

Option 1: Justice for the People

Mexican history is scarred by betrayal and injustice. The blood of Emiliano Zapata and Miguel Hidalgo bear witness to the triumph of the powerful over the powerless. The same is happening today. The will of the Mexican people is being denied in the name of international capitalism and free markets. NAFTA has opened our country to a new form of exploitation by the United States. Mexico has been shoved, weak and defenseless, into the global marketplace. The results have been devastating. Millions have been pushed off the land. Unemployment has reduced a generation of workers to desperate poverty. Lack of opportunity has forced thousands to turn to drugs and crime to survive. Meanwhile, a handful of rich families has snatched up still more of our country's wealth.

Mexico must heed the cry for justice from its people. We must rekindle the promise of the Mexican Revolution for those who have known only poverty and oppression. We must turn away from an international system that benefits the rich at the expense of the poor, wealthy countries at the expense of poorer ones. We should also limit our relationship with the United States. For centuries, it was our greatest enemy. Today, its oppression comes in the form of free trade policies, a huge market for illegal drugs, and lax gun policies that lead to thousands of Mexican deaths each year.

Fairness and equality must serve as the foundation for a new society. The resources of our country must be used to meet the needs of our people. The enormous imbalance between rich and poor must be corrected. Our country's political system must be more responsive to the demands of the people. With commitment and struggle, all Mexicans can at last have an opportunity to share in the wealth of our country.

Option 1 is based on the following beliefs

- The state needs to play a central role in Mexico's economy so that the country's resources are used to reduce poverty.

- Mexico's problems, both today and in the past, are due mainly to the concentration of power and wealth in the hands of a tiny, undemocratic elite.

- The international system, led by the United States, is based on the exploitation of Mexico and other developing countries.

What policies should we pursue?

- The government should take a leading role in managing the economy and promoting higher living standards. The minimum wage should be raised, the wealthy should be forced to pay their fair share of taxes, and government projects should be launched to hire the unemployed.

- Mexico should lobby for an immediate end to NAFTA and its other free trade agreements.

- Mexico's should limit its foreign trade and aim to keep Mexico's resources for the Mexican people.

- The government should work with the EZLN and other local groups to address the concerns of local communities.

- Mexico should direct new resources toward strengthening *ejidos* and increasing food production for the Mexican market. Land taken unfairly from peasants should be returned.

- The government should expand social services to create alternatives to the drug trade and emigration.

Arguments for

1. By limiting trade, we can use food and oil that would have been exported to meet the needs of our people.

2. By alleviating poverty, we attack the drug trade at its root.

3. Investing in the advancement of peasant communities and other disadvantaged groups will finally allow the poorest among us to participate fully in the development of Mexican society.

Arguments against

1. Reversing years of free-market reform will leave Mexico isolated from the mainstream of the global economy and destroy the confidence of investors, both at home and abroad, in the Mexican economy.

2. Refusing to work with the United States could leave the millions of Mexicans in the United States vulnerable to discriminatory U.S. policies.

3. Re-establishing state control over the economy will undermine the modernization of Mexican industry, leading to inefficiency and corruption.

4. The government will not be able to fund its social programs without the income generated by trade.