

**MEXICO: STEPS TOWARD CHANGE**

# Mood is grim among the

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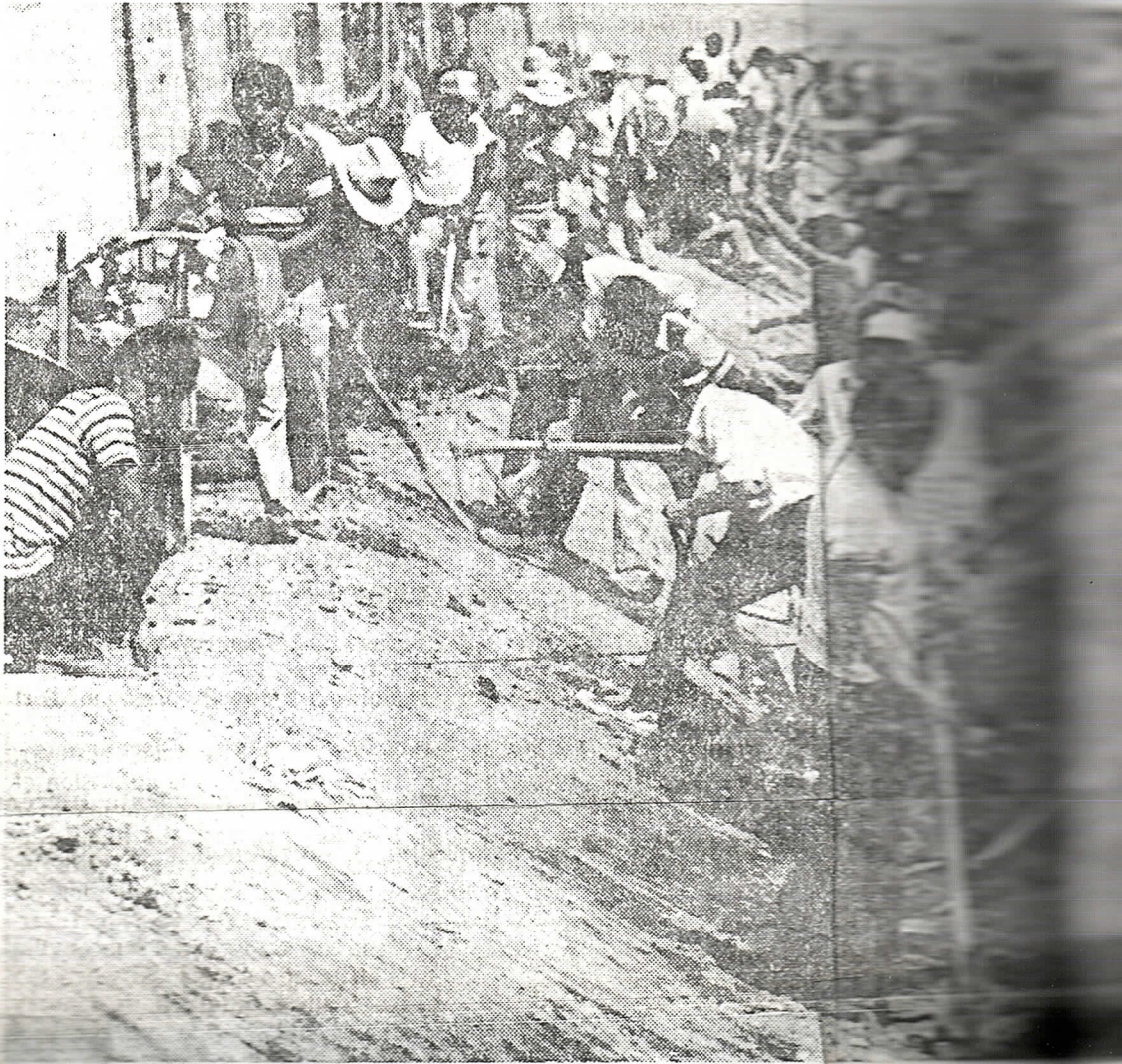
MEXICO CITY — In Mexico each year, the first day of May is a day reserved for Mexican workers. Arm in arm, more than a million members of Mexico's labor union parade in front of the National Palace, showing both their solidarity with the government and their numerical strength.

This year, midway through the celebration, as President Miguel de la Madrid and his Cabinet watched from the central balcony of the palace, two Molotov cocktails were tossed in de la Madrid's direction, one landing on a nearby balcony.

The firebombs, tossed by members of *Preparatoria Popular*, a radical student organization, burned three members of the president's security. Members of the student group were placed under arrest. But while no one was injured seriously, the incident underscored the generally grim mood of the 1.5 million Mexican workers who participated in the parade.

Solidarity signs were scrapped for protest signs. Insults were directed at de la Madrid. And for the remaining several hours of the march, the march became a sullen political exercise. The head of Mexico's largest union blamed "the CIA and international communists" for the violence.

In many ways, the May Day demonstration symbolizes the instability of Mexico's government over the past 15 years. For decades, large segments of Mexico's society have suffered from widespread poverty and political governments that characterized other Latin American nations. However, there have been some changes. Some of the most dramatic political events in Mexico's history were a coalition



Workers dig a sewer ditch in a Mexico City project.

of military leaders, workers and landlords, and over the years PRI has added to that coalition a network of intellectuals, public officials and bureaucrats, creating a foundation broad enough to include ideological representation from the right and the left.

### MIGUEL DE LA MADRID'S ECONOMIC PROGRAM

- Public spending cuts.
- Investment projects to boost hiring.
- War on corruption.
- More food production and importation.
- Tax changes to raise public revenues.
- Price hikes on public goods, services.

In the past several years, the nation's largest manufacturing plants, with more than 40,000 workers, have held demonstrations throughout the country against the election fraud.