Mexico, Mexican Americans, and Mexican Immigrants

I. Racism, Exploitation, scapegoating

A. If the practical conditions that allowed slavery to arise was the cotton plantations of the south,

B .if the practical conditions that led to the extermination of the native Americans was the need for geographical expansion, land, resources.

C. The practical conditions which has led to the marginalization of the Hispanic community in our society is both the need for

1. cheap labor

2.the need for "scapegoats."

3. a society which refuses to deal with its real problems needs to find unreal ones that it can target with its wrath.

4. Today Mexican Americans and Mexican immigrants fill both roles, cheap labor and scapegoat.

5. 4 million Mexican laborers do the majority of migrant labor work.

- The work and housing conditions are substandard,

- they have no health benefits and no real home.

- Over half are below the poverty level, a high percent are poor-poor

-migrant workers have high levels of TB, influenza, pneumonia, and a life-expectancy of 47 years of age.

- They do the hardest work, work that is necessarily labor intensive.

6. However, they are blamed by many in the middle class who blame them for their declining life style

7. they are blamed by ideological institutions, media and govt, for creating the problems of the American economy, destroying the health care system, sapping the welfare system, and the education system.

8. Little or no attention is given to the fact that these workers are necessary, that maybe agribusinesses who profit from their work could afford to pay more, health benefits, sanitary facilities.

9.Or that they need not hire them. Almost no space is given to "globalization" and its effect on immigration

10.as I pointed out in class the meat packing industry is actively recruiting in Mexico for workers to fill jobs that white Americans will not fill.

11.Recruiters that take advantage of the impoverished with lies and half truths, poor living and working conditions.

12.They especially like illegal aliens because they are afraid to organize

13. and while politicians posture about keeping illegal

immigrants out, they pass laws to let more in.

II. This is a cycle, Mexicans forced off their own land by multinationals, recruited in the US, and then blamed

A. Mexico

1. Mexico was colonized by the Spanish, won their

independence, was invaded by the French, invaded

by the US, and fought a civil war to overthrow an

autocratic government, they abolished slavery long

before the US.

2. the US took a third of Mexico

2. Mexico is now a third world country part of the

global empire of neo-colonialism

3. It wealth, minerals and oil, and agriculture is

exploited by the first world

4. it is a class society with a wealthy elite in power who

serve their own and international interests

5. it is a major drug transfer and drug producing center

6. Those who resist are killed, Chiapas, Tarahumara

7. Victims of neo-colonialism forced to work on agribusiness plantation under medieval conditions, or in maquiladoras, or flee to the US.

8. Join the migrant labor force, or the meat packing

industry

III. Mexican Removal, repatriation and mass expulsion

A. In the late nineteenth century Mexico under Portilio Diaz privatized the communal land.

1. Nearly 5 million Mexican farmers lost their land, 135 million acres, 30 million acres in Chihuahua went to seven people.

2. Much went to foreigners

B. Simultaneously the US because of industrial and agricultural expansion was in need of cheap labor

1. the Alien Land Law of 1913 (non-whites from becoming citizens, therefore could not own land

2.the Chinese Exclusion Act 1882 prohibited immigration of Chinese for 10 years, created a shortage of labor. Asians were to militant and too aggressive.

3. Immigration Act of 1917 barred non-whites from immigration, Mexicans were considered white

4. In this situation more than a million of these displaced farmers immigrated to the US to fill the low level jobs in railroads, mines, and mostly in agriculture esp in CA

5. jobs are segregated

6.railroads -- skilled high level year round jobs to whites

7. Mexicans, low wage, seasonal, manual labor, despite the individuals skill level (Mexican jobs)

repair, not secure, travel everywhere

8. agriculture-- segregated by race, racialized tasks, races

against each other

9.railroads-- migratory living is costly -- alienation

-- minimal standard of living, housing is poor,

racialized white in houses, for free,

--Mexicans in railway cars which are rented, bought everything from commissary

10. agriculture -- no medical care, lived in employer owned houses or provided there own, car parks, tent camps, squatters camps, no sanitary facilities, segregated whites from Mexicans, over-recruiting workers, keeps wages low

11. segregated neighborhoods, fear of intermarriage, theaters, pools, restaurants.

Consequences, **low wages, low skilled, transient and seasonal, hard to move up, vicious circle of poverty, hard for kids to move up because all hands are needed in field. same now, child labor laws.**

IV. GREAT DEPRESSION - SCAPEGOATING- AND THE MEXICAN REMOVAL

A. Who do we blame for the Great Depression, not big business, not big finance, not big government. Let’s blame unemployment and those Mexicans, they are not really Americans, they are migratory

B. Dust Bowl, thousands from Oklahoma to CA "Grapes of Wrath"

C. The first and only mass expulsion of immigrants in the history of th U.S. -- repatriation or Mexican Removal

1)supposedly all illegal immigrants, with months just Mexican

2) supposedly male temporary illegally, no, all targeted, intimidation, force, threats, coercion. Mexican Americans, legal citizens, legal aliens

3)scareheading -- publicity and media campaigns threatening raids, the arbitrary threat of legal expulsion caused many legal to return

4) first immigrants involved in labor disputes and strikes

5) ideological institutions govt and media Mexicans were draining welfare during this hard time, not even close

6) 500,000 repatriated, ended in 1940s when we had labor shortage because of the war welcome back