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"A Time for Resistance": Globalization, Undocumented Immigration, and the Chicana/o Movement in the San Diego Borderlands

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in

History

by

Jimmy C. Patiño, Jr.

Committee in Charge:

Professor Luis Alvarez, Chair
Professor David G. Gutiérrez, Co-Chair
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Professor Daniel Widener

2010

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Co-Chair

Chair

University of California, San Diego

2010

DEDICATION

For those who shaped my past, Jimmy Patiño, Sr., Ricardo Cortez, Jr., Ruben Flores, and Oscar Niño, rest in peace.

For my present, Nova Starr

And for my future, Jimmy, III and LunaBella

I dedicate this dissertation.

EPIGRAPH

It is, in the end the saving of lives we writers are about…

We do it because we care…

We care because we know this: the life that we save is our own.

Alice Walker

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welcoming me into their homes. Thanks to all the West Mesa families that we shared our lives with and watched our kids grow up. There is not enough room on the page to fully thank all our family and friends for the all the little things, from a few bucks for groceries to watching our kids, that made this possible.

My experience at UCSD was an amazing and unforgettable experience, largely due to the prolific mentors that surrounded me. To Luis Alvarez, who I met in my hometown in Houston and journeyed with to his hometown of San Diego, your mentorship encouraged me to think courageously and independently, challenging my ideas when I most needed it while respecting my own perspective. The single-most important mentor relationship that I formed when coming to UCSD was with David G. Gutíerrez. Dave taught me to see the migrant experience beyond simply an addition to Chicana/o history, but as a fundamental shift in our understanding of democracy, citizenship and struggle. Furthermore, he challenged me to dig through my work to find what my own politics were and as such, define myself in the academic world in the face of forces that seek to confine us. In relation to developing my own political identity, Danny Widener always encouraged me to maintain and further develop the relationship between activism and scholarship. Lisa Lowe was a gracious and engaged mentor. Working with Professor Lowe reminded me of the passion and joy that the world of ideas and its connections to struggle was. Similarly Nayan Shah was an example of scholarly excellence who challenged me to flesh out the gendered constructions of race and class as a way to maintain a critical approach to all social categories as mechanisms of power. I also thank UCSD professors Roberto Alvarez, Natalia Molina, Nancy Kwak, and Rachel

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In closing I would like to highlight the efforts of my life partner, Nova Starr Patiño, who supported me by quite simply insisting that I balance my mind with my heart. She reminded me that I am much more than a scholar trying to think up ideas that can help the world, but also a human being worth taking time off work to watch the high tide roll in, the sun set, and our children grow. All the insights this dissertation might provide are truly due to her impassioned support, the flaws are mine. To our niñitos, Jimmy, III and LunaBella, may this dissertation teach you that no boundaries can contain you so long as you struggle alongside others.

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Dissertation: *"A Time for Resistance": Globalization, Undocumented Immigration and the Chicana/o Movement in the San Diego Borderlands*

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

"A Time for Resistance": Globalization, Undocumented Immigration and the Chicana/o Movement in the San Diego Borderlands

by

Jimmy C. Patiño, Jr.

Doctor of Philosophy in History

University of California, San Diego, 2010

Professor Luis Alvarez, Chair
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This dissertation asks how the ethnic Mexican community in Southern California struggled for full societal membership while a large proportion of their constituency were noncitizens and therefore targets of border enforcement policies? These violations, due to racialist presumptions of border enforcement, not only affected immigrants, but also U.S. citizens of Mexican heritage. I demonstrate that beginning in the 1920s and continuing to the present, with particular highlight on the "Chicano movement" of the 1960s and 70s, a number of activists responded to this conundrum by forging a conception of community across differences in nationality (American and Mexican) and citizenship status (U.S. citizens and Mexican immigrants). This more fluid, transnational conception of a "Chicano-Mexicano" community was chiefly developed through the

spectrum of a shared ethnicity and culture coupled with the experience of racialization by border enforcement immigration policies.

Transnational and cross-citizenship status solidarity within the ethnic Mexican community was forged in the context of struggle against more narrowly nationalistic forces both within and outside the community. In recognition of this vexing context, my dissertation explores the activism emanating from the Committee on Chicano Rights (CCR) led by Herman Baca, a printer from the barrios of southeast San Diego County. Building off the cross-citizenship activism of Mexican-American labor activists of the previous generation, the CCR utilized a grassroots approach to mobilizing by basing itself in and interacting with working-class Latina/o community members to assess key social problems and develop solutions to them. Mobilizing as a united ethno-racial community in classic Chicano movement style, the CCR moved into addressing class issues through engagement with the capital-labor antagonism embedded within immigration policy. This community-based effort engaged constituents initially through voter registration and later through providing community services to undocumented migrants, going door-to-door calling issues-based meetings in communal places such as the local church, and establishing an open presence out of Baca's printing shop in the main commercial strip of the city. In this way, the CCR stayed attuned to the demographic transformations occurring in the Latina/o community in the 1970s, namely the mass influx of new migrant laborers, many of whom were undocumented.

INTRODUCTION[1]

During its April 11, 1981 meeting at St. Rita's Catholic Church in San Diego, the Chicano National Immigration Tribunal recorded more than 50 cases of harassment and brutality resulting from enforcement of policies targeting "illegal aliens." The Chicano Tribunal expounded the variegated forms of violence experienced by Latina/o citizens and immigrants at the hands of Border Patrol agents, Custom's officers and local police in a renewed environment of xenophobia throughout the 1970s. Organized by San Diego's Committee on Chicano Rights (CCR) in outrage over the death of two U.S.-born Chicano children who were refused admittance into the U.S. from Mexico, the tribunal featured the testimony of dozens of undocumented migrants, legal residents and U.S. citizens. For instance, the testimony of undocumented worker Benito Rincon recalled how he was shot while handcuffed to Efren Reyes on the Mexican side of the U.S.-Mexico border by Border Patrol agents. Reyes died from the shooting. Less dramatic, but reflective of the spectrum of harassment experienced by the Latina/o community in the borderlands, a U.S. citizen of Mexican descent recalled how he was stopped and

[1] A note on ethno-racial terminology: I use the term "ethnic Mexican" to refer to people of Mexican heritage regardless of their nationality (U.S. or Mexican) or citizenship status (U.S. citizen or immigrant). I use the term "Mexican American" to refer to born or naturalized citizens of the United States that are of Mexican heritage. I use the term "Chicano" in reference to individuals who identify with the "Chicano movement," who use the term as a self-referent, and in reference to how these individuals are using the term to describe their community. I use the term "mexicano" or Mexican immigrant to refer to Mexicans from Mexico. I use the term "Latina/o" in reference to people with wider Latin American cultural heritage. Ethno-racial identity and terminology is always a contentious and on-going process and therefore cannot be utilized without some degree of ambiguity. I utilize primarily the theoretical work on identity of Stuart Hall as exhibited, for example, in Stuart Hall, "Old and New Identities, Old and New Ethnicities" in Anthony D. King, ed. *Culture, Globalization, and The World System*, (Binghamton: SUNY Department of Art and Art History, 1991) and the concept of "racial formation" as developed by Michael Omi and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1990s*, (New York: Routledge Press), 1994.

detained for sixteen hours at the inland Border Patrol checkpoint in San Onofre, California despite having presented his birth certificate. Similarly a Tijuana woman shared her experience of entering the U.S. with the proper documentation to visit Disneyland with her spouse and being stopped inland and subjected to a body cavity search in unsanitary facilities. The concerned community members at the Tribunal even heard from a Puerto Rican, and therein a U.S. citizen, who was asked to prove his citizenship on four separate occasions by West Chicago Police. These and many more cases were compiled by Chicana/o activists and supported by newspaper, affidavits and and other forms of evidence to create a more than 1,000 page document that was presented to the administrations of Presidents Ronald Reagan and Jose López Portillo in Washington, D.C. and Mexico City. The Tribunal document addressed Presidents Reagan and Lopez Portillo by calling "for an immediate end to the escalating violence and violations of the human, civil, and constitutional rights of the undocumented and also the rights of the twenty million Chicano, Latino citizens and legal residents of the U.S." This was of urgent significance, the Tribunal argued, due to the "social, economic, and political interdependency between the United States and Mexico."[2]

The 1981 Chicano Tribunal was not unlike an April gathering of Latina/o activists 42 years earlier in Los Angeles. In 1939 San Diego activists collaborated with others from throughout the country as part of the first Congreso del Pueblo que Habla Español (The Congress of Spanish-Speaking People) to address the state of Latinas/os in the

[2] Herman Baca, President of the Committee on Chicano Rights on behalf of the Chicano National Immigration Tribunal to President Ronald Reagan and José López Portillo, *Summary of the Chicano National Immigration Tribunal,* Box 43, Folder 1, Herman Baca Papers, Mandeville Special Collections Library, University of California, San Diego.

United States. San Diego ethnic Mexican labor organizers contributed to these discussions by recalling their struggles to unionize immigrant workers in the face of Ku Klux Klan harassment and "illegal alien" roundups by the newly created Border Patrol during the repatriation campaigns of the 1930s.[3] Though the Great Depression was unique for its economic challenges and explicit racial segregation, the Congreso shared a number of concerns with the Chicano Tribunal of a later era. Like the 1981 Tribunal, activists in the Congreso independently convened to address the transnational implications of international migration, its effects on civil rights struggles, and the abuses experienced by noncitizen and racialized workers by agents of immigration and border enforcement. Furthermore, both the Congreso and the Tribunal noted the contradictions evident in the U.S. government's practice of recruiting racialized noncitizens to work in the U.S. while subjecting them, as well as Mexican Americans, to harassment and deportation efforts of a federal police force. As one participant in the 1939 Congreso convention stated, "The basic objectives pursued by the Spanish-Speaking Congress involve the unification between American citizens of Mexican descent and Mexican nationals as well as the friendship between the peoples of the United States and Mexico."[4]

The 1939 Congreso and the 1981 Chicano Tribunal reveal how working-class, immigrant and racialized communities engaged, resisted and offered alternatives to the terms of economic and political globalization. Rather than meekly submit to growing

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[3] Carlos M. Larralde, "El Congreso in San Diego," *Journal of San Diego History* 50(1 and 2) (Winter/Spring 2004): 20.

[4] Mario T. García, *Mexican Americans: Leadership, Ideology and Identity, 1930-1960*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 150. Quote taken from the Latina/o community newspaper *La Opinion*, 1939.

needs and power of capital, participants in both meetings prioritized the experiences of ethnic Mexicans and their transnational notions of belonging. Globalization, defined in part as the ever-increasing phenomenon of removing barriers for capital to operate across national boundaries, manifested at the U.S.-Mexico border through infrastructural developments such as railroad and irrigation systems in the U.S. and Mexico beginning in the late nineteenth century. In relation to these transnational economic developments, business elites, particularly in the agricultural industry, began recruiting racialized noncitizen laborers from Mexico and Asia to work as a disposable, exploitable workforce. By the 1920s these business elites, particularly in the agricultural industry, worked with state actors to implement and maintain the illegal status of noncitizen workers. This was most evident with the enactment of the U.S. Border Patrol in the 1920s, a federal police force whose purpose was in large part to control this noncitizen workforce.[5] While nativist politicians and business elites were often at odds, in that the former sought to limit the inflow of immigrant workers and the latter sought to utilize them, the enactment of border enforcement policies in the 1920s revealed a link between racial nativism and capitalist desires for immigrant workers. The making of the "illegal alien" and a Border Patrol served to create a class of workers without access to processes of redress, under continuous threat of deportation, and therefore subject to explicit forms

[5] Historian Kelly Lytle Hernández asserts, "Established in May 1924, the Border Patrol was created to enforce U.S. immigration restrictions comprehensively by preventing unauthorized border crossings and policing borderland regions to detect and arrest persons defined as unauthorized immigrants." While acknowledging the ways in which "demands for labor control within the vortex of capitalist economic development" significantly influenced the development of the U.S. Border Patrol, Lytle Hernández adds that "Border Patrol practice was a site of constant struggle" between a number of actors in the U.S. and Mexico. See Kelly Lytle Hernández, *Migra! A History of the U.S. Border Patrol*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 2-4.

of exploitation.[6] Furthermore, the deployment of the category "illegal alien" worked to racialize ethnic Mexican, including those with U.S. citizenship, as perpetually foreign and a threat to U.S. society.[7] In the decades after the 1920s, contemporary immigration policies continued to target "illegal aliens." In fact, current immigration policies continue many of the same practices established throughout the twentieth century to augment militarized resources for border enforcement and to complement the increased utilization of a racialized noncitizen workforce in agribusiness, construction, tourism, and domestic services.

The entanglement of transnational migration and U.S. businesses' need for labor created monumental growth of the ethnic Mexican population as migrants became a part of pre-existing Mexican-American communities and created new ones. Indeed, by 1920 740,000 ethnic Mexican inhabitants lived in the U.S. growing from the approximately 100,000 that made-up the first Mexican American communities following the U.S. conquest of northern Mexico. Due to the economic developments in the U.S. and Mexico described above, by 1930 the ethnic Mexican population had doubled at about 1.4 million. Following the only decline in the ethnic Mexican population during the Great Depression decade of the 1930s to about 1.1 million, by 1970 it reached 4.5 million. It

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[6] Historian Mae Ngai asserts that "The construction of Mexicans as an illegal and illegitimate foreign presence in their former homeland played a central role in the reorganization of the agricultural labor market in the 1920s…which required the creation of a migratory work force…" See Mae Ngai, "The Architecture of Race in American Immigration Law: Reexamination of the Immigration Act of 1924," *The Journal of American History* 86(1) (June 1999): 91.

[7] See Mae Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and The Making of Modern America*, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2005). Ngai's book reminds that the racial formation of the "illegal alien" also formulated "alien citizens," that is, racialized U.S. citizens who were grouped with undocumented migrants. The book also reminds that this process was not exclusive to Latinas/os as especially Asian and Asian-Americans were subject to a similar process of racialization through immigration policies.

would nearly double by 1980 to 8.7 million and contemporary numbers reveal how it has skyrocketed in recent decades, at more than 29 million in 2007.[8] The majority of this growth was due to economically induced migration.

In this context, ethnic Mexican activist struggles to attain the civil and human rights of their constituency addressed the implications of immigration by necessity. Mutualistas, Mexican cultural practices of mutual aid, were working-class organizations that existed within ethnic Mexican communities to address the survival needs of migrants beginning in the nineteenth century. The emergence of Civil Rights organizations and the incorporation of ethnic Mexican workers into labor unions were also critical organizational units that addressed the problems emanating from mass migration. The Congreso emerged at the intersection of civil rights and labor unionism as the majority of the members were participants in the labor movement of the Depression era. Labor-based civil rights organizations such as the Hermandad Mexicana and Asociacion Nacional Mexico Americano (ANMA) in the 1950s and the Centro de Accion Social Autonoma (CASA) in the 1960s and 70s would pave the way for organizations such as the Committee on Chicano Rights to hold the Chicano Tribunal in 1981.

That San Diego activists played important roles in both the Congreso and the Chicano Tribunal should not come as a surprise, as their city and surrounding area was a critical part of the long history of ethnic struggles against federal legislation criminalizing "illegal aliens" and militarizing the U.S.-Mexico Border. Situated only 20 miles north of

[8] According to the U.S. Census Bureau the Mexican-origin population in 1960 was approximated at 1.7 million, 4.5 million in 1970, and 8.7 million in 1980. De Leon and Griswold del Castillo estimate 3.9 million Mexican-origin peoples in the U.S. in 1960, *North to Aztlan*, 2nd ed., p. 160. The Census reported that the Mexican-origin population was at 28.3 million in 2006. The Pew Hispanic Center reported the 2007 number. See "Hispanics of Mexican-Origin, 2007" at http://pewhispanic.org/files/factsheets/49.pdf.

the Mexican border and closely linked to the important gateway city of Tijuana, communities in the San Diego borderlands were often the first to experience heightened racialization, harassment, and brutality associated with border policing throughout much of the twentieth century. Focusing on the working-class ethnic Mexican communities in the San Diego borderlands, this dissertation highlights the social movements that emerged in response to efforts by the U.S. state to control the rising immigrant workforce crossing through and settling in this border city.

This dissertation thus follows three main lines of inquiry. The first asks how ethnic Mexicans struggled to alleviate themselves from legal violence, systematic exclusion, and second class citizenship while a large number of their community held no legal standing as legitimate subjects (and indeed were targeted by a federal police force for expulsion) within U.S. society? Noting that Mexican-American activists have vehemently disagreed over the acceptance of immigrant coethnics as members of their community, my second line of inquiry asks why some ethnic Mexican activists, from the Congreso to the CCR, chose to forge communion with undocumented migrants as fellow ethnic and class members of their society?[9] Finally, noting that ethnic politics has itself worked to obfuscate capital-labor antagonisms instead of creating niches for some ethnic elites within the prevailing capitalist system, I ask how these cross-citizenship Chicano/Mexicano social movements worked to enact transnational practices of citizenship and suggest radically democratic adjustments to the unequal capital-labor

[9] On the history of the fragmentation within Mexican-American politics over identifying with or differentiating from Mexican immigrants, see David G. Gutiérrez, *Walls and Mirros: Mexican Americans, Mexican Immigrants, and the Politics of Ethnicity*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

relations existent within globalization?[10] This final line of inquiry reveals the broader stakes of this dissertation by underscoring that the historical development of the immigration debate is fundamentally about the very nature of democratic participation in an era of globalized capital and labor relations. Indeed, the activists studied herein were struggling with nothing less than how "citizenship" in its most expansive sense as an experience and process of belonging could be reconceptualized to account for the power dynamics embedded in a system in which noncitizens (as well as racialized "others") were actively constructed to maintain an unequal relationship between capital and labor?[11]

"A Time for Resistance" reveals that racialized communities most associated with being foreign, alien, and "illegal" asserted insurgent forms of citizenship that challenged the primacy of capital through the very forms of difference utilized to subordinate them. The transnational workings of ethnicity and race provide insight into how alternative forms of democratic practice have been enacted in response to political-economic configurations that transcend the boundaries of the nation-state. A number of Chicano/Mexicano activists continuously struggled for and accomplished such alternative

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[10] See Juan Poblete, ed. *Critical Latino/a and Latin American Studies*, "Introduction" (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003). Poblete puts it well when he argues, "This desire to unify Latino populations is, nevertheless, politically ambivalent as it opens both dangers and possibilities. In the end, its value depends on its concrete and institutional political articulation. In this ambiguity it coincides with market-driven initiatives to create the "newness" of the Latino phenomenon and its own existence as an emergent market of "new" immigrants ready for capitalist attack or investment." Historian Robin D.G. Kelley also writes in this regard, "Unable to see a world that left few written records, many scholars concerned with studying "race relations" folded the black working class into a very limited and at times monolithic definition of the "black community." By overlooking or playing down class and gender differences, mainstream middle-class male leaders have too often been regarded as, in historian Nell Painter's words, "representative colored men.""

[11] This is not to suggest that issues of racialization are deducible to class relations but rather to demonstrate that race, nation, citizenship and other power dynamics based in conceptions of difference are intertwined with transnational systems of class domination and struggle.

practices of democracy by crossing key differences of nation and citizenship status to formulate communion with undocumented immigrants. Beginning in the 1930s labor movement, and giving special attention to Chicana/o Movement mobilizations throughout the 1970s, I demonstrate how Mexican Americans and Mexican immigrants crafted transnational notions of community through a shared ethnic and cultural identity that stemmed in part from overlapping experiences of racialization at the hands of border enforcement and immigration policies. This transnational practice of community emphasized the experiences and voices of racialized noncitizen workers as a manner of engaging the hegemony of capital and the state. Through community-based struggles against the consistent legal violence inflicted by border and immigration control, these activists demanded that both the American and Mexican governments respect and consider their collective demand to dismantle border enforcement and deportation mechanisms. In the place of militarized enforcement policy Chicano/Mexicano activists proposed new forms of social membership that would take into account the transnational economic forces that integrated Mexico with the U.S. to equalize the ability for labor to operate across borders with that of capital. These actions revealed that versatile notions of ethnic community worked to bring racialized and working class peoples into the hegemonic conversation about immigration policy, and therein, globalization.

Citizenship, Migration, and Social Mobilization in Ethnic Studies

"A Time for Resistance" contributes to a number of fields, particularly the study of migration, borderlands, social movements and citizenship within Ethnic Studies and History. Throughout the dissertation I assert that Chicanos and Mexicanos in the San

Diego borderlands practiced new ways of "being political" and forming ethnic community by cultivating links for undocumented workers and racialized U.S. citizens to participate together in transnational social movements. To put forth a nuanced study of transnational migration, movements for social change, and ethnic community formation, I engage debates over whether borders, or borderlands, operate as spaces of convergence or division. Some scholars have argued borderlands are privileged spaces where hybridity and cultural intermixture formulate "two worlds merging to form a third country—a border culture."[12] Other scholars have identified borders as areas where the enactment of border enforcement ideology "unifies nation-members against nonnationals."[13]

This study's emphasis on San Diego as a border site in which globalization can be studied on the ground through the experience of mixed-status ethnic Mexican communities reveals that borderlands are sites where geographical and social borders breakdown and, paradoxically, are strictly enforced simultaneously.[14] Deeply engaged in

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[12] Gloria Anzaldúa. *Borderlands=La Frontera,* (San Francisco: Spinsters/Aunt Lute Books, 1987), 25. Anzaldúa notes the "border as dividing line" as well through conceiving of the U.S.-Mexico border as "una herida abierta," an open wound. She contrasts the border with "borderlands as a vague and undetermined place created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary." Therefore I use the above quote to demonstrate how borders and borderlands have often been conceived with emphasis on the possibilities of forging hybrid identities, largely based on works that emphasized Anzaldúa's borderlands without thorough investigation of the dividing tendencies of borders. For analyses of the borderlands as a site in which hybrid identities and counter narratives emerge see, Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson, "Beyond "Culture": Space, Identity, and the Politics of Difference," *Cultural Anthropology* 7(1) (1992): 6-23; José David Saldívar, *Border Matters: Remapping American Cultural Studies*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); Guillermo Gomez-Peña, *Warrior for Gringostoika: Essays, Performance Texts, and Poetry*, (St. Paul, Minn.: Graywolf Press, 1993). For a critique see, Josiah Heyman, "The Mexico-United States Border in Anthropology: A Critique and Reformulation," *Journal of Political Ecology* 1 (1994): 43-65 and Pablo Vila "Limits of American Border Theory." In Pablo Vila, ed. *Ethnography at the Border*. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2003).

[13] Josiah Heyman, "The Mexico-United States Border in Anthropology: A Critique and Reformulation," *Journal of Political Ecology* 1 (1994): 43.

[14] I take the notion of the borderlands both as a site where geographical and social borders breakdown AND paradoxically are strictly enforced chiefly from the sociologist Pablo Vila. See Vila, "Limits of American Border Theory," in Pablo Vila, ed. *Ethnography at the Border*. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2003).

localized processes of international migration as a major entrance point through which working-class immigrants consistently entered and exited via the adjacent border city of Tijuana, ethnic Mexican communities in San Diego responded with innovative identity formations, community configurations, and political expressions ALONGSIDE the erection of new barriers and boundaries. Ethnic identity formation and politics in the San Diego borderlands often included international migration as a critical force, but not necessarily in terms that made the borderlands a site of utopian cultural intermixture and hybrid identities, even among ethnic Mexicans.[15] To the contrary, those transnational and cross-citizenship status alliances that were forged and serve as the primary focus of this dissertation were *constructed* against the grain of more nationalistic and exclusionary notions of community both within and outside the ethnic Mexican community.

Indeed, analysis of ethnic social movements emerging out of the borderlands challenge scholarly notions of "citizenship" by revealing how Chicana/o activists debated with the state and among themselves over its meaning. On the one hand, citizenship is utilized by the state as a hierarchical control mechanism from which the state maintains its hegemonic position by legitimizing some society members in juxtaposition to noncitizens. On the other hand, noncitizens and racialized citizens have historically taken notions of citizenship and rearticulated them to be more inclusive of society members

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[15] My critique of conceptions of the borderlands as a site of hybrid cultural identity formation and counter-hegemonic political subversion is limited to a failure to consider the simultaneous (re)enforcement of geographical and social borders. For analyses of the borderlands as a site in which hybrid identities and counter narratives emerge see, Gloria Anzaldúa. *Borderlands=La Frontera*, (San Francisco: Spinsters/Aunt Lute Books, 1987); Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson, "Beyond "Culture": Space, Identity, and the Politics of Difference," *Cultural Anthropology* 7(1) (1992): 6-23; José David Saldívar, *Border Matters: Remapping American Cultural Studies*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); Guillermo Gomez-Peña, *Warrior for Gringostoika: Essays, Performance Texts, and Poetry*, (St. Paul, Minn.: Graywolf Press, 1993).

whose racialized, gendered and classed differences have relegated them outside the bounds of official citizenship status.[16] Instead of understanding social movements as attempts to convince the state to ordain its juridical conception of citizenship, the social movements studied herein illuminate the collective processes by which activists redefined what citizenship could and should entail. As political theorist Engin F. Isin argues, "being political" is that moment "when strangers and outsiders (noncitizens) question the justice adjured on them by appropriating or overturning those same strategies and technologies of citizenship."[17] In other words, "being political" for Isin is that moment when noncitizens, and in this case their racialized citizen coethnics, disrupt the naturalized hierarchy of citizen over noncitizen. Thus, while I assess the success and failure of social movements to overturn the practice of immigration restriction policies and labor exploitation, I am equally interested in assessing the vision and actual practice of Chicano/Mexicano transnational social movements to create alternative forms of democratic practice and citizenship, however limited they may have been.

By engaging citizenship critically, this dissertation also challenges studies of international migration by emphasizing the prerogatives of immigrants and their citizen

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[16] Rearticulation of citizenship by those defined outside of it can be traced to the struggles of enslaved peoples, Asian immigrants deemed ineligible for citizenship, struggles for indigenous sovereignty, and women's rights struggles. These groups contested the state's definition of citizenship and sought to redefine it and indeed practiced alternative processes of belonging. On slavery see, …; on African-American practice of alternative forms of citizenship in the Jim Crow era see Robin Kelley, *Race Rebels: Culture, Politics, and the Black Working Class;* on citizenship and Asian-American cultural resistance see Lisa Lowe, *Immigrant Acts*; In relation to undocumented immigrants and Latina/o community see Alicia Schmidt Camacho, *Migrant Imaginaries: Latino Cultural Politics in the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands*, (New York: New York University Press, 2008); William V. Flores and Rina Benmayor, ed., *Latino Cultural Citizenship: Claiming Identity, Space and Rights*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1997); and David G. Gutiérrez, "Migration, Emergent Ethnicity, and the 'Third Space': The Shifting Politics of Nationalism in Greater Mexico," *Journal of American History* 86(2) (September 1999).

[17] Isin, x.

coethnics within the volatile context of the U.S.-Mexico borderlands. Immigrant communities in the U.S. have always held their own proclivities and transnational connections that shifted the terrain in which American belonging and identity were defined. The deeply ingrained practice of recruiting and hiring Mexican laborers to the U.S. Southwest and throughout the country as workers in agricultural and service industries facilitated a situation in which noncitizen workers were a continual presence throughout the twentieth century subject to deportation and unable to access basic rights. While growing literature and popular discourse on these migrants have insisted on describing undocumented immigrants' situation as "hiding in the shadows" this dissertation sees the mass migration of people from the less developed world as a kind of "voting with their feet" reaction to the neoliberalization of the world political economic system. Sociologist Nestor Rodríguez argues that the "Battle for the Border" involves the autonomous movement of working-class Mexican and Latina/o immigrants who refuse to abide by official immigration policies that shield the transnational economic realities that link the U.S., Mexico and the rest of the Americas. Undocumented migrants force the U.S. state to respond to them, as I explore in this case study's analysis of the political response by ethnic Mexicans to what was an often violent reaction by state mechanisms.[18] Furthermore, the very presence and participation of undocumented migrants as fellow community members and activists in Chicana/o and Latina/o social

[18] Timothy J. Dunn, *The Militarization of the U.S.-Mexico Border, 1978-1992: Low Intensity Conflict Doctrine Comes Home*, (Austin, Texas: CMAS Books, Center for Mexican American Studies, University of Texas at Austin), 1996; Joseph Nevins, *Operation Gatekeeper: The Rise of the "Illegal Alien" and the Making of the U.S.-Mexico Boundary*, (New York: Routledge, 2002); Mai Ngai. *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America*, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2004) and Kathleen Anne Lytle Hernández, *Entangling Bodies and Borders: Racial Profiling and the U.S. Border Patrol, 1924-1955*, Ph.D. Dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 2002.

movements reframed the terrain of struggle across borders into the realm of the transnational. Moreover, autonomous migration reveals political opportunities to shift the anti-democratic terms of globalization by influencing U.S. Chicanas/os and Latinas/os to reformulate their political trajectories to consider imaginaries beyond the nation-state and juridical categories of citizenship.

Notions of autonomy, as articulated by Rodriguez in relation to migration, are utilized in this dissertation to rethink ethnic social movements that advocated ethnic self-determination as part of their strategy to resist race and class oppression. To extrapolate how Chicano/Mexicano communities were imagined as devices of political struggle I utilize notions of self-determination and autonomy to articulate the working-class, grassroots base from which transnational ethnic spaces created more democratic practices of citizenship that were inclusive of noncitizen, "illegal" migrants. By "autonomous" I mean the political activity engineered by a community independent of state involvement. Of course, "the state" is a complex configuration made up of a multiplicity of actors who held their own differences and contradictions.[19] Rodríguez identifies autonomy as a concept that can be traced to Marx's *Capital* but most closely with unorthodox Marxists who saw workers' struggles as "not only waged against capital, but also against their "official" organizations, i.e., the Communist Party and unions."[20] This concept is particularly applicable in the case of undocumented workers, as Rodríguez argues the

[19] See Theda Skocpol, et al., *Bringing the State Back In* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

[20] Nestor Rodríguez, "The Battle for the Border: Notes on Autonomous Migration, Transnational Communities, and the State," *Social Justice* 23(3), Fall 1996. Another seminal work on Chicana/o politics and autonomy from an international comparative perspective is Mario Barrera, *Beyond Aztlán: Ethnic Autonomy in Comparative Perspective*, (New York: Praeger, 1988).

very act of unauthorized migration epitomizes a working-class independent relationship with the state, organized labor, and larger capital. It is therefore useful in my analysis of how racialized citizens and noncitizens came to seek independence from political outlets in their own communities that were linked to variegated tentacles of the state as Republican, Democratic and for much of the century the AFL-CIO shared a consensus that ideological approaches to controlling the undocumented populations were necessary.[21]

My thinking on autonomy is also informed by theoretical insights stemming from the Zapatista rebellion in Chiapas, Mexico in 1994. I find useful in the idea that autonomous social movements from working-class and racialized communities not only seek independence from the state, but also seek to make explicit the power that these communities already hold in their day-to-day functioning. This type of autonomy would not seek to separate from the larger society in the form of a nation-state. Rather, autonomy refers to localized forms of structuring life using the cultural idioms of that locality to formulate indigenous decision-making processes so that subaltern subjects and communities can represent themselves in their engagement with the state. This process is evident in many moments of collective contemplation, analysis and praxis among Chicano/Mexicano activists enacting new forms of citizenship and democratic practice inclusive of racialized and undocumented subjects and in dialog with both the U.S. and Mexican states.[22] Fully considering the critiques of ethnic nationalism that note its

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[21] Ibid.

[22] See Gustavo Esteva, "The Meaning and Scope of the Struggle for Autonomy," *Latin American Perspectives* 117(28:2) March 2001, and "Indigenous Autonomy in Oaxaca, Mexico," in *Auroras of the Zapatistas: Local and Global Struggles of the Fourth World War*, (Brooklyn: Autonomedia, 2001).

tendency to erect new forms of exclusion in regards to gender, this notion of autonomy and self-determination asserts that important mobilizations constructed transnational notions of ethnic community to critique hegemonic globalization of the U.S.-Mexico borderlands.

This understanding of autonomy, paired with a "long civil rights movement" approach to examining transnational Chicano/Mexicano activism against border enforcement immigration policies beginning in the 1920s, also shifts the periodization of the politics most associated with the Chicana/o Movement era of the 1960s and 70s. This study challenges generational models often utilized within Chicana/o history and other studies of ethnic mobilizations in the U.S. by tying the insurgencies that emerged out of ethnic (inter)nationalisms and Third World politics of the 1960s and 70s with the ethnic-class mobilizations that emerged during the burgeoning labor movements of the 1930s and 40s. Many scholars agree that the primary contribution of the Chicana/o Movement to the history of ethnic Mexican struggles in the US was its insistence that Mexican people do not have to de-emphasize their cultural identities to be a part of US society.[23]

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[23] For recent writing on the Chicano Movement see, Ernesto Chavez, *Mi Raza Primero! Nationalism, Identity, and Insurgency in the Chicano Movement in Los Angeles, 1966-1978* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); George Mariscal, *Brown-Eyed Children of the Sun: Lessons from the Chicano Movement, 1965-1975*, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2006); Ian Haney Lopez, *Racism on Trial: The Chicano Fight for Social Justice*, (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003), and Lorena Oropeza, *Raza Si! Guerra No! : Chicano Protest and Patriotism in the Viet Nam War Era*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005). A classic book on the Chicano Movement remains Carlos Muñoz, *Youth, Identity, Power: The Chicano Movement*, (New York: Verso Books, 1989, revised edition, 2007). All these works utilize a generational model that emphasize strict divisions between that of the assimilationist "Mexican American Generation" of the World War II era with that of the militant "Chicano Generation" of the 1960s and 70s. While key differences existed between these differing contexts, this dissertation builds on works that reveal key connections between the Latina/o activism in the labor movements of the Depression and War eras and the Civil Rights and Chicano Movement eras from the 1950s into the 1970s particularly in relation to working-class political mobilizations and struggle for immigrant rights. For an example of a study that identifies key connections see Zaragoza Vargas, *Labor Rights are Civil Rights: Mexican American Workers in Twentieth-Century America*, (Princeton, N.J.:

Indeed, the Chicana/o Movement utilized notions of self-determination as articulated by the decolonial movements in the third world, as well as the emergence of black power in U.S. society, to affirm that their participation in U.S. society would be structured on their own terms. Put in the context of the immigrant rights movement, the Chicano Movement's primary contribution was not something entirely new, but rather a continued attempt to affirm the ethnic heritage of Mexicans in the United States. In so doing, the Movement is part of the much longer historical challenge to racial projects that subjugated ethnic Mexicans and other Latinas/os, including the exploitation of migrant laborers and its fallout on the rest of Latina/o life. I thus follow historian Mai Ngai, who notes that the struggle for immigrant rights among the ethnic Mexican community has its roots in the era of restriction beginning in the 1920s with the creation of the Border Patrol and the notion of the "illegal alien."[24] Therefore, analysis of a number of ethnic Mexican organizations, particularly that of El Congreso del Pueblo que Habla Español and other Latina/o activists groups from the 1930s to the 1960s shifts understandings of the Chicana/o Movement and the current immigrant rights movement from something new and emergent, to something on-going since the enactment of border enforcement policies in the early 20th century.[25] The Congreso, which held affiliates in San Diego County, put

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Princeton University Press, 2005), and David G. Gutiérrez, *Walls and Mirrors: Mexican-Americans, Mexican Immigrants, and the Politics of Ethnicity*, (University of California Press, 1994). For a postulation of the generational model see Mario T. García, *Mexican Americans: Leadership, Ideology, and Identity, 1930-1960*, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989). For an interesting appraisal of the generational model see David G. Gutiérrez, "An Ethnic Consensus? Mexican American Political Activism since the Great Depression," *Reviews in American History* 19(2): 289-295.

[24] Mai Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America*, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2004).

[25] On the Congress, see First National Congress of the Mexican and Spanish American Peoples of the United States, *Digest of Proceedings*, April 1939, Public Domain. See also, David G. Gutiérrez, *Walls and*

together chiefly by Latina/o CIO unionists many of which were affiliated with the Communist Party in the late 1930s called for the preservation of Mexican heritage, the establishment of Spanish as another official language on par with English in areas of the country where there were large numbers of Spanish-speaking people and even for a prototype of Chicana/o studies that would educate U.S. residents about the long history of Spanish-speaking peoples in what is now the U.S.[26] This political stance on cultural identity that perceived no contradiction between the transnational practice of Mexican ethnicity and ethnic Mexican's place as part of U.S. society facilitated their advocacy for and identification with undocumented migrants on the basis of both ethnic and class solidarity. This understanding of a longer duree of struggle for immigrant rights within Chicana/o and Latina/o history contributes to the larger historiography that extends civil rights and ethnic nationalist demands for autonomy emergent in the 1960s to the nuanced movements of leftists of color in the Interwar period.

Narrative Plan

"A Time for Resistance," takes its title from a popular slogan utilized by transnational Chicana/o Movement activists in San Diego during the 1970s. This group of activists understood the slogan to be a call to action against the border militarization

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Mirrors: Mexican Americans, Mexican Immigrants and the Politics of Ethnicity, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994): 115-116 and George J. Sánchez, *Becoming Mexican American: Ethnicity, Identity and Culture in Chicano Los Angeles, 1900-1945*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994): 209-210.

[26] First National Congress of the Mexican and Spanish American Peoples of the United States, *Digest of Proceedings*, April 1939, Public Domain. See also, David G. Gutiérrez, *Walls and Mirrors: Mexican Americans, Mexican Immigrants and the Politics of Ethnicity*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994): 115-116 and George J. Sánchez, *Becoming Mexican American: Ethnicity, Identity and Culture in Chicano Los Angeles, 1900-1945*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994): 209-210.

provisions of President Jimmy Carter's proposed immigration plan in the late 1970s, a plan they viewed as escalating a historical and an on-going war that targeted the ethnic Mexican community. I utilize this phrase, "A Time for Resistance," as a frame to interpret Latina/o community resistance to a border enforcement regime rooted in the 1920s establishment of the Border Patrol through the much more recent mobilizations of the 21st century. In this regard, it has been "A Time for Resistance" for the ethnic Mexican community from the 1920s to the present. This dissertation thus tells the story of a series of "encuentros" or encounters among borderlands communities responding to the sustained legal violence exerted by border enforcement from the 1920s to the 1980s, with brief reflection on the current moment.[27] It explores these encounters beginning with the Congreso in 1939 and culminating with the Chicano Tribunal in 1981 as sites in which Chicano/Mexicano/Latino community members asserted an alternative form of citizenship and democratic practice that engaged both the U.S. and Mexican states and acknowledged the overlapping realities of American and Mexican societies. "A Time for Resistance" tells the cyclical story of these encuentros to highlight both the persistence of border enforcement as a system of labor control and subaltern resistance to these dehumanizing effects of globalization.

Part I of the dissertation, "Cross-Border Mexicano Identity and the Emergence of Migra Repression," explores the often brutal state repression targeting the transnational ethnic Mexican community in the San Diego borderlands from the 1920s into the 1960s.

[27] By "encuentro" I am referring to a meeting or convening of individuals and groups that share a common struggle. The Zapatista movement uses this term to refer to an attempt to unite various groups commonly being oppressed by capital. It also references a call to democratically make decisions about how to resist the domination of capital. I refer to this definition when considering the conferring of ethnic Mexican and wider Latina/o activists resisting the border enforcement regime.

Consisting of one chapter entitled "Fronterizos in the Era of Border Enforcement, 1925-1968," Part I asserts that from the 1920s to the 1960s important manifestations of Mexican-American activism in Southern California emerged out of the burgeoning labor movements in the United States and articulated an intersecting ethno-racial and working-class identity that included undocumented immigrants as fellow coethnics and workers. After exploring the shift from localized, vigilante forms of control of the Mexican workforce to the enactment of the Border Patrol, the chapter examines the 1931 de-segregation case in *Alvarez v. Lemon Grove Independent School District*. As the practice of apprehending individuals identified as "illegal aliens" became solidified within the Repatriation efforts of the Great Depression, an analysis of this case reveals how new pressures from border enforcement policies disrupted the transnational notions of identity widely shared in ethnic Mexican borderlands communities. These notions of community crossed the border and prefaced ethno-racial, migrant, and working-class notions of identity over differences in nativity and citizenship status. The rest of the chapter follows the transnational activism of ethnic-based labor movement organizations, primarily the El Congreso del Pueblo que Habla Español and La Hermandad Mexicana in San Diego and Southern California. These activists maintained and repackaged notions of community that were transnational and inclusive of undocumented migrants that would influence subsequent generations of Chicana/o activists.

Part II of the dissertation, "The 'Illegal Alien' and the Chicana/o Movement," explores the construction of transnational notions of community and political mobilization in the Chicana/o Movement era from 1968 to 1977. Chapter 2, "Raza Sí, Migra No!" Forging a Transnational Chicana/o Movement 1968-1973," explores why

and how activists reconceptualized the Chicana/o community beyond borders of citizenship status and nationality. San Diego chapters of the Mexican American Political Association and Centro de Accion Social Autonoma (CASA) combined the 1960s Chicana/o Movement call for unity as an ethno-racial community with the mentorship by old left, trade unionist Mexican-American activists discussed in Chapter 1 to refocus advocacy for undocumented immigrants in a new era. In addition to the influence of old left Mexican-American activists, the exploding numbers of migrants crossing from Mexico into the Southern California and the accompanying increase in Border Patrol brutality in the local barrios of San Diego County led these activists to shift their own identities in relationship to *mexicanos* beginning in the early 1970s.

Chapter 3, "Autonomy and Chicano/Mexicano Mobilization in the California Borderlands, 1970-1974," explores how San Diego Chicana/o activists' advocacy of undocumented migrants led to a reemergence of a transnational notion of community in a new era that I refer to as "Chicano/Mexicano." It details a series of events in which Chicano/Mexicano activists disassociated from Chicana/o activists associated with the Democratic Party and mainstream anti-immigrant unions to assert an autonomous politics independent of the two-party state. By advocating for their undocumented neighbors and in so doing creating an alternative politics outside of the frame of the nation-state, Chicano/Mexicano activism affirmed a more grassroots and participatory based mobilization effort by staying attuned to the demographic realities of the ethnic Mexican population.

Chapter 4, "Fragments of a Chicano/Mexicano Movement: The Quest for Unity in a Heterogeneous Community, 1974-1977," explores how internal debate among

Chicano/Mexicano activists led to the formation of the San Diego-based Committee on Chicano Rights (CCR). The CCR mobilized a concerted effort to address undocumented immigration through mobilizing around everyday life issues as identified through engagement with working-class citizen and noncitizen barrio residents. In this chapter, I explore the debates between various factions of the California La Raza Unida Party, an ethnic third party in which San Diego Chicano/Mexicano activists participated. I also interrogate a split in the San Diego area chapter of the organization CASA (El Centro de Acción Social Autónoma) of which many student organizers broke away from Baca's leadership. These two examples reveal that the CCR facilitated an approach in between a persistent narrow nationalism that deemphasized the noncitizen migrant experience and an explicitly Marxist-Leninist class-based nationalism that emphasized ideological rigor over mass mobilization. In this way, Chapter 4 continues the exploration of how the struggle to include the experience of the noncitizen in conceptions of community was both an external struggle against the U.S. state AND an internal struggle amongst Chicano activists over erecting new borders in the ways they conceived of solutions to undocumented immigration.

Part III, "The Rise, Fall and Legacy of Autonomous Chicano/Mexicano Engagement with the Immigration Crisis, 1977-2006," shifts from emphasis on the construction of transnational Chicana/o mobilizations and the creation of the political practices of the emergent CCR to its actual engagement with the state and its attempted implementation of an form of democratic practice that included and exerted the voices of transnational workers. Chapter 5 focuses on the years 1977 to 1979, asserting that the nationalization of the immigration issue led to a widening notion of Chicano/Mexican

transnational community from beyond the borderlands in relation to other Latina/o communities throughout the country and beyond the context of the U.S. to further engagement with Mexico and Mexican civil society. In these years, the immigration debate reached the national level when the CCR and its allies confronted the "Carter Curtain" in 1977, President Jimmy Carter's immigration proposal that would give amnesty to some undocumented migrants but also increase the militarization of border enforcement.

Chapter 6, "Transnational Citizenship in the San Diego Borderlands: The National Chicano Conference and Tribunal" analyzes collective Chicano/Mexicano processes of asserting independent solutions to the immigration crisis by convening the space for grassroots organizers from throughout the U.S. On April 11, 1981 the CCR reconvened a number of the 1,000 grassroots activists who had participated in the National Chicano Immigration Conference to hear the voices of several survivors of *migra* brutality and remember those that did not survive the abuse of militarized immigration policy. It argues that the through the tribunal the CCR demonstrated an alternative practice of citizenship, challenging the legitimacy of immigration policy and disrupting the related discourse of the nation-state by revealing its collusion with capital. These events intensified a dialog between the CCR as a significant part of the wider Chicano/Mexicano leadership and the U.S. state on abolishing the deportation mechanism of immigration policy and intensified dialog with Mexican civil society. The tribunal demonstrated a practice of autonomy by Chicano/Mexicano communities as independent from, but in dialog with, both the Mexican and U.S. states, suggesting an enactment of transnational citizenship.

In the epilogue I further consider the legacy of Chicano/Mexicano activism by asserting that the central organizing base of more contemporary immigrant's rights movements are rooted in cross citizenship conceptions of Latina/o communities developed years ago. As state repression through deportation raids has increased following the historic immigrant marches of 2006, and laws in Arizona that allow local law enforcement to interrogate residents who resemble undocumented migrants for their citizenship papers, we can see that it is still "A Time for Resistance."

A Note on Methodology and Sources

Throughout this dissertation I utilize archival, oral history, newspaper and secondary sources to construct a narrative not only about a few activists or organizations, but also how such activists and activism was part of a much broader collective struggle of ordinary people. While leaders and organizations are the voices most heard and recorded, my research suggests that this leadership was often reflective of the wider community of which it was a part. When activists and organizations mobilized hundreds or even thousands of people to march in the streets, engage state actors for redress, or attend meetings, I viewed the words of activists leaders and organizations as a glimpse into the wider community's sentiment. At the same time, the voices of organizations and activists do not speak for the masses of people who make up the ethnic Mexican and working class populations. I realize that the visions, analyses and actions of a handful of activists do not reflect a unitary and monolithic politics. I analyzed these sources of evidence with this caution in mind. This is both a strength and weakness of my historical

sources. In this regard I accessed the archival sources of ethnic Mexican activists and organizations in the U.S., including those of former members of the Congreso del Pueblo que Habla Español ("El Congreso"), La Hermandad Mexicana, the Mexican American Political Association (MAPA), El Centro de Acción Social Autónoma (CASA), La Raza Unida Party (LRUP) El Centro Cultural de la Raza and the Committee on Chicano Rights (CCR). I mined the collections of these organizations and activists who were members of them scattered throughout California, in particular the Chicana/o Movement era immigrant rights organization CASA, housed at Stanford University, and the San Diego-based artist collective El Centro Cultural de la Raza, housed at the University of California, Santa Barbara. The papers of activists included the collections of Herman Baca housed at the University of California, San Diego, who was a participant in a number of the above organizations in the 1960s and 70s, including chairing the CCR. I also accessed the papers of labor activist Bert Corona at Stanford University, who was also a member of several of the above organizations going back to the Congreso in the 1930s. I also collected and accessed the series of oral histories part of the Herman Baca papers. These included oral histories of Baca himself, Carlos "Charlie" Vasquez, Norma and Roger Casares, and Jerry Apodaca. I also utilized the oral history of, and corresponded informally with, CCR member and renowned Chicano borderlands artist David Avalos conducted by the Smithsonian Institute. The fact that these records exist from the political activity of a racialized community such as the one under study is a huge privilege built on the labor of a number of scholars, archivists, and students. These records, which likely did not exist in the not so distant past because of institutional

discrimination against working classes and communities of color, are a glimpse into the sentiments, desires, and experiences of a group only recently written into history.

While all the archival sources were in the United States, those of Latina/o activists and organizations were indeed transnational in nature. Activists engaged in the immigration debate readily collected newspapers, press releases, scholarly reports, and sources from activist activities in Mexico and, to a lesser degree, wider Latin America. I utilized these sources as evidence of transnational activism and conceptions of citizenship.

CHAPTER 1: Fronterizos in the Era of Border Enforcement, 1925-1968

In April of 1939, San Diego delegates attended the first *Congreso del Pueblo que Habla Español* (Congress of Spanish-Speaking People) in Los Angeles finding much resonance with the outcry against abuse and violence recounted by Mexican immigrant and Mexican-American workers.[1] Luisa Moreno, a labor activist in Los Angeles and San Diego and major organizer of the Congreso, brought forward a number of mexicano, Mexican American and other workers to provide testimony of their suffering to the nationally-convened group of activists. Humberto Lozano's face was burned by chemicals while working in a factory. Ambrosio Escudero had lost three of his fingers while working as a machinist. In addition to the testimony of these Latina/o workers, Japanese and Filipino workers also shared their own experiences of racial violence in rural areas.[2] San Diego ethnic Mexican labor organizers had mobilized along with other workers to address these types of abuses in the midst of vigilante Ku Klux Klan harassment and "illegal alien" roundups by the newly created Border Patrol during the repatriations of the 1930s. Congreso chapters emerged in San Diego city proper and in San Diego County towns of Escondido, National City and Oceanside to face the KKK and Border Patrol repression that sought to subordinate ethnic Mexican workers. Congreso members in the San Diego borderlands forged cross-citizenship spaces, building off the ongoing efforts of the local trade labor movement to organize new sectors of the American working class, while they also challenged the emergence of

[1] I will use "mexicano" as a way of referring to Mexican immigrants as well.

[2] Carlos M. Larralde, "El Congreso in San Diego: An Endeavor for Civil Rights," *Journal of San Diego History* 50(1 and 2) (Winter/Spring 2004), 17.

border enforcement policies that disrupted existing ethnic Mexican cross-border solidarities. The Congreso emerged as an innovative new voice that privileged the voices of abused racialized laborers and noncitizens and sought to develop an autonomous politics that took seriously the perspective of ethnic Mexican communities in order to tie their struggles at the intersection of racial oppression and noncitizen exploitation with the larger struggle of working-class peoples in the U.S. and beyond.

This chapter explores how the creation of the Border Patrol in 1924 greatly affected the trajectory of local political struggles of ethnic Mexicans in the San Diego borderlands. It demonstrates that from the 1920s to the 1960s important manifestations of Mexican-American activism in Southern California that emerged out of the burgeoning labor movements in the United States and began to articulate an intersecting ethno-racial and working-class identity that enabled advocacy for undocumented immigrants as fellow coethnics and workers. The chapter begins by examining the early de-segregation case, *Alvarez v. Lemon Grove Independent School District* in relation to the creation of the Border Patrol in the 1920s. As the threat of "illegal aliens" was created by state and capitalist elites in the 1920's, new pressures from border enforcement policies disrupted the transnational identity widely shared in ethnic Mexican communities in San Diego and wider Southern California. While always variegated and contested, these notions of community crossed the border and privileged ethno-racial, migrant, and working-class notions of identity over those rooted in differences in nativity and citizenship status. The rest of the chapter follows the cross-citizenship activism of ethnic-based labor movement organizations such as El Congreso del Pueblo que Habla Español and La Hermandad Mexicana in their struggles to protect undocumented workers

as part of the transnational Latina/o community and the American working-class in San Diego and wider Southern California. These organizations maintained and repackaged notions of community that were transnational and inclusive of undocumented migrants and other noncitizens. The chapter argues that ethnic Mexican trade unionists in the 1930s were among the first to forge a new politics of identity and action rooted in their understandings of transnational spaces occupied by both citizens and undocumented migrants. This transnational identity enabled both racialized citizens and noncitizens to challenge their subordinated position in the face of an emergent system of border enforcement immigration policies designed to exploit noncitizen laborers. Indeed, the solidification of U.S. global dominance shifted the priorities and strategies of transnational organizing as the Great Depression, World War II and the Cold War shaped and reshaped the political possibilities that were imagined. But the fundamental problem of how to struggle for meaningful citizenship while a significant proportion of the ethnic Mexican and wider Latina/o community consisted of individuals recruited as noncitizen workers would remain a central issue throughout this period and set the stage for grassroots organizing and activism for the rest of the century.

Mexican Migration in Early Twentieth Century San Diego

The United States' annexation of more than half of Mexico's territory in 1848 created a contradictory situation in which people of identical national and cultural backgrounds were now arbitrarily divided by the imposition of a new political border. Of course, this situation was compounded at the turn of the twentieth century when economic restructuring on both sides of that political border set millions of people in

motion. The infrastructural economic development of Mexico between 1870 and 1910—and especially the concentration and consolidation of land holdings by a tiny elite in that period—displaced millions of working people from their homes and livelihoods, driving them into a growing internal migration stream within Mexico. At almost the same time, the gradual extension of the rail network and expansion of massive irrigation systems in the U.S. Southwest opened up vast new territories to development and, in turn, increased the demand for labor.[3]

After the supply of Asian workers was drastically diminished by a series of immigration restrictions passed between the early 1880s and the turn of the century, the convergence of these developments laid the foundation for a rapidly increasing circulation of laborers from Mexico into the United States (and often back again).[4] The massive circulation of Spanish-speaking workers through the U.S. economy that began then has continued largely unabated ever since. San Diego and wider California reflected this influx of Mexican workers into its developing industries of agriculture, railroad yards, shipping docks and fish canneries. In addition, San Diego and the wider Southwest experienced an increase in Mexican refugees fleeing the instability of the Mexican Revolution from 1910-1920. Between 1910 and 1920 the Mexican-origin

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[3] See Mark Reisler, *By the Sweat of their Brow: Mexican Immigrant Labor in the United States*, (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1976); David G. Gutiérrez, *Walls and Mirrors: Mexican Americans, Mexican Immigrants, and the Politics of Ethnicity*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 39-68; George J. Sánchez, *Becoming Mexican American: Ethnicity, Culture and Identity in Chicano Los Angeles, 1900-1933*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).

[4] On the relationship between Asian and Mexican immigration and policy see, Mae Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America*, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2004), 21-55.

population in San Diego grew from approximately 1,222 to 4,028.[5] One estimate has the Mexican-origin population expanding to about 20,000 by 1928.[6]

The legacy of anti-Mexican sentiment conjured in the build-up to the Mexican-American war in the mid nineteenth century was utilized by white Anglo society to keep Mexican workers in subservient positions in the new economic contexts of the twentieth century. Elites sought to control the relative autonomy of Mexican migrants to move at their own choosing and to create communities, networks, and working-class bonds of mutual aid. In addition to practices of segregation enforced by local police agencies, vigilante policing was employed as a significant mechanism to manage and control the racialized workforce. The 1920s saw a national renewal of the white supremacist Ku Klux Klan. The KKK of the 1920s, according to a number of scholars, was comprised of a middle class of skilled laborers, small proprietors, merchants, professionals and landowning farmers.[7] About three to six million Americans in all 48 states joined this

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[5] The 1910 figure is from *Mexicans in California: report of Governor C.C. Young's Mexican Fact-Finding Committee*, (Sacramento: State Printing Office, 1930). Citied in Richard Griswold del Castillo, "American Colonization of San Diego," in *Chicano San Diego: Cultural Space and the Struggle for Justice*, Richard Griswold del Castillo, ed., (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2007), 66. The 1920 estimate comes from Albert Camarillo, *Chicanos in California*, (San Francisco: Boyd and Fraser, 1984).

[6] The 1928 estimate is based on the study by Cynthia Jane Shelton, "The Neighborhood House of San Diego: Settlement Work in the Mexican Community, 1914-1940," Master's thesis, Department of History, San Diego State University, 1975. Cited in Richard Griswold del Castillo, "Revolution to Economic Depression," in Richard Griswold del Castillo, ed., *Chicano San Diego: Cultural Space and the Struggle for Justice*, ed. Richard Griswold del Castillo (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2007), 92.

[7] Rory McVeigh, "Power Devaluation, the Ku Klux Klan, and the Democratic National Convention of 1924," *Sociological Forum* 16, vol. 1 (March 2001), 1-2; Kathleen Blee, *Women of the Ku Klux Klan: Racism and Gender in the 1920s*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991); David Chalmers, *Hooded Americanism: The History of the Ku Klux Klan*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 1984); Kenneth Jackson, *The Ku Klux Klan in the City, 1915- 1930*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976). Nancy MacLean, *Behind the Mask of Chivalry: The Making of the Second Ku Klux Klan*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994).

resurgence movement of the KKK between 1920 and 1925.[8] Among the Klan's goals were to maintain the subordinate status of working-class laborers, particular immigrant and racial minorities. One west coast flyer reportedly handed out by Klan recruiters in 1921 stated goals of building a "closer relationship between capital and labor," "preventing unwarranted strikes by foreign labor agitators," and "limitation of foreign immigration."[9] These goals were exemplified in November of 1922, when KKK members paraded through ethnic Mexican and African-American communities in Breckenridge, Texas, to demand that they leave town. It was reported that most of the labor performed in Breckenridge was done by Mexican and black workers.[10] These goals and actions reveal the usage of white supremacy to forge an alliance between mid level workers and small scale business owners in the interest of larger capital.

In San Diego Wayne Kenaston, Jr., recalling his father's participation in the Ku Klux Klan in 1920s San Diego County, remembered that the notorious organization's key role was "chasing Mexicans across the border."[11] Historians Carlos M. Larralde and Richard Griswold del Castillo argue that the KKK of the 1920s in San Diego and wider Southern California sought to keep the rising number of Mexican migrants from participating in community politics. A closer inspection reveals that in addition to maintaining the subordinate position of ethnic Mexicans, a key aspect of Klan activity

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[8] Rory McVeigh, "Power Devaluation, the Ku Klux Klan, and the Democratic National Convention of 1924," *Sociological Forum* 16, vol. 1 (March 2001), 1-2.

[9] "Ku Klux Klan is Busy in Seattle," *Los Angeles Times*, July 4, 1921, 14.
[10] "Exodus Follows Ku Klux Parade," *The New York Amsterdam News*, November 29, 1922, 2.

[11] Quoted in Carlos M. Larralde and Richard Griswold del Castillo, "San Diego's Ku Klux Klan," *The Journal of San Diego History* 46(2-3) (Spring/Summer 2000). From V. Wayne Kenaston, Jr., Interviewed by Nancy B. Cuthbert, 8 February 1978, San Diego Historical Society Oral History Program.

was the control of a racialized workforce. According to the lawyer and activist Carey McWilliams, a key goal of the Klan was to keep ethnic Mexicans at the most subordinated position of workers. McWilliams recounted, the Klan "opposed white-collar jobs for Mexicans who at one time were merchants or professionals in war-torn Mexico, and demanded a policy to force them into manual labor."[12] In San Diego County the Klan paid special attention to Mexican workers claiming that "These foreigners want a place in the sunlight, and our money, but when we trade with them, we build them up at our own expense."[13] As Larralde and Griswold del Castillo point out, the Klan's patrolling of the border could be particularly violent. Disfigured and tortured bodies were found at times in the orchards east of the city of San Diego. The Klan linked white supremacy with labor control in its self-professed crusade against "wetbacks" and "communists."[14]

Social relations in the 1920s San Diego border region were therefore structured by the heavy policing of racialized worker's mobility through vigilante patrols, official law enforcement, and support from legitimized government. The intent of these policing systems was to maintain the subordinated position of a racialized noncitizen labor force. The KKK was a mechanism through which unequal class relations were maintained, as it was an organization of mainly petit bourgeois businessmen, skilled laborers and even state officials. Indeed, in adjacent Imperial County, Deputy Sheriff Sam Griffin admitted

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[12] Ibid., 18.

[13] "Every Influence Needed on Side of Restrictive Immigration Bill," *The Imperial Night-Hawk*. March 5, 1924: 5. Quoted in Larralde and Griswold del Castillo, 2000.

[14] Larralde and Griswold del Castillo, 2000.

to signing an application and taking an oath as a Klan member. Griffin and another officer were alleged to have summoned 17 KKK members out of a total of 25 possible individuals to serve as jurors into a case against an ethnic Mexican defendant. Revealing the tolerance for Klan activity in the border region, Judge Franklin J. Cole declined to act on these allegations choosing to keep the same pool of jurors.[15]

Local elites also consented to the operations of the Klan through turning a blind eye to their activities. Historians Carlos Larralde and Richard Griswold del Griswold del Castillo argue, "Newspapers refused to investigate cases of Klan hatred because editors feared that negative publicity might create a bad image for San Diego and hurt its commercial growth."[16] In another article, Larralde asserts that even when mainstream media outlets would report on KKK operations, few reported the Klan's brutality against Mexican immigrants.[17]

From the perspective of ethnic Mexican workers and activists, the San Diego borderlands region was a hostile landscape of tenuous job opportunities and random racial terrorism. Describing the horrendous environment, migrant worker and veteran of the Mexican Revolution Mercedes Acasan García recalled in tears the many Mexican workers that were lynched, whipped, and burned. "Since they were ragged Wetbacks, nobody cared who they were and nothing was done about it," said García, "These laborers in rural areas had their homes or barns burned. Several growers patrolled their

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[15] "Sees Grip on Bench," *Los Angeles Times*, July 11, 1922.

[16] Larralde and Griswold del Castillo, 2000.

[17] Carlos Larralde, "Roberto Galvan: A Latino Leader of the 1940s," *Journal of San Diego History*, 52, no. 3/4 (Summer/Fall 2006), 157.

fields to calm their sad and worried field hands; their crops were worthless without Mexicans."[18]

Migrant Mexicanidad in the Borderlands

Mexican migrants in the San Diego borderlands held their own proclivities and forged their ways of life in the context of worker's exploitation, racial segregation and antagonistic relations with the majority white population. While the context of the early twentieth century in the San Diego borderlands was one that resembled what one scholar labeled "conditions of semi-slavery," ethnic Mexicans created communities and utilized existing cultural institutions and strategies to survive and resist oppressive circumstances from the nineteenth century into the 1920s.[19] Anthropologist Robert R. Alvarez, Jr. argues that Mexican migrants in the San Diego area developed social networks that allowed them to endure challenging conditions and successfully settle and organize the basis for a subsistent community. Alvarez describes how beginning in the nineteenth century Baja Californio migrant worker families created networks to adjust to shifting socio-economic patterns as they moved between mainland Mexico, Baja California, and the United States. By the 1920s, the developing economies of border towns in the U.S. and Mexico, including San Diego, Tijuana, Calexico, and Mexicali led to increased migration. Alvarez explains that this migration was based on pre-established networks in

[18] Larralde and Griswold de Castillo, 2000.

[19] Richard Griswold del Castillo uses this phrase in reference especially to laborers within the "agricultural complex of the Imperial Valley." While it specifies a specific locale "semi-slavery" describes the sentiment many scholars have developed in relation the conditions of migrant laborers in similar commercial agricultural systems. See Griswold del Castillo, "From Revolution to Economic Depression" In *Chicano San Diego: Cultural Space and the Struggle for Justice*, ed. Richard Griswold del Castillo, (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2008), 72. These fields were where the KKK, as Larralde and Griswold del Castillo (2000) point out, attacked or harassed Mexican workers.

Baja California in which families recognized one another to create new kinship ties, provide mutual aid and promote ethnic and class solidarity. Alvarez argues,

> The arrival of Baja migrants in the frontera illustrates how families extended mutual help to kin ties to create a formal kin network along the border. The primary basis for this reciprocity was the institution of family sentiment, or *parentesco*, which along with *compadrazgo* (copaternity) and marriage, was used to recruit and extend ties among frontera migrants. Although *parentesco*, like *compadrazgo* and marriage, was commonly practiced in Mexico, these institutions became the basis for cultural maintenance, social adaptation, and successful settlement in the border towns of the U.S. Unlike kin extensions in Mexico, the kin ties of the border were based on a *parentesco* that included the migration experience, the regional affiliation, the mining circuit and settlement in the frontera.[20]

Alvarez's analysis of Mexican migrant community formation suggests that the ethnic Mexican community in the California borderlands was not only subject to the prerogatives of Anglo elites, but held its own strategies, priorities, and cultural practices that allowed them to survive and even gave them an idiom in which to voice their discontents. Furthermore, before the eventful establishment of the Border Patrol in 1925, ethnic Mexican community in the borderlands existed by-and-large across differences in nativity, nationality and citizenship status.

While it must be considered that the notion of the family within the ethnic Mexican community held its own dynamics of power, kinship practices formed the basis of a subaltern community with its own faculties in an oppressive context. The community of the 1920s and 30s that Alvarez utilizes as a case study, Lemon Grove, might demonstrate how community formation was mobilized to challenge racial subordination and class exploitation among ethnic Mexicans at the U.S.-Mexico border in

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[20] Robert R. Alvarez, Jr., *Familia: Migration and Adaptation in Baja and Alta California, 1800 – 1975*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1987), 95.

the early twentieth century. Alvarez asserts that borderlands communities were bounded together around notions of Mexicanidad and cultural identity that were transnational, baring little or no distinction between U.S. and Mexican nationality. Family sentiment served as a primary organizing function of the community, as working-class migrants utilized cultural tools such as *compadrazgo* and *parentensco* to incorporate neighbors into family-bonded networks of survival and shared livelihood. This community identity was also class-based in that the population consisted of primarily workers and small entrepreneurs. In this way community organization addressed issues such as low wages, mutual benefits, and disputes with bosses and the state. Finally, identity as a migrant, rather than being a destabilizing force, was actually part and parcel of the collective experience that created a strong basis of community. This conception of community was based on Mexicanidad, regional affiliation, and the experience of migration OVER citizenship status. Yet the new pressure that emerged with the enactment in the mid-twenties of a federal policing force created to apprehend and deport undocumented migrants through a legalized system of racial profiling disrupted this notion of community.

From the KKK to the Border Patrol

While white supremacist vigilantism and official government ignorance, if not outright participation with the Klan, worked together to maintain this terroristic environment, there existed a major conflict between the explicit violence of the Klan and the official boosterism of San Diego's elite. In a sense the KKK was correct in its assessment that "when we trade with them we build them up at our expense" in that

continual recruitment of Mexican laborers led to a growing ethnic Mexican community in the San Diego borderlands.[21] In other words, from the time of the American takeover forward capitalist development in Southern California depended on the recruitment of noncitizen racialized labor, and in this fact the population of ethnic Mexicans and other communities of color incrementally increased.[22] This reveals a key contradiction in the interests of capitalist development and the system of white supremacy: that the recruitment of cheap noncitizen racialized laborers actually increased the population share and ethno-racial diversity of U.S. society. Therefore, capitalists had to conceive of new methods of management and control that facilitated access to racialized noncitizen labor while keeping them subordinated. The Klan's method of labor control conflicted with the goals of many capitalists. Terrorized laborers did not make good workers and racial violence did not encourage continued access to cheap, subjugated racialized workers. As the migrant worker García pointed out, "Several growers patrolled their fields to calm their sad and worried field hands; their crops were worthless without Mexicans."[23] Growers and other business leaders wanted their laborers "calm" so they could work diligently. Alternative ways of managing labor relations in the developing border region would have to be created to appear legitimate and civil and therein move forward the capitalist development of the region.

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[21] Quote from, Larralde and Griswold del Castillo, 2000.

[22] Other workers of color, particularly Asian workers, and after the Immigration Act of 1924, particularly Filipino workers throughout the 1920s were recruited as menial laborers in the American West. See Mae Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America*, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2004), 96-126. On the Filipino-American community in San Diego see, Yen Le Espiritu, *Filipino American Lives*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1995).

[23] Larralde and Griswold del Castillo, 2000.

Historian Mai Ngai analyzes the Immigrant Act of 1924 as an answer to this problem and a shift in official discourse on how to manage Mexican workers in particular by transforming them from conquered subjects to illegal aliens.[24] Ngai argues that the Immigration Act of 1924 was the successful culmination of restrictionist politicians who benefited from the racial fear of Asian, Southern European and Mexican immigrant workers. Different from business elites that successfully developed the American West by acquiring labor in large part from Asia and Mexico, restrictionists, both politicians and white labor leaders, played on the racial anxiety of white workers in order to solidify their leadership roles. Ngai points out that the Act of 1924 barred Asian and greatly reduced Southern European migration to the applause of restrictionists, but goes onto to note that the same reform allowed business elites to continue to access the labor of Mexican migrants.

Due to the stipulations of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, Mexicans were eligible for citizenship and therefore restrictionists were unable to deem them ineligible in the manner Asian immigrants were or even put quota on migration from Mexico as was done to Southern Europeans. The powerful lobbies of the agricultural industries in the U.S. Southwest by and large influenced the 1924 bill to exclude migration from the Western Hemisphere as subject to restrictions and quotas. This in affect would maintain access by these business elites to Mexican labor. Instead, to control Mexicans, restrictionists successfully created the Border Patrol. Ngai explains,

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[24] Mae M. Ngai, "The Architecture of Race in American Immigration Law: Reexamination of the Immigration Act of 1924," *The Journal of American History* 86, no. 1 (June 1999) and *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America*, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2004).

> …during the 1920s Congress made provisions for the enforcement of immigration laws that hardened the difference between legal and illegal immigration. It lifted the statute of limitations on deportation in 1924 and formed the Border Patrol in 1925…By the late 1920s the problem of illegal immigration became increasingly associated with Mexicans, as they came to constitute half of those deported formally under warrant and over 80 percent of all voluntary departures… 'Illegal' became constitutive of 'Mexican,' referring not to citizens of Mexico, but to a wholly negative racial category.[25]

This political development was not only a concession to nativists, but also a new weapon for capitalists that sought a method of maintaining a subordinated Mexican workforce outside of the illegitimate image of vigilante groups such as the KKK. As a mechanism of the U.S. state, the Border Patrol and the "hardened difference between legal and illegal immigration" became a legitimized tool through which to control, but allow a continued flow of a cheap, subordinated work force.

Therefore, ethnic Mexican activists beginning in the 1920s struggled for basic civil and human rights in a context in which "'Illegal' became constitutive of 'Mexican.'"[26] Ethnic Mexican activists would now have to develop a path of struggle that would address the fact that significant parts of their community were U.S. citizens, "legal" immigrants, and "illegal aliens." Much more perplexing was that as a population associated with the newly created legal category of "illegal alien," ethnic Mexicans were subject to a state sanctioned system of deportation and border enforcement. Furthermore, this implied that an ethnic Mexican individual of any status would be a suspected "illegal" due to the race-based practice of policing noncitizens. Therefore, just as cultural critic Lisa Lowe argues that, "the life conditions, choices, and expressions of Asian

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[25] Ngai, 1999, 16.

[26] Ibid.

Americans have been significantly determined by the U.S. state through the apparatus of immigration laws and policies," I would argue that beginning with the Immigration Act of 1924, border enforcement immigration policies structured the "life chances, choices and expressions" of ethnic Mexicans as well.[27]

This chain of events that shifted mechanisms that controlled Mexican labor from racial terrorism to legitimized official policy reveals the diversifying ways in which capitalists worked with the state to manage the global context in which capital-labor relations took place. It also allowed local elites to promote their city as one of civilization and opportunity through distancing themselves from the chaotic and violent image of KKK vigilante justice. Yet racial fear was utilized by both the KKK and official policy. The difference between the two was a superficial line between legitimized versus illegitimate violence.

This is demonstrated interestingly by the opinions of critics of the KKK. In a most ironic twist, one critic of the KKK argued that the Klan was actually an idea stolen from the "primitive" Bantu tribe in Africa. In affect racializing the KKK, the editorial that appeared in the *Detroit Free Press* argued, "It is perhaps not so commonly known that similar organizations (as the KKK) begin to appear at a very low stage in development of human society, and that ethnologists have studied secret societies in the heart of barbarous Africa that are essentially the same as the Klan."[28] Pointing out that Bantu tribes wore masks, held "gruesome ceremonies," organized secret societies, and

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[27] Lisa Lowe, *Immigrant Acts: On Asian American Cultural Politics*, (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1996), 7.

[28] "Confess Theft of Klan Ideas from Africans," *The Chicago Defender*, February 17, 1923.

"degenerate into persecutory and blackmailing gangs" in the name of law and justice, the editorial cast the KKK outside the bounds of civilized society. Noting that peoples of the Pacific islands as well as Mexican Indians also practiced these rituals, the author criticized the KKK by associating them with nonwhites, maintaining a racial hierarchy around the notion of white civility. By asserting that "the Klan is a return to methods which civilization has outgrown as it outgrew nose rings and cannibalism" the editorial revealed ideas that were the basis of a shift from overt systems of racial violence to implicit ones such as the emergence of the Border Patrol.[29]

Another critic in a *Los Angeles Times* editorial decried the KKK and its crusade against especially Japanese communities on the west coast as "strange" because "We of the United States may not find our laws perfect or their administration by our courts impeccable; but we are a law abiding people and we have faith in the justice and equity of our courts."[30] Of most offense was how KKK vigilante justice tactics dismissed the democratic functioning of laws and the violent method of achieving their goals. The critic was not opposed to white supremacy, however, but the method in which it was maintained by the Klan. This *LA Times* editorial also demonstrated the intellectual basis of the emergence of state-sanctioned policing powers such as the Border Patrol that sought to replace "uncivilized" illustrations of vigilante chaos and violence. Indeed, the critic closed the editorial by arguing, "There may be room for a society to aid in maintaining the supremacy of the white race—but it is not through blazing crosses,

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[29] Ibid.

[30] "Ku Klux Klan!" *Los Angeles Times*, January 24, 1921.

white-draped and masked riders, and threats of mysterious reprisals that the supremacy of any race can be maintained or advanced."[31]

The modern state in its cooperation with capital put on a face of civility and rule of law in contrast to chaos and anarchy. The modern state in reality maintained systems of labor exploitation and racial hierarchies through legitimized violence. It is in this manner that racial discourse enabled elites to divide different classes of workers. Further, "race" was a way to naturalize the noncitizen status of especially Mexicans and Asians. The shift from vigilante to legitimized control of Mexican labor and "the shift in formal language from race to national origin (in immigration policy) did not mean that race ceased to operate," points out Ngai, "but rather that it became obfuscated."[32] Through the newly created category of "illegal alien" racial subordination and noncitizen status was utilized to ensure a cheap and docile labor force. With the Immigration Act of 1924 effectively barring Asian workers from entering the United States, Mexican workers became the primary noncitizen laborers to be recruited to the region. While this new system of border enforcement by and large replaced the vigilante patrols of the KKK, neither white supremacist activities nor the racial anxiety they propagated disappeared or even appreciably diminished. Racial nativist organizations, encouraged by official policies that expressed a goal of deporting "illegal aliens," would continue to exist alongside the state-sponsored battle against noncitizen racialized labor.

Citizenship in the New Regime: Re-reading the Lemon Grove Incident

[31] Ibid.

[32] Ngai, 1999, 14.

In the emergent era of immigration restriction, transnational practices of community and identity were disrupted by the presence of a national policy and police force whose very function was to strictly implement nationalist separation between juridical citizens and noncitizens, while at the same time ensuring a regulated flow of cheap labor. This pressure to conform to a citizen-based, national (rather than transnational) identity was demonstrated in the struggles of the ethnic Mexican community in Lemon Grove in Southeast San Diego County in the 1930s. A number of scholars have written about *Roberto Alvarez v. Lemon Grove School District*, a 1930 segregation case also known as the "Lemon Grove incident."[33] This case featured resistance from the ethnic Mexican community in a small town in San Diego County against the attempt by the school board to segregate Mexican children. Analysis of the Lemon Grove case teases out how new policing mechanisms enacted to maintain a citizen-noncitizen hierarchy shifted social relations in the U.S.-Mexico borderlands.

The Lemon Grove parents that led the struggle against segregation held a working-class base and maintained transnational *mexicano* migrant identities such a vital part of the San Diego border region. Most of the Lemon Grove parents were Mexican nationals and built networks of support and solidarity around Mexicanidad, regional Baja Californio identity, migrant experiences, and working-class solidarity through the cultural tools of family and *parentesco*. Anthropologist Roberto Alvarez argues that these

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[33] Francisco E. Balderrama, *In Defense of La Raza: The Los Angeles Mexican Consulate and the Mexican Community, 1929-1936*, (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1982); Roberto R. Alvarez, Jr., "The Lemon Grove Incident: The Nation's First Successful Desegregation Case," *The Journal of San Diego History* 32(2) (Spring 1986); Laney Whitcanack, "Community Action for and against Integrated Education," In *Grassroots Social Action: Lessons in People Power Movements,* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield), 2008: 87-94.

networks, especially strong in Lemon Grove, were mobilized to resist segregation. When the Lemon Grove ethnic Mexican community received word of the school board's plans to separate their children without their consent, they sought to challenge the situation, chiefly because the new school, which the community called "La Caballeriza" (barnyard), was substandard in comparison with the main elementary school. The parents created La Comité de los Vecinos de Lemon Grove (The Lemon Grove Neighbors Committee) and ordered their children to return home if turned away from the primary school.[34]

If we take Alvarez's assertion that the Lemon Grove mobilization was based on the conception of a transnational working-class migrant mexicano identity, then we might assume that the Comité referred to this transnational notion of community in their description of "Mexican children." The Comité seemed to show concern for both the immigrant and U.S.-born Mexican community. They stated, "…a speedy determination of the matter is necessary to prevent serious embarrassment and to determine the legal right under the laws of California, of children of Mexican parentage, nationality and or descent to attend the public schools of California on a basis of equality with other Americans."[35] In this statement the significance of the case is related to the "legal right" of all children of Mexican "nationality" and "descent." The usage of the term "descent" and "nationality" could be interpreted as applying to citizen and noncitizen Mexicans

[34] Roberto R. Alvarez, Jr., "The Lemon Grove Incident: The Nation's First Successful Desegregation Case," *The Journal of San Diego History* 32(2) (Spring 1986). Also see *The Lemon Grove Incident*, VHS, Paul Espinoza and Frank Christopher, (New York: Cinema Guild, 1985).

[35] *Superior Court of the State of California, San Diego County, Writ of Mandate, February 13, 1931*. Quoted in Alvarez, 1986.

alike. Indeed, if an established conception of community was based in Mexicanidad and the experience of labor migration this broader conception would make sense. Arguing for the rights of "children of Mexican parentage, nationality and or descent" in equality with "other Americans" suggests an assertion of "American" as inclusive of people of Mexican descent whether official citizens or not. The Comité asserted that, "We are not in agreement, which is very natural, nor do we consider just, the separation of our children, without any reason, to send them to another establishment that distinguishes Mexican Children from children of other nationalities."[36]

In its engagement with American courts, however, the meaning of "Mexican students" almost inevitably shifted from a transnational to a strictly national connotation. A major strategy used by the Comité lawyers was a claim to citizenship since most of their children were U.S.-born. The writ of mandate argued that for continued inclusion of the Mexican children because 95 percent of the students were American born "entitled to all the rights and privileges common to all citizens of the United States."[37] These claims to juridical notions of citizenship reveal contradicting notions of belonging. The transnational sense of "Mexican" identity was seemingly dismissing of nativity as a prerequisite to inclusion. Yet a key strategy of the law suit was insistent on inclusion due to the nativity of the students being segregated. This revealed how the pressures of border enforcement and anti-Mexican sentiment in the Depression era disrupted the transnational migrant *mexicano* identity practiced in the borderlands in years past.

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[36] *La Opinion*, January 25, 1931. Quoted in Alvarez, 1986.

[37] *Superior Court of the State of California, San Diego County, Writ of Mandate, February 13, 1931.* Quoted in Alvarez, 1986.

By the 1930s, the Great Depression had rained havoc on the Latina/o community in Southern California as repatriation efforts, ranging from personal decisions made by Mexican immigrants to return to Mexico in the midst of economic decline to mass roundups of both citizens and noncitizens of Mexican-origin, created an atmosphere in which all Latinas/os were considered foreign and scapegoated for taking jobs from "real Americans." Indeed, Balderrama and Raymond Rodríguez assert,

> Americans, reeling from the economic disorientation of the Depression, sought a convenient scapegoat. They found it in the Mexican community. In a frenzy of anti-Mexican hysteria, wholesale punitive measures were proposed and undertaken by officials at the federal, state and local levels. Contributing to the brutalizing experience were the mass deportation and repatriation drives. Violence and 'scare head' tactics were utilized to get rid of the burdensome and unwanted horde. An incessant cry of 'get rid of the Mexicans' swept the country.[38]

While the claim to American citizenship was a useful tactic in winning the case and ensuring that the Mexican-American children of Lemon Grove received a quality education, it also presented a re-definition of what community members meant by "Mexican" children from a transnational ethnic-based identity to one based in American citizenship through birth on the northern side of the U.S.-Mexico border. Indeed, the pressures were very real in this context as the Ruiz family was deported for participating in the boycott of the school. A widowed mother, Mrs. Ruiz was utilizing county assistance after the death of her husband. As an immigrant, school officials, upset over the resistance displayed by the ethnic Mexican community, succeeded in deporting her and her U.S.-born children.[39] One of Mrs. Ruiz's children, David Ruiz, recalled,

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[38] Francisco Balderrama and Raymond Rodríguez, *Decade of Betrayal: Mexican Repatriation in the 1930s*, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexican Press, Revised edition, 2006), 1.
[39] Roberto R. Alvarez, Jr., "The Lemon Grove Incident: The Nation's First Successful Desegregation Case," *The Journal of San Diego History* 32, no. 2 (Spring 1986).

> They took advantage because we were supported by the government 'cause my father had died. And according to them it was for that reason we were sent back. And I had--it was Roberto, Enrique, Jorge, Laura, Lupe--five brothers (sic) that were born here. You spend have of your life, your young kid life here, in the States. Now they throw you back to a country you hadn't lived there very much. Then you don't know exactly which country you have to belong to first.[40]

The experience of the Ruiz family demonstrates the disruption of a transnational practice of community. In the context of the Great Depression and Mexican Repatriation, recently enacted mechanisms of deportation were utilized to strictly divide U.S. citizens from noncitizens and "Mexicans" from "Americans" to appease demands for jobs. Therefore, transnational practices of community were interrogated. In this context, individuals and communities, particularly ethnic Mexicans, were pressured to choose "which country you have to belong to first." In the face of such a threat, the Comité emphasized the American citizenship of their children. This claiming of citizenship, while challenging the second-class citizenship of Mexican Americans, was unable to challenge the dominant idea that illegal immigrants were indeed draining the country of resources and therefore had no basis for membership in society. Only as American citizens, and as legally "Caucasian," were the children deemed deserving of attendance at the central school. The implied message was that noncitizens, many of whom were members of the ethnic Mexican community, as well as other people of color were not deserving of attending integrated schools. This reveals how U.S. state mechanisms could absorb challenges to narrow definitions of U.S. citizenship. The Lemon Grove case, while successful in challenging the school, was thus eventually co-opted in part to

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[40] *The Lemon Grove Incident*, VHS, Paul Espinoza and Frank Christopher, (New York: Cinema Guild, 1985).

reinforce narrow notions of American that excluded blacks, Asians, Native Americans and noncitizen Mexicans.

I demonstrate this analysis of the Lemon Grove incident not to dismiss the significance of this important subaltern struggle, but to demonstrate how the creation of the Border Patrol and the enactment of repatriation campaigns in the Depression era would disrupt the transnational conception of a working-class mexicano community. In appealing for equal treatment in the mainstream institution of the U.S. courts, agents of the state, through the courts, constantly attempted to shore-up and re-inscribe a narrow notion of American citizenship based on hierarchies of race and citizenship status. It must be considered that the Comité's initial transnational meaning in usage of the term "Mexican children" was altered by the juridical language of the court and representation of the community by the Mexican consulate lawyers. Yet the conundrum of the repatriation campaigns of the time signified the new terrain on which ethnic Mexican politics in the U.S. would have to grapple.

The Lemon Grove struggle revealed competing visions on how Mexican Americans might engage the era of restriction. Unlike the simultaneous occurrence of *Salvatierra v. Independent School District* in South Texas, referenced more often due to its legal precedent, historian Francisco E. Balderrama points out that the Lemon Grove incident was based on a working-class mobilization because there existed no "petite bourgeoisie of small Mexican American businessmen in the Lemon Grove comité." Therefore, while the ruling of the Lemon Grove case reinscribed many of the exclusions practiced by the state, the Comité displayed aspects of a transnational citizenship in the Mexican nationalism that served as the basis for the mobilization. In contrast, the League

of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) represented an organization of the emerging (or at least aspiring) Mexican-American middle class whose attorneys led the *Salvatierra* case. LULAC's aspiring class strategy involved disassociating with Mexican migrants and deemphasizing Mexican ethnicity as to avoid the emergent repression and stigmatization of new border enforcement policies in the early 1930s. What the Lemon Grove case reveals in this broader context is the disorienting affect that border enforcement policies had on ethnic Mexican organizing and the emergence of an intra-community debate about how best to act on it.

Cross-Citizenship and Transnational Resistance: El Congreso

The Depression era not only brought on new forms of repression and hardship but new forms of resistance. The Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) and radical labor activists gained a significant foothold in communities of color, including Latina/o workers, in their drive for redress to economic crisis through organizing groups of workers traditionally marginalized by dominant labor unions. It was in this context that a contingent of Latina/o community members in San Diego and wider California formulated a concerted response to the mechanism of racialized noncitizen exploitation and the related system of border enforcement across the imposed differences of nationality and citizenship status. Many scholars have noted that *El Congreso del Pueblo de Habla Español*, a coalition of labor activists, liberal politicians and left-leaning artists and entertainers was paramount to a working-class assertion of Latina/o politics that crossed lines of citizen and noncitizen via cross-border ethnic ties, identity as workers, and protection of immigrants as vulnerable members of the workforce. Congreso

reoriented Mexican-American/mexicano identity to battle the citizenship regime and tie ethnic Mexican struggles to larger class concerns across borders.[41]

Latina/o labor activists, with their Anglo allies, convened a national meeting of grassroots activists to determine action against, among other things, the repatriation drives from the perspective of the racialized communities under attack. Its first meeting held in Los Angeles in 1939 identified border enforcement policies and deportations as a primary method of worker repression and exploitation and called for the immediate adjustment of noncitizen workers' status. The Congreso convened for "unity of the Spanish speaking people of the United States" to struggle for "the defense of Mexican homes in the United States, seeking to prevent their disorganization frequently caused by deportations."[42] Again, the rhetoric Congreso members deployed echoed the same kind of transnational sensibilities articulated by the plaintiffs in the *Lemon Grove* case. Congreso identified deportations as a threat against "Mexican homes" across lines of official citizenship status. Indeed, the Congreso asserted that the repatriation effort more specifically had been "distorted by forces hostile to the Mexican and Spanish-American people in the Unites States" leading to "abuses upon our people." Congreso opted to work independently toward informing noncitizens and other interested parties about the

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[41] On Congreso see Mario T. García, *Mexican Americans: Leadership, Ideology and Identity, 1930-1960*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989); Vicki Ruiz, *Cannery Women, Cannery Lives: Mexican Women, Unionization, and the California Food Processing Industry, 1930-1950*, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1987); David G. Gutiérrez, *Walls and Mirrors: Mexican Americans, Mexican Immigrants and the Politics of Ethnicity*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994); George J. Sánchez, *Becoming Mexican American: Ethnicity, Culture and Identity in Chicano Los Angeles, 1900-1933*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993); Carlos M. Larralde, "El Congreso in San Diego," *Journal of San Diego History* 50 (1-2) (Winter/Spring 2004) and Zaragoza Vargas, *Labor Rights are Civil Rights: Mexican American Workers in Twentieth-Century America*, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2007).

[42] First National Congress of the Mexican and Spanish American Peoples of the United States, *Digest of Proceedings*, April 1939, Public Domain.

violation of rights and the anti-labor effects of repatriation and deportation.[43] Furthermore, Congreso sought to amend "the naturalization laws to permit all non-citizens, who wish to do so, to become American citizens."[44] Their primary reasoning was that fees for naturalization were too high for the working-class wages made by most of these noncitizens, that red tape and bureaucracy worked to bar access to citizenship, and most importantly, that "in every way except the possession of citizenship papers they (noncitizens) are as thoroughly a part of American society as the citizen population."[45] But again, other components of the Congreso's political and social platform made clear that such arguments for an easier path to U.S. citizenship did not preclude the organization's ongoing emphasis on the transnational connections within the practice of ethnic identity.

These postulations by the Congreso were part of a call for unity as an ethnic group that transcended the boundaries of the nation-state and crossed lines of nationality and citizenship status in an era in which noncitizens were the targets of state repression. Historian David G. Gutiérrez asserts that the Congreso,

> Made a number of important ideological contributions to Mexican Americans' and Mexican immigrants' ongoing struggle to achieve social justice in the United States. Clearly the most important of these contributions was the fostering and encouragement of ethnocultural and class solidarity among people who, in the previous quarter-century, had found many reasons to distrust each other. Rejecting the views of those Mexican Americans who advocated the erection of strict boundaries between Mexican immigrants and Americans of Mexican descent, congress organizers chose instead to emphasize the cultural and class

[43] Ibid.

[44] Ibid.

[45] Ibid.

> similarities of the two groups as the primary basis for organization…Such activists insisted that Americans in good conscience could not have it both ways—they could not simultaneously exploit the labor and the goodwill of ethnic Mexican people, deny them any real possibility of assimilating into the social or cultural mainstream, and then expect them not to continue to cherish and defend their own cultural traditions and practices.[46]

Utilizing ethnic identity as a basis for a structural critique of capitalism and larger solidarity with the international working class, Congreso carved out a space of struggle that utilized racial unity to contribute to class struggle on transnational terrain.

By organizing as an ethnic and class-based entity, in the spirit of uniting with the wider working class, Congreso asserted an autonomous space from which to struggle, build coalition, and locally root radical activism while interconnecting it with transnational and global processes. Despite the fact that the Congreso was part of a Communist popular front to address racial issues in order to incorporate workers of color into its ranks and in its close relationship with the trade labor movement of the era, historian George J. Sánchez's argues that,

> Latino organizers of the conference (in 1939) had their own "Popular Front" strategy in the late 1930s. While they welcomed aid and support from all fronts, including white liberals and leftists, they defined their own direction for fighting the oppression they believed was integral to American society. By not excluding Communists from their ranks—both Anglos and Latinos—El Congreso proved to be an inclusive organization, but not one "captured" by any outside group. In fact, the leadership of El Congreso, though clearly a product of labor and left organizations, prided itself on being able to appeal to *all* Latinos, regardless of political affiliation.[47]

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[46] David G. Gutiérrez, *Walls and Mirrors: Mexican Americans, Mexican Immigrants and the Politics of Ethnicity*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 115-116.

[47] Sánchez, 1994, 245.

Here Sánchez captures the significance of el Congreso as a "politics of opposition" that enabled Latina/o activists to enact their own, independent political perspective around the notion of ethno-racial identity as it intersected with class oppression as well as gender positionalities.

Indeed, about 30 percent of Congreso's membership were women, many of whom held leadership positions including co-founder Luisa Moreno as well as Josefina Fierro de Bright in the central Los Angeles chapter, and in San Diego women such as Cesaria Valdez, Celia L. de Rodriguez, Aurora Castillo and Margarita Flores who battled gender discrimination in the workplace, domestic abuse and environmental ills.[48] Congreso's official stance on gender oppression, as designed at the 1939 conference, asserted that the "Mexican woman, for centuries have suffered oppression" and that chapters would in response create Women's Committees "so that she (the Mexican woman) may receive equal wages, enjoy the same rights as men in social, economic, and civic liberties, and use her vote for the defense of the Mexican and Spanish American people, and American democracy."[49]

Therefore the Congreso acted as an autonomous voice for grassroots community and labor activists creating a program to address the intersection of race, class and gender repression as a transnational entity rooted in the U.S. but situated in between the United

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[48] On El Congreso's struggles against gender oppression see, Sánchez, 1994, 227-228. On San Diego Congreso women activists, see, Carlos M. Larralde, "El Congreso in San Diego," *Journal of San Diego History* 50 (1-2) (Winter/Spring 2004): 22; and Carlos M. Larralde, "Roberto Galvan: A Latino Leader of the 1940s," *Journal of San Diego History* 52 (3-4) (Summer/Fall 2006): 155-156.

[49] "Resolutions Adopted by the Second Convention of the Spanish Speaking People's Congress of California, Dec. 9 and 10, 1939," 6, Ernesto Galarza Papers, Sanford University. As quoted in Sánchez, 1994, 248.

States and Mexico and even wider Latin America. By transnational entity I am referring to Congreso's unequivocal stance that Mexican and wider Latina/o culture and community, built in reaction to a history of class racism for protection and perseverance, as well as the current structural position of both Mexican Americans and Mexican noncitizens as primarily exploited workers, sought to build on connections that transcended the U.S.-Mexico border. Indeed, Congreso put forth a transnational identity as both "American" and "Mexican" from the beginning of the 1939 conference when both the U.S. and Mexican national hymns were honored. The resolutions of the Congreso called for the preservation of Mexican heritage, the establishment of Spanish as another official language on par with English in areas of the country where there were large numbers of Spanish-speaking people and even for a prototype of Chicana/o studies that would educate U.S. residents about the long history of Spanish-speaking peoples in what is now the U.S.[50] This political stance on cultural identity perceived no contradiction between the transnational practice of Mexican ethnicity and ethnic Mexican's place as part of U.S. society facilitating Congeso's advocacy for and identification with undocumented migrants on the basis of both ethnic and class solidarity.

While historian George J. Sánchez notes that the Congreso signaled a shift from a Mexico-oriented to a "Mexican American" political posture rooted in the politics and context of the United States, Congreso's embracing of Mexican and Latina/o heritage and

[50] First National Congress of the Mexican and Spanish American Peoples of the United States, *Digest of Proceedings*, April 1939, Public Domain. See also, David G. Gutiérrez, *Walls and Mirrors: Mexican Americans, Mexican Immigrants and the Politics of Ethnicity*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994): 115-116 and Geogre J. Sánchez, *Becoming Mexican American: Ethnicity, Identity and Culture in Chicano Los Angeles, 1900-1945*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994): 209-210.

communion with Mexican migrants as part of their community inexplicably maintained ties to Mexican society.[51] One participant in the 1939 Congreso convention stated, "The basic objectives pursued by the Spanish-Speaking Congress involve the unification between American citizens of Mexican descent and Mexican nationals as well as the friendship between the peoples of the United States and Mexico."[52] Congreso demonstrated that the structural reality of migration and the intertwined economies of the U.S. and Mexico created possibilities of a politics that transcended the nation state. While it is apparent that a shift in consciousness among ethnic Mexican politics moved toward focusing on life in the U.S. as indicated in advocacy for union activity, naturalization, registration and voting in a generation that was majority U.S.-born and engaged in the politics of the New Deal, Congreso also maintained a space that nurtured cross-border notions of belonging in its engagement with the voices and experiences of noncitizens. For example, one of Congreso's early public demonstrations involved support for Mexican President Lazaro Cardenas' effort to expropriate U.S. and foreign oil companies from Mexico. Bert Corona remembered,

> These companies for years had unfairly exploited Mexico's oil resources. El Congreso organized a march against possible U.S. military intervention to regain the oil concessions. Eight or nine thousand people marched up Broadway Street in downtown Los Angeles in a protest that concluded at the Mexican consulate. The march scared the hell out of the city

[51] Sánchez argues "The upsurge in Chicano political activity that occurred in the 1930s and early 1940s, however, involved at its core an attempt by the children of the immigrant generation and those who arrived in the United States as youngsters to integrate themselves into American society." While I do not disagree with this assertion, I would add that this activity, particularly that of advocacy for noncitizens, profoundly reshaped, at least momentarily, notions of integration with American society by conceiving of belonging or citizenship as outside or interconnected to relations outside the realm of the nation-state. See Sánchez, 1994, 249-252.

[52] Mario T. García, *Mexican Americans: Leadership, Ideology and Identity, 1930-1960*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 150. Quote taken from the Latina/o community newspaper *La Opinion*, 1939.

> establishment—Mexicans had never before marched in Los Angeles in such numbers.[53]

Indeed, Cardenas' appointee to the Los Angeles Mexican consulate and former interim president of Mexico Adolfo de la Huerta attended the 1939 convention and offered support and advice. Other transnational interactions included attendance of a representative from the Mexican labor union, the Confederación de Trabajadores Mexicanos (CTM). The Congreso had invited the CTM's leader Lombardo Toledano, but due to his radicalism he was not allowed to enter the U.S. Instead, Toledano sent a representative.[54] As American Studies scholar Alicia Schmidt Camacho argues, "Members of the Congreso had extensive experience of cross-border political campaigns that originated in Latin American anarchism and socialism, (leading them) to look beyond citizenship as a vehicle for rights."[55] Aside from explicit engagement with Mexican politics, embracement of noncitizens as fellow community members with shared cultural and class experiences in and of itself attempted to re-define citizenship and belonging from its basis in the nation-state, to a transnational reality. As Camacho asserts, "Mexican migrants opened up new challenges and horizons of possibility for Mexican American social movements in the 1930s" through the construct of the transborder community "as an expression of social relations that found no accommodation within the nation-state."[56]

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[53] Mario T. García, *Memories of Chicano History: The Life and Narrative of Bert Corona*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994, 115.

[54] García, 1989, 150.

[55] Alicia Schmidt Camacho, *Migrant Imaginaries: Latino Cultural Politics in the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands*, (New York: New York University Press, 2008): 40.

[56] Ibid, 60.

Congreso Activism in San Diego

Sociologist Carlos Larralde argues that San Diego served as an important site in which Congreso sought to protect and organize noncitizen workers in its pivotal position at the U.S.-Mexico border. As a site of border crossing, recruitment of migrant labor, and prevalent racial terrorism, San Diego was a challenging and significant place for Congreso's efforts. Larralde asserts "*El Congreso* worked to stop the illegal activities of both the KKK and coyotes first by recruiting supporters in the Imperial Valley and San Diego."[57] Thousands of Mexican immigrants had lived and worked in the fields throughout San Diego County and adjacent Imperial County and as such were the target of KKK and other white supremacists organizations. Evidence suggests that the Klan would raid, lynch and kill ethnic Mexicans along the U.S. – Mexico border targeting the many migrants looking to work on the citrus, walnut and other farms and factories from which owners hired them to work. Tying Klan terrorism with border control policies, Congreso member Bert Corona remembered recovered migrant victims of murderous KKK violence at the border. He stated, "These cadavers represented the forgotten, the abominated. In a way, U.S. border authorities saw the Klan's deeds as a form of Mexican repatriation in the 1930s."[58] Indeed, the racialization of ethnic Mexicans through official

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[57] Carlos M. Larralde, "El Congreso in San Diego," *Journal of San Diego History* 50(1 and 2) (Winter/Spring 2004): 20.

[58] Bert Corona interview with Carlos M. Larralde, April 25, 1980. Quoted in Carlos M. Larralde, "El Congreso in San Diego," *Journal of San Diego History* 50(1 and 2) (Winter/Spring 2004): 19.

repatriation efforts fueled Klan activity. This was a local manifestation of what literary critic Lisa Lowe observes in regard to Asian immigration decades before. Lowe asserts,

> Capital could increase profit and benefit from the presence of a racialized and tractable labor force up until the point at which the Chinese labor force grew large enough that it threatened capital accumulation by whites. At that point…the state could constitute the 'whiteness' of the citizenry and grant political concessions to 'white' labor groups who were demanding immigration restrictions.[59]

Particularly in the U.S.-Mexico borderlands the state granted the concessions to the "white" citizenry by exhibiting complacency toward Klan activity and encouraging white supremacist terrorism through the implicitly racialized practice of border enforcement immigration policies.

In the San Diego area Congreso chapters were founded at National City, Oceanside and Escondido as well as the wider lettuce, cotton, citrus, and cannery industries in conjunction with trade unions.[60] Seeking to organize workers across ethnicities, Congreso members including Philip and Julia Usquiano, Roberto Galvan, Cesaria Valdez, Carlos Montalvo, Aurora Castillo, and Margarita Flores, worked with wider Southern California Congreso leaders based mostly in the Los Angeles including Luisa Moreno, Josefina Fierro de Bright, Carey McWilliams, Bert Corona, and "Smiley" Rincon to challenge a system of labor exploitation. Capitalists utilized the Border Patrol, local police, and the KKK to terrorize workers of color and break down unionizing efforts. Bill Karn, a grower in Fallbrook in northern San Diego County, exemplified this systemic practice in that he was both a San Diego County Supervisor and a KKK

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[59] Lowe, 1996, 13.

[60] Carlos M. Larralde, "El Congreso in San Diego," *Journal of San Diego History* 50(1 and 2) (Winter/Spring 2004): 20.

member. Furthermore, he reportedly utilized the Border Patrol to break up attempts by Mexican workers he employed to unionize.[61] The Klan and businesses that utilized noncitizen laborers and border enforcement policies formally and informally worked together in southern California to disrupt Congreso organizing efforts.

Congreso in San Diego sought to challenge this racism and labor exploitation through a strategy of organizing and uniting citizen and noncitizen workers within the trade union movement. In 1937, Luisa Moreno arrived in San Diego to organize the fish and cannery workers throughout southern California.[62] As chief organizer of the United Cannery, Agricultural, Packing, and Allied Workers of America (UCAPAWA) in southern California, by the 1940s she successfully negotiated with a number of industry leaders to gain, among other things, a non-discrimination pledge from the Royal Packing Plant that packed Ortega chiles in San Diego.[63] During spring of 1939, operatives at the Van Camp Seafood Company, a tuna cannery in San Diego, organized Local 61 of UCAPAWA. After a year of struggle the firm signed a contract recognizing the union. According to historian Vicki Ruiz, "In 1942 local members and management hammered out a new agreement (providing) the predominately Mexican work force" with the highest wages in the tuna packing industry.[64] Congreso members applied their goals of

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[61] Carey McWilliams interview with Carlos Larralde, June 12, 1979. Quoted in Larralde, 2004, 20.

[62] Carlos M. Larralde and Richard Griswold del Castillo, "Luisa Moreno: A Hispanic Civil Rights Leader in San Diego," *Journal of San Diego History* 41(4) (Fall 1995): 3.

[63] Ibid., 5. For analysis of the broader successes and history of Moreno and the UCAPAWA see, Vicki Ruiz, *Cannery Women, Cannery Lives: Mexican Women, Unionization, and the California Food Processing Industry, 1930-1950*, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1987).

[64] Vicki Ruiz, *Cannery Women, Cannery Lives: Mexican Women, Unionization, and the California Food Processing Industry, 1930-1950*, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1987): 81. Ruiz cites

including noncitizen workers and wider Latina/o issues in the campaigns of the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO). UCAPAWA activism in the cannery industries was a prime focus for Congreso efforts, particularly because vulnerable noncitizens and workers of color were well represented in these workforces. In relation to these struggles, Moreno wrote "Caravans of Sorrow" in 1940 to argue that noncitizens were indeed a part of the American working class and in the process, attempted to advance a bold new definition of citizenship. She explained of noncitizens,

> These people are not aliens – they have contributed their endurance, sacrifices, youth and labor to the Southwest. Indirectly, they have paid more taxes than all the stockholders of California's industrialized agriculture, the sugar beet companies and the largest cotton interest that operate or have operated with the labor of Mexican workers.[65]

In San Diego this cross-citizenship organizing brought the wrath of the KKK, particularly as the activities of CIO organizers reached rural areas where farm workers toiled in the vast agricultural industries of the borderlands of San Diego and Imperial Counties. Like the organizing work in the canneries, the women's committee of el Congreso, the Comite de Damas del Congreso (Ladies of the Congress's Committee), in San Diego worked to improve the lives of farm workers in borderlands fields. One member, Margarita Flores, was brutally beaten by members of the KKK in Brawley, Imperial County. She lost her right eye and several teeth. The KKK in Orange County

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UCAPAWA News, July 1939, May – June 1940, 15 January 1942 as the source to detail of activities of Local 61.

[65] Luisa Moreno, "Caravans of Sorrow: Noncitizen Americans of the Southwest," in *Between Two Worlds: Mexican Immigrants in the United States*, In David G. Gutiérrez, ed., (Wilmington, DE SR Books, 1996): 122.

near Anaheim also beat Celia L. de Rodriguez.[66] A few damas disappeared and were never seen again in east San Diego and Imperial County. Moreno thought they were left somewhere in the desert in rural Imperial County, victims of Klan violence.[67] San Diego Congreso members struggled to get the word out about the prevalence of KKK violence at the border since few mainstream newspapers reported on it.[68]

World War II and Congreso Organizing

U.S. entrance into World War II shifted Congreso's efforts in the California borderlands in significant ways, namely through moving forward with a popular front strategy, addressing the massive influx of immigrant workers in response to the wartime demand for labor, and confronting the domestic social environment that touted a patriotism that was exclusive of people of color. Congreso members united with the U.S. effort against Hitler due in part to the American Communist Party's call to forge a popular front against fascism to maintain democratic principles in which change could be fought for, and in the interest of battling white supremacy.[69] Yet the popular front strategy also diminished the Congreso's civil rights work due to a decrease in numbers as

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[66] Carlos M. Larralde, "Roberto Galvan: A Latino Leader of the 1940s," *Journal of San Diego History* 52 (3-4) (Summer/Fall 2006): 156.

[67] Ibid., 156-157.

[68] Larralde, 2006, 157. Larralde notes that the African-American newspaper, *The California Eagle*, based in Los Angeles was a rare exception.

[69] Sánchez, 1994, 248-249. Sánchez reminds that the American Communist Party aligned against Nazism when Germany invaded Russian territory in 1942.

members joined the war effort or diffused into other organizational fronts.[70] In San Diego, growth of the defense industry and the parallel growth of an exclusive pro-military ideological environment put Congreso members in a position in which they continued unionizing efforts across citizenship ranks while having to battle the increased maltreatment of communities of color who were too often perceived as not truly American and thus a threat to the war effort.

Moving to San Diego in 1940, Moreno continued organizing cannery workers in the context of a wartime economic boom. With Congreso member and secretary treasurer of the United Fish Cannery Workers Union Roberto Galvan, Moreno organized the UCAPAWA Local 64 enlisting hundreds of workers in San Diego's largest canneries including California Packing Corporation, Marine Products Company, the Old Mission Packing Corporation, Van Camp Sea Food Company, and Westgate Sea Products.[71] This continued labor organizing was significant because World War II brought thousands more Mexican immigrant workers to the San Diego borderlands due to the industrial development that grew around the transformation of San Diego into a naval center. As Larralde asserts, "To Moreno's amazement, during World War II, San Diego transformed

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[70] Sánchez, 1994, 249. The popular front strategy also sought to legitimize the American Communist Party in its unity with mainstream political efforts against Nazism. For the problems faced by especially workers of color due to the popular front strategy utilized by the American Communist Party see Vicki Ruiz, *Cannery Women, Cannery Lives: Mexican Women, Unionization, and the California Food Processing Industry, 1930-1950*, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1987) and Robin D.G. Kelley, *Hammer and Hoe: Alabama Communists During the Great Depression*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990). These authors essentially argue that the popular front strategy limited the autonomy that had facilitated workers of color and women into successful CIO mobilizations.

[71] Carlos Larralde interview with Luisa Moreno, April 17, 1971. Referenced in José Rodolfo Jacobo and Richard Griswold del Castillo, "World War II and the Emerging Civil Rights Struggle," In Richard Griswold del Castillo, ed., *Chicano San Diego: Cultural Space and the Struggle for Justice*, (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2007): 98.

itself into a dynamic military and factory city. The fear of Japan made San Diego in a few short years the greatest naval port in America."[72] Thousands of soldiers and sailors moved in and out of the region while the wartime economic boom brought more Mexican migrants to fill important labor demands. By 1943, these informally recruited migrant workers were joined by bracero workers who arrived as part of an agreement between the U.S. and Mexico. Known as the Bracero Program, the two governments worked to bring Mexican laborers to temporarily fill labor needs left open as U.S. workers went to fight overseas. Just years after hauling Mexican workers away for "stealing jobs," they were now being officially recruited by the U.S. government.

The treatment of Japanese Americans as suspected enemies within the U.S. reflected the narrow nationalism exerted in an environment of wartime patriotism and reveals how race and ethnicity were key factors in defining who was "American." Congreso member's responses to the internment of Japanese Americans beginning with executive order 9066 in 1942 provides evidence that Congreso's focus on worker's issues facilitated multiracial organizing and activism. For example, the San Diego Comite de Damas del Congreso consisted of members who were Anglo, Asian and Hispanic in their meeting place in downtown of the city.[73] Moreno and other Congreso members spoke out against the relocation of the Japanese Americans to camps.[74] San Diego played a vital role in Congreso efforts to smuggle Japanese and Japanese Americans into Baja

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[72] Larralde and Griswold del Castillo, 1995, 6; Warren A. Beck and David A. Williams, *California: A History of the Golden State* (New York: Doubleday & Company, 1972), 395-396.

[73] Larralde, 2006, 156.

[74] Larralde and Griswold del Castillo, 1995, 6.

California to avoid detention. San Diego Congreso members Phil Usquiano and Carlos Montalvo assisted Los Angeles based activists, especially Armando Davila and Alfredo Montoya in these efforts. Addressing multiracial workforces in southern California, Davila encouraged Japanese and Mexican Americans to take charge of their own lives in the face of brutal discrimination. Asserting a transnational political approach, Davila also pressured both the Roosevelt administration and the Mexican government to cease the mistreatment of the ethnic Japanese community while advocating for improved working conditions of ethnic Mexicans and other workers.[75] San Diego Congreso member Roberto Galvan reportedly assisted Japanese American internees at the Manzanar Camp northeast of Los Angeles by helping them sell their personal belongings and providing storage for many of the interned families' goods. He also assisted Japanese Americans into Mexico to escape internment. Many Congreso members including Galvan who was a close friend with the Okimoto family had neighbors and compatriots who were Japanese Americans.[76] San Diego Congreso member Cesaria Valdez worked with her secretary, Junko, in her attempts to initiate government programs that addressed poverty in rural areas and farm worker communities. Junko was later interned.[77] This engagement with the Japanese American community and other communities of color was reflective of the grassroots attempts to organize the workforces in the agribusiness and cannery industries that who tended to be Filipino, Japanese, and Mexican.[78]

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[75] Larralde, 2004, 24.

[76] Larralde, 2006, 161.

[77] Larralde , 2004, 22.

[78] Larralde, 2004, 20;

The exclusive notion of wartime American identity also affected the Mexican-American community and other communities of color. Indeed, the ethnic Mexican, African American and other youth who were participating in the jazz and zoot suit subculture of the era, were also targeted as a threat to the nation from within. This wartime policing effort was best exemplified by events in Los Angeles including the Sleepy Lagoon incident in 1942 and the Zoot Suit Riots in 1943. In clashes between these mostly Mexican-American youth and military personnel the press depicted the youth as criminal gang members who held a disregard for authority and the war effort. These sentiments erupted in 1942 when a group of Mexican-American youths was charged with the murder of Jose Diaz in Sleepy Lagoon in south-central L.A. and June of 1943 when sailors in Los Angeles attacked mostly Mexican-American zoot-suiters.[79] The press and local leaders exerted anti-Mexican sentiment over concern for these "pachucos" or street youth by using racializing language that defined Mexicans as primitive and barbaric. The wartime environment led many officials to conflate advocacy for these youth and against the racist sentiment being exerted on them with disloyalty and even Communist-inspired conspiracy to attack the U.S. from within.[80]

In San Diego the fear of the "pachuco menace" merged with ever-prevalent hysteria over "illegal aliens" to complicate the racialization of ethnic Mexicans in the border region. Moreno worked with Galvan to educate rank and file union members

[79] On recent scholarship on the zoot suitors, the Sleepy Lagoon incident and the Zoot Suit Riots see, Luis Alvarez, *The Power of the Zoot: Youth Culture and Resistance during World War II*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008); Catherine Ramirez, *The Woman in the Zoot Suit: Gender, Nationalism and the Cultural Politics of Memory*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009); Eduardo Pagan, *Murder at Sleepy Lagoon: Zoot Suits, Race, and Riot in Wartime L.A.*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003).

[80] Gutiérrez, 1994, 125-126.

about the issues involved in the Sleepy Lagoon Case in San Diego. A key member of the Sleepy Lagoon Defense Committee, Moreno argued, "The hysteria against the Sleepy Lagoon defendants and the Pachucos over all was the outward manifestation of a complex fear in Southern California that Mexicans were moving more into the essential industries like agriculture, the food-processing commerce, the garment commerce, construction and other businesses."[81] The riots of 1943 extended into San Diego making visible on-going conflicts between the military presence so prevalent in the emergent naval port and the area ethnic Mexican community. The San Diego city council investigated a number of fights at local bars attended by both civilians and servicemen. The *San Diego Union* on June 10, 1943 reported that groups of servicemen took to the streets of downtown San Diego in response to a rumor that zoot suitors had arrived in San Diego from Los Angeles. About one hundred sailors and marines chased zoot suitors out of the area. San Diego police were told to search suspicious individuals that "appeared to be members of a Pachuco gang."[82] According to historians Larralde and Griswold del Castillo, Luisa Moreno led a campaign in San Diego that attempted to force local officials to address the routine violence exerted by military personnel on Latina/o communities. Larralde and Griswold del Castillo assert that, "Moreno was convinced that tranquility in San Diego was a hoax and that the local newspaper was deceiving the community."[83] Allying for a time with San Diego city councilman Charles C. Dail and

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[81] Carlos M. Larralde and Richard Griswold del Castillo, "Luisa Moreno and the Beginnings of the Mexican American Civil Rights Movement in San Diego," *The Journal of San Diego History* 43(3) (Summer 1997), 7.

[82] Ibid., 4.

[83] Ibid., 4.

Mexican consul Alfredo Elias Calles, Moreno sought to address the systematic conflict between the military and the ethnic Mexican community.

Moreno argued that several cases of military personnel inflicting violence against the ethnic Mexican community was going unreported. Despite activist efforts to bring these incidents to the attention of both city and navy leadership, the problem was ignored because officials worried it would affect the morale and the overall war effort. In other words, ethnic Mexican concerns were ignored due to the perception that their problems were at odds with national unity for the war. Moreno argued, "We will never know much about the San Diego civilian casualties. The Navy and the local newspaper ignored the violence since most of the victims were Mexicans."[84] Moreno alerted a number of *San Diego Union* reporters to several conflicts between minorities and the police and navy personal.[85] She also expressed concern for Latina/o military personnel. Councilman Dail informed Rear Admiral David Bagley about the problem of civilian-military conflicts and their prevalence in San Diego. In the context of the San Diego borderlands where Mexican migrant laborers worked and passed through looking for work, Admiral Bagley had once reportedly joked, "Mexicans came cheap by the dozen and could be bought for ten cents each," and if "the Japs bombed Mexico City, it would cost fifty cents to replace it."[86] Moreno and Dail aimed to negotiate the issue with Admiral Bagley and invited him to meet. Bagley refused the offer.

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[84] Ibid., 5.

[85] Ibid., 6.

[86] Ibid., 5.

In the new wartime context, elites threatened by the continued efforts of Congreso members and the wider labor movement to advocate for workers of color responded by using the old tactic of questioning the patriotism of unionists, utilizing the increasing vitality of red-baiting, and threatening deportation of immigrant activists. In this emerging circumstance, the attempts to address the military conflicts with ethnic Mexicans in San Diego deteriorated when Admiral Bagley allied himself with State Senator Jack B. Tenney, a master of red-baiting tactics. Moreno's sole ally in the San Diego City Council, Charles C. Dail, soon dropped out in fear of Tenney's state level un-American activities committee. Congreso advocate and attorney Carey McWilliams continued to assist her, even while Tenney issued an indictment of Moreno publicly accusing her of participating in a Communist conspiracy. Tenney blamed the Zoot Suit Riots in LA on a Communist publication on the west coast, *People's Daily World* and attacked the Sleepy Lagoon Defense Committee.[87] Moreno argued, "A desperate Tenney has used the Sleepy Lagoon case and Red-baiting to support segregation, oppose miscegenation and to divide the Mexican community in Southern California." As Moreno later recalled, San Diego leaders, more interested in urban development and erasing the city's image of being a sailor's hangout, ignored harassment of the ethnic Mexican community by area military personal and the role played by the Tenney committee. Tying the racism exerted on Pachucos and its role in arousing suspicions of disloyalty among all Mexican-origin people during World War II with the hysteria over undocumented migration, Moreno remembered that Mexican-American veterans of

[87] Ibid., 7.

World War II were denied service in most cafes and restaurants in the San Diego area and when they left the military service, several were deported as aliens.[88]

In the San Diego borderlands, the racialized practice of border enforcement policy was conflated with the historical practice of policing Mexicans. In this environment citizenship status did not spare Mexican Americans from harassment, suspicion or deportation even among war veterans who had spilled their blood to prove their allegiance to the United States. Recalling the hysteria over the "illegal alien" during the Depression era, one historian refers to the "pachuco menace" as the World War II era representation that continued the racialization of the Latina/o community.[89] This shifted the priorities of El Congreso and the wider Mexican American Left to the more domestic issue of public harassment and demonization of a Latina/o youth subculture in addition to labor struggles and immigrant advocacy. In this way, former Congreso members continued the struggle to assert the autonomy of the ethnic Mexican community in the U.S. as a central mechanism in which to participate in U.S. politics. As Historian David G. Gutiérrez notes, the defense of the Sleepy Lagoon defendants "strongly implied that Roosevelt's pledge to uphold the principle of the self-determination of oppressed peoples was meaningless unless it was first extended to America's own minority groups.[90] Although El Congreso declined in the war era and ceased by the end of the war, ideas of ethnic self-determination and autonomy as mechanism through which to address class

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[88] Ibid., 9.

[89] Gutiérrez, 1994, 125.

[90] Ibid., 1994, 128.

struggle in a transnational context would continue to be exerted as hysteria over migration would reach an unprecedented high mark in the next decade.

Rise of Cold War Repression

The momentum of the labor movement was countered in part by the rise of officially sanctioned hunts for "Communists" as enemies within the United States. This second red scare was mobilized to disrupt the labor and civil rights organizing by CIO unions and organizations such as El Congreso as the U.S. rose to its superpower prominence in its standoff with the Soviet Union following World War II.[91] This was most visible with the passage of the Internal Security Act in 1950 followed by the McCarran-Walter Act of 1952. The former legislated the means to prosecute any person formally participant in Communist, Socialist, or other groups deemed subversive. The latter declared that any noncitizen that had entered the country after 1924 would be subject to deportation regardless of their character, length of stay, employment record, or relationship to U.S. citizens.[92] While Congreso's demise came about primarily due to a shift in priorities in support of World War II, the cross-citizenship transnational activism exerted by its members in other venues, i.e. UCAPAWA, other CIO unions, etc., were stamped out by a combination of Cold War repression of "subversives" and the deportation mechanisms that Congreso had struggled so vehemently against. These red scare events began in the late 1940s and climaxed in the 1950s displaying how immigration policing was deeply implicated in domestic wars against dissent expressed

[91] The first red scare occurred roughly between 1917-1920 occurred in reaction to the Bolshevik revolution in Russia.

[92] For how these developments affected ethnic Mexican politics in particular see Gutiérrez, 1994, 161-168.

by working-class and racialized communities. The San Diego borderlands was a significant location in which these events played out due to its location at the border where the processes of expulsion took place, serving as a major site where militarization and intimidation was further embedded in the day-to-day existence of the ethnic Mexican community in particular and radical politics throughout the nation.[93]

A number of Congreso members in San Diego and wider southern California faced the State Senate Committee on Un-American Activities (henceforth referred to as the state committee), part of a larger national entity of powerful state actors in charge of locating and interrogating so-called subversives. Congreso activists including Luisa Moreno, Josefina Fierro de Bright, Roberto Galvan, Phil Usquiano, and many of their allies in the CIO faced the state committee. Moreno's case in particular demonstrates that state-sanctioned witch-hunt for "subversives" were coupled with deportation proceedings as means through which powerful interests dismantled working-class social movements. Furthermore, Moreno's harassment by red scare state officials in San Diego located the city as a site of reactionary American nationalism that extended the practice of maintaining a physical border that divides "citizens" from "noncitizens" to police ideological and subaltern identities.

In a hearing, Moreno revealed the contested notions of citizenship exerted by the Congreso on the one hand and red-baiting state actors on the other. Moreno exposed the hegemonic usage of official citizenship to divide workers with similar struggles and demonstrated that the practice of dividing citizens from noncitizens was at odds with

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[93] On the purges inflicted on the labor movement in the Cold War era see Paul Buhle, *Taking Care of Business: Samuel Gompers, George Meany, Lane Kirkland and the Tragedy of American Labor*, (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1999).

democracy. The state committee, headed by Senator Tenney, subpoenaed Moreno in September 1948. Hearings were held at the San Diego Civic Center from Sept. 8 – 10, 1948. Moreno remembered, "While the members were cautious and passive, Tenney was a bully with a scathing tongue. He reduced his victims to tears. By the time he finished with them, they felt depleted."[94] She evoked the Fifth Amendment when asked if she had ever been a member of the Communist Party. Richard E. Coombs, chief council for the delegation, asked her pointedly whether she might not be risking the right to become a full-fledged citizen by refusing to answer his question. "Citizenship," Moreno responded, "means a lot to me, but the Constitution of the United States means more." Listeners applauded in defiance of the customary Tenney edict against displays of audience sentiment. One youth was even hustled from the room by officers. "I told Coombs," recalled Moreno "that I had taken an oath to uphold the U.S. Constitution when applying for naturalization and that was what I intended to do in the hearing." Tenney and the committee threatened to send a transcript of the proceedings to the INS. They agreed that Moreno was an insubordinate and did indeed forward it to immigration authorities.[95]

The state's usage of juridical citizenship to disrupt working-class movements was further demonstrated as Moreno awaited the final determination of her naturalization application in her home in San Diego. Her application for citizenship was still open despite her being warranted under arrest as an alien who supported an organization that is subversive to the US. She soon found that her immigrant gardener, Manuel, was

[94] Larralde and Griswold del Castillo, 1995, 9.

[95] Ibid.

collecting her memoirs and other documents for the FBI in exchange for being granted citizenship. Moreno soon after destroyed all the documents she had in fear of indicting other activists under the tyranny of the search for subversives.[96] At the INS office in San Diego she was soon after interviewed to determine her status. Her deportation was finalized. As a final attempt by state officials to indict more labor activists, she was offered citizenship if she would testify against activist CIO leader and Australian-born Harry Bridges. Moreno declined.[97]

Moreno's case reveals the wider success by proponents of red scare tactics in breaking up labor and civil rights activist networks. The red scare of the 1950s successfully utilized tactics of divide and conquer, utilizing not only citizenship differences but racial difference as well. One way of avoiding persecution through being label a subversive was to have character witnesses vouch for you. Unfortunately, few activists came to Moreno's aid in fear of being labeled a communist. Corona identified race as an important factor related to the failure to support Moreno and other Latina/o activists under attack. He recalled,

> Luisa would have fought the effort to deport her if she had sensed that it would have been a collective struggle rather than just an individual one. Unfortunately, the efforts by the left—specifically, the Communist Party—to defend labor leaders in similar situations extended only to those of European descent and not to Latinos. That same lack of effort also characterized the reaction of the CIO.[98]

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[96] Ibid., 11.

[97] Ibid., 10.

[98] García, 1994, 119.

The combined struggle for the labor movement and against racial oppression exerted by Latina/o activists and other people of color was deeply wounded by the prerogatives of the Cold War battle against Communism and its domestic purging. Internal fragmentation along lines of race and citizenship status aided the state-sponsored destruction of the labor movement. Despite attempts by labor activists of color to address the tendency to disconnect class identity from the experiences of racial oppression in the labor movement, these activists, as exemplified through organizations such as El Congreso were exponentially disabled by the workings of racism both within and outside its ranks. Former Congreso members and other Latina/o community activists including Josefina Fierro, Refugio Martínez, Humberto Silex, Armando Dávila, Frank Martínez, Frank Corona, Tony Salgado and Fred Chávez, among others, were also deported.[99] San Diego Congreso activist Phil Usquiano faced the Tenney committee and another, Roberto Galvan, was deported. Galvan asserted that the vision exerted by Congreso and other racialized, working-class, and immigrant activists would continue to struggle when he noted, "We the ordinary people can shape history instead of suffering it and create a new world. Something has to be done since your committee (the Committee on Un-American Activities) has created untold upheaval and caused California much grief."[100] Like Moreno, Galvan was monitored for the FBI by people close to him, colleagues Roberto Reyes and Randy Resendez, in exchange for U.S. citizenship.[101] Transnational cross-citizenship Mexican-American politics, while severely wounded, would survive in the

[99] Ibid.

[100] Larralde, 2006, 169.

[101] Ibid., 167.

continued activism of those who survived this purge in the emergence of new organizations that sought to defend the ethnic Mexican community at the intersection of race and class.

Operation Wetback and the Bracero Program

Scholars have identified a few organizations that continued advocacy for noncitizen workers as intertwined with that of the Mexican-American community as a whole including the Asociacion Nacional Mexico Americana (ANMA), The Committee for the Protection of the Foreign-Born, some CIO unions, and in San Diego, La Hermandad Mexicana. Other organizations including the Community Service Organization (CSO) and later the Mexican American Political Organization (MAPA) put forth advocacy for noncitizen rights to varying degrees, in contrast to and debate with other political approaches within the organization that were less decisive on the noncitizen issue.[102] Many former Congreso members and Latina/o CIO unionists participated in these and other political channels in the repressive red scare politics of the 1950s. This continued activism was significant in a moment of heavy repression of not only activists, but the ethnic Mexican community at large.

The conflation of a fear of underground subversives with "illegal aliens" in the 1950s also disrupted a disturbing number of ethnic Mexican communities throughout the

[102] See Gutiérrez, 1995, 152-178; García, 1994, 169-192. Little scholarly attention has been given to La Hermandad Mexicana. Sparse information appears in Larralde and Griswold del Castillo, 2000, 8 and García, 1994, 290-295. Similarly, little attention has been paid to the political practices of various chapters of the Mexican American Political Association (MAPA) in California and its relationship to immigration and noncitizens. Brief mention appears in Gutíerrez, 1995, 181; García, 1994, 200-201 and Armando Navarro, *La Raza Unida Party: A Chicano Challenge to the U.S. Two-Party Dictatorship*. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2000), 148-150.

country. "Operation Wetback" replicated the repatriation drives of the 1930s to an unprecedented level as the Border Patrol unleashed sweeps to deport as many "aliens" they could identify. Of course race served as a primary criterion of who was identified as illegal resulting in thousands of U.S. citizens of Mexican-origin being deported. More than half a million ethnic Mexicans of all citizenship statuses were deported in 1951 and 1952. More then 800,000 were deported in 1953 and in 1954, the INS claimed to have deported more than 1 million.[103]

Operation Wetback was in part the result of the rise in undocumented migration that paralleled the Bracero Program, an official agreement between the U.S. and Mexican governments through which Mexico would provide U.S. agricultural businesses with temporary workers. This program began to address labor shortages in 1942 as many working men were sent to battle in the theatres of World War II. Demonstrating the contradictions within immigration policies that a few years before had repatriated thousands of Mexican and Mexican-American workers, the Bracero Program sought to avoid the problem of recruiting undocumented migrant laborers through developing an official program. Ironically the Bracero Program further exacerbated and encouraged the flow of undocumented migration. Provisions in the program required that "braceros," literally "arms" in Spanish, be provided adequate housing, wages, and other protections. Growers soon learned that to avoid paying higher costs as required in the program, they could simply hire undocumented workers and/or encourage braceros to overstay there contracts in exchange for more work. Furthermore, the braceros themselves sought to

[103] United States Immigration and Naturalization Service, "Number of Undocumented Persons Apprehended, 1951-1954." See Juan Ramón García, *Operation Wetback: The Mass Deportation of Mexican Undocumented Workers in 1954*, (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1980), 236.

gain leverage by ignoring the assignments of the official contracts, which often failed to pay sufficiently and offer the amenities promised, to find other work.[104]

Therefore while it seemed contradictory for the U.S. officials to deport more than one million noncitizen workers while importing thousands of others through the Bracero Program, Operation Wetback in fact sought to maintain the exploitation of foreign labor by harnessing those workers operating outside of the officially sanctioned agreement. Bert Corona argued,

> In fact there was no contradiction at all—Operation Wetback in reality was in support of the bracero program. What was concerning the INS, in league with the agricultural industry and other employers of braceros, was that braceros were protesting their poor working and living conditions and that numbers of them were skipping out on their contracts and moving into cities to find work without documents. Hence, Operation Wetback was really a response to the weakening of the contract-labor system that regularized the pool of cheap labor, especially for agribusiness. It was meant to scare the braceros into remaining in their camps and accepting their conditions and, in this way, to preserve the revolving door of reserve surplus labor from Mexico.[105]

Rather than stop the flow of migrant workers from Mexico, Corona's analysis reveals that the state much rather sought to maintain the subordinated status of these migrants. As sociologist Néstor Rodríguez has asserted in analysis of more contemporary migration, the state in collusion with capital sought to halt the autonomous migration and political activity of migrant workers through border enforcement policies.[106]

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[104] Gutiérrez, 1994, 141-142.

[105] García, 1994, 184.

[106] Néstor Rodríguez, "The Battle for the Border: Notes on Autonomous Migration, Transnational Communities, and the State," *Social Justice* 23, no. 3 (Fall 1996).

Transnational ethnic Mexican labor organizations such as the ANMA struggled for the rights of braceros and against sweeps of the Border Patrol and Operation Wetback. Composed of Mexican-Americans and mexicano immigrants with and without documents the organization worked to continue labor struggles, battled discrimination and continue to work in a transnational context. For example, Corona, a leading organizer in San Jose, recalled that many ANMA workers struck in solidarity with worker's strikes initiated against the same companies in Mexico and other parts of Latin America.[107] Corona also visited Mexico City as a representative of the Mill-Mine worker's union, from which ANMA emerged, to gain support for the union's famous *Salt of the Earth* strike in New Mexico. Here Corona gained support from a number of Mexican unionists and radicals. Artists Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo showed much concern for Latina/o workers in the U.S. This transnational solidarity honed by cross-citizenship ethnic Mexican groups in the U.S. is greatly demonstrated by a message displayed on a photo of Corona, Rivera, Kahlo and José Gordillo. It read, in part, "Greetings to my Mexican brothers in the U.S. who are fighting for the preservation of our national consciousness, our rights to complete equality with Anglo workers, to equal pay for our work, and for the preservation of our pride in being Mexican and friends of peace."[108] ANMA chapters also participated in demonstrations in support of the Cuban revolution, against the overthrow of Guatemala president Jacobo Arbenz by the CIA and in support of labor struggles in Chile, Bolivia, and Peru.[109]

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[107] García, 1994.

[108] Ibid., 192.

[109] Ibid., 186.

Indeed, in struggles to protect Latina/o workers from the onslaughts of Operation Wetback, ANMA worked with the followers of the progressive administrations of Lazaro Cardenas of Mexico and Jacobo Arbenz of Guatemala through the consulates.[110] ANMA staged a number of protests and demonstrations in front of INS facilities and other parts of cities heavily affected by the Border Patrol raids. Furthermore ANMA assisted undocumented and other migrants by informing them of their rights to withhold information about their status and giving legal assistance.[111] Operation Wetback was a storm that had to be weathered. A few migrants avoided deportation using the services provided by ANMA. ANMA also participated in a number of strikes initiated by braceros protesting their living conditions and the failures by the growers to abide by the contracts. Corona argued "one result of the bracero strikes was that many of the growers found it more difficult to obtain and exploit such workers."[112]

La Hermandad Mexicana Nacional

Resistance to the increasing repression of the 1950s faced significant challenges in the context at the U.S.-Mexico border in San Diego County. In addition to the Operation Wetback, San Diego activists had to contend with the consistent harshness experienced by migrants passing through the borderlands and the hysterical hunt for them not only by the Border Patrol and local police, but vigilante and white supremacist groups as well. Mexicans workers since the 1940s, lured by the growing wartime and postwar

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[110] Ibid., 182.

[111] Ibid., 183-184.

[112] Ibid., 181.

U.S. economy, passed through the San Diego borderlands risking their lives in a hostile and unforgiving environment to find work and livelihood. As continues to be the case, migrants hid in various compartments of vehicles including side panels, under the metal bars of car seats, and even in the gas tank. Many drowned crossing rivers or succumbed to the desert heat. In the late 1940s, concern by the San Diego chapters of Congreso focused on the division of families by these migrations and by border enforcement policies that deported them.[113] And Congreso leaders in San Diego reportedly required that fellow union members practice shooting and carrying weapons in defense of themselves against the KKK.[114]

The particular context at the borderlands produced a transnational, cross-citizen ethnic Mexican organization called the Hermandad Mexicana Nacional. Founded by former Congreso members Phil and brother Albert Usquiano, the Hermandad emerged in 1951 in the midst of labor and immigrant repression. Throughout the 1950s Hermandad chapters were founded throughout San Diego County including the city of San Diego, National City and Oceanside. Mostly Spanish-speaking immigrants, the group was founded to protect the rights of a special class of workers found uniquely in the borderlands: those who resided in Tijuana but who worked in the U.S. in the San Diego metroplex. A number of workers had acquired temporary visas during the economic boom of the war era but were unable to find housing due to shortages in San Diego. For this reason they and their families resided in their native Mexico just across the border in Tijuana. In the early 1950s era of immigrant repression, the INS threatened to cancel

[113] Larralde, 2006, 164.

[114] Ibid., 169.

their visas and the Hermandad was formed to address these cross-border workers' unique circumstances. Most of the workers were members of the Carpenter's Union or Laborer's Union. The Hermandad succeeded in defending these workers' right to work and reside in the U.S.[115]

The Hermandad, as one historian says, "resurrected" the politics of El Congreso in the 1950s.[116] Like Congreso it organized on the principles and protections of the U.S. constitution and at the intersection of race and class. In its founding document, the Hermandad asserted its basis on the constitutional notion that all men are created equal "without distinction of race, creed, or economic, social or political position."[117] While based in liberal democratic notions of the pursuit of happiness, the Hermandad also challenged the primacy of the nation-state in its attempt to "organize a united front of all Mexicans in defense of their union, material and legal interests."[118] Through the inclusion of noncitizens as key members in its ranks the Hermandad challenged conceptions of citizenship that excluded immigrant workers. Indeed, the Hermandad noted that all mexicanos have the right to participate in its democratic functioning "without distinction in origin, creed, or political economic positioning."[119] Organizing ethnic Mexican workers without distinction in origin signals the cross-citizenship, transnational basis

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[115] García, 1994, 290-291.

[116] Larralde, 2004, 27.

[117] Hermandad Mexican Nacional Document, August, 1951, In *Hermandad Mexicana: 25th Anniversary: Un Daño Contra Uno es un Daño Contra Todos*, Program Bulletin, 1971, Mandeville Special Collections Library, University of California, San Diego; also found in Bert Corona Papers, Box 29, Stanford University Special Collections Library.

[118] Ibid.

[119] Ibid.

from which it was based, crossing key differences in nationality within the mixed status ethnic Mexican community.

Local chapters of the Mexican American Political Association (MAPA) beginning in the late 1950s and into the 1960s continued the legacy of advocating for noncitizens as equal members of the U.S. Latina/o community. Former Congreso member Phil Usquiano began a chapter in the San Diego working class suburb of National City. MAPA – National City was a political facet of the Hermandad, which was also led by Usquiano. Like the Congreso worked to bridge the ethnic Mexican community with other CIO union activism, MAPA in National City, alongside the Hermandad worked to bridge grassroots ethnic Mexican community issues with labor activism. Usquiano was also a member of the Central Labor Council in San Diego in the 1960s.[120] MAPA was a vehicle through which labor and ethnic activism sought to assert itself in the electoral arena. For example, Usquiano, alongside his daughter Julia and son Albert organized local campaigns of Robert Kennedy's run for the Democratic seat in 1968. MAPA National City helped mobilized the Mexican-American/mexicano working-class community to contribute over a thousand volunteers.[121]

MAPA represented a coalition of middle class and professional individuals alongside working class constituents and trade unionists. Therefore only some of the chapters throughout California reflected the working-class based, transnational politics exerted by past organizations such as Congreso, ANMA and the Hermandad. Indeed, at the founding of the organization at Fresno in 1960, debates regarding ethnic identity,

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[120] García, 1994, 241.

[121] Ibid., 241-242.

coalitional politics and autonomy were put aside in the interest of consummating the group. Former Congreso member Bert Corona alongside other trade unionists and working class activists sought to explicitly identify as people of color and seek out coalitions with African Americans, Asian Americans, and Native Americans. The debate was put aside because a number of participants were uncomfortable with claiming a nonwhite identity. Corona recalled, however, that two years later a coalitional stance was adopted leading to a number of joint struggles with other people of color.[122]

Corona recalled that MAPA was created to assert an independent political stance by the ethnic Mexican community due to the experience of being overlooked by the Democratic Party. Like the debate over racial identity, the nature of MAPA's relationship to the Democratic Party, and by extension the U.S. state, would be debated and performed differently by particular chapters. On the one hand, some MAPA members, particularly government appointees, sought to make MAPA a corollary to the Democratic Party. CIO veterans of the labor movement, trade unionist and community organizers sought to utilize MAPA as an independent entity from which ethnic Mexican communities could choose on their own terms whether to ally with or challenge the Democratic, as well as Republican, Parties. The latter group also envisioned MAPA working beyond the realm of electoral politics to engage the day to day issues of the working class Latina/o communities. Corona exemplified this position,

> My own position, and that of many others, was that we had been rejected by the Democratic Party in previous electoral efforts. We needed therefore to build an independent electoral machine, one that could engage in progressive politics without having to compromise with Democrats—or

[122] Ibid., 199-200.

> with the Republicans for that matter. I also believed that MAPA should not remain strictly an electoral organization but that it should involve itself in the various issues affecting Mexican communities.[123]

This vision of grassroots organizing, explicit embrace of Mexican identity, and working-class advocacy were part and parcel of the assertions made by Congreso and others who perceived their communities as united across citizenship and transnational in scope.

Conclusion

More than a quarter century after the enactment of the Border Patrol, deportation mechanisms and the legal category of "illegal alien" disrupted working-class transnational practice of mexicano community in the borderlands, the Hermandad and autonomous MAPA chapters quietly but strongly existed in the San Diego borderlands throughout the conservative 1950s and into the 1960s. Within the delicate alliances between liberal and radical community leaders, these organizations held the semblance of political practices enacted by the labor movement of the Depression era, when El Congreso emerged to put forth a transnational Mexican-American/mexicano politics that re-imagined belonging in the U.S. as intricately connected to maintenance of Mexican cultural identity, community and a transnational existence. It would be former Congreso members that would tap into these continued practices within the Hermandad to reignite transnational, cross-citizenship ethnic Mexican politics in a moment of insurgent ethno-racial nationalism. The multiple manifestations of the Chicana/o Movement mobilizations in the 1960s, after years in which explicit class struggle was heavily repressed, emphasized ethno-racial pride and identity as a basis for the emergence of new

[123] Ibid., 200.

social movements. San Diego would play out as an important point of synergy in which old battles between the capitalist state and working-class transnational borderlands communities would be exacerbated by an unprecedented number of migrants passing through the volatile borderlands.

CHAPTER 2: "Raza Sí, Migra No!" Forging a Transnational Chicana/o Movement in the San Diego Borderlands[1]

> That is why we have to redefine what is meant by unity… Let us examine the character of the mexicano family, of the family of La Raza (our people). 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![2]
>
> Bert Corona, Labor Activist and former member of the Congreso del Pueblo que Habla Español

> The Chicano Movement took it (immigration) up as a number one type of priority. That this was an issue affecting our people across the board whether we were citizens, whether we were documented or undocumented that this was something that was aimed at our efforts to enfranchise our community.[3]
>
> Herman Baca, Chair, Committee on Chicano Rights

One evening in the early 1970s San Diego area Chicana/o Movement activist Herman Baca received an unannounced visit from veteran Mexican-American labor activists Bert Corona and Chole Alatorre. Conversing with a group of friends for a few moments in Baca's print shop that doubled as a headquarters for local chapters of the Mexican American Political Association (MAPA) and the emerging La Raza Unida Party

[1] Raza Sí, Migra No! Translates roughly to Our people, yes! The Border Patrol, no!

[2] Bert Corona, *Bert Corona Speaks on La Raza Unida Party and the "Illegal Alien" Scare.* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1972), 19.

[3] Herman Baca Oral History Collection, Session 5, Tape 7, August 23, 2006, Herman Baca Papers, Mandeville Special Collections Library, University of California, San Diego.

(LRUP) Corona requested that Baca meet him in another room for a private conversation. "What's going on?" asked Baca in the next room. Corona urgently replied, "We gotta get on this immigration issue." Baca recalled thinking to himself, "You on peyote or something? What does that got to do with us?" Yet Baca heard out the elder Corona. Corona continued, "We gotta get on this, this is an issue that is going to be with us probably until the year 2000."[4] Following this conversation with the seemingly prophetic Corona, Baca and a contingent of Chicana/o Movement activists initiated a concerted effort in San Diego to interrelate the plight of undocumented Mexican immigrants with Mexican Americans within the Chicana/o Movement mobilizations of the 1970s. Building off the efforts of veteran activists such as Corona who had battled border enforcements policies since the 1930s, grassroots activists in San Diego adjusted Chicana/o Movement activism to address the increasing violence emanating from militarized Border Patrol efforts to control the rising number of border crossers in the 1960s and 70s. Baca and Corona's backroom conversation represents the conferring of transnational ethnic Mexican activism to a new generation and a reorientation in the way an important number of Chicana/o Movement activists conceptualized the relationship between Mexican Americans and Mexican migrants to engage the global scope of their struggle for social justice.

By following the formulation of transnational Chicana/o activism in a local context, this chapter will identify the racial, ethnic, class and gendered foundations on which activists reimagined the boundaries of the Chicana/o community beyond divisions

[4] Herman Baca Oral History Collection, Tape 2, Session 1, August 2, 2006, Herman Baca Papers, Mandeville Special Collections Library, University of California, San Diego. Henceforth referred to as the Baca Papers.

of citizenship status and nation. Furthermore, by examining the evolution of Chicana/o Movement efforts to address increasing brutalities at the U.S.-Mexico border from 1968-1972, the chapter details how San Diego Chicana/o activists linked with past and on-going struggles against border enforcement policies. Veteran activists such as Corona urged Chicana/o activists to "redefine what is meant by unity" beyond the boundaries of U.S. citizenship and society. As the opening quote reveals, Corona sought to interconnect the mobilizing basis of the Chicana/o Movement around ethno-racial unity (La Raza) and indigeneity (This was our territory!) with the longer struggle against the class antagonisms embedded in border enforcement policy by including undocumented workers (our grandparents and their friends) as important parts of the struggle of "our people."

Chicana/o activists came to utilize the movement's expression of racial, ethnic, and cultural pride to facilitate a reconceptualization of the "Chicana/o community" across lines of citizenship status in an environment of increasing border enforcement repression. Therefore, alongside his initial bewilderment about Corona's request to take on the immigration question, Baca recalled "I already knew there was something out there that wasn't right."[5] As Baca organized in the border region at a time of increasing migration and accompanying Border Patrol harassment, he became keenly aware of the fact that the policing of so-called illegal immigrants was an issue that increasingly interfered with efforts to "enfranchise" the ethnic Mexican community. Responding to the hypermasculine exertion of violence and dominance by enforcement mechanism of U.S.

[5] Herman Baca Oral History Collection, Tape 2, Session 1, August 2, 2006, Herman Baca Papers, Mandeville Special Collections Library, University of California, San Diego.

immigration policies, cross-citizenship imaginings of the Chicana/o community legitimized its moral basis on the gendered notion of the nuclear family as activists argued that the Border Patrol split parents from their children, brutalized Mexican men as workers and violated Mexican women as wives and mothers. Border Patrol repression also led Chicana/o activists to reconsider their class status and identities as they contemplated the structural roots of how legislation targeting undocumented workers equally affected Mexican-American workers who, because of their racial and ethnic characteristics, were either suspected of being "illegal" or relegated to the second-class citizenship bequeathed to racialized minorities in the United States. Therefore, the common racialization of citizens and non-citizens by organs of the U.S. state created the context in which transnational community could be (re)imagined through the shared experience of racialization, discrimination and legal violence. Built on notions of keeping families together as the basic foundation of the larger Chicano/Mexicano community, these activists created the conceptual space to imagine new forms of mobilization that engaged the ramifications of international migration in an era of intensifying political and economic globalization.

To explore the emergence of what I call Chicano/Mexicano activism I will concentrate on the experience of San Diego activist Herman Baca, who led efforts that encountered the demographic transformations of the ethnic Mexican community and adjusted to the increasing brutality emerging from Border Patrol attempts to control the rising flow of migrants from Mexico.[6] The chapter follows Baca's activism in San Diego

[6] I use this term, based on the emerging terminology used by transnational Chicana/o activists, to describe and analyze the emergence of conceptions of Chicana/o community across boundaries of citizenship status

as he and other activists including Carlos "Charlie" Vasquez, Norma Mena, Vic Villalpando, and Albert García battled local cases of Border Patrol brutality and local police measures seeking to apprehend "illegal aliens." The chapter unfolds beginning in 1968, when both Corona's founding CASA chapter and Baca's MAPA chapter was initiated and culminates in the year 1972 when San Diego activists were able to convene a Congressional hearing to investigate border violence. This Chicana/o Movement response to undocumented immigration was a significant marker of a new space of transnational activism. By "transnational" I refer to the inclusion of migrants as acting agents who broke the boundaries between two nations and put U.S. Chicana/o activists in a position in which to consider the wider ramifications of ethnic politics in the U.S.-Mexico borderlands.

Political Economy in the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands at Mid Century

Chicana/o Movement activist attention to the political implications of international migration in the San Diego borderlands was indicative of an unprecedented demographic revolution of the ethnic Mexican population that grew almost ten-fold from 1960 to 1980 due primarily to immigration.[7] These demographic shifts were an intensification of the almost century old practice of utilizing noncitizen Mexican labor. Political economic shifts in the U.S. and Mexico in the 1960s and 70s exacerbated this historical practice. Immigration from Mexico increased incrementally after the infamous

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and nationality. "Chicano" emphasized the racialized experiences in the U.S. that gave rise to the Chicano Movement, while "Mexicano" identified migrant notions of identity as part of Mexican society and culture.

[7] According to the U.S. Census Bureau the Mexican-origin population in 1960 was approximated at 1.7 million, 4.5 million in 1970, and 8.7 million in 1980. The Census reported that the Mexican-origin population was at 28.3 million in 2006. De Leon and Griswold del Castillo estimate 3.9 million Mexican-origin peoples in the U.S. in 1960, *North to Aztlan*, 2nd ed., p. 160.

mass deportations of Operation Wetback in 1954. At that time the Border Patrol claimed it had apprehended over 1 million "illegal Mexican aliens" reaching a high point before dropping to fewer than 100,000 from 1956 to 1966.[8] Following the abolishment of the Bracero Program in 1964, coupled with an improving economy in Mexico, documented migration to the U.S. in the first half of the 1960s hit historically low levels.[9] Mexicans were put back in motion in search of economic security due to a widening gap between rich and poor and the failure to create enough jobs for a growing population in Mexico during its economic growth known as the "Mexican Miracle."[10] Ironically, developing nations such as Mexico that were experiencing growth due in large part to foreign investment disrupted traditional means of subsistence and set in motion a new cycle of economically-driven migrations from rural to urban centers, which often in turn resulted in transnational migration to first world nations such as the U.S. In the U.S., manufacturing jobs were increasingly sent to developing nations leading to the expansion of a service economy. In addition to the nearly century-year-old commercial agriculture industry in the U.S. Southwest, the expanding service economy alongside other industries such as construction increasingly relied on migrant labor. Furthermore, the Immigration Act of 1965, in addition to eliminating racial quotas that shaped the demographic nature

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[8] "Table 913: Illegal Mexican Aliens Apprehended and/or Deported, 1924-1973," in F. Ray Marshall, "Economic Factors Influencing the International Migration of Workers," *Statistical Abstract of the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands*, cited in Stanley R. Ross, *Views Across the Border: The U.S. and Mexico* (University of New Mexico Press, 1973), 167.

[9] David G. Gutiérrez, "*Sin Fronteras?* Chicanos, Mexican Americans, and the Emergence of the Contemporary Immigration Debate," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 10 no. 4 (summer 1991), 5-37.

[10] See David G. Gutierrez, "Ethnic Mexicans in the Late Twentieth Century: Globalization, Labor Migration, and the Demographic Revolution," in *A Columbia History of Latinos in the U.S. Since 1960*, ed., David G. Gutierrez, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004); Saskia Sassen, "America's Immigration "Problem,"" *World Policy Journal* 6(4) (Fall, 1989): 811-832.

of immigration, encouraged family reunification as a legitimate reason to migrate to the U.S., although the legal revisions did, in fact, impose a ceiling on Western Hemisphere immigration for the first time. Many Mexican immigrants had families already residing in the United States who had settled after previous migrations creating a further basis for the increase in the population. These developments contributed to an unprecedented demographic revolution of the ethnic Mexican population as it grew from 1.7 million in 1960 to 8.7 million by 1980.[11] The population of Mexican-born immigrants in the U.S. grew from an estimated 454,000 in 1950; hit 760,000 by 1970 and in 1980 would reach about 2.2 million.[12]

The Immigration Act of 1965 created the context in which undocumented immigration would explode. By putting a 20,000 annual quota on immigration from Mexico at a time when about 200,000 braceros were recruited to work in the U.S. alongside another 35,000 regular admissions for permanent residency, the number of "illegals" inevitably increased.[13] Because undocumented migration from Mexico was a significant part of this demographic shift, border enforcement efforts intensified. In 1966, Border Patrol apprehensions peaked back over 100,000, a level it had not reached since the infamous Operation Wetback in 1954. The rate incrementally increased every year in the early 1970s and again reached just under one million by 1977.[14] These shifts

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[11] According to the U.S. Census Bureau the Mexican-origin population in 1960 was approximated at 1.7 million, 4.5 million in 1970, and 8.7 million in 1980. The Census reported that the Mexican-origin population was at 28.3 million in 2006.

[12] Pew Hispanic Center, "Mexican Immigrants in the United States, 2008," (Washington, D.C., 2008).

[13] Mae Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America*, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2004), 261.

[14] Pew Hispanic Center, 2008 and Gutierrez, 1991.

were experienced in the midst of the Chicana/o Movement mobilizations particularly in the San Diego and wider Southern California border region.

Long identified as the world's busiest border crossing, San Diego served as a central site in which social relations were formulated out of state attempts to control border crossers in the second half of the twentieth century. Therefore San Diego's position became more important as intensifying globalization tied it closer to Tijuana and the surrounding border area economically and socially.[15] It continued to be an important place in which the ethnic Mexican community dealt with the impact of these structural forces in the 1960s and 70s. Migrants continually and increasingly moved through San Diego and many stayed in San Diego to work in its growing tourism industry and have access to relatives and resources in Tijuana. Chicana/o Movement activism in the borderlands collided with this explosive movement of people and forged a conception of the "Chicana/o community" that included these migrants as MAPA, CASA and eventually the Ad Hoc Committee on Chicano Rights continued the struggle for immigrant rights and working-class ethnic autonomy.[16]

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[15] Historian Joseph Nevins writes, "One would expect intensifying ties between the two border cities as San Diego and Tijuana have experienced rapid demographic and economic growth as well as intensifying transboundary integration." Tijuana grew by 1,000 percent from 1950 to 1980. The total San Diego/Municipio de Tijuana region would be over 3 million by 1995, more than double the second-largest border twin city area suggesting that the last half of the twentieth century was a moment of intense social change in the region. Joseph Nevins, *Operation Gatekeeper: The Rise of the "Illegal Alien" and the Making of the U.S.-Mexico Boundary,* (New York: Taylor and Francis, 2002), 80.

[16] For the evolution of Chicano thinking on the issue of Mexican immigration and the significance of Mexican immigrants to the "Chicano Movement," see Esteban Flores, "Post-Bracero Undocumented Mexican Immigration and Political Recomposition," (Ph.D. diss., University of Texas, Austin, 1982); David G. Gutiérrez, "*Sin Fronteras?* Chicanos, Mexican Americans, and the Emergence of the Contemporary Immigration Debate," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 10 (4) (summer 1991), 5-37 and most recently Alicia Schmidt Camacho, *Migrant Imaginaries: Latino Cultural Politics in the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands,* (New York: New York University Press, 2008), 152-193.

The Old Left and the Chicana/o Movement

Baca's initial thoughts about Corona's request (You on peyote or something? What does that have to do with us?) revealed the dissidence experienced by participants in a nationalist movement as they increasingly shifted their focus toward addressing the transnational implications of international migration. The Chicana/o Movement, like other late Civil Rights era mobilizations, was inspired in part by the emergence of black power in the United States and nationalist decolonization movements occurring in the third world. In this context key manifestations of the Chicana/o Movement sought to organize around unity as an indigenous people conquered by the U.S. that sought liberation as an internal colony through self-determining its own political trajectory.[17] While radical in its separatist rhetoric calling for the liberation of "Aztlán," the Mexican lands acquired by the U.S. in 1848, Chicana/o Movement activism tended to utilize notions of self-determination to mobilize the Mexican-American community and gain access to existing institutions as legitimate citizens within U.S. society.[18] For example, beginning in 1968 Baca's MAPA chapter in National City, a working class suburb of San

[17] An insightful analysis of what has been termed the "Third World Left" in Los Angeles is Laura Pulido, *Black, Brown, Yellow and Left: Radical Activism in Los Angeles*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006). For an analysis of the internal colony model utilized especially by Black and Latina/o activists in the 1960s and 70s see Ramón Gutiérrez, "Internal Colonialism: An American Theory of Race," *Du Bois Review: Social Science Research on Race* 1 (2004), 281-295.

[18] For recent writing on the Chicano Movement see, Ernesto Chavez, *Mi Raza Primero! Nationalism, Identity, and Insurgency in the Chicano Movement in Los Angeles, 1966-1978* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); George Mariscal, *Brown-Eyed Children of the Sun: Lessons from the Chicano Movement, 1965-1975*, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2006); Ian Haney Lopez, *Racism on Trial: The Chicano Fight for Social Justice*, (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003), and Lorena Oropeza, *Raza Si! Guerra No! : Chicano Protest and Patriotism in the Viet Nam War Era*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005). A classic book on the Chicano Movement remains Carlos Muñoz, *Youth, Identity, Power: The Chicano Movement*, (New York: Verso Books, 1989, revised edition, 2007).

Diego, was primarily focused on mobilizing the Mexican-American vote through mass registration and an ethnic-based consciousness.

The narrative of Herman Baca's entrance into the transnational politics of Chicano/Mexicano struggle against border enforcement policies shifts the historiography on the Chicana/o Movement by revealing continuity between the 1930s struggles against class racism practiced by ethnic-based labor movement organizations such as the Congreso and the establishment of Chicana/o Movement organizations that included Mexican noncitizens as exploited members of their ethnic community. The Chicana/o Movement has been understood by most scholars as a fundamental break from the perceived assimilationist politics of the World War II generation. Yet Baca's engagement with organizations such as MAPA and CASA in which veteran activists of Mexican-American labor movement organizations such as the Congreso, ANMA and the Hermandad Mexicana reveal that in some important cases the new nationalistic tones of the Chicana/o Movement found articulation through older forms of mobilization based on class analysis, grassroots community organizing, transnational notions of community inclusive of undocumented immigrants, and the fusing of ethnic and class political identities with struggle against border enforcement policies. Chicana/o activists reinitiated these political practices through mentorship from veteran activists who had dealt with the border enforcement repression in the past, particularly the unionist Bert Corona. Baca recalled that,

> Immigration was an issue that had to be injected into the Chicana/o Movement. One of the principal persons, if not the most principal person that injected that issue into the community was Bert Corona. Before Bert

> Corona injected it there was a lot of misunderstanding, really a sense of irrelevancy that the issue didn't have nothing to do with us.[19]

Herman Baca, a printer from the San Diego suburb of National City, grew into ethnic politics based on his experience growing up in the small town of Los Lentes, New Mexico and the barrios in National City. The shift from the communal pueblos of New Mexico, where ethnic Mexicans predominated the cultural atmosphere, to the segregated barrios of the San Diego area where authority figures overwhelmingly were white and often displayed an antagonistic posture toward Chicanos, proved to be striking experiences for Baca. Indeed, his experiences in the San Diego area soon taught him painful lessons about how racism worked as an oppressive system continually present in urban working class Chicana/o communities. Contrasting the oppressive circumstances of Southern California with an environment in which ethnic Mexicans could and did occupy significant positions of stature in New Mexico supplied an intellectual basis for future analysis of Chicana/o oppression and the possibility for alternative political practices. Indeed, Baca's father, Nicholas Baca, served as a justice of the peace in Los Lentes when Baca was a child. While serving in an official position in a rural environment required minimal responsibilities (Baca recalled his father ruling a reward of 2 chickens to the victim of a scuffle), that a Mexican-American could and did occupy a position of relative power was an important contrast to the systematic exclusion of Latinas/os from significant community positions in San Diego County.[20] In San Diego, Baca as a young man engaged in barrio gang fights, petty crime, and frequent encounters

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[19] Herman Baca Oral History Collection, Tape 13, Session 11, September 13, 2006, Baca Papers.

[20] Herman Baca Oral History Collection, Session 1, Tape 1, August 2, 2006, Baca Papers.

with National City police. Baca recalled, "I had come out of a barrio-type environment, and out of all the friends I grew up with a couple were already dead, a couple were in jail, and some had gone over to Vietnam."[21] After graduating from Sweetwater High School and spending a short stint in jail, Baca entered the printing industry slowly moving his way up.

Baca engaged the Chicana/o movement through his friendship with Vietnam veterans from his neighborhood who entered San Diego State University on the G.I. Bill where they encountered the growing student militancy of the late 1960s. As a printer Baca was asked to print flyers and pamphlets for the numerous activities and speaking engagements his friends and other activists were engaged in. Establishing his own print shop in the barrios of National City, it served as a space in which political ideas of the day were discussed, piquing Baca's interest in the burgeoning era of protest. After accepting an invitation to Chicana/o Movement events held at SDSU in 1968 Baca recalled, "That was the first time I'd ever seen that many Mexicans gathered in one place other than the church…there was Gracia Molina de Pick…there was Alurista, there was Rene Nuñez… and I remember thinking 'this is the first Mexicans I've ever heard talk about something other than brindis (a toast)…here they're talking about politics.'"[22] Alurista, Molina de Pick and Nuñez were faculty members of the newly established Mexican American Studies Department at SDSU. At SDSU students formed the Mexican American Youth Association (MAYA) successfully pressing to found the first

[21] Herman Baca Papers, "Biography and Herman Baca Timeline, Register of the Herman Baca Papers," Baca Papers.

[22] Herman Baca Papers/Herman Baca Oral History Collection. Tape 2, Session 1; August 2, 2006. Mandeville Special Collections Library, University of California, San Diego.

Mexican American Studies Department in the country in 1968.[23] Also in 1968, a MAYA chapter at UCSD, in alliance with black student activists, struggled to create a college for third world students, called the Lumumba-Zapata College.[24] Chicana/o students were mobilized through participation in support of the celebrated United Farm Workers (UFW) in 1965 and its enigmatic leader César Chávez.

Chávez's mobilization of mostly Mexican-American farmworkers, whose insignia was a flag with an eagle at the center a la the Mexican flag, worked in combination with other influences including the anti-war student movement, black power, and nationalist decolonization movements in the third world to mobilize students to formulate a radicalized political identity based on ethno-racial unity. In this context of the 1960s, Chicana/o student movement took an unrelenting stance against identifying with American culture and society through claims to an indigenous "Chicano" cultural identity based in the former Mexican territories of the Southwest U.S.A. This stance was articulated best through the embracement of a "Chicano" identity, juxtaposed to the assimilationist "Mexican-American" label, and the conception of Aztlán as the territorial homeland of Chicanas/os located in the U.S. Southwest. Chicanas/os took on a "brown" unequivocally non-white racial identity that utilized depictions of indigenous Mesoamerican ancestors and farmworkers' connection with the land to imagine an

[23] Isidro Ortiz, "'¡Sí, Se Puede!' Chicana/o Activism in San Diego at Century's End," in *Chicano San Diego: Cultural Space and the Struggle for Justice*, Richard Griswold del Castillo, Ed., (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2007), 130-131.

[24] See George Mariscal, *"Brown-Eyed Children of the Sun": Lessons from the Chicana/o Movement, 1965-75*, (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2005).

alternative to capitalist U.S. society.[25] *Chicanismo* focused on the conception of a racialized community (la raza/the people) that would serve as a strategic rallying point (carnalismo or brotherhood) for a unified anti-racist movement.[26] Conceiving of themselves as a part of a "mestizo nation" within the U.S., Chicana/o students and activists emphasized a right to self-determination. The Plan de Aztlán, in part authored by San Diego poet Alurista, asserted "A nation autonomous and free - culturally, socially, economically, and politically - will make its own decisions on the usage of our lands, the taxation of our goods, the utilization of our bodies for war, the determination of justice (reward and punishment), and the profit of our sweat."[27] For the most part, Chicana/o students utilized this revolutionary and neo-separatist rhetoric to establish their own spaces on campus in which to learn about their cultural heritage, initiating Chicana/o Studies programs and establishing Chicana/o student organizations, culminating in the establishment of the Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán (MEChA) as a national student activist group.

The primacy of ethno-racial identities as a mobilizing basis for communities of color in the 1960s was deeply related to the success of Red Scare politics in devastating leftist organizing through the labor movement in the 1940s and 50s. After World War II, the initiation of the Cold War led to a domestic policy that sought to stamp out class

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[25] Excellent analyses of the articulation of a brown, non-white identity by Chicana/o Movement activists include, Ian Haney Lopez, *Racism on Trial: The Chicano Fight for Social Justice*, (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003) and Guadalupe San Miguel, *"Brown, Not White": School Integration and the Chicano Movement in Houston*, (College Station, Tex.: Texas A&M University Press, 2001).

[26] Ernesto Chávez, *"Mi Raza Primero!" (My People First!) : Nationalism, Identity, and Insurgency in the Chicano Movement in Los Angeles, 1966-1978* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).

[27] First National Chicano Youth Liberation Youth Conference, *Plan de Aztlán*, In the public domain, 1969.

struggle through demonizing communism. This took a particular toll on the thriving mobilizations of the labor movement that had emerged in the Depression era, including the activism of workers of color who often put forth nuanced methods of organizing that addressed the intersection of class, race, and gender oppression. Red scare politics was successful at marginalizing, and deporting those activists and organizations that achieved success at mobilizing a cross-section of working-class peoples in the U.S. Further, the failure for much of the labor movement to critically reflect on its de facto privileging of maleness and whiteness contributed to a fragmentation that enabled a purge of the left.[28] Therefore many activists in the 1950s and 60s were subtle about how they addressed class issues.[29] This lead to the emergence of "New Left" struggles based on the identity politics of civil rights, anti-war, and women's rights while influenced by strands of Marxist thought, tended to downplay its significance.[30] This historical context would greatly influence the political trajectory of communities of color in the 1960s and its

[28] Mario T. García. *Memories of Chicano History: The Life and Narrative of Bert Corona.* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 116-124. Corona recalled in relation to the threat of deportation these activists endured that, "Unfortunately, the efforts by the left—specifically, the Communist Party—to defend labor leaders in similar situations extended only to those of European descent and not to Latinos. That same lack of effort also characterized the reaction of the CIO…Consequently, Latino labor community leaders such as Luisa (Moreno), Josefina Fierro, Refugio Martínez, Humberto Sílex, Armando Davila, Frank Martínez, Frank Corona, Tony Salgado, and Fred Chávez, to name a few, found themselves isolated and defenseless." 119.

[29] This does not mean that class struggles at the intersection of race and gender did not continue. As chapter 1 articulated, ANMA and the Hermandad Mexicana were just two examples of continued labor struggles at the intersection of ethnic politics.

[30] On the costs of the repression of class struggle see Gerald Horne, *Fire this Time: The Watts Riots and the 1960s*, (Charlottesville, Vir.: University of Virginia Press, 1997). Horne argues that the decline of class politics contributed to the causes of the Watts riot and the emergence of a masculinist black nationalist politics.

tendency to emphasize ethnic nationalisms.[31] Yet as introduced, on-going struggles against border enforcement policies within the ethnic Mexican community, rooted in Chicana/o labor struggles against border enforcement policies established in the 1920s intermingled, influenced, and engaged Chicana/o Movement mobilizations to forge a Chicano/Mexicano activism that pushed forth these transnational struggles for the rest of the 1970s.

Indeed, Baca was deeply influenced by Chicana/o Movement calls for self-determination, but as a community member (rather than a student) sought to apply *chicanismo* in the working-class barrio in which he lived. This led to his engagement with the Mexican American Political Association (MAPA), an organization founded in 1959. Baca's experience with MAPA marked a key difference with the trajectory of Chicana/o Movement activism among students because present within MAPA were veteran labor activists who had since the 1930s insisted on an embracement of Mexican heritage, community self-determination, and protest as central to bridging ethnic Mexican community politics to larger class struggles. Therefore Baca's experience with MAPA put him in contact with older Mexican-American labor activists. Baca's experienced was parallel to that of other Chicana/o Movement activists who got their political start among the dozens of other MAPA chapters that operated throughout California.[32] These experiences go against the grain of many scholars who insist that the Chicana/o

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[31] On domestic Cold War policies, McCarthyism, and labor after WWII see Paul Buhle, *Taking Care of Business: Samuel Gompers, George Meaning, Lane Kirkland and the Tragedy of American Labor*, (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1999).

[32] See Armando Navarro, *La Raza Unida Party: A Challenge to the U.S. Two-Party Dictatorship*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2000), 108-134.

Movement was fundamentally distinct from the so-called assimilationist politics of the Mexican-American generation. Through MAPA's practice of organizing communities at the grassroots level, as practiced by the Mexican-American left of the previous generation, a new cohort of Chicana/o activists gained access to ideological tools that combined class identities as workers and poor people with the cultural pride emphasized within the Chicana/o Movement. Chicana/o community activists such as Baca, in many ways different than student activists in their working-class background and focus on ethnic Mexican barrios, would apply notions of self-determination in relationship to the demographic shifts and transnational realities within working-class ethnic Mexican communities.[33]

Local chapters of the Mexican American Political Association (MAPA) beginning in the late 1950s and into the 1960s continued the legacy of advocating for noncitizens as equal members of the U.S. Latina/o community. Former Congreso member Phil Usquiano began a chapter in San Diego that doubled as a political facet of the Hermandad Mexicana Nacional, which was also led by Usquiano. The Hermandad Mexicana was a San Diego area organization created in 1951 that mobilized mostly Mexican immigrant workers and controlled the laborer's union local 89.[34] Therefore Baca's search for a community level organization through which to address the Chicana/o oppression brought him into contact with veteran activists such as Corona and Usquiano.

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[33] On the ambiguous class position of students and its affect on Chicana/o politics see Juan Gomez-Quiñones, *Mexican Students Por La Raza* and Carlos Muñoz and Mario Barrera, "La Raza Unida Party in Southern California,"

[34] Hermandad Mexicana Founding Document, 1951, in "Hermandad Mexicana: 25th Anniversary: Un Daño Contra Uno Es Un Daño Contra Todos," Program Bulletin, 1976, Box 29, Corona Papers.

Aware that Usquiano and his brother Albert headed the San Diego chapter of MAPA, Baca approached them for information on how to begin a National City chapter. The Usquianos assisted Baca at establishing the new chapter. It was in this context that veteran transnational labor activists such as Corona and Usquiano brought immigration issues to the attention of San Diego Chicana/o activists. Baca and the much younger Chicana/o Movement-centered MAPA-National City chapter forged relationships with these elder activists with longer histories of battling the ill affects of border enforcement policies.

Indeed, Corona and Usquiano had a relationship dating back to their participation in El Congreso del Pueblo que Habla Español (The Congress of Spanish-Speaking People) in the 1930s through which they struggled for immigrant and worker's rights in the context of mass deportations and McCarthy era repression of labor activists.[35] Corona also worked with Usquiano in 1968 to extend the Hermandad to the Los Angeles area and plant the seeds to establishing the premiere Chicana/o Movement era organization that directly addressed the plights of undocumented workers: el Centro de Acción Social Autónomo (CASA). Corona recalled,

> When some of us decided to organize the undocumented in L.A., we were fortunate that we didn't have to reinvent the wheel. We had the advantage of knowing a group out of the San Diego area who had been attempting to do precisely this since the early 1950s. This was La Hermandad Mexicana

[35] El Congreso was founded in 1939 as part of a Communist "popular front" strategy to unite liberal and left activists in the struggle against racial and class oppression. For work on El Congreso see, Mario T. García, *Mexican Americans: Leadership, Ideology, and Identity, 1930-1960*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1989), 145-174; David G. Gutiérrez, *Walls and Mirrors: Mexican Americans, Mexican Immigrants and the Politics of Ethnicity*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994); and George J. Sánchez, *Becoming Mexican-American: Ethnicity, Culture, and Community*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).

> Nacional, the Mexican National Brotherhood, led by Phil and Albert Usquiano, two trade union leaders in San Diego.[36]

CASA differed from other Chicana/o Movement organizations in its political practice of a much older type of organizing, the mutualista (mutual aid society). The mutualista worked as an organizational mechanism for working-class people within Mexican communities by creating a collective fund through the payment of dues in order to provide services such as insurance or legal defense. This form of organizing worked to mobilize and assist undocumented workers. Historian David G. Gutiérrez argues, "The single factor that clearly distinguished CASA from other Chicano groups organized during this period was that from its inception CASA'a main thrust was the organization and defense of undocumented Mexican workers."[37] CASA would consolidate a contingent of Chicana/o activists that centered the experience of undocumented workers as a primary concern to all Mexican-origin people in the U.S. In the early 1970s CASA chapters would also emerge in Oakland, San Jose, Orange County, San Antonio, Greeley, Colorado; Seattle, and Chicago.[38] Baca emerged as an important leader of this statewide and increasingly national community-based organization.[39]

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[36] García, 1994, 290-291.

[37] David G. Gutierrez, *CASA in the Chicano Movement: Ideology and Organizational Politics in the Chicano Community 1968-1978*, Working Paper Series, No. 5, (Stanford, CA: Stanford Center for Chicano Research, Stanford University. 1984), 10.

[38] Gutiérrez, 1984

[39] According to Baca, CASA was for a time a transnational organization in that a Tijuana chapter existed in the 1970s. Herman Baca Oral History Collection, Tape 4, Side 1, Session 2, Baca Papers. For work on CASA see Ernesto Chavez, *Mi Raza Primero! Nationalism, Identity, and Insurgency in the Chicano Movement in Los Angeles, 1966-1978*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); Juan Gomez Quiñones, *Chicano Politics: Reality and Promise, 1940-1990*, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2000); Marisela Chávez, "'We lived and breathed and worked the movement': The Contradictions

Corona recognized the need to organize undocumented workers and families after working with the campaigns of the United Farm Workers in central and northern California in the mid to late 1960s. These unionizing efforts were often derailed by the growers' ability to bring in undocumented strikebreakers. Out of this experience the UFW, under the leadership of César Chávez, developed an unfavorable disposition toward the undocumented, supporting and cooperating with INS deportation policies.[40] Corona's experience with deportation raids of the past led to his disagreement with the UFW's position on undocumented workers. Corona explained,

> We understood César's dilemma but rejected his strategy. We believed that these undocumented farmworkers who were being used to break strikes also had to be organized. Unless we directed ourselves to educate them politically and to organize them, they would always be at the disposal of the growers.[41]

Corona and another veteran unionist, Chole Alatorre, created CASA in 1968 to provide legal and social services to the increasing population of undocumented migrants and extended the San Diego-based Hermandad Mexicana to politicize and organize them.[42] Baca's co-founding with Charlie Vasquez of CASA Justicia extended CASA to south San Diego. Recalling these political foundations, CASA Justicia members identified 1971 as

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and Rewards of Chicana/Mexicana Activism in El Centro de Acción Social Autónomo-Hermandad General de Trabajadores (CASA-HGT), Los Angeles, 1975-1978," In *Las Obreras: Chicana Politics of Work and Family*, edited by Vicki L. Ruiz, (Los Angeles: UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center Publications, 2000); Mario T. García, *Memories of Chicano History: The Life and Narrative of Bert Corona*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994); and David G. Gutierrez, *CASA in the Chicano Movement: Ideology and Organizational Politics in the Chicano Community 1968-1978*, Working Paper Series, No. 5, (Stanford, CA: Stanford Center for Chicano Research, Stanford University, 1984).

[40] Gutiérrez, 1994, 197-199.

[41] Ibid, 287.

[42] Ibid., 293-298.

the pivotal year when "Bert Corona long-time labor organizer plants a seed." The document recalls, "Corona introduces the immigration concern to Herman and the (MAPA) volunteers. Herman and Charlie create a San Diego based organization called CASA JUSTICIA. CASA Justicia provides services to the undocumented workers."[43]

Corona's participation in MAPA and CASA led to engagement with the treatment of the undocumented in the migrant flow zone of San Diego and is where he crossed paths with Baca and other Chicana/o activists in the area, including student leaders of CASA Justicia, Carlos Vasquez, Roger Casares, Norma Mena, Nick Insunza, Gloria Jean and Augie Bareño.[44] For San Diego Chicana/o activists, meeting with Corona and learning about the significance of the immigration issue to the Chicana/o struggle was nothing short of life changing. Corona convinced Baca and others that the immigration issue was particularly important for organizing ethnic Mexican workers because it was a source of intense race-based state repression. As historian David G. Gutiérrez argues about the seasoned Corona, "From his (Corona's) point of view, Mexican Americans should consider discriminatory practices against Mexican nationals as a direct threat to American citizens of Mexican descent as well."[45] Baca was not simply convinced by Corona's wisdom, but by the way his analysis helped Baca explain the rising occurrences of border enforcement harassment and violence in his hometown of San Diego. It was in the context of struggle against state violence that a transnational Chicana/o Movement

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[43] "The Committee for Chicano Rights, Organizational history, July 21-22, 1979," Box 12, Folder 6, Baca Papers.

[44] Interview with Carlos Vasquez, Tape 1, September 7, 2006, Herman Baca Oral History Collection, Baca Papers.

[45] David G. Gutierrez, *Walls and Mirrors: Mexican Americans, Mexican Immigrants, and the Politics of Ethnicity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 149.

was mobilized through imagining undocumented Mexican workers and Chicanas/os as a united "Raza" struggling against *la migra*.

Border Violence and Chicana/o Community Activism in San Diego

The entanglement of Mexican American enfranchisement efforts within efforts to deport noncitizens, the way in which border enforcement efforts split up families and the chauvinism displayed by INS officials paved the way for the conceptualization of a cross-citizenship Chicano/Mexicano community. MAPA and CASA Justicia interactions with local barrios in South San Diego allowed Chicana/o activists to thoroughly respond to the implications of the demographic shift occurring within the ethnic Mexican community in the early 1970s. Within the barrios of San Diego, Baca witnessed first-hand the escalation of legal violence that accompanied the dramatic increase of migration from Mexico. At a time in which Chicanas/os were calling for self-determination of their own neighborhoods, in San Diego barrios the Border Patrol and local police targeting "illegal aliens" were agents of an invasive, oppressive force.

Ironically, through the attempt to participate in the mainstream mechanisms of the liberal state, namely voting, Baca and the National City chapter of MAPA discovered that the significant presence of noncitizens in their communities suggested that solutions to their de facto disenfranchisement might lie beyond efforts to mobilize participation in official state institutions. Indeed while attempting to register community members, MAPA members repeatedly found that households were made up of a mix of citizens, legal residents, and the undocumented. Baca recalled,

> MAPA was attempting to register people. That was one of the goals of MAPA. The registrars were coming back and stating that people (in the ethnic Mexican community) don't want to register because within a family you might find one member that was a U.S. citizen, then another one who was in the process of getting their documentation, and an auntie or tio (uncle) or grandma or grandpa would be undocumented.[46]

Becoming aware of the mixed status realities of the ethnic Mexican community through canvassing local barrios was only the first instance in which the implications of international migration frustrated attempts to increase political participation.

Situations such as these revealed to Chicana/o activists that the San Diego-Tijuana area and wider U.S.-Mexico borderlands were not only sites of crossing but also sites of stringent division and state power. Indeed, the San Diego-Tijuana borderlands was important because it was a primary site in which families and community members lived in transnational situations that involved the ever-present possibility of Border Patrol interference in their daily lives. Even when migrants established roots on the northern side of the border by obtaining work and residency, and attempted to legally legitimate their status through the appropriate channels, the INS often perceived them as potential threats to U.S. society. Therefore, Baca and other Chicana/o activists in the San Diego borderlands became regularly concerned with immigration policies due to the racialist presumptions that immigration enforcement agencies often practiced.[47]

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[46] Herman Baca Oral History Collection, Tape 2, Session 1, August 2, 2006, Baca Papers.

[47] For the Border Patrol and racial profiling see, Kathleen Anne Lytle Hernández, *Entangling Bodies and Borders: Racial Profiling and the U.S. Border Patrol, 1924-1955*, Ph.D. Dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 2002. Also see, Joseph Nevins, *Operation Gatekeeper: The Rise of the "Illegal Alien" and the Making of the U.S.-Mexico Boundary* (New York: Routledge, 2002); and Mai Ngai. *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2004).

For example, MAPA sought explanation from the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) officials for the deportation of a legal resident woman, Salud Quiroz de García, in March 1971. Having entered in 1959, the INS claimed her visa was invalid because she held a residence in Tijuana. Upon being judged excludable for immigration to the United States, her three sons were also deemed excludable although one of them was a U.S. citizen. From March to September 1971 Quiroz de García and her three sons resided in Tijuana while awaiting an appeal to return to San Diego where her husband and father of the boys awaited with their daughters. After INS authorities postponed several hearings, she and her three sons were summoned to the border station at San Ysidro to determine the validity of their exclusion. They were once again deported.[48] The Quiroz de García case is one example of the situation of many border residents who were in the in-between position of border-crossing worker or deportee attempting to overcome restraints keeping them from family or work. The increase in the number of these situations lead to a rising sense of alarm over the issue for both Mexican Americans and Mexican immigrants alike because of the depiction of crisis increasingly being expressed in the media.[49]

As a member of the Los Angeles MAPA chapter, Bert Corona assisted the family claiming that the INS acted wrongly and violated Quiroz de García's rights of due process by deporting her and her sons. They appealed the ruling, claiming that Quiroz de García was interrogated, pressured, and intimidated to the point of causing duress in

[48] Bert Corona to Local, State, and Federal Politicians, July 27, 1971, Box 6, Folder 3, Committee on Chicano Rights Correspondence, Baca Papers; Quiroz de García's Brief Appealing the Order of Excludability, 1971, Box 28, Folder 20, Bert Corona Papers, Stanford University Library.

[49] On the creation of the "crisis" of illegal immigration see Nevins, 2002.

violation of due process. Indeed, Corona appealed to politicians, "She (Quiroz de García) was terrorized by the authorities… into making all kinds of declarations upon which they have made some biased and arbitrary decisions to exclude her. Can you use your high offices to expedite her being reunited with her family?"[50] Quiroz de García revealed that the interrogator, a male INS official, acted as if he would tear up her visa documents and intimidated her by sarcastically asking what she had paid for her sons' documents. Further, the same INS official translated the official recording of the episode from Spanish to English. The official record reported that she had held residence in Tijuana since 1959 and failed to acknowledge her residence in San Diego with her spouse and other children. Because of this biased recording, Quiroz de García's claim of intimidation was not on the official record nor was the fact she resided in San Diego.[51] The appeal argued that the false pretenses, intimidation, and inadequacy of the INS officials involved with this case caused the separation of a family that had held at least partial residence in San Diego since 1959.

Dozens of migrants with problems similar to Quiroz de García's came to the attention of the CASA Justicia chapter run by Baca and Chicana/o student activists including Carlos Vasquez and Norma Mena.[52] CASA Justicia aimed to assist immigrants in these situations in obtaining their legal papers for a fee of $15 a year in exchange for an education on the struggle of Chicanas/os in the U.S. and the significance of becoming

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[50] Bert Corona to Local, State, and Federal Politicians, July 27, 1971, Box 6, Folder 3, Committee on Chicano Rights Correspondence, Baca Papers.

[51] Ibid.

[52] Charlie Vasquez interview, Tape 1 and 2, September 7, 2006, Herman Baca Oral History Collection, Baca Papers.

involved politically. CASA Justicia would assist dozens of immigrants in these types of situations beginning in 1972. As CASA Justicia director Charlie Vasquez recalled informing the migrants, "We are going to save you a lot of money (in getting their legal documents). But you need to be part of the community… We would call for meetings with members (where) we'd explain the situation (of Chicana/o politics in the U.S.) They (the immigrants) were very vocal on what problems they were having, work, their kids at school, small claims, loans house loans DL, cops harass, DWI's, and we'd politicize them on Chicano history. Some did become US citizens and voted."[53] The routine harassment experienced by immigrants in their engagement with U.S. immigration services was only the tip of the iceberg in regards to the affects on ethnic Mexicans by border enforcement mechanisms. Violent acts committed by border enforcement agents would solidify the thinking of MAPA and CASA Justicia that the plight of undocumented Mexicanos was one in the same with that of U.S. Chicanas/os.

Violence and Targeting "Illegal Aliens" in the Borderlands

A string of incidents beginning in 1971 led Chicana/o activists in San Diego to take increasing action to further solidify cross-citizenship conceptions of the Chicana/o community. Antonio Cuevas, a Mexican American, claimed he was beaten twice in the same day crossing to Mexico and back to the United States.[54] According to a letter from Vic Villalpando, director of the Mexican American Affairs Office of San Diego County,

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[53] Ibid.

[54] Vic Villalpando to Herman Baca, et al., February 15, 1972, Box 6, Folder 3, Baca Papers; and Jean Crowder, "Congressmen hear minorities," *National City Star-News*, 30 April 1972.

the Cuevas case was an indication of a wider harassment by the Border Patrol of especially Mexican Americans. For Villalpando, the Cuevas case was important because unlike the numerous other cases of Border Patrol brutality, it was recorded and covered by the media. Villalpando asserted, "Heretofore, I have been appraised (verbally) of mal-treatment cases against Chicanos crossing the Border by Immigration and Customs officials, but I was never able to attain written statements that could be used in a court of law."[55] Cuevas was beaten twice in one night while attempting to return home to San Ysidro from visiting friends in Tijuana. He claimed he was beaten while in the presence of an Immigration Department supervisor and beaten again when he responded to being beaten by an Agent Eckert that he would report him. San Ysidro activist Albert García asserted that after the *National City Star-News* ran the story on Cuevas' beating, he received more than 60 additional complaints charging U.S. customs and immigration officers with brutality.[56] Continued repression led to further recognition that Chicano/Mexicano destinies were deeply interrelated, and, due to their shared experience of racialization, they were members of the same community.

In addition to the mentorship received from veteran cross-citizenship ethnic Mexican activists, border violence forced Chicana/o activists in San Diego to come to grips with the transnational implications of migration as central to their social struggle. Villalpando, who worked closely with MAPA and CASA Justicia, initiated a "Border Project" that sought to record what ethnic Mexicans knew was an all-too-often occurrence: harassment by the Border Patrol of anyone that looked Mexican. In 1972,

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[55] Villalpando to Herman Baca, et al., February 15, 1972, Box 6. Folder 3, Baca Papers.
[56] 60 persons claim brutality by U.S. Border officials," *National City Star News*, February 17, 1972.

Villalpando reported a rise in harassment against "Mexican Americans" after receiving a number of complaints. In February of 1972 Villalpando requested that MAPA and CASA Justicia among other Chicana/o organizations assist in recording the increasing cases of brutality. Villalpando asserted,

> We know, either personally or vicariously, that incidents of brutality by Border officials against our people are frequent and almost common-place. For this reason I am addressing myself to you for the purpose of soliciting your help in securing actual case documents of Border incidents for the purpose of seeking justice.[57]

Because the victims of these harassments were ethnic Mexicans of differing citizenship statuses, the notion of "our people" came to include both Mexican immigrants and Mexican Americans.

The documenting of these incidents that indiscriminately targeted ethnic Mexicans of all citizenship statuses revealed activist reconfigurations of the parameters of "Mexican American" or "Chicana/o" identity and community. In addition to the Cuevas case, Antolin Gutiérrez Morfín, an undocumented migrant, was run over twice by a Border Patrol vehicle and severely injured and temporary legal resident Carlos Basave Mayoral, who had served in U.S. military forces in Vietnam, was deported and stripped of his temporary permit on charges of smuggling marijuana only to be reinstated when the charges against him were disproved.[58] And disturbingly, a Border Patrol agent allegedly raped an undocumented woman in custody, Martha Elena Parra Lopez, before

[57] Vic Villalpando to Herman Baca, et al, February 15, 1972, Box 6, Folder 3, Baca Papers.

[58] Albert R. García to Senator Allan Cranston, April 4, 1974, Box 17, Folder 8, Baca Papers.

she was deported.[59] Chicana/o activist concern for these cases revealed the undeniable effects the continuing rise in border enforcement had in the San Diego-Tijuana borderlands on the ethnic Mexican community across citizenship status differences. MAPA-National City mobilized to document these cases and demand that the federal government investigate "a problem that has been prevalent in this area for too long…the continual violation of Chicano's and Mexican National's civil and God-given rights by the U.S. Immigration Department and the U.S. Customs Bureau."[60] Writing to San Diego area Congressman Lionel Van Deerlin concerning the mounting cases of brutality and the "very doubtful" sentiment that the local District Attorney would "proceed with justice," San Ysidro Chicano Albert García asserted, "Van, this has to stop immediately. For no more the Mexican-American community will stand for criminal racism attitudes of individuals such as the Immigration Department."[61] García's notion of "Mexican-American community" indicate the inclusion of Mexican immigrants in that his letter specifically addressed the experiences of two immigrant victims of Border Patrol violence, Gutiérrez-Morfin and Parra Lopez. Parra Lopez was undocumented at the time.

The alleged rape of Parra Lopez further reveals how developing notions of a cross-citizenship community was articulated through the gendered notion of the nuclear family. In turn, activists used the powerful image of the family as part of a strategy to use mount a traditional Mexican masculine response to state violence. Chicana/o activists

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[59] Affidavit of Martha Elena Parra Lopez, June 7, 1972, Box 6, Folder 1, Baca Papers; García to Cranston, Baca Papers.

[60] Herman Baca to Congressman Lionel Van Deerlin, March 20, 1972, Box 13, Folder 7, Baca Papers

[61] Albert García to Congressman Lionel Van Deerlin, April 19, 1972, Box 17, Folder 8, Baca Papers.

used this tactic to advocate for Parra Lopez and other victims of migra repression by acting as defenders against the disruption of ethnic Mexican families who protected Mexican women from being taken away from their roles as wives and mothers by the invading Border Patrol. In the San Diego County La Raza Unida Party's coverage of the accused rape, Chicana/o activists' outrage was expressed through description of the victim as a "young attractive Mexican National women" and "mother of two." This highly-charged emotional imagery aided Chicana/o activists' claims against the brutality of border enforcement policy on their community by highlighting the Border Patrol's role in disrupting family life, in this case violating the women's role as a wife and mother.[62]

Parra Lopez, a resident of Tijuana, Baja California, claimed she was raped in May 1972 after she was apprehended and detained with two friends by a Border Patrol officer due to a tip he was given by Chula Vista police. At the San Ysidro station where she was being questioned for deportation proceedings, she was harassed when the Border Patrol officer Kenneth Cocke stated in an obscene way that she was good-looking and must have many admirers. Soon thereafter, she and her two companions were taken to the international border where Cocke instructed Parra Lopez's companions to go with the flow of traffic to Mexico. Her companions refused to leave without her, upsetting Cocke. He then drove along the international border into an isolated area about 15 to 20 minutes away from the San Ysidro border entrance. According to Parra Lopez, Cocke then instructed the companions to cross the nearby fence demarking the U.S.-Mexico border. The companions again refused until the officer threatened all three of the women with

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[62] "Border Patrolman Accused of Rape," *La Raza Unida Party San Diego County Newsletter* 2 (July) 1972, Box 14, Folder 8, Baca Papers.

bodily harm. He pushed Parra Lopez into the front seat as the companions left. After they were gone, the officer reportedly instructed, "Take your brassiere off, I want to see if they are real and also take your panties off so that I can see if you have concealed money or documents." Parra Lopez then claimed, "After a long struggle with this officer until my strength was out, he stripped me completely and violated me, he made a statement and said 'I hope you do not have any disease,' he then told me to get dressed and to get out of the patrol car and go to my country." The next day she contacted a friend in San Diego who had contact with Chicana/o Movement activists to inform her about what had happened to her.[63]

As a number of scholars have noted, women are often imagined as synonymous with the nation. At times of war a common act of dominance has been to violate women of the enemy, the symbolic embodiment of the nation.[64] As a noncitizen Mexican woman, Parra Lopez was legally vulnerable. Cocke's apparent comment that "I hope you do not have any disease" reveals the larger anti-immigrant narrative that assumed that Mexican immigration was a pathogen invading the cultural and racial health and integrity of the U.S. society. As a Mexican woman, it might be assumed that she was the primary carrier of this assumed pathogen. She belonged in her country, but to assert the power and superiority of the United States over Mexico, and the symbolic control over the conquered nation's women, the officer engaged in the violent act of rape.[65]

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[63] Affidavit of Martha Elena Parra Lopez, 1972.

[64] Sylvanna M. Falcón, "Rape as a Weapon of War: Militarized Rape at the U.S.-Mexico Border," *Social Justice* 28:2, 2001. On gender, sexuality and immigration see, Eithne Luibhéid, *Entry Denied: Controlling Sexuality at the Border*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002).

[65] Ibid.

Chicana/o Movement activists painted the horrific event as another case of the Border Patrol attacking their race, revealing the role of the traditional family as central to the construction of a transnational community. Activists conceptualized the alleged rape as an attack by white society on their cross-citizenship racial community by denoting the woman's place as a wife and mother. Baca criticized the U.S. district attorney in San Diego, Edward Miller, for dragging his feet on bringing charges to the officer arguing that, "if the suspect would have been a Chicano, he would have been in jail long ago."[66] Baca also exclaimed, "This travesty of justice only serves to symbolize the immorality, brutality, and all the injustices that are committed against Mexicans and Chicanos daily along the international border by the racist Immigration Department."[67] In a later critique of officials in handling the case, Chicana/o Movement activists used it as evidence of a systemic "double standard…one for whites and the other for non-whites."[68] It was a very powerful critique in that it appealed to the revered conceptions of family in U.S. society to call attention to the systematic racialization of Latinas/os through immigration policy. At the same time, while these cross-citizenship Chicana/o Movement proponents criticized the hegemonic practice of immigration policy and border enforcement, they did not consider how the notion of the nuclear family itself upheld hierarchies internal to their community.[69] In this way family and the traditional gender roles of male

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[66] "Border Patrolman Accused of Rape," 1972.

[67] Ibid.

[68] "District Attorney's Double Standard on Rape Case," *La Raza Unida Party San Diego County Newsletter* 7 (December 1972), Box 14, Folder 8, Baca Papers.

[69] I am influenced by the Chicana feminist writings in response to sexism in the Chicana/o Movement that explored the complexities of ethnic nationalism's tendency to mobilize as a people against racism without

breadwinner and female domestic caretaker were an important modality through which Chicano/Mexicano notions of community were constructed.[70]

This made sense in a context where the INS exerted its own gendered assumptions, perceiving the bodies of Mexican women as probable harboring places of contraband. As Chicana/o activists sought to gather information from their constituencies in their engagement with the perils of immigration policies, by 1972 many Chicana/Mexicana women came forth to complain about being strip-searched by Customs agents. For example, Roberta Baca (no relation to Herman Baca) filed a complaint that inspectors unjustifiably strip-searched and interrogated her upon her return to the United States from Mexico. She stated that for no apparent reason she, her children and a friend, Isabel Loranzana, were asked to go into INS offices at the San Ysidro border crossing on January 15, 1972. After the two women were asked to empty their purses, inspectors confiscated Baca's identification card as well as Loranzana's boyfriend's which she happened to be carrying. Baca and Loranzana were denied explanation of why they were being detained as they were made to wait in the office. They were told that they could not make any phone call because they were not under arrest. Furthermore, because they were not under arrest, they were told they had "no rights." A female inspector then took Baca into a separate room where she told Baca to

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addressing patriarchy and other social hierarchies internal to the Latina/o community. See Alma García, *Chicana Feminist Thought: The Basic Historical Writings*, (New York: Routledge, 1997).

[70] Conceiving of gender as a major modality through which a racialized community was imagined on transnational ground is related to the notion articulated by Stuart Hall that "race is the modality through which class is lived." See Stuart Hall, "Race, Articulation and Societies Structured in Dominance," *Sociological Theories: Race and Colonialism*, (Paris: UNESCO, 1980).

be quiet and stand in the corner. She asked Baca if she had anything concealed on her body to which she replied that she did not. Baca then claimed,

> She had me bend over and through all this, she kept asking me repeatedly if I had anything concealed on my body. She made me stand with my feet about two feet apart and put my hands on my knees with my back toward her. She then had me bend way over and place my hands on my buttocks and spread my buttocks apart. She proceeded to check the inside of my vagina with a flashlight, to see if I had anything concealed.[71]

After instructing Baca to put her clothes back on the inspector asked if Baca was on welfare, if her husband was the father of her children, and if she had ever been arrested. Loranzana was then taken to the room, pat searched, and asked the same questions.[72] Revealing no probable cause other than the women's ethnicity and gender, the inspector's interrogation following the strip search reveals the perspective by the INS that Mexican women in particular were threats to the health of the nation. As potential "welfare queens," and criminals, these women, who appeared to have legal status in the U.S., were assumed to be a threat. They were also perceived as a threat to the idealized nuclear family as they were suspected of having children out of wedlock. As in the case of Parra Lopez, the logic of the border enforcement policy was based on the idea that Mexican women were the possessors of social pathogens and therefore their bodies were subject to the prerogatives of INS agents. According to CASA Justicia director Carlos Vasquez, following the publicity of Customs violation of women being searched, about 300 women

[71] "Statement take from Mrs. Roberta Baca on January 20, 1972 at 1:00 P.M.," Box 3, Folder 16, Baca Papers.

[72] Ibid.

expressed interest in testifying against the INS regarding similar experiences of harassment.[73]

These gendered constructions served as the backdrop to an emergent transnational Chicano/Mexicano politics. Chicana/o activists sought to reverse border enforcement policy logic that defined Mexican migration as a threat to the imagined basis of U.S. society, the hallowed nuclear family. Chicana/o activists responded by depicting border enforcement policies as culpable of breaking up Chicano/Mexicano families. Villalpando and San Ysidro activist Albert García led calls for a congressional hearing on the prevalence of strip searching at the border. Chicana/o activists perceived the proposed hearing as an opportunity for the Chicano/Mexican community to testify against the systematic practices of the INS at the U.S.-Mexico border. Congressman Edward Roybal, as chair of the Congressional Treasury Committee which held U.S. Custom's within its jurisdiction, agreed to hold a hearing on border issues in San Diego. Activists argued that Border Patrol, Customs and local law enforcement agents physically brutalized Mexican men, keeping them from providing for their families while violating women's bodies, taking them from their roles as wives and mothers. Indeed, in preparation for the hearings, García categorized border brutalities in two areas, "women being searched illegally," and "men beaten or abused."[74]

These gendered constructions of legal violence were taken by Chicana/o activists as evidence that the INS was systematically violating the entire Chicano/Mexicano community. In this way grappling with legal violence at the border symbolized another

[73] Interview with Carlos "Charlie" Vasquez, Tape 2, September 7, 2006, Herman Baca Oral History Collection, Baca Papers.

[74] "Immigration and Customs Hearing," Flyer, Box 3, Folder 16, Baca Papers.

way activists were attempting to construct a new vision of a transnational Chicana/o community. Herman Baca and the MAPA-National City chapter urged state officials to investigate "a problem that has been prevalent in this area for too long…the continual violation of Chicano's and Mexican Nationals civil and God-given rights by the U.S. Immigration Department and the U.S. Customs Bureau." Baca accused the two federal agencies of being "more representative of the KGB and the Gestapo than organizations that are supposedly representative of a constitutional government." Collectively addressing the differential gendered treatment experienced by Chicana/o and Mexicana/o border crossers, Baca exclaimed, "We are tired of this type of attitude and treatment and whole heartedly support the investigation being called for by Mr. Albert García and Mr. Vic Villalpando."[75]

"Raza sí, Migra no!" 1972 Congressional Hearings in San Diego

The Congressional hearing, held on April 29, 1972 at the Federal Courthouse in downtown San Diego, was a site where Chicana/o Movement activists articulated this new sense of Chicano/Mexicano identity, mobilizing as a united transnational "Raza" against the variegated brutalities experienced at the border. As binational coverage of the event revealed, one Mexican newspaper observed, "To the shout of "Chicano Power", and "Raza sí, Migra no" (Our people, yes, the Border Patrol, no!), a group of Americans of Mexican ancestry, walked in a great oval outside of the Federal Court, with placards

[75] Herman Baca to Congressman Lionel Van Deerlin, March 20, 1972, Box 13, Folder 7, Baca Papers.

and slogans that repudiated the attitude of customs and immigration agents."[76] According to *El Mexicano* more than 100 Chicana/o activists led by Herman Baca sought to call attention to the federal hearing inside the courthouse and the repeated brutalities of the Border Patrol and Customs agents.[77] Through Chicana/o Movement mobilization as a united "Raza" activists created space through which abused ethnic Mexicans of all citizenship statuses could voice their experiences. Calling for an alternative perspective on border enforcement policies outside of the U.S. state, Baca and the protestors disparaged the allowance of San Diego district customs supervisor, Vernon Hann, to testify.[78]

Despite Hann's testimony, ethnic Mexican victims of border brutality displayed their grievances to members of the House Appropriations Committee investigating the Treasury Department, of which customs was a branch. The committee members included Edward Roybal (D-Los Angeles), who chaired the hearing, Representative Don Reigal (R-Flint, Mich.) and counsel to the committee A.A. Gunnel. Also present was San Diego area Congressman Lionel Van Deerlin. Complicating the strict gender divide, both men and women testified to being strip searched while men testified to being beaten as well. According to one report, "Both men and women recounted hours spent waiting for the

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[76] Enrique Sanchez Diaz, "Las Revisiones en la Frontera un Atentado Contra la Dignidad," El Mexicano, Sábado 29 de Abril de 1972. See Box 17, Folder 8, Baca Papers. Translated from Al grito "Chicano Power", y "Raza sí, Migra no", el grupo de norteamericanos de ascendencia mexicana, caminaban en un gran óvalo afuera de la Corte Federal, con pancartas y leyendas que repudiaban la actitud de los agentes de aduana y migración."

[77] "Treatment of Mexicans Protested," *San Diego Union*, April 29, 1972. See Box 17, Folder 8, Baca Papers.

[78] Jean Crowder, "Congressmen hear minorities: Beatings, 'atrocities' told in border crossing probe," *National City Star-News*, April 30, 1972. See Box 17, Folder 8, Baca Papers.

procedure to end, not daring to seek what they felt were their rights for fear of punitive consequences from border officials."[79] Five women and five male survivors of harassments and brutalities of border agents testified, while former immigration officers García and Frederick Drew gave testimony about mass violations of civil and constitutional rights by the Border Patrol and Custom's agents. More than twenty testimonies from witnesses in Mexico and the U.S. were collected for the investigation.[80] A mother told of how her daughter, in the company of her an African-American female friend and two Mexican-American male friends, underwent a strip search in a similar manner as Roberta Baca, when a matron inspector checked the girl's vagina and rectum with a flashlight. She explained, "My daughter told me it was a very humiliating experience. I asked her why she thought she had been searched, and she told me she had long hair, was wearing blue jeans and was with a black girl and two Mexican-American men and she thought she represented the counter culture to the customs officials."[81] Similarly, a registered nurse from Chula Vista recalled an experience almost identical to Roberta Baca's and the other testifiers when she was strip searched in 1971 crossing the border. As a nurse, she testified that the search, in addition to humiliating, was unsanitary. Another young woman testified that a male customs officer had twisted her arm and put his hand in her brassiere in a supposed search for narcotics. Another woman

[79] Ibid.

[80] Rep. Edward Roybal, "Some Strange Customs at the Border," *Los Angeles Times*, June 19, 1972.

[81] Ibid.

quoted an officer as saying, "When you go across the border you automatically relinquish your citizenship."[82]

Male crossers were also strip searched, as well as beaten and abused. Joe Vioaca was beaten in 1970. A San Diego shipyard welder told of being strip-searched, internally examined and slapped. A United Farm Worker organizer told of an unprovoked attack at the border crossing in Calexico after which he was transferred in shackles to El Centro and then San Diego where charges of smuggling marijuana and assaulting a federal officer were later dropped. Drew, an African-American former immigration agent, testified that minority group members were "customarily treated with something less than courtesy" and that he observed several instances of "outright brutality and outright cruelty" against Mexicans and Mexican Americans. Implicating the role of race in the decision-making process of the INS, Drew claimed, "Never during the time I was an immigration inspector did we, to my knowledge ever apprehend a blue-eyed, blond Mexican."[83]

The investigations led to a critical assessment of border enforcement procedures, especially by Representative Edward Roybal. One of few Latina/o congressional representatives, Roybal recounted the border atrocities discussed at the hearing and acted on upon them under the oversight authority of the committee upon which he sat. A few months later, Roybal explained his actions in a *Los Angeles Times* editorial. He attested,

> It became evident from the testimony presented by both the accusers and customs officials that border procedures had failed to protect a person's right to privacy. This failure stems from two erroneous but related

[82] Roybal, 1972.

[83] Crowder, 1972.

> premises apparently accepted by many customs inspectors. One is that everyone crossing the border is suspect and liable to search and seizure and two, that border crossers relinquish their rights and therefore can be stripped and body searched at will. The result of this customs psychology has been rudeness and physical abuse by some officers.[84]

He noted that of the 1,800 women stripped and searched at the border in 1971, only 285 were found carrying contraband, most of which were not concealed in body cavities. Roybal recommended that all U.S. Customs body searches be based on documented evidence, that the person being search be informed of his or her rights in English or Spanish, and that a medical doctor conduct all searches in sanitary conditions.

Another solution offered by Roybal, and recommended by Chicana/o activists including García, Villalpando, H. Baca, and other Latina/o organizations including the Spanish Speaking Political Association and the G.I. Forum, was an affirmative action program that would diversify the personnel of the Customs department, particular in regard to Mexican-American employees.[85] Villalpando noted to Roybal that "It has been our experience that EMPATHY is a product between peoples of common language and culture; EMPATHY in this case could very well be the ingredient needed at the Border Stations that will greatly enhance the Immigrations' 'Service Delivery System,' to all Mexican-Americans using the U.S.-Mexico Border facilities."[86] Indeed a dialog between Roybal and San Diego Chicana/o and Mexican-American activists produced the model of an affirmative action program, as resolved by the San Diego Chapter of the moderate

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[84] Roybal, 1972.

[85] Roybal, 1972. Representatives of the Spanish Speaking Political Association to Edward Roybal, May 6, 1972, Box 3, Folder 16, Baca Papers; "G.I. Forum Resolution: Affirmative Action Program for U.S./Mexico Border Crossing Stations," Box 3, Folder 16, Baca Papers; Vic Villalpando to Edward Roybal, 1972, Box 3, Folder 16, Baca Papers.

[86] Villalpando to Roybal, 1972, Box 3, Folder 16, Baca Papers.

Mexican-American organization the G.I. Forum, and was signed and supported by Baca of MAPA, García, Villalpando, and a host of other activists.[87] The same year, the Congressional Committee on Immigration adopted the affirmative action program as recommended, "setting forth administrative procedures and responsibilities for an affirmative action program to improve Mexican American employment"[88] An important reform that arguably laid the foundation for the much more diverse border enforcement system that exists to today, this early action sought to bring border station employees to at least 50% Mexican American and establish a liaison position between the INS and the Mexican-American community.

The cross-citizenship activism of San Diego Chicana/o Movement leaders pushed state officials to address the harassment and brutalities at the border experienced by ethnic Mexican residents and other communities of color. By broadening a sense of community to include undocumented residents as well as citizens, activism along these lines also opened up important new avenues for dialogue between to local transnational *mexicano* community and various agents and organs of the U.S. state. Yet while these activists called for due process rights even for those that were not citizens of the U.S., dependence on state officials and institutionalized mechanisms of redress also revealed how cultural nationalism could be co-opted and made to conform to a liberal ethnic agenda. Indeed, the affirmative action program presented by San Diego activists and Congressman Roybal, while critical of the abuses of border enforcement policies, worked to call for reformist solutions without really addressing deeply-rooted structural issues

[87] "G.I. Forum Resolution: Affirmative Action Program for U.S./Mexico Border Crossing Stations," Box 3, Folder 16, Baca Papers.

[88] "Congressional Committee on Immigration," 1972, Box 3, Folder 16, Baca Papers.

including inherent class hierarchies and the continued usage of race and citizenship status categories as a means to exploit, manage, and control an international working class. Through the logic of diversifying the ethnicity of border agents, the class exploitation at the root of noncitizen policing could actually become better disguised and mystified.

The Limits of Redress from the Liberal State

Following the hearing, San Diego activists began to experience how the liberal state tended to obfuscate the ways border enforcement policy systematically violated the civil and human rights of the ethnic Mexican community. Following the hearing, the San Diego district attorney Ed Miller, a former ally of Chicana/o activists who attributed his election to MAPA organizing, refused to investigate the rape case of Martha Elena Parra Lopez, calling it a federal matter and citing a lack of evidence to convict the accused of rape.[89] Appealing then to the Attorney General of the State of California, Evelle J. Younger, Chicana/o activists were appalled to hear him defend Miller's decision. Younger explained, "While the evidence does reveal that an act of sexual intercourse did occur…the evidence also reveals that the Border Patrol officer did not use such threats of force" that would fall within the description of rape under the California Penal Code.[90] In other words the San Diego County and California State District Attorneys agreed with the alleged perpetrator Kenneth Cocke's assessment that the sex was consensual. Later in 1974, the newly appointed INS commissioner General Leonard Chapmen responded to

[89] Albert García to Congressman Lionel Van Deerlin, November 24, 1972, Box 20, Folder 19, Baca Papers.

[90] Evelle J. Younger to Albert García, Ad Hoc Committee on Border Brutalities; and Robert R. Lopez, San Diego Human Relations Agency, May 4, 1973, Box 20, Folder 19, Baca Papers.

continued pressure from Chicana/o activists to address the rape case by re-asserting Cocke's contention that he gained consent from Parra Lopez. The INS did proceed with misconduct and removal action against Cocke resulting in his resignation from the Border Patrol in October of 1972. No criminal charges were ever pursued.

Chicana/o activists were appalled because there seemed to be ample evidence that could bring the Cocke case to a grand jury. Aside from Parra-Lopez's statement that she was indeed abducted and raped, her companions whom Cocke forced to leave the situation, Maria Sandoval and Teresa Castellanos were witnesses to the events. Furthermore, a medical examiner at University Hospital in San Diego verified that there were physical indications of bruising and use of force.[91] The District Attorney's and Attorney General's failure to proceed with prosecution led Chicana/o activists to further dramatize the role that race might have played. García revealed the frustration experienced by activists in this case when he argued that "I understand this rape case was stopped in Washington so that no further publicity would be issued." Indeed, with the failure to even put forth a trial on these offensive allegations, Chicana/o activists learned once again that state actors were not to be relied upon for redress.

The lack of response by INS officials and other state actors on continued issues of border violence validated Chicana/o activist suspicions that the state was indifferent or collusive with forces that produced the oppressive context of harassment at the border. While Chicana/o activists were successful in bringing hearings to San Diego in regards to Custom's officials, their next forum of address was the INS. Roybal's sympathies and

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[91] "Border Patrolman Accused of Rape," *La Raza Unida Party San Diego County Newsletter*, no. 2, (July 1972). See Box 14, Folder 8, Baca Papers.

his standing on the Congressional Committee on the Treasury, which was in charge of overseeing the Customs Bureau led to the hearing in San Diego. Activists would find no such ally in their pursuit of a congressional hearing on the INS where the ethnic Mexican community could directly voice its discontents with border enforcement policies. In November of 1972, García appealed to San Diego Congressional representative Lionel Van Deerlin, who attended the Customs hearing, regarding an incident in which the Border Patrol ran over a Mexican migrant on the San Diego side of the U.S.-Mexico border. Like the Parra-Lopez case, the injured migrant and the Border Patrol officers told opposing stories. Border Patrolmen Dennis Boux and Joseph J. Henning declared that they did not see Antolin Gutiérrez Morfín who was hiding in the bushes and he was accidently run over. According to García, Gutierrez asserted that he was run over on purpose. García argued, "He was run over by a Border Patrol (Jeep) twice – once might be considered accidental – but twice was most assuredly intentional."[92] García exclaimed to Van Deerlin, "I would recommend that a Congressional hearing against the Department of Immigration would be advisable or other action against this irresponsible department can be taken. I know this will take very hard work, but as I accomplished the one against Customs I can also start working on the Immigration Department."[93]

The call for hearings on the INS was unheard as violence and harassment continued to occur. García himself was accused of being an "illegal alien" by Harbor Police of the San Diego Unified Port District while boarding a flight at the airport in July of 1973. With his spouse and another couple, García waited in line to board the plane

[92] Albert García to Senator Allen Cranston, April 4, 1974, Box 17, Folder 8, Baca Papers.

[93] Albert García to Congressman Lionel Van Deerlin, November 24, 1972, Box 20, Folder 19, Baca Papers.

when he was approached and detained by an officer apparently for no other reason than suspicion of being in the country illegally. García filed a claim against the Port District. This harassment followed an incident in North San Diego County where two Border Patrol agents roughed up 41 year old farmworker Daniel Magaña. The agents, Alvin R. Francis and Jon S. Holman alongside an unidentified San Diego County deputy, interrogated Magaña at his home in street clothes concerning the whereabouts of undocumented migrants. Pressing San Diego district attorney Ed Miller, while reminding him of his failure to prosecute Border Patrol agent Kenneth Cocke, Baca called for the District Attorney to "thoroughly investigate" these officers and that "criminal charges" be brought against them. There is no indication that Miller put forth criminal charges, although Magaña did file a $500,000 damage suit in the San Diego County Superior Court. A year later, Francis and Holman were suspended 30 days without pay by an INS judge for misconduct.

San Diego Chicana/o activists frustrations with a local, state, and federal government officials' failure, outside of the limited response from Roybal and the Treasury committee, to meaningfully act on a rising number of violent and offensive incidents led them to act more militantly and more independently. Baca noted the rise in harassment and violence following the Customs hearings in 1972. In March of 1973 he exclaimed, "In the past year, the Chicano community has seen a continuous attack on its civil, constitutional, and human rights." Imagining a community inclusive of both undocumented Mexican migrants and Mexican-American citizens of the U.S. through a collective struggle against border enforcement agents, Baca identified the INS as "reminiscent of an era which the world is still trying to forget…the Hitler Gestapo era

with its midnight knock on the door and the total disrespect for any of the codes and laws of civilized men."[94] At the end of 1973 García saw an opportunity to finally get the INS to hold hearings and address the rising number of harassment incidents in the San Diego borderlands by appealing to the newly appointed commissioner of the INS, General Leonard F. Chapman, Jr. Like descriptions of INS activities as reminiscent of "the Hitler Gestapo era," Chicana/o activists' frustrations with the lack of redress of their grievances from state actors resulted in direct language and specific demands. García called for the resignation or replacement of particular INS officials in the San Diego sector, including the Regional Commissioner Leonard Gilman, the District Director of Los Angeles, Donald T. Williams, and Associate Commissioner of Operations, James F. Greene, who García described as "the one individual who in my estimation deems immediate forceful retirement" because he has "consistently demonstrated unresponsiveness and lack of cooperation in the resolution of problems within the community."[95] All the agents whom García called to replace, in his opinion, failed to demonstrate "some awareness of the problems of the Immigration Service within the Southwest Region and proper insight and consideration that is required to avoid furtherance of incidents involving persons of Latin American descent."[96] García also called for further investigation of more than ten incidents including the Parra Lopez rape case, the entering of homes as in the David Magaña case, the use of violence as in the Cuevas, Gutiérrez Morfin and other cases; the

[94] Herman Baca to Edwin Miller, Jr., San Diego County District Attorney, March 15, 1973, Box 20, Folder 19, Baca Papers.

[95] Albert R. García to General Leonard F. Chapman, Jr., December 8, 1973, Box 17, Folder 8, Baca Papers.

[96] Ibid.

deportation of legal residence as in the case of Carlos Basave Mayoral who was accused of drug smuggling but later cleared, the inhumane treatment of undocumented migrants at the El Centro detention center and the general shooting and killing of migrants.[97] García also called for a meeting between San Diego Chicana/o community leaders and Chapmen upon his visit to the San Diego sector to discuss matters further.

Growing frustration with the lack of response from Chicana/o activist appeals led them to explore the possible tactics at the resource of the ethnic Mexican community, including transnational networks and ethnic political mobilization directed against border enforcement agencies that were perceived as anti-Mexican. For example, to emphasize the urgency of the crisis in the ethnic Mexican community, García asserted to Chapman,

> Of course if the unfortunate outcome of this situation were not resolved at this level there would be the onset of nationwide criticism against the Immigration & Naturalization Service by the people of Latin American descent in the United States. It would also entail an appeal to the Mexican Government requesting an economic boycott putting an end to the purchasing of American merchandise by Mexican citizens on account of the unequal treatment of Mexican Nationals when compared to that received by Canadian Nationals which is distinctively different. The demonstrations above-mentioned will also involve civil disobedience as a form of rebellion.[98]

While García's appeal continued to be based on simply replacing bad INS agents with more sensitive ones, the threat of boycott, appeal across the boundaries of the nation-state, and cross-citizenship ethnic mobilization revealed an important and evolving attempt to grapple with the systematic nature of border enforcement policies as state officials seemed unable or unwilling to address them adequately. In this way the struggle to address the inhumane reactions to transnational labor migration led Chicana/o activists

[97] Ibid.

[98] Ibid.

in this local occurrence to indelibly seek out solutions beyond the confines of U.S borders. While appeals to the Mexican state would entail grappling with the complex and often contradictory interplay of global inequalities between the United States and Mexico and the related hegemony of the Mexican state within Mexico, San Diego Chicana/o activists began conceiving of international processes that might create democratic spaces through which those most affected by the emerging era of globalization, working-class racialized migrants and citizens, could voice their discontents, even if they were well aware of the problematic role of organs of the Mexican state.

Indeed, Chapman's response, addressed to the U.S. Senator from California Alan Cranston, all but validated the suspicion that the practice of the INS and the wider U.S. state was in effect racist and callous toward the needs of the Chicana/o community. Not only did Chapman disagree with García's requests to dismiss the individuals he perceived as problematic in relation to the ethnic Mexican community, he promoted James F. Greene, the agent García seemed particularly frustrated with, to Deputy Commissioner of Immigration, second in command of the entire INS, following Chapman.[99] In regards to the other staff members García criticized, Chapman asserted, "I find each of the above-mentioned men to be involved, dedicated public servants whom I can trust and work with. I plan to do so."[100] Chapman also responded to García's list of alleged violations, going case by case mentioned to dismiss each of them and clear the INS of any wrong doing. For example, in response to the charge of Border Patrol harassment experienced

[99] Leonard F. Chapman, Jr., Commission of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, to Alan Cranston, United States Senator, 1974, Box 17, Folder 8, Baca Papers.

[100] Ibid.

by ethnic Mexican students attending bilingual education classes, Chapman argued that the questioning of "aliens" followed "complaints received by this Service that illegal aliens had been attending these classes."[101] It goes without saying that Chapman did not choose to take García's invitation to meet with San Diego Chicana/o leaders.

Official disregard led to a more systematic analysis of border enforcement policies due to its racialization of the ethnic Mexican community across differences in citizenship status. García asserted to Senator Cranston in April of 1974,

> I foresee no change whatsoever in the Immigration and Naturalization Service in this country. I had such high hopes for such a change to take effect because I had presumed that someone with innovative experience and zealous loyalty to offer to the people of the United States, especially the Mexican-American community, would come in and immediately begin by taking action in getting rid of some bad apples. People of Mexican ancestry received Mr. Chapman's appointment with great enthusiasm…because they expected changes taking place within the Immigration and Naturalization Service…However it seems that all the people working in the environment inherit the same tactics, and the same falsities are occurring within the service.[102]

Closing the letter, García apprised Cranston on yet another incident in which a Border Patrolman Bradshaw broke into the home of Mercedes Bustamante after kicking down her door in pursuit of her sons who the officer thought were undocumented. Chicana/o community activists in San Diego found that redress to their grievances concerning the ill-effects of border enforcement policies would not simply be achieved through mechanisms of the liberal state.

Conclusion

[101] Ibid.

[102] Albert R. García to Senator Alan Cranston, April 4, 1974, Box 17, Folder 8, Baca Papers.

Growing tensions around the immigration issue in the San Diego borderlands led a contingent of Chicana/o activists in the early 1970s to determine that thorough engagement with migration was a necessary step toward the goal of achieving comprehensive Chicana/o civil and human rights. Engagement with the liberal state brought forth some resolutions, but by and large frustrated Chicana/o San Diego activists who soon after began a more nuanced analysis of the situation. For instance, Baca drafted a MAPA proposal for presidential candidates in 1972 demanding, "A totally new immigration policy especially towards Mexico including the complete elimination of the present border patrol along the U.S. and Mexico border because of its inherent constitutional racism and Anti-Mexicanism. Stop all deportations." This was listed under the demand that the U.S. government recognize "the right of self-determination of the Chicano people."[103] For Baca, these two demands were intrinsically and irrevocably linked as he term "the Chicano people" in a manner that included "Mexicans" of all citizenship statuses. This would open up a more fluid notion of community, relating both to Mexico and the United States, but on the terms of ethnic Mexican barrio residents, migrants and workers of all citizenship statuses. While premised on a traditional notion of the family, San Diego Chicano/Mexicano activists' experiences in the crossfire of the early 1970s San Diego borderlands and relationship with the veteran labor movement activists helped to conceptually and politically extend Chicana/o identity and community to consider its connections with the wider world. Indeed, tensions around the immigration crisis would continue to rise to new levels in the 1970s making these

[103] "Proposals for M.A.P.A. to candidates for the elections for President of the U.S. 1972," Box 14, Folder 2, Baca Papers.

activities within the Chicana/o Movement increasingly significant as legal violence against their communities continued. Alternative analyses soon emerged through struggles against increasing legislation emerging at the local, state and federal levels that targeted "illegal aliens". Chicana/o activists in MAPA and CASA engaged these battles as Baca, the elder Corona, and others deepened the analysis of anti-immigrant discourse to consider the structural mechanisms at work in the collusion between the state and capital. In so doing, they began to call for a more autonomous space from which to struggle against border enforcement policies based on Chicano/Mexicano self-determination. As Baca, Corona, and others would attempt to propagate the significance of the increasingly volatile issue to revitalize the Chicana/o Movement through a transnational lens, they would find they were going against the grain of powerful forces both within and outside the movement.

CHAPTER 3: "A necessary step and element in the struggle for political independence": Autonomy and Chicano/Mexicano Mobilization in the California Borderlands

"Viva La Raza Aqui!!!!!"[1]

A Concerned Chicana, 1972

"How do you tell the difference between a Chicano and his brother from Mexico?"[2]

Herman Baca, Ad Hoc Committee on Chicano Rights, 1972

To comprehend struggles within the Mexican-American community over the issue of immigration, it is important to understand the powerfully dividing tendency that nationality and citizenship status have proven to be throughout much of the twentieth century. A handwritten letter from a "concerned Chicana" spells out how this issue remained just as troublesome within the years of the burgeoning Chicana/o Movement. She wrote to activist Herman Baca concerning his publication of the San Diego County Raza Unida Newsletter in December of 1972,

> I fail to understand your great concern for the Mexican Nationals when your first responsibility is to our people here. As to previous experiences in Mexico. (sic) They fail to recognize us, as what we are. As far as the Mexican Nationals are concerned we to them are nothing but Pochas or Pochos. I feel a great love for our people, but I don't necessarily like being called a Pocha… What is the great concern for the Nationals? When they wouldn't give two cents for the Chicanos. Please Mr. Baca, don't misunderstand me. I enjoy the Newsletter very much its just that, I would like to hear more about the Chicanos other than the misfortunes of

[1] "A Concerned Chicana" to Herman Baca, December 17, 1972, Baca Papers, Box 13, Folder 5.

[2] "Picket A.B. 528," Press Release, March 11, 1971, Box 13, Folder 7, Baca Papers.

> the Mexican Nationals. I await your answer to my questions in the next newsletter. Thank you for hearing me out!!!
>
> A Concerned Chicana
> Viva La Raza Aqui!!!!!"[3]

The letter defined a deeply dividing line between "Chicanos" and "Mexican Nationals." This concerned Chicana did not recognize any meaningful relationship between the "misfortunes of the Mexican Nationals" and "the Chicanos." Baca responded to this type of sentiment by asking, "How do you tell the difference between a Chicano and his brother in Mexico?"[4] Indeed, Baca would note how Border Patrol repression did not discriminate between Mexican Americans and Mexican immigrants, as both were subject to harassment and brutality. Despite the efforts of Baca and a contingent of Chicana/o Movement activists that sought to link the "misfortunes" of Mexican immigrants and Chicanos, a transnational political outlook I refer to as "Chicano/Mexicano," this letter revealed the deeply embedded animosity that plagued even a movement based on pride in Mexican ethnicity and community. "Raza" was often celebrated only in terms of "Viva La Raza aqui!!!!!" (Hooray for our people here!!!!!). This internal struggle along lines of citizenship status and nationality was what Chicano/Mexicano activists such as Baca confronted in the early to mid 1970s.

This chapter explores how Chicano/Mexicano activists exerted transnational notions of community autonomy through debates within their own communities over the

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[3] "A Concerned Chicana" to Herman Baca, December 17, 1972, Baca Papers, Box 13, Folder 5. A "Pocho" or "Pocha" is a term used by Mexicans, often derogatorily, to refer to Mexicans in the United States, particularly those Mexican Americans that have taken on U.S. cultural attributes and/or predominately speak English. In a derogatory way it refers to someone who has rejected their Mexican heritage.

[4] "Picket A.B. 528," Press Release, March 11, 1971, Box 13, Folder 7, Baca Papers.

relationship between Chicanas/os and undocumented Mexican migrants.[5] In the pivotal years from 1971-1974 when a local memorandum in San Diego summoned taxi drivers to report any of their clientele they suspected were "illegals" and a California state law instructed employers to verify the citizenship status of their workers, Chicano/Mexicano activists not only struggled against anti-immigrant state actors, but with activists within the Chicana/o Movement and wider Mexican-American political circles. Chicano/Mexicano activists soon found themselves pitted against other Chicana/o Movement activists that alongside organized labor and the Democratic Party, sought further border enforcement policies as the solution to the issue of undocumented immigration. The amorphous state, through the juridical mechanism of citizenship, attempted to control the ebb and flow of political movements through a combination of consent and coercion. Democratic officials and organized labor leaders convinced many Chicana/o activists that a stringent division between American citizens and noncitizens would embolden labor unions by preventing "illegals" from breaking strikes. In this way the logic of the nation-state and juridical notions of citizenship, alongside outright state patronage, disciplined aspects of the Chicana/o Movement and created friction between

[5] By "autonomy" I mean political activity engineered by a community independent of state involvement. Sociologist Nestor Rodríguez identifies autonomy as a concept that can be traced to Marx's *Capital* but more closely with unorthodox Marxists who saw workers' struggles as "not only waged against capital, but also against their "official" organizations, i.e., the Communist Party and unions." This concept is particularly applicable in the case of undocumented workers, as Rodríguez uses it, and their relationship to the state, organized labor, and larger capital. It is therefore useful in my analysis of how racialized citizens and noncitizens came to seek independence from political outlets in their own communities that were linked to the Democratic Party and the AFL-CIO affiliated United Farm Workers. See Nestor Rodríguez, "The Battle for the Border: Notes on Autonomous Migration, Transnational Communities, and the State," *Social Justice* 23(3), Fall 1996. I further utilize the notion of autonomy in relation to the theoretical insights offered by scholars who conceptualized new notions of identity and struggle as exerted by the Zapatista rebellion in Chiapas, Mexico in 1994. I find useful in this idea the notion that autonomous social movements from working-class and racialized communities not only seek independence from the state, but also seek to make explicit the power that these communities already hold in their day-to-day functioning.

those acting independently and those tied to the state. With this realization, Chicano/Mexicano activists attempted to break the hold that the U.S. state, the Democratic Party, and organized labor had on Chicana/o and Mexican-American politics to forge a transnational movement independent of hegemonic interference and enabled to address the racialist system of labor exploitation that plagued their mixed status (citizens and noncitizens) community.

More specifically, I will analyze the ways in which Herman Baca and his emergent Ad Hoc Committee on Chicano Rights (AHCCR) confronted other Chicana/o and Mexican-American activists linked to the Democratic Party, mainstream labor organizations, and state funded organizations. First, I will explore how Baca's attempt to forge a coalition of San Diego area activists to address the local affects of border enforcement policies was problematized by organizations funded by the local government. I will then investigate debates between Assemblyman Pete Chacón and Baca over the Dixon Arnett bill to outline the process in which Chicano/Mexicano activists sought to challenge the narrow American nationalism exerting from the Democratic Party and AFL-CIO unions. I then investigate the internal splintering of the Mexican American Political Association (MAPA), a California-wide organization that Baca and his mentor Bert Corona sought to redirect toward a grassroots approach to politicization that aimed to organize the ethnic Mexican community across differences in citizenship status to contribute to a larger movement against the primacy of capital. Activists broke off from Democratic Party-influenced MAPA to create La Raza Unida Party as an autonomous space through which "a drastic overhaul of immigration policies" was demanded. I conclude by exploring how leading figures in the national Chicana/o

Movement were affected by the escalating importance of the immigration issue and influenced by the transnational activism emerging out of San Diego and Southern California.

The Chicano/Mexicano Movement reaches San Diego Mayor's Desk

In the early 1970s Baca was a part of a contingent of Chicana/o Movement activists that realized that the mounting violence and repression exerted by the Border Patrol to control the increasing numbers of migrants from Mexico greatly affected their "community." This contingent of Chicano/Mexicano activists emanated out of the *mutualista*-style organization CASA (Centro de Acción Social Autónoma) headed by veterans of the labor movement of the 1930s represented best by the figure of Bert Corona.[6] Baca, through political apparatuses including a San Diego-based CASA called CASA Justicia as well as the Mexican American Political Association (MAPA) and the emergent Ad Hoc Committee on Chicano Rights, engaged the prevalence of Border Patrol violence in his borderlands community by appropriating Corona's approach of incorporating ethnic Mexicans of all statuses into a conception of an insurgent, united "Raza" to widen Chicana/o Movement rhetoric on community self-determination and the goal of autonomy. "Self-determination" was not an agreed-upon notion in its particular terms and goals, but Chicano/Mexicano activists contended that debate over its definition

[6] A *mutualista* is a mutual aid society often utilized in Mexican culture by working-class peoples to collectively protect their interests and provide basic necessities to its dues-paying membership. Bert Corona and labor unionist Chole Alatorre founded CASA in 1968. CASA was formed by extending the San Diego-based Hermandad Mexicana to Los Angeles. The Hermandad Mexican organized Mexican immigrant workers, politicizing them to engage in union struggles beginning in 1951. Its leader, Phil Usquiano was another old left leader who worked with Chicana/o activists such as Baca, particularly in San Diego.

should consider the heterogeneous make-up of ethnic Mexican communities that included working-class migrants and multi-generation barrio residents. In their engagement with immigration policy and border patrol/police violence Chicano/Mexicano activists began an examination of the structural roots of border enforcement policies relating them, in differing articulations, to the capitalist pursuit of exploitable labor and the state's participation in targeting undocumented migrants as criminals, strikebreakers, and job thieves.

Baca and other San Diego area activists including Charlie Vasquez, and Albert García organized the Ad Hoc Committee on Chicano Rights (AHCCR) to engage the onslaught of local anti-immigrant policies as members of a racialized cross-citizenship community under siege. In addition to a rising number of cases involving harassment and brutality at the hands of INS agents against Mexican-Americans and Mexican immigrants (see Chapter 2), anti-immigrant repression emerged in San Diego in September of 1971 when the San Diego County Sheriff John C. Duffy issued a memorandum that required taxi drivers to assist the department in identifying "aliens." The memorandum proclaimed,

> Due to the increasing numbers of aliens entering the country…the following policy was adopted to assist the Border Patrol in alleviating this problem…When a taxicab driver picks up a person or group of persons whom he feels may be in this country illegally he should notify his dispatcher via the radio of the situation…The dispatcher will then notify this department who will contact a police agency to stop the taxicab and determine the status of the passengers… HOWEVER, if the driver of a taxicab is stopped by a law enforcement officer and found to have illegal aliens in his vehicle…then his permit to operate a taxicab in the county area will be SUSPENDED.[7]

[7] San Diego County Sheriff's Department, "Sheriff John Duffy Memorandum," September 15, 1972, Box 22, Folder 3, Baca Papers.

In addition to the threat of license suspension the memorandum also added that transporting a person known to be in the country illegally was a felony punishable by a $2,000 fine and five years in prison for each alien transported.

Activists took note of how local law enforcement policies parroted INS policy and affected the entire ethnic Mexican community in the San Diego borderlands. They responded by articulating a common struggle among Mexican immigrants and Mexican Americans. Indeed, the memorandum encouraged racial profiling of ethnic Mexicans in its call to report persons that one "feels is in the country illegally." Baca learned of the memorandum when incensed barrio residents notified him that taxi drivers were refusing service to ethnic Mexicans due to fear of incrimination.[8] Baca exclaimed, "The sheriff's order has in fact made every cab driver a deputy and an immigration officer… causing great injustice to Mexican Nationals and Chicanos."[9] Baca detailed how Duffy's memorandum threatened the 250,000 Mexican-origin people in San Diego County due to its racial presumptions. "The Sheriff," Baca said, "must be obsessed with racism."[10] The Ad-Hoc Committee brought together a coalition in struggle against an "injustice" shared by "Mexican Nationals and Chicanos."

While nominally successful at organizing a coalition against the racist implications of the police order, the AHCCR found that many Chicana/o organizations would not take a stance on the controversial immigration issue. An AHCCR document

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[8] Herman Baca Oral History Collection, Tape 2, Session 1, August 2, 2006, Baca Papers.

[9] "Sheriff Indicts Chicanos, Community Demands Apology," *La Raza Unida Party – San Diego Newsletter*, Issue 7, December 1972.

[10] Ibid.

recalled, "Late in 1971, among Chicano activists, the immigration issue is thought to be a no win situation. A right-wing mentality among Chicanos allows the undocumented to be seen as job thieves and swelling the welfare lines. The immigration issue proves to be a major test of funded organizations' commitment."[11] Nonetheless, a coalition was successfully formed, consisting of Chicana/o Movement and more moderate Mexican-American organizations in San Diego including CASA Justicia, MAPA, La Raza Unida Party, the student organization El Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán (MEChA), the G.I. Forum, the Chicano Federation, the Chicano Park Steering Committee, the social service-based Padre Hidalgo Center, the Mexican American Advisory Committee (MAAC) and the Spanish Speaking Political Association.

The Ad-Hoc Committee issued a local media campaign against the Duffy memorandum and mobilized a 400 person demonstration in front of the San Diego County jail just days after its release.[12] Through this campaign and appeals to local, state and federal officials the AHCCR successfully pressured Sheriff Duffy to rescind the memo. Duffy detailed the information federal officials brought to his attention. "No one but immigration authorities, not even the FBI, has the right to detain, interrogate or arrest illegal aliens," he said. This was due to the fact that immigration was a federal issue strictly up to the Immigration and Naturalization Service to handle. "We do not even

[11] "The Committee for Chicano Rights, Organizational history, July 21-22, 1979." Folder 6, Box 12, Baca Papers.

[12] "The Committee for Chicano Rights, Organizational history, July 21-22, 1979." Folder 6, Box 12, Baca Papers. Also see, "Herman Baca Timeline," Description of the Herman Baca Papers, Baca Papers.

have the right to ask them to show their papers," Duffy said.[13] This historical practice, however, would not die easily. In May of 1973 the San Diego Police Department issued a similar policy. The Ad Hoc Committee continued its struggle against Chief Ray Hoobler and the SDPD's "Hoobler Memorandum."

Baca spoke to the local media about efforts by the AHCCR to now protest the Hoobler Memorandum in 1973, arguing that it was a racist policy aimed at the entire ethnic Mexican community and that immigration matters were solely under federal jurisdiction. Baca exclaimed,

> Since the issuance of the May 8th memorandum by San Diego Chief of Police Ray Hoobler, it has come to our attention that numerous violations of civil and constitutional law have occurred in San Diego County concerning the rights of Mexican ancestry. Homes, churches and places of employment have been entered under the pretext of searching for "illegal aliens". Persons of Mexican descent have been stopped on the street, school children have been interrogated, and persons of Mexican ancestry seeking their legal rights have been abused at the employment offices, at the welfare department, and the San Diego County Hospital. This local memorandum raised many legal, social, and moral questions.[14]

Baca went on to explain that all other police departments in San Diego County had conformed to the understanding put forth by the U.S. Justice Department in regards to the Duffy Memorandum that immigration was a federal issue to be addressed by the U.S. Congress and the INS.

Baca and the Committee would find that the internal battles they waged within Chicana/o and Mexican-American politics was connected to the way their autonomous

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[13] "'Hands-Off' Policy On Aliens Aired: Only Immigration Authorities May Hold Suspects, Lawmen Told," *San Diego Union*, 26 April 1973, Box 22, Folder 3**,** Baca Papers.

[14] Herman Baca, Ad Hoc Committee on Chicano Rights to William Roth, October 1, 1973, Box 6, Folder 4, Baca Papers.

action threatened the larger power structure. By challenging city policing policies, particularly those of the SDPD, Baca challenged San Diego mayor and future governor of California, Pete Wilson. Baca's demands to address the discrimination issues that emanated from a police policy that attempted to identify undocumented migrants based on physical appearance and mannerisms disrupted Wilson's plans to develop the city. Through his "America's Finest City" campaign Wilson sought to utilize public monies to supplement high-end developers to revitalize downtown and surrounding districts while promising residents that he would contain the urban sprawl most associated with cities such as Los Angeles. As part of these efforts he sought to clean up and further professionalize the San Diego Police Department to promote the image of "America's Finest City."[15] Baca's public demands to immediately cease policies enacted by SDPD Chief Hoobler in apprehending and delivering "illegal aliens" to the Border Patrol disrupted Wilson's painting of a peaceful, harmonious city free of the urban problems of bigger cities. Furthermore, Baca and the Ad Hoc Committee on Chicano Rights' refusal to concede to Wilson's political patronage further frustrated the mayor.[16]

As the struggle over the Hoobler Memorandum raged on, powerful interests came to bear on government funded Chicana/o organizations. Social service community organizations receiving funds from the local, state, and federal government began to pull out of the Ad-Hoc Committee including the Chicano Federation, MAAC, and the Padre Hidalgo Center. This became evident when Wilson threatened to cut all relations with

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[15] On Wilson's mayoral terms and political ascendancy see, Mike Davis, "The Next Little Dollar: The Private Governments of San Diego," in *Under the Perfect Sun: The San Diego Tourist Never See*, eds. Mike Davis, Kelly Mayhew, and Jim Miller, (New York: New Press, 2005), 103-108.

[16] Ibid.

Chicano Federation director Luis Natividad if he continued working with Baca and the Ad-Hoc Committee on Chicano Rights. Wilson had called a meeting of invited representatives of the Mexican-American community, including Natividad, to discuss the hoopla over the Hoobler Memorandum. As critic Mike Davis asserts, Wilson was successful at quashing demands from communities of color by offering token positions and negotiating support from minority leaders.[17] It appears that Wilson was upset with Natividad for rejecting his offer of patronage in regards to the Hoobler Memorandum. Wilson lamented, "Having received no message from you indicating that you could not attend (the meeting with Mexican-American leaders), I am compelled to wonder whether your absence was a matter of choice. If so, I regret your decision. And if it was in fact a conscious decision, you should regret it, too, because it was a bad one."[18] Infuriated by a recent showing of a local news program in which Baca appeared to protest the SDPD's policy on apprehending undocumented migrants, Wilson exclaimed to Natividad, "Several Chicano friends have since apologized for Baca's performance and assured me that he was not speaking for the Chicano community. Neither the apology nor the assurance was required. In fact, to any fair-minded viewer it should have been obvious that there was no responsible or representative spokesman, but rather an inept juvenile on an ego trip."[19]

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[17] Davis argues that Wilson successfully placated to minority communities by offering token positions within the city government and negotiated with minority leaders in order to keep the peace and proceed with his development plans. For instance, Davis claims that African-American councilman Leon Williams consented to support Wilson's downtown development scheme in exchange for the political clout to hone new black leaders thus creating what Davis calls the "Williams Machine."

[18] Pete Wilson to Louis Natividad, July 19, 1973, Baca Papers, Box 6, Folder 4.

[19] Ibid.

Of concern for Wilson was not only Natividad's failure to attend his meeting, but the possibility that he was rejected in preference for participation with the AHCCR. Wilson was "informed" that Natividad attended an AHCCR meeting. To this, Wilson exclaimed "the thought that you (Natividad) would consciously choose to boycott our meeting in preference for Herman Baca's ridiculous 'leadership' would be truly astounding and very disappointing. I cannot imagine your preferring self-important propaganda to honest communication as a means of solving community problems."[20] Wilson concluded by asking Natividad to inform him if he had, indeed, chosen Baca over him. The stakes were clearly outlined as one or the other. "If I do not hear from you, I must reluctantly assumed (sic) that you feel that Herman's 'leadership' can do more to help San Diego's very important Chicano community than can leadership elected by the people of San Diego," explained Wilson. "And if that is your feeling, I will not expect your participation in any efforts undertaken by me, nor will I trouble you with any further invitations to participate."[21] Clearly Wilson would not speak to or work with anyone working with Baca. What Wilson did not address explicitly, but local activists argued was implicitly evoked, was the Chicano Federation's one dollar a year lease provided by the city of San Diego. Reflecting on Wilson's letter, an AHCCR document recalled, "Mayor Pete Wilson memorands (sic) Chicano Federation leader Louie Natividad 'stop

[20] Ibid.

[21] Ibid.

working with Herman Baca or lose the Federation's dollar a year lease.' Wilson's ultimatum makes clear a beginning split between activist groups and funded agencies."[22]

Undeterred by Wilson's implied threat of taking the Chicano Federation's one dollar lease, the AHCCR and its allies accused Wilson of assassinating Baca's character to avoid addressing the issue at hand – that the SDPD was illegally apprehending undocumented migrants, and thus harassing the ethnic Mexican community at large. Indeed, some Chicano elected officials came to Baca's defense, revealing the evolving success of Chicana/o movement mobilizations in entering the political arena.[23] Trustees of Southwestern College, National School District (National City), Chula Vista ISD, and San Ysidro ISD from South San Diego, noted in an open letter to Wilson,

> Your attack directed at Mr. Baca, on a personal basis, is seen by many respected individuals as a vendetta on your part to discredit and discolor the issue that we as elected officials and concerned citizens have taken a stand on. Your unprofessional demonstration of petty emotionalism expressed in your letter to several respected individuals about Mr. Baca is far from becoming of the dignity of your position… Your stand on the "alien" issue should not arbitrarily disclude (sic) the opinions of the people that it affronts most—the Mexican American. It is our desire that you reconsider your position and listen to what a large segment of our population is trying to advise you of.[24]

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[22] "The Committee for Chicano Rights, Organizational history, July 21-22, 1979." Baca Papers, Folder 6, Box 12.

[23] As I will further discuss, this "success" at electing officials through ethnic mobilization was a double-edge sword. Indeed, at issue was how elected officials could become subsumed by the state's mechanisms of gaining consent from emergent social movements through formulating a bureaucratic class of ethnic representatives at the peril of many of the demands coming from, in this case, the ethnic Mexican working-class base.

[24] Robert W. Baker, Benjamin Moreno, Ernest Azhocar, Oscar Canedo, Al Y. Casillas, and Ray Parra to Peter Wilson, July 31, 1973, Baca Papers, Box 6, Folder 4. Also see, "Chicano school trustees ask Wilson to reconsider," National City Star News, August 5, 1973.

The AHCCR issued a statement in defense of Baca as well. They accosted the mayor, asserting, "Your reaction, if not libelous, was at minimum a clear indication of your inability to understand or appreciate the importance to all Chicanos of the problem posed by the continued interference of San Diego Police officers with the freedom of movement of Chicanos in the City of San Diego."[25] Despite Wilson's attempt to depict a harmonious city cleansed of the urban problems of poverty, sprawl and racial tensions, the AHCCR's demand to address an issue fundamentally dealing with "the freedom of movement" of ethnic Mexicans in the city identified a historically embedded social practice of policing racialized laborers, connecting modernized police practices with the historical practices of official vagrancy laws of the nineteenth century and the practices of informal vigilante groups such as the Ku Klux Klan.[26] The AHCCR assured Wilson that they regarded "Mr. Baca's position with respect to the Hoobler memorandum as legally correct and meriting of continued support." They concluded by reminding Wilson that his "invitation… is considered not essential to the continuance of our efforts to protect our community through all appropriate political or legal channels."[27]

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[25] Ad Hoc Committee on Chicano Rights to Pete Wilson, August 5, 1973, Baca Papers, Box 6, Folder 4.

[26] See Chapter 1 of this dissertation for the history of vigilantism and policing the ethnic Mexican community in San Diego. For the history of labor control and vagrancy laws in the Mexican-American context see, David Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas: 1836-1986*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1987; and Edward J. Escobar, *Race, Police, and the Making of a Political Identity: Mexican Americans and the Los Angeles Police Department, 1900-1945*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999); for the San Diego case see, Richard del Castillo, "From Revolution to Economic Depression," in *Chicano San Diego: Cultural Space and the Struggle for Justice*, ed. Richard Griswold del Castillo, (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2007). For Mexican-Americans and the KKK in San Diego and Southern California see, Carlos M. Larralde and Richard Griswold del Castillo, "San Diego's Ku Klux Klan." *The Journal of San Diego History* 46(2-3) (Spring/Summer 2000).

[27] Ibid.

Despite the uncompromising persistence of the AHCCR and other ethnic Mexican leadership to press the local city elite to alleviate the repression of noncitizens in their community, as noted, groups began to buckle to the pressure. The Chicano Federation soon after Wilson's threat joined other groups that dropped out of the coalition. What the debate with Wilson reveals is that the call to address border enforcement policies touched a chord among deep-seated interests in the political mainstream. The state had the power to split developing Chicano/Mexicano mobilizations because many Chicana/o Movement organizations, particularly state-funded social serve agencies, were dependent on government funds. Furthermore, the AHCCR had to contend with the "right-wing mentality among Chicanos" that perceived undocumented workers as "job thieves" who are "swelling the welfare lines."[28] Not only were Anglo Republicans like Wilson exerting pressure on Chicana/o Movement activists over the undocumented immigration issue, so too were Chicano Democrats, a point explored below through Baca's debates with Assemblyman Peter Chacón. In this way the Republican and Democratic Party held a relative consensus on border enforcement policy, making political autonomy a necessity for activists seeking alternatives.

Baca Debates Assemblyman Peter Chacón

Chicano/Mexicano activists also confronted the ideological pressures of the state through engagement with the increasing number of Chicana/o politicians, most of which

[28] "The Committee for Chicano Rights, Organizational history, July 21-22, 1979." Folder 6, Box 12, Baca Papers.

were part of the Democratic Party.[29] The emergence of these Chicana/o Democrats represents another method in which the hegemonic state gained the consent to rule through appeasing some of the civil rights demands put forth by communities of color in the 1970s. The Democrats brought social movements into its ranks through the logic of the nation-state where American nationality was configured within a hierarchical citizen-noncitizen dichotomy. Electoral politics are dependent on a constituency of juridical citizens therefore reinforcing the exclusion of noncitizens as part of the polity. In this way, the incorporation of social movements into the two-party state worked to marginalize working-class demands that sought, in this case, to dismantle a system of labor that utilized noncitizens as a cheap and easily exploitable working force.

A key difference between the vision of the Chicana/o Movement exerted by many Chicana/o Democrats and those that exerted a Chicano/Mexicano vision of the movement was that the former sought to address race and class issues within the confines of the nation-state, while the latter were not only addressing the ethnic concerns of border patrol policing, but the larger international class concerns at the basis of immigration policy.[30]

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[29] I am utilizing the terms "Chicano politician" strategically here to show that many newly elected officials identified with and utilized the ethnic mobilization of the Chicano movement. Different then the debates between, for example, Chicano movement activist Jose Angel Gutierrez and "Mexican-American" Congressman Henry B. Gonzales in Texas, the latter of which disassociated with Chicano mobilizations due to his perception that they were proponents of "racism in reverse" in their emphasis on Chicano identity, many newly elected ethnic Mexican officials identified with and participated in manifestations of the Chicano movement and utilized the term "Chicano" and the ethnic-based politics associated with it. My discussions of Assemblymen Peter Chacón of San Diego and Alex García in this section are cases in point. This understanding reveals yet another strand among a myriad of identity postulations with various class, gender, and national connotations that Chicano movement strategy and Chicano identity evolved into and were rigorously debated and contested. On the Gutiérrez/González debate see, David G. Gutiérrez, *Walls and Mirrors: Mexican Americans, Mexican Immigrants and the Politics of Ethnicity*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994, 186-187.

[30] Of course, some participants in the coalition that made up the Democratic Party were addressing legitimate working-class concerns such as César Chávez and the United Farm Workers Organizing Committee (UFWOC). Yet this vision of addressing working-class concerns, as will be discussed, was in

In this context, proponents of a transnational Chicano/Mexicano vision of community struggled against Chicana/o and Mexican-American activists that were tied to the Democratic Party and its marriage to AFL-CIO affiliated unions. While CIO unions had organized undocumented workers in the 1930s, its merger with the AFL in the midst of labor movement repression in the 1950s narrowed its organizing base to the confines of national boundaries. Furthermore, organized labor's struggle against the Bracero Program in the 1950s and 60s sought to deter the importation of temporary foreign workers in order to better organize citizen workers, leading to a depiction of noncitizen laborers as strikebreakers. This depiction was not off the mark, as noncitizen workers were utilized as strikebreakers, particular within the successful struggles of the United Farm Workers Organizing Committee (UFW) led by César Chávez from the mid 1960s into the 1970s. Indeed, the UFW deeply influenced the Chicana/o Movement, and its alliance with the Democratic Party greatly influenced the emerging number of Chicana/o politicians. Therefore, at stake in these debates between Chicana/o Democrats and Chicano/Mexicano activists was whether the very definition of "Chicana/o" was bounded along the lines of U.S. citizenship or transcended them. Further at stake was whether worker solidarities ended at the border or crossed them. The manner through which Chicano/Mexicano activists engaged Chicano Democrats is represented well by Baca's

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the early 1970s limited in its usage of the logic of the nation-state that bounded that movement along the lines of American citizenship and nationality to the exclusion of noncitizens. Therefore, this working-class mobilization was appropriated, at least temporarily, by the state and its capitalist interests through its deployment of the mechanism of citizenship, which inherently is based on an "Otherization" of noncitizens. Through this mechanism the transnational working-class was divided and a system of labor exploitation momentarily maintained. Also, while the Chicano/Mexicano mobilization successfully crossed the lines of citizenship status in attempts to unite working-class peoples in a transnational context, its ability to transcend the boundaries around race and ethnicity on which it was largely based were still in question as were its creation of explicit class identities.

debates with San Diego Assemblyman, Peter Chacón over California legislation that sought to address the problem of undocumented immigration.

Indeed, Baca's mentor Bert Corona represented the opposite side of the spectrum from Chávez regarding the Chicana/o debate over immigration. Corona had come to the issue of undocumented immigration and the creation of CASA due to his break with Chávez and the UFWOC's position on deporting undocumented workers. Baca recalled the first time he met Chávez in the early 1970s depicting a divisive rift between the UFW leader on the one hand, and Corona on the other. In Baca's recollection he made clear which side he was on. "César and myself met at the Christ the King Church in Imperial (Imperial Beach in San Diego County)," Baca remembered. Baca asserted, "To be honest it was hot and frank, the discussion. César's position was that they (undocumented workers) were breaking our strikes, that he didn't care who they were that anyone who broke their strikes was the enemy and blah, blah, blah. So, I remember telling him 'well, you haven't been able to incorporate the union because of lack of power, so how is it that once you get rid of these people (undocumented workers) that that's going to come about? Aren't these people (undocumented workers) also poor people? Aren't they trying to feed their families just like your people are? Aren't they also being exploited?' But we went around and round… that was the context of the time."[31] It is in this heated context that Baca and Chacon would engage one another.

Baca's first engagement with Chacon reveals the manner in which electoral politics often deterred independent community action. One of Baca's first engagements

[31] Baca Oral History Collection, Tape 8, August 28, 2006, Mandeville Special Collections Library, University of California, San Diego.

with Chicana/o Movement politics was as manager of Chacón's campaign to become the first Mexican-American assemblyman in the California Legislature from San Diego County in 1970. Baca and Chacón would soon part ways when heads of the Democratic Party began to take the campaign in a different direction than Baca's ethnic-, community-centered strategy. "After we won, the party came in and said, 'Get rid of the radicals,' meaning us," said Baca's longtime friend and activist Carlos Vasquez. "For us (Baca and Vasquez), it was the turning point away from traditional party politics."[32] Despite the differences that led to the end of Baca and Chacón's working relationship, Chacón identified with the Chicana/o Movement, and sought to address problems of discrimination, poverty, and systematic neglect to gain the Mexican-American vote. He was elected to his first term in 1970.[33]

Baca and Chacon would come together again in 1971, this time as adversaries debating the passing of the Dixon Arnett Bill by the California legislature, a law that fined employers that hired undocumented workers. Baca, Corona, and Chicano/Mexicano activists argued that this led to discrimination against Mexican-looking workers mobilizing against the bill by incorporating the Chicana/o Movement focus on cultural pride to emphasize an indelible connection among all "*mexicano* workers." Corona commented on the bill,

> Tens of thousands of mexicano workers, born here, with 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

[32] Applegate, Joe. "Some People in this Town Don't Like Herman Baca and he Doesn't Care." In *Reader: San Diego's Weekly*. Vol. 8 No. 24, June 21, 1979, pg. 9. Herman Baca Papers.

[33] Biography of Herman Baca, Baca Papers.

> which one you is legal or illegal. I want every Mexican worker to show me his birth certificate or his green card.[34]

Corona connected race and class oppression to articulate how citizenship-status was used to deter blame away from the "*patrón*." Corona made explicit reference to the mixed-status reality of ethnic Mexican communities in the U.S. when he argued,

> That is why we have to redefine what is meant by unity… Let us examine the character of the mexicano family, of the family of La Raza (our people). 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![35]

Using the Chicana/o Movement rhetoric of indigeneity, ("this was our territory!") Corona bridged and expanded the politicized notion of "La Raza" to unambiguously incorporate Mexican immigrants. By referencing the cultural, ethnic, and "racial" connections between Chicanas/os and mexicanas/os and the intimate encounter by "Raza" of all statuses through the communal notion of family, Corona sought to bridge Chicana/o mobilizations with working-class and cross-citizenship identities.

Baca led the front against the Arnett bill in San Diego, asking "How do you distinguish an American born Chicano from his brother born in Mexico? In order to be enforced every Chicano will have to prove his citizenship."[36] Conjuring increasingly common occurrences of Border Patrol violence against the ethnic Mexican community, Baca argued, "The problem is not black and white. We have people who have been here

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[34] Bert Corona, *Bert Corona Speaks on La Raza Unida Party and the "Illegal Alien" Scare (*New York: Pathfinder Press, 1972), 19.

[35] Ibid.

[36] "Picket A.B. 528" Press Release, March 11, 1971, Box 13, Folder 7, Baca Papers.

10, 20 up to 50 years who have never gotten their citizenship papers because of various reasons – language differences, cultural differences, bureaucratic red tape and an overall general fear of the Immigration Department. We are tired of families being broken up by inhuman and immoral laws."[37] Again, building on ethnic ties, racial discrimination and the struggle to keep families together, Baca articulated transnational notions of community.

Chacón's position on the Arnett Bill revealed differing visions of the boundaries of the "Chicano" community. Chacón assisted in passing the Arnett Bill in 1971 reasoning that the bill helped the "Chicano" community and "U.S. citizens" more broadly, by positing "illegal aliens" as the major cause of "depressed" wages and "displaced" jobs. He clearly defined "Chicano" along lines of U.S. citizenship status. He argued in February of 1972 that the bill would "prevent wages from being depressed by illegal aliens" and "prevent legal U.S. citizens from being displaced by illegal aliens." He argued further that this bill would assist "Chicanos" because "unemployment among minorities is usually three times the normal rate, in this case, 18 percent." "Many Chicanos in the state," argued Chacón, "are currently being denied work because jobs are going to illegal aliens. Yet the flow of illegal aliens to the state continues unabated."[38]

In addition to arguing that "illegal aliens" displaced Chicanos and other U.S. workers, Chacón also argued that credible organizations such as the United Farm Workers (UFW) also supported the bill. As mentioned, César Chávez and the UFW were

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[37] Ibid.

[38] Peter R. Chacón, "Statement on the Illegal Alien Law – What's Good and What's Bad About It?" Baca papers, Box 22, Folder 1. Also see, *Chicano Federation Newsletter* 2(3), March 1972, Baca Papers, Box 22, Folder 1.

held in high stature among many Chicano and Mexican-American leaders. The UFW's support of the Arnett Bill convinced many Chicana/o activists to support the measure. Chacón noted, "Cesar Chavez and the UFW supported the Arnett bill vigorously during the session and it was partly for this reason that I supported the bill and voted for it."[39]

Further fragmentation over the issue was revealed when Chacón cited support for the bill by statewide representatives of MAPA, the California Rural Legal Assistance, and other Mexican-American politicians. Chacón noted that MAPA statewide president Armando Rodriguez "…offered the position that 'illegal aliens should not displace U.S. citizens in jobs.'"[40] Chacón and Baca, as well as Baca's mentor Corona who was a former president, were members of MAPA precluding an oncoming confrontation between Democrats and militant activists within the organization. Chacón also cited support from the California Rural Legal Assistance, "an organization that has done much for Chicanos and other disadvantaged groups," and also gained support from other Chicano assembly representatives, including Alex García of Los Angeles.[41] García responded to a Republican-sponsored bill that sought to repeal the Dixon Arnett bill by labeling it "an anti-Chicano bill which will prevent the hiring of American citizens or resident aliens with lawful status, most of whom are Mexican"[42] García in this statement exemplifies a more narrow usage of "Chicano" identity defining it within stringent notions of "lawful" citizenship status that conformed to U.S. state definitions to the

[39] Ibid.

[40] Ibid.

[41] Ibid.

[42] "Brophy bill regarding employment of illegal aliens," Memorandum from Alex Garcia and Peter Chacón to Democratic Assemblymen, February 16, 1972, Baca papers, Box 22, Folder 1.

exclusion of undocumented workers. The combined force of the Democratic Party and AFL-CIO unions such as the UFW defined ethnic and worker solidarities along rigid American nationalist lines that excluded workers without documentation.

Yet, Chacón, García and others failed to engage key contradictions at the heart of the undocumented immigrant debate, chiefly in that powerful corporate interests benefited from the cheap labor provided by noncitizen workers and therefore would not give this up easily. Sociologist Kitty Calavita argues that the Arnett bill was enacted to neutralize the effectiveness of the United Farm Workers movement by diverting attention away from employers and onto undocumented workers. Furthermore, the bill was virtually unenforceable due to all the amendments that guaranteed that growers and other businesses were not pressured to prove the status of their workers. The law was successful in granting an apparent concession to labor (as mentioned both the UFW and the wider AFL-CIO supported the bill) to quell the successful organizing of the UFW without actually doing anything to address the root causes of undocumented migration. Employers were in effect licensed to police themselves. Even Chacón and Garcia expressed doubt that businesses would enforce the Arnett law. Responding to the California assembly testimonies of Bert Corona and Los Angeles Raza Unida Party leader Raul Ruiz who testified that Mexican immigrant and Mexican-American workers were being laid off without discrimination due to the passing of the Arnett law, Chacón and García countered these charges by expressing doubt that businesses would hold "a high degree of compliance with the Labor Code."[43] In other words, Chacón and García

[43] Ibid.

countered claims that ethnic Mexican workers were being discriminated against as a result of the Arnett Bill because businesses would not enforce the provisions of the bill. Yet, in the same memo they cite an incident in Los Angeles in which "35 men were faced with loss of their job." It seems that, as Calavita argues, a number of businesses were not complying with the bill while others chose to layoff ethnic Mexican workers of all statuses.

In addition to discounting the assertion that ethnic Mexican workers of all statuses were being laid off, the bill's supporters also discounted the critique that the Arnett bill would lead to increased harassment of mixed-status, mostly ethnic Mexican families. Chacón and García argued, "That the Arnett Law has resulted in broken homes is also unsubstantiated, and further is something which is highly unlikely. The Arnett bill specifically provides that if a person can qualify (not has) for legal residency, he is employable. Under Federal law, even though an individual may have entered illegally at an earlier date, if his children were born here, or if his wife is a legal resident, then he qualifies for legal residency, and therefore would not be put out of a job."[44] This assertion rests on a great deal of faith in the INS in its ability or desire to discern and carefully follow its intricate protocol. As argued in chapter 2, Baca, Corona, and the organization CASA were assisting a number of migrants of all statuses who were split from their families, deported under dubious circumstances, and unable to gain legal standing due to the INS' inapproachability and racial presumptions. Chacón and García seemed unaware or unwilling to connect the problems with border enforcement policies being voiced from communities within their districts in San Diego and Los Angeles.

[44] Ibid.

Chicano/Mexicano conceptions of community that included undocumented Mexican migrants greatly clashed with that of Chacón's. Chicano/Mexicano activists reasoned that while the Arnett bill in theory sought to assist citizen workers through fining employers who undercut them by hiring noncitizens, it ultimately targeted the undocumented as the problem which, in its racial connotations, would lead employers to simply refuse to hire ethnic Mexicans of any citizenship status.

Chacón and García's support for the Arnett Bill also revealed how confining Chicana/o struggles within the conceptual borders of the liberal nation-state worked to reduce ethnic politics to identity politics. In other words, rather than utilize ethnic struggles to address systematic class inequalities, many Chicana/o activists used ethnic solidarity as a way of pressuring their constituencies into supporting agendas simply because they were of the same ethnic group. For example, Chacón claimed that the refusal by many Chicana/o activists to support the Arnett Bill was violating the unwritten code that they should be supporting the Democratic Party through which Chicanas/os were to be elected to office. The uproar from the Chicana/o community over the Arnett Bill led Assemblyman Bill Brophy, a Republican from Los Angeles, to introduce a bill to repeal it in early 1972. Interestingly, Brophy won his seat in a highly Latina/o district when the La Raza Unida party ran Raul Ruiz as a third party candidate, drawing votes away from the favorite, Democrat Richard Alatorre. Chacón claimed that he would continue to support the Arnett bill in part due to Brophy's "dubious motive in introducing the measure." Chacón claimed that Brophy planned to run against Mexican-American pioneer, Congressman Edward Roybal, later in the 1972 and sought to oppose the Arnett Bill to garner "the Chicano voter." Pointing out how the LRUP helped defeat Richard

Alatorre, "a Chicano Democrat," Chacón lashed out, "It is ironic that Mr. Brophy once again finds himself allied with La Raza Unida…One wonders how some Chicanos can be duped so easily!"[45] This outlook reveals how Chacón's vision of gaining access into liberal democratic institutions called for support of candidates simply because of their ethnicity as opposed to their politics.

Chacón was not alone in arguing that Chicana/o political positions should be a certain way. Baca, leading a small protest in front of Chacón's San Diego office, asserted, "It is obvious that Mr. Chacón cares more about the Democratic party than he does his own people…Mr. Chacón: We do not feel that you can parade as a representative of Mexican people, when you destroy their very chances for a better life."[46] Demanding that Chacón rescind his support for the Arnett Bill, Baca argued that "it is a known fact the Immigration Department in the United States has been an oppressor of the Mexican people."[47] Questioning Chacón's dedication to working-class ethnic Mexican communities that he claimed to represent, Baca asserted that the Arnett Bill had led to "thousands of (Chicano) families losing their jobs."[48]

Going beyond arguing that Chicanas/os should assert a political position against the Arnett Bill simply because it was anti-Mexican, Baca outlined how the bill was part

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[45] Peter R. Chacón, "Statement on the Illegal Alien Law – What's Good and What's Bad About It?" Baca papers, Box 22, Folder 1. Also see, *Chicano Federation Newsletter* 2(3), March 1972, Baca Papers, Box 22, Folder 1.

[46] Nancy Ray, "Chicano Picket Chacón's Offices: Assemblyman's Vote Favoring Ban on Jobs for Illegal Aliens Assailed." *San Diego Union* 11 February 1972.

[47] Ibid.
[48] Ibid.

of a systematic practice of utilizing race and citizenship status to scapegoat and marginalize racialized workers. He argued,

> The state of California is famous for laws such as AB-528 (the Dixon Arnett Bill). One only has to check the history books to see the parallel laws that have been passed in the past to solve the unemployment problem. We have had the anti-mining laws, directed against Mexicans as they had discovered gold in the 1850s; the anti-Coolie laws in the 1860s against the Chinese; and the laws prohibiting Japanese and Philipino's (sic) from owning land. In 1932 we had the deportation which, once again, blamed the Chicano for the economic depression that was on hand. In the 1930's we also had the infamous "Okie's law" that prohibited Okie's (Anglos) from coming into California. In 1940 Americans were interned simply because they were of Japanese ancestry. In 1954 it was estimated that over four (4) million Mexicans were deported in "Operation Wetback."… Let us not repeat history once more.[49]

Baca facilitated a consideration of subaltern solidarity across borders and racial lines by recalling the state's hand in dividing workers by race and citizenship status to avoid critical analysis of the economic system. Chicano/Mexicano activists further argued that the INS routinely turned a blind eye to undocumented workers when growers wanted to exploit them. Yet in a moment of economic recession, when "oppressed people" began to voice their discontents the government sought to scapegoat undocumented workers as "aliens."

By arguing that the Arnett Law was a "scapegoat law" aimed to redirect attention away from "the failure of the system to rectify the causes" of economic recession Baca offered critical analysis of global capitalist practices. He noted that manufacturing jobs were being exported while unemployment in the U.S. continued to rise. Addressing Chacón's blame on "illegal aliens" for high unemployment, Baca exclaimed, "The causes

[49] Herman Baca to Assemblyman Peter R. Chacon, March 3, 1972, Box 13, Folder 7, Baca Papers.

of California unemployment is not the so called "illegal aliens," who are the victim, but the unscrupulous employer who are allowed to continue their practices of low wages, slave labor conditions, and continual exploitation of Chicano's and other poor people."[50] Engaging Chacón's claim that the Arnett Bill would address the much higher rate of unemployment experienced by minorities, Baca attested, "Other causes of unemployment are the War of Viet Nam, technical changes, foreign competition and the unscrupulous business's who move their businesses to foreign countries to exploit other poor people."[51]

Furthermore, the Arnett Law was part of the systematic practice of exploiting laborers. Baca argued, "It is estimated that of the 175,000 Mexicano's who from 1917 to 1930 met the state agricultural needs, only 10% were available in 1936 due to deportation."[52] Baca identified a pattern in which Mexican labor was utilized by U.S. employers at times of great need and then systematically removed at moments of less need or recession. To this he reinforced the notion that immigration laws that targeted "illegal aliens" are racially motivated and tend not to "distinguish a U.S. born Chicano from his brother across the border." He exclaimed, "The reality is that in order for this law to be enforced, a disenfranchised community with very little political, economic and social resources, will be subjected to further harassment, interrogations, and overall violations of our civil and God-give rights by law enforcement agencies (police, sheriff,

[50] Ibid.

[51] Ibid.

[52]Herman Baca, "Chicanos Protest Illegal Alien Law." *Chicano Federation Newsletter* 2(4), April 1972, Baca Papers, Box 22, Folder 1.

D.A. office, etc.) who have shown little sympathy for the rights of Chicanos in the past."[53]

Baca and his allies were battling over the very trajectory of the Chicana/ Movement and confronting the vision held by Chacón and others connected to the liberal state through the Democratic Party to assert an autonomous political trajectory based on the democratic participation of working class ethnic Mexicans. For Baca and others, ethnic and class solidarities were transnational, and attempts to utilize juridical citizenship categories to mobilize labor struggles enabled the state in dividing poor people and concealing how evolving capitalist practices caused recession and rising unemployment. Thus the Chacón-Baca debate was but a microcosm of increasingly complex debates internal to Chicana/o politics in the early to mid 1970s. This played out in the statewide organization of MAPA, a group that from its beginnings was built on a tentative alliance between politician-oriented, Democratic Party activists and grassroots community organizers. The immigration debate would help provoke these two segments within this historic organization to collide once and for all.

MAPA Implodes

Chicano/Mexicano activists in California sought to utilize the emergent national organization, La Raza Unida Party (LRUP) to advance independent Chicana/o political actions that emphasized grassroots organizing, transnational practices of community

[53] Ibid.

inclusive of undocumented migrants, and working-class based. [54] Bert Corona had attempted to forge an independent political organization along similar lines in his participation in MAPA in the 1960s, but was unable to overcome the conservative wing of the organization that was attached to the Democratic Party. In many ways Raza Unida epitomized the goal of grassroots political independence that Corona hoped the progressive members of MAPA would forge.[55] After Raza Unida came to fruition in California, Corona issued a manifesto-like appeal to MAPA chapters statewide and the wider ethnic Mexican community entitled "MAPA and La Raza Unida Party: A Program for Chicano Political Action for the 1970s" that argued that MAPA and other organizations within the ethnic Mexican community should facilitate the launching of La Raza Unida Party. Corona argued, in effect, that MAPA with its 11-year history would assist in "delivering the mexicano vote" by continuing its mass registration attempts in the community.

Much more than this, however, Corona's essay sought to unite the efforts of the Chicana/o Movement to address the burgeoning implications of the immigration issue and therein focus attention on how race and labor exploitation work to oppress ethnic Mexicans of all citizenship statuses. Corona declared,

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[54] On the La Raza Unida Party see, Ignacio García, *United We Win: The Rise and Fall of the La Raza Unida Party*, (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1989);and Armando Navarro, *La Raza Unida Party: A Chicano Challenge to the U.S. Two-Party Dictatorship*. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2000).

[55] Mario T. García, *Memories of Chicano History: The Life and Narrative of Bert Corona*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 200-201. Corona says of MAPA, "My own position, and that of many others, was that we had been rejected b y the Democratic Party in previous electoral efforts. We needed therefore to build an independent electoral machine, on that could engage in progressive politics without having to compromise with the Democrats—or with the Republicans, for that matter. I also believed that MAPA should not remain strictly an electoral organization but that it should involve itself in the various issues affecting the Mexican communities."

> Of special significance in this decade of the 1970's is the growing restlessness, rebelliousness and militancy of Chicanos in the labor unions and the growing resistance of non-documented Mexican people from Mexico to the inhuman (sic) and brutal harassment of the Immigration Service, the Border Patrol, and the exploitation by employers. Both of these important factors are indications that the key group in our communities – the workers – is also beginning to move to defend their own and their families' existence. There are estimates in official circles that in California alone, we have more than 300,000 Mexican workers without documents as a permanent part of the labor force. So, the organizing and mobilization for defense of so called 'illegal' Mexican workers is a very significant indication of the degree and depth of awareness and movement amongst our people.[56]

Corona was not only attempting to convince Chicana/o Movement activists that undocumented immigrants should be included as a part of the community, he was also arguing that the immigration issue represented an opportunity to more clearly define the movement in class terms. Organizing noncitizen Mexican workers led to "a degree and depth of awareness" beyond a narrow Chicana/o nationalism that appealed to middle-class concerns over a limited civil rights and access to mainstream institutions, but addressed the larger and arguably more important issue of general economic "exploitation." Indeed, focus on the immigration issue served as a segue into the issues that Corona identified as a central constituency of the Chicana/o community, workers, "the key group." In this way Corona argued that the mass mobilizations efforts needed to establish La Raza Unida would be supplied by engaging issues that affected community members' everyday lives at its working-class base. Corona called on MAPA, the Brown Berets, unions, and other Chicana/o groups already with a presence in the barrios and the workplace to mobilize for La Raza Unida. He also noted the historical trajectory calling

[56] Baca Papers, "MAPA and La Raza Unida Party: A Program for Chicano Political Action for the 1970s." Box 14, Folder 4.

this forth: "MAPA along with its two predecessor political organizations—ANMA in the 50's and the "Congreso de los Pueblos de Habla Español" of the 30's and 40's has been a necessary step and element in the struggle for political independence and self-determination of the Chicano people."[57] Indeed, Corona's experience in these historic organizations enabled him to foresee the larger implications of the growing immigration crisis at hand: that capitalism profited from the exploitation and control of noncitizen, racialized workers and that its effects spilled over to Mexican-American citizens and other workers.

Further, this effort would necessitate a clear expansion of the perceived boundaries of the Chicana/o community. Corona exclaimed, "All our raza…those born here, those born in Mexico with documents…and those that do not have documents, All! We are brothers of blood and peoplehood! We work and pay the same taxes and they even take our children to war from us! Further, we all suffer from the abuse and brutality of the INS and Border Patrol!"[58] Indeed, Corona attempted to capitalize on the prideful reference to Mexican heritage within *chicanismo* to assert that undocumented Mexican migrants were in fact a part of the community. The legal violence in Southern California by the border patrol was evidence of this, just as police brutality had led barrio residents to mobilize as a people. Raza Unida could be utilized as an autonomous space in which to enact this transnational notion of community.

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[57] Ibid.

[58] Ibid. My translation from: Toda nuestra raza…..Los nacidos aquí, los nacidos en Mexico que tienen documentos…..y los que no tienen documentos, Todos! Somos hermanos de sangre y raza! Todos trabajamos y pagamos los mismos impuestos y nos llevan a nuestros hijos a las guerras por parejo! Ademas, todos sufrimos por los abusos y brutalidad de la emigración y el Border Patrol!

Baca took Corona's essay to heart and used his resources as a printer to print mass copies of it to present to MAPA chapters throughout the state. Not only inspired by Corona's message, Baca also aimed to tilt control of MAPA to the grassroots-based forces once and for all and solidify community independence from the Democratic Party and the amorphous U.S. state. When the idea of a La Raza Unida Party arose within MAPA circles, the members linked to the Democratic Party became deeply opposed to it. After distributing Corona's essay throughout the state in early 1971, Baca ran for MAPA state president at the state convention that summer against Democrat Armando Rodriguez, losing the election by a mere 20 votes. Baca's Democratic opposition accused him of "reverse discrimination" in his advocacy for La Raza Unida in its apparent exclusion of Anglos. Corona's attempt to pass a resolution in support of La Raza Unida also failed, but revealed attempts within MAPA to gain autonomy. Members of a rising Chicana/o bureaucratic class, MAPA's Democratic leadership was vehemently against autonomy and transnational notions of community because it threatened their attachment to the state, sought to unseat their power base and dislodged the nation-state and juridical citizenship as a means of gaining political power.

In April of 1972, the MAPA situation came to a final confrontation as Baca, Corona and their allies attended the MAPA-sponsored National Chicano Political Caucus in San Jose to mobilize an autonomous shift away from the Democrats and toward La Raza Unida Party. The conference was also hosted by more moderate Mexican-American organizations including the G.I. Forum and LULAC. Baca and Corona's attendance would lead to a confrontation. Baca recalled,

> I remember the caucus was going on. Armando Rodriguez was chairing it and he had the mic. I remember Bert (Corona) walked in and he got a standing ovation. Then somebody from the floor said, 'I make a motion that we go on record supporting the Raza Unida Party.' That's when all hell broke loose…People started arguing. I ran up there and grabbed the mic (from Rodriguez) and said, 'There is a motion on the floor, let's vote on it," and that's when everybody was trying to get the mic from me. They passed the motion and then somebody asked, 'What are we doing here at this hotel? Let's go to the barrio.' So we wound up in the barrio."[59]

More than half of the caucus joined the RUP-initiated walkout, held a meeting and released a number of passed resolutions directed at "all Chicano organizations working for the liberation of Chicanos." It should come as little surprise that the first resolution sought, "A drastic overhaul of U.S. immigration policies that affect Mexicans and Latin Americans." This resolution was followed by other internationalist concerns including an end to the war in Southeast Asia, an end to imperialism in Latin America, an end to U.S. aid to Latin American dictatorships, and strong support for Chicana liberation.[60] Indeed, these RUP proponents, initiated in part by Corona's essay and Baca's activism at the border, outlined a global analysis of power that emphasized the intersections of a number of struggles. Much more, it posited that the ethnic Mexican community in the United States could participate in this world community on autonomous terrain with the abolition of "immigration policies" often interfered in their everyday lives.

Conclusion

[59] Herman Baca, interview by Armando Navarro, May 31, 1997. Quoted in Armando Navarro, *La Raza Unida Party: A Chicano Challenge to the U.S. Two-Party Dictatorship*. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2000), 149.

[60] Armando Navarro, *La Raza Unida Party: A Chicano Challenge to the U.S. Two-Party Dictatorship*. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2000), 149.

Southern California Chicano/Mexicano activists came to engage the amorphous U.S. state through struggle against state actors both outside and within Chicana/o Movement and Mexican-American political circles. Many manifestations of the U.S. state sought to frame the Chicana/o Movement through a liberal nationalist lens where "illegal aliens" were defined as strikebreakers, job thieves and invaders to the legitimate struggles of Mexican-Americans and the American working-class. This was accomplished through fiscal support for many Chicana/o Movement organizations and patronage put forth by the Democratic Party in its tentative commitment to elect Mexican-American candidates. In these ways the state enforced a vision of politics that defined ethnic and class solidarities strictly along the lines of juridical citizenship status and American nationality. Chicano/Mexicano activists challenged this notion through assertions that undocumented workers were part of the "Chicana/o community" and furthermore insisted that they were exploited racialized workers marginalized to obfuscate the state's collusion with global capitalist shifts that caused recession and unemployment. This Chicano/Mexicano assertion of autonomy from the state, dramatized by the split in MAPA and the mobilization of La Raza Unida Party in California, marked a significant break from the Democratic Party and the hegemonic bloc of organized labor, business elites, and representatives of the U.S. state. This contingent of activists embarked onto the La Raza Unida Party to forge an autonomous space in which a reckoning with transnational systems of exploitation and marginalization was on the horizon. Yet significant differences within La Raza Unida and the larger Chicano/Mexicano contingent of activists still had to be overcome, particularly in relation to the internal policing efforts required to organize as an ethno-racial "nation," and the

implications of expanding the ethnic basis of Chicano/Mexicano activism to a more explicit class-connotations through Marxist ideological rigor and organizing methods.

CHAPTER 4: Fragments of Chicano/Mexicano Mobilization: Forging Unity in a Heterogeneous Community

Chicano/Mexicano activism in San Diego shifted its organizational vehicle from the Mexican American Political Association (MAPA) to the La Raza Unida Party (LRUP) in 1972. Activists sought to more readily assert Chicana/o independence from the Democratic Party and the larger U.S. state. Herman Baca, the director of the San Diego County LRUP recalled,

> Our perspective here (in San Diego) was we should get that mandate. In other words, 'Let the people decide," but based on consensus and a mandate. So we established a figure of 10,000 (people registered with the Party)…So, I was always of the opinion that it don't matter what politics you're in. You need a mandate. You need a consensus or you're just talking about what you think. And, who cares what you think? That's not political, you know, it's an abstract. I mean, there was a concept, an idea of a party, but there was nothing that you could put your hands on, nothing that you could say 'there's the building where the party's at.[1]

Therefore, San Diego Chicano/Mexicano activists sought to build a party through continued engagement with the ethnic community that made up its constituency. The LRUP in California was challenged by this insistence on following through with community engagement. Furthermore, the LRUP had the same problem that MAPA had in its primary function of mobilizing Chicana/o voters: the mixed-status character of the ethnic Mexican community rendered large percentages of the population ineligible to vote and worse, targets for expulsion.

[1] Herman Baca Oral History Collection, Tape 4, Session 3, August 14, 2006.

San Diego Chicano/Mexicano activists addressed the undocumented issue through its organization of CASA Justicia, part of the larger network of CASAs (Centro de Acción Social Autónoma) throughout the U.S. and in Tijuana. Baca recalled, "You know, there would be families where some of the family members would be citizens. Others were trying to get their documents or had their documents, and others had no documents. So, there was a reluctance to get involved, to register to vote." To address the problem Baca and the San Diego Chicano/Mexicano activist "just plugged in" the network of CASAs, with the influence of CASA co-founders Bert Corona and Chole Alatorre in Los Angeles. CASA provided services to the undocumented, particularly legal aid to assist them with their immigration status. Baca stated, "the concept was very, very simple: to try to get people that were undocumented or had immigration problems into membership organization so they could address the issue that was affecting them and their families. So, we used to have a Board of Directors that was made up of undocumented."[2] Chicano/Mexicano activists in San Diego structured their activism around addressing the mixed-status character of the ethnic Mexican community in the early 1970s through registration of voters in the LRUP and the services that attracted undocumented people in CASA. Furthermore, these two organizations epitomized the value in building a collective effort to address the oppression experienced by the ethnic Mexican community.

As the 1970s unfolded debates within the statewide chapters of the LRUP and CASA revealed that these organizations were unable to fully adhere to the concept of collective mobilization, the "mandate" Baca found so important. Although LRUP

[2] Ibid.

could have potentially forged a politics inclusive of undocumented migrants, the emphasis on ethnic authenticity by important contingents within the Party led to a closing of ranks among those fearing threats to Chicana/o solidarity, including a number of Chicano/Mexicano activists. Similarly, the preeminent transnational organization of the Chicana/o Movement era, CASA, shifted its emphasis from providing services as recruitment efforts that politicized undocumented families toward rigorous study of Marxist-Leninist organizing that effectively disengaged with everyday ethnic Mexican communities.

In response, San Diego Chicano/Mexicano activists would cease participation with the LRUP and CASA. In response, the Committee on Chicano Rights (CCR) was created in 1976 to carry on the longer history of activist presence and leadership in the ethnic Mexican barrios of the San Diego borderlands. Seeking to maintain its engagement with the everyday life issues of Chicano/Mexicano communities, the CCR addressed the continued harassment and violence suffered by San Diego residents at the hands of the Border Patrol and local law enforcement. This chapter explores the history of the CCR by detailing how the organization grew directly from the activism of the earlier Chicano/Mexicano mobilizations in the California LRUP and CASA. The chapter details how Herman Baca, co-founder of the CCR, and other San Diego Chicano/Mexicano activists confronted exclusionary practices within the LRUP and CASA from 1972-1975.[3]

[3] Baca was part of a contingent of San Diego activists, mainly based in the working-class suburb of National City. This group of activists, including Carlos "Charlie" Vasquez, Albert García, Ralph Inzunza, Albert Puente, Norma Mena, Augie Bareño, and a number of others formed a network of activists centered around Baca's print shop and accessing support from area Latina/o community members and students from

The CCR articulated a transnational Chicano/Mexicano politics that addressed class struggle through the language of racial oppression, self-determination, and critique of the grounded experiences of working-class Latinas/os with the Border Patrol, wider law enforcement, and state agents. Their practices of ethnic autonomy and self-determination were rooted in a mandate to challenging the systematic violations of the civil and human rights of racialized working-class peoples. After exploring the demise of the LRUP and CASA the chapter concludes by investigating the CCR's dialogue with local San Diego barrio communities through analysis of its mobilization around the 1975 shooting of a Latino youth named Tato Rivera in National City. The presence of the CCR's Chicano/Mexicano political space based in Baca's print shop led to a collective engagement with the city government over the shooting. The case demonstrates that rather than creating social movements based on "authentic" ethnic or ideological identities as were confronted in the LRUP and CASA, the CCR crafted a politics of shared struggle against the brutalizing effects of global capitalism.

San Diego State University, the University of California, San Diego, and area community colleges. This fluid contingent of activists organizationally emerged in 1968 in a National City chapter of the Mexican American Political Association. It evolved from the early to mid 1970s through establishing a local chapter of CASA, LRUP, and a loose coalition of other Chicana/o organizations through the Ad Hoc Committee on Chicano Rights. These organizations created consistent engagement with the area Latina/o communities through canvassing, offering services to immigrants, calling for community meetings at local churches or area political spaces such as Chicano Park or the Chicano Federation, and through the operations of Baca's Aztec Printing. Aztec Printing worked as an open door to the Latina/o community in that it was a local small business as well as the headquarters of the array of organizational activities these Chicana/o activists were involved in. Furthermore, the local, regional and eventually (inter)national media space that Baca and other San Diego Chicano/Mexicano activists were able to attract made them recognizable to area Latinas/os as an active movement attempting to represent the concerns of working-class Latina/o communities.

"Strikebreakers" and "Communists": Fracture in La Raza Unida Party

Despite its progressive internationalist rhetoric, the La Raza Unida Party (LRUP) in California failed to create a concerted solidification toward cross-citizenship status unity due to prevalent suspicions of "outsiders" that threatened Chicana/o solidarity. Factions within the LRUP successfully marginalized an emerging solidarity that sought to link movement politics to the goal of dismantling the immigration deportation system by attempting to enforce an "authentic" Chicana/o politics. At the California state convention in summer of 1972, a significant meeting that prefaced the first national convention of the national LRUP later that year in El Paso, splintering concerning the immigration issue emerged out of suspicions of infiltration. The meeting convened in the Los Angeles area hosted by the City Terrace chapter of the LRUP. It brought together all of the California LRUP chapters in an attempt to mold a united plan of action for the state. San Diego and wider Southern California activist attendees of the convention, including Baca as chairman of the San Diego County LRUP, also held links with grassroots chapters of the Mexican American Political Association (MAPA) and local chapters of the Centro Acción de Social Autónoma (CASA). Both these affiliations were attacked by the hosting LRUP Labor Committee and City Terrace chapters as outsiders who had wandered away from "authentic" Chicana/o politics that, despite rhetoric that seemed to include migrants, centered on the experience of Mexican-American citizens of the U.S.

Suspicions about CASA members emerged from LRUP members that continued to perceive undocumented migrants as strikebreakers that disrupted the unionizing efforts for Chicanas/os. Despite the rhetoric on Mexicana/o inclusion with the LRUP, the Labor

Committee, the only non-geographically based chapter and precursor to the Maoist August Twenty-Ninth Movement, expressed concern that CASA members participating in the LRUP were "Communists" who through their *sin fronteras* approach to organizing citizen and noncitizen workers, threatened Chicana/o unionizing efforts. These tensions surfaced in the labor and deportation workshop. The resolutions of this workshop suggest that the Labor Committee and the hosting City Terrace chapter presented a position that essentially characterized undocumented workers as strikebreakers. CASA members were expelled from the workshop by the hosts of the convention, the City Terrace chapter organizers, suggesting that the final resolutions reflected the position of the Labor Committee and the host chapter.[4]

At first glance the resolutions put forth a transnational position that included undocumented Mexican migrants as fellow ethnic community members and workers. The resolutions explicitly condemned the Dixon Arnett Bill, California state legislation that sought to implement employer sanctions for hiring undocumented workers in 197s, because "the law does not penalize the true enemy" and therefore, "we take a position that unites us rather than divides us."[5] This reveals the likelihood that the labor and deportation workshop participants and the wider LRUP were in basic agreement with organizations such as CASA that immigration bills such as Dixon Arnett divided Mexican workers of differing citizenship statuses. In this regard the workshop

[4] Armando Navarro, *La Raza Unida Party: A Chicano Challenge to the U.S. Two-Party Dictatorship*. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2000), 152.

[5] La Raza Unida Party State of California Resolutions, Los Angeles, July 1-2, 1972, CASA papers, Stanford University Special Collections.

resolutions sought to deal with the presence of undocumented workers by identifying undocumented workers as "refugees from hunger" and creating a pathway to legalization.

Yet, while this position identified with undocumented workers in ethnic and class terms, other aspects of the resolution reveal that differences within the California LRUP existed over how to implement a path to citizenship for undocumented workers. The resolutions suggests that the Labor Committee and City Terrace chapters put forth a position that would require undocumented migrants with jobs (having a job would certify the ability to gain legal status) to approach immigration authorities within a short window of three months to gain access to the pathway to citizenship. Facing the reality that the Arnett Law would likely pass, the labor and deportation workshop resolved that "all (undocumented) persons now in the U.S. begin the processing of visa applications within 3 months from the passage of the proposed law."[6] In other words to gain a legalizing visa, undocumented workers would be required to apply for a visa within three months from the passage of the proposed Arnett Bill.

CASA members challenged this position put forth by the Labor Committee and City Terrace chapters.[7] While challenging the logic that noncitizens have no rights or access to citizenship, CASA likely criticized the Labor Committee and City Terrace chapters' placement of responsibility on undocumented workers to "begin the processing of visa applications" within a small window of three months.[8] Aside from wavering on

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[6] Ibid.

[7] Navarro, 2000, 152.

[8] La Raza Unida Party State of California Resolutions, Los Angeles, July 1-2, 1972, CASA papers, Stanford University Special Collections.

LRUP's criticism of the Arnett Bill, this resolution did not consider the fact that many employers benefited from the undocumented status of workers, and would likely hire another wave of undocumented migrants. Further, the three-month window would only incorporate a select few migrant workers into citizenship and guarantee that the situation would be reproduced.

The workshop actually recognized this, arguing that it was an immediate step that would remove undocumented workers as potential strikebreakers. The resolution stated, "These proposals will not alter the existing immigration structure at all, but they will immediately remove the so-called illegals as potential strike breakers, and low wage marginal workers, as they will not be afraid to unionize and to work on their jobs for fair wages."[9] This reveals the logic of the caucus resolution in that undocumented workers, despite the rhetoric, were not ultimately being conceived as part of the community, but as outsider "strikebreakers." This might outline what the conflict was between the hosting Labor Committee chapter of the LRUP and members of CASA. The resolution actually reifies a citizenship over noncitizen hierarchy by placing blame on undocumented workers for their status and requiring them to approach the repressive INS to alter their status. CASA on the other hand most likely argued that the very fact that the undocumented worker holds a job puts responsibility on the state to recognize that legal status has already been earned. This debate, however, was thwarted when challengers to the resolution were threatened with bodily harm. Raul Ruiz, member of the hosting LRUP City Terrace chapter and moderator of the labor and deportation workshop, commented years later that the host chapter stifled the debate due to concern over a

[9] Ibid.

possible takeover by the Socialist Worker's Party or the Communist Party.[10] The class and related citizenship analysis of CASA led to the accusations of Communist-infiltration and the threat of a "foreign" ideology into the Chicana/o Movement

Further closing of ranks on "outsiders" ensued when two southern California chapters, San Bernardino-Riverside and Orange County, were not recognized. Several Los Angeles-based LRUP chapters argued that several chapters from the LRUP did not properly register for the convention. Furthermore, these L.A.-based chapters, who were dominant in numbers due to the conventions location in the Los Angeles area, accused the LRUP California Southern Region members, including the San Diego chapter as well as San Bernardino and Riverside, of being a threat to "Chicana/o politics" because they were non-radical MAPA members.[11] Again, Raul Ruiz later explained that, "We (the City Terrace chapter, among others) thought that you were Mapistas (MAPA members) disguised as Raza Unida…I think that your allegiance was being questioned. We thought there was some type of conspiracy. This is why we did what we did."[12]

Southern Region members argued that these techniques were used by the L.A. chapters to marginalize their insistence upon "decentralized" LRUP operations beyond L.A. They asserted that the call for a decentralized LRUP would allow for grassroots organizing that would stay attuned to the needs of working-class Chicana/o communities. Baca, whose San Diego chapter was recognized only after much debate, joined the

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[10] Navarro, 152.

[11] La Raza Unida Party Organizing Committees Southern Region to La Raza Unida Party Organizers State of California, August 21, 1972, CASA Papers, Box 26, Folder 6, Stanford University Library.

[12] Armando Navarro, *La Raza Unida Party: A Chicano Challenge to the U.S. Two-Party Dictatorship*. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2000), 152.

unrecognized chapters in a walkout of the meeting. The Southern Region collectively responded to the events of the City Terrace convention in a manifesto calling for unity and criticizing the "dogmatic cultural nationalism" and "psudo-Marxism (sic) or chest-pounding machismo self-righteous SECTARIANISM" by many LRUP participants. Instead, Carlos Muñoz of the Orange County chapter along with the rest of the Southern Region including San Diego called for a "humanistic nationalism" that would be based on the "human needs of our barrios." Similar to the grassroots approach to organizing that characterized the activism of labor movement veterans such as Bert Corona, the Southern Region sought to avoid ideological squabble in favor of making the LRUP a viable and attractive mobilizing vehicle for working class ethnic Mexicans.[13] The Southern region asserted, "At this stage in the development of our Partido we do not need leaders or spokesman, we need organizers. The kind of organizer dedicated to the tedious and largely unglorified work that goes with organizing local colonias and barrios around the issues Chicanos in those areas relate to and understand."[14] Members of the Southern Region, particularly San Diego activists, understood that this plan of action would of course necessitate a conception of the "Chicano community" to be fluid and embracing of

[13] Indeed, Baca had printed hundreds of copies of Corona's manifesto, "MAPA and La Raza Unida Party: A Program for Chicano Political Action for the 1970s" in 1971. Corona called for mass canvassing as a way of engaging the ethnic Mexican community. He exclaimed, "The effects of all this type of work are only truly reaped if we repeatedly and constantly carry out the canvassing, caravanning, etc. Sporadic and once-in-a-while mobilizing is not fruitful nor effective. We must saturate our barrios—our people's minds this summer—with the reasons and urgency to establish La Raza Unida Party." He identified this grassroots organizing as tied to the trade union movements of the past, including that of the Congreso del Pueblo que Habla Español and Asociacion Nacional Mexico-Americano (ANMA) of the 1930s and 50s respectively. "MAPA and La Raza Unida Party: A Program for Chicano Political Action for the 1970s," Box 14, Folder 4, Baca Papers.

[14] La Raza Unida Party Organizing Committees Southern Region to La Raza Unida Party Organizers State of California, August 21, 1972, CASA Papers, Box 26, Folder 6, Stanford University Library.

its multi-generation and multiple legal status realties. The accusations of infiltration within California LRUP organizing derailed the democratization of the Chicana/o Movement in favor of consolidating power among a few self-declared ethnic elites. It also shifted its trajectory away from engagement with the transnational community it claimed to represent.

Indeed, the Southern Region asserted a vision of decentralized, local autonomy. To build a mass organization, it would have to be done "from the bottom up. It is important, therefore, that our first battle lines be drawn in the local areas."[15] Concerning the emerging ideological rivalry between Denver, Colorado LRUP leader Corky Gonzales and South Texas LRUP leader Jose Angel Gutiérrez for the National LRUP chair, the Southern Region argued, "We believe that the local situation must dictate the pragmatic orientation of the Partido."[16] The Denver approach, rooted in the minority status of ethnic Mexicans in that state, sought to focus the LRUP on disseminating revolutionary education campaigns to the Chicana/o community and working as an independent political force that could pressure local, state and national decision-making. The Texas approach, emergent in a part of South Texas where ethnic Mexicans were a majority, emphasized winning elections, gaining official representation and engaging in hard-line negotiations with non-LRUP politicians. The California Southern Region argued that through a localized approach to the LRUP that would grant autonomy to particular chapters, the Denver and Texas approaches would not be "mutually exclusive." Instead, decisions about the utility of these two approaches would depend on the local

[15] Ibid.

[16] Ibid.

context on a basis "critical and independent of those (the Denver or Texas) perspectives."[17] The region asserted further, "Local politics must dictate the tactics to be used in local areas. State policy must be based on the tactics and strategy that are effective in local politics. In other words, until we develop the capability for mass mobilization at the state level, we must operate under a decentralized Partido framework."[18] In this way, the Southern Region envisioned an autonomous local approach to assessing what tactics, strategies, and ideas would apply to their own analysis of their own contexts. This analysis could only be reached, the Southern Region asserted, through "COLLECTIVE LEADERSHIP AS OPPOSED TO INDIVIDUAL LEADERSHIP."[19] Through registering community members to join the LRUP, organizers would be able to assess the local context and the people's concerns. It would also create the base through which to win elections, gain legitimacy in the eyes of the Chicana/o community, and put forth successful education campaigns combining the polarized Denver and Texas perspectives.

The resistance experienced by the Southern Region to ideas concerning local autonomy reveals some of the policing efforts that were prevalent within the LRUP and wider Chicana/o Movement. Fears of Socialists, Communists, or non-radical MAPA members infiltrating what many imagined were the authentic political interests of the Chicana/o community were based on continuing reference to a static notion of community at a moment when the fluid and transnational nature of the ethnic Mexican

[17] Ibid.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Ibid.

community in the U.S. was intensifying. As political scientist Christina Beltran asserts, "The struggle for social justice that initially animated Chicano cultural nationalism quickly devolved into debates over cultural authenticity and an emphasis on group unity that led to the demonization and denial of internal disagreement."[20] At a time when activists were engaging the immigration issue to articulate a more fluid understanding of a heterogeneous and ever-changing community, these policing efforts revealed the continued strength of a more reactionary identity politics that disabled a grappling with the globalized context in which working-class racialized communities were struggling. The energies invested in policing the boundaries of community reveal that important aspects of La Raza Unida Party were not prepared to act on the lessons coming from the borderlands. The decline of LRUP following its national convention in 1973 and the deep seated rivalry of Denver's Corky Gonzales and Texas' Jose Angel Gutiérrez revealed that this innovative third-party project missed an opportunity to engage the concerns emerging from a rapidly shifting demographic reality within the ethnic Mexican communities it claimed to represent.

The work of activists on undocumented immigration emanating out of Southern California, however, made a lasting impact on the wider Chicana/o Movement, shifting historiographical understandings of the La Raza Unida Party that consider transnational visions of Chicana/o community and identity. For example, thought to be the two leading Chicana/o Movement leaders in their rivalry over the national chairman position of the La Raza Unida Party (LRUP), Corky Gonzales and Jose Angel Gutiérrez experienced

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[20] Christina Beltrán, "Patrolling Borders: Hybrids, Hierarchies and the Challenge of Mestizaje." *Political Research Quarterly* 57(4) (December 2004), 599.

shifting positions on undocumented immigration influenced in part by the activism occurring in the California borderlands. While these two leaders contributed significant intellectual contributions to strategies of Chicana/o political mobilization, their visions in the early 1970s failed to venture outside the basic logic of the nation-state in their lack of engagement with the migration of laborers from Mexico and the international policing forces the U.S. state exerted to control them.[21] This issue had plagued the political aspirations of Mexicans in the U.S. at least since the 1920s if not for more than 100 years. In the emerging age of "globalization" it would become an even more vital part of any solution to the problems experienced by Mexicans in the U.S. at the end of the twentieth century. Both these national movement leaders' relationship with activists such as Herman Baca and Baca's mentor Bert Corona in the national network of the LRUP was influential enough for these leaders to eventually explore their presumptions or request assistance from these Southern California Chicano/Mexicano activists on the undocumented immigration issue.

On a visit to Los Angeles in 1973 Gonzales spoke of a conversion he experienced in regards to undocumented immigration and the U.S.-Mexico border, demonstrating how engagement with the migrant experience often led Chicana/o activists toward class critiques that cited state support for capital as the root of inequalities. "Along with many others, I used to think that Mexicans crossing the border were depriving other Mexicans of jobs. I also believed that the border should be closed," he said in concluding remarks

[21] It is noted that the Mexican state also participated in these policing efforts as will be further explored in the evolution of Chicano/Mexicano mobilizations for the rest of the 1970s. For an excellent example of cross-border analysis of border policing see, Kelley Lytle Hernandez, "The Crimes and Consequences of Illegal Immigration: A Cross-Border Examination of Operation Wetback, 1943-1954," *Western Historical Quarterly* (Winter 2006), 421-444.

to a speech.[22] Gonzales explained, "I came to realize that Mexicans who have come here are not replacing any jobs occupied by people on this side of the border. Let's put the Man straight. He is using us to fight and kill each other and become divided."[23] Gonzales' realization was based on an engagement with the contradiction of being the child of an immigrant while supporting border enforcement policies. Gonzales exclaimed, "If I were to say: 'Keep out Mexicans without documents,' then I would be putting a knife into my father's heart. He came from Chihuahua."[24] Also at the heart of this kind of contradiction was that the Chicana/o Movement was based on the historic presence of Mexicans in what became the U.S. Southwest. Gonzales dramatically noted, "For us to try to prevent Mexicans from coming across to a land which is theirs by historical right is to become part of murderers."[25] He finally concluded that the economic structure was the enemy. "The economic structure which destroys our people is created right here. It is created in Nixon's own back yard. It is created by the millionaires who use him as their puppet. This is where the enemy is—the enemy is not our own people! For us to say today, 'No more Mexicans should come in here,' is to be as racist as those who wrote the immigration laws so that people like the Japanese and Chinese, Indians, Blacks and Mexicans could no longer come into this country."[26] Gonzales' realizations about undocumented immigration revealed the entanglement of racism, nationalism, and

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[22] "Corky Gonzales Speaks: Corky Gonzales Spoke at La Placita for Los Tres," *La Raza Unida-San Diego County Newsletter* 9 (April and May), 1973, Baca Papers, Box 14, Folder 8.

[23] Ibid.

[24] Ibid.

[25] Ibid.

[26] Ibid.

citizenship status within the practice of the U.S. state as an instrument of global capitalist development. The tie between Gonzales' statement connecting contemporary restrictionist immigration laws to those of the past that targeted different groups and similar statements exerted by Baca, Corona, and other Chicano/Mexicano activists were evidence of how these Southern California activists influenced his thinking on the issue.

Jose Angel Gutiérrez, key founder of the La Raza Unida Party in the South Texas town of Crystal City, also showed signs of becoming especially concerned with undocumented immigration and influenced by the leadership of Chicano/Mexicano activists in Southern California, Baca in particular. In February of 1973, he wrote Baca reminding him about their conversations concerning undocumented workers and requesting that he establish "a Centro such as CASA in San Antonio."[27] Baca declined, but persistent, Gutiérrez wrote him in April of the same year, suggesting sending some of his people from Texas to be trained by Baca on how to run a CASA-like service center. Also announcing his plan to attend a "Unity Rally" in San Diego, Gutiérrez exclaimed, "We must begin an immigration service in Texas."[28] Gutierrez's exclamation over the need for an immigration service in Texas was evidence that he was engaging what activists in the California borderlands had already been battling: the demographic revolution taking place as unprecedented masses of migrants arrived from Mexico and wider Latin America.

These two national leaders in their networking with Chicano movement activism in the California borderlands found that the increasing pressures of immigration were

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[27] Jose Angel Gutiérrez to Herman Baca, February 23, 1973, Baca Papers, Box 14, Folder 13.

[28] Ibid.

affecting their own concerns and goals for the ethnic Mexican community. The activism in the San Diego borderlands and wider Southern California had much to do with this. Contrary to the prevailing historiography on the Chicana/o Movement that would have Gonzales and Gutiérrez as the leaders at the forefront of ethnic Mexican activism in the United States in the 1960s and 70s, if we look at the longer durée of community struggles against state sanctioned policy enforcements that targeted undocumented migrants, activists such as Baca, Corona, and other Chicano/Mexicano activists were pressing forward the next chapter of a longer enduring battle.

Internal debate and fracture within CASA in San Diego

Another key site where the Chicana/o Movement activists debated over how to define and implement practices of self-determination and autonomy in relation to undocumented immigration was within the evolution of CASA. Baca, along with Charlie Vasquez, Norma Mena, Augie Bareño, Roger Casares and Gloria Jean, had established CASA Justicia in 1972 as the San Diego area chapter of the national CASA. CASA was founded and directed by labor activists Bert Corona and Chole Alatorre, centralized in Los Angeles. This organization was the seminal force within the Chicana/o Movement in the late 1960s and early 1970s in focusing on the need to address immigration policy and unite the community across citizenship statuses. It accomplished this by offering services to undocumented migrants, particular legal services that assisted with adjusting their immigration status. Yet, by 1974 a shift occurred in which student members of CASA in Los Angeles gained control from veteran activists Alatorre and Corona, and put the organization on a new trajectory. Instead of concentrate on the service to undocumented

workers and families, the students would emphasize ideological rigor in order to facilitate their perceived role as the vanguard of a transnational mexicana/o worker's movement.[29]

A shift that led to the resignation of Corona and Alatorre's leadership most likely led to a negative perception by CASA Justicia of the new student leadership in L.A. Baca and the San Diego activists were brought into CASA and into the immigration question more fully by the mentorship of Corona. CASA Justicia, therefore, established itself under the same organizing model implemented by Corona and other veteran labor movement activists in providing services as a way of attending to the needs of migrant workers and politicizing them.[30] Indeed, in documenting the history of what would become the CCR, Baca and his allies remembered beginning in 1973 how "in CASA the Rodriguez brothers (LA) dominate a major break."[31] While Corona remembers this

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[29] For work on CASA see Laura Pulido, *Black, Brown, Yellow and Left: Radical Activism in Los Angeles*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006); Ernesto Chavez, *Mi Raza Primero! Nationalism, Identity, and Insurgency in the Chicano Movement in Los Angeles, 1966-1978*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); Juan Gomez Quiñones, *Chicano Politics: Reality and Promise, 1940-1990,* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2000); Marisela Chávez, "'We lived and breathed and worked the movement': The Contradictions and Rewards of Chicana/Mexicana Activism in El Centro de Acción Social Autónomo-Hermandad General de Trabajadores (CASA-HGT), Los Angeles, 1975-1978," In *Las Obreras: Chicana Politics of Work and Family*, edited by Vicki L. Ruiz, (Los Angeles: UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center Publications, 2000); Mario T. García, *Memories of Chicano History: The Life and Narrative of Bert Corona*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994); David G. Gutierrez, *CASA in the Chicano Movement: Ideology and Organizational Politics in the Chicano Community 1968-1978*, Working Paper Series, No. 5, (Stanford, CA: Stanford Center for Chicano Research, Stanford University, 1984) and *Walls and Mirrors: Mexican Americans, Mexican Immigrants and the Politics of Ethnicity*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 179-205.

[30] Here I am also referring to San Diego activists Phil, Julia and Albert Usquiano who founded the Hermandad Mexicana in the 1950s. Corona styled CASA in the manner of the Hermandad.

[31] "The Committee for Chicano Rights, Organizational history, July 21-22, 1979." Folder 6, Box 12, Baca Papers.

"break" as more cordial and mutually agreed upon, Baca and his allies in San Diego remembered it as one that was "major" and brought about in a "dominate" way.[32]

In San Diego this break and the conflicts that developed around it were primarily about ideology and organizing strategy. At stake were the ways in which Chicano/Mexicano activism would engage working class ethnic Mexican communities. The roots of the conflict that would lead to a change in leadership in L.A. centered around a group of younger, mostly student activists' desires to radicalize the organization from a "social service organization" to "an active political base." This vision differed from the more pragmatic efforts of the veteran leadership. A similar process would occur in San Diego as Chicana/o students from San Diego State University and the University of California, San Diego joined the efforts of CASA Justicia from its origins in 1972. A CCR document recalls that in 1973, "Casa Justicia grows with SDSU and UCSD students."[33]

While many of the students would continue to work with Baca and official director of CASA Justicia, Carlos Vasquez, a contingent of the student volunteers sided with the new student leadership in Los Angeles in 1973. The differing outlooks about mobilizing strategies were articulated by the students through stringent interpretations of Vladimir Lenin's writings on ideology and mobilization. While Corona and Alatorre in L.A. and CASA Justicia activists in San Diego were left-leaning in their class-based conceptions of identity as "workers" or "poor people" in relation to ethnic identity, they

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[32] For Corona's recollection of the break, see Mario T. García, *Memories of Chicano History: The Life and Narrative of Bert Corona*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 308-315.

[33] "The Committee for Chicano Rights, Organizational history, July 21-22, 1979." Folder 6, Box 12, Baca Papers.

did not articulate rigid notions of Leninist thought as the new student leaders did. Corona remembered, "These Young Turks (emergent student leaders of CASA L.A.) organized a national network of some of our other CASAs. With their network, they then decided to become almost like a political party. It was to be a vanguard party, a Marxist-Leninist party…They saw themselves as a vanguard, but it was a vanguard without a 'guard'—without a base!"[34] Through a conception of ideological evolution the "Young Turks" thought of themselves as key leaders in implementing advancement from a Chicana/o Movement politics based on cultural nationalism to that of class struggle.[35] As Young Turk supporters in San Diego asserted,

> The concrete research and investigation necessary to combat the repressive forces was responsible for propelling elements with the organization theoretically beyond the stage of "cultural nationalism" to the concept of class struggle. The notion of racism as the primary contradiction facing Latinos was replaced by the growing awareness that Capitalists versus workers, Exploiters versus Exploited, was the fundamental contradiction in society.

Class struggle, they argued, must be "clear and directed to combat for workers."[36] To mark this ideological shift as the vanguard of Mexican workers, the Young Turks renamed the organization the Hermandad General de Trabajadores (General Brotherhood of Workers)-CASA.[37] In San Diego this would lead to conflict between Baca, Vasquez

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[34] Mario T. García, *Memories of Chicano History: The Life and Narrative of Bert Corona*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 310-311.

[35] See "Internal Document, National Organization," Correspondence from CASA San Diego to National CASA, Los Angeles, San Diego Nucleo, Box 22, Folder 6, CASA Papers, Stanford University Library.

[36] Ibid.

[37] García, 1994, 311.

and a group of student CASA members who supported the Young Turks in Los Angeles.[38]

Soon after the shift to the new student leadership in Los Angeles, San Diego Chicana/o student volunteers of CASA Justicia announced to the new Young Turk leadership and the wider national CASA network that they had "severed" their relationship with Baca , Vasquez and CASA Justicia National City because they were essentially non-political and "undemocratic." Calling themselves CASA San Diego, these students wrote, "The rationale for this decision is based principally upon two essential considerations: One, that the concept and practice of the Hermandad General de Trabajadores and the struggle to organize undocumented workers is being ignored for the sake of providing social services. Two, that the politics and practices of the self-appointed "Chairman" and "Director" are undemocratic, arbitrary and essentially manipulative; for us to remain would serve only to validate and reinforce these

[38] Baca's relationship to class struggle and Marxism was complex as it was to many Chicana/o activists. As a protégé of Corona, Baca referred to the exploitation of Mexican labor as the central goal of U.S. immigration policy. In this way he highlighted how race and citizenship status justified the exploitation of labor and divided workers, particularly those of Mexican descent, along the lines of citizenship status. In these assertions, connections to Marxism and class analysis are apparent. Yet Baca also displayed reluctance to utilize Marxist concepts too explicitly or discuss the possibility of developing a class consciousness amongst the Chicana/o community. Instead he often opted to evaluate the political consciousness of the Chicana/o community in terms of "self-determination." In this way, Baca was much more pragmatic in his opinion that this system of labor exploitation he was encountering, in the guise of immigration policy, much be address and obliterated in order for the Chicana/o community to be in any position to discuss its political trajectory. In this way, Baca tended to look at the Chicana/o community as a nation within a nation, similar to the internal colony model exerted by U.S. third world proponents within the black, brown, and yellow power movement. Little was said explicitly about how this "nation" should confront its internal class struggles accept for that the exploitation of Mexican labor by U.S. businesses was detrimental. His unyielding support for Corona's ideas about centralizing the experience of the mexicana/o worker and allying it with other workers seemed to imply, however, that he sought to move forward politically based on an intersecting ethno-racial and class experience.

reactionary tendencies."[39] CASA San Diego then outlined their understanding of the basic principles of CASA, including its role as an anti-imperialist organization, its incorporation of undocumented workers as members of the working-class, its commitment to the theoretical education to a disciplined membership, and a "commitment to the development of an active political base as opposed to a social service organization" with a "democratic political structure."[40] It was the latter two principles that the volunteers cited were violated by Baca and Vasquez, the "Chairman" and "Director" of CASA Justicia.

The San Diego volunteers claimed that the break was necessarily because Baca and Vasquez had derailed their attempt to democratize CASA Justicia by organizing a general membership meeting. According to CASA San Diego, in response to this general membership meeting, Baca and Vasquez quickly handpicked a board of directors to legitimate their decision-making powers as chairman and director respectively. CASA San Diego also claimed that the general meeting was structured in a way that did not allow any input from volunteers or other members and plans to have elections and committees in order to facilitate more general membership participation never came to fruition. The volunteers also claimed that Baca and Vasquez thwarted attempts to "organize workers." Indeed, they claimed that three volunteers were terminated "because their political work with the members and specifically workers, posed a threat to their continued domination and manipulation of the centro." They concluded by claiming that

[39] C.A.S.A. San Diego to National CASA, February 10, 1975, San Diego Nucleo, Box 22, Folder 6, CASA papers.

[40] Ibid.

the creation of the board of directors worked to create a staff of paid volunteers that would stay loyal to Baca, Vazquez, and the board of directors "thus eliminating the threat of 'outsiders' consolidating their domination."[41]

About a month later, CASA Los Angeles informed Baca, Vasquez, and CASA Justicia that they were no longer affiliated with CASA for "anti-democratic" decision making and a failure to "participate in the political and organizational development" ongoing with other CASA chapters. In addition, the letter from the general secretary (secretaria general) Jacobo Rodriguez informed Baca that all ties to Bert Corona and "all political contact, communication and work" with him were to cease. This last assertion was most likely in reaction to Baca's political connection to Corona and CASA Justicia's claim that they had held to the original practices of CASA under Corona and Alatorre's leadership. Rodriguez sought to legitimate the new leadership of CASA by exhibiting that Corona supported them and was still affiliated with CASA. As will be explored, Baca, through the role of social services sought to maintain Corona's organizing tactics of engaging the everyday needs of working class ethnic Mexican community members, particularly those of undocumented worker, rather than discuss theoretical issues that flew over their heads.

The rise of the Young Turks removed the trade-unionist and grassroots activist roots of CASA that ironically initiated class struggle through considering the needs of transnational racialized and noncitizen workers. According to one report, The Young Turks began their ascent to leadership in CASA-L.A. when they organized the Moratorium Against Deportation without consulting Alatorre, Corona and the older

[41] Ibid.

leadership. As part of organizing this event, the report states "internal discussions began to take place in CASA in Los Angeles and evidenced the differences between the trade union orientation of the founding leadership of CASA and of the populist petty-bourgeois orientation of the incoming young activists."[42] The essay relates how events in San Diego and other areas were reflective of this shift, "With counted exceptions the young activists lacked trade union experience. In some cases the development of the young collectives had been contradictory to the established leadership of CASA composed of community activists, for example in San Diego and San Jose, in which the new leadership opted to allow the virtual expulsion of the older leadership to take the leadership as the "rising" force."[43] In the reports analysis of the elitist preclusions of the Young Turks, identified as a "petty-bourgeois orientation," it reveals how the change in leadership shifted away from engagement with working class ethnic Mexican communities as practiced by "trade union" and "community activist" orientation of Corona, Alatorre, and CASAs in San Diego (CASA Justicia) and San Jose.

Correspondence from former president of CASA, Chole Alatorre, just before the change in leadership later in 1974 reveals the organizing tactics utilized originally by the trade unionists and community organizers and the central role that providing social services provided. Alatorre wrote, "The Centro de Acción Social Autónomo, (C.A.S.A.), a community organization, has since its inception been one of the few organization in this community that has consistently aided poor families who are faced with lack of

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[42] "History of CASA," Bert Corona Papers, History of CASA writings, Box 29, Folder 8, Stanford University Libraries.

[43] Ibid.

employment housing, food, clothing, legal and immigration problems. C.A.S.A., maintains a center where these families may come and find the immediate aid and support which permits them to overcome the crisis facing them and which without such support they are unable to overcome."[44] Alatorre cited that CASA assisted over 13,000 families in the past year. She noted the important role that the National City center played, as well as those in the San Fernando Valley and Santa Ana in Orange County in their locations in the U.S.-Mexico borderlands "for those families that are deported and have no place to land."[45]

Social services were central to CASA not as an end in itself, but as a method of mobilizing defense of these migrants. Alatorre pointed out, "Besides running these self-help and direct assistance centers, C.A.S.A., has been actively involved in the fight against the very damaging and repressive legislation such as the Dixon-Arnett Law, which our attorney fought in the courts to have it declared unconstitutional."[46] More than simply fighting laws such as the Arnett Bill, CASA also organized a number of direct actions including protests, marches and rallies against legislators, law enforcement agencies, and other officials. They also orchestrated union support in their struggles against employers and advocated for ethnic Mexican workers in negotiations with their unions. In this way CASA built its base in recognition of the needs of undocumented workers and other community members.

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[44] Soledad Alatorre to Aileen Eaton, July 26, 1974, Box 14, Folder 1, Corona Papers, Stanford University Library.

[45] Ibid.

[46] Ibid.

Letters from migrants reveal the important role that CASA played in its social servicing roles as a method of engaging the transnational realties of the ethnic Mexican community. One letter from Alvaro Camargo of Mexico City written in June of 1973 refers to CASA as "the organization that helps Mexicans."[47] Unable to gain sufficient wages in Mexico to feed his wife and five daughters, and having the experience of working in the gardening, mining, and railroad industries in the United States before, Camargo requests CASA's assistance in migrating to the United States. Having all their legal documentation in hand, Camargo cordially asks for assistance assuring that he is able-bodied and prepared to work.[48] Similarly, Mercedes Alba thanked CASA in 1972 for sending her the forms she needed to migrate, and asked for assistance so that her daughter could migrate.[49] In all likelihood Alba became a CASA member as an undocumented worker and was able to utilize CASA's services to gain citizenship in the United States. Responding to a member residing in Tijuana, Baja California, a CASA representative informed Asuncion Esparza Vera that they would need his union number to pursue the collection of a pay check he was awaiting.[50] That CASA members were both in the United States and Mexico and were dealing with work-related, immigration, and other day-to-day occurrences reveals how CASA services provided functioned as an important way to tap into the day-to-day, often transactional, lives of the Latina/o community in Southern California. It is this aspect of CASA that was critiqued and that

[47] Alvaro Camargo to Bert Corona, June 4, 1973, Box 14, Folder 1, Corona Papers.

[48] Ibid.

[49] Mercedes Alba to Bert Corona, November 18, 1972, Box 3, Folder 1, Corona Papers.

[50] Asunción Esparza Vera to CASA, June 10, 1974, Box 3, Folder 1, Corona Papers.

suffered after the shift to mostly student leadership. In San Diego, Baca and Vazquez and CASA Justicia sought to uphold this older way of doing things in order to maintain a presence in transnational ethnic Mexican communities.

Indeed, the move away from service providing by the new CASA San Diego chapter made it very difficult to create an organizational base. CASA San Diego sought to engage community members by bringing them into its study circles. This goal was reflective of CASA's national organization goal to engage the community and formulate an assessment of the community's main issues. Furthermore, an analysis of Marxism would provide the tools to solve them, and build a party that would be the vanguard of an emergent socialist movement. By early 1976, CASA San Diego established at least two study groups, one based in Chula Vista in southeast San Diego County, and the other at the University of California, San Diego. Furthermore, they happily reported that in an attempt to act on their study of class struggle, they have made contact with a local construction worker.[51] The study groups and a relationship with the Eastwood Carpenters Local 2020, an AFL-CIO union in South San Diego become the key projects of the group as the latter prepared for a possible strike.[52] In July of 1976, CASA San Diego also began work with an organization of tenants at the Del Sol housing project. CASA's would give organizational advice, disseminate information on the tenant

[51] "Report on San Diego 2/22/76," Juan Gutiérrez, CASA-San Diego to CASA-Los Angeles, CASA Papers, Box 22, Folder 6.

[52] "Report on San Diego 2/24/76," Juan Gutiérrez, CASA-San Diego to CASA-Los Angeles, CASA Papers, Box 22, Folder 6.

organization via leaflets, and mobilize tenants as issues arise.[53] Yet an emphasis on ideological rigor and discipline rather than the needs of workers, tenants and other community members prevented any meaningful exchange between the community and the ambitious student leaders of CASA San Diego.

In its engagement with community projects such as working with the construction workers union and the housing project tenants an emphasis on identifying the "most militant" individuals to participate in the study groups put immediate limits on the possibility of dialog and exchange. CASA San Diego actually limited the number of workers who could participate in the study groups to six because it sought to invite only the "most militant."[54] The relationship with the Del Sol Action Council also seemed to sour because its members were not attending the study meeting that CASA-San Diego had invited them to. Del Sol Action Council representatives explained that the tenants elected to forego the study group because "too much work was needed at the apartments."[55] This failure to identify with the needs of the actual community members in which they wished to engage is evident in CASA San Diego's frustrations with Del Sol. CASA San Diego group representative Juan Gutiérrez lamented, "The Del Sol Action Council is still meeting regularly but in essence I don't think they are doing the work properly."[56] Further, he was particularly aggravated that the leader of the tenant's council missed a meeting with him. CASA-San Diego's engagement with community

[53] Juan Gutiérrez to CASA-L.A., "Reporte Semanal de San Diego July 26, 1976," CASA Collection, Box 22, Folder 6.

[54] Ibid.

[55] Juan Gutiérrez to CASA-L.A., "Reporte de San Diego, 9/13/76," CASA Collection, Box 22, Folder 6.

[56] Ibid.

groups and potential members were conditional on an almost arrogant expectation to parrot their ideological leanings and measures of "militancy" and "discipline." Describing the potential recruitment of a garment workers' union leader, Gutiérrez praised the unionist's critical assessment of the Mexican government, in line with CASA ideology, while criticizing that he "still believes in U.S. democracy." While he still requested permission to recruit him, these comments revealed the policing efforts at play that conditioned working with the group. The ideological narrowness of the student group made it difficult to organize the working-class constituency it claimed to represent.

The Young Turk-led CASA's ideologically-focused political practice that made the "most militant" community members the ideal activist marginalized it from the day-to-day experiences of working class ethnic Mexican communities. Indeed, CASA-San Diego's self-reflective documents revealed the rigid and jargon-ridden theoretical focus of the group. The organizations trajectory and goals are outlined along the lines of Marxist-Leninism, as manifested in "proletarian struggles and revolutions that have established Socialist societies led by the Party under the Dictatorship of the proletariat."[57] In this way CASA-San Diego asserted that Marxist-Leninism is "the guiding instrument of the proletariat and oppressed people in their struggle for revolution and liberation."[58] Ideological consolidation and information exchange would be crucial to the central goal of "the recognition of the dictatorship of the proletariat."[59] This would be accomplished through continued legal and immigration services to undocumented workers, labor and

[57] CASA-San Diego to National CASA, Box 22, Folder 6, CASA Papers.

[58] Ibid.

[59] Ibid.

union organizing, "anti-imperial" agitation through demonstrations, forums, and the like, and internal study of Marxist-Leninist theory. While the group asserted its continued value of legal and immigration services its heavy theoretical connotations led to concentration on internal study. Furthermore, internal study of Marxist-Leninist theories was interpreted by implementing a strict disciplinary regiment that would seek to identify the most "advanced" members. The practice of "democratic centralism" required reports from all CASA chapters, called nucleos, to operate as a disciplinary mechanism that sought to formulate relatively uniform ideological leanings. Geographer Laura Pulido in her analysis of CASA argues,

> Democratic centralism could also be problematic, particularly if the discussion had not been free and wide-ranging. Sometimes even with extensive debate, the leadership could and would decide on a course of action that was contrary to the desires of the membership. Such practices did not inspire confidence and helped account for high rates of turnover and disillusion.[60]

Reports sent from CASA San Diego to CASA headquarters in Los Angeles from 1975-1976 reflected the high amount of energy put into maintaining favor with the CASA leaders in L.A. The reports repeatedly attempted to please the LA-based leadership by highlighting positive steps toward ideological unity. Most actions were directed at the national CASA decision to concentrate on the publishing and vending of their newspaper, *Sin Fronteras*. CASA San Diego leader Juan Gutiérrez commented in this regard that "nothing concrete has been developed yet."[61] In contributing its concerns for the development of the newspaper project, the CASA San Diego nucleo revealed the

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[60] Laura Pulido, *Black, Brown Yellow and Left: Radical Activism in Los Angeles*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 228.

[61] Juan Gutiérrez, CASA-San Diego to CASA-Los Angeles, Box 22, Folder 6, CASA Papers.

groups wider concentration on theoretical rigor. They assert, that "scientific theoretical understanding of the paper in a revolutionary movement" as well as a "scientific analysis of the objective conditions which call for the development of the paper" are central to the production of the publication. They suggest a correspondence amongst all CASA nucleos to read V.I. Lenin's, "Where to Begin, What is to be Done, Party Literature, and Party Organization," and Stalin's "History of the C.P.S.U."[62]

The reports also lamented on problems in accomplishing ideological conformity. Gutiérrez continually reported on problems brought on by a member named Liopoldo "Leo" Nuñez. In March of 1976, Gutiérrez expressed concern for Nuñez's "lack of discipline" which created "the possibility of there being problems in the future."[63] Gutiérrez reported that "at our last study group Leo got into the Sino-Soviet question taking a strong side with the Soviet Union and downing the Chinese nation, although I tried stopping him he said he had a right to expose his opinion on the question being that he's not a member of the organization yet."[64] CASA had an intricate system of becoming a member that rested on an exhibition of discipline, knowledge, and hard work. Gutiérrez's comment reveals that there existed a correct line of reasoning; in this case that CASA members should sympathize with the Chinese in the historic division between the socialist nations of the Soviet Union and China, and that opposition to this should be "stopped." Gutiérrez also appeared to blame himself for Nuñez's exploits, possibly

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[62] Ibid.

[63] "Report on San Diego – Chula Vista, 3/4/76," Juan Gutiérrez, CASA-San Diego to Secretary General, CASA Papers, Box 22, Folder 6.; "Nucleus Report to Secretary of Organization," Juan Gutiérrez to Secretary of CASA, Los Angeles, CASA Papers, Box 22, Folder 6.

[64] "Nucleus Report to Secretary of Organization," Juan Gutiérrez to Secretary of CASA, Los Angeles, Box 22, Folder 6, CASA Papers.

revealing the consequences of a centralized politics. In one of its earliest reports presumably in 1975, Gutiérrez lamented, "At first I attributed the different problems in the study group to Liopoldo Nunez, now that I've had more time to analyze the situation and what's more I can think and analyze better, I know that my vision was ignoring the true factor, me."[65]

By August of 1976 Gutiérrez's reports reveal him as overly worked and stressed. Despite participation in study groups, the tenants association and the labor union he promised the CASA headquarters in Los Angeles that "we will do better."[66] Internal issues with the students also continued. Gutiérrez, who was the roommate of the "trouble" member Nuñez, moved out and apparently broke ties with CASA in August 1976. He noted that he would move on with the organization, again, with the "most militant members."[67] In an event in September, not only does Nuñez cause trouble by not attending as he said he would (apparently he's still in the group) but "other Nuñez's" came but did not contribute to the work needed to be done.[68] This was utilized to explain lack of progress in the group due to "lack of discipline."

In the end, CASA San Diego's failure to establish key spaces of community engagement and intense study would lead them to place the blame on the community rather than their own mobilizing strategies. Gutiérrez argued that there "doesn't exist the

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[65] Ibid.

[66] Juan Gutiérrez to CASA-L.A., "Reporte de San Diego August 26, 1976," Box 22, Folder 6, CASA Papers.

[67] Juan Gutiérrez to CASA-L.A., "Reporte de San Diego August 6, 1976," Box 22, Folder 6, CASA Papers.

[68] Juan Gutiérrez to CASA-L.A., "Reporte de San Diego, 9/13/76," Box 22, Folder 6, CASA Papers.

clarity of who we are" in San Diego.[69] Furthermore, he explained that mobilization was difficult because "repression at this point is at a highest stage (sic), Migra raids, police brutality, drugs, and lumpenism among others set the objective field for someone to come and organize." "I'm doing what I can,"[70] he lamented. CASA-San Diego, and wider CASA at the national level, would dissolve in 1978, but the symptoms were in San Diego at least by 1976. By disconnecting from its older leadership, failing to consider the needs of community members to create a base, and concentrating on forging ideological conformity conditioned any working relationship with community members and activists. These practices greatly limited CASA San Diego's success on what was already an ambitious goal. Nearby, Baca, Vasquez and other San Diego Chicano/Mexicano activists attempted to stay attuned to community life and everyday people's struggles as central to advancing political mobilization of racialized working class people. As CASA San Diego rightly noted, repression was at its highest level in the San Diego borderlands, and Baca's already established leadership in National City would be propelled to lead efforts to address *migra* repression, in addition to daily subjugation at the hands of police brutality. In contrast to CASA San Diego's trajectory in the mid 1970s, Baca and San Diego Chicano/Mexicano activists would consolidate the many functionaries of organizations such as CASA, MAPA and LRUP into the emergent CCR, propelled from a local mobilization against a National City police officer's shooting of young Tato Rivera in the back in 1975.

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[69] Ibid.

[70] Ibid.

Forging Community Leadership from the Ground Up: The Tato Rivera Case

Baca's leadership in a community campaign to seek retribution for the National City Police shooting of a Puerto Rican youth, Luis "Tato" Rivera, in 1975 revealed the community base that years of community work in MAPA, LRUP, and CASA Justicia had fostered. It also signaled the launching of Baca and the CCR as a concerted organization leading it on a trajectory toward its assertion as an autonomous Chicana/o organization a year later in 1976. Baca's print shop for instance, along with CASA Justicia next door from 1970-75, worked as a central place of community mobilization and political activity from Baca's entrance into Chicana/o Movement activities in the late 1970s through MAPA, LRUP, and the Ad Hoc Committee on Chicano Rights. Meetings were held there and organizational planning was fostered as part of the day-to-day operations of the print shop. In this way Aztec Printing worked a Chicano/Mexicano political space. Located in the business district area and surrounded by the residential space of the National City barrios, the shop played an important role in grounding Baca and the CCR's political activity, exemplifying the goal of building a movement based on the everyday lives of the barrios of National City.

The Rivera case reveals how many community members looked to Baca and the organizations running out of his shop for recourse to injustices they faced. Luis "Tato" Rivera was killed by National City policeman Craig Short in October 1975. The sixth shooting case by the National City Police Department in three years, Rivera, age 20, was killed six blocks from a reported purse snatching at about 1 a.m., Friday, October 12, 1975. Rivera was shot and killed under dubious circumstances. Suspected of the theft, Rivera was ordered to freeze by Officer Craig Short as he left the area. As he fled he was

shot in the back. He was unarmed.[71] Baca was in Los Angeles visiting family when the shooting occurred. The Monday morning after the shooting, Rivera's friends, devastated and profusely angered waited for Baca to arrive at his print shop for another day's work. Upon his arrival, Baca was informed about the shooting and the local youths' accounts of what occurred. He was asked by the youth to address this issue to bring justice to the situation in the face of the local power structure. Baca, while sympathetic, expressed that he would only act upon the request of the young man's parents. Baca recalled,

> Boom! All the focus came here (to National City). People came out of the woodwork. I told you, I got there that morning. Seventy-five kids were there. 'You've got to say something. You've got to do something.' I said, 'No, I ain't going to do nothing until the parents request or ask.' So, now that's a Monday morning, okay. He got shot like Sunday a.m., like at 12:30, and so that day was like a hectic day and people just came out of the, just like it was a dam had burst uphill and there was, the water just came downhill. It's as simple as that. I mean, people I hadn't seen for a long time. So that afternoon there must have been like around, phew, a hundred, hundred and fifty people at the, around the shop, 'Hey, what are you going to do?' So, I said, well, my thing was and always has been that you have to have a mandate. Don't matter if it's even two persons, but it's a mandate. You're not doing it because that's your opinion or that's your feeling, then it becomes an 'I' thing instead of a 'we' thing. So I said, 'No.' I says, 'Let's call a community meeting, you know, and see what the community wants to do.[72]

By that afternoon, the devastated Rivera family asked Baca to take on the National City Police and demand retribution for their son's life. The decision by community members, local barrio youth, Rivera's family, and other concerned residents, to approach Baca revealed the localized community base that would work as the foundation of the CCR and its actions. Baca's presence in the community as a small business owner and service

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[71] Chato Paz, "Tato Rivera Killing," *Voz Fronteriza*, 1(1), January 5, 1976; David Avalos, Roberto Robledo, and Enrique Torres, "Recall in National City: An Interview with the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on Chicano Rights," *Voz Fronteriza* 1(2), February 2, 1976.

[72] Herman Baca Oral History, Session 3, Tape 5, August 10, 2006, Baca Papers.

provider, and as an activist and facilitator between the media and borderlands Latina/o communities revealed how an approach to political mobilization that was locally rooted and engaged with the everyday needs and experiences of the working class racialized communities.

Following the mandate given by the Rivera family, Baca called for a meeting at the local St. Anthony's Catholic Church where hundreds of area residents decided on what course of action to take. This mobilization of area residents enacted a challenge to the state's often-violent occupation of the space where working-class racialized communities resided. Baca recalled that the meeting was "jam-packed" with about 600 area residents along with local press and media. As they hashed things out, somebody remembered that there was a National City Council meeting going at that moment. The group, full of outrage, decided to march from the church to city hall to demand that local politicians divulge who killed Tato Rivera. On the way to the city hall, the group stopped at the site where Rivera was killed, viewing the bullet holes that had passed through him and into a house. These physical marks of the violence inflicted on this community reflect the contestation for space as belonging to the people living there or as the possession of the state and its policing mechanisms. The group barged into the city council meeting, surprising the council members as hundreds of kids, especially youth, packed the room full. Baca remembered, "So all the kids, we just packed that place, man. The kids were behind the city councilmen. They were just surrounded, you know. So I got up there and told them we demanded to know who shot Luis "Tato" Rivera. 'Well you know, we can't divulge that.' (the council said). 'Well, you better divulge it, because

it, because this isn't going away,' (answered Baca)."[73] The crowd then followed Baca back to the church. Within a few days and after several community meetings it was decided to mobilize a campaign to recall the entire National City Council. It was estimated that about 2,000 people participated in the community meetings and demonstrated in front of the city hall demanding that the city council release the name of the officer.

This local mobilization demonstrated a model of self-determination that was engaged with local community members and able to challenge the state at the local level. Baca recalled that at the first community meeting about $3,000 was made all through donations of local residents to mobilize a justice for Tato Rivera campaign. After being denied demands for immediate redress of this tragedy Baca and the community coalition responded by initiating a campaign to recall, through public petition, the entire National City Council, including the mayor, for "condoning official lawlessness" and failing to "provide representative leadership."[74] This more than yearlong campaign gained significant media coverage. In addition to support garnered by area Chicana/o Movement activists, an important link was made when the Nia Cultural Organization, a local black cultural nationalist group who were former members of Ron Karenga's US organization. Nia recognized the intersection between the black and Chicana/o community's experience with police brutality and would be supportive of the emergent CCR's actions for years to come. This might reveal how exertions of ethnic self-determination based on

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[73] Ibid.

[74] David Avalos, Roberto Robledo, and Enrique Torres, "Recall in National City: An Interview with the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on Chicano Rights," *Voz Fronteriza* 1(2), February 2, 1976.

engagement with structural repression, rather than the boundaries of ethnic community, facilitate connections with other racialized community and put forth nascent class identities based on shared struggle. Furthermore, several individuals began to approach Baca on how to join the Ad Hoc Committee on Chicano Rights, as word of the recall campaign reached Chicana/o Movement circles throughout the area. While the coalition failed to recall the city council, they successfully pressured local elites to mobilize resources to win another election and release the name of the officer that killed Rivera.[75] Furthermore, the campaign for Tato Rivera demonstrated a grassroots method of organizing based in the daily functioning of working class racialized communities.

From the Local to the Global

Aside from exhibiting the community-based nature of the CCR's activism, the Rivera case revealed how local police repression was interlaced with international policing practices as experienced by the ethnic Mexican community in the San Diego borderlands. Baca and the Ad Hoc Committee on Chicano Rights acted on the Rivera case as they had to the law enforcement repression experienced by undocumented immigrants. Whether brutalized by National City Police or Border Patrol agents, the Ad Hoc Committee's inclusion of Chicanas/os and Mexicanas/os as part of the same community led to engagement with the simultaneously localized and global ramifications of state violence because it was an issue of expediency as directly experienced by these borderlands residents. Cases of Border Patrol – local police cooperation abounded in the

[75] Paz, 1976; Avalos, Robledo, and Torres, 1976.

early to mid 1970s and was a common practice in the San Diego border region. San Diego Chicano/Mexicano activists had struggled against such acts throughout the first half of the 1970s. In January of 1973 for example, Expedito Madrigal signed an affidavit that he and friend Juan Luis Rodriguez were stopped by San Diego Police and interrogated about their citizenship status. Rodriguez informed an Officer Phenix that he was a United States citizen. After "not being satisfied with the explanation given by Mr. Rodriguez" Phenix began questioning Madrigal who showed him a border crossing card that was valid for the next 72 hours. Phenix decided to detain the two men for 4 hours until immigration officials arrived. They were soon after released. Critical of these actions, Madrigal, a Tijuana resident, remarked, "The San Diego Police officer made a decision, and with no experience on immigration procedures he arrested and detained Mr. Rodriguez and myself for a period of 4 hours… A San Diego Police Sergeant in charge of that particular shift released us with the usual 'I am sorry this happened, we apologize.'"[76]

The link between local police and border enforcement policies of the INS was particularly experienced by youth. Just as the Rivera case revealed the conflicted relationship between Latina/o youth and local police, Border Patrol agents also maintained a strained relationship with youth. In February of 1974 17-year-old Antonio Bustamante and his 14 year old brother Benjamin walked home from the local San Ysidro Park where they had just finished playing basketball. A Border Patrolman named Bradshaw noticed them and followed them home. Upon the boys return, the Patrolman

[76] Expedito Madrigal Affidavit, July 16, 1973, Box 6, Folder 4, Baca Papers.

proceeded to kick down the door to their home, enter the house and shut the door. He accused the youth of being "illegal aliens" and allegedly pushed their mother who was witnessing the event while he used profane language in his accusations. Soon, San Diego police officers arrived and, with the assistance of the Border Patrol agent, struck the boys and continued to verbally abuse them with accusations of being "illegal." Soon after, however, it was discovered that the boys were United States citizens and the law enforcement agents explained to the boys that it had been a misunderstanding.[77]

These incidents reveal the intersection of immigration policing forces and local law enforcement that Chicana/o activists in the San Diego borderlands were forced to confront. For this reason, activists like Baca simultaneously addressed the interconnected repression at the hands of police, such as the case of Tato Rivera and numerous others, and the Border Patrol. In fact, Chicano/Mexicano activists addressed both issues simultaneously due to the long history of cooperation between local police and the Border Patrol. As activist saw it, both local and border policing were long-practiced mechanisms for controlling the local ethnic Mexican population.

Emergence of the Committee on Chicano Rights

After navigating the fractured and eventually withdrawing from the efforts of the Mexican American Political Association (MAPA), the Centro de Acción Social Autónomo (CASA), and La Raza Unida Party (LRUP), Baca co-founded the Committee on Chicano Rights (CCR), formerly the Ad Hoc Committee on Chicano Rights. It marked a transformation from an ad hoc coalition of participant organizations concerned

[77] Albert R. García to Kimball H. Moore, March 4, 1974, Box 6, Folder 4, Baca Papers.

about mounting immigration issues to a coherent member-based grassroots organization. Founded by Baca, Albert García, Carlos "Charlie" Vasquez, Ralph Inzunza, and Albert Puente, the CCR was established primarily "To secure and protect for all Chicanos (i.e. Raza, Mexican-American, etc.) and their families, their rights, and privileges vested on them by the Constitution and laws of our Country."[78] This mission statement reveals that the CCR was not conceived of as necessarily a radical organization. Its stated purpose, "To foster and perpetuate the basic principles of democracy, i.e., political freedom of the individual and equal social and economic opportunities for all citizens," depicts the organization as a liberal American-based civil rights organization. Indeed, the organization aimed to improve the "political, educational, social and economic conditions of the Chicano community" simply by "encouraging their participation in political, community, and civic affairs."[79] This plan of action to encourage "participation" implied entrance into existing institutions with no semblance to ideas about structural change. Even the tones of separatism present in many Chicana/o Movement organizations' notion of Aztlán or cultural connections to Mexico over the United States were not present. Instead the CCR operated in line with the established constitution of "our Country" implying an American national identity.

As discussed in regards to Baca's activism up to the mid 1970s, however, the notion of a self-determined Chicana/o community and the conceptualization that the "Chicana/o" community was a transnational population of racialized citizens and noncitizens, the CCR pushed forth questions that subverted the liberal state framework.

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[78] Articles of Incorporation of Committee on Chicano Rights, Inc.; November 24, 1976. Baca Papers, Box 6, Folder 1.

[79] Ibid.

In its transnational conception of community and its focus on voicing the differential material experiences of working-class racialized communities, the CCR challenged notions that political borders and liberal state categories of citizenship were encased realities. In this way the CCR would continue the engagement by San Diego Chicano/Mexicano activists with the various tentacles of the U.S. state on autonomous terrain. Its very creation was based on addressing the localized context in which Chicanas/os and mexicanas/os struggled in the border region, namely the intermingled repression by the Border Patrol and local police through policies targeting "illegal aliens." Indeed, CCR members recalled its foundation as a "reaction to the co-optation of the government funded community organizations by the traditional political apparatus…establish(ing) itself as a community-based, non-profit, non-government funded, volunteer membership organization committed to developing social and political awareness in the Chicano/Mexicano/Latino communities."[80] The addition of the term "Latino" may have been a prelude to the expanding notions of identity and community that Chicano/Mexicano activists were exploring as the immigration debate ventured once again outside of the borderlands to the halls of congress and the popular press in the wider U.S., Mexico and beyond.

Conclusion

Baca and the emergent CCR addressed the intersecting oppression of local policing and immigration policing through engaging the community at the everyday level, organizing a decision-making process, and engaging in protest, boycott, and

[80] Register of the Herman Baca Papers, Biography.

consistent demand to varying levels of the U.S. state, from local to federal, for a democratic engagement with the community as the only way to bring justice to these issues. In a context in which a variety of Chicano/Mexicano organizations grappled with heightening outcry over "illegal aliens" and internal fragmentation, the CCR emerged in the mid 1970s with a solution based in transnational conceptions of "community" that emphasized engagement with the daily experiences of working-class Latinas/os, local autonomy, and collective leadership. As the immigration issue hit national proportions with congressional debates over federal proposals that sought employer sanctions on businesses and increased budgets for the INS throughout the mid '70s, the election of Jimmy Carter in 1976 solidified the national spotlight on the localized issues that Baca had been engaging since the first years of the 1970s, and his mentor Corona since the late 1960s. The increasing outside repression from police and federal agents, and the arrival of the "illegal alien" debate on the desk of a newly elected president pushed fragmented Chicano/Mexicano mobilizations to coalesce around the issue of immigration as part and parcel of the movement for Chicana/o self-determination. This propelled Baca and the CCR to the forefront of (inter)national Chicano/Mexicano mobilizations and established San Diego as an important pole of activism that sought to rectify the contradictions of immigration policy in the late 1970s.

CHAPTER 5: Border Showdown: The Carter Curtain, the KKK and Chicano/Mexicano Autonomous Social Action

> The battle for the border is more than just a move to control illegal immigration; it is a struggle to resist attempts by working-class communities in peripheral countries to spatially reorganize their base of social reproduction in the global landscape.[1]
>
> Nestor Rodriguez, "The Battle for the Border"

> The (border) fence is a test. If we Chicanos and Mexicanos fail…a clear signal to American policy makers that the United States can proceed without concern with the continued abuse and exploitation of the Chicano in the United States, and the exploitation of Mexico's resources (undocumented workers and oil) without fear.[2]
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> Herman Baca, CCR Press Conference, Tijuana, BC, Mexico, February 3, 1979

In the midst of a media frenzy over the announcement by the infamous Ku Klux Klan to assist the U.S. Border Patrol in apprehending "illegal aliens," San Diego borderland activist Herman Baca and chair of the Committee on Chicano Rights responded with a warning on a November 1977 afternoon that the "Chicano community" would assert "an immediate response in-kind" to any "interruption of their daily lives."[3] Baca organized a "Unity March" to demonstrate that the Chicana/o community, other communities of color, and their allies refused to be intimidated by the historic terrorist organization. Within a few days, Baca's home was vandalized with messages that read

[1] Nestor Rodriguez, "The Battle for the Border: Notes on Autonomous Migration," *Social Justice* 23(3) (Fall 1996), 17-21.

[2] Committee on Chicano Rights, Press Release, Tijuana, B.C., Mexico, February 3, 1979, Box 18, Folder 11, Baca Papers.

[3] Unity March," *La Prensa*. November 10, 1977.

"WHITE POWER," and "CHICANO GO BACK WHERE YOU CAME FROM (MEXICO)."[4] Undeterred, Baca and the quickly formulated Coalition of Human Rights proceeded with the Unity March and declared that this harassment from a racist organization was only a symptom of the official immigration policy that targeted so-called "illegal aliens" as a means of subordinated a steady source of cheap laborers.

The KKK border event, alongside federal proposals to further militarize the border, amplified and reinforced an on-going mobilization among Chicano/Mexicano activists working within working-class Latina/o communities against border enforcement policies. Defense against "interruption of their daily lives" was what Baca and the CCR had struggled for on a daily basis, not only against overtly racist groups like the KKK, but more commonly against local police and the federal Border Patrol beginning in the late 1960s. Under the call to control the border, Border Patrol agents in conjunction with local police had invaded homes, churches, and schools; jailed, deported, and at times brutalized both Mexican immigrants and Mexican Americans; and daily searched, questioned, and detained border crossers often under dubious circumstances throughout the 1970s. By 1977 the CCR in San Diego had already developed processes of local Chicana/o self-determination through which to address these consistent brutalities and violations of human rights. This practice was locally rooted through engagement with area community members and their experiences with the unassailable effects of border enforcement policies, and other state violations of their rights, in their everyday lives. Therefore when debate over immigration policies reached the office of newly elected

[4] Robert Dietrich, "4 Incidents Probed; letters 'KKK' found," *San Diego Evening Tribune*, October 22, 1977.

President Jimmy Carter, Baca and others cried out that it was "A Time for Resistance" to intensify and dramatize on-going contestation between Chicano/Mexicano activists and the state over what sociologist Nestor Rodriguez calls "The Battle for the Border."[5] Rodriguez writes that the battle for the border, as manifested in the "illegal alien" debate, is truly about the maintenance of a method of organizing a global political and economic system that allows the transnational movement of capital while subjugating and policing that of labor. The autonomous migration of third world laborers presents an alternative practice of globalization where workers deemed unfit to be citizens create their own mechanisms of survival that transverse the border, creating transnational communities. These transnational communities can also be political spaces, as Rodriguez notes, "transnational communities unite with domestic sectors to resist immigration laws, engage in labor struggles and promote multiculturalism."[6] This chapter details this "Battle for the Border" in a border showdown between the Carter administration and Chicano/Mexicano activists in the San Diego borderlands, from 1977 to 1979.

This chapter argues that increasing structural repression exerted by the state through restrictionist policies in the late 1970s led Chicano/Mexicano activists to further extend the boundaries of their communities beyond national borders by exploring connections to Mexican society and experimenting with redefining civil society on transnational ground. It investigates this through analysis of Chicano/Mexicano struggles to link President Jimmy Carter's immigration plan that would give amnesty to some undocumented immigrants, but also further militarize enforcement at the border with the

[5] Nestor Rodriguez, "The Battle for the Border: Notes on Autonomous Migration," *Social Justice* 23(3) (Fall 1996), 17-21.

[6] Ibid.

explicit racism of the KKK in 1977. Indeed, following a demonstration against KKK activity Baca declared,

> On October 29, 1977 the community joined by Chicano leaders from throughout the nation, marched to demonstrate their anger and ran the KKK out of the Chicano community…But the threat posed by the immigration crisis still exists…Fifteen million Chicano/Latino/Mexicanos in the U.S. must now understand that the "Carter Immigration Proposal" is in fact a loaded gun pointed at our heads.[7]

As Baca revealed, immigration policy, the "loaded gun," was pointed not only at Chicanas/os and Mexicanas/os, but at the wider diaspora of Latin American migrant communities as "Chicano/Mexicano" became "Chicano/Mexicano/Latino." Utilizing the term "Latino" acknowledged that the racialization process exerted by border enforcement affected not only Mexicans, but also other migrant communities from the Americas residing in different parts of the U.S. The nationalization of the immigration crisis through President Carter's proposal and the international media headlines of a resurgent KKK seeking to deport "illegal aliens" put Chicano/Mexicano activists in a position to consider their relationships to other Latina/o communities beyond the Southwest and Mexican America. This is investigated through analysis of a series of Chicano/Mexicano mobilizations against the "Carter Curtain" culminating in a 1979 national march against President Carter's immigration proposal in San Diego. Refusal by U.S. state actors to address Chicano/Mexicano concerns alongside further terror and brutality exerted on Latina/o border crossers throughout the late 1970s led activists to consider the Mexican government and wider Mexican society as an alternative means through which they could struggle. Their worlds were expanding and their relations with other Latinas/os as part of

[7] "Unity March," *La Prensa*. November 10, 1977.

a global movement interconnected with Mexico and wider Latin American were explored in reaction to the global forces of capital that brought migrants to the border and led apparatuses of the U.S. state to respond with repression.

The Carter Curtain and KKK

In the summer of 1977 during President JimmyCarter's first year as the head-of-state, his administration released a proposal for immigration reform that would issue "aggressive and comprehensive steps toward resolving this problem."[8] The president described "this problem" as follows: "…millions of undocumented aliens have illegally immigrated to the United States. They have breached our nation's immigration laws, displaced many American citizens from jobs, and placed an increased financial burden on many states and local governments."[9] Carter's plan proposed to escalate border enforcement manpower and technology, place sanctions on employers who hired undocumented workers, grant amnesty to some undocumented immigrants depending on how long they had been in the U.S., instate a temporary worker program, and build a wall at the border in San Diego and El Paso.[10] Carter's immigration plan was the culmination of congressional debates over immigration policy that had occurred throughout much of the decade. For instance, employer sanctions in the proposal simply reflected legislation that the CCR and Chicano/Mexicano activists had struggled against in California in the

[8] Jimmy Carter, "Undocumented Aliens Message to Congress," August 4, 1977, John Woolley and Gerhard Peters, *The American Presidency Project* (online), Santa Barbara, CA: University of California (hosted), Gerhard Peters (database), Available from World Wide Web: http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=7923.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Ibid.

early 1970s. The Dixon Arnett Bill, and later the proposed Rodino Bill at the federal level, sought to sanction employer who hired undocumented immigrants. The parts of the proposal to build a wall at the most crossed border sites and increased the technology and manpower of the Border Patrol reveal how employer sanctions legislations were based on and had evolved into identifying "illegal aliens," not employers, as the primary culprit in the criminalized act of entering the U.S. without documentation.

Chicano/Mexicano activists such as the CCR jousted with the President over his proposal's concentration on targeting "illegal aliens" asserting the experiences of borderlands ethnic Mexican communities for the past decade. They argued that any law enforcement solution to the immigration issue would have the effect of discriminating against Latinas/os of all statuses and reinforce, rather than deter, the ability for businesses to continue to access cheap noncitizens laborers. The CCR rearticulated its stance on employer sanctions arguing, "We don't oppose punishing employers. We oppose punishing our people. The result of the proposal would be that punishment by discrimination at the hands of employers who will simply refuse to hire any person of Mexican or Latin ancestry."[11] By 1977, CCR activists had become all too familiar with the ways both Mexican Americans and Mexican immigrants were both affected by attempts to deport "illegal aliens" due to the racial presumptions of border enforcement policies. Chicano/Mexicano activists such as the CCR jumped on the proposal to build a wall between the U.S. and Mexico, what they labeled the "Carter Curtain," as a symbol

[11] "CCR Interview," *El Gallo* 9(5), (August – October 1977), 6. See Box 1, Folder 1, Herman Baca Papers, Mandeville Special Collections Library, University of California, San Diego. Hereafter referred to as Baca Papers.

of racism that epitomized the often-violent effects border militarization had had on ethnic Mexican communities in the borderlands.

Chicano/Mexicano activists argued that the proposal not only exacerbated the Latina/o community problems with the Border Patrol by further militarizing it, but also reinforced a system of noncitizen labor exploitation. Baca reminded that "The Border Patrol has worked with business interests" illustrating a picture of deportation as a means of labor control. In a letter to President Carter responding to his proposal, Baca exclaimed, "…your administration (through the INS) continues to perpetuate the status quo by bringing in cheap labor and allowing U.S. businesses to exploit it."[12] The guest worker provisions of the proposal were described as a slave-like program that would create a "captive labor force that will work hard, cheap and scared."[13] Baca argued that the provisions of the proposal would allow temporary workers to stay to work and require them to pay taxes. Yet they would not have access to citizenship, voting or public services and therefore be subject to taxation without representation. To dramatize how border enforcement policies enabled a system of noncitizen labor exploitation, Chicano/Mexicano utilized analogies with slavery asserting that undocumented workers were routinely denied access to legal standing so that that they could not defend themselves and be relegated to performing cheap labor.

Yet Carter's proposal was the first to include amnesty provisions that would acknowledge the presence of millions of undocumented persons and give them the opportunity to become U.S. citizens. For this reason, Carter's plan was considered liberal

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[12] Herman Baca, CCR to President Jimmy Carter, July 6, 1977, Box 7, Folder 1, Baca Papers.

[13] "CCR Interview," *El Gallo* 9(5), (August – October 1977), 6.

in its mixing of amnesty and enforcement mechanisms, a trend that has shaped the immigration debate ever since. Chicano/Mexicano activists asserted that their definition of "amnesty" were starkly different than Carter's. Activists had made arguments for a form of amnesty that would develop a pathway to citizenship with minimal requirements. From Chicano/Mexicano perspectives, undocumented workers had already became society members and were owed access to citizenship due to the labor and taxes they had contributed. In this context, Baca labeled Carter's definition of amnesty as a "false promise." He argued that the proposal does not really recommend "amnesty" but puts forth a long list of requirements that would lead to an "adjustment of status" for migrants that entered before 1970. Baca explained that, different from "amnesty," an "adjustment of status" was a device already part of immigration law that determine particular qualifications so that a select number of immigrants could become citizens. Border Patrol apprehension data suggests that undocumented migration had incrementally increased throughout most of the 1970s, reaching just under 1 million in 1977.[14] The majority of undocumented migrants had arrived in the past two years therefore ensuring that only a small percentage of them would benefit from Carter's policy and its "amnesty" for migrants that entered before 1970.[15] Baca also argued that the

[14] Pew Hispanic Center, 2008 and Gutierrez, 1991.

[15] Mexican immigrants in the U.S. numbered at 454,000 in 1950, hit 760,000 by 1970 and by 1980 would reach about 2.2 million. Pew Hispanic Center, "Mexican Immigrants in the United States, 2008," (Washington, D.C., 2008). This indicates huge year-by-year incremental increases in immigration from Mexico to the U.S. This was due to the post-industrial rise of the service sector in the U.S. that in addition to the century-old agricultural industry increasingly relied on migrant labor and economic shifts in Mexico. Developing nations such as Mexico were experiencing economic growth due in large part to foreign investment which ironically disrupted traditional means of subsistence setting forth migrations from rural to urban centers and due to lack of jobs triggered transnational migration to first world nations such as the U.S. See David G. Gutierrez, "Ethnic Mexicans in the Late Twentieth Century: Globalization, Labor Migration, and the Demographic Revolution," in *A Columbia History of Latinos in the U.S. Since 1960*, ed.,

Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) had a seven-year waiting list for citizenship papers guaranteeing, "it will take years before anyone will benefit."[16]

Debates between Chicano/Mexicano activists and proponents of the Carter Plan would intensify when a few months following Carter's proposed crackdown on "undocumented aliens," leaders of the infamous Ku Klux Klan held a press conference at the San Ysidro – Tijuana Border Station to announce their intent to start a Border Watch Program. David Duke, the KKK's national leader, told reporters that the illegal alien problem "is changing the fabric of American life" due to the "rising flow of color…washing over our borders."[17] Duke went on to argue that the border should be sealed off, that it should be illegal for employers to hire undocumented workers, and that if he had the power he would deport every "illegal" present in the United States. The KKK planned to begin a patrolling program on the U.S.–Mexico border from Texas to California.[18] Klan members would work to spot undocumented migrants and report sightings to the Border Patrol via C.B. radios. The Klan patrollers would apprehend migrants in some cases and would also be armed where legal. Accompanied by a small

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David G. Gutierrez, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004): 62-63; and Saskia Sassen, "America's Immigration "Problem,"" *World Policy Journal* 6(4) (Fall, 1989): 811-832.

[16] "CCR Interview," *El Gallo* 9(5), (August – October 1977), 6. See Box 1, Folder 1, Herman Baca Papers, Mandeville Special Collections Library, University of California, San Diego. Hereafter referred to as Baca Papers.

[17] *San Diego Union Tribune*, Evening Tribune, 17 October 1977; Jon Standefer, *San Diego Union*, 17 October 1977; and Jon Standefer, *San Diego Union*, 18 October 1977. See Folder Labeled "Newspaper Clippings, 1977, October-December, Ku Klux Klan," Box 68, Folder 3, Baca Papers.

[18] The Ku Klux Klan held a long history of policing ethnic Mexicans at the U.S.-Mexico border and Southern California. See Carlos M. Larralde and Richard Griswold del Castillo, "San Diego's Ku Klux Klan," *The Journal of San Diego History* 46(2-3) (Spring/Summer 2000).

entourage wearing T-shirts with "white power" written on them, Duke was also given a tour of border facilities by INS officials. [19]

The CCR led a Chicano/Mexicano effort to not only decry the presence of the notoriously racist organization, but to intensify its engagement with the U.S. state and further mobilize Latinas/os and allies to put forth alternative interpretations of border enforcement policies. Local Latina/o community members and activists in San Diego perceived this announcement as a direct threat to their well-being and safety. Phone calls poured into Baca's workplace with community members expressing their concern about the presence of such a racist and notorious group in relation to the repercussions of the heated immigration debate.[20] According to Baca, these community members perceived the KKK as an invading force "trying to do (to us) what they did to blacks in the South."[21] Indeed, San Diego African-American leaders were also appalled, including members of the Nia Cultural Organizations, who had worked with the CCR on police brutality cases, and the first African-American city councilman Leon Williams, who witnessed a cross burning from his Southeast San Diego home the night after the KKK press conference.[22] Within a couple of days after the KKK press conference, the CCR held their own press conference where Baca asserted,

> We are here to state, today, that Chicano communities, from the United States, will not tolerate or meekly submit to terrorist harassments,

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[19] Ibid.

[20] Baca Oral History Collection, Session 5, Tape 7, August 23, 2006, Baca Papers.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Jon Standefer, *San Diego Union Tribune*, October 18, 1977; and "Unity March," *La Prensa*, November 10, 1977.

> intimidations, or interruption of their daily lives. Let it be made clear, right now, least any of these individuals have the mistaken idea that Chicanos are going to submit passively; that any action taken by these groups against our people will call forth an immediate response in kind.[23]

Already aware of the many cases of legal violence inflicted on ethnic Mexican individuals of all citizenship statuses in San Diego at the hands of Border Patrol and local police in search of "illegal aliens," the KKK's explicit announcement to apprehend "Mexican-looking individuals," enabled Baca to demonstrate the experience of racialization by Chicana/o communities to a wider world, highlighting a shared struggle of undocumented migrants and U.S. Latinas/os. The CCR would link this dramatic experience of racialization to the more common practices of border enforcement policies and the proposed "Carter Curtain."

Soon after his speech, Baca was appointed head of the quickly formulated Coalition for Human Rights, an alliance of Chicana/o, African-American, and other concerned activists from San Diego and wider Southern California. Baca recalled the coalition's meeting: "After the press conference we decided that …this tour, this action (and) this seed being planted by this right-wing racist, terrorist-type group - was a result of the policy that continued the manipulation and exploitation of Mexican labor that was affecting our community, our efforts at enfranchisement. So we decided we were going to confront it. So we called for a march."[24] The lines had been drawn for a border showdown.

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[23] Herman Baca, Committee on Chicano Rights, Press Release, October 20, 1977, Box 41, Folder 12, Baca Papers.

[24] Baca Oral History Collection, Session 5, Tape 7, August 23, 2006, Baca Papers.

Further harassment would polarize the situation. While working at his print shop to organize the march, Baca's spouse Nadyne phoned him on the morning of October 21 to inform him that racist messages had been spray painted on his home reading "Chicano, go back where you came from (Mexico)" and "White Power."[25] Baca had not noticed it having left early in the morning when it was still dark. It was retaliation from KKK members or sympathizers to the march called by the CCR and Coalition. Uneasy about the situation, Baca sent his family to Los Angeles to stay with relatives until the march had commenced. For the next several nights, a number of Baca's compatriots stayed to protect him at his home, patrolling the area with rifles. After several nights of patrolling, the group decided to send Baca to stay at one of their homes, so they could get rest in preparation for the upcoming march.[26]

The vandalism against the Baca family was just one instance in a surge of Klan activity in the tense San Diego area. An accidental shooting of a known Klansmen had occurred at an East County bar when the manager attempted to break up a fight on October 20. Further, two other homes were inscribed with the letters "KKK" in Southeast San Diego, home to many of the area's black and Latina/o residents on October 20 in addition to the cross-burning reported by Councilman Leon Williams on October 18.[27] In such an environment, communities of color and their allies were especially compelled to forge a response to the increased white supremacist activity and the

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[25] Robert Dietrich, "4 incidents probed; letters 'kkk' found," *San Diego Evening Tribune*, October 22, 1978.

[26] Baca Oral History Collection, Session 5, Tape 7, August 23, 2006, Baca Papers.

[27] Jon Standefer, " 'No Retaliation' Klan Says of Fight," *San Diego Union*, October 21, 1977.

threatening environment. The San Diego Police Chief reported that he was prepared for violence when the Klan's border watch program was to commence on October 22.[28] Coupled with the upcoming Chicana/o-led protest march, a media spotlight was pointed at San Diego to observe if tensions might boil over.

The coalition proclaimed that the KKK harassment of the Chicana/o community was a by-product of federal immigration policy and therefore it was the responsibility of President Carter himself to alleviate the situation. Baca referred to the tacit approval of the Klan activity by the Border Patrol to make his point. This "tacit approval" referred to the tour given to the KKK by INS officials. INS official James O'Keefe participated in the tour and while he responded to the media that he discouraged KKK involvement, he also exclaimed, "As far as receiving information from them, we welcome information from any citizen…We would respond – if we have the manpower."[29] Chicana/o leaders argued that this invitation by INS officials, through giving a tour and affirming that the border patrol would act on KKK reports, was proof of the absurdity and racial hysteria that surrounded the immigration debate.

Indeed, Baca declared,

> We charge the Carter Administration with failure to produce an effective immigration policy which is just, reasonable and humane. We hold Lionel Castillo, Commissioner of the INS to blame for the current situation for his failure and inability to control the operations of the INS, Border Patrol, or its' officials in the field. Finally, we hold accountable the local police, politicians and media, who through their manipulation of a serious issue

[28] Jon Standefer, *San Diego Union Tribune*, October 18, 1977.

[29] Standefer, *San Diego Union Tribune*, October 18, 1977.

> have contributed to the present hysteria surrounding the undocumented alien issue.[30]

Out of such an assessment, Baca and the coalition demanded that President Carter immediately remove the INS officers that allowed the tour, that a congressional investigation be conducted on the whole border situation, that the Carter administration meet with Chicana/o community leaders, and that the administration further disavowal from INS support of extremist, racist groups.[31]

The Unity March was held a week after the start of the KKK Border Watch program in protest of the presence of the Klan at the border and the implied cooperation displayed by the Carter administration. Area Chicana/o, African-American, and progressive forces were joined by national Chicana/o Movement leaders in the protest march that would launch a national campaign against the Carter immigration plan. Estimates of the protest participants ran from 300 to 1000.[32] During the March and rally, protesters would make their views clear. Chicana/o Movement veteran Corky Gonzales proclaimed that the border patrol is to Chicanas/os, what the KKK was to African-Americans in the South. He exclaimed at the protest rally, "La Migra is just as guilty, just as racist as the KKK. They are twins dressed in different uniforms who mistreat, terrorize and brutalize our people." Long-time labor organizer and Baca's mentor Bert Corona referred to the KKK as "right-wing terrorists…who are a pimple on the body of a decaying system." The Carter plan embodied the "decaying system," argued Corona, and

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[30] "Chicanos List Demands to Carter Administration," *Chicano Federation of San Diego County, Inc. Newsletter*. Vol. VII, No. 9, November 1977.

[31] Ibid.

[32] "Unity March," *La Prensa*, November 10, 1977.

attempted to pass "systematic and legalized racism" as comprehensive reform.[33] The explicit racism of the Klan made it quite easy for Chicana/o activists to link it with the implicit racism of the Carter plan.

As Baca's speech vowing "an immediate response in-kind" to Klan harassment on the Chicana/o community revealed, the threat of random violence led activists to stabilize the situation using their own faculties. Hysteria over the immigration crisis and the repeated neglect from various state actors to address the violence emanating from the Border Patrol led to a breakdown of "law and order" as Baca put it, creating the conditions for dialog between Chicano/Mexicano activists and apparatuses of the U.S. state to deteriorate. This led to further mobilization and reliance on autonomous action based on the expanding notion of a Chicano/Mexicano community. As Baca remarked at the Unity March,

> On October 29, 1977 the community joined by Chicano leaders from throughout the nation, marched to demonstrate their anger and ran the KKK out of the Chicano community…But the threat posed by the immigration crisis still exists…Fifteen million Chicano/Latino/Mexicanos in the U.S. must now understand that the 'Carter Immigration Proposal' is in fact a loaded gun pointed at our heads.[34]

Indeed, by highlighting the embarrassing media display in which INS officials accommodated the KKK border watch program, these activists took advantage of such a link to make explicit to a broader constituency the subtle racial assumptions that underpinned current Border Patrol practices and President Carter's proposed immigration bill.

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[33] Ibid.
[34] "Unity March," *La Prensa*. November 10, 1977.

In these ways the CCR's asserted a self-determined response based on the everyday experience and operation of the transnational Latina/o community in the U.S.-Mexico borderlands. The call to defend against "interruptions of (the Chicano community's) daily lives" intensified activist constructions of community political practice based on transnational processes of everyday life within Latina/o communities independent from the hegemonic gaze of capital and the state. The years of structural violence on racialized borderlands communities and the ascension of the immigration issue to the national level facilitated further enactment of autonomous community action in a transnational context. This can be demonstrated further in Baca's speech concerning the KKK,

> For the last 7 years, through the Nixon, Ford, and Carter administrations, we have spoken out for the creation of a just, humane and responsible immigration policy. We have repeatedly condemned the militarization of the border.
>
> We have decried, repeatedly, the human degradation, brutalities, harassments, rapings (sic), and killings that have occurred on these borders.
>
> We have repeatedly condemned the use of the local police, border task force, and sheriff deputies, in carrying out INS/Border Patrol functions. These actions have only served to solidify the violent nature of proposed solutions.
>
> Long have we raised our voices against the manipulation of the undocumented alien issue to a point of hysteria by self-serving interests. The total breakdown of reasonable discourse has now occurred. The continued insistence of attempting to resolve the undocumented worker problem through the policies of "Control and Containment," implemented by PARA MILITARY FORCES and DOCTRINES has led to its inevitable conclusion. The breakdown of law and order.[35]

[35] Ibid.

Baca noted the inability for mechanisms of the U.S. state to respond meaningfully to the expressed concerns of its constituencies by recounting the years spent dialoging, pleading and demanding from various levels of the government an end to militarized solutions to undocumented migration. These types of solutions were based in the definition of the problem, put forth by both President Carter and the KKK, as one of "invasion" that made necessary a military solution and an unwillingness to acknowledge grassroots Latina/o demands.[36] Despite their calls for the alleviation of state violence, President Carter's solutions sounded eerily similar to KKK Grand Dragon David Duke's concern over the "rising flow of color washing over our borders." In both cases, the migrants themselves were the problem. Their act of crossing was further criminalized and deemed a threat to "American citizens" indicating an insistence to define U.S. citizenship in narrow and by effect, racialized terms.[37] Therefore solutions called for keeping noncitizens out, by force. Baca's speech echoed that their cries for justice from systematic state violence had not been answered revealing a significant shift in their strategy by beginning the process of contemplating solutions outside the U.S. in relation to the transnational space of the

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[36] Carter identified the "undocumented alien" problem as "millions of undocumented aliens (who have) breached our nation's immigration laws, displaced many American citizens from jobs, and placed an increased financial burden on many states and local governments."Jimmy Carter, "Undocumented Aliens Message to Congress," August 4, 1977, John Woolley and Gerhard Peters, *The American Presidency Project* (online), Santa Barbara, CA: University of California (hosted), Gerhard Peters (database), Available from World Wide Web: http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=7923.

[37] For analysis of the interconnection between immigration systems of control and its hand in shaping the boundaries of authentic U.S. citizenship see Lisa Lowe, *Immigrant Acts: On Asian American Cultural Politics*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996): 1-36. For the construction of U.S. citizenship in relation to the creation of the Border Patrol and the "illegal alien," see Mai Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America*, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2004): 7. Ngai asserts that the construction of the "illegal alien" "produced 'alien citizens'—Asian Americans and Mexican Americans born in the United States with formal U.S. citizenship but who remained alien in the eyes of the nation." These works tie immigration restrictions of the 1970s to a longer history of border enforcement policies enacted with the Border Patrol creation in the 1920s and even to the overtly racialized restriction of Chinese labor migrants in the 1880s.

U.S.-Mexico borderlands.[38] Unity March participant and San Antonio Chicano/Mexicano activist Mario Cantu expressed this sensibility when he asserted,

> The involvement of the Chicano movement in an issue which has international ramifications is a crucial step in understanding that basic denial of human rights of Mexicanos from Mexico, is also a basic denial of Chicano human rights in the U.S. That the Chicano movement can move away from purely local concerns to one that involves the basic human rights of people from other countries, clearly signals a new era for the Chicano movement.[39]

Stop the Carter Curtain!

Staying on the offensive, the CCR and its allies, including elder unionist Bert Corona now head of the National Immigration Coalition in Los Angeles and Denver-based Chicana/o Movement icon Rodolfo "Corky" Gonzales, extended their notion of the Chicano/Mexicano community to enact transnational responses to the immigration crisis that engaged not only the U.S. state, but the Mexican state as well. President Carter was set to meet with Mexican President Jose Lopez Portillo, chiefly in regards to oil in Mexico, in Mexico City from February 14 – 16, 1979. Chicano/Mexicano activists would take this opportunity to continue their protests of the Carter Curtain but more importantly consider their relationship with the Mexican government as an assertion of self-determination and strategy for alleviation of brutality. The meeting with Lopez Portillo in the context of heightened hysteria over "illegal immigration" created a situation in which the CCR and Chicano/Mexicano activists considered the role of the Mexican state in the exploitation of undocumented migrants. Activists perceived the

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[38] Herman Baca, Committee on Chicano Rights, Press Release, October 20, 1977, Box 41, Folder 12, Baca Papers.

[39] Ibid.

increase of oil production in Mexico as giving unprecedented leverage to the Mexican state in negotiations with the United States. In this way, Chicano/Mexicano activists sought to pressure the Mexican government to include humane address of the immigration issue as part of trade negotiations.

Chicana/o relations with Mexico were complex. As discussed in earlier chapters, the Chicana/o Movement emerged in a context where a largely American-born Mexican-origin contingent of activists utilized "Aztlán" as a notion to emphasize a strategy of engaging U.S. society as an indigenous people that, although emphasizing pride in Mexican culture, implicitly separated them from Mexico and immigrants.[40] At the same time, emphasis on Mexican cultural identity and reckoning with the U.S. conquest of Northern Mexico made possible wider communes with Mexico and the wider Americas. While some Chicana/o movement activists did engage the Mexican state, most notably Jose Angel Gutiérrez as representative of the La Raza Unida Party in South Texas, investigations of Chicana/o Movement activist relations with the Mexican state are few and far between.[41] Raza Unida's interaction with Mexico demonstrated a non-critical

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[40] See Chapter 2. For the evolution of Chicana/o thinking on the issue of Mexican immigration and the significance of Mexican immigrants to the "Chicano Movement," also see Esteban Flores, "Post-Bracero Undocumented Mexican Immigration and Political Recomposition," (Ph.D. diss., University of Texas, Austin, 1982); David G. Gutiérrez, "*Sin Fronteras?* Chicanos, Mexican Americans, and the Emergence of the Contemporary Immigration Debate," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 10 (4) (summer 1991): 5-37 and Alicia Schmidt Camacho, *Migrant Imaginaries: Latino Cultural Politics in the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands*, (New York: New York University Press, 2008): 152-193.

[41] In the early 1970s Mexican President Luis Echeverria provided Jose Angel Gutierrez with funds to provide scholarships to Mexican-American students through the Becas para Aztlán program as well as funds for other activities of the La Raza Unida Party. See Armando Navarro, *La Raza Unida Party: A Chicano Challenge to the U.S. Two-Party Dictatorship*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2000), 254-256. Other scholarly works that consider relations between Chicanas/os and Mexico are, Juan Gómez-Quiñones, "Piedras contra la luna, México en Aztlán y Aztlán en México: Chicano-Mexican Relations in the Mexican Consulates, 1900-1920," in *Contemporary Mexico: Papers of the IV International Congress of Mexican History* (Mexico City: El Colegio de México and UCLA Latin American Studies Center,1975): 494-527; and "Notes on the Interpretation of the Relations between the Mexican Community in the United

approach that perceived the Mexican government as an ally. It seems that Chicano/Mexicano activists also approached the Mexican state with an expectation that they would act on behalf of Mexicans in the U.S. A moment in which the U.S. and Mexico engaged one another in the late 1970s enabled the CCR and wider Chicano/Mexicano movement to explore further the complex relationship between Chicanas/os and Mexico.

Chicano/Mexicano activists interceded in U.S.-Mexico negotiations when the CCR released a press release in January of 1979 announcing a National Protest March coinciding with the meeting of Carter and Portillo. At central issue was the brutalities experienced by Mexicans in the U.S., best symbolized by the proposed building of a border fence, the "Carter Curtain" in San Diego/Tijuana and El Paso/Juarez. Activists protested "Vietnam like militarization of the United States-Mexican border" that had lead to "massive violations of human and constitutional rights by the Border Patrol on the Chicano community."[42] A spokesperson for the CCR stated "that any agreement reached in Mexico City, will ultimately have an effect on the social, economic, and political future of the Chicano community in the United States."[43] Leaders Gonzales, Corona and Baca explained the significance of this march in a TV interview, in calling attention to the contradiction of U.S. economic desires to cross the border into Mexico while a wall

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States and Mexico: Historical and Political Contexts of a Dialogue Renewed," in *Mexico-United States Relations: Conflict and Convergence*, ed. Carlos Vásquez and Manuel García y Griego, (Los Angeles: Chicano Studies Center and Latin American Research Center Publications, 1983): 417-39; and most recently, Alicia Schmidt Camacho, *Migrant Imaginaries: Latino Cultural Politics in the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands*, (New York: New York University Press, 2008): 152-193.

[42] Committee on Chicano Rights Press Release, January 22, 1979, Box 18, Folder 11, Baca Papers.

[43] Ibid.

was proposed to be built to keep Mexican workers out. Chicana/o Movement veteran from Colorado, Corky Gonzales, explained,

> The main purpose of the march today is to protest the cactus curtain of the fence that is being put up in Tijuana barrios…to the violation of human rights of people *sin documentos* and Chicano people who are citizens of this country…to Carter who is going to meet with Portillo to take care to recognize the human rights of our people both here and those who cross what we call the imaginary frontier. I feel that Carter's purpose for the meeting with Portillo has more to do with high finances and profits in dealing with the purchase of oil and natural gas."[44]

Gonzales' comments reveal a critical approach to the hegemonic foreign policy of the United States and an implicit call to Mexico to recognize and act on the interconnected situation between Mexican Americans and Mexicans in the U.S. Baca would contribute to the interview by calling attention to the larger structural forces that immigration policy was failing to address. He explained, "What we are saying is that all the solutions (to the immigration debate) have been adverse to the victim…like lets get more border patrol, lets get more military….rather than dealing with the causes of the whole immigration issue, which are political, social and economic in nature."[45] In an attempt to not only inform the American public, but the Mexican public, about the transnational implications of the Carter Curtain and immigration policy Corona explained further,

> We view the building of this new fence and the increased and stepped up militarization of the entire U.S. and Mexico Border as very symbolic in the sense and within the context of the hostile action not only against the Mexican people in Mexico and the Mexican nation but against all

[44] Maria Velasquez, KCST-TV interview of Herman Baca, Corky Gonzales, Bert Corona, et al., "Undocumented Mexican Visitors Program," Typescript, February 11, 1979, Box 1, Folder 11, Baca Papers.

[45] Ibid.

> Mexican and Latino people in the U.S. That hostility has been expressed historically in lower wages being paid to the Mexican and Latino workers who perform the same work as Anglo and other workers,(and) lower social and living conditions…When they put a border facing Latin America like they are intending to put here it (sic) merely symbolizes, emphasizes and enforces the racist and the chauvinistic discriminatory treatment that our people have suffered and lived through in the U.S.[46]

Corona's statement reveals the strategy being taken up among Chicano/Mexicano activists in regards to addressing both the U.S. and Mexican states in the immigration issue. They continued criticisms of racism and disregard against the U.S. state and appealed to the Mexican government and society as fellow *mexicanos* living in a hostile environment that needed alleviation. This would enable the utilization of the Mexican state as a tool in addressing the immigration system's brutalization of ethnic Mexican communities by intervening in the desire by these two states to reach a new economic agreement on oil.

Corona closed the interview by emphasizing the Chicana/o Movement goal of reckoning with the legacy of conquest that had relegated Mexicans in the U.S. to second-class citizenship and further led to the creation of a system in which Mexican noncitizen labor was continually exploited and subjugated. He exclaimed, "This used to be Mexico and this is the reality that that has to be understood by 220,000,000 Americans as well." Corona continued, "The only way to stop the exploitation of workers on this side of the border is to give them all the rights that those of us who are born here have. The right to…not be deported, the right to unify economies, the right to organize into unions."[47] Corona exerted a vision of citizenship that acknowledged the already unified economies

[46] Ibid.

[47] Ibid.

of the U.S. and Mexico that would recognize migrant workers as legitimate society members. This vision was expressed to both U.S. and Mexican audiences.

This call to bind the destinies of ethnic Mexicans in the U.S. and Mexicanos in Mexico was initiated by Baca a week earlier. Baca had traveled to the Hotel Palacio Azteca in nearby Tijuana to appeal to the Mexican press and wider Mexican society "a message from the 16 million Chicanos/Latinos residing in the United States." Like Corona's attempt to connect the identities of Mexicans in Mexico and those in the U.S. through a shared experience of repression under the U.S. government, Baca asked "the Mexican people join us in the construction of that most odious symbol of racism, discrimination, and bigotry…the Carter Curtain." Aside from tying together the plight of the Mexican and ethnic Mexicans in the U.S. through a shared culture that was to be degraded by a fence between the two nations, Baca also argued that this was a "test" that would determine future U.S. social and economic dominance of in Mexico. Baca attempted to convince *mexicanos* that their interests were tied up with the fate of undocumented workers. At stake, Baca argued, was whether the entirety of Mexican society would be subject to exploitation by the United States in the same manner as undocumented *mexicano* migrants. "The fence is a test," Baca exclaimed, "If we Chicanos and Mexicanos fail…a clear signal to American policy makers that the United States can proceed without concern with the continued abuse and exploitation of the Chicano in the United States, and the exploitation of Mexico's resources (undocumented workers and oil) without fear."[48] Binding U.S. Chicanas/os, undocumented migrants, and

[48] Committee on Chicano Rights, Press Release, Tijuana, B.C., Mexico, February 3, 1979, Box 18, Folder 11, Baca Papers.

mexicanos in Mexico together was not simply bloodlines, but the shared struggle against the affects of U.S. imperialism and the rule of capital. In this way, not only were the voices of the undocumented added to the immigration debate, but also working-class and poor members of a developing nation were called upon to voice their discontents toward the policies of an imperial power within the world system.

In this mobilization, Chicano/Mexicanos imagined a transnational method of address to the immigration crisis, by mobilizing working-class participants in the overlapping economies of these two nations to express their concerns and demands to both the Mexican and U.S. governments. This widening of activities through consideration of appealing to the Mexican government and civic society reveals how Chicano/Mexicano activists began to consider transnational solutions to the immigration crisis. This emerged through the engagement with the shifting realities of their local community. By re-conceptualizing their community as consisting of both new migrants and multi-generation racialized citizens, continued border enforcement repression led them to extend the Chicana/o Movement critique of U.S. imperialism. They asserted that the legacies of anti-Mexican sentiment not only justified the erecting of "capricious borders" after the U.S. conquest of Northern Mexico, creating Mexican-American second-class citizens 150 years ago, but continued to be utilized to develop immigration laws that facilitated a system of labor exploitation that disciplined migrants and racialized ethnic Mexican communities. Chicano/Mexicano activists called upon the Mexican nation itself to assist in the battle of its people struggling against racism and exploitation in the U.S., both recent arrival *mexicano* migrants and the long-struggle of Chicanas/os. This was an assertion of autonomy in that Chicano/Mexicano activists and community

members opted to appeal to the Mexican government in response to the inability or unwillingness of the U.S. state to address their demands to end brutality. Having conceived of their community as transnational space, and noting the interest between the U.S. presidency and Mexican government to negotiate a new petroleum trade policy, they recognized new paths of struggle and were not limited to the mechanisms of one nation-state.

Yet while these ideas and assertions of transnational autonomy floated about after the release of the Carter proposal and KKK fiasco it was still unclear what these activists wanted beyond an alleviation and address of harassment and brutality through an end to militarization of the border. The National March Against the Militarization of the Border and the Carter Curtain in 1979 sought to bring attention to the brutal results of militarized immigration policies to the U.S., Mexican and wider public, but what did Chicano/Mexicano activists expect to accomplish from these tactics? Indeed, significant questions abounded. For one, what was expected of the Mexican government? Activist strategies hoped that Mexico would help call for an end to militarized border policies as contingent on a petroleum deal with the U.S. But was this wishful thinking? What was Mexico's role in the undocumented immigration issue? And was Mexico's petroleum industry strong enough to make such demands against what the activists themselves recognized as powerful and vested corporate interests that wanted century-old access to cheap migrant labor?[49]

[49] Indeed Mexico's oil boom was debt-financed helping to bring petroleum prices down, dropping Mexican revenues and resulting in major economic crisis in the 1980s. Therefore, Chicana/o activists hopes that the Mexican state would have the power to influence and even demand adjustment to U.S. immigration policy to U.S. state leaders were based on a weak foundation. Mexico's economic crisis in the 1980s would facilitate the neoliberalization of their economic policies as new leadership turned away from the

These questions were left open, as the purpose of the National March was to again bring attention to the brutal results of border enforcement policies. The march was put together to assert a "united front" by the "Chicano community" to show "opposition" to the Carter Plan, the proposed wall, militarization and violations of human rights.[50] While it did not put forth concrete solutions to the problem, the action convened a national dialog among Chicano/Mexicano and grassroots immigrant rights activists over the vexing problem of immigration policy in a broader transnational context. It widened the playing field to consider the role that the Mexican people and government might play in their attempts to alleviate the brutality at the border. It also suggested, again, that President Carter and other U.S. officials meet with the "communities most affected" by immigration policy. President Carter actually invited the San Diego Chicano Federation, of which Baca and the CCR had worked with, to meet with him as part of a larger meeting with "Hispanic leaders" for insight in preparation of the meeting with Lopez Portillo the following week.[51] After a community meeting, the Federation refused to meet with Carter on the grounds that he continued to support the building of a fence at the border and their doubt "that he will seriously consider any input that will not coincide

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nationalist-based policies of the post-revolutionary PRI toward projects of economic globalization culminating in the North American Free Trade Agreement in 1994. Leticia Reina, Elisa Servín, and John Tutino, "Introduction: Crises, Reforms, and Revolutions in Mexicano, Past and Present," In Reina, Servín, and Tutino, eds., *Cycles of Conflict, Centuries of Chang: Crisis, Reform, and Revolution in Mexico*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007), 4-5.

[50] Committee on Chicano Rights Invitation Letter to Participation in National Protest March, February 11, 1979, Box 18, Folder 11, Baca Papers.

[51] Richard Hernandez, Deputy Assistant to President Jimmy Carter to Emma Creel, Director of the Chicano Federation, February 6, 1979, Box 18, Folder 11, Baca Papers. For a recent reflection on this event see, Blanca Gonzalez, "Emma Creel-Vargas: Chicano Federation chairwoman was a tireless activist," *San Diego Union-Tribune*, December 30, 2009.

with his present policy."[52] They instead invited Carter to meet "directly with the people" to discuss the affects of immigration policy on border communities at the National Protest March. These two ideas, one that considered the transnational scope of struggle through engagement with Mexico and the other that insisted that ethnic Mexican communities at the border were entitled to a voice in discussions of immigration policy due to their experiences of racialization and brutality, built the foundation for further action as a transnational autonomous entity based in Latina/o borderlands communities. Furthermore, more violence would prompt Chicano/Mexicano activists to not only call for alleviation of brutality but for collective, independent contemplation on and solid solutions to this crisis at the border.

Conclusion

The nationalization of the immigration debate through the President Carter's immigration proposal in 1977 further exacerbated alarm over "illegal aliens" in the midst of a troubled U.S. economy. Heralded as a progressive and more humane immigration policy due to its amnesty provisions, Chicano/Mexicano activists across the country and particularly in the San Diego borderlands perceived the proposal as the militarization of an already violent policy. The presence of the racist KKK a few months later further sensationalized the issue. Undoubtedly, the proposal and the KKK presence engendered further racialization of Latinas/os in the U.S. via discourse on immigration that divided citizen from noncitizen by deploying race, whether implicitly or explicitly. As Omi and Winant's valuable concept of racial formation continues to remind, racialization is a

[52] Chicano Federation Press Release, February 1979, Box 18, Folder 11, Baca Papers.

process that is repackaged and redeployed in new contexts.[53] But more poignantly, this chapter reviewed not only how these events further deployed race to perform national sovereignty without disrupting the ebbs and flows of global capitalism but also asserted that these events amplified and reinforced an on-going mobilization among Chicano/Mexicano activists within working-class Latina/o communities who were extending the boundaries of their communities beyond national borders, exploring connections to Mexican society, and experimenting with redefining civil society on transnational ground. Furthermore, Chicano/Mexicano activists were compelled to create independent analyses and processes in which to contemplate, disseminate and collectively forge solutions to the immigration process in reaction to the inability or unwillingness of liberal nation-state actors to respond to their demands. This created the space in which the CCR learned to convene grassroots Latina/o activists from across the country and beyond to collectively contemplate solutions and voice their frustrations to a transnational audience. Building on these developments, Chicano/Mexicano activists led by the CCR would enact notions of self-determination as a transnational to exert alternative forms of citizenship that challenged not only the U.S. state but the Mexican state for its passive collusion with the system of immigrant exploitation.

[53] Michael Omi and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1990s*, (New York: Routeledge, 1994).

CHAPTER 6: Transnational Citizenship in the San Diego Borderlands: The Chicano National Immigration Conference and Tribunal

> Power concedes nothing without demand. It never did and it never will. Find out just what any people will quietly submit to and you have found out the exact measure of injustice and wrong, which will be imposed upon them, and these will continue till they are resisted with either words or blows, or both. The limits of tyrants are prescribed by the endurance of those whom they oppress.
>
> Frederick Douglass, Abolitionist, 1857

> We have gathered here in San Diego, California today, April 11, 1981 to participate in the Chicano National Immigration Tribunal and to declare to all those who recognize the inherent dignity and inalienable rights of freedom, justice and equality of the human race that on behalf of our people we condemn the violation of human, civil, and constitutional rights by the immigration and naturalization service, border patrol and other law enforcement agencies acting on behalf of the U.S. government's inhumane, degrading, and irrational immigration policy.
>
> Herman Baca, National Chicano Immigration Tribunal, 1981

Evoking the words of a former slave, the Committee on Chicano Rights (CCR) defined the goals of the Chicano National Immigration Tribunal. On April 11, 1981 the CCR reconvened a number of the 1,000 grassroots activists who had participated in the National Chicano Immigration Conference to hear the voices of several survivors of *migra* brutality and remember those that did not survive the abuse of militarized immigration policy. More than 50 cases of harassment and brutality by Border Patrol agents, Custom's officers and local police in performance of policies that targeted "illegal aliens" were presented at the tribunal proceedings. The cases were recorded, supported by archival evidence and collected to create a 1,000 page document that was presented to the administrations of Presidents Ronald Reagan and Jose López Portillo in Washington,

D.C. and Mexico City. Quoting Frederick Douglass' observation that "Power concedes nothing without demand. It never did and it never will…the limits of tyrants are prescribed by the endurance of those whom they oppress," the CCR introduced a document that demonstrated an alternative practice of citizenship, challenging the legitimacy of immigration policy and exposing the nation-state's collusion with capital.[1] The tribunal epitomized an assertion of self-determination that is best captured in activist scholar Gustavo Esteva's observation of another, more recent social movement. The tribunal asserted the "capacity and liberty" for transnational working-class Latina/o communities to "determine their identity and their ways of life and government in their own spaces…and forms of communion with the society at large."[2] The "society at large" was widened to include the binational space of the United States and Mexico, a civic society that defied the boundaries between the two nations. The Tribunal also asserted a refusal to abide by the hierarchical construction of citizen over noncitizen and stamped their demand to dialog with the U.S. and Mexican states as a transnational Chicano/Mexicano and wider Latino community.

Highlighting two events organized by the Committee on Chicano Rights in San Diego, this chapter sets the stage for understanding how the wider Chicano/Mexicano activist community developed an autonomous response to the immigration crisis by conceiving of themselves as a transnational community. Chicano/Mexicano demonstrations against President Jimmy Carter's immigration plan in the late 1970s

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[1] "Statement of Purpose," "Summary from the Chicano National Immigration Tribunal 1981," Box 43, Folder 1, Baca Papers.

[2] Gustavo Esteva, "The Meaning and Scope of the Struggle for Autonomy," *Latin American* Perspectives 117(28:2) March 2001.

mobilized a network of grassroots Chicano/Mexicano and immigrant organizations across the U.S. and the borderlands. In what would be Carter's last year in office, the CCR organized the Chicano National Immigration Conference and Memorial March in May of 1980. Following several tragic encounters between Latina/o border crossers and INS agents in 1979, culminating in the death of two children, the CCR organized the conference to not only protest these tragedies, but to collectively put forth solutions from the perspective of working-class Latina/o communities. These grassroots Chicano/Mexicano activists convened in San Diego to highlight the oppression of border militarization and demand that their own practices of community and belonging that disrupted hierarchical divisions between citizens and noncitizens be acknowledged. The practice of transnational citizenship was demonstrated through the National Chicano Immigration Tribunal in ways it had not been in previous activism. Activists more emphatically began to refer to themselves as part of "Chicano/Mexicano/Latino" communities and actively assert the self-determination of their own identities and processes of governance in between, but in dialog with both the U.S. and Mexican states. The Chicano Tribunal provided the perspectives of working-class, transnational Latina/o communities on immigration policies from both nations and made a strong push to end the brutalities of the past decade. Latina/o community members and leaders essentially demanded acknowledgment of the practice of citizenship they had already created, one that included anyone residing or participating in the overlapping society and economies of the United States and Mexico.

"La Frontera en Sangre" – The Bloody Border

CCR member and artist David Avalos put together a pamphlet of sketches, collage and commentary recording a number of violent border incidents that occurred following the National Protest March Against the Carter Curtain in 1979. Entitled "La Frontera en Sangre," the cover shows a sketch of two migrants handcuffed together and on their knees. Both are Mexican men. One is being shot in the chest by a Border Patrol agent and spilling blood, while the other looks on in terror. The two men are in a line indicating they are near crossing the U.S.-Mexico border. Behind them, the ground reads "Mexico." The agent is standing emotionless in full uniform and hat. Behind the migrants in the background are the words: "Human Rights? Racism! Due Process? Bigotry! Summary Trial and Execution? Brotherhood? Justice! Inhuman! Disgusting!"[3] Avalos' sketch depicts a real event, the killing of 24-year-old Efren Reyes on March 17, 1979 by a Border Patrol agent. When he was shot Reyes was handcuffed to 22-year-old Benito Rincon, who was also shot by the agent but survived. The shooting occurred in San Ysidro on the U.S. side of the San Diego-Tijuana borderlands. For Avalos, the sketch of the real event depicted the violence and brutality of militarized border enforcement that the National Protest March was meant to bring attention to. It also underscored CCR chair Herman Baca's seemingly prophetic words that militarized policies had led to an "inevitable conclusion: the total breakdown of law and order."[4] A string of violent incidents in 1979 brutalizing migrants, including children, demonstrated

[3] David Avalos, "La Frontera en Sangre," Committee on Chicano Rights, 1980, Box 43, Folder 1, Baca Papers; also see, Centro Cultural de La Raza Archives, Box 106, Folder 6, California Ethnic and Multicultural Archives, Department of Special Collections, Donald C. Davidson Library, University of California, Santa Barbara.

[4] Unity March," *La Prensa*, November 10, 1977.

the CCR and their allies' main concern that their communities were under siege as part of attempts to enforce the border between the U.S. and Mexico.

Just three days after the shooting of Reyes and Rincon, a 4-year-old boy, Mario Alberto Canedo died waiting to receive treatment for a heart condition at the Border Station in Tijuana. The event occurred when the boy was rushed from his home just outside Tijuana by his aunt, Guadalupe Astorga. Canedo was recovering from heart surgery after having been released from University Hospital in San Diego just days earlier. After he began coughing up blood, Astorga and another relative drove him to the border with hopes of reaching University Hospital to address the matter. Despite her desperate pleas of "Emergencia! Emergencia!" (Emergency! Emergency!), customs agents asked her to wait before crossing the U.S.-Mexico border. After spending about 30 minutes pleading at the border crossing station, Astorga let out a "blood-curtailing scream" as the boy gasped his last breath in her arms. An ambulance arrived moments too late.[5]

Without a multiple-entry visa the boy and his aunt had to wait for clearance to cross the border for medical attention. Astorga later recalled, "I asked them to give me attention, and they didn't pay any attention to me."[6] She arrived at the border and informed a Mexican police officer that the child was sick. The police officer went to the front of the border station to inform the U.S. officer that the child was sick. Astorga showed the U.S. officer the child and was directed to secondary inspection with a yellow tag that could indicate anything from an emergency to further search needed. She waited

[5] *Los Angeles Times*, March 23, 1979.

[6] Robert Golum, "Two Deaths at Border Probed," *National City Star News*, 1979.

in this line for what she reported as "a long time."[7] Becoming desperate, she exited her car and went to the front of the line to plead with U.S. Border Patrol officers to let them through. An officer reportedly told her, "I don't care. You go down there so they can check your identification." She was also told an ambulance was on the way. Astorga remembered that a few minutes later "when the ambulance arrived the child got hold of my clothes and died in my arms."[8]

Just a few months later, an incident involving another child, this time an 18-month-old baby, further infuriated Chicano/Mexicano activists. Manolo Alberto, a Tijuana resident and U.S. citizen born in Los Angeles, died of starvation three days after being denied entrance into the United States for treatment. The woman who brought the baby into the border checkpoint, a family friend named Lupe Alonzo, called the border inspectors "cruel and callous."[9] A customs inspector reported that upon entrance of Alonzo and Alberto to the border checkpoint, "the baby was in third stage malnutrition, when the body starts consuming its organs to sustain itself."[10] Despite the baby's apparent appearance, the primary customs inspector, thinking there might be narcotics in the car, instructed Alonzo to go to the secondary inspection area. This shifted the decision-making responsibilities from custom's to immigration officers on whether to allow the two entrance into the U.S. Alonzo presented the child's birth certificate to the officers who reportedly said, "I can tell he's Mexican without looking at the birth

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[7] Ibid.

[8] Ibid.

[9] "Officials Called Cruel in Barring Ill Child at Border," *New York Times*, June 21, 1979.

[10] Golum, 1979.

certificate."[11] A customs officer report demonstrated the wider practice by immigration officers (Border Patrol) of approaching border crossers "angrily to catch them off guard." Alonzo was denied entrance and sent back to Mexico with Alberto. The baby died at a Tijuana hospital three days later.[12]

Baca recalled the event involving the 18-month-old baby. He said, "I particularly remember that case because they finally let them (the boy and family friend) cross a day or so after we raised holy hell about it. So finally they let him across to be buried."[13] As Baca's eyes filled with tears he recalled, "And I had never seen a coffin for a baby. It was like a shoebox. And I'll always remember looking at his little face and I just kept saying, 'Why? Why?' You know, he didn't have anything to do with this. And you know that just teed me off to no end. It just made me angrier."[14] These events tragically demonstrated the silencing of undocumented voices in debates over immigration. Baca's emotional reaction might indicate a wider sentiment experienced by Chicano/Mexicano activists struggling to defend migrants and racialized citizen brutalities at the border. This structural repression ignited resistance to it, further motivating alternative practices of citizenship and an end to the terror interceding in the daily lives of working class borderlands communities. The CCR led efforts to address these issues and utilized the increasing national media coverage on deaths and brutalities at the border to call further attention to the violence they had endured for at least a decade. In between the shooting

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[11] Ibid.

[12] Ibid.

[13] Herman Baca Oral History Collection, Tape 11, Session 9, September 2006, Baca Papers.

[14] Ibid.

of Rincon and Reyes in March and the death of Alberto in June of 1979, 19-year-old Guillermo Lozano, 17-year-old Ismael Villa, and Martin Olmos (age unknown) were injured when shot by Border Patrol officers from helicopters in San Ysidro. Earlier in the year, 30-year-old Margarito Balderos had been shot twice in the back after surrendering to Border Patrol in San Ysidro. Late in the previous year, 21-year-old Abel Reyes Silva had been shot in the back by a Border Patrol officer at the border in Tijuana and a pregnant woman, Maria Contreras, died of a heart attack while being interrogated by border officials in Progreso, Texas. These incidents were recorded on Avalos' "La Frontera en Sangre" pamphlet, calling for further mobilization.

These events further demonstrated the unwillingness of U.S. state actors to respond meaningfully to Chicano/Mexicano demands. The CCR and other Chicano/Mexicano activists kept tabs on these events and insisted on action to alleviate violence and injustice. The death of 18-month-old Alberto, a U.S. citizen and a baby, seemed to mark a tipping point for activists involved in battling the brutalities of immigration for the past decade. As had been the case since the early 1970s, cases of violence against women and children were particularly disturbing to activists, enabling a strong case for attention to these situations by depicting the Border Patrol and larger immigration deportation policies as invasive and destructive to the most vulnerable members of society.[15] The CCR marked the death of the U.S. citizen baby by asserting a commitment to alleviate the situation.

[15] See Chapter 2 for analysis of how notions of the "family" worked as a basis in which border enforcement policies were critiqued as disruptive of families through splitting them up.

> A U.S. citizen born resident of Mexico, Mario Alberto was a seriously ill baby who desperately needed special medical treatment. Though properly documented, Mario Alberto was barred from entry into the United States and died days later in Tijuana. It is to the end of this kind of immigration tragedy and to stopping all other acts of violence and discrimination against our people, that the CCR has dedicated itself to.

The CCR thus maintained authority and leadership on the issue of immigration due to their involvement with these situations and their location at the site of so many of the brutalities at the San Diego borderlands.

The CCR demanded the U.S. state provide immediate alleviation of these brutal incidents. Activists caught the attention of U.S. Congressmen Edward Roybal, who as head of the Treasury subcommittee was in charge of investigating the U.S. Customs Service, headed a hearing on the deaths of the two children in the San Diego-Tijuana borderlands. The hearing was held at a U.S. Customs station in San Diego and included the testimony of Alonzo and Astorga, witnesses and victims of the events that led to the denial of two children crossing to the U.S. that later died. Roybal, and San Diego area Congressman Lionel Van Deerlin concluded that something had to be done about the situation, but reminded that the hearing was only to gather facts.[16] A historic figure because he was the first Mexican-American U.S. Congressman elected from California in the 20th century, Roybal was challenged by Baca at the hearings to bring more urgency to the issue and begin a dialog with borderlands Latina/o communities. Baca questioned the planning and structure of the meeting and doubted any meaningful results because, "case after case (has been) dismissed with a see-no-evil, hear-no-evil, speak-no-evil

[16] Golum, 1979.

attitude."[17] Baca criticized the location of the hearings at the port of entry customs offices, exclaiming that it was "like investigating the wolf in the wolf's den."[18] The CCR preferred a public hearing where Chicano/Mexicano leaders and community members could confront the INS and challenge border enforcement immigration policy. In fact, it was revealed that plans to hold the hearing at an elementary school in a mostly Latina/o community were shelved due to concerns with safety. Furthermore, governmental responses tended to compartmentalize and bureaucratize issues of brutality. Roybal's Treasury subcommittee, for example, only held jurisdiction over U.S. Customs and not the INS, which drew the bulk of the blame from activists for the deaths of the two children and wider systemic violations of human rights. Baca shot at Roybal, "We know the primary cause of the deaths of these two children was the INS, so what are we investigating? We have waited 7 years, we believe these hearings should have been open."[19] Roybal shot back, "What surprises me more than anything is your lack of gratitude. You (Baca) have the nerve to stand there for local consumption and say what you did. The truth of the matter is that I'm the only one who helped you. What you want Mr. Baca is a demonstration, a big show, and you're getting it." Baca responded, "Mr. Congressman, we want solutions."[20]

Congressman Roybal experienced the brunt of Chicano/Mexicano activist frustrations over further death and violence. Baca's confrontation with Roybal, and the

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[17] *El Tiempo Chicano*, 1979. See Box 42, Folder 1, Baca Papers.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Ibid

CCR's leading role in confronting these atrocities, reaffirmed efforts to dialog with the U.S. state (and now the Mexican state) on the terms of autonomous working-class Latina/o communities. Baca's declaration that "we want solutions" acknowledged the inability for state actors to create solutions or even speak on an equal plain with Chicano/Mexicano leaders. Chicano/Mexicano strategies of engaging the U.S. state thus shifted to engaging grassroots activists mobilized by the Carter Curtain resistance movement and performing Chicano/Mexicano autonomy by determining their own solutions. Baca and the CCR called for Chicano/Mexicano grassroots activists to convene in San Diego to collectively craft alternatives to border enforcement policies. Baca explained, "It is our position that all of the past and present proposals which have or are being advocated by policy-makers have failed to resolve the immigration issue. Any new and positive changes are going to have to be defined by us, the Chicano community."[21]

The Chicano National Immigration Conference and Memorial March

Many scholars have noted how Chicana/o Movement attempts to forge unity led to a number of political gains and created internal fractures over competing definitions of "Chicano" authenticity. The Chicano Immigration Conference offered intriguing strategies for building ethnic community, particularly in that it articulated a transnational Chicana/o identity that incorporated a range of differences. Instead of asserting an essentialized identity that privileged one group (such as those with U.S. citizenship or long-standing experience in U.S. society) within what is a heterogeneous community, the

[21] Herman Baca, CCR to Danny Villanueva, April 10, 1980, Box 41, Folder 12, Baca Papers.

conference acknowledged differential citizenship-status, time of arrival from Mexico, and national affiliation among members in the Chicano/Mexicano community. Despite its advancements, however, the conference failed to consider how gendered power dimensions greatly affected the particular forms of exploitation experienced by Chicanas and Mexicanas. Nonetheless, it at least grappled with internal differences and initiated a collective process that gave voice to the most vulnerable among them.

The conference addressed a number of issues that reflected the heterogeneity of the ethnic Mexican population while centered on the immigration issue. Workshops on the incarceration of the undocumented, women and immigration, and organized labor reflected a concern with different terms of citizenship-status, gender, and class. The focus on internal difference and its transnational scope enabled the possibility of a more inclusive and expansive notion of "self-determination," as something forged through differences out of a shared repression and shared struggle against that repression.

The conference brought together a broad spectrum of activists representing about 200 organizations from throughout California including San Diego, Los Angeles, San Jose, Oakland, San Francisco and Santa Barbara; Texas, including San Antonio, Houston and El Paso; Colorado, including Denver and Pueblo; as well as Chicago and Tijuana. It brought together well-known Chicana/o Movement and Mexican-American organizations, including chapters of the Brown Berets, MEChA, the Crusade for Justice, and the Chicano Moratorium Coalition. It also included local chapters of the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), the GI Forum, and the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund (MALDEF). Other participants included a number of grassroots services organizations (i.e. the Vecinos de Casa Familiar, San Diego; Escuela

de la Gente, Van Nuys, CA; and Centro de Inmigracion Pro-Comunidad, Santa Barbara), religious institutions (i.e. Hispanic Community Lutheran Ministry, Tucson; Accion Catolica Juvenil, Los Angeles; and the Archdiocesan Latin American Committee, Chicago); emergent immigrant rights groups (i.e. Coalition for Immigrant Rights, Houston; and the National Center for Immigrant Rights, Los Angeles); artist collectives (i.e. El Teatro de la Esperanza, Santa Barbara; El Movimiento Artistico Chicano, Chicago; and El Centro Cultural de la Gente, San Jose); labor unions (i.e. United Auto Workers #165, Los Angeles; and the United Domestic Workers of America, San Diego); and legal aid societies (i.e. El Paso Legal Assistance Society, Legal Aid Society Orange County, and Civil Rights Litigation Center, San Antonio). Also included were a small number of non-Latina/o activists of color, including the Union of Democratic Filipinos, the former head of the black cultural nationalist organization Nia, Ken Msemaji, and American Indian Movement leader Dennis Banks. Other prominent speakers and participants included Bert Corona, Corky Gonzales, Soledad "Chole" Alatorre, Ruben Bonilla, National Chairman of LULAC; Lupe Saldana, National Chair of the American G.I. Forum, and Professor Rodolfo Acuña.[22] It was estimated that about 1,000 individuals participated in the conference and as many as 4,000 participated in the memorial march the following day.[23]

Baca greeted conference participants in what one report noted as an "an hour-long, applause-punctuated speech" that framed the root causes of "illegal immigration" as

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[22] Committee on Chicano Rights List of Participants in the National Chicano Immigration Conference and Memorial March, 1980, Box 41, Folder 13, Baca Papers.

[23] "The Slave Issue of the 20th Century: 1,000 Attend National Immigration Conference, *"Unity*, June 6, 1980; "Herman Baca Timeline," Finding Aid of the Baca Papers.

tied to the global scope of capitalist practices, U.S. neoimperialism, and exploitation of labor to the subordination of the Latina/o population in the United States.[24] Veteran activist Bert Corona and Corky Gonzales reinforced Baca's analysis in their introductory speeches. Gonzales noted the bankruptcy of relying on the U.S. state and the need for autonomous action, ideas that echoed Baca's call for an alternative perspective on the immigration debate beyond the binary of enforcement, on the one hand, and mixed enforcement/amnesty provisions on the other. In a speech a week earlier, Baca situated the Chicano/Mexicano positions on immigration between the "historically racist, chauvinist view" and a liberal view.[25] Baca explained that solutions that relied on enforcement as a solution were analogous to the racist views the Klan or Nazis "who view any non-whites as a problem." "The second perspective," he argued, "is more dangerous" because "confused" and "good willed liberals" simply sought to "call for re-shuffling without getting to the causes of the problem."[26] This was more dangerous, Baca argued, because "if put into practice, it would sanctify exploitation" since proposals such as that presented by President Carter called for amnesty alongside more "repressive legislation," including further militarization and guest worker programs. Baca explained that the liberal perspective failed to recognize the circular system of neoimperial U.S. "domination of Mexico" that created the context in which Mexican workers are forced to migrate to the U.S. for economic survival and are subsequently exploited as noncitizens

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[24] "Chicanos Hear Warning on "Legal Slavery,"" *San Diego Union*, May 25, 1980. See, Box 42, Folder 1, Baca Papers.

[25] Herman Baca Speech, May 12, 1980, Box 41, Folder 13, Baca Papers.

[26] Ibid.

or, as the Carter proposal also suggests, as part of a temporary guest worker program. The potential packaging of amnesty alongside a formalization of the importation and exploitation of Mexican workers is what made the liberal perspective so dangerous, according to Baca. He argued, "It would create an apartheid system in the Southwest if these guest worker plans were put into effect because you need a tremendous enforcement system."[27] He argued further that guest worker programs would discipline labor organizing as the Bracero Program of the mid century did, "creating a strictly defined lower-economic class."[28] For this reason, the CCR defined the immigration issue as the "slave issue of the 20th century," and argued that "these same attitudes led to the ultimate degradation of chattel slavery in this country's history. If things continue we will reach the same point again."[29]

The CCR wanted solutions that addressed the root problems of immigration that were tied up in the collusion between first world nation-states and global capitalists and imperialist ventures into the third world. Baca argued that the U.S. government was obligated to let working-class migrants in because "they've let Chase Manhattan run amuck in the third world."[30] This justified the solution of granting immediate amnesty to any noncitizen "person or dependent… even if he came in 1 second ago."[31] Citing that for every one dollar invested in Mexico, seven dollars is taken out, Baca declared that

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[27] Ibid.

[28] Ibid.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Ibid.

[31] Ibid.

immediate legal standing was necessary because migration was simply a "symptom" of the larger cause of global capitalism and U.S. imperialism. He further argued that to accomplish this "third way" of addressing the immigration crisis, it was necessary to put "political power in the hands of those most affected by the immigration issue – the Chicano/Mexicano/Latino community."[32] It was this logic that fueled the CCR's efforts to initiate dialog among grassroots activists at the National Chicano Immigration Conference.

A grassroots and community-based approach was evident in the organization of the conference. It was held at St. Rita's Catholic Church in a working-class, largely Latina/o area of San Diego. St. Rita's thus fit with the conscious effort of the conference organizers to hold the event in a pre-existing institution within the local working-class Latina/o community. The conference was affordable, costing only $10 for registration that included meals, entertainment and information about recent CCR struggles over immigration, including the "*La Frontera en Sangre*" booklet created by CCR member David Avalos.[33] Free lodging was also provided upon request.

Working-class Mexicana/o cultural practices were also evident in the proceedings of the conference. Cultural identity was an important part of promoting a transnational, autonomous and working-class politics and enacting a form of self-governance based on the everyday cultural idioms of Chicano/Mexicano communities. For example, before

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[32] Ibid.

[33] "Registration Form with Agenda and Confirmed Speakers for Conference and March," Box 41, Folder 12, Baca Papers. Also part of the conference packet was a brochure put out by the AFL-CIO "The Multinational Corporation: A Modern Day Dinosaur that Eats the Jobs of American Workers." National Chicano Immigration Conference A Time for Resistance Packet, May 23, 1980, Box 42, Folder 1, Baca Papers.

the opening speeches, an invocation was conducted by Sister Sarah Murietta of the Padre Hidalgo Center. Chicana/o *teatros* provided music and entertainment that galvanized the conference themes of unity, community and political solidarity with undocumented immigrants. For example, Chicano poet Jose Antonio Burciaga performed, as well as the San Diego-based Latin Folk and Rock musical group Los Alacranes Mojados.[34] Mariachis set the mood in the mornings before and evenings following the conference. Pan Dulce (Mexican sweet bread) was served for breakfast and on the last day of the conference before the March, the tradition of serving Menudo (tripe and hominy stew) on Sunday morning convened participants following a Catholic mass performed by Bishop Gilbert Chavez. These cultural practices surrounded and reinforced the conference themes of celebrating mexicana/o culture and uniting as one people through shared ethnic ties across boundaries of nationality and citizenship status.

The performance of the play "La Victima" by Teatro de la Esperanza, a Santa Barbara-based theater troupe, culminated the theme of unity and political solidarity across lines of nation and citizenship status. The play began by proclaiming, "The Chicano is a victim of a subtle and complex form of oppression, which because of particular racial and historical factors differs from traditional forms yet results in the same end; the exploitation of one group, for the benefit of another."[35] The play then followed the life of Amparo, a girl from Mexico forced to flee the violence of the

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[34] "The Conference Agenda," National Chicano Immigration Conference, 1980, Centro Cultural de La Raza Archives, Box 106, Folder 6, California Ethnic and Multicultural Archives, Department of Special Collections, Donald C. Davidson Library, University of California, Santa Barbara; Flyer, "A Time for Resistance, Organized by CCR, Tentative Agenda," Box 41, Folder 12, Baca Papers.

[35] El Teatro de la Esperanza, Summary of "La Victima," Centro Cultural de La Raza Archives, Box 106, Folder 6, California Ethnic and Multicultural Archives, Department of Special Collections, Donald C. Davidson Library, University of California, Santa Barbara.

Mexican Revolution in 1913 to the United States. In Scene 2 entitled, "The First Deportations-1921" Amparo meets Julian at a dance where they escape by "the skin of their teeth" a deportation raid. Amparo and Julian marry and have a son, Samuelito. In the midst of the Depression and the repatriation of mexicanas/os back to Mexico, Amparo loses Samuelito while being deported by train. Samuelito is then adopted by Mexican-American parents, goes by the name "Sam," becomes a war veteran and joins the Border Patrol moving up the ranks. Sam's long-lost brother and sister also migrate to the U.S., leaving Amparo and a sick Julian behind. After Julian passes away, Amparo has no choice but to migrate to the U.S. to be with her children there. At the climax of the play, Sam raids a factory strike and detains his long-lost family. As he interrogates his mother, he figures out who she is but denies it, ultimately deporting her. The final scene portrays Sam's inner turmoil as a nightmare. The play ends with a rendition of the Chilean folk song "El Pueblo Unido" signaling the need to recognize the familial, ethnic and political links between undocumented Mexican migrants and Mexican Americans. In the context of the Conference, the play expressed key themes that sought to extend a political agenda based on these links that had long fragmented ethnic Mexican politics in the U.S. and reinforced the practice of transnational community. This transnational ethnic identity was not based solely in blood lines, but reflective of the material realities that Chicano/Mexicano activists in San Diego had engaged for decades, namely that state repression affected the everyday life and aspirations of ethnic Mexicans and Latinas/os of all citizenship statuses. The conference thus intended to provide autonomous working-class Latina/o solutions to the immigration debate that went well beyond the "carrot and

stick" official policy proposals that combined a limited amnesty with further militarization and temporary worker "slave" programs.

The conference workshops called for the complete dismantling of border enforcement and deportation, the right for laborers to cross borders and have the same basic rights as citizens, and a binational and international collaboration that was inclusive of the independent voice of Chicano/Mexicano/Latino communities. The Border Violence workshop, convened by Baca, Ruben Sandoval and Albert García, called for the abolishment of the INS/Border Patrol and an end to the binational policy of militarization at the border as a solution to migration between Mexico and the U.S. The Border Violence workshop's resolutions revealed how Chicano/Mexicano activists now perceived the roots of border violence in a transnational frame, put in place not only by the policies consistently exerted by the U.S. state but approved by the Mexican state as well.

Grassroots activists not only blamed the U.S. state for border violence, but also held the Mexican state responsible. Leading up to the conference, the CCR and other Chicano/Mexicano activists had engaged President Jose Lopez Portillo in his talks with President Carter about Mexico's growing oil industry to little avail. In 1980, the CCR proposed that President Lopez Portillo act by creating a bilateral commission to address on-going struggles in San Diego to stop the detaining and alleged deportation of children without their parents.[36] Lack of response from the Mexican state led to more critical appraisals by Chicano/Mexicano activists. Baca asserted a more direct approach to the

[36] Herman Baca, CCR to President Jose Lopez Portillo, February 28, 1980, Box 41, Folder 12, Baca Papers.

Mexican state when he argued, "Mexico, because of its situation, has never defended the Chicano like it should…Concerning the immigration issue for example, we see the Chicano Movement in complete contradiction with forces in Mexico. While the Chicano is against temporary worker programs, the PRI (Institutional Revolutionary Party) is for them….There is a great difference between the Mexican people and the PRI."[37] Baca's comments reveal that many activists had become critical of the Mexican government in its apparent unwillingness or inability to address the abuses within border enforcement policies. This led the CCR to continue to consider transnational alliances, but with the "Mexican people" rather than the ruling PRI who Baca cited as "reactionary forces in power."[38] Instead, the CCR sought to locate "progressive forces (in Mexico) that are doing the same thing we are trying to do."[39] The call for the National Chicano Immigration Conference and Memorial March by the CCR to be held in May of 1980 marked a new moment in which Chicano/Mexicano activists sought to collectively develop solutions to the immigration crisis on their own by calling forth community organizations from across the U.S. and the U.S.-Mexico border region to San Diego. This collective process illumined a Chicana/o self-determination based on a transnational community in autonomous dialog with the U.S. and Mexican states on the immigration issue.

The conference thus brought full circle the transnational definitions of community that Chicano/Mexicano activists in San Diego had developed in their battles against legal

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[37] "Interview: Herman Baca of the Committee on Chicano Rights," *El Foro Del Pueblo*, 1(3) May 1980.

[38] Ibid.

[39] Ibid.

and border violence for almost a decade. Baca asserted that a fluid definition of community facilitated sustained independent resistance to systems of border enforcement. He noted, "Chicano to me means change… but instead of being anti-Mexicano as some have tried to project it (the Chicano Movement and identity), it was really an effort of trying to learn about being a Mexicano. We never said we weren't Mexicano. At the same time, we needed to make Mexico aware of our situation over which we had no control – and make clear we would have to be respected for our efforts."[40] Baca made clear that relations with Mexico were just as problematic for "Chicanos" as with the U.S. Because Mexico was unwilling to assist Chicano/Mexicano activists and transnational ethnic Mexican communities in the U.S. with repression from border enforcement policies, Baca argued that "The Chicano was forced to look inward and understand that if we wanted respect, we would have to fight for it, if we wanted change we would have to make it ourselves."[41] Baca outlined well the structural constraints that created the conditions in which a significant number of working-class ethnic Mexican community organizations reconceptualized their community as an autonomous entity in between the hegemonic rule of both the U.S. and Mexican states. This assertion revealed the inability for both states to facilitate the demands of its peoples due to their alignment with the interests of transnational capital. Baca stated that the inability for the two national governments to end the violence placed on ethnic Mexican and Latina/o communities and forcing "the Chicano" to "look inward" ultimately was "a positive thing because it has

[40] Ibid.

[41] Ibid.

reinforced us (Mexican Americans and Mexican nationals) as one people and I see a linking up somewhere in the future based on that understanding and that respect."[42]

The Chicano/Mexicano Perspective workshop reflected a transnational analysis of power by proposing solutions that crossed borders. Reckoning with the U.S. conquest of the Southwest, the workshop participants, led by Corky Gonzales, asserted, "That this conference go on record as demanding unconditional residency for all people with all rights and privileges of indigenous people as provided for in the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo."[43] Following the idea that the "Chicano/Mexicano" community was an entity that pre-existed what became the U.S. Southwest, workshop participants sought the reinstitution of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which guaranteed the citizenship rights of the Mexican inhabitants of the Southwest following the U.S.-Mexican War in 1848, be extended to contemporary migrants from Mexico. This epitomized the extension of Chicana/o Movement goals by rectifying the long history of Mexican subjugation in the U.S. in an era of increasing globalization and migration by making official the interlaced and unequal social, political and economic ties between the U.S. and Mexico.

But what about non-Mexican migrants? The assertion of Chicano/Mexicano historical rights to roam the U.S.-Mexico border region did not prevent the conference from looking beyond the wider issue of migration from the third world to the first. In fact, the class analysis of labor exploitation as a key part of immigration policy facilitated the assertion of a type of class identity that intersected and existed alongside an ethno-

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[42] Ibid.

[43] "Resolutions Passed at the National Chicano Immigration Conference," May 24, 1980, Box 43, Folder 1, Baca Papers.

racial community membership. The second resolution of the Chicano/Mexicano workshop stated, "That this conference go on record as abolishing all quotas on immigration from countries where the USA has political, economic, and military domination."[44] This resolution reflected Baca's earlier assertions that U.S. society owes third world migrants the opportunity to migrate and settle because U.S. policy-makers have "allowed Chase Manhattan to run amuck in the third world." By viewing the immigration issue as a manifestation of capital power and control of third world and working-class peoples more broadly, the conference was able to transcend narrow nationalist solutions to a crisis that racialized their community in a unique and particular way. This sentiment was reinforced by resolutions from the Economics, Labor, and Foreign Worker Program Workshop facilitated by veteran labor activist Bert Corona and Nick Hernandez. This workshop went on record for "supporting an Open-Border for immigrant workers and a Closed-border for multinational corporations."[45] Noting that inequality emanated from multinational corporations greed as much as ambiguous racism, conference goers argued against the free movement of capital and policing of labor. The rejection of any guest worker programs, defined as "twentieth century slavery," reflected this sentiment further.[46]

While the conference expressed broad notions of inclusivity in its analysis of race and class oppression, it failed to report on the Women and Immigration Workshop in its final proceedings and resolutions or more fully consider the powerful ways in which

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[44] Ibid.

[45] Ibid.

[46] Ibid.

patriarchy shaped global systems of power. While other workshops were not reported on, including the workshops on media and legislation, the failure to adequately address gender was reflective of many ethnic mobilizations calling for community unity. While the Chicano Immigration Conference and wider Chicano/Mexicano movement addressed and contemplated the experience of a group often subordinated within their community, noncitizens, Chicano/Mexicano critiques of border policing were based largely on the ways in which it broke up the nuclear family. This construction of Chicano/Mexicano ties through a celebration of families likely reinforced the domesticated positions of women as wives and mothers, possibly limiting the ability for feminist concerns and female leadership to reach a matter of significance. Veteran labor activist Soledad "Chole" Alatorre along with Adela Serrano, Ann Legrada and Maria Montes were to suppose to have led the workshop, but no evidence reveals its resolutions or even if the workshop took place. More importantly, the conference participants and its leaders decided not to publish the resolutions if in fact the workshop did occur.

While the conference proceedings and resolution missed the opportunity to explore and grapple with the ways gender issues shaped the many identities existent within the Latina/o community, it did extend notions of identity and solidarity across national boundaries through engaging Mexican civil society. Several newspapers, particularly in the Mexican press in Tijuana and wider Baja California, printed the resolutions of the workshops at the conference. Baca held a press conference in Tijuana days before the conference charging that the U.S. press did not report the problems of

Mexican Americans due to its racist history.[47] Furthermore, the Labor, Economics and Foreign Worker Program workshop resolved that it supported the demands made at an International Immigration Conference held a month earlier in Mexico City, revealing solidarities with groups in Mexico advocating for undocumented migrant workers.[48] The Chicano/Mexicano Perspective workshop demanded that the Mexican government support progressive groups in Mexico and Chicano groups in their struggle for human rights and demand for compliance with the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. Workshop participants argued this was based on the "fact" that, "somos un pueblo sin fronteras" (we are a people without borders) and therefore "the struggle for immigrant rights is part and parcel of the struggle for Chicano/Mexicano rights to self-determination."[49] This pronouncement of transnational citizenship enabled activists to assert a community identity that sought autonomy from, but compliance with both the U.S. and Mexican states.

The effects of the National Chicano Conference on Immigration on Mexican activists and wider society are difficult to measure. Mexican activists' participation in the conference was minimal, as only one immigrant rights group from Tijuana attended. Yet the Mexican media, particularly in Tijuana and wider Baja California, was churning

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[47] "Asegura Un Lider Chicano: La Prensa Americana Ha Sido Racista y Discrimatoria," *El Heraldo de Baja California*, 19 de Mayo 1980. See Box 42, Folder 1, Baca Papers. The Mexican newspapers, *ABC*, *Voz de Pueblo*, *El Mexicano*, and *Zeta* reported on the conference and listed at least some of the resolutions. See Box 42, Folder 1, Baca Papers.

[48] The complete resolution reads, "That this conference go on record as supporting the demands presented at the International Immigration Conference in Mexico City held on April 28, 1980." See Box 43, Folder 1, Baca Papers.

[49] "Resolutions Passed at the National Chicano Immigration Conference," May 24, 1980, Box 43, Folder 1, Baca Papers.

out story after story on the conference and other Chicana/o Movement activities that focused on immigration. San Diego Chicana/o activists had become especially familiar with the Tijuana press through the years due to their proximity to the border. Baca recalled, "The U.S. media, even in our own backyard in San Diego would not cover our issues. So we came to find that the Tijuana media would eat stuff on racism up, send it to Mexico City and it would come full circle back to the U.S. press."[50] At a CCR meeting devoted to planning the conference, it was noted that activists "have learned that the best way to get attention in Washington is through Mexico." They further observed that "through the last 10 years they (Chicana/o activists in San Diego) have been able to educate the media to the immigration situation and have encouraged investigative reporting as opposed to the previous bylines doled out by the INS."[51] Baca argued that going through Mexico and back to the U.S. press pressured the San Diego press to finally take note of their activities, concerns and demands.[52]

Engagement with Mexican society brought Bert Corona and several CCR members to an academic conference called the First Symposium on Immigration at the Autonomous University of Sinaloa in Culiacán, Sinaloa, Mexico in June of 1980.[53] The

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[50] Herman Baca Oral History Collection Session 5, Tape 7, Baca Papers.

[51] "Committee on Chicano Rights Community Meeting," February 27, 1980, Box 106, Folder 6, Centro Cultural de la Raza Archives.

[52] Herman Baca Oral History Collection Session 5, Tape 7, Baca Papers.

[53] Baca's mentor Bert Corona was involved with the Autonomous University of Sinaloa the previous year and its conference on Amnesty. Interestingly, the conference's theme of amnesty mostly referred to amnesty for political prisoners who protested the Díaz Ordaz regime in 1968 and Corona inserted amnesty for undocumented migrants into the United States with his participation acting as Professor in the Chicano Studies Department at California State University, Los Angeles. It is likely, therefore, that CCR member participation in the 1980 symposium was also related to the connections Corona had already established. See "Conferencia Culicán, Mexico," Box 30, Folders 13 and 14, Bert Corona Papers, Stanford University Special Collection Library.

conference highlighted the growing transnational activity that Chicano/Mexicano activists were engaging in San Diego as hysteria grew over "illegal aliens." Baca utilized the conference to broadcast concerns about the violence exerted upon the ethnic Mexican community in San Diego and throughout the U.S. and to spread word about the solutions proposed by Chicana/o grassroots organizations at the National Chicano Immigration Conference. At a press conference in Culiacan, CCR activists noted that the Chicano Immigration Conference participants had agreed to report on recent violations committed at the U.S. Mexico border at the Culiacán symposium "for the purpose of demanding an end to the abuses that occur daily to Mexicanos/Chicanos in the United States."[54] They cited the cases of 4-year old Mario Canedo, the shooting of Efren Reyes and Benito Rincon while handcuffed, as well as the February 1979 shooting of 28 year old Margarito Fernandez and the May 1979 shooting of 16 year olds Martin Zarate and Ricardo Real by the Border Patrol.[55] The CCR experience in Mexico showed how Chicano/Mexicano participants in the National Chicano Immigration Conference sought to enact transnational forms of community and coalition by disseminating information about the abuses experienced by Mexican and Latina/o migrants due to border enforcement.

The Culiacán symposium also showed how the CCR and wider Chicano/Mexicano movement sought to expose the experiences and give voice to undocumented migrants themselves. A key resolution from the National Chicano Immigration Conference that outlined future activities for the CCR was the appointment

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[54] "Informe a la Prensa, Culican, Sinaloa," Committee on Chicano Rights, June, 16, 1980, Box 41, Folder 12, Baca Papers.

[55] Ibid.

of a representative from the conference participants to "present the most degrading violations of human rights to international Human Rights Organizations with the understanding that the long range solutions be in our people's self-determination."[56] By documenting and presenting the experiences and voices of noncitizens and racialized citizens abused by the Border Patrol and wider immigration policy, the conference participants reframed who was qualified to participate in the process of creating immigration policy. Their notion of social membership redefined citizenship to include undocumented migrants residing in or working in the U.S.-Mexico borderlands. This alternative citizenship also refused to abide by national boundaries, redrawing its jurisdiction to include both the U.S. and Mexico. To officially give time and space to those abused by border enforcement and immigration policies, the Chicano Immigration Conference opted to hold a tribunal as one way to further pursue an autonomous solution to the immigration crisis.

The National Chicano Immigration Tribunal

Noting that Frederick Douglass was "oppressed by a policy similar to today's immigration policy," the CCR compared the plight of Latina/o working-class communities with the African-American struggle against slavery. Drawing on the words of "a man born into slavery who rose above his chains and outlined clearly what we must do to end our oppression,"[57] the CCR introduced a document that encapsulated a

[56] "Resolutions Passed at the National Chicano Immigration Conference," May 24, 1980, Box 43, Folder 1, Baca Papers.

[57] "Statement of Purpose," "Summary from the Chicano National Immigration Tribunal 1981," Box 43, Folder 1, Baca Papers.

transnational citizenship that disrupted the discourse and practice of the nation-state and immigration policy in the service of capital. Survivors, relatives of the abused, and witnesses presented more than fifty cases of how border enforcement violence affected Latina/o migrants throughout the United States and the binational borderlands. Voicing the experiences of both the undocumented and documented, the cases were arranged into 8 different categories, including denial of medical services, use of deadly force by law enforcement officials, abuse of children, inflicting unnecessary physical violence, systematic violations of human rights, and raids of community and work-place by INS/Border Patrol agencies.[58]

The tribunal revealed the many dimensions through which border enforcement policies affected Latinas/os in the U.S. and in the borderlands. In addition to the violent incidents noted in David Avalos' pamphlet, "La Frontera en Sangre," the Chicano Tribunal put forth dozens of additional testimonies. In February of 1980, Border Patrol agents in Jim Hogg County Texas shot at a truck while in pursuit of undocumented migrants, resulting in a crash that killed two people and injured 11. In Arizona, three undocumented persons, Manuel Garcia, Elezar Ruelas and Bernabe Herrera, were tortured and hung due to the vigilantism of the Hanigan family. These were among the most dramatic incidents in which physical violence and death resulted from the hysterical pursuit of "illegal aliens."[59]

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[58] "Summary from the Chicano National Immigration Tribunal 1981," Table of Contents, Box 43, Folder 1, Baca Papers.

[59] "Summary from the Chicano National Immigration Tribunal 1981," Letter to President Ronald Reagan and Jose Lopez Portillo, Box 43, Folder 1, Baca Papers.

The Chicano Tribunal reported that deportations disrupted families and lives of migrants. One undocumented Mexican worker was deported to Guatemala because INS agents thought he looked Guatemalan. Frank Amaro from the Mexican American National Organization (MANO) in Los Angeles testified about the more than 300 cases from 1971-1979 in which his organization had assisted children separated from their parents due to deportation. He noted that a number of the families were never reunited. MANO sought to keep these children from entering the foster system in that it made reunification with their families more difficult. Elvia Murphy Davalos was forcibly separated from her husband when INS agents detained and stripped searched her while the couple was visiting from Tijuana on a legitimate temporary visa to visit Disney Land. Such practices affected U.S. citizens of Latina/o ancestry also. At least two Puerto Rican men, and therefore U.S. citizens, reported being routinely harassed and detained by INS officers. In fact, several U.S. citizens were detained, harassed, and, at times,deported.[60]

In the finalized document of the tribunal proceedings, newspaper coverage and additional archival evidence was added to a summary of the testimony for each case. The tribunal proceedings document noted that these cases "represent nothing but the tip of the iceberg of immigration abuses."[61] Furthermore, the tribunal leaders argued, "The enclosed documentation proves beyond a shadow of a doubt that these rights violations which have been perpetrated under the color of the law are widespread and commonplace."[62] The racialized experiences of the Latina/o community, both

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[60] Ibid.

[61] Ibid.

[62]Ibid.

noncitizens and citizens, had been systematically erased. The tribunal document worked as a collective demand to end this erasure, demanding recognition of an alternative notion of self-governance, community formation and citizenship.

Through the very act of proceeding with an independent forum, the tribunal called for the right to exist as a transnational community, both American and Mexican. The Chicano Tribunal enacted a democratizing project that enabled participation in the affairs of both societies. Rather than exist at the infra-political level, Chicano/Mexicano communities sought to engage with and demand recognition from the U.S. and Mexican governments. This was made clear when the 1,000 page document created out of the tribunal was addressed to new President Ronald Reagan and President Jose Lopez Portillo. A letter to both presidents appeared in the first few pages of the document "formally request(ing) a response to the enclosed documents outlining specific cases of violations of human, civil, and constitutional rights of persons of Mexicano/Latino ancestry by the INS/Border Patrol and other law enforcement agencies."[63] The letter was signed off by Baca, in his capacity as the appointed representative of the proceedings of the National Chicano Immigration Conference and the Chicano National Immigration Tribunal, reminding the two presidents that the escalation of violence due to border enforcement polices "has been totally ignore by both United States and Mexican policy-makers." For this reason Chicano/Mexicano leaders demanded the immediate ending of violence from the everyday practice of border enforcement, the establishment of a binational commission with substantive dialog with communities in "areas most affected

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[63] Summary from the Chicano National Immigration Tribunal 1981," Letter to President Ronald Reagan and Jose Lopez Portillo, Box 43, Folder 1, Baca Papers.

by immigration abuses," and an inclusion of the abuses documented in the tribunal summary in any future talks on immigration policy. Noting the transnational space in which their communities existed, Baca asserted, "It is our position that the social, economic, and political interdependency between United States and Mexico demands that these actions be taken immediately."[64]

The tribunal document concluded with recommendations asserted by Chicano/Mexicano activists that reiterated the need to abolish the INS/Border Patrol, cease all deportation mechanisms, and ensure the protection of the human and civil rights of undocumented migrants. A list of the resolutions from the National Chicano Immigration Conference, along with a "Bill of Rights for the Undocumented Worker," asserted these recommendations to the two administrations. Developed at the First International Conference for the Full Rights of Undocumented Workers, the Bill of Rights put forth13 decrees. Included in these decrees were that every immigrant worker have the right to establish legal residency by demonstrating a status as a wage earner and tax payer, the right to all Constitutional rights afforded citizens, the right to be reunited with family, access to labor rights, the right to bilingual education and bilingual legal proceedings, the right to vote in her or his country of origin's federal elections, and the right to vote in local and state elections of the nation resided in.[65] Through the tribunal document, Chicano/Mexicano activists reconfigured the nation-states' bounded management of rights to take into consideration the transnational operation of capitalism from the perspective of migrant laborers and racialized citizens.

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[64] Ibid.

[65] "Bill of Rights for the Undocumented Workers," Summary from the Chicano National Immigration Tribunal 1981, Box 43, Folder 1, Baca Papers.

Conclusion

Continued repression and violence exerted by border enforcement policies in the San Diego borderlands facilitated Chicano/Mexicano assertions of autonomy in a transnational context. The National Chicano Immigration Conference and National Chicano Immigration Tribunal in 1980 and 1981 were the culmination of mobilizing efforts that expressed already practiced modes of social, cultural and economic survival. Despite harassment and at times violent repression, Mexican and Latina/o working class migrants continued to come in mass to challenge an arrangement of globalization that impoverished their homelands and attempted to police their movement.

Chicano/Mexicano activists formulated a process of ethnic community through which the intersecting political needs of racialized citizens and noncitizens were considered and acted upon. In so doing, insurgent notions of citizenship were expressed and enacted to redraw a civil society that more readily acknowledged the shared political, social, and economic realities in the U.S.-Mexico borderlands. Chicano/Mexicano activism thus gave voice to those otherwise deemed "illegal" and challenged the brutalities of globalization through the experiences of the most degraded among us.

EPILOGUE

In the fall of 2010, Arizona governor Jan Brewer signed Senate Bill 1070 into state law. The controversial measure directed police and others to determine the immigration status of persons solely on "reasonable suspicion." A host of Latina/o activists, civil rights advocates, and anti-racist organizers lambasted the bill for legalizing racial discrimination and giving local law enforcement officers the power to determine who appears to be an undocumented migrant. As part of the massive outcry against S.B. 1070, Herman Baca, president of the Committee on Chicano Rights (CCR) in the San Diego area, released a press release on April 22 in concert with calls to boycott the state of Arizona. Baca stated that "for any person of Mexican ancestry" the law will make it illegal to be present in Arizona whether undocumented, legal or U.S. born; legally mandate de jure segregation, creating a police state to rival the practices of states like Mississippi in the segregated South of the last century; and lay the foundation for a South African type apartheid system in the U.S. Southwest.[1] Baca's 2010 statement reiterated positions taken up by the Committee on Chicano Rights (CCR) and wider transnational-minded Chicana/o activists in the 1970s that identified border enforcement as detrimental to the ethnic Mexican and Latina/o community across differences in citizenship status and nationality. Nestled in the San Diego borderlands, an area Chicana/o activists called the Vietnam of the Southwest because of its militarized environment at the site of the largest border crossing area in the country, Baca and the CCR had firsthand experience with the policing mechanisms that targeted so-called illegal aliens: systematic

[1] Committee on Chicano Rights Press Release, "Boycott Arizona," April 22, 2010.

harassment, detainment, brutality, and violence against the entire Latina/o community. Due to further militarization efforts at the U.S.-Mexico border and in the San Diego borderlands since the 1990s, the flow of undocumented laborers from Mexico and Latin America has not ceased, but simply been re-directed toward the rural deserts of Arizona.[2] For all of these reasons, San Diego Chicano/Mexicano activists have had much to say to both proponents and critics of the emergent Arizona law.[3]

It is telling in the way Baca advocated for a basis of resistance to these anti-immigrant and, by extension, anti-Latina/o laws. Baca asks, "What are we as a people going to do to oppose and stop the Arizona law?"[4] His notion of "we as a people" formulated the answer to his question, that the ethno-racial community under attack must design their own solutions as an ethnic Mexican and Latina/o community. The primary organizing basis for resistance, according to Baca, is an ethno-racial identity that crosses differences in citizenship status and is transnational in scope. Baca exclaims, "Unlike the 1950's and 60's our population in 2010 is no longer small. Presently in the U.S. there are close to 50 million Chicanos, Latinos and Mexicanos, and all people of good will that should organize a boycott, civil disobedience and dialog with President Obama and the Democratic Party" as "a people."[5]

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[2] See Karl Eschbach, et al., "Death at the Border," *International Migration Review* 33(2) (1992); Laurie MacMillan, *Crossing Arizona*, DVD, Directed by Joseph Matthew and Dan DeVivo, (New York: Cinema Guild, 2006); Joseph Nevins, Operation Gatekeeper: The Rise of the "Illegal Alien" and the Making of the U.S.-Mexico Boundary, (New York: Routledge, 2002).

[3] In addition to the CCR's commentary, a coalition of San Diego leaders held a press conference entitled "Arizona Fascism Press Conference," on April 27, 2010.

[4] Committee on Chicano Rights, 2010.

[5] Ibid.

In closing his 2010 press release, Baca further complicated the notion of a united ethno-racial community by reminding listeners that the racial oppression experienced by the Latina/o community via immigration policies is rooted in structural inequality and class concerns. He explained that "our community" needs to understand that "The 'immigration problem' is systemic and historical (since the end of the U.S./Mexico War) and, like the Afro-American slave system (early 1600 to mid 1800), was created because of this country's economic historical addiction to FREE and CHEAP labor." Baca explained further, "The existing immigration system is a **labor issue** and exists because Mexican workers are in a rightless condition."[6] In other words, immigration policies that employ law enforcement and militarized solutions do not reflect an attempt to repair a broken system. Instead, they extend a more than century-year-old labor system by empowering police forces to further manage and control a noncitizen and racialized workforce. Consequently, Baca asks, "how do we organize ourselves to stop the Arizona law, and similar proposals to end the historical exploitation of Mexican labor and the violations of our people's human, civil and constitutional rights?"

Baca's analysis of the current moment in Arizona reveals how this dissertation's explorations of ethnic autonomy as a vehicle through which to address the structural class inequalities of a globalizing political economy continue to hold relevance. Baca's call to organize as a people makes sense if we take Omi and Winant's classic assertion that racialization projects, such as immigration policy, are often re-articulated by the targeted

[6] Ibid. Words in bold a reflective of the actual press conference.

racialized group as a form of resistance.[7] Indeed, Latinas/os from the Congreso of the 1930s to the CCR in the 1980s organized as a people to resist a system that targeted, harassed, brutalized and ultimately excluded them from any meaningful experience of citizenship. If we note that ethnic and racial identities and mobilizations can and do elide class and labor concerns, Baca's assertion that immigration is by and large a "labor issue" rings true. This, of course, runs contrary to the mainstream media's coverage of the contemporary immigration debate, which is framed largely as a "Latino" issue, effectively emptying the debate of any real class and labor content and ignoring its relationship to other racialized and working-class sectors of society. The notion that immigration is not simply about the rights of Latinas/os, but more fully about the continued existence of systems of labor exploitation, therefore leads us to ask key questions concerning how to address situations such as those in Arizona. In other words, how do activists address a labor and class issue that is layered with, as Baca put it, systematic violations of particular racialized people's human and civil rights?

The Chicano Tribunal epitomized an alternative practice of citizenship that was expressed through practices of transnational ethnic community and consciously sought to mobilize independently of the state. This practice of an insurgent citizenship not only sought the rights for a particular ethnic community, but expressed class concerns and structural critique through engagement with racial oppression. Chicano/Mexicano

[7] I see ethno-racial identity and terminology as always a contentious and on-going process. I utilize primarily the theoretical work on identity as exhibited, for example, by Stuart Hall, "Old and New Identities, Old and New Ethnicities" in Anthony D. King, ed. *Culture, Globalization, and The World System*, (Binghamton: SUNY Department of Art and Art History, 1991) and the concept of "racial formation" as developed by Michael Omi and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1990s*, (New York: Routledge Press, 1994). These scholars promote an understanding of identity and race as shifting and re-articulated both by the state and by society members in the context of struggle.

activists argued that their particular experience of oppression was tied to a global system that enabled capital to access noncitizen laborers and transverse the globe while subjugating laborers to border enforcement and resulting violence. They argued that "crises" over "illegal aliens" were constructed by elites to divide people with similar ethnic and class ties. In this way, Chicano/Mexicano activism addressed labor and class issues through mobilization as an ethnic community. The trajectory of the Chicano/Mexicano activism that emerged out of the Chicana/o Movement and on the shoulders of Mexican-American/mexicano labor activism in the 1930s faced a major obstacle in the passing of the pivotal Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) of 1986. The IRCA successfully fragmented the Chicano/Mexicano mobilizations by appeasing some activists through the granting of a limited amnesty, while others continued to seek out the complete de-militarization of immigration policy.

Yet the central organizing base of more contemporary immigrant rights movements are rooted in transnational conceptions of Latina/o communities developed by Chicano/Mexicano activists years ago. Commentary on the historic 2006 marches even suggests that an emergent notion of citizenship was expressed by noncitizen protesters that demanded immediate legal standing, noted their right of belonging in U.S. society without disconnection with their home societies, and asserted these demands independently from existing discourse on solutions to the immigration crisis.[8] Like Chicano/Mexicano activists almost 30 years earlier, and their labor movement predecessors of the 1930s, these protestors imagined new forms of citizenship that took

[8] See David G. Gutiérrez, "Citizens, Noncitizens and the Shell-Game of Immigration Policy Reform: A Response to Dan Tichenor," *Labor: Studies of Working-Class Histories of the Americas* 5(2) (2008).

into account the transnational economic, political and cultural realties of U.S., Mexican and wider societies in *las Américas* and beyond. Chicana/o and Mexicana/o activists from the Congreso to the CCR put forth these notions of transnational community. Yet the space forged by Congreso and the CCR through which grassroots ethnic Mexican activists convened to put forth their own solutions and critique border enforcement policy as part of a system of noncitizen labor exploitation are not as of yet identifiable in these current mobilizations, reveal yet another "Time for Resistance." It is my hope that this dissertation on the struggles of the past might contribute to the creation of new spaces through which racialized citizens and migrants might continue to imagine and practice a working-class transnational community on par with capital and the nation-state.

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