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# The Great Invasion

## Mexico Recovers Its Own

By Carlos Loret de Mola

Los Angeles, California. This is the second largest Mexican city in the world for the number of our compatriots settled there, and it must have as many Spanish-speakers as Madrid. The Anglo-Saxons are still the most numerous and there are a lot of Negroes, but the numerical advance of Mexicans is astonishing. Ten movie houses at once show the Cantinflas comedy "El Barrendero." On the streets one has the impression of a great Mexican city. "La Opinion," with a circulation of 60,000 copies, is one of three daily newspapers in Spanish in this enormous country. When did the Mexicanization of Los Angeles happen?

It has been a sociological phenomenon of tremendous implications.

A peaceful mass of people, hardworking, carries out slowly and patiently an unstoppable invasion, the most important in human history. You cannot give me a similar example of such a large migratory wave by an ant-like multitude, stubborn, unarmed, and carried on in the face of the most powerful and best-armed nation on earth.

But neither barbed-wire fences, nor aggressive border guards, nor campaigns, nor laws, nor police raids against the undocumented, have stopped this movement of the masses that is unprecedented in any part of the world.

In 1950 they were called "Pachucos" (half-breeds); today they are called "Chicanos." They have marked social and family characteristics, agility for adapting to the environment and for conquering a great region, once primitive and virgin, that belonged to our fatherland, and we lost it. But it seems to be slowly returning to the jurisdiction of Mexico without the firing of a single shot, nor requiring the least diplomatic action, by means of a steady, spontaneous, and uninterrupted occupation.

These are not assault troops. Nor are they potentates who take over a territory through economic power and purchase of properties. They are a mass of workers, artisans, women, and students who arrive to reinforce the base of the common people and the human virtues of this society in California. Much like them, despised and persecuted, were the humble Christians in the sovereign empire of Rome; but the meek brought down the Caesars and established — for some 2,000 years now — their own style of life over those all-powerful enslavers of the ancient world.

There is a great difference in circumstances. Today we perceive as powerful those who control and manage

U.S. society; and it seems crazy to dare to believe it, but let's not forget that great social movements, and changes in social structure, were done by populist forces, so long as they knew how to work together.

The United States is the richest and best organized country in the world, within the limitations of the capitalist system. Its industrial power and way of living absorbs immigrants and readily converts them to nationals. But the Mexicans in the southern part of this nation continue to be Mexican and even to impress their personality on their surroundings, in limited proportions and yet ever growing.

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Usually they take low-paying jobs; nevertheless, they put such industry, will-power, and self-interest into their job efforts — precisely because of unequal status in a hostile and deprecatory ambience — that they end up making themselves indispensable.

California society does not dare to suppress them. The efforts of misguided authorities to expel them always end in failure. They (the Chicanos) are a social and physical reality that cannot be uprooted.

The U.S. upper classes in the western states live in increasing splendor. Their apogee of luxury and comfort doubtlessly marks the inevitable beginning of their decadence. The Mexican invasion continues.

Who are they? They are those who have a great capacity to take risks, the more ambitious, those with more character, the strongest from the rural and suburban areas of their home country. A human current of natural selection flows out of Mexico and settles down in the United States, where a second selection takes place. Those who are selected must meet two tests: that of leaving, with fortitude, their family and society and giving up familiar ways and customs; and then that of having the character to adapt to new

working conditions. A human current with these qualities, if it can succeed in maintaining itself united and coherent, will end by winning. It's a question of time.

The territory lost in the 19th century by a Mexico torn by internal strife and under centralist dictatorships led by paranoid chiefs, like Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna, seems to be restoring itself through a humble people who go on settling various zones that once were ours on the old maps.

Land, under any concept of possession, ends up in the hands of those who deserve it. All of us Mexicans should prove ourselves worthy of what we have and what we want. The problem is one of organization.

And those humble Mexicans — the braceros, the "wetbacks," the undocumented, teach us with their example of tough, iron-like character and their spirit of great adventure how to overcome a hostile environment. Let us imitate them from within the Mexico that belongs to us. ■