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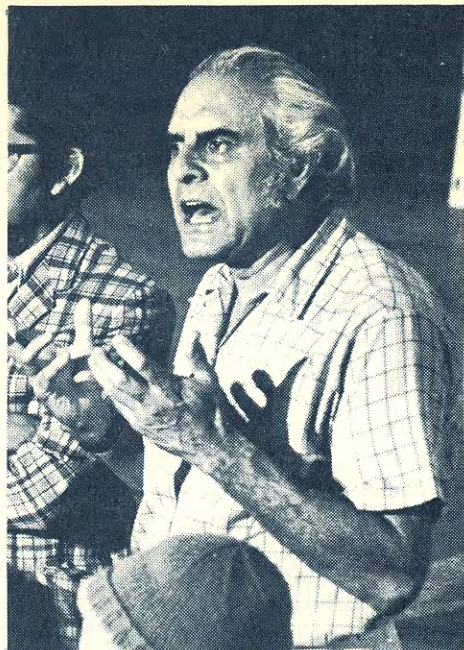


Photo by Steve Ramirez

Bert Corona

Bert Corona is a founder and former president of California MAPA (Mexican-American Political Association). As a leader of the *Hermandad General de Trabajadores* (General Brotherhood of Workers) in Los Angeles, he is presently engaged in a struggle to defend the rights of Raza workers who are in the U. S. without visas. A long time activist in the Chicano and labor movements, Corona was elected chairman of the National Chicano Political Caucus held in San Jose, Calif., April 22-23, 1972. The move overturned the control of the conference by moderate Chicano groups such as MAPA, and resulted in the caucus adopting a program of independent Raza political action against both Democrats and Republicans.

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Bert Corona Speaks



on La Raza Unida Party & The 'Illegal Alien' Scare

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INTRODUCTION

The following is a speech given by Bert Corona, Jan. 22, 1972, at the *Mi Raza Primero* Conference in Muskegon, Mich., where he was a keynote speaker. Corona discusses the need for independent Raza political action in opposition to the Democratic and Republican parties. He also outlines the reactionary character of the Dixon Arnett Law, which made it illegal to "knowingly" hire an "illegal alien." The law, passed by the California legislature with the support of many trade union officials and most liberal Democratic Party politicians, was declared unconstitutional by a Superior Court in Los Angeles County a month after Corona's speech. In a move to reinstate the law, however, Governor Ronald Reagan has issued a decree that all Californians must take an oath that they are U. S. citizens or otherwise legally entitled to work in the state. Legislation similar to the Dixon Arnett Law is presently under consideration by Congress (HR 23-28, Sections 26 & 28).

The speech was originally delivered in Spanish and has been translated and edited by *Militant* staff writer Antonio Camejo. Apart from minor stylistic changes editing has been limited to brief deletions for reasons of space. These have been noted by an ellipsis (. . . .).

LA RAZA UNIDA PARTY

"Perhaps inside the Democratic Party, working within the system, we are going to have the influence we all want." We have all heard this. Senator Montoya [D-N. M.] tells us every time we get together, "Why don't you fellows work positively within the system?" Mr. Roybal [D-Calif.] tells us the same thing. They all say the same thing, and then the labor leaders when they come to get our vote say the

same thing. But let's see just what the labor movement has received being inside the Democratic Party.

Since the labor movement doesn't control the party but is simply a bloc within a party that is controlled by others, it has received only crumbs. It has been able to defend itself so as not to be destroyed completely, but in reality the trade-union movement has not attained any great victories with that approach. In 1947 the government passed the Taft-Hartley law, and many of the labor leaders inside the Democratic Party said at that time, "Well, perhaps it isn't so bad after all. In the end they're going to register all the communist labor leaders and get them out so they don't bother us — these militants in the unions who keep trying to make us accountable, and who talk about rank-and-file control and worker power."

The law was passed and the labor movement had one hand chained behind its back. Later on in the 1950s after the most reactionary wave we have seen in decades, — McCarthyism — they passed the Landrum-Griffith Act. This tied the hands of labor even more. And now last year they have just established the Pay Board. This famous Pay Board, supported by Democrats and Republicans and supported by the labor movement, betrayed the workers and supports the corporations so they can continue getting larger and larger profits.

Those are the results which make it evident that we are still playing with the illusion that perhaps within one of the two parties, perhaps within the Democratic Party, if all us *mexicanos*, all of us of La Raza, unite something will happen. As the *gabacho* [white] politicians of the Democratic Party say, "Now when all of you 'meskins' get together, and you all get inside the Democratic Party, and you all vote as a bloc, then maybe we'll sit down and decide to

name one of you who is eminently qualified to some meaningless position." [Laughter and applause.]

Every time the labor movement, with all its power inside the Democratic Party, has tried to control or benefit a little bit from the large corporations, the real power has pushed it aside and laughed at it. In Texas, the "right to work" law still exists. In state after state controlled by Democratic administrations these antilabor laws still exist. So then where is the great influence that the labor movement has inside the Democratic Party? That's the little story they're trying to sell us. . . . But no matter which party wins *a nosotros nos siguen jodiendo, como dice el español* [they'll continue screwing us, as the Spanish say]. [Laughter and applause.]

We can see this now in the law that they're trying to pass against the longshoremen's strike on the West Coast. This is the end result of the politics of collaboration within one party that is controlled by the same group that controls the other party, and this is going to result in a great defeat for the workers movement in its totality. This is the final step of bankrupt and accommodationist politics. Perhaps at one time, during the years of [Franklin D.] Roosevelt it was a viable policy. Perhaps at some time it had a certain validity. I don't know. But it is now clearly ridiculous.

And this is what they want to sell us in 1972. No less than 20 Chicano representatives of Muskie, of Kennedy, of all of them, have come to California. And they all come with the same tune — which doesn't go beyond three notes — "It's to our advantage. It's to our advantage because this time it will be different." How is it going to be any different if the only difference is the puppets they have up front? Behind the curtain are Morgan, Rockefeller, Carnegie, Vanderbilt. They're all back there. The Chase

Manhattan Bank, the Bank of America, the First National Bank of New York, the Boston group, and I continue mentioning them because those groups have a lot to do with us Chicanos, with La Raza, with Puerto Ricans and Central and South Americans. After all, who are the owners of ASARCO [American Smelting and Refining Company], of the great mining corporations of Mexico, of Peru, or were [the owners] in Chile? They are Morgan, Rockefeller, and the rest. Who are the owners of the railroads of the Southwest, of the Southern Pacific, of the Santa Fe, of the Texas Pacific, and all the rest? Look at the sides of the freight cars. They say "J.P. Morgan Company." Those are the owners of the railroads.

Who are the owners of the industries, developed in the last hundred years under the capitalist system in the Southwest or western part of the United States? These same cats. They are the owners of almost all the new industry in Mexico. Eighty percent of Mexico's industry that is not in the hands of the government is penetrated in a dominant manner by the capital of these same five or six financial groups. This is the simple reality of the matter. And this situation is repeated in Central and South America, in the countries of the Caribbean, in Africa, and in all the underdeveloped nations controlled by these world capitalists. It is the same story.

So when there is a strike in agriculture we are fighting against these same elements. They are the owners of the canneries. Not directly of course. They have names like Heinz, Vandecamp, Del Monte, the Green Giant, but in the end its the same. When there is a strike in the mines against Kennecott, Anaconda, ASARCO, or St. Joseph's Lead, in the end we have to see that we are dealing with the same group. And they don't only dominate in the Southwest and the

rest of the country but also in Mexico and in Central and South America. It is very important that we know exactly what system controls these two political parties. *Porque si nos vamos a meter al toril, hay que saber de donde vienen los toros!* [Because if we are going to get into the bullpen we have to know where the bulls will be coming from!] [Laughter and applause.]

They have given the same promises and the same alternatives to the labor movement that they give us—crumbs. They parade before us the dilemma of the "lesser of two evils." "Come with us because we are less evil than the other one." But as this one guy says, "Bring me two pregnant women and even though one of them is only just a little bit pregnant, she's still pregnant." [Laughter and applause.]

And the system knows how to manipulate. We have seen how from time to time they name a person with a Spanish surname to be an ambassador. They do the same thing with labor leaders. . . . So we can't forget what our history has been because they try to repeat our history, each time a little more polished, more sophisticated, in order to serve those in power. A while back some gentlemen were pushing a new political party in this country, the New Democratic Coalition. And they went to the campuses and had meetings with what they called "the leadership." And a lot of students went and asked some strong questions because they saw a certain similarity between this and the Democratic Party in spite of the rhetoric. These Democrats, disguised as the New Democratic Coalition, use our rhetoric. They talk about "liberation," being against oppression and racism, against the war. They are professors of terminology. But when we asked them if they were totally committed to struggle against the Democratic Par-

ty, come what may, to defend the interests of the Chicano vote in relation to reapportionment, they began to vacillate saying, "We support it in principle, but we don't know what the situation is here, etc." The same old stuff. When it comes from a party not controlled by the people, by the power of the masses, then it doesn't matter how they dress it. *Pueden vestir al mono de seda, pero mono se queda.* [You can dress a monkey in silk but it's still a monkey.]

Understanding then how both parties work in the political system in this country, how could we defend and promote our vital interests within either party, especially the Democratic Party? We already see what has happened to the trade-union movement. We have seen what has happened to the Black movement. Despite the fact that they have many elected officials, the mass of the Black people remain as poor as ever. . . . Brutality against Black people is as profound as ever.

Now, of course, it is a little different. It is more subtle, more disguised, and no longer a totally open racism. But a subtle poison can be worse than one with the label right out front. No one is going to take a bottle that says, "caution, arsenic." But if they give it to you as if it were water? [Laughter and applause.] That is the situation with this little party. *Nos quieren hacer de chivos los tamales* [They want to give us tamales made out of goat meat]. We know that if we get back into the Democratic Party, as some people are going around proposing, this time we are not only going to come out battered, as we always have, but skinned alive [laughter], a peeled onion. [Laughter and applause.]

What has been the history of the *mexicano* in the United States? What has been the history of the peoples and countries of Latin America during

the last hundred years? If we refuse to accept how the past has been a nightmare, then we don't have much of a future, because these two political parties are the property of the Rockefellers, the Morgans, Vanderbilts, Carnegies, and all those financial organizations they have established.

What is the role that they have defined for us? *That we should be a permanent source of cheap labor for this economic system, always vulnerable to exploitation.* Because this system is characterized by a very singular thing: nothing exists in private or semiprivate hands that is not for the purpose of producing profits. For this reason, we have migrated to every corner of this country. If this were not the case, then all of us would have stayed along the border, in the Southwest. But many times I find more people from New Mexico or Texas in the Northwest, for example, than in those states themselves. Why? Why do they go there? Who takes them there? Do they go because they are masters of their own destiny? If that were so, I am sure that *nuestra Raza* [our people] would not be wandering over there near Canada where it rains every day and you almost drown six months out of the year, where you can't find dry corn to make good fat *tortillas*. People don't go there because they want to. You don't find them in Alaska freezing to death, fishing and working in those smelly, disease-ridden fish packing plants because they want to. Why then do they go? Because the economic system has denied them the possibility of making a decent living in *El Valle* in Texas, or a decent living in the country of their origin, Mexico. [Applause.] Because these same companies exploit there also.

Even while accepting that many of the whites are also victims of this system, we have to point out that this system—based completely on

~~profits and the exploitation of the masses by the few in order to obtain super profits—has catalogued us to serve forever as cheap labor in Mexico, in central and South America, in the Southwest, the Midwest, in Alaska, or in the North Pole if they could make some profits. And they'll probably even send us to the moon to work the mines. [Applause.] What is the role that has been designated for Mexico or Central and South America? Simply the same thing, that of removing the raw materials from the mines of Mexico, Chile, Peru, at the lowest prices [so] that Venezuelan and Mexican petroleum appear in other areas at the cheapest possible prices. Even the large agricultural interests in the Southwest are moving canneries and packaging plants across the border because harvesting is cheaper in Mexico. Everything is based on producing the greatest possible profits. And if we believe there is any other "mystique" to politics, we're dreaming. *Nos hemos tragado no, no mas un atole, sino hasta el dedo.* [We've not only swallowed the hook, line, and sinker, but the fishing pole as well.] [Laughter.]~~

There comes a time in history when a people have no choice but to do what history calls upon them to do—to break with such a vile history, with the nightmare of having been exploited, of always being vulnerable and never enjoying economic stability. We have never been part of the "American way of life," of the affluence or wealth of this country. As Mr [Salvador] Ramírez said this morning the unionized workers, the white workers, are justly complaining about the Pay Board and its decisions. They're complaining because their average earnings are \$8,900 per year. What is to be said about our people in Los Angeles who don't receive more than \$2,500 annually working in the garment or the electronics industries, in

the canneries, or in the other industries where our people can get work? Or in South Texas where earnings don't reach \$1,000? We are talking about a very real situation—the plight of the masses of our people.

On the basis of that experience, on the basis that these two parties have been nothing but promises—purely a love of words and not of deeds—there is only one way out, and that is to form our own party. And that is why La Raza Unida Party has been receiving the support of the people. That is why you have seen the successes in *Cristal*, in South Texas, in Colorado, in the campaign of Raul Ruiz [in Los Angeles], in other places. Because our people have said, "*Ya Basta!*" [Enough!] We're up to here with the lies, with the tricks, and with the promises without deeds to back them up." The deeds don't exist to back up the promises, nor to guarantee anything so that we might have faith and count on something for the future within those parties.

But what kind of party must our party be? Is it going to be simply a copy of the other parties to fight for political power within the system? If we are going to be satisfied with working within the framework the system has given us, if we think that our party, working within the system, is going to be able to push aside, to reject, the role assigned us by the large financial groups, by the great powers which control this nation, then we are dreaming. Then we are even more mistaken.

Our party, first of all, must emanate from this history of betrayal, of neglect, of exploitation, which has been our life here in this country, not only in the economic, social and cultural sphere, but in politics itself. That has been our history, and from there must emanate the very basis of our party. Every step that this *Partido de La Raza Unida* takes must fulfill a series

of criteria. One of these, I believe, should be whether or not the action will strengthen the political independence of our people. Second, whether the step or proposition is going to benefit the great mass of the poor of our people, or if it will benefit only a few. And third, if an action will help develop or establish the means through which our people, our Raza, can determine its own destiny. If we ask these questions every time that we support a candidate or a proposition, I don't think we're going to make so many errors. Errors we will make. Sometimes we deserve them, but as the saying goes, we are entitled to them.

This party must see the reality of what our life has been here. If not, we will be no more than another chapter in the history of the political exploitation of our people by the capitalist economic system and the two parties it controls. We can't play with a lion and expect that it will treat us as a kitten treats a lamb. And if we approach a wolf, and we are still little lambs, we will get eaten for sure. Thus we must always think out our steps and never be afraid to take an independent stand as the comrades of the Raza Unida Party in Texas have done—a position in which we bring upon ourselves the hatred of the opposition and all those other elements controlled by the two parties.

Only in that manner will we be able to march forward. I believe that if our party develops on the basis of political independence, with the determination that we are going to control our own lives—always rejecting suicidal courses or the romances and serenades of the foundations with the little programs they offer us—then we will have a weapon that can authentically represent our vital interests. We have to conceive a plan for dealing with these two parties without accommodating ourselves to them. And

perhaps the only way that we can deal with them is in continuous battle.

I believe there are great possibilities for La Raza Unida Party. In Southern California we did not achieve the big victory that we hoped for,—that of establishing our party through registration. In order to qualify as a legal party in California you have to register no less than 67,000 new voters in the Raza Unida Party. In order to fulfill that figure you have to register double that number, because the registrars of voters are very racist. Every Spanish surname they see come in on the lists they challenge or investigate by sending the people letters asking them to mail or bring in proof of their citizenship. Some of our people replied that they were citizens by treaty. So the registrar of voters asked for a copy of it. We sent him a copy of the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo. [Laughter.]

But we *are* forging a unity of the Chicano youth, the women, the workers, the farm workers, the old, and the poor. But already, the unity in Los Angeles where I live and work is reaching even a broader level. That is because of the very special exploitation that exists there. Our unity has to include not only the Chicanos born here, but also those who come from Mexico and Central and South America with documents, and those who come from there without documents—those people who are called *mojados* [wetbacks] or "illegals." We don't accept these terms, because for us the only thing that is illegal is the Immigration Service. [Applause.]

THE 'ILLEGAL ALIEN' SCARE

About two months ago I went to a conference in Bay City, Mich., where I spoke about how they are using the Immigration Service and the new immigration laws to exploit the *mexicano* workers more and more, to fill

them with fear so they won't organize or complain or go to the union.

I was invited to speak that afternoon on TV. I was scheduled for six, but the manager of the station said I would instead speak at six-thirty, "because we have to present a professor here who is a friend of the station owner, and he will speak before you." So I said, "fine."

Well, who was that *torito* [little bull] they threw at us? That man stood up there for half an hour and tried to sell to the so-called "Mexican-Americans" the idea that the greatest threat to their well-being is not the capitalist system, not the corporations, not bad wages, not discrimination, not exploitation. No! You know what is? A massive horde conglomerated on the other side of the border like hungry wasps, with their teeth bared, descending upon us good "Mexican-Americans" to take away our jobs, lower our salaries, and create problems for our children with diseases and bad living conditions.

It's not the system, nor the corporations, nor racism, nor discrimination! The problem is our *carnales* [brothers and sisters], who in their poverty come from Mexico to find work. They are the enemy! I said to myself, *hijo de la gata parda* [son of a brown cat]. What propaganda!

That's what they are going around telling us in Los Angeles. They are trying to divide the Chicano from the *Tijuano* [someone from Tijuana], the Chicano from those who have papers. To those with papers they say, "You're not like the Chicanos. Don't let them call you that. The name comes from chicanery. It's insulting. Don't use it." But those who really lose out are the people without papers—they really have no rights. They tell them all kinds of lies, and these people are truly anxious for someone to help them.

That is why we have to redefine

what is meant by unity. Our unity must embrace all *nuestros carnales* [our brothers and sisters], because regardless of what is said, the danger does not stem from those who come across the border. They are the ones who have helped create the great riches of this country. There is not a furrow in a vegetable field, not a tree in an orchard, nor a dam, mine, railroad, or road that is not linked with the sweat and blood of *nuestra Raza* who come from the other side. [Applause.]

The people don't cause unemployment. The workers don't steal the jobs. Workers don't cause unemployment or low wages. Workers don't cause bad health and working conditions. Who does? Only the owners of those factories, the owners of those mines, the owners of those fields and modern plants. But they dare to throw the blame on the unfortunate worker and his family who come here to earn their daily bread.

Unfortunately, many times the unions, deceived and taken in because they have a *puestecito* [little job] over there in the government, say the same thing. They support the law advocated by Ted Kennedy and Edmund Muskie that would increase the personnel of *la migra* [the Immigration Service] 10 times—not just on the border, but so they can roam the entire country looking for our people. More personnel so that the wives, husbands, and children of those who are here legally can't come in. Those are the amendments that our supposed "friends"—in the name of protecting the Mexican-American worker—are attempting to enact. They put all the blame on the poor Mexican worker, *when all of us should know that it is the economic system that is to blame for the fact that there aren't enough jobs!* [Applause.]

The masses and the workers are a vibrant force. They buy, eat, live, and

use. They are the ones who create the markets. They are not the enemy. Without the working people there would be nothing. What would be left if all the *mexicanos* were to leave the Southwest? How would the economy of the Southwest, or over here where you are, function?

It is very important that we make these points clear—that they are not going to divide us, that they are not going to throw these lies at us and destroy us.

Let us examine the character of the *mexicano* family, of the family of La Raza. In every family there are those who were born here, those from the other side [of the border] with documents, and those here without documents. . . . What are we going to do, deport all our grandparents and their friends who don't have documents? *This was our territory!* [Applause.]

We have to remember that this situation exists because the corporations and the great financial interests—which operate on both sides of the river and the border—have only one norm by which they function: they want greater and greater profits by whatever means. Or as the saying of the militants goes, "By all means possible." They are going to defend their interests and their system of profit. That is why they have designated the role they have for us, and that is why they have tried to feed us the lie that by working inside their political party, the Democratic Party, we are going to obtain political power. We have already seen what that history has been.

I believe we have a great future and great hope with our party, La Raza Unida Party. We are just barely *gateando* [crawling on all fours], but with that little *gateo*, we have made those who travel in jets turn around and say, "Oh, Oh! Here they come already."

Look at the campaign of Raul Ruiz

[California 48th State Assembly District] with 3,200 votes. Muskie and all the Democratic presidential candidates went over there to support the candidate of their party, Richard Alatorre. Well, we didn't win. But as they say, *me chingaron pero los jodi* [they screwed me, but I messed them up]. [Applause and laughter.]

We didn't win, but we *did* defeat the puppet, the political opportunist, that the Democratic Party had chosen as the best qualified to represent us. They didn't take us into account; we had already held our convention and selected our candidate. There were no possibilities that we were going to elect Ruiz. The intent of that campaign was to destroy the power, at least for that one time, of the Democratic Party. So, we didn't win, but neither did they. That is the lesson we established for always. And there will be more of them.

The possibility exists of forging unity of all our Raza and of not letting ourselves be guided by those who always go around shedding tears that what they are proposing is for our benefit, as both Kennedy and Muskie say, and as those who unfortunately stuck us in California with this Dixon Arnett Law say.

The Dixon Arnett Law has caused some very serious damage within our community. We are not only suffering from the fact that they cut welfare by \$200-million in Los Angeles County. . . . We are not only living with the permanent racism of the system, which has always been the scourge of our people. But now, in addition, they have passed this law. And I have to say *camaradas* [comrades, or brothers and sisters], although it hurts me very much to have to say it—but truths cannot be hidden—this Dixon Arnett Law was approved by the Farm Workers, thinking, like the labor movement, that perhaps a law could help them to organize better.

I understand their intention. I understand the frustration of Farm Worker organizers, because I have been a volunteer organizer in Coachella and in other places in California. I know the frustration that exists when you are organizing people, and they are on strike, and then the strike is broken by *esquiroles* [scabs] brought in by the *patrón* from Mexicali, Rio Colorado, or from Tecate [in Mexico] by the thousands! And they can bring in thousands every day because of the hunger that exists in those valleys. I understand that frustration, but I think the *camaradas* of UFWOC [United Farm Workers Organizing Committee] made a mistake if they think that they are going to be able to do in politics what the entire labor movement of the AFL-CIO has been unable to do.

The Farm Workers thought that by supporting that law they were going to impede the importation of *esquiroles* for the purpose of breaking strikes. But the legislature doesn't belong to the Farm Workers. The legislature is bought and paid for by the corporations, including the *mexicanos* we have there—those they give money to so that they can run as Republicans or Democrats. They're not from the Raza Unida Party. The legislature voted and approved and *changed* that law, which went in like a bullet and came out like a cannon shell. Instead of only preventing the bringing in of scabs—which we are all in favor of—the law approved by the legislature reads like this: "That every *patrón* can be fined from \$200 to \$500 if he 'knowingly' employs 'illegal' workers and upon doing so, adversely affects the employment of workers who are permanent residents here." Look how broad the law is. The state is now intervening in the question of immigration, which is under federal jurisdiction.

So what has been the result? Tens

of thousands of *mexicano* workers, born here, with documents or without documents, have been fired under the pretext of the Dixon Arnett Law. Now the *patrón* calls all the *mexicano* workers together and says, "Look, I don't know which one of you is legal or illegal. I want every Mexican worker to show me his birth certificate or his green card."

And then what happens to the person who doesn't have one, who was born, say, in Texas? In many of the counties in Texas there are no records. They sank with the hurricanes and who knows what else. I can just hear a *carnal* saying, "I know I was born in Hidalgo County in Texas, but I don't know when or where. But I've lived there all my life." *Then how come you don't speak English?* "Well, over there no one speaks English!" [Laughter.]

That's why I wish that the Raza Unida Party would triumph in about four counties down there, because then we could ask them for birth certificates. [Applause.] We could ask the Raza Unida *camaradas*, such as county clerks and city clerks, to make all the Raza we have there in California *naturales* [inhabitants from birth]! [Laughter, shouts, and applause]. . . .

We have to take political power to straighten out all these anomalies, all this exploitation—because the immigration law is part of the system of exploitation. . . .

The *patrones* are now saying to La Raza, "All of you have to prove that you are here legally. Those of you who aren't can bring me \$500, and I'll put it in a fund so that in case I get fined you can pay it." So our poor Raza has to sell *la tierrita* [little plot of land] to pay \$300 to the *coyote* [labor smuggler who arranges to get Mexicans across the border], \$200 to the employment agency to find a job, and then a \$500 deposit

with the *patrón* so he doesn't lose anything in case they fine him. Did you think that the *patrones* were going to lose? *How are they going to lose when they are the owners of the system?* You can invoke the Ten Commandments against them, but if they're the owners of the system, they are the ones who apply them. And who are they going to apply them against? Against us, naturally. [Applause and laughter.]

We have succeeded in forcing certain setbacks to the Dixon Arnett Law. They were going to put it into effect in January, but because of the demonstrations and organization we have created among those without documents, they postponed it until March.

In Los Angeles we have an organization called *La Hermandad General de Trabajadores* [The General Brotherhood of Workers] and 99 percent of the members are workers without documents. In one barrio there, we have more than 8,000 members, of which 5,000 are paid up. They pay dues of \$15 a year each, so we don't need government programs, foundations, or anything of that kind. . . . We have gone before the courts, we have set up picket lines, and last night we marched right down Broadway from Olympia to the Federal Building passing out our leaflets. *Now the people without documents are no longer afraid of la migra!* They are catching on to the idea of mobilizing themselves, of not being paralyzed with fear. We tell them, "The most that they will do is throw you across the border. And in the end, you're not in hell. They speak Spanish there, you can get *torillas*, and then, you can come back. [Applause and shouts.]

I believe, *hermanos* [brothers and sisters], that this organization is going to be the largest in the Southwest for the following reason. The Department of Labor itself tells us

that in what they call the 'labor market' of Los Angeles County and part of Orange County there are 250,000 Mexican *workers* without documents! The Los Angeles School District has more than 100,000 matriculated children who are without documents. . . . Over there in Los Angeles we have half a million of our people without documents, *and one of these days you are going to see a demonstration down Broadway of 100,000. Then, who are they going to deport?* . . .

That fright that if you don't have papers, you can't say anything, is gone. Before, it was "Change your name! Work for whatever the *patrón* offers you! Go and clean the foreman's house on Saturdays and Sundays! Take your wife over to help the foreman's wife on Saturdays and Sundays! Pay him kickbacks! Clean his shoes! Wipe his ass!" [Laughter, shouts, and applause.]

The people have opened their eyes. They know that if they are organized, they can defend themselves. *La migra* applies the law in the most brutal and inhuman way. They divide families and cause the most incredible psychological damage to children who have their parents taken away. *La migra* causes social dislocation on a grand scale. They make liars out of the honorable. But at the same time, they are helping us organize to a certain extent.

Cesar Chavez once said, "I give thanks to the *patrones* sometimes because they are so stupid, so brutal, so malicious, that they help us organize the people." So this law is helping us to organize our people—people who are the most exploited and the most vulnerable, people about whom the unions say, "we can't organize them. All the scabs are illegals." Well, they lie, *because half of those in Cesar Chavez' union in California are people without documents.* The majority of many unions, of the

laundry workers, of convalescent hospital workers, of workers in the electronics industry, or in the garment industry are made up of workers from Mexico without papers. They are in the unions. . . . *Así que no vengán a hacernos pendejos a nosotros* [so don't try to take us for fools] [Applause]. . . .

Today I read in a paper that Mexico is creating half a million new workers annually for whom no work is available. The other day we received a copy of the economic survey of the *Asociación de Bancos de Comercio de México* [Association of Commercial Banks of Mexico], and for the first time these banks analyze the economic situation in Mexico in a complete fashion. One of the most revealing things, although at the same time sad for us, is that the population of Mexico is growing at a tremendous rate, but unemployment is growing at an even faster rate.

In Mexico right now, out of a population of 25 million people who should be working, there are only jobs for 12 million. And you have to include in that figure the 12-year-old children who go around selling chiclets and *chácharas* [cheap items sold on the streets] in the cities along the border. *Twelve million people have to maintain an entire country of 55 million.* What would happen if this country suffered from more than 10 percent unemployment? There'd be a revolution. Already, with more than 6 percent unemployment the U.S. is scandalized. Mexico suffers from 48 or 49 percent unemployment. Why?

I want to quote a report that just came out so you understand who is responsible for all this. *We should never think that it is our own people or our own countries such as Mexico or other countries of Central and South America that are incapable of developing themselves, that they don't know how to provide their*

people with enough jobs. No.

Just listen to this current business survey. It says, "Indeed, no other area in the capitalist world brings the U.S. monopolies such profits as Latin America. According to official data, direct U.S. investment in the countries of this region between 1950 and 1967 amounted to \$4.662-billion, while the total profits and dividends received here during the same period from those countries amounted to \$16.079-billion." Four to one! How can Mexico, Panama, Honduras, Guatemala, or the Dominican Republic develop if this country takes out 400 million for every 100 million it invests? . . .

That is what we have to take into account. All of these welfare laws, all of the tricks and obstacles, and the Dixon Arnett immigration law are put into action to guarantee one thing: *that the people to whom they are applied become more docile, more exploitable, more unstable, poorer, and more vulnerable.* For what? For the creation of super-profits that the system thinks it has a right to extract from the exploitation of us, other minorities, and the other workers. That is the reality of things, and I think that our Raza Unida Party always has to take into account that reality. We can't be a party that is going to totally accommodate itself with part of the system because they promise us little things. We, as a party, must *always* defend the interests of the great majority of our people, of the poor, of the masses of our people, and struggle for our political independence and self-determination. Then and only then will we be a party worthy of the support of *nuestra Raza*. And then we can really say, *Somos una Raza Unida!* [We are a united people!] *Qué viva la Raza! La Raza Unida!* [Long live our people! Our united people!] [Standing ovation.]