

US / Mexico Strategy

For over five years now, May First/People Link has been comprised of two organizational centers: in the United States and Mexico. While ours remains an international organization, the predominance of membership in these two centers, reflected in the bi-national character of our leadership, is one of our organization's singular achievements: we are among the only organizations in the Left of either country with a membership substantially situated in both.

This presents a situation that is unique in its potential and the challenges it presents. Here, in summary, are the issues.

1. This bi-national relationship reflects the relationship between the two countries. Mexico and the U.S. are bound by a rich, interactive history characterized by constant migratory movement north and continuous exploitation south. This migration has created a huge community of permanent residence and citizens in the United States continuously enhanced by a flow of migrants from Mexico.

A collaborative strategy involving the left movements in both countries could have enormous impact on the future of the entire region and would certainly enhance the struggles in both countries for social transformation. Yet, the collaboration between the movements of both countries has been paltry at best and sometimes completely absent.

Our project is one of the first real attempts at this collaboration.

2. The power of this collaboration is enhanced by its foundation: technology. Technology's central role in the development of the current political situation as well as its potential in the future make the current bi-national collaboration all the more important.

3. The two sections in this collaboration are very different. Both provide technology for members but, in terms of movement work, the Mexico section concentrates much more on training and exposure of new technology to movement groups as well as representation in technology conferences. The U.S. section does very little training and works in coalitions and networks designed to concentrate on political/technical issues.

4. While there has been an honest, and fairly successful, attempt at democratically and structurally representing both countries, there is no strategic coordination between the centers. It is basically as if two organizations share the same budget and decision-making process.

5. This problem is situated in the difficulty of forging a strategy between two countries but solving has been made difficult by what may have been a premature action transforming the Mexico center into a cooperative without an adequate internal discussion of the structural and strategic implications of what they would mean for this organization and the relationship between its two centers. That has yielded no benefits and has served to deepen the chasm between the two centers.

That chasm is reflected in the by-laws' section on the bi-national character of our organization: a somewhat superficial, mathematical rendition of power-sharing that has done little to bring us closer together or in better coordination.

6. As we move toward the organization-wide transformation, we need to revisit this relationship and think about it strategically.

Should organization continue working to develop a strategy involving our memberships in these two countries?

Is there a need for strategic unity of any kind between the two centers?

If so, what are the bases for this unity?

If not, what kind of collaboration can be carried on between the two centers?

What is the Mexican role in our coop if we convert to it?

7. With the extreme right-wing takeover of the U.S. government and the resulting turmoil it has caused in ruling class circles as well as the explosive community-based movements of the last five years, the U.S. is primed for major movement eruption. Mexico just elected a progressive to its Presidency: a fact certain to provoke political tension and heightened struggle.

It is clear that the benefits of a bi-national collaboration, present when we first explored it, are greater than ever. **The question for us is how we pursue that potential.**