

Presentation

THE MIGRATORY processes are consubstantial to the evolution of the social groups that have constituted our civilization throughout its history. The very distant African ancestors, taking advantage of the climatic bonanza occurred approximately one and a half million years ago, invaded the territories of present-day Europe and Asia, thus mitigating the collateral effects of the increase in population. Already in the times of modern man (*Homo sapiens sapiens*) some fifteen thousand years ago the occupation of the American continent took place, establishing the immigrant character of the first settlers of this region, a fact without doubt very instructive for those who recently sacralise xenophobia in those parts. Definitely, nomads and invaders, pilgrims, merchants and colonizers have built the world we know today.

The navigation trips of the late fifteenth century were the substrate of the first attempt at globalization of Western culture. They brought as a consequence (among others) that the heirs of the cradle of our specie were enslaved by the descendants of those who emigrated from it.

The conditions of underdevelopment generated by the colonization opened a gap between the centers of economic power and the periphery that has widened to the extent that technical scientific progress has increased. These own advances have recently led to the availability and cheapening of means of transport, giving rise to waves of migrants from the former colonies to the centers of power.

A very particular case is the one in North America. The dispossession of an immense area of northern Mexico by the United States, drew an imaginary line (although coercive) that divided areas with homogeneous cultures north and south of it. The deterioration of living conditions in Mexico, a consequence of unequal economic exchange, has generated a migratory phenomenon that is perceived more as a vindication of alienated rights than as a challenge to the *status quo*.

This issue of the magazine is dedicated to different facets of the Mexican migratory phenomenon. From the social representation of migrants in foreign communities to the perception of the event in the mass media are treated in these pages. Likewise, our guest editor interviews Raúl Hinojosa Ojeda, a professor at UCLA and a prominent scholar in immigration matters. Although there

is a prodigious literature on this subject, the works contained in this edition make it an essential contribution to the understanding of the migratory phenomenon with our northern neighbors. ■

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