

Mexico and the U.S.

Lorenzo Torrez is chairman, Chicano section; department of nationalities, Communist Party, USA.

By LORENZO TORREZ

The increasing struggle over the issues of undocumented workers in the United States and ever increasing U.S. multinational expansionism has brought forth many new questions having to do with the proper or improper relationships between the United States and Mexico.

One such issue is the debate over the U.S.-Mexican border. One school of thought (or lack of thought) argues that the border line should be done away with, that the various treaties between the two countries are meaningless; that people from either side do not respect them and that in reality it is only an imaginary line anyway.

The second line defends the existence of the border and points out that it serves as a buffer, however weak it may be, to hold Mexico's economy and social culture from being annexed totally by the U.S.

I am a partisan of the second school. I believe that the first school of thought is simplistic and irresponsible. When this line of thinking is espoused by those of us who have U.S. citizenship that puts us automatically in the camp of those who favor U.S. monopoly expansionism, U.S. oppression, and U.S. militarism. It is chauvinism of the worst kind and cannot be hidden under cover of revolutionary sloganeering.

Those who espouse these views and are of Mexican citizenship also place themselves in the camp of U.S. expansionism and, in fact, join with the Mexican bourgeoisie in the struggle against the Mexican working class.

Borders have everything to do with the sovereign rights of nations. They constitute a sharp line of demarcation and one should not treat the sovereign rights of a nation so lightly — based on

simple surface considerations.

Many nations have gone to war with each other over the question of borders. Furthermore, removing the border between Mexico and the United States would tend to subvert the sovereign rights of the weaker nation to the whims and wishes of the stronger nation — the United States.

One must ask, is this what these people want? Of course not! Then, what leads them to express and propagate such thinking?

The border has everything to do with the relationships and attitudes of the oppressor nation toward the oppressed nation. There are many instances related to the U.S.-Mexican border. In 1916 General John Pershing crossed the border at Columbus, New Mexico, and pursued the Pancho Villa forces all over northern Mexico. In 1906, the Arizona National Guard crossed the border at Nogales, Arizona, to help put down a strike of copper miners for the eight-hour day in Cananea, Sonora, Mexico.

In the war of annexation (1846-1848) the U.S. armed forces occupied Mexico City. In addition to the annexed states, which we know now as Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, California and Colorado, the U.S. negotiators tried to annex the Mexican states of Tamaulipas, Coahuila, Chihuahua, and Sonora.

These are a few of the more glaring examples of U.S. expansionism but there are many others.

The rich coastal valleys of north-west Mexico supplies over half of the winter vegetables consumed annually in the United States. The tomato crop alone rivals that of Florida.

A combination of U.S. agribusiness and rich Mexican bourgeoisie is in full control of this market, eating up the ejidos (farmlands) that were distributed to small farmers as a result of the 1910 revolution.

"Maquiladoras" are U.S. factories which enjoy various tax breaks from the Mexican government. These fac-

(OVER)

— the border issue



LORENZO TORREZ

tories utilize Mexico's source of cheap labor power. They produce electronic equipment, shoes, clothing, toys and many other gadgets for U.S. consumption. It is reported that some of these factories pay as little as 50 cents per hour. Women constitute the largest number of employees and they are exploited to the hilt by these U.S. multi-national corporations.

The New York Times has reported that the Lopez Portillo administration has accepted the plan which Carter has proposed for all Latin America — that the World Monetary Fund will lay down the rules for Mexico's economic planning. The plan is a plan for economic austerity, for less government spending on social programs and a wage cut for workers.

Such are the consequences of U.S. multi-national expansionism. Mexican basic industry presents the same basic picture. Industrial workers,

farm workers, and peasants are driven to the urban cities of the United States in search of jobs. Among those remaining in Mexico it is estimated that 50 percent are unemployed.

What motivates those Chicanos who espouse elimination of the border? Basically, it is bourgeois nationalism. They envision the southwest section of the United States as a separate nation supposedly under socialism. Not only that, but they also see themselves at the helm (in power) in the new nation. This view is quite typical of bourgeois nationalists.

The reason these people advocate elimination of the present border is because they perceive a new border sometime in the future in what used to be the border lines of the already annexed states.

But the question to be asked is, will the U.S. working class accept such a solution? Will it stand still while this new nation is carved out? No, of course not.

Thus the solution must be found within the framework of a working class solution. It must be found by the working classes of both nations within their own present borders. One should not attempt solutions which will cause new problems or new adventurous provocations. Look at what has happened in the Middle East. Is this the solution we are looking for? Above all, one must have full confidence in the working class.

To argue on the basis of so-called meaningless treaties, and imaginary lines is to argue upon the quicksand of bourgeois ideology. That ideology is being quickly replaced by workers' respect for each other's sovereignty and by working class international solidarity.

It is being replaced by unity against a dying, though yet very strong, capitalist system. It is being replaced by unity against opportunistic individuals who dream of power and control. It is being replaced by a struggle against national chauvinism.