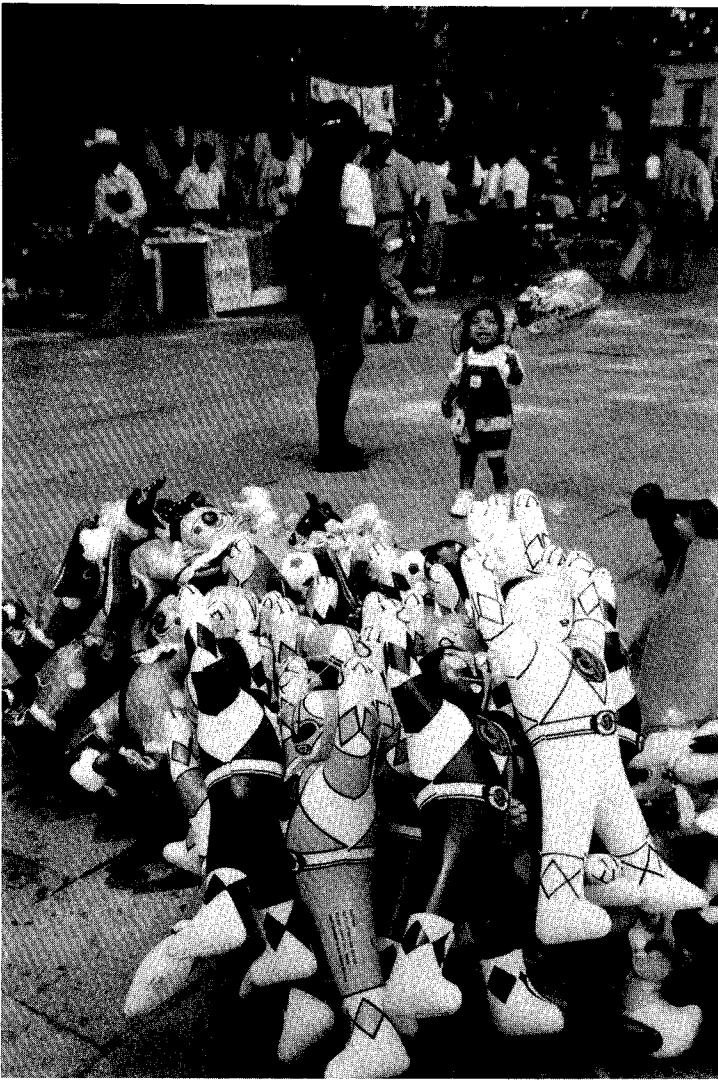


Colonial restorations: Laying new cobblestone streets in Oaxaca's historic district

man of Spanish descent, thinks pre-Hispanic ruins are great, but so are restored convents, quality restaurants and better hotels. "Our city survives on tourism," he said. "But if we wrap all our assets into one neat package, Oaxaca could thrive on tourism."

As head wrapper, Calzadiaz gushed with optimism. Acknowledging the looming problems at Monte Albán, he reminded that they go unnoticed by the average tourist. More importantly, the new P.A.N. (center-right party) mayor has prioritized the restoration of the historic center. On a daily basis, Calzadiaz oversees that aesthetic overhaul: the extension of a central pedestrian walkway; the restoration of cobblestone streets and the original colors of colonial facades; the burying of telephone and electricity lines; the tight regulation of street vendors.

"We must get rid of the imported junk: the plastic balloons, the Barbie Dolls, the Central American textiles," he stressed. "For that purpose, we have restricted street



Plastic balloons and other unwanted imports for sale in the zócalo

sales to regional products only, during specific seasons, on limited days of the week."

Meanwhile, Calzadiaz frequents the international tourism fairs. But he knows he cannot change the traditional view of Mexico as beaches and sun overnight. Instead, he tries to convince US and European travel agents to offer beach resort packages that stop two or three nights in this city *en route* to the seaside megaresorts. "I've already succeeded with chartered flights from Berlin and Houston destined for Huatulco [megaresort on Oaxaca's Pacific coast]," he boasted, visibly proud of himself. "Once those tourists see our cultural, historical and archeological treasures, many will return."

Bricio Arturo Espinosa disagrees. "That's a bunch of

hogwash," said the self-styled tourist consultant who suggested we meet for an interview at VIPS, an upscale fast-food burger joint. After ordering lavishly, he lambasted the current mayor for ignoring his advice offered in an unsolicited, 60-page tourism report. "I was almost nominated for Secretary of Tourism under the last administration, you know," he informed, winking at the waitress with his first course in hand.

"It's a good thing you called me," he said, "because I've been working on something very special lately, a most intriguing project — excuse me, waitress!" He ordered a second imported beer and continued. "I'm very impressed, overwhelmed really, by what I've come up with."

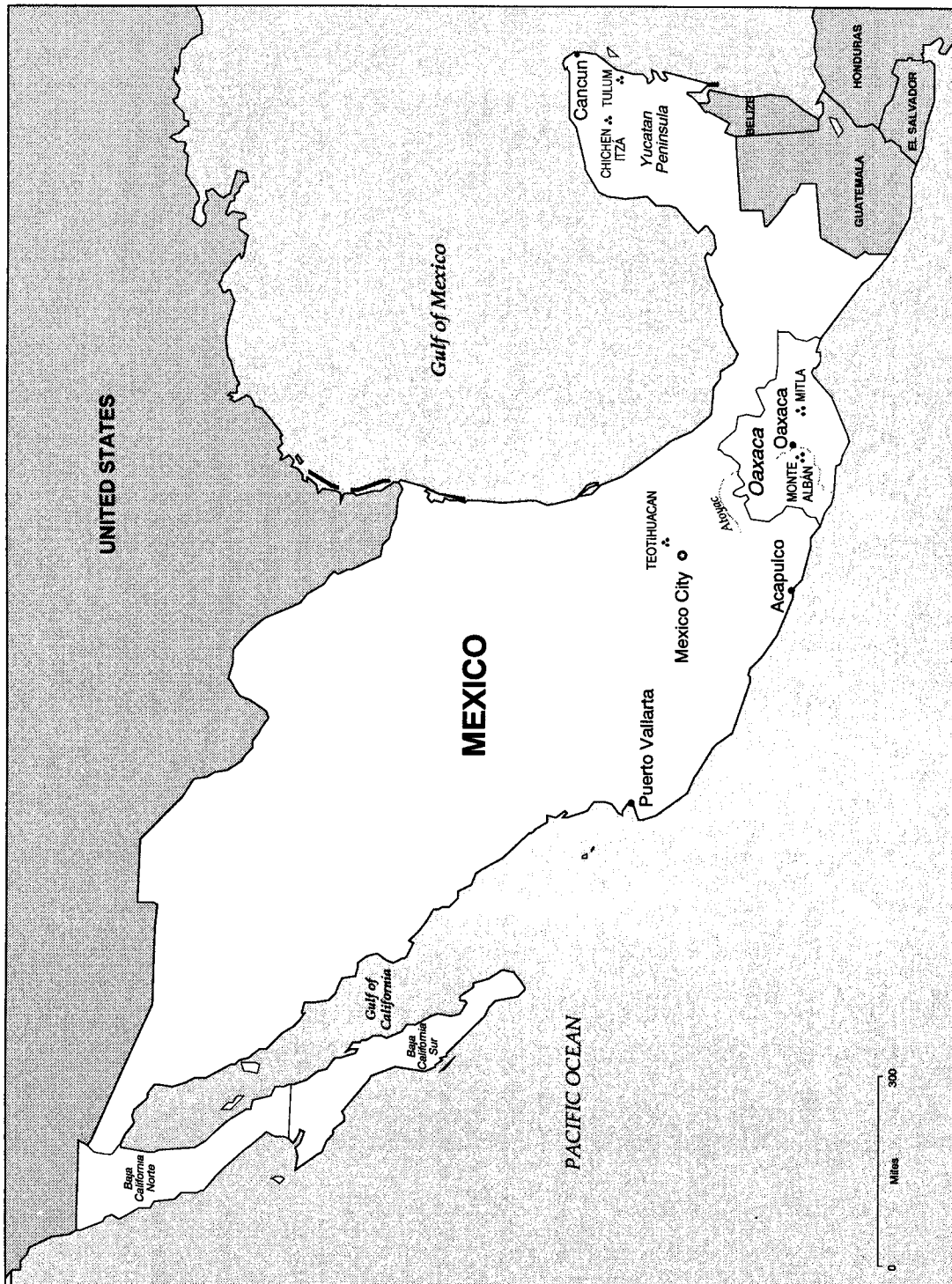
According to his plan, Oaxaca would be declared the capital of world peace. At his behest, representatives of all nations across the globe would gather here to participate in permanent discussions about war in the Middle East and Africa, ethnic cleansing, nuclear arms testing. "In sum," he explained, "Oaxaca would be transformed into a center for universal conflict resolution, a dialogue table for all of humanity's problems."

In return for this service, Espinosa reasoned, the city would be showered with foreign direct investment: peace embassies for each country; cultural exhibition centers; international restaurants representing all member nations; deluxe hotels. "So you're beginning to see," he said, munching on another plate of fries, "how original my idea is, and how the revenue generated could help resolve the problems you mentioned at Monte Albán, for example."

Not knowing quite what to say, I asked Espinosa how he planned to finance his project. "Well, actually, I was hoping that your foundation might help me out...?"

As he awaited my reply, I pictured Peter Martin in Hanover and the expression on his face as he opened my next expense report with a line item reading, Permanent Festival of Universal Peace. Then I imagined the academics, years from now, grappling to understand the fall of the Institute of Current World Affairs for unexplained reasons in 1996 A.D. I could see the archeologists there at 4 West Wheelock Street, removing the weeds that had concealed the ICWA house for centuries.

"No," I said politely. "We don't finance projects." Espinosa took it well, and handed me the bill. □



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Institute Fellows and their Activities

Adam Smith Albion. A former research associate at the Institute for EastWest Studies at Prague in the Czech Republic, Adam is spending two years studying and writing about Turkey and Central Asia, and their importance as actors the Middle East and the former Soviet bloc. A Harvard graduate (1988; History), Adam has completed the first year of a two-year M. Litt. degree in Russian/East European history and languages at Oxford University. [EUROPE/RUSSIA]

Christopher P. Ball. An economist, Chris Ball holds a B.A. from the University of Alabama in Huntsville and attended the 1992 International Summer School at the London School of Economics. He studied Hungarian for two years in Budapest while serving as Project Director for the Hungarian Atlantic Council. As an Institute Fellow, he is studying and writing about Hungarian minorities in the former Soviet-bloc nations of East and Central Europe. [EUROPE/RUSSIA]

William F. Foote Formerly a financial analyst with Lehman Brothers' Emerging Markets Group, Willy Foote is examining the economic substructure of Mexico and the impact of free-market reforms on Mexico's people, society and politics. Willy holds a Bachelor's degree from Yale University (history), a Master's from the London School of Economics (Development Economics; Latin America) and studied Basque history in San Sebastian, Spain. He carried out intensive Spanish-language studies in Guatemala in 1990 and then worked as a copy editor and

Reporter for the *Buenos Aires Herald* from 1990 to 1992. [THE AMERICAS]

Sharon Griffin. A feature writer and contributing columnist on African affairs at the *San Diego Union-Tribune*, Sharon is spending two years in southern Africa studying Zulu and the KwaZulu kingdom and writing about the role of nongovernmental organizations as fulfillment centers for national needs in developing countries where governments are still feeling their way toward effective administration. [sub-SAHARA]

John Harris. A would-be lawyer with an undergraduate degree in History from the University of Chicago, John reverted to international studies after a year of internship in the product-liability department of a Chicago law firm and took two years of post-graduate Russian at the University of Washington in Seattle. Based in Moscow during his fellowship, John is studying and writing about Russia's nascent political parties as they begin the difficult transition from identities based on the personalities of their leaders to positions based on national and international issues. [EUROPE/RUSSIA]

Pramila Jayapal. Born in India, Pramila left when she was four and went through primary and secondary education in Indonesia. She graduated from Georgetown University in 1986 and won an M.B.A. from the Kellogg School of Management in Evanston, Illinois in 1990. She has worked as a corporate analyst for PaineWebber and an accounts man-

ager for the world's leading producer of cardiac defibrillators, but most recently managed a \$7 million developing-country revolving-loan fund for the Program for Appropriate Technology in Health (PATH) in Seattle. Pramila is spending two years in India tracing her roots and studying social issues involving religion, the status of women, population and AIDS. [SOUTH ASIA]

John B. Robinson. A 1991 Harvard graduate with a certificate of proficiency from the Institute of Kiswahili in Zanzibar and a Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing from Brown University, he and his wife Delphine, a French oceanographer, are spending two years in Madagascar with their two young sons, Nicolas and Rowland. He will be writing about varied aspects of the island-nation's struggle to survive industrial and natural-resource exploitation and the effects of a rapidly swelling population. [sub-SAHARA]

Teresa C. Yates. A former member of the American Civil Liberties Union's national task force on the workplace, Teresa is spending two years in South Africa observing and reporting on the efforts of the Mandela government to reform the national land-tenure system. A Vassar graduate with a *juris doctor* from the University of Cincinnati College of Law, Teresa had an internship at the Centre for Applied Legal Studies in Johannesburg in 1991 and 1992, studying the feasibility of including social and economic rights in the new South African constitution. [sub-SAHARA]

Chosen on the basis of character, previous experience and promise, Institute Fellows are young professionals funded to spend a minimum of two years carrying out self-designed programs of study and writing outside the United States. The Fellows are required to report their findings and experiences from the field once a month. They can write on any subject, as formally or informally as they wish. The result is a unique form of reporting, analysis and periodical assessment of international events and issues.

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