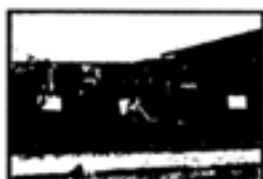
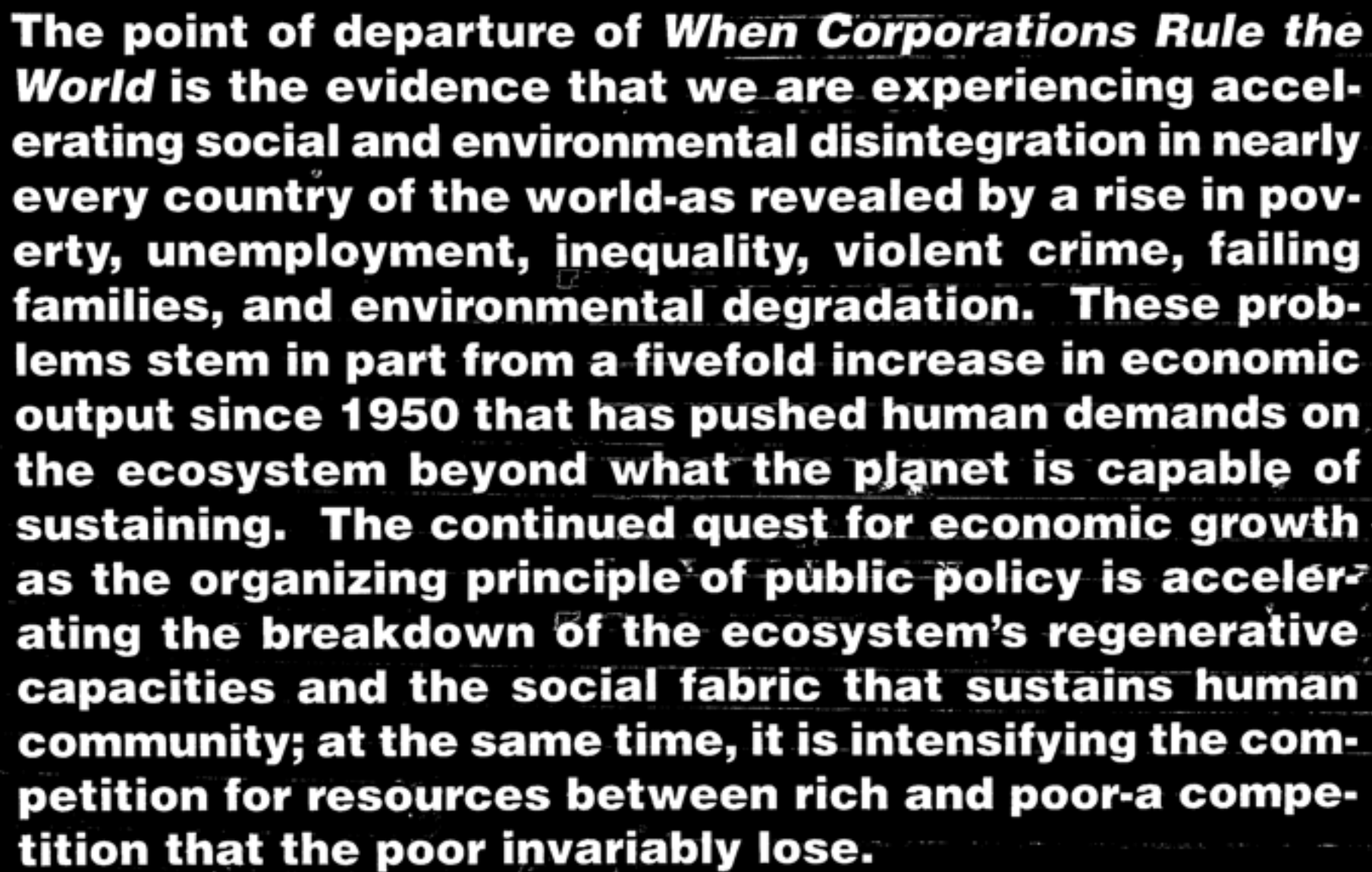




My first cross-border visit to a labor struggle was in 1981.

Where: Somewhere in Tijuana.
When: Some day in March.
Why: Curiosity.
Who: Some workers.
What: Some metal working plant
by some union over some issues.
How: Friends of a friend.





The point of departure of *When Corporations Rule the World* is the evidence that we are experiencing accelerating social and environmental disintegration in nearly every country of the world-as revealed by a rise in poverty, unemployment, inequality, violent crime, failing families, and environmental degradation. These problems stem in part from a fivefold increase in economic output since 1950 that has pushed human demands on the ecosystem beyond what the planet is capable of sustaining. The continued quest for economic growth as the organizing principle of public policy is accelerating the breakdown of the ecosystem's regenerative capacities and the social fabric that sustains human community; at the same time, it is intensifying the competition for resources between rich and poor-a competition that the poor invariably lose.

Korten, David C., *When corporations rule the world*, 1995.



THE MAQUILADORA

LEYMEX



DAEWON



CORMEX



HAN YOUNG



Laymex and Daiwon workers struck their plants in June of 1996 largely over health and safety problems. But low wages were also an issue. They were "represented" by C.R.O.M. but one of their demands was to meet with the manager while excluding the "union." They want their own union. The workers voted to affiliate with S.T.I.M.A.C.S. (Sindicato de Trabajadores de la Industria Metálica, Acero, Hierro Conexos Y Similares) which, in turn, is affiliated with F.A.T. (Frente Auténtico del Trabajo). Meanwhile, the leadership was fired and accepted severance pay which cut off the heads of the struggle. The remaining workers filed papers through the labor courts to displace C.R.O.M. only to be denied because C.R.O.M. was no longer registered at Laymex! This rather contradictory ruling is being appealed...

HYUNDAI PRECISION AMERICA is HYUNDAI DE MEXICO, S.A. DE C.V.

This plant is the only significant shipping container factory outside China. It is the Korean company's effort to compete in a market virtually sealed by Chinese low wages. Chinese workers and Mexican workers race each other to the bottom of the scale. The main plant now does only final assembly and painting. The rest of the work has been subcontracted out to five other factories: Laymex, Daiwon, Cormex, Han Young and the Ensenada shipyard. It is believed by the workers that Hyundai owns at least the first four though it is strongly denied. In Mexican law companies which significantly supply a main business are the legal responsibility of the latter. This is important because Hyundai moved out its dangerous work to avoid health and safety responsibility to its workers that is strong on paper in Mexican labor law. The injury rate was very high at the main plant as it is now at the satellites. Laymex, Daiwon and Han Young have been sites of major labor struggles in the past year. It is a classic problem in the maquiladoras of workers attempting to get out from under the "protection contracts" of the official union and certify an independent union democratically controlled. The Han Young story makes up the third part of this series.



Industria Naval de California behind the CROM office, April 1997.



HYUNDAI PRECISION USA HEADQUARTERS IN MISSION VALLEY, SAN DIEGO.

THE SUBSIDIARY




HAN YOUNG DE MEXICO, S.A. DE C.V.

This plant is many miles to the west of Hyundai, Laymex, Dalwon and Cormex. It is west of downtown Tijuana not far from Playas; Originally it was located in Tecate and many workers ride a company bus to and from there daily. The bus also picks up Emetario Armenta in Maclovio Rojas and a few more in El Florido on the way.

On June 4th, the workers engaged in a 'work action' which shut the plant down for two days.* After meeting with the company and electing a leadership, the workers went back to work with promises to address twelve demands including recognition of their own independent union. At this writing, Emetario and two other leaders have been fired for their union activities. This action has been legally appealed and an information campaign has been launched to inform the world of Hyundai's treatment of its workers.

*Under Mexican labor law, workers cannot legally strike without the authorization of a government registered union. However, even without an organization, they can engage in very short stoppages to get grievances heard and acted upon.

HAN YOUNG DE MEXICO, S.A. DE C.V.
HAN YOUNG AMEX, INC.

Hyong M. Park
 PRESIDENT



The boss says, "He's a worker too," and sits with the strikers. But the photography makes him nervous so he moves down the street. Later, he is confronted by the workers and interviewed by TV.

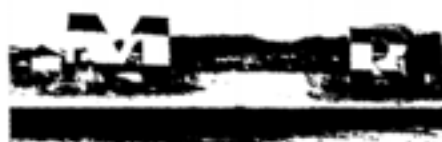


THE COLONIA

The Old Sign



Danny Mydlack's Sign



Hortensia Hernández Mendosa and Artemio Osuna Osuna lead the community to the new sign raising.



Hyundai's Truck Trailers



Gephardt's Visit

(February 14, 1997) was the beginning of a revisit to NAFTA. As Minority Leader of the House, he will be very active in the debates over its renewal and "fast-track" for a trade agreement with Chile in the Fall. With him was Democratic Whip David Bonior as well as Jay Mazur head of UNITE, George Becker head of the United Steel Workers, Harley Shaiken of U.C. Berkeley and Barbara Shailor, Director of the International Section of the AFL-CIO. Again, testimony was given as to working conditions in the maquiladoras.



Maclovio Rojas*

Justice cannot be done here to the story of the poblado Maclovio Rojas. And justice will not be done until Maclovio Rojas is a colonia. It is the story of a strong community whose leaders have endured jail, death threats, many whose members marched in the blazing August heat of 1996 to Mexicali to confront the governor of Baja. They have fought off land pirates and waged a seemingly successful battle to force Hyundai to give up its claims to their land. And they have attracted the support of many in México and the USA in their defense.

* One of several Baja communities named after a young farm labor leader who was murdered by land owners.

Japanese Labor Delegation

(April 26, 1997) Members of APWSL (Asian Pacific Workers Solidarity Links) made Tijuana's colonias and maquiladoras the last stop on a USA tour. They were particularly interested in North American plants owned by Japanese companies. After informal meetings with residents of Maclovio Rojas, they heard testimony about working conditions, pay and employment from maquiladora workers.



WORK STOP II

Mexican labor law allows all workers to engage in work stoppages of up to two days in order to get management's attention to grievances. On August 19, 1997, the Han Young workers walked out a second time in order to push the company toward the negotiations to which all had agreed.



Meeting at the plant.



Meeting at the office.



The photographer drives to San Diego from the office.

O.K., let's talk about these two tires.

They were pointed out to the photographer by one of the Korean managers. Let's admit, for the sake of argument that one or two of the workers decided to



couple supervisors. First of all, it has to be mentioned that the latter have cars. But more to the point, is the issue of property damage and labor disputes. Whatever one may think of modern "labor relations" as mediated by governments, the idea is to contain conflict by allowing both sides nonviolent ways of sorting out differences. If labor is deprived of the rights of struggle embodied in Mexican law,

workers deflate a

A Korean manager, these two tires to the photographer, "Look how these workers are to do could ask, "What tion of the work-to poor ventila- of welding fumes and other industrial effluents?" What is more serious, flesh or rubber?

then what recourse is there for its side? Is it any surprise that at least some workers will try to defend their rights by going outside the law? It is known, of course, that the employers and governments of all three countries at stake here have, at one



ager points out the photogra- low these work- this!" But, one about the defla- ers' lungs due tion in the midst

time or another, resorted to violence against their workers including murder.



Meanwhile, in San Diego...



THE HUNGER STRIKE



**Gobierno del Estado Libre Y
Soberano de Baja California**



28 days x 24 hours = 672 hours
x 4 workers = 2,688 hour
Hunger strike!

During the Hunger Strike, the Han Young workers decide to change union representation from STIMACHS (FAT) to their own independent union.



Business
U.S. to Investigate Tijuana Labor Election Dispute
LABOR Election Investigated
WORLD
The San Diego **Union-Tribune**
San Francisco Chronicle
Justice for Mexican Workers
Business
Vote for union at maquiladora draws accusations



UNT IN BAJA CALIFORNIA IS FORMED.



UNION NACIONAL DE

ntary

The Remedy Is Mexican Jobs



UNION NACIONAL DE TRABAJADORES NATIONAL WORKERS' UNION

SINDICATO NACIONAL DE TRABAJADORES AL SERVICIO DE LAS LINEAS AEREAS SIMILARES Y CONEXOS "INDEPENDENCIA" FUERA CONTRATOS DE PROTECCION

TECNICOS Y MANUALES RECALZA LA INTERVENCION DE ORGANIZACIONES ESPECIALISTAS EN LOS SINDICATOS QUE CONFORMAN LA UNT.

REVOLUCION

INSURGENTES

SINDICATO TRABAJADORES DE 6 DE OCTUBRE INDUSTRIAL, COMERCIAL, WORKERS UNION SIN OF October LONG LIVE THE STRIKE THE RIGHTS OF THE PEOPLE

EN LUCHA POR LOS DERECHOS LABORALES LAND, DEMOCRACY AND LIBERATION ORGANIZING STRUGGLE FOR THE RIGHTS OF LABORERS "INDEPENDENCIA" FUERA CONTRATOS DE PROTECCION

SINDICATO DE TRABAJADORES TECNICOS Y MANUALES DE LA PRODUCTORA ORIENTADORA S. Y C. DE LA REPUBLICA MEXICANA EN UNO DE LA LEY DE CINEMATOGRAFIA CONTEMPLE LOS DERECHOS DEL SECTOR SOCIAL



NTSS POR LA DEFENSA DEL TRABAJO Y LA UNION ADGALION PRODUCCION Y DISTRIBUCION AVANZANTE CON LA LEY DE CINEMATOGRAFIA

STyiii



REUNION CONSTITUTIVA DE LA UNT EN BAJA CALIFORNIA



CONFIRMAN LA UNT

The 6th de octubre union put up some of the photographer's photos of their hunger strike and sit-in.

& THE CHAIN-IN



1. Para mí pu és, ésé mono que está ayi abajo, está agachado, para mí no le encontraba figura y lo traté de desifrarlo y para mí pués, yo pienso que como toda la gente que está agachado, que está de rodillas, que no dice nada, que no protesta ante el gobierno. For me, that figure that is crouched down, on the bottom, at first I could not decipher it or make out what it was. And for me, I thought that it was like all the people who are on their knees, crouched down, who do not say anything nor do they protest against the government.

2. Los que están en cima de ese, pués también se me figuran como los niños, que ellos no saben de problemas ni de lo que está sucediendo a sus alrededores. Ellos no más van con sus padres, pidiendo de comer y eso porque uno no tiene que dárles. Those figures that are on top of that one, well they look like children who do not know anything about problems, nor what is going on in their surroundings. They only stay with their parents, and they beg for food because one cannot provide for them.

3. Está pidiendo que levantemos los brazos, que nos unamos. Arriba tiene los iniciales de Baja California - unidos podemos levantar a Baja California. It is asking us to lift our arms, to unite. On top it bears the initials of Baja California - united we can raise Baja California.



4. Porque yo era uno de los que andaba apoyando el movimiento, andaba organizando la gente, ayudándole a los demás compañeros a que nos organizáramos para nuestro sindicato. Because I was one of those who was supporting the movement, I was organizing the people, helping my companions to organize ourselves for the sake of our union.

5. No pués, no me quitó la fe. Si no nada más ellos solos se están evidenciando de que no tienen... ellos mismos son los que están violando la ley, el propio gobierno. Entonces esto es para que uno esté más consciente y uno apoye más la lucha para que todos que tengamos el mismo problema se nos de una solución favorable. No, it did not make me lose faith. It is that they just provide evidence for their lack of... it is them, the government that are violating our laws. So, this makes us more conscious and also makes us support the struggle more, so that all of us who have the same problem can find a favorable solution.



6. Pués, significa para mí la lucha de todos los trabajadores Mexicanos desde la revolución Mexicana para acá. Well, it signifies to me the struggle of all the Mexican workers since the Mexican revolution to the present.

7. Bueno, si se me hace una ironía porque pués todo lo que se ha logrado hasta ahorita México, es, todo lo que el gobierno a tenido, todos los edificios, todas las civilizaciones, a base del esfuerzo de todos los trabajadores desde el tiempo más remoto. Desde antes de la revolución, siempre a vido una explotación y por eso fue la revolución.



Murals in the lobby by
CARLOS COLORADO



Pero, pués yo pienso que ahora estamos volviendo otra vez a lo mismo, a la misma escleritud.

Well, it really is an irony to me because all that Mexico has accomplished, all that the government has, all the buildings, all the civilizations, are due to the effort put forth by all the workers since the most remote times. Before the revolution, there was mass exploitation and that is why there was a revolution, but I think that now, we are regressing, back to the same slavery as before.

8. La mayoría de las personas tienen miedo pués, porque a veces los amenazan y eso, y tienen miedo de unirse para defender sus derechos. The majority of people are frightened because sometimes they are threatened and they are scared to unite themselves to defend their rights.

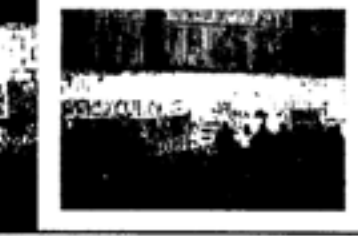
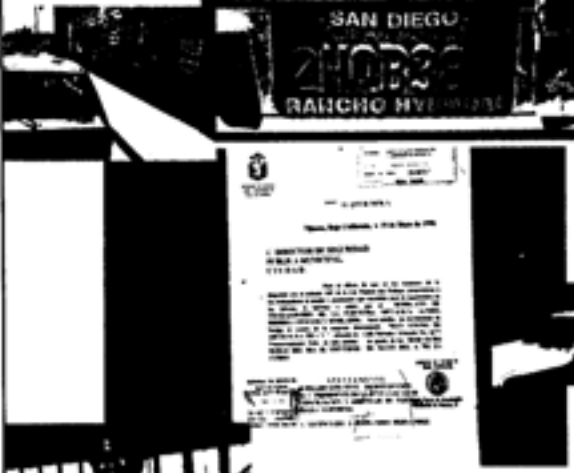
9. Esa de enfrente está hablando del trabajo, de los obreros y de una liberación que aún no alcanzamos. That one in the front is talking about work, about the workers and about a liberation we have not yet to reach.

10. La de este lado habla sobre las angustias del pueblo. The one on that side talks about the worries that a pueblo has.

THE STRIKE & DECERT VOTE

REVISION DE CONTRATO COLECTIVO

A LOS PATRONES
TODOS LOS DERECHOS
SIN OBLIGACIONES
Y A LOS TRABAJADORES
PURAS OBLIGACIONES
SIN DERECHOS

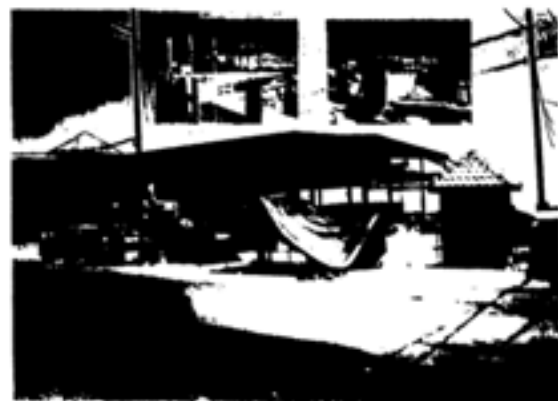


HAN YOUNG MOVES & THE STRIKE CONTINUES!

The company tries to be a "sparrow" and fly away from the strike. From

governments as to whether the strike was legal and whether the moved plant is the same employer. The strike resumes when a federal panel of judges rules completely in favor of the workers.

fall until the end of April, a legal battle is waged between Han Young, the Mexican business association and Tijuana and Baja



¡Apoyanos Todos!!

¡CONSULTA!
\$100
SALARIO MÍNIMO

La Organización de la Maquila y el Comercio de Tijuana invita a todos los trabajadores a participar en el plebiscito el próximo

DOMINGO 30 de MAYO
de 10 a 12 hrs.

¡9 DE OCTUBRE!



While in federal court, the strike was largely out of sight. After the favorable ruling, 6 de octubre came out for the '99 May Day march. Pickets went up the next Monday. Police came the 3rd day at the instigation of attorneys (black jackets) from the Maquiladora Assn. After a lot of arguing, the cops left. In June, the police returned and removed the picketers and their banners and signs. However, not much welding gets done because most of the available welders in Tijuana support the strike.



Attorneys representing the ruling class stay close to the moral of their clothing. They're dressed as "business men," no?



Victory at Han Young!
(work in progress)

UNION NACIONAL DE TRABAJADORES

Union Urges New Global Trade Rules, **Reaffirms Commitment**

in Ciudad Juarez, which boasts the largest concentration of maquiladoras on the border, a three-union alliance opened the Center for Labor Studies in September. This is a project of the Authentic Labor Front (the only union federation in Mexico that opposed NAFTA) and two U.S. unions, the Teamsters and the United Electrical Workers.

The Center is an outgrowth of joint campaigns the three unions have waged to organize workers at factories in Juarez and Chihuahua. It has already documented extensive discrimination against pregnant women at three Juarez factories belonging to FAVESA, a subsidiary of Lear Industries. The plants supply car seats to General Motors.



"When I was being hired, after the interview, they asked me when I would have my next period," one worker explains. "They said I couldn't actually start work until I had my period. I was still three weeks away, so I had to wait. On the first day of my period, I came back. The nurse was there and she said, 'Let's see it. Show me the sanitary napkin.' They accepted me that same day."

Sanitary Napkin given anonymously by a U.S.A. woman in solidarity with her Mexican sisters.

The director of the Center for Labor Studies, Guillermina Solis, charges that the companies want to avoid offering government-mandated maternity benefits. That's why they don't hire pregnant women and why they fire women who get pregnant. Her allegations are supported by the Women's Rights Project of Human Rights Watch. Its detailed report last October documented extensive sexual discrimination in maquiladoras.

David Bacon. "Cross-border organizing gives labor a chance." *The Progressive*. July 1997.

Since the 1970s the Mexican government, state governors, multinational corporations and the unions have had an agreement that union organizing drives, independent unions, strikes or other disruptions of production simply would not be permitted. Union Organizers were regularly fired, and when workers struck, the police broke their strikes. The PRI-controlled government, the PRI labor unions and both Mexican and foreign multinationals in Mexico typically collude to deny independent unions official recognition, to deny legal status to strikes, and to fire union activists and remove them from the plant.

Mexican labor unionists have been frustrated for decades by their inability to create genuine unions to fight for higher wages and better conditions. At the same time, U.S. and Canadian unionists have felt threatened that their employers would move plants and jobs to Mexico where unions were weak and wages low. The positive result has been that in the last few years, after the passage of NAFTA by the U.S., Canada and Mexico, some labor unionists from all three countries have looked for ways to coordinate their organizing activities in order to take on the multinational companies.

Driven by developments such as NAFTA, labor union activist from Canada and the U.S. are developing a variety of strategies for working with their sisters and brothers in Mexico. After more than two decades of experience, several different strategies have emerged, four of which are discussed here. First some groups are trying a community-based approach that attempts to organize the two-thirds female workforce of the maquiladoras primarily as women workers, often basing its work in the communities where the women workers live. Second, is a company-based or industry wide organizing strategy that targets specific companies or industries and works through the cooperation of Canadian, Mexican, or U.S. workers and unions. Third, is a strategy of cross-border support committees, coalitions, some transnational in scope and others regional or local, who try to support workers and union organizing in Mexico (as well as workers in the United States and Canada). Finally, there is the strategy of building clandestine cells, which organize workers into unions, but try to avoid the Mexican labor boards' official recognition process. Each of these strategies is based on one or another aspect of the difficult reality of building cooperation between U.S. and Mexican workers, as well as, the problems of organizing in Mexico.



EL CHARRO DE C.R.O.M.* JESUS MEDINA DUARTE

Realmente, ahorita en Baja California, principalmente aquí es en donde se pagan los mejores salarios del país. Aquí, no hay trabajadores con salarios mínimos. Aquí en Baja California es en donde hay menos problemas por malos tratos ante la comité de quejas de violaciones contra la Constitución. No las hay.

As of now in Baja California, the wages being earned here are the best ones in all of this country. Here, there are no workers earning minimum wage. Here in Baja California, is where there are less complaints over violations against the Constitution and of wrong doings by the labor committee.

El salario mínimo que marca la ley son 158.50 y aquí se paga hasta 350 mínimo. Se paga como dos y medio más arriba. El mínimo. The minimum wage the law states is that



of 158.50 and here, we pay at least 350. The minimum they receive is actually two and a half times more than what the law states. This is the minimum.

En la mayoría de las empresas, aparte del seguro social, tenemos servicio médico. Un servicio médico en las empresas en donde hay un especie de consultorio que tiene los utensilios para primera emergencias. In the majority of the companies, besides social security benefits, they also provide medical services. These medical services are in the factories where they have a some sort of medical room and here they have first-aid supplies.

Verdad que son mínimos los problemas porque realmente siempre hay una

buena relación. Siempre hay un reglamento interior del trabajo y todos saben sus obligaciones. Aquí en Baja California más porque hay muy pocos casos de malos tratos, pero la mayoría es por parte de las empresas porque están en mala condiciones. No hay despedidos así por malos tratos.

There really is not many problems here because we have good relationship with all. We always find a contractual solution to work and everyone knows what their obligations are. Here in Baja California, there are very few cases over wrong doings and the majority are due to the factories being in bad condition. There are no unjustified lay-offs.

A genuinely democratic movement in Mexico would have to find ways to control U.S. based multinational corporations, as well as to regulate and limit their role in Mexican affairs. These initial efforts at worker-to-worker, cross-border international solidarity represent some important first steps to curb the power of the multinationals and increase the power of working people in Canada, Mexico and the United States. The creation of a genuinely international labor movement based on mutual respect and solidarity, would also represent a significant contribution to attempting to democratize Mexican society. Wage workers represent the majority of the populations of Canada, Mexico and the United States; that which improves the organization and political strength of those groups could potentially represent a force for democracy throughout the continent.

DAN LA BOTZ, *DEMOCRACY IN MEXICO: Peasant Rebellion and Political Reform, 1995* (emphasis added).





THE MASK...

Juán Escutia

Ahora nos están tratando más peor que esclavos. They are treating us worse than slaves now.

Uno no pelea por uno mismo, si no por su propia familia y ellos no ven eso. One does not struggle for oneself, but for their own family and they do not see this.

El patron, para por ejemplo, de un 100%, nosotros se puede decir que tenemos un 10%. Entonces, nos van a juzgar y a decir que son malos. Si era posible para ellos, no nos pagaban.

My employer for example from 100% we get only 10%. So they see us as bad and that is why they want to treat us like slaves. If it were possible for them, they would not pay us.

O sea, los cuatro Kerennans. Uno de ellos es Mr. Lee y el otro el dueño. Mr. Kim, o sea es un socio, y otro, es el dueño del dueño. Ahora, los demás trabajadores son Sam y Gao. Ellos, nada más son empleados de él, pero son Kerennans.

There are four Koreans. One of them is Mr. Lee and he is the owner. Mr. Kim is an associate of his, as well as his brother-in-law. Now, the other ones are Sam and Gao. They are only his employees, but they are Korean.



Ahora, en lo que yo no estoy de acuerdo y en lo que realmente no hallo nada más que me causa tanto coraje es la forma que tratan a los trabajadores. They treat us as slaves, they treat us as machines, and they treat us as slaves. They want to see us as slaves and they want to see us as machines. And they want to see us as slaves and they want to see us as machines. And they want to see us as slaves and they want to see us as machines. And they want to see us as slaves and they want to see us as machines.

As of now, the one thing that I am most displeased about is the way they treat the workers. Sometimes there are no gloves, there are no air plugs, there are no masks, and there are even times when they block the flow of work, which causes the workers to not reach their standard. Also, they are denying access to the materials needed to operate the machine. One must even go to the extreme of getting angry and arguing with the Koreans so one can finish their work. This is the reason why they pressure the workers so that they can reach the standard. Even with all this struggle, if you do not reach the standard, then you will find yourself unemployed in three days. This is what happened to Chienno. So, I do not understand why they want to fire him if he was unable to reach the standard. You would fire someone if they abandoned their work or refused to do it. But, you cannot fire someone who does everything they say because the standard is unrealistic.

Un trabajador tiene el guante roto de un lado. No lo quiere cambiar y no le dejan porque los tiene que durar cuando menos un mes. Son guantes que ni si quiera tres días les duran por lo chafa, corriente. A worker's glove is torn on one side. He goes to get it replaced, but they do not give him more because they are supposed to last him at least a month. These gloves are the type that last three days because they are so cheap, flimsy.

Ellos tienen la costumbre de agarrar a la persona y pegarle. Y no más porque están a él no le gusta que los personas arrojan sus cosas adentro de la oficina. Esto es porque ellos no tienen tiempo y están adentro allí, los están quitando el tiempo. Ya cuando no la reportan, lo agarran y lo empujan a sacar a jalarlos a uno. Que si uno ya trata de ponerlos al tanto y ir a la Conciliación, ya lo despidieron en tres días, cuando día y noche ocho días. They have the habit of grabbing a person and hitting them. They do this because they do not like it when an employee is trying to organize his case in their office. This is because they do not have any time, but when an employee is there then they have less time. When they finally get up with a worker, they will grab him and push him out. If somebody tries to challenge them and go to Conciliation, then they will fire that person in three, four, or even in eight days.

Tuvimos seis contenedores, ahora los cuatro y se los van a quitar porque ellos quieren más porque están en casa. Los trabajadores que por ser no salieron los seis, se les quite dinero. Nos quitaron cinco o cuatro cincuenta pesos a toda la gente y andaban muy disgustados. We needed to complete six containers by the end of the day and they saw we were working on the fifth one because they saw four completed. So, our employer deducted one hundred to one hundred and fifty pesos from everyone's wage and everyone was really upset.

Ahora están con un nuevo modelo que es costoso. Ahora es cuando ya sabes que a uno se le está dando más arriba de lo que piensa uno. Uno if lo hace, pero justamente como lo sube el estándar a una persona así mismo le hace de subirle el estándar. Now they have a new model for the containers. Now is also the time when they give us more work than what we thought. People will do all the work, but they should increase our pay as they increase the amount of work we do because that is only fair.

O sea, una pieza que se está ensamblando entre una pareja, lo tienen que soldar entre los días. Aparte de que está muy mal condicionado, es un peligro porque tres personas, se muere de un mes, se les está dando. Probablemente, uno se les fuerse le pare recorda. El trabajador se va solo y le agarró la cara y lo tumbó y hay lo dejó solo. Ya de manera de que ya no les fuerse personas que se les va ya nada porque se desprende de la grúa que no más son partes sencillitas. Well, sometimes two workers must assemble and weld a piece of a container together. This is dangerous work because in less than a month, three people have narrowly escaped death. On Thursday, this is what precisely happened to someone. A piece of a container fell and it crushed him causing him to stumble over and get a little death. There have been three instances of this happening and it is due to a very weak crane that cannot hold such a heavy piece of container.

Para, C.E.D.U.E. no más llega y simplemente en la creación del puro ruido han puesto aparatos allí porque los vecinos han protestado. Hay muchos que trabajan de noche y salen a la una y día de la mañana. Los vecinos se quejan cuando como de eso de las diez, pero no pueden por el ruido.

Well, when C.E.D.U.E. came to the plant they inspected the noise levels, and at that time they put a few devices in only because the neighbors were complaining about it. Some men have to work the night shift which gets out at one or two in the morning. So, the neighbors want to sleep at ten at night, but the noise does not let them sleep.

Yo les había comunicado a ustedes que casi se mataba un compañero de trabajo en Tecate porque se le vino encima una pieza del contenedor. Era una de las piezas de las más pesadas. I had already told you about one of my co-workers in Tecate who almost killed himself when a piece of one of the containers fell on him. It was one of the heaviest pieces.

Es el problema que realmente tenemos de la C.R.O.C., no tenemos respaldo. That is the problem with C.R.O.C., we really do not get any support from them.



Emeterio Armenta Escalante

Por la forma que ya estamos declarados en la cuestión de la lucha, la verdad here, es no personal, lo que me dirigen de absolutamente nadie. Lo acusan con la forma de que yo quiero trabajar en paz. Por un individuo que me metió la empresa está tratando, y no está tratando ni no está haciendo de todo el personal. Porque aparte de eso, para realmente me da la culpa, dices y congo a la misma vez por la forma de que nos tratan. También uno, como Mexicano, de los mexicanos aquí en México. Que con unos cuantos pesos dólares quiere cubrir el detalle de lo que está padeciendo el trabajador. Por eso se han realmente apesado para el trabajador que realmente lo quieren.

Well, we have all ready declared ourselves to the fight for our union. The truth here is not personal, it is not directed at absolutely no one but to the boss. I am the boss of person who works against their interests. The reason that workers suffered have not been resolved by the company, but the company continues to cheat them, just the workers. Besides that, I want to support them, and I believe that they need to be paid. As a Mexican, I can feel that pain, but there are also conflict people in Mexico. That with a few dollars, they think they can cover up whatever is affecting the workers. This is why there is no support for the workers even though they deserve it.

Yo estoy ganando cincuenta pesos al día y yo tengo cinco años laborando por la empresa. Yo he sido uno de los mejores porque era jefe de línea. Pero, mi salario no va depender de la empresa, yo no va depender del sindicato y el contrato.

I am fifty pesos a day and I have been working for that company for five years. I have been one of the best because I was in charge of the production line. But my salary will not depend on the company. I am beyond of the union and the agreement.

Cuando la empresa se trasladó de Tecate a Tijuana, uno de nuestros compañeros que era un supervisor general, lo mandaron a limpiar y a controlar las líneas conforme como deben de estar. Entonces, se sabe poco porque él agarró el control y empezó a cambiar el polvo a toda su parte como de que había mucha cantidad por los pesos y por las maas. El reportó un problema tres veces a una maestrilla porque él quería guardar bien con los Kerennans. Después de unos cuantos días, él se dio cuenta que por medio de los datos. Pero, él ya tenía la información muy avanzada y se le empezó a hacer de recibir a la mañana. Así entonces recibió por medio de los datos. O sea, todo lo malo, de errormente y otros, continuó el polvo. El trabajo más malo, él se puso a limpiar las máquinas con paños azules y todo eso se le empezó a hacer en los ojos. Era lo peor porque él se iba a perder el otro. Aún así, con que lo agradeceremos. Con trabajo con una silla. Si le pasaron en el polvo porque según los estaba maltratando mucho.

When the company moved from Tecate to Tijuana, one of our co-workers, who was a general supervisor, was sent to clean and prepare the machines according to their specifications. So, he took a seat before and started to dust the place which had many seats and so on. He did not care about wearing safety glasses or a mask because he wanted to please the Koreans. About three days after he started to notice that the dust had affected him greatly. Unfortunately, his situation was far too advanced and from night to morning, I had become really worse. This infection was caused by the dust. In other words, all the bad things he knew and urine contaminated the dust. Unfortunately, he cleaned these machines with an only, so he rubbed all of the fat and it went into his eyes. This made him lose his sight in one eye and it is starting to cause blindness in the other. After he did all this, how did they reply him? By throwing a chair at him. They threw the chair at his chest because he was bothering them.

Hablé con el representante del sindicato que se llama Luis Pereda. Le dije: "Uy, usted viene como las vacas de Fermi, va cuando no hacen falta." Y me dijo que, "Porque?" me dijo: "Uy, pero cuando lo escapanes nunca está presente. Nada más cuando viene nada más cuando están fiero su contrato con los Kerennans y de aquí no más a renovar su cheque. Después no más le pagan libre a la creación del billete de los Kerennans. Y cuando nosotros lo escapanes a un día, cuando está por nosotros. O sea, usted realmente qué es? Defensor del trabajador y defensor de la empresa?" Le pregunté: "Pero, si me pagas tú, para ti podría ayudarte. Pero, tu no me pagas. La que me paga es la empresa." Yo le contesté: "Yo no puedo."

I talked to the union representative and he name is Luis Pereda. So I said to him, "Listen, you come here like the cows of Fermi, when they are not needed." He asks me, "Why?" Listen, I said, "When we need you, you are never around. You only come here when you have a meeting with the Koreans and from there you receive your check. The only time you open your doors is when the Koreans money is the door. When we need you, you are never there for us. So what are you ready? Are you the protector of the workers and of the company?" Well, if you were paying me then I would help you. But, you do not pay me. The one who pays me is the company." This is how he answered me.

No, pero todos están inconformes porque ya el sindicato se les parece tiempo, ni les está pagando. Porque ya Hyundai tiene el sindicato así directamente en sus propios oficinas. Al ser representante del C.R.O.C., le dicen en las oficinas de Hyundai. No, and everyone is unhappy here because the union has not been working for them but they are working for them. This is because Hyundai has the union offices inside the company. Even the representative of C.R.O.C. is in the office of Hyundai.

Porque ellos tienen la ley en la mano. Ahora, no les puedes alterar la voz porque ya es cuestión de voz se despiden. Si no, se hacen resacaar "voluntariamente." El trabajador se tiene que poner a Conciliación, pero está quepa. O sea, a los funcionarios del gobierno, ya los tienen comprados todo como la C.E.D.U.E. La C.E.D.U.E. es una agencia que según según tratada de controlar el ambiente es que trabajan los trabajadores. Si ya no se que realmente no está bien el ambiente entonces como debe de ser, pero la controla. Pero, ya siempre se van a ir con tiempo. Ahora es todo lo contrario. La que ellos hacen es no más ir y le hacen a lo que. Todo lo que les piden es una cierta cosa. They have the law in their hands. Right now, if you raise your voice to them, then you might be fired. If not, they might make you get "voluntarily." For a worker, there are no guarantees because Conciliation, well, they have been bought out. The government officials, the C.E.D.U.E., have been bought out by the company as well. C.E.D.U.E. is an agency that is supposedly in charge of maintaining a safe environment for the workers work. If they think a company is not properly maintained, they close it. But, that was in the past. Now, it is actually the opposite. That they do now is absolutely nothing. Their only concern is to get paid.

Es más barato para nosotros, más accesible a mí, más bonito, comprar un televisor de cien o doscientos pesos que comprar uno nuevo recién salido de la Samsung, que vale mil o dos mil pesos porque no los gana. It is cheaper and more accessible to me to buy a television for one hundred or two hundred pesos than to buy a new one just made in Samsung, that is worth one thousand or two thousand pesos because I do not have that money.

El Hijo de Frankenstein



No, pues, no es justo. Tenemos muy bajo el salario por el trabajo que hacemos. Cuando empiezo, si estaba bien los salarios. Pero, ahora ya no. Casi cualquier maquiladora que anda por allá está pagando la misma que aquí. Uno aquí se está fregando la vista, los pulmones, y no respira bien. No tienen ventilación ni nada. Esto cerrado todo. No well that is not fair. They are not paying us enough for all the work we do. When I began to work here the wages were good. But now they are not. Almost every other maquiladora pays the same wage they pay here. One is risking their sight, their lungs, and we cannot breathe well here. They have no ventilation here whatsoever. Everything is closed.

Es que uno se va fregando mucho los pulmones ahí. Las mascarillas que nos dan son de esas de doctores. Y respaldan, no sirven. One can really damage their lungs there as well. The masks they give us are the type doctors use. There is no security there.

Si se preocupa uno, pero se abre estoy pensando de salirme ya. Se es macho el dato que se abre uno. Porque yo, a veces ya cuando llego en la tarde, ya llego con la lengua de fuera. One worries a lot, but I have been thinking about quitting. Working there does much damage to your body. Sometimes, when I get home in the afternoon, I get there gasping for breath.

Yo no puedo renunciar ahora porque en las demás maquiladoras pagan muy bajo el salario. No tenemos buen salario ahí tampoco, pero pagar un poco mejor que en las demás. Y está, la antigüedad que tenemos que a final de cuentas sí la respaldan. I cannot quit my job now because the pay at the rest of the maquiladoras is even worse. We do not have a good salary here, but we get more than the rest. As for seniority, they do not respect that either.

Eso de que nos hacen sentir menos. Nos hacen sentir menos que uno. Hay ocasiones en que, tal vez jugando, nos arrojan con algo que tropiezo en la mano. Según ellos están jugando, pero no es algo para jugar. Después nos dicen, "vete por allá," y eso nos arrojan las cosas. A veces se lo llevan a la fuerza. They make us feel worthless there. They make us feel inferior to them. There has been times when, maybe they were playing, but they would throw us with the objects they were holding. According to them it was a joke, but you do not joke about that. Later they tell us "go over there" and they almost throw things at us to get going. Sometimes they would take someone using force.

Pero, según lo que nosotros sabemos de los Koreanos, es que ellos les tratan peor. O sea que ellos vienen con la idea de traer a uno así. Que allá, hasta los japoneses, pero aquí nos arrojan y arrojan. Ya tratan ellos con idea de eso y pues, para ellos no existe otra cosa más que malagar. Well, according to what we know about the Koreans, it is that they treat them worse over there. So, they come over here with the idea to treat people this way. Over there, they actually treat them, but here we get tossed around and treated. They come with the idea, and for them, nothing else exists other than work.

Yo entré a Hyundai porque tenía la oportunidad de aprender, eso, por ejemplo allí aprendí a soldar ya. Por eso entré y por eso me más de esperanzas. Pero, hasta ahora el trabajo ya no es, eso, pues realmente no hay futuro, no hay más para crecer. Ahora sí que hay mucha explotación hacia los trabajadores. I entered Hyundai because I had the opportunity to learn, for example, there I learned how to weld. This is why I started working there, so I can gain more skills. Until now, the work, well, there is no future there, there is no room for advancement. Now there exists a lot of exploitation of the workers.

La Calabera



Yo sé que aprendí a soldar. Entonces yo aprendí, pero nos pagan muy poco. Muchas personas que no aprendieron allí eso, así de todos modos pagan muy poco. Entonces, eso es un ejemplo de que no están valorando bien el trabajo. Les están pagando demasiado poco para lo que se trabaja y lo que se hace, pues, es muy poco. Well, I learned how to weld, but the pay is not good. A lot of people did not learn how to weld, but the pay is still bad. So, this is an example of the way that they are not placing a great value on our work. They pay too little for all that we work and for all we do, so, it is not enough.

Pero, si uno se siente como explotación, eso, al menos lo que me a pasado, pues que ellos ponen un determinado de trabajo, de cantidad de trabajo, entonces uno los hace y después quieren más por lo mismo. No hay más dinero de nada. Entonces, allí está el símbolo de explotación, por lo cual se dice explotación. Well, I feel exploited when, well at least what I have experienced, is that they give a specific amount of work, so we do it and then they want more work for the same wage. There is no more money or anything. So, this is what exploitation is, or at least what we call exploitation.

Aquí en Han Young, pues realmente no, por ejemplo, ya muchos no tienen zapatos de seguridad, al menos nosotros que somos los más viejos de allí. No dan el equipo necesario y a veces, tiene uno que estar corriendo allí porque no tiene uno las cosas. A veces uno se está quemando los brazos y pide uno y no hay, no hay. Well, here in Han Young, for example, many of us do not have steel-toed shoes, at least the older workers like us do not have them. They do not give the necessary equipment and we have to be running after them for it. Sometimes, our arms may be burning and we ask them for things and there is nothing, nothing.

Zapatos, por ejemplo, no hay. A veces uno corre muchos riesgos y uno tiene que estar bien abusado. Si no, "pun" y allí se quedo uno. También hay muchas cables que pasan por arriba de corriente de gas, o sea no está bien todo. Mascarillas, hay muchas buena y no dan las mascarillas de las más crecidas. Well, faja las mascarillas porque a veces hay unas pláticas que sirven pláticas y con la plática, con el color, la soldadura y la plática, pues perjudica más. Shoes, for example, we have no shoes. Sometimes we work in very dangerous situations and you have to be cautious. If not, then "boom" and you are left there. Also, there are many cables over us that are for gas, so the masks it creates. Means, there is a lot of smoke and they do not provide the proper masks. The masks are very important because sometimes there are wooden parts with paint on them and with the heat and the welding, then they become hazardous.

Yo pues, tengo, porque nos dan unas mascarillas de las más corrientes. Entonces, yo me pongo un trapo pues, para proteger me más. I have a mask because they give us the cheapest ones. So, I must put a cloth underneath it to better protect myself.



Julián Fuentes Martínez

Pues, ahora se siente uno un poquito mejor. Pues, sí porque si se ve que si se está ganando uno algo. Ya se ve que hay más forma de salir un poquito más adelante, aunque sigue de todos modos las cosas. Ahora, metieron una barra que anda por allí. Uno de recursos humanos, es el que cree que anda por allí. Él le está medio respaldando. Pues, aquí mi compañero [Emeterio] lo castigaron cuatro días y no supe porqué. Igual después pregunté por él y no más dijeron que estaba castigado por cuatro días. Yo no supe porqué, pero la demás parece que está marchando bien. Well, right now one can feel a lot better. This is because one can see that we are getting a little more. We can now see that there is a way to improve our way of life, although some problems still exist. They have added someone new in there. I think he is the Human Resources person. He is just causing more problems. Here, my co-worker [Emeterio] has been suspended for four days and I still do not know why. I asked about him and at they told me was that he was suspended for four days. I never found out why, but besides this, everything seems to be going well.

Estaba bien antes porque ahora con la devaluación, o sea me refiero al dinero, pagaban mejor antes de la devaluación del '94. It was better before the devaluation of the peso because they paid more before the devaluation of '94.

Es igual que la Conciliación, digo sin embargo están iguales de vendidos. No tenemos protección. No hay protección para el trabajador. It is the same as Conciliation, because both have been bought out. We have no protection. There is no protection for the worker.

Ellos solo se arreglan. Cuando el sindicato va arreglar algo, según algún problema que tenemos los trabajadores, pues en vez de que el sindicato hable con algún representante de los trabajadores, hablan primero con el patrón. Ellos se ponen de acuerdo, pero en fin de cuentas, todo queda igual. Como si se hubiera pasado nada. Todo al favor del patrón. They just smooth each other's backs. When the union is going to fix something, some problem we supposedly have, well the union leader talks to the employer instead of a representative for the worker. The employer and the union leader agree with one another, but nothing gets done. Like if nothing had happened. He goes in favor of the employer.



Por ejemplo, aquí en Tijuana hay mucha gente de diferentes estados de los de la república. Esto, realmente se puede decir que no tanto sean ignorantes, pero desconocen muchas cosas sobre los procesos y eso. A veces, cuando sirven mucho tiempo quieren perder el ánimo. Pero, así son las cosas. For example, here in Tijuana there are many people that come from many different states in this republic. These people are not necessarily ignorant, but they do not know about the procedures and things like that. Sometimes, when they have been here for a long time, they begin to lose hope. That is the way it is.

Sylvestre Rodriguez Reyes

Pues, realmente se puede decir que ya todo se sabe. Ya todos los Koreanos ya saben del movimiento. Y ya no hay para qué ocultarse. Estamos como tenía que estar. Well, one can say that everything is out in the open. All the Koreans know about our movement. There is no reason to hide any more. We are now where we needed to be.

Pues, yo pienso que el sindicato sí protege mucho. Pero, hasta ahora las cosas no están bien claras ante la ley del sindicato. Ahora todo marcha bien, pero, si el sindicato está aprobado y ya está legal, pues va estar mucho mejor. Well, I think that the union really protects us. Right now though, the union law is still not very clear. Everything is going well, but when the union has been approved and legalized then, things will be much better.

*Dan La Botz, Mask of Democracy: Labor Suppression in Mexico Today, 1992.

La Ardillita

Pues, por el lado económico, no nos alcanza porque es muy poco lo que nos pagan. Por lo tanto, no vive uno cómodamente. O sea, no rinde. Well, economically speaking, we earn a very small wage and it is not sufficient. For now, we live very uncomfortably. So, our money is not enough.

El sueldo está muy bajo. Pues, si no estamos soldando juguetes. No estamos soldando juguetes para que nos paguen lo que nos están pagando. Ahora, ellos piden una producción por día, y se la sacamos y porque terminamos temprano al siguiente día nos piden dos o cuatro piezas más. Vamos y pedimos una explicación y pues, no es que estamos terminando muy temprano. Pues, es como les digo, yo no estoy soldando juguetes. Son piezas pesadas que pesan más de cien kilos y que se están cargando entre dos o tres personas. The wage is very low. We are not welding toys. It seems as if our wage is for welding toys. They ask for a specific amount of production per day and when we finish early then the next day they add two or four more to the production. We ask for an explanation of this increase and they say it is because we finished early. Well, it is like I told you, I am not welding toys. These are big pieces that weigh more than 100 kilos and it takes two or three people to carry.

Bueno yo pienso que está bien que invierten en él, pero que no abusen de los trabajadores. Que el trabajo es una cosa y, por ejemplo, el bienestar de la familia es otra. Nosotros estamos peleando por nuestras familias y está bien que traigan inversión a México porque se necesita, pero no es para que exploten la gente. Que le quieran pagar poquito y ellos se están enriqueciendo a costa de nuestro trabajo. Eso, yo pienso, que no está bien. Well, I think it is great that they want to invest in us, but as long as they do not abuse the workers. Work is one thing and the well-being of my family is another. We are fighting for our families and it is alright if they want to invest in Mexico, but it is not a reason for them to exploit the people. I think it is not fair that they want to pay us a small wage while they get rich from our work. This, I believe, is not right.

Porque, como dice el compañero, tantos cables de electricidad como mangueras de gas y todo está tirado atravesado por donde sea. Entonces estamos en peligro. Y también la contaminación dentro de la fábrica, que se puede decir que no es una fábrica porque está muy pequeña. Hay una contaminación muy grande porque se aglomera el humo y pues, por más que quieran poner, no ponen aire acondicionado como debe de ser. As my co-worker has said, there are electric cables and gas line and everything is scattered everywhere. So we are in danger. Also, the contamination inside the factory, if you can call it a factory since it is so small. There is a huge contamination because the smoke accumulates inside and as much as they want to put air conditioning as they should, they do not.

Incluso, la dependencia que se encarga de ver la contaminación de las empresas, luego allí y al parecer también les dijo que pusieran extractores para limpiar el ambiente. Pero, no mas pusieron unos dos o tres y al rato se descompusieron y hasta allí quedó no más. The factory inspectors came here and they told them to put air purifiers in this factory. However, they only put two or three air purifiers and later they broke down and that was that.

La C.E.D.U.E. Ellos sí avisaron que iban a ir porque al siguiente día llegando temprano nos pusieron hacer limpieza. Es federal. The C.E.D.U.E. They told them when they were coming and early the next morning they made us clean the factory. It is from the government.

Incluso, las dependencias federales y las dependencias estatales de aquí de Tijuana, pues van y le avisan al patrón y el patrón, por abajo del agua, les da un poco de dinero y ya se quedan callados. Entonces, a nosotros nos están amolando cada día más. The federal and the state inspectors here in Tijuana tell my employer when they are coming and our employer gives them money so that they can keep quiet. Thus, as each day passes by, they dig us deeper and deeper into a hole.

Por ejemplo, las dependencias que puede uno recorrer para que lo apoyen a uno, no lo apoyan. Como es Conciliación allí, pues ni para que ir a presentarse porque no más va uno para perder el tiempo. O sea, porque sabe uno que los compran rápido. O sea, les dan una feria y ya se acabó todo y nosotros quedamos igual. For example, the factory investigators whom one can turn to for support as a worker, well, we do not receive this support. Like Conciliation, it is better not to even bother with them because you will only waste your time. It is because one knows that they have been bought out. So, the company gives them money and everything stops and we stay the same.

Pues le diré, por ejemplo, los zapatos de seguridad tiene un año y no me han dado. Y los primeros me los dieron a los dos años de estar trabajando con ellos. Eso es el calzado. Para el demás equipo que se necesita para trabajo tiene uno que andar corrietandolos, haciendo corajes con ellos y tener que insultarlos para que le pueda dar a uno las cosas. Well, for example, it has been a year that I have not received the steel-toed shoes that I need. The first pair that I did get was after two years working there. This was only the shoes. In order to obtain the rest of the equipment necessary for work, you had to run after them and even insult them so that they may finally give you what you need.

Porque las dependencias les han llegado allí a los patrones les avisan con anticipación y pues hasta a mi me ponen a barrer porque no tienen quien se ponga a barrer allí. The factory inspectors tell my employers when they are going to come, so they make me sweep the floors because they have no one to sweep them.

Entonces el patrón ve que hay problemas y es cuando lo llama. Llama al representante del sindicato. El viene y en lugar de hablar con los trabajadores, como debe de ser, habla con los empleados de confianza, que son de confianza del patrón, entonces habla con ellos y le dan su dinero. Es lo que hace este señor. When the employer detects problems then this is when he calls him. He calls the union leader. He comes and instead of talking with the workers, like he should, he talks to a select group of men chosen by the employer. They give him his money and this is all he does.

Según él fue con el pretexto de que iba arreglar eso de que nos dieran calzado y el equipo de seguridad y todo eso. Pero, no fue eso sí no que el patrón no le mandó su chequecito, pues tuvo que ir a hacer algo para que le pagaran. Supposedly he came to talk to the employer about the shoes and other safety equipment we needed. It was evident that he did not come for this reason, but he did come to collect his check that the employer did not send him.

Aquí en México, no hay esa unión. Si se unen, pero a la mera hora se van espantado por x motivos. Por ejemplo, si somos cien, después se desaniman y al final quedan dos o tres y ya no se hizo nada. O sea, la gente, bueno los trabajadores, de momento sí sienten el impulso de querer hacer esto y lo otro, pero no todos aguantan hasta lo último. Después, empiezan con "que van a correr a estos y van a despedir a estos" y por el temor y para que no los despidan del trabajo, pues prefieren no seguirle. Here in Mexico there is no unity. We can unite, but for any little reason we become scared. For example, there may be a hundred of us, yet some of us may drop out and finally there are two or three of us left, so nothing gets accomplished. The workers at first are motivated, but some of them cannot endure until the end. They complain that, "they are going to fire and kick people out," so they fear losing their jobs and they stop.

Una huelga siempre mejora una empresa, al respeto de los trabajadores. Hasta entonces es cuando hacen caso. Los patrones cuando ya sienten la presión de los trabajadores, pero como le digo que es muy difícil que se logre esto, yo digo aquí en Tijuana. Por una parte porque mucha gente, cuando hay una huelga, pues todos piensan en su familia y a la misma vez no quieren la huelga. Por la razón que ellos no saben cuando vaya a durar. Por ejemplo, si solamente el hombre es el que trabaja, entonces no van a tener dinero para la familia. Y yo pienso que no aguantarían o tal vez no aguantaríamos.



Jose Fernando Flores Cruz

La verdad ya ahorita siento con más confianza, con más libertad de expresar lo que siento. Porque tenemos el apoyo de ustedes y de Mari [Tong], que nos está apoyando bastante. Y están los licenciados que están en el apoyo judicial. Pues, estamos viendo que nos están ayudando como debe de ser. Truthfully, I now feel more confident and more at liberty to express what I feel. This is due to the support we have received from all of you and Mary [Tong], who has supported us a lot. We also have the lawyers that are supporting us in a judicial manner. Well, we finally see all the help we should be getting.

No pues realmente, pensando en lo que ayer nos estuvieron diciendo en la asamblea que tuvimos y este, empecé a ver todos los detalles que nos explicaron. Que la demanda va, incluso se va meter el lunes. Y ya vi que hay una mejor organización tanto de los trabajadores como los de licenciados. Entonces, esa organización ya llegó a tal grado de que hay más fuerza, hay más confianza, más estabilidad en el movimiento. O sea, yo pienso que va más adelante. Thinking about what they told me yesterday in the assembly, well, it made me focus on all the details that were explained to us. Our demand will finally be sent on Monday. And I have now seen a major organization of workers and of professionals. Thus, this organization has gotten stronger with more confidence, and this results in a more stable movement. This is why I think it is progressing.

Este movimiento que se hizo va a servir de ejemplo para la mayoría de las maquiladoras. Entonces, eso va a venir a dar movimiento en las diferentes maquiladoras para que el personal se vaya dar cuenta de todo. Podemos realmente, como trabajadores unimos luchar en contra las malas condiciones en las que nos tienen los patrones. This movement that was formed will serve as an example to the majority of maquiladoras. This will probably cause some movement with different maquiladoras and the personnel should be aware of this. We, as workers, must unite in order to fight the horrible conditions of employers have for us.

Aquí, primero se dieron cuenta que ya no habíamos organizado un poco y dijeron, "okay, a dialogar." Se prestaron a dialogar, pero en el momento de diálogo ellos pidieron un determinado de tiempo para dar solución a uno de los problemas. Entonces, a los diez días ellos nos dieron las botas, por decirle así. Pero, esos diez días los ocuparon para meter a alguien. Por ejemplo, a mi administrador Koreano, a mi me dice, "Porque dijiste que yo nunca les presto dinero?" Y yo sí le dije abiertamente porque desde que yo empecé a trabajar aquí, nunca me han prestado ni un centavo. Me dice, "Que no y que cuanto quieres?" La empresa, incluso, me dio cien pesos ese día. La condición era que ya no me quería ver aquí. "No más firmas," me dice. Here, when they first noticed that we were organizing they told us, "Okay, let's talk." They did talk, but only on the condition that we give a definite time to the solution of one of the problems. So, after ten days they gave us boots. But these ten days, they used them to put someone new. For example, the Korean administrator pulled me aside and asked me, "Why are you saying that I do not give loans? And I told him openly that since I have been working here, they have never lent me one cent. So, he says, "No, how much do you want?" He began telling me. He even gave me one-hundred pesos that day. The conditions were that I was never to return. "No more signatures," he told me.

A strike always improves a factory, with respect to its employees.

Until this point is reached then this is when they finally listen to us. The employers must feel pressured by the workers, but it is difficult to happen here in Tijuana. One reason is because the people worry about their families and how long the strike will last. For example, if man is the only one that works then the family will have no money. And this makes me believe that they cannot tolerate this happening any more.



Colonias

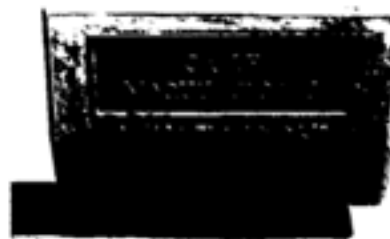


Maquiladoras

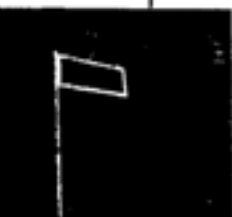


Let's talk taxes.

When Mexico, Baja and Tijuana under-tax the Maquiladoras, the only way they are really taxed is through personnel incomes and purchases (sales taxes). Therefore, there are little public funds for paved streets, street lights, signs, sidewalks, landscaping, water, sewage and electrical power. Many workers go daily from their Third World communities to First World industrial "parks" and back again.



Most of the newer colonias do not have all of these utilities. The newest have none. And, if the community does not vote PAN (PRI in most of Mexico),...



Keeping the Faith



Despite Mexico Vote Outcome, Investors Bullish for Now

By MARY BETH SHERIDAN
TIMES STAFF WRITER

Porfirio Muñoz Ledo could scarcely contain his joy. The leftist leader's party had just made historic gains in Mexican elections. The big loser was the ruling PRI, which has championed NAFTA and free markets.

"This is the new Mexican revolution!" exclaimed the plump politician, flinging open his arms as he spotted a reporter. "The PRI goes down, and the peso goes up!"

Last Sunday's elections have produced one of the unlikeliest sights since Jerry Rubin traded his hippie sandals for wingtips and Wall Street.

Leftists eager to tax investors and weaken the North American Free Trade Agreement have made their biggest

electoral advance in years in Mexico. And the stock market has greeted the news with a breathless rally.

On the heels of a prelection surge, the market set four daily records this week before finally dipping on Friday, with the index falling 0.8% to 4,821.62 points. The peso closed at its strongest level since February.

What gives?

Analysts say investors are mainly relieved that the midterm elections went off without a hitch. In the vote, Mexicans denied the Institutional Revolutionary Party, or PRI, its seven-decade hold on Congress. A leftist, Cuauhtemoc Cardenas, swept into office as Mexico City's first elected mayor.

Despite the dramatic changes, there was little of the demonstrations and cries of fraud that had followed past elections. Instead, the vote was seen as fortifying the

Please see MEXICO, D8

MEXICO: Cash-Flush Investors Are Eager to Jump Into the Market

Continued from D1
democratic process, presumably positive for political stability.

And while it made gains, the left-wing party—the Democratic Revolution Party, or PRD—remains a minority. It is roughly tied for No. 2 with the conservative, pro-business National Action Party, or PAN, in the lower house of Congress.

Finally, Congress doesn't take office until September. To many investors, that's light years away.

Meanwhile, Mexican consumers are returning to stores for the first time since the 1995 recession. Add to that the expectation of strong earnings from Mexican companies, and it becomes clear why cash-flush investors are hopping into the market.

"Whatever happens in the negative sense is going to take time to brew," said Rogelio Ramirez de la O, a prominent economist. "And the market is not going to miss an opportunity for a 20% gain."

Longer term, though, it's unclear what the left-wing surge could produce. It will almost certainly

increase pressure on President Ernesto Zedillo to soften his tight-credit, low-spending policies. Those policies gradually renewed investors' confidence after the collapse of the peso in 1994. But many Mexicans still haven't felt the recovery.

"The main message of this election was a slap in the face of the Zedillo administration," political scientist Federico Esteves noted. "The pocketbook vote was not willing to give him another mandate, let alone a legislative majority, for his policy package."

He did caution, however, that while voters were unhappy with the recession, they were not necessarily calling for left-wing solutions.

A visit to the PRD's spare, six-story headquarters suggests a party still firmly committed to leftist ideals. Outside, hawkers sell T-shirts and videos of Cuban revolutionary hero Che Guevara. Inside, workers politely address a visitor as "comrade."

Rosa Albina Garavito, a member of the PRD's economic team, stiff-

ens at the suggestion that the party has softened its leftist positions, as Britain's Labor Party has done under Tony Blair.

"The PRD's economic project is the same as when the party was founded" in 1988, she said in an interview. The PRD split from the ruling PRI in part because of the latter's move toward free-market economics.

The PRD's platform calls for renegotiating Mexico's foreign debt, taxing short-term foreign investment and reining in the inflation-fighting central bank. Each is enough to give investors a Maalox day.

But such positions aren't shared by either the PRI or PAN. Thus the chances of PRD's platform being passed are slim.

Where PAN and PRD do agree is on tax cuts and a redistribution of tax revenues to cash-starved states and towns. Currently, Mexico's central government gobbles up 80% of federal taxes.

But it's unlikely the opposition can pass such changes without intense negotiations with the PRI. That's

because tax policy must also be approved by the upper house of Congress, still controlled by the PRI.

The elections, however, still could weaken Zedillo and his policies. His fierce anti-inflation stance has helped Mexico recover from the recession and obtain billions of dollars in loans. But with wages still trailing 1994 levels and bank loans scarce, the country's economic recovery hasn't reached most Mexicans.

The first test of Zedillo's policies will come at year's end, as Congress debates the budget. The opposition will probably push for faster domestic growth, even if it means higher inflation and a weaker peso. The PRD could attract allies, even from the presi-

dent's own PRI.

"The PRI faction in Congress will be the first to say, 'One moment—I can no longer support economic programs that lead us to lose popular support,'" Ramirez de la O said.

Still, no one expects an about-face in Mexico's transformation to a free-market economy.

The old, state-dominated economy has mostly been dismantled. The government has few properties left, for example, that it is still trying to sell off. And analysts say Zedillo's most important economic reform—privatization of the pension system—will be too far advanced to turn back.

The real test could come in 2000, when presidential elections are

held. Cardenas is expected to use the high-profile Mexico City mayor's job to make a run for president. Considered a member of the PRD's left wing, he has already earned the enmity of some big businessmen by calling for a reversal of Zedillo's pension reform.

But whether Cardenas can duplicate his overwhelming victory of last Sunday is unclear. The elections in 2000 will probably force the PRD to moderate its policies, analysts say. To win the presidency, the party will need the critical middle-class vote.

"They have to kowtow to some of the grass-roots pressures," Esteves said. "But they have to balance that if they mean to keep winning."

Bonds

For week ending Friday, July 11, 1997

Bond	Yield	Close	Chg.	Bond	Yield	Close	Chg.	Bond	Yield	Close	Chg.	Bond	Yield	Close	Chg.
GOV 1/20/00	4.37	99 1/4	-1/8	MEXFIN 4/2	11 1/4	104 1/4	+1/8	S&P 12/29/00	6.25	100 1/2	+1/8	WELLS 1/2	10.00	100 1/2	+1/8
GOV 12/15/00	4.37	99 1/4	-1/8	MEXFIN 4/2	11 1/4	104 1/4	+1/8	S&P 12/29/00	6.25	100 1/2	+1/8	WELLS 1/2	10.00	100 1/2	+1/8
GOV 12/15/00	4.37	99 1/4	-1/8	MEXFIN 4/2	11 1/4	104 1/4	+1/8	S&P 12/29/00	6.25	100 1/2	+1/8	WELLS 1/2	10.00	100 1/2	+1/8
GOV 12/15/00	4.37	99 1/4	-1/8	MEXFIN 4/2	11 1/4	104 1/4	+1/8	S&P 12/29/00	6.25	100 1/2	+1/8	WELLS 1/2	10.00	100 1/2	+1/8
GOV 12/15/00	4.37	99 1/4	-1/8	MEXFIN 4/2	11 1/4	104 1/4	+1/8	S&P 12/29/00	6.25	100 1/2	+1/8	WELLS 1/2	10.00	100 1/2	+1/8
GOV 12/15/00	4.37	99 1/4	-1/8	MEXFIN 4/2	11 1/4	104 1/4	+1/8	S&P 12/29/00	6.25	100 1/2	+1/8	WELLS 1/2	10.00	100 1/2	+1/8
GOV 12/15/00	4.37	99 1/4	-1/8	MEXFIN 4/2	11 1/4	104 1/4	+1/8	S&P 12/29/00	6.25	100 1/2	+1/8	WELLS 1/2	10.00	100 1/2	+1/8
GOV 12/15/00	4.37	99 1/4	-1/8	MEXFIN 4/2	11 1/4	104 1/4	+1/8	S&P 12/29/00	6.25	100 1/2	+1/8	WELLS 1/2	10.00	100 1/2	+1/8
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GOV 12/15/00	4.37	99 1/4	-1/8	MEXFIN 4/2	11 1/4	104 1/4	+1/8	S&P 12/29/00	6.25	100 1/2	+1/8	WELLS 1/2	10.00	100 1/2	+1/8
GOV 12/15/00	4.37	99 1/4	-1/8	MEXFIN 4/2	11 1/4	104 1/4	+1/8	S&P 12/29/00	6.25	100 1/2	+1/8	WELLS 1/2	10.00	100 1/2	+1/8
GOV 12/15/00	4.37	99 1/4	-1/8	MEXFIN 4/2	11 1/4	104 1/4	+1/8	S&P 12/29/00	6.25	100 1/2	+1/8	WELLS 1/2	10.00	100 1/2	+1/8

report on NAFTA

LEYMEX

TIJUANA

THE 'LIBERAL' L.A. TIMES SUPPORTS CLASS WAR

So, this is a very slippery editorial as is all argumentation on the pro NAFTA side.

Most of the 'slips' have to do with WHO is being discussed.

Though the balance of jobs lost or gained between Mexico and the U.S. is probably not large,* unrestricted trade between the two countries tends to drive wages down in the latter and not up in the former. Also, what kind of jobs are gained/lost is conveniently not addressed. But wages, as opposed to salaries, have dropped in both countries.

To whom is NAFTA paying off? In the adjacent panel, one answer is "The New Entrepreneur Class of Mexico." These small export businesses are writing their "own ticket." But, again, no mention of wages/benefits paid to Mexican workers or whether they are union. The big lacunae here though is the paltry effects these companies will have on the massive unemployment and underemployment that drives thousands of Mexicans northward.

The whole premise of these writings is that the world economy is for those who are privileged with advantages.

To HELL with the rest..

* Read Jefferson Cowie, "National Struggles in a Transnational Economy: A Critical Analysis of US Labor's Campaign Against NAFTA," *Labor Studies Journal*, Winter 1997.



A Success, by Several Measures Clinton shouldn't be reticent in his report on NAFTA

On Tuesday, when President Clinton presents Congress his third-year report on the North American Free Trade Agreement, he should have no hesitation in declaring the pact a success. The numbers and the politics of the U.S.-Mexican-Canadian trade association have proved to be winners.

Just consider U.S. trade with Mexico. Last week, our southern neighbor became the No. 2 buyer of American exports, behind No. 1 Canada and ahead of No. 3 Japan. NAFTA is a regional trade group, and these numbers show that North America is a bountiful trade family. For instance, U.S. exports to Mexico for April reached \$5.7 billion. That represents an increase of 31% over the same month a year earlier. Total trade among the three partners continues to grow at an impressive rate, having reached \$435 billion last year. These numbers add up to a sweet deal economically, and NAFTA has a political dimension as well, and both aspects will come under the spotlight in Clinton's report and Congress' reaction.

Congress could schedule hearings. The International Trade Commission is already taking testimony on NAFTA, and most of it has been favorable. But some sectors can be expected to question the value of the trade pact. There are legitimate concerns: the jobs picture,

environmental aspects, political effects. They should be heard out and investigated where necessary.

Some gains are clear. Competition for long-protected economy to free market competition forced many inefficient businesses to close shop. That did not go down well among the Mexican merchant class. But three years later it's clear that NAFTA has been good for Mexico. Its export economy is on track, and a prosperous Mexico is of course good for the United States in ways stretching from purchasing power to the damper it puts on immigration.

Now, American companies sell more products in Mexico than ever before. And the celebrated "sucking sound" of American jobs headed south to Mexico that Ross Perot and Pat Buchanan injected into the 1992 presidential campaign? U.S. trade unionists are right to raise the issue, but it hasn't happened, at least in a clearly measurable volume. "In all sectors, the U.S. economy added 8.9 million jobs since NAFTA," economist Sidney Weintraub testified before the International Trade Commission.

We think NAFTA is paying off in many ways and expect President Clinton to deliver the same conclusion in his report to Congress.

TIJUANA



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Commentary

The New Entrepreneur Class Writes Its Own Ticket

Free of government control and protection, business and industry risk-takers profit hugely from innovation.

By LUIS RUBIO

Time was when being close to the government was the only possible way for Mexican businesses to be profitable. In today's world, the only way for Mexicans to make money is to beat their Japanese, Brazilian, Chinese or American counterparts.

And this is precisely what the new breed of Mexican entrepreneurs is doing. Whether it is in steel, cement, glass, chemicals, auto parts or processed foods, the new generation of innovators has turned around the Mexican economy and become the core of its success. It is they who lead the rapidly growing export industry, creating a new phenomenon: the Mexican multinational. The most promising development is that the 30% of the country's firms, producing 70% of the goods, have become world-competitive. Above all, the new entrepreneurs are all a living example that Mexicans can in fact make it.

What is interesting is that most of these firms are fairly small, even by Mexican standards. While there are several billion-dollar companies that are growing fast, 80% of the 15,000 companies that export and that are very successful by any yardstick are small. This is not the way it was before the process of liberalization began about 12 years ago.

Although there are a few industrial groups that have celebrated a century in business, modern Mexican industry was developed largely in response to the scarcity of imports caused by World War II. Suddenly, Mexico found itself without tires, processed foods, cars and most manufactured goods, which were being diverted to the U.S. war effort. The Mexican government launched a program of industrial-

ization by substitution for imports. The war shielded those businesses from foreign competition, and Mexican entrepreneurship was born. When the war ended and imports became available once more, the government, under the auspices of the U.N. Economic Commission for Latin America, introduced legislation to protect those firms and develop home-grown industry.

But the essence of the new industrial thrust lay in its origin as a government program that led to the development of government-owned banks, utilities and plants producing steel, fertilizers, petrochemicals, cars, trucks—all the essentials. By controlling raw materials, by exerting extraordinary influence in the availability of credit, granting

discretionary subsidies and managing the flow of imports, the government ended up having full powers to determine the profitability of private firms. Businessmen found themselves spending most of their time in the corridors of government offices rather than looking after their factories and customers. Just like the famous thief's explanation for why he robbed banks, Mexican entrepreneurs made money by staying close to where the money was.

That breed is dying out now. Though there are many ways that government can influence how firms fare, it is the market that determines whether they succeed or fail. And most of Mexico's entrepreneurs have failed the market test. More than 150,000 firms used to produce the country's goods; today barely one-third are still capable of satisfying consumer demand. Countless firms have gone under, and more will follow if they don't develop entrepreneurial talent.

Twelve years after imports began to be liberalized, the business scene has been thoroughly transformed. The results, both good and bad, are impressive. On the one hand, Mexico's industrial exports have increased from just under \$7 billion in 1986 to more than \$60 billion in 1996, almost a ninefold increase in a decade. Those exports did not come

from a vacuum, but from an ever stronger private sector that has become as competitive and successful as the best in the world. By the same token, 70% of Mexico's traditional industrial firms are dying and a whole era of Mexican business leaders and practices is dying with them.

What differentiates the successful companies from their earlier brethren is not size but entrepreneurship. In fact, there's not a single company among them that is not led by an exceptionally skillful individual. It is entrepreneurial drive that has succeeded in transforming this impressive sector of the economy. Only this can explain booming things like the relatively tiny firms, worth a few millions of dollars, that represent more than 10% of the world capacity in their product and, often, 20% or more of the U.S. market.

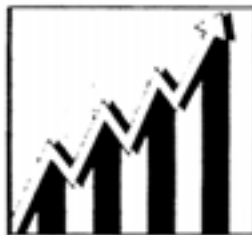
By liberalizing imports, negotiating a free trade arrangement with the U.S. and Canada and welcoming foreign investors, Mexico made a daring challenge to Mexican businesses: Become competitive or else die. It's the rule of the entrepreneur class all around the globe.

Luis Rubio is president of CIDAC—Centro de Investigación para el Desarrollo (Center for Research for Development), an independent political and economic institution in Mexico City.

To read previous articles in the Soundings on Mexico series, visit The Times' Internet Web site:
<http://www.latimes.com/>
HOME/NEWS/COMMENT



Today, economist LUIS RUBIO looks at the country's new generation of entrepreneurs.



Let's talk "economic development" (a special case of "economic growth") here for the "third world." The classic model begins with "primitive accumulation" whereby massive naked exploitation leads to high profits and reinvestment. So, growth begins to take off and some of the benefits of that wealth can be more broadly distributed. Exploitation of labor may, then, become far lessened to the point where many workers become quite comfortable and secure. Though, not all. In the poor regions of the world, however, primitive accumulation does not lead to the growth of much of the population to a sizable middle income. Why? Because the third world is colonized by the first world. Profits are not redistributed back to those who produced them but to the stockholders of the transnationals in the first world and a small number of the rich in the countries where the work is done. The "liberal media" in the USA does not address policy concerns in broad terms that fully explain the winners and losers. As giant enterprises, the "liberal media" are part of the winners. Only in some articles and the "op eds" do critics lay out the correct picture.

U.S. ELEVATOR BEFORE



Sweetwater



AFTER



Mexicali



SANYO (Refrigerators) BEFORE

610 Union JOBS (CWA 9509)



Keany Mesa, San Diego

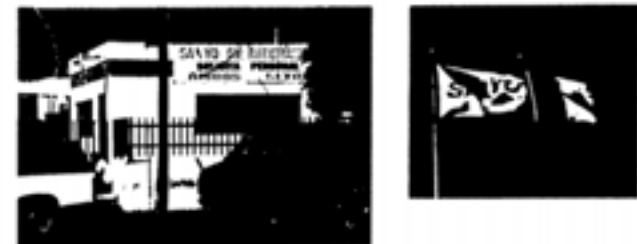
AFTER

102 Union JOBS
(CWA 9509)



Otay Mesa, San Diego

3-400 NON-Union JOBS



Otay Mesa, Tijuana