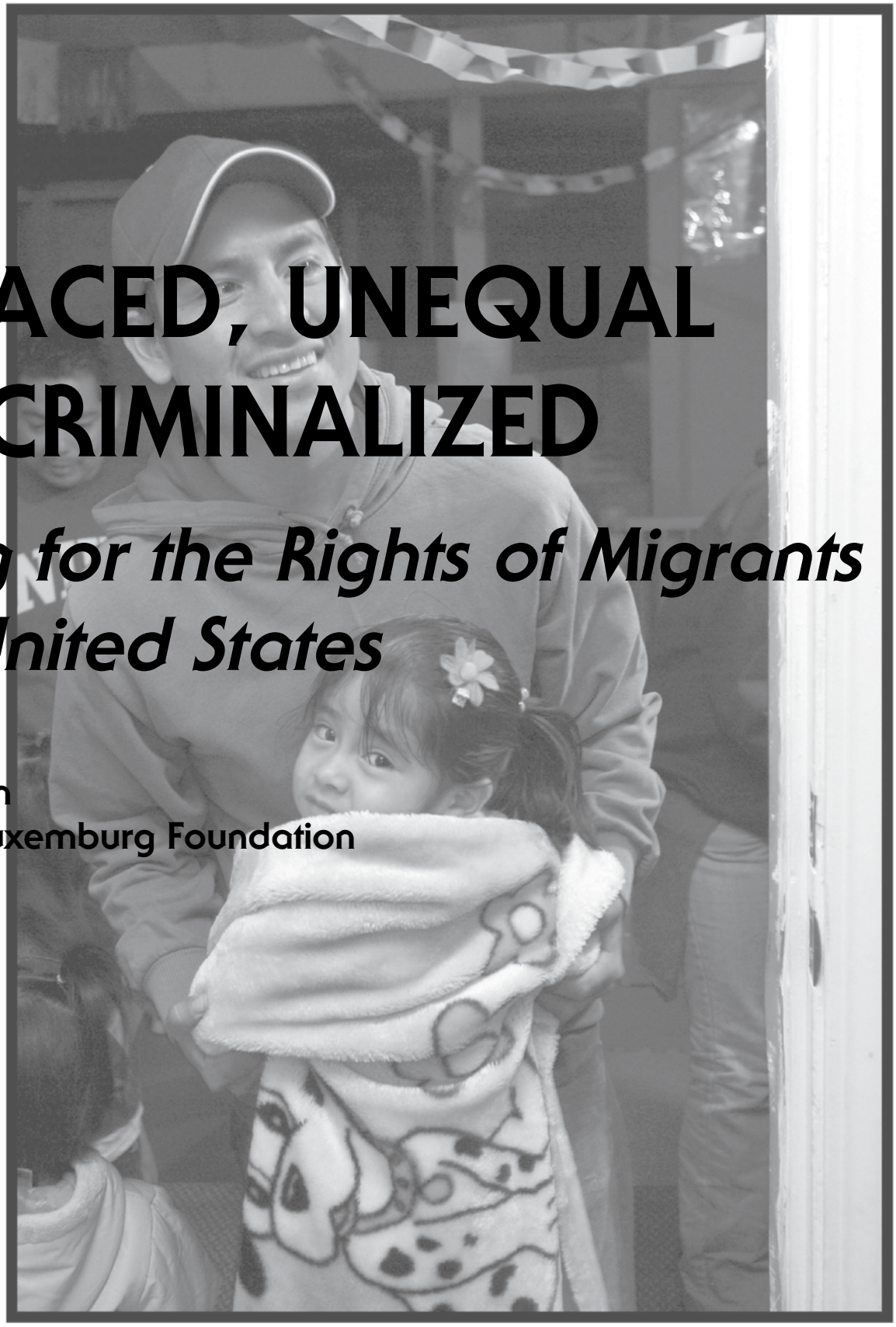


# DISPLACED, UNEQUAL AND CRIMINALIZED

## *Fighting for the Rights of Migrants in the United States*

**By David Bacon**
**For the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation**

Oakland, California -- Protesting raids at a local hotel.

# Introduction

A political alliance is developing between countries with a labor export policy and the corporations who use that labor in the global north. Many countries sending migrants to the developed world depend on remittances to finance social services and keep the lid on social discontent over poverty and joblessness, while continuing to make huge debt payments. Corporations using that displaced labor share a growing interest with those countries' governments in regulating the system that supplies it.

Increasingly, the mechanisms for regulating that flow of people are contract labor programs—called "guest worker" or "temporary worker" programs in the U.S., or "managed migration" in the UK and much of the EU. With or without these programs, migration to the U.S. and other industrial countries is a fact of life. Despite often using rhetoric that demonizes immigrants, the U.S. Congress is not debating the means for ending migration. Nothing can, short of a radical reordering of the world's economy.

Nor are the current waves of immigration raids and deportations in the U.S. intended to halt it. In an economy in which immigrant labor plays a critical part, the price of stopping migration would be economic crisis. The intent of immigration policy is managing the flow of people, determining their status here in the U.S., in the interest of those who put that labor to work.

Migrants are human beings first however, and their desire for community is as strong as the need to labor. The use of neoliberal reforms and economic treaties to displace communities, to produce a global army of available and vulnerable workers, has a brutal impact. Existing and proposed free trade agreements between the U.S. and Mexico, Canada, Central America, Peru, Colombia, Panama, South Korea, and Jordan not only do not stop the economic transformations that uproot families and throw them into the migrant stream—they push that whole process forward.

On a world scale, the migratory flow caused by displacement is still generally self-initiated. In other words, while people may be driven by forces beyond their control, they move at their own will and discretion, trying to find survival and economic opportunity, and to reunite their families and create new communities in the countries they now call home. But the idea of managing the flow of migration is growing.

It is the contention of this paper that these global economic forces are driving the development of U.S. immigration policy. Increasingly, the political fault lines that divide the U.S. immigrant rights movement are determined by decisions to either support this general trend in policy, and its political representatives in Washington DC, or to oppose it and create a social movement for equality and rights based in the communities of migrants themselves.

The development of a labor supply and labor management system to govern the flow of migrants, that is, of people, requires increasingly ferocious enforcement. With the criminalization of work for undocumented migrants a quarter century ago, along with the resurrection of a contract labor program for migrants, in the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, the parameters were set for the debates over immigration policy that continue to the present. Today immigration raids and enforcement actions, harsh and racist legislation, and the hysteria that comes with all this, are sweeping our country. Today's migrants have become needed low-wage labor and criminals at the same time.

This paper will outline first the global economic forces driving displacement and migration, and their impact on communities. It will then outline the basic structure and purpose of U.S. immigration policy, and the basic proposals for changing it. It will examine the division between mainstream, Washington DC-based supporters of corporate immigration reform and community- and labor-based groups who call for an alternative, and finally it will outline their proposals for an alternative based on human and labor rights.

We begin with the examination of one particular stream of migrants, of indigenous people from Oaxaca, both because their experience is similar to others, but also because organizations in the communities involved have articulated a sophisticated analysis of the system in which they move.

Postville, Iowa - Maria Rosala Mejia Marroquin, a Guatemalan immigrant, was arrested in an immigration raid at the Agriprocessors meatpacking plant in Postville. She was released to care for her child, but had to wear an ankle bracelet to monitor her movements. She could not work or travel, and was eventually deported.

# Where the Flow of People Begins

Rufino Domínguez, the former coordinator of the Binational Front of Indigenous Organizations, who now heads the Oaxacan Institute for Attention to Migrants, estimates there are about 500,000 indigenous people from Oaxaca living in the U.S., 300,000 in California alone.

According to Rick Mines, author of the 2010 Indigenous Farm Worker Study, "the total population of California's indigenous Mexican farm workers is about 120,000 ... a total of 165,000 indigenous farm workers and family members in California." Counting the many indigenous people living and working in urban areas, the total is considerably higher, he says, easily meeting Domínguez' estimate.

The study counted 54,000 people who had emigrated from 350 Oaxacan towns, or about 150 per town. Given the size of many small communities, this supports the widespread assertion of many indigenous Oaxacans that some towns have become depopulated, or are communities of the very old and very young, where most working-age people have left to work in the north.

"In the early 1990s there were about 35,000 indigenous farm workers in California," Mines says, "while in the 2004 to 2008 period there were about four times as many, or 120,000 indigenous Mexican farm workers." In addition, indigenous people made up 7% of Mexican migrants in 1991-3, the years just before the passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement. In 2006-8 they made up 29% -- four times more.

California has a farm labor force of about 700,000 workers, so the day is not far off when indigenous Oaxacan migrants may make up a majority. They are truly the workforce that has been produced by NAFTA and the neoliberal changes in the global economy. Further, "the U.S. food system has long been dependent on the influx of an ever-changing, newly-arrived group of workers that sets the wages and working conditions at the entry level in the farm labor market," Mines says. The rock-bottom wages paid to this most recent wave of migrants – Oaxaca's indigenous people – sets the wage floor for all the other workers in California farm labor, keeping the labor cost of California growers low, and their profits high.

Economic crises provoked by the North American Free Trade Agreement and other economic reforms are now uprooting and displacing these Mexicans in the country's most remote areas, where people still speak languages that were old when Columbus arrived from Spain. While farm workers 20 and 30 years ago came from parts of central Mexico with a larger Spanish presence, migrants today come increasingly from indigenous communities. "There are no jobs, and NAFTA forced the price of corn so low that it's not economically possible to plant a crop anymore," Dominguez says. "We come to the U.S. to work because we can't get a price for our product at home. There's no alternative."

As he points out, U.S. trade and immigration policy are linked together. They are part of a single system, not separate and independent policies. The negotiation of the North American Free Trade Agreement was in fact an important step in the development of this relationship.

Since NAFTA's passage in 1993, the U.S. Congress has debated and passed several new trade agreements – with Peru, Jordan, Chile, and the Central American Free Trade Agreement. At the same time it has debated immigration policy as though those trade agreements bore no relationship to the waves of displaced people migrating to the U.S., looking for work. Meanwhile, a rising tide of anti-immigrant hysteria has increasingly demonized those migrants, leading to measures to deny them jobs, rights, or any pretense of equality with people living in the communities around them. To

resolve any of these dilemmas, from adopting rational and humane immigration policies to reducing the fear and hostility towards migrants, the starting point must be an examination of the way U.S. policies have both produced migration, and criminalized migrants.

Santiago Juxtlahuaca, Oaxaca, Mexico -- Zacarias Salazar plows a cornfield with an ox.

# The Immigration Reform and Control Act and NAFTA

Trade negotiations and immigration policy were formally joined together when Congress passed the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) in 1986. Immigrant rights activists campaigned against the law because it contained employer sanctions, prohibiting employers for the first time on a federal level from hiring undocumented workers. Those advocates said the proposal amounted to criminalizing work for the undocumented. IRCA's liberal defenders pointed to its amnesty provision as a gain that justified sanctions, and the bill eventually did enable over 4 million people living in the U.S. without immigration documents to gain permanent residence. Showing the broad bipartisan consensus for the bill's approach to immigration in Washington DC, the bill was signed into law by Ronald Reagan, a Republican and the country's most conservative president up to that time.

Few noted one other provision of the law. IRCA set up a Commission for the Study of International Migration and Cooperative Economic Development to study the causes of immigration to the U.S. The commission was inactive until 1988, but began holding hearings when the U.S. and Canada signed a bilateral free trade agreement. After Mexican President Carlos Salinas de Gortari made it plain he favored a similar agreement with Mexico, the commission made a report to President George Bush Sr. and to Congress in 1990. It found, unsurprisingly, that the main motivation for coming to the U.S. was economic. To slow or halt this flow, it recommended "promoting greater economic integration between the migrant sending countries and the United States through free trade" and that "U. S. economic policy should promote a system of open trade." It concluded that "the United States should expedite the development of a U.S.-Mexico free trade area and encourage its incorporation with Canada into a North American free trade area," while warning that "it takes many years – even generations – for sustained growth to achieve the desired effect."

The negotiations that led to NAFTA started within months of the report. As Congress debated the treaty, Mexican President Carlos Salinas de Gortari toured the United States, telling audiences unhappy at high levels of immigration that passing NAFTA would reduce it by providing employment for Mexicans in Mexico. Back home Salinas and other treaty proponents made the same argument. NAFTA, they claimed, would set Mexico on a course to become a first-world nation. "We did become part of the first world," says Juan Manuel Sandoval, coordinator of the Permanent Seminario on Chicano and Border Studies at Mexico City's National Institute of Anthropology and History. "The back yard."

NAFTA, however, did not lead to rising incomes and employment, and therefore, it did not decrease the flow of migrants to the U.S. Instead, it became an important source of pressure on Mexicans, particularly Oaxacans, to migrate. The treaty forced yellow corn grown by Mexican farmers without subsidies to compete in Mexico's own market with corn from huge U.S. producers, subsidized by the U.S. farm bill. Agricultural exports to Mexico more than doubled during the NAFTA years, from $4.6 to $9.8 billion annually – $2.5 billion in 2006 in corn alone. In January and February of 2008, huge demonstrations in Mexico sought to block the implementation of the agreement's final chapter, which lowered the tariff barriers on white corn and beans.

As a result of a growing crisis in agricultural production, by the 1980s Mexico had already become a corn importer. Corn imports rose from 2,014,000 to 10,330,000 tons from 1992 to 2008. According to Alejandro Ramírez, general director of the Confederation of Mexican Pork Producers, Mexico imported 30,000 tons of pork in 1995, the year NAFTA took effect. By 2010 pork imports, almost all

from the U.S., had grown over 25 times, to 811, 000 tons. As a result, pork prices received by Mexican producers dropped 56%.

Imports had a dramatic effect on Mexican jobs. "We lost 4000 pig farms," Alejandro Ramírez estimates. "On Mexican farms, each 100 animals produce 5 jobs, so we lost 20,000 farm jobs directly from imports. Counting the 5 indirect jobs dependent on each direct job, we lost over 120,000 jobs in total. This produces migration to the U.S. or to Mexican cities -- a big problem for our country." Once Mexican meat and corn producers were driven from the market by imports, the Mexican economy was left vulnerable to price changes dictated by U.S. agribusiness or U.S. policy. "When the U.S. modified its corn policy to encourage ethanol production," he charges, "corn prices jumped 100% in one year."

NAFTA then prohibited price supports, without which hundreds of thousands of small farmers found it impossible to sell corn or other farm products for what it cost to produce them. The CONASUPO system, in which the Mexican government bought corn at subsidized prices, turned it into tortillas and sold them in state-franchised grocery stores at subsidized low prices, was abolished.

Mexico couldn't protect its own agriculture from the fluctuations of the world market. A global coffee glut in the 1990s plunged prices below the cost of production. A less entrapped government might have bought the crops of Veracruz farmers to keep them afloat, or provided subsidies for other crops. But once free market structures were in place prohibiting government intervention to help them, those farmers paid the price. Veracruz campesinos joined the stream of workers headed north. There they became an important part of the workforce in the Smithfield pork processing plant in North Carolina, as well as in other industries.

U.S. companies were allowed to own land and factories, eventually anywhere in Mexico, without Mexican partners. U.S.-based Union Pacific, in partnership with the Larrea family, became the owner of the country's main north-south rail line, and immediately discontinued virtually all passenger service, as railroad corporations had done in the US. Mexican rail employment dropped from over 90,000 to 36,000. Facing privatization, railroad workers mounted a wildcat strike to try to save their jobs, but they lost and their union became a shadow of its former presence in Mexican politics.

Slashing wages in privatized enterprises and gutting union agreements only increased the wage differential between the U.S. and Mexico. According to Garrett Brown of the Maquiladora Health and Safety Network, the average Mexican wage was 23% of the U.S. manufacturing wage in 1975. By 2002 it was less than an eighth, according to Mexican economist, and former Senator Rosa Albina Garabito. Brown says that since NAFTA went into effect, real Mexican wages dropped by 22%, while worker productivity increased 45%.

Low wages are the magnet used to attract US and other foreign investors. In mid-June, 2006, Ford Corporation, already one of Mexico's largest employers, announced it would invest $9 billion more in building new factories. Meanwhile, Ford said it was closing at least 14 US plants, eliminating the jobs of tens of thousands of U.S. workers. Both moves were part of the company's strategic plan to stem losses by cutting labor costs drastically and moving production. When General Motors was bailed out by the U.S. government in the current recession, it closed a dozen U.S. plants and laid off tens of thousands of workers. Its plans for building new plants in Mexico went forward without any hindrance.

In NAFTA's first year, 1994, one million Mexicans lost their jobs, by the government's count, when the peso was devalued. To avert the sell off of short-term bonds and a flood of capital to the north.

U.S. Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin engineered a $20 billion loan to Mexico, which was paid to bondholders, mostly US banks. In return, U.S. and British banks gained control of the country's financial system. Mexico had to pledge its oil revenue to pay off foreign debt, making the country's primary source of income unavailable for social needs.

As the Mexican economy, especially the border maquiladora industry, became increasingly tied to the U.S. market, Mexican workers lost jobs when the market for what those factories produced shrank during U.S. recessions. In 2000-2001 400,000 jobs were lost on the U.S./Mexico border, and in the current recession, thousands more have been eliminated.

Monterrey, Mexico -- La Alianza barrio, a community of displaced people, who work in maquiladoras.

# Displacement – a Product of Free Market Reforms

All of these policies produced displaced people, who could no longer make a living or survive as they'd done before. The rosy predictions of NAFTA's boosters that it would raise income and slow migration proved false. The World Bank, in a 2005 study made for the Mexican government, found that the extreme rural poverty rate of 35% in 1992-4, prior to NAFTA, jumped to 55% in 1996-8, after NAFTA took effect. This could be explained, the report said, "mainly by the 1995 economic crisis, the sluggish performance of agriculture, stagnant rural wages, and falling real agricultural prices."

By 2010 53 million Mexicans were living in poverty, according to the Monterrey Institute of Technology -- half the country's population. About 20% live in extreme poverty, almost all in rural areas. The growth of poverty, in turn, fueled migration. In 1990 4.5 million Mexican-born people lived in the U.S. A decade later, that population more than doubled to 9.75 million, and in 2008 it peaked at 12.67 million. About 11% of all Mexicans now live in the U.S. About 5.7 million were able to get some kind of visa, but another 7 million couldn't, and came nevertheless.

People were migrating from Mexico to the U.S. long before NAFTA was negotiated. Juan Manuel Sandoval emphasizes that "Mexican labor has always been linked to the different stages of U.S. capitalist development since the 19th century – in times of prosperity, by the incorporation of big numbers of workers in agricultural, manufacturing, service and other sectors, and in periods of economic crisis, by the deportation of Mexican laborers back to Mexico in huge numbers." The current wave of deportations – one million people in the last two years – bears him out.

From 1982 through the NAFTA era, successive economic reforms produced more migrants. The displacement of people had already grown so large by 1986 that the commission established by IRCA was charged with recommending measures to halt or slow it.

Its report urged that "migrant-sending countries should encourage technological modernization by strengthening and assuring intellectual property protection and by removing existing impediments to investment" and recommended that "the United States should condition bilateral aid to sending countries on their taking the necessary steps toward structural adjustment. Similarly, U.S. support for non-project lending by the international financial institutions should be based on the implementation of satisfactory adjustment programs." The IRCA commission report even acknowledged the potential for harm by noting "efforts should be made to ease transitional costs in human suffering."

The North American Free Trade Agreement, however, was not intended to relieve human suffering. In 1994, the year the treaty took effect, U.S. speculators began selling off Mexican government bonds. According to Jeff Faux, founding director of the Economic Policy Institute, "the peso crash of December, 1994, was directly connected to NAFTA, which had created a speculative bubble for Mexican assets that then collapsed when the speculators cashed in."

"It is the financial crashes and the economic disasters that drive people to work for dollars in the U.S., to replace life savings, or just to earn enough to keep their family at home together," says Harvard historian John Womack. "The debt-induced crash in the 1980s, before NAFTA, drove people north... The financial crash and the Rubin-induced reform of NAFTA, New York's financial expropriation of Mexican finances between 1995 and 2000, drove the economically wrecked, dispossessed and impoverished north again."

The U.S. immigration debate has no vocabulary that describes what happens to migrants before

they cross borders – the factors that force them into motion. In the U.S. political debate, Veracruz' uprooted coffee pickers or unemployed workers from Mexico City are called immigrants, because that debate doesn't recognize their existence before they leave Mexico. It would be more accurate to call them migrants, and the process migration, since that takes into account both people's communities of origin and those where they travel to find work.

Displacement itself becomes an unmentionable word in the Washington discourse. Not one immigration proposal in Congress in the quarter century since IRCA was passed tried to come to grips with the policies that uprooted miners, teachers, tree planters and farmers, in spite of the fact that Congress members voted for these policies. In fact, while debating bills to criminalize undocumented migrants and set up huge guest worker programs, four new trade agreements were introduced, each of which would cause more displacement and more migration.

Matamoros, Tamaulipas, Mexico -- A boy jumps over a polluted canal on his way to cross the border.

# Increasing Reliance on Guest Worker Programs

Over the last 25 years, guest worker programs have increasingly become a vehicle for channeling this migration. Increasing numbers of guest workers are recruited each year for labor in the U.S. from Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean under the H1-B, H2-A and H2-B programs. Recruiters promise high wages and charge thousands of dollars for visas, fees and transportation. By the time they leave home, the debts of guest workers are crushing.

In 2007 the Southern Poverty Law Center issued a report, Close to Slavery, documenting the treatment of guest workers. No one gets overtime, regardless of the law. Companies charge for tools, food and housing. Guest workers are routinely cheated. Recent protests have exposed the exploitation of guest workers recruited from India to work in the Mississippi shipyard of Signal International. They paid $15-20,000 for each visa, lived in barracks in the yard, and had to get up at 3.30 to use the bathroom because there weren't enough for everyone. The company cut the wages, held six workers prisoner for deportation, and fired their leader, Joseph Jacobs. In 2006 Santiago Rafael Cruz, an organizer for the Farm Labor Organizing Committee, was murdered when the union tried to set up an office in Mexico to end the corruption and abuse by guest worker contractors.

If workers protest this treatment, they're put on a blacklist and won't be hired the following year. Protesting wouldn't do much good anyway. Prior to the current administration, the U.S. Department of Labor almost never decertified a guest worker contractor, no matter how many complaints were filed against it. The paper industry depends on this system. Twenty years ago, it stopped hiring unemployed workers domestically, and began recruiting guest workers. As a result, labor costs in the forests have remained flat, while paper profits have gone up.

U.S. guest worker programs in general are just one part of a much larger, global system, which produces labor and then puts it to use. In Latin America, economic reforms promoted by the U.S. government through trade agreements and international financial institutions displace workers, from miners to coffee pickers. They then join a huge flood of labor moving north. When they arrive in the U.S., they become an indispensable part of the workforce, whether they are undocumented or laboring under work visas. Displacement creates a mobile workforce, an army of available workers that has become an indispensable part of the U.S. economy, and that of wealthy countries like it. The same system that produces migration needs and uses that labor.

The creation of a vulnerable workforce through the displacement of communities is not new. Africa became "a warren for the hunting of black skins" during the bloody displacement of communities by the slave traders. Uprooted African farmers were transported to the Americas in chains, where they became an enslaved plantation workforce from Colombia and Brazil to the U.S. south. Their labor created the wealth that made economic growth possible in the U.S. and much of Latin America and the Caribbean. But displacement and enslavement produced more than wealth. As slave-owners sought to differentiate slaves from free people, they created the first racial categories. Society was divided into those with greater and fewer rights, using skin color and origin. When anti-immigrant ideologues call modern migrants "illegals," they use a category inherited and developed from slavery.

Today displacement and inequality are as deeply ingrained in the free market economy as they were during the slave trade. Mexican President Felipe Calderon said during a 2008 visit to California, "You have two economies. One economy is intensive in capital, which is the American economy. One economy is intensive in labor, which is the Mexican economy. We are two complementary

economies, and that phenomenon is impossible to stop." When Calderon says intensive in labor, he means that millions of Mexican citizens are being displaced, and that the country's economy can't produce employment for them. To Calderon and employers on both sides of the U.S./Mexico border, migration is therefore a labor supply system.

U.S. immigration policy determines the rules under which that labor is put to use. Employers see migrants as a source of labor, and seek to organize the flow of migration, to direct it where it's needed. "The economic interests of the overwhelming majority of [U.S.] employers favor borders as porous for labor as possible," according to Faux. But employers want labor in a vulnerable, second-class status, at a price they want to pay.

President George Bush said the purpose of U.S. immigration policy should be to "connect willing employers and willing employees." He was simply restating what has been true throughout U.S. history. Providing labor is the reason Chinese migrants were brought from the Pearl River delta to build the transcontinental railroad in the 1850s. Providing labor was the motivation for the slave trade. In the 1920s and 30s Filipinos were kept moving from labor camp to labor camp, while anti-miscegenation laws kept them from settling down and forming families. They, too, provided labor, as did those Mexican farmers brought to the U.S. during the bracero contract labor program, from 1942 to 1964.

U.S., industrial agriculture has always depended on a migrant workforce, formed from waves of Chinese, Japanese, Filipinos, Mexicans, and more recently, Central Americans. Today a growing percentage of farm workers are indigenous people speaking languages other than Spanish, an indication that economic dislocation has reached far into the most remote parts of Mexico's countryside.

Within this system of displacement and migration, U.S. immigration policy determines the status of migrant labor. It doesn't stop people from coming into the country, nor is it intended to. Its main function is to determine the status of people once they're here. And an immigration policy based on providing a labor supply produces two effects. Displacement becomes an unspoken tool for producing workers, while inequality becomes official policy. The unquestioned assumption is that migrants will not have the same rights as people living in the community around them. All the immigration bills debated by Congress over the last few years are based on this assumption.

Today, calling someone an "illegal" doesn't refer to an illegal act. Illegality is a social category. Illegality creates an inexpensive system. So-called illegal workers produce wealth, but receive a smaller share in return – a source of profit for those who employ them. Inequality is profitable. In 1994 the labor of undocumented workers pumped $45,000 per person into the California economy according to the North American Integration and Development Center at UCLA. Assuming almost all were working at close to the minimum wage, each received only a small part of the value he or she produced, about $8840 each. The average manufacturing wage at the time produced an annual income more than twice that. That additional value was expropriated by employers.

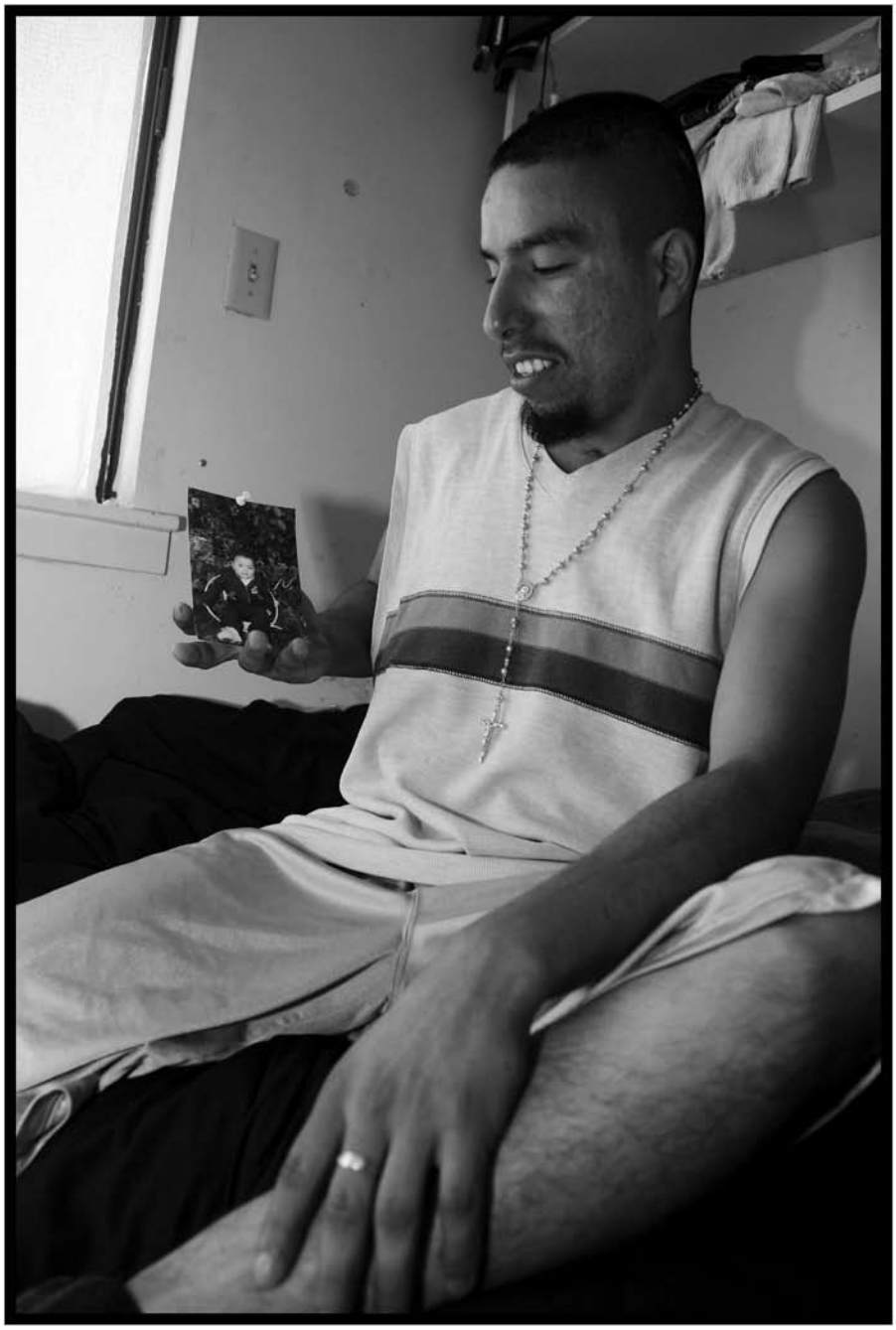
Companies depend, not just on the workers in the factories and fields, but also on the communities from which they come. If those communities stop sending workers, the labor supply dries up. Work stops. Yet no company pays for a single school or clinic, or even any taxes, in those communities. Workers pay for it all, through the money they send home.

About 11 percent of Mexico's population lives in the U.S., according to the Pew Hispanic Center. Their remittances, which were less than $4 billion in 1994 when NAFTA took effect, rose to $10 billion

in 2002, and then $20 billion three years later, according to the Bank of Mexico. In 2006 that figure reached $25 billion. At the same time, the public funds which used to pay for schools and public works leaves Mexico in debt payments to foreign banks. Remittances, as large as they are, cannot make up for this outflow. According to a report to the Mexican Chamber of Deputies, remittances accounted for an average of 1.19% of the gross domestic product between1996 and 2000, and 2.14% between 2001 and 2006. Debt payments accounted for 3% annually. By partially meeting unmet, and unfunded, social needs, remittances are indirectly subsidizing banks.

At the same time, companies dependent on this immigrant stream gain greater flexibility in adjusting for the highs and lows of market demand. The global production system has grown very flexible in accommodating economic booms and busts. Its employment system is based on the use of contractors, which is replacing the system in which workers were directly employed by the businesses using their labor. This has been the employment model in the garment and janitorial industries and in agriculture for decades. Displaced migrant workers are the backbone of this system. Its guiding principle is that immigration policy and enforcement should direct immigrants to industries when their labor is needed, and remove them when it's not.

Guest worker and employment-based visa programs were created to accommodate labor needs. When demand is high, employers recruit workers. When demand falls, those workers not only have to leave their jobs, but the country entirely.
Today employers call for relaxing the requirements on guest worker visas, especially since those protections have recently been strengthened by the current Secretary of Labor, Hilda Solis. Simply putting more labor protections on the programs does not change their basic structure that makes those workers vulnerable. "They don't have labor rights or benefits," Dominguez charges. "It's like slavery. If workers don't get paid or they're cheated, they can't do anything."



Graton, California -- Rafael Cisneros, an H2-A worker, looks at a photo of his son, who he left behind in Mexico to work in the U.S.

# Labor Programs and Greater Enforcement – The Corporate Agenda on Immigration

The meatpacking industry started lobbying for guest workers in the late 1990s, when companies organized the Essential Worker Immigration Coalition – corporations like Wal-Mart, Marriott, Tyson Foods and the Associated Builders and Contractors. While Republicans are strong guest worker supporters, the proposals in Congress are bipartisan, supported by liberals like Senator Edward Kennedy and Congressman Luis Gutierrez.

New guest worker programs are the heart of the corporate program for immigration reform, and are combined with proposals for increased enforcement and a pro-employer program for legalization of the undocumented. Guest worker proposals, advanced now even at the negotiations of the World Trade Organization, have two characteristics. They allow employers to recruit labor in one country and put it to use in another, and they tie the ability of workers to stay in their new country to their employment status. If they aren't working, they have no right to stay. These inevitably lead to a different social, political and economic status, in which workers don't have the same rights as those around them, and can't receive the same social benefits.

Some bills in the U.S. Congress in recent years would have allowed some of the largest corporations to recruit and bring into the country, through labor contractors, as many as 800,000 people a year. And in the middle of the final debate in 2006 in which his proposal failed, President George Bush tried to eliminate all family-based immigration, and allow people to come to the U.S. only when recruited by employers. Under his proposal almost all immigrants would have become guest workers. Significantly, however, the general three-part approach of the Obama administration's immigration reform program is not significantly different from that of his predecessor.

A second element in the corporate program is legalization, but in a program tailored more to protect employers from legal charges for hiring undocumented workers than helping families adjust their status. Congress' comprehensive bills all would have imposed waiting periods from 11 to 18 years on immigrants applying for legalization, during which time they would be as vulnerable as ever. But their employers would be protected from charges they'd violated employer sanctions, while they organized the recruitment of new workers through guest worker programs.

Because of the record of abuse of guest worker programs, and because working outside those programs offers an attractive alternative, the third necessary element of this kind of corporate reform in an increase in enforcement against undocumented labor in the workplace, and unauthorized border crossing. These proposals seek to end spontaneous migration, in which people decide for themselves when to come and where to go, by making it impossible to work without a work visa and contract. In its place they substitute a regimented system in which people can only migrate as contracted labor.

After the big immigrant rights marches of 2006 the Federal government launched a dramatic increase in raids in workplaces and communities. Spokespeople for the bureau of Customs and Immigration Enforcement (ICE), a division of the Federal Department of Homeland Security (DHS), explained they were intended to show the need for the administration's immigration program. ICE also began to implement many of the enforcement measures contained in the reform bills Congress didn't pass.

In 2007 then-Homeland Secretary Michael Chertoff proposed a rule requiring employers to fire any worker who couldn't correct a mismatch between the Social Security number they' provided their

employer, and the SSA database. The regulation assumes those workers have no valid immigration visa. That regulation was challenged in federal court by unions and immigrant advocates. But the Obama administration has simply implemented the same scheme using different tactics.

Recently the Council on Foreign Relations proposed two goals for U.S. immigration policy. In a report from the CFR-sponsored Independent Task Force on U.S. Immigration Policy, CFR Senior Fellow Edward Alden stated, "We should reform the legal immigration system," it advocated, "so that it operates more efficiently, responds more accurately to labor market needs, and enhances U.S. competitiveness." This essentially calls for continuing use of migration to supply labor at competitive, or low, wages. "We should restore the integrity of immigration laws," Aiden went on to say, "through an enforcement regime that strongly discourages employers and employees from operating outside that legal system." This couples an enforcement regime like the one at present, with its raids and firings, to that labor supply scheme.

For two years dozens of other employers have fired workers in response to demands from ICE, the enforcement arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE chief John Morton made serial announcements of the number of companies being audited to find undocumented employees – citing figures from 1000 to 1654. Many thousands of workers have lost their jobs. In Minneapolis, Seattle and San Francisco over 1800 janitors, members of SEIU union locals, lost their jobs. In 2009 some 2000 young women laboring at the sewing machines of American Apparel were fired in Los Angeles. At one point Morton claimed ICE had audited over 2900 companies.

President Obama says this workplace enforcement targets employers "who are using illegal workers in order to drive down wages—and oftentimes mistreat those workers." An ICE Worksite Enforcement Advisory claims "unscrupulous employers are likely to pay illegal workers substandard wages or force them to endure intolerable working conditions." Curing intolerable conditions by firing workers who endure them doesn't help the workers or change the conditions, however. Instead, the administration's rhetoric has fed efforts to blame immigrants for "stealing jobs" and for undermining wages.

The DHS workplace enforcement wave is focusing, not on low-wage employers, but on high-wage, and often unionized ones. There is a long history of anti-union animus among immigration authorities. Agents have set up roadblocks before union elections in California fields, conducted raids during meatpacking organizing drives in North Carolina and Iowa, audited janitorial employers and airline food plants prior to union contract negotiations, and helped companies terminate close to a thousand apple packers when they tried to join the Teamsters Union in Washington state.

Unscrupulous employers use their vulnerability to deny undocumented workers the minimum wage or overtime, and to fire workers when they protest or organize. This affects workers in general. After deporting over 1000 employees of Swift meatpacking plants, former Homeland Security Secretary Chertoff called for linking "effective interior enforcement and a temporary-worker program." The government is again giving a cheap labor subsidy to large employers. Deportations, firings and guest worker programs all make labor cheaper and union organizing harder.

Meanwhile, some states and local communities, seeing a green light from the Department of Homeland Security, have passed measures that go even further. The Arizona legislature has passed a law requiring employers to verify the immigration status of every worker through a federal database called E-Verify, and fire workers whose names get flagged. It then passed a law, SB 1070, requiring police to check the immigration status of all people they stop on the street. Mississippi passed a bill making it a felony for an undocumented worker to hold a job, with jail time of 1-10 years, fines of up to $10,000 and no bail for anyone arrested. States like Georgia and Alabama have passed bills even

more repressive than Arizona's. Congress itself has passed bills requiring similar use of the E-Verify database, which were supported by both political parties.

Workplace raids and firings are part of an overall program for increasing immigration enforcement. One of its most bitterly-fought elements is the growing connection between police departments and immigration authorities. Under President Bush, the federal government began implementing "287g" agreements, under which local police departments shared information and turned over to immigration agents people arrested for even minor traffic violations. Those agreements then were codified in a federal program called "Secure Communities." At first, ICE tried to sign agreements with state and local law enforcement bodies, requiring them to turn over the fingerprints of anyone with whom they came into contact. The Obama administration claimed that it was only seeking criminals for deportation.

In practice, however, this increased cooperation led to the detention of hundreds of thousands of immigrants with no criminal record, who were held simply because they were undocumented. Deportations skyrocketed. Over a million people have been deported from the U.S. as a result of all this combined enforcement since Obama took office. When even some states tried to pull out of the program, the Department of Homeland Security announced that it didn't need their agreement, and would continue expanding the program with or without them. A rising wave of protest has met this declaration, as the wave of deportations has grown. In response to criticism, the administration has called for the passage of "comprehensive immigration reform" as its alternative to criminalization and mass removals – essentially using blackmail and repression to advance the corporate immigration reform program.

Emeryville, California -- Luz Dominguez, fired from her hotel job because she had no papers.

# The Modern Immigrant Rights Movement

Before the cold war, the defense of the rights of immigrants in the U.S., especially those from Mexico, Central America and Asia was mounted mostly by immigrant working class communities, and the alliances they built with the left wing of the U.S. labor movement. At the time when the left came under attack and was partly destroyed in the cold war, immigrant rights leaders were also targeted for deportation. Meanwhile, U.S. immigration policy became more overtly a labor supply scheme than at any other time in its history.

In the 1950s, at the height of the cold war, the combination of enforcement and contract labor reached a peak. In 1954 1,075,168 Mexicans were deported from the U.S. And from 1956 to 1959, between 432,491 and 445,197 Mexicans were brought into the U.S. each year on temporary work visas, in what was known as the "bracero" program. The program, begun during World War Two, in 1942, was finally abolished in 1964.

The civil rights movement ended the bracero program, and created an alternative to the deportation regime. Chicano activists of the 1960s - Ernesto Galarza, Cesar Chávez, Bert Corona, Dolores Huerta and others - convinced Congress in 1964 to repeal Public Law 78, the law authorizing the bracero program. Farm workers went on strike the year after in Delano, California, and the United Farm Workers was born. They also helped to convince Congress in 1965 to pass immigration legislation that established new pathways for legal immigration - the family preference system. People could reunite their families in the U.S. Migrants received permanent residency visas, allowing them to live normal lives, and enjoy basic human and labor rights. Essentially, a family- and community-oriented system replaced the old labor supply/deportation program.

Then, under pressure from employers in the late 1970s, Congress began to debate the bills that eventually resulted in the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act. That debate set in place the basic dividing line in the modern immigrant rights movement. IRCA contained three elements. It reinstituted a bracero-like guest worker program, by setting up the H2-A visa category. It penalized employers who hired undocumented workers ("employer sanctions"), and required them to check the immigration status of every worker. And it set up an amnesty process for undocumented workers in the country before 1982.

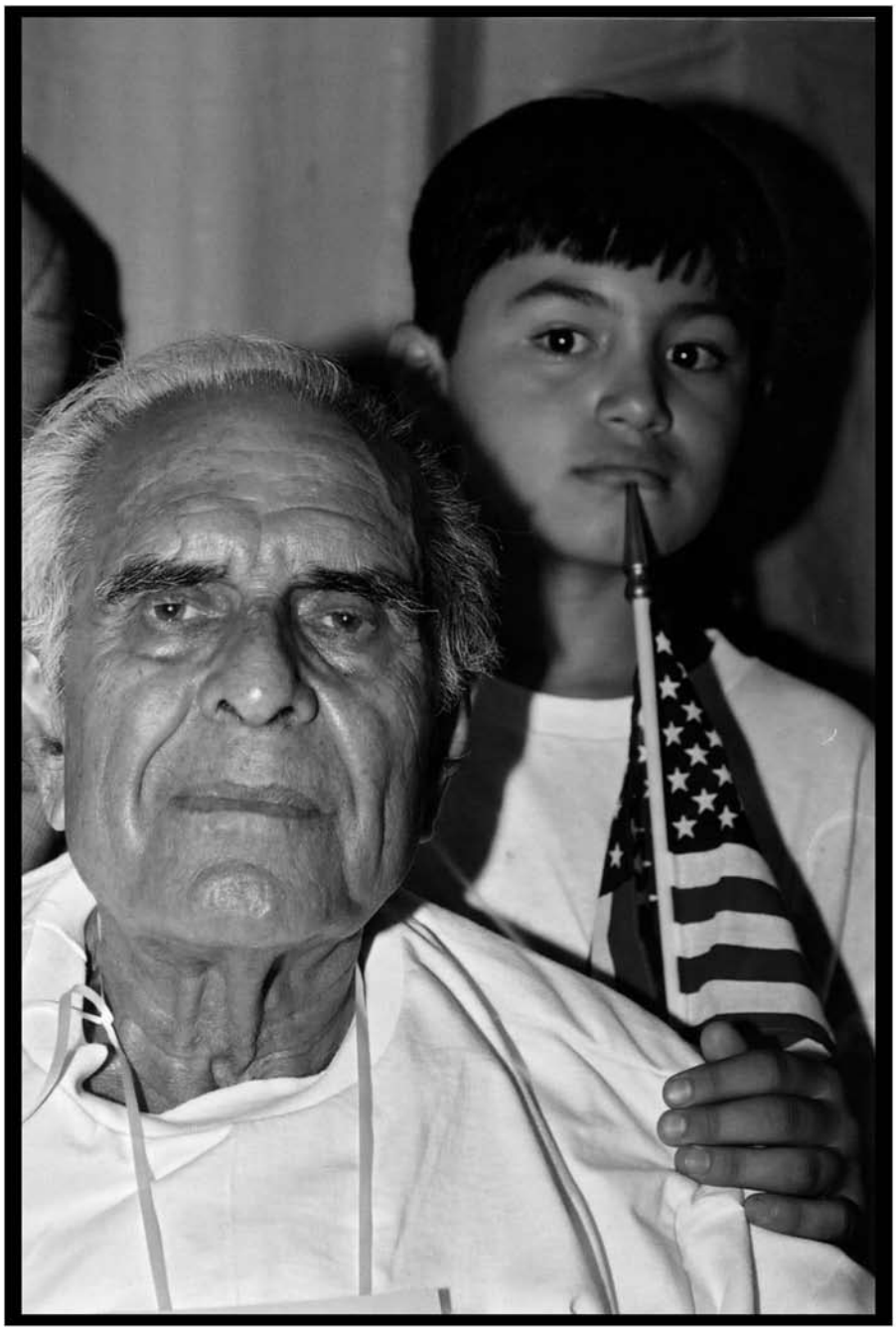
The main trade union federation to which most U.S. unions belong, the American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO), supported sanctions, saying they'd stop undocumented immigration (and therefore, presumably, job competition with citizen or legal resident workers). The Catholic Church and other Washington DC liberal advocates supported amnesty and were willing to agree to guest workers and enforcement as a tradeoff. Employers wanted guest worker programs. The bill was opposed by immigrant communities and leftwing immigrant rights advocates , from the Centro de Acción Social Autónomo (CASA), founded in Los Angeles by labor and immigrant rights leader Bert Corona, to the Bay Area Committee Against Simpson Mazzoli in Northern California, and similar groups around the country. Local labor activists and leaders also opposed the bill, but were not strong enough to change labor's position nationally. The Washington DC-based coalition produced the votes in Congress, and Ronald Reagan, one of the country's most conservative presidents, signed the bill into law.

Once the bill had passed, many of the local organizations that had opposed it set up community-based coalitions to deal with the bill's impact. In Los Angeles, with the country's largest concentration of undocumented Mexican and Central American workers, pro-immigrant labor activists set up centers to help people apply for amnesty. That effort, together with earlier, mostly

left-led campaigns to organize undocumented workers, built the base for the later upsurge of immigrants that changed the politics and labor movement of the city. Elsewhere, local immigrant advocates set up coalitions to look for ways to defend undocumented workers against the impact of employer sanctions. Grass roots coalitions then began helping workers set up centers for day laborers, garment workers, domestic workers, and other groups of immigrants generally ignored by established unions.

Over the 27 years since IRCA, a general division has marked the U.S. immigrant rights movement. On one side are well-financed advocacy organizations in Washington DC, with links to the Democratic Party and large corporations. They formulate and negotiate over immigration reform proposals that combine labor supply programs and increased enforcement against the undocumented. On the other side are organizations based in immigrant communities, and among labor and political activists, who defend undocumented migrants, and who resist proposals for greater enforcement and labor programs with diminished rights.

In the late 1990s, when the Clinton administration acquiesced in efforts to pass repressive immigration legislation (what eventually became the Immigration Reform And Immigrant Responsibility Act), Washington lobbying groups advocated a strategy to allow measures directed at increasing deportations of the undocumented to pass (calling them "unstoppable") while mounting a defense only of legally resident immigrants. Many community-based coalitions withdrew from the Washington lobbying efforts, refusing to cast the undocumented to the wolves. The strategy failed, in any case, and the eventual law includes severe provisions directed at legal, as well as undocumented immigrants.



Los Angeles, California -- Bert Corona, hero of the U.S. immigrant rights movement.

In the labor movement, the growing strength of immigrant workers, combined with a commitment to organize those industries where they were concentrated, created the base for changing labor's position. At the 1999 AFL-CIO convention in Los Angeles,

the federation called for the repeal of employer sanctions, for a new amnesty, and for defending the labor rights of all workers. The federation was already opposed to guest worker programs. That position was maintained by the AFL-CIO, even after several unions left to form the rival Change to Win federation, until 2009. At that time, a compromise was reached between the two federations, in which they dropped their previous opposition to employer sanctions, so long as they were implemented "fairly."

In the years between 2003 and 2009, a succession of "comprehensive" immigration reform bills were introduced into Congress. At their heart are the guest worker programs proposed by employers. But while the employer lobbies wrote the first bills, they've been supported by a political coalition that includes some unions (especially the Service Employees), lobbying groups like the National Council of La Raza and the American Immigration Lawyers Association, and the top hierarchy of the Catholic Church. Except for the vacillating and divided position of unions, this is the same political coalition that passed IRCA in 1986.

Some local immigrant rights coalitions have also supported the bills, although most have been unwilling to agree to guest worker programs and more enforcement. Supporters of the comprehensive bills have organized a succession of high-profile lobbying efforts, which have received extensive foundation support. Those coalitions have included the National Immigration Forum, the Fair Immigration Reform Movement, and Reform Immigration for America. While the names have changed, the organizations at the heart have stayed constant. The structure of the bills has been basically the same from the beginning – the same three-part structure of IRCA – guest workers, enforcement and some degree of legalization.

Over the last decade, however, a loose, unorganized network of groups has grown that has generally opposed most CIR bills and their provisions, and that have also organized the movements on the ground that have opposed increased enforcement and repression directed against immigrant communities. Outside the Washington beltway, community coalitions, labor and immigrant rights groups are advocating alternatives. Some of them are large-scale counters to the entire CIR framework. Others seek to win legal status for a part of the undocumented population, as a step towards larger change.

One of those proposals is the Dream Act. First introduced in 2003, the bill would allow undocumented students graduating from a U.S. high school to apply for permanent residence if they complete two years of college or serve two years in the U.S. military. Estimates are that it would enable over 800,000 young people to gain legal status, and eventual citizenship. For seven years thousands of young "sin papeles," or people without papers, have marched, sat-in, written letters and mastered every civil rights tactic to get their bill onto the Washington DC agenda.

Many of them have "come out" -- declaring openly their lack of legal immigration status in media interviews, defying authorities to detain them. Three were arrested when they sat-in at the office of Arizona Senator John McCain, demanding that he support the bill, while defying immigration authorities to come get them. The DREAM Act campaigners did than get a vote in Washington. They learned to stop deportations in an era when more people have been deported than ever since the days of the Cold War.

When it was originally written, the bill would have allowed young people to qualify for legalization with 900 hours of community service, as an alternative to attending college, which many can't afford. However, when the bill was introduced, the Pentagon pressured to substitute military for community service. Many young activists were torn by this provision, and ultimately, the bill did not pass

Congress, even with that change. Nevertheless, many immigrant rights activists view the DREAM Act as an important step towards a more basic reform of the country's immigration laws.

Supporting the Dream Act and other partial protections for the undocumented are the worker centers around the country. This movement is based on organizing centers for contingent workers, who are mostly undocumented. Some of the centers have anchored the protests against repression in Arizona, or fought to pass laws in California, New York and elsewhere prohibiting police from turning over people to immigration agents. They've especially developed grassroots models for organizing migrants who get jobs on street corners, and these projects have come together in the National Day Labor Organizing Network. The National Domestic Worker Alliance was organized last year, in part using the experience of day labor organizing, to win rights for domestic workers, almost all of whom are women. It won passage of a bill of rights in New York, and is working on passing it in California.

On a broader scale, what would be a law that would liberate people, not turn them into modern day slaves today? Many progressive immigrant rights organizations have sought to formulate an answer to this question, especially in response to the CIR proposals in Washington that they oppose.

The Frente Indigena de Organizaciones Binacionales (Binational Front of Indigenous Organizations – FIOB) conducted a series of organized discussions among its California chapters to formulate a very progressive position on immigration reform, with the unique perspective of an organization of migrants and migrant-sending communities. Because of its indigenous membership, FIOB campaigns for the rights of migrants in the U.S. -- for immigration amnesty and legalization for undocumented migrants -- while also condemning proposals for guest worker programs. At the same time, "we need development that makes migration a choice rather than a necessity -- the right to not migrate," explains Gaspar Rivera

Santiago Juxtlahuaca, Oaxaca, Mexico -- Indigenous farmers protest the impact of NAFTA.

Salgado, FIOB's binational coordinator. "Both rights are part of the same solution. We have to change the debate from one in which immigration is presented as a problem to a debate over rights. The real problem is exploitation." This perspective is especially important in the U.S., where those debating immigration policy need to hear the voices of Mexicans, especially on the left, as they discuss the movement of people back and forth across the border.

The FIOB proposal on immigration reform is similar to that advanced by the Dignity Campaign, a loose coalition of organizations around the country that have proposed an alternative to the comprehensive (labor supply plus enforcement) bills. The constituent organizations have participated in other earlier coalitions opposing employer sanctions and guest worker programs. The Dignity Campaign brings together immigrant rights and fair trade organizations, to encourage each to see the global connections between trade policy, displacement and migration. It also brings together unions and immigrant rights organizations to spur the growth of a fightback against immigration enforcement against workers, highlighting the need to oppose the criminalization of work.

The Dignity Campaign proposal draws on previous proposals, particularly one put forward by the American Friends Service Committee called "A New Path," -- a set of moral principles for changing U.S. immigration policy. Several other efforts were also made earlier by the National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights to define an alternative program and bring together groups around the country to support it. Important contributions to the Dignity Campaign were made by several organizations. Filipino Advocates for Justice, based in northern California's Filipino community, has its roots in the student civil rights protests and anti-discrimination fights defending Filipino workers. It anchored the movement to gain veteran status and benefits for Filipino veterans of World War 2, and is one of the leaders of the Domestic Workers Alliance in California. It also anchors the Dignity Campaign.

The Mississippi Immigrants Rights Alliance, one of the only community-based immigrant rights coalitions initiated and organized by African Americans, has defeated dozens of anti-immigrant bills over the last several years. Through the Black Caucus in the state legislature, it has concentrated on developing a political alliance between African Americans and immigrants, has opposed immigration raids, and has fought for the rights of guest workers brought into the Gulf coast for reconstruction work after Hurricane Katrina. In contributed to the Dignity Campaign important proposals based on finding common ground between immigrants and communities, especially African American ones, with high unemployment. These efforts coincide with a proposal by Houston Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee to pass an immigration reform combining legalization for the undocumented with Federal job creation and job training programs.

Community2Community in northern Washington State is based in rural farm worker communities. It has opposed enforcement efforts in immigrant communities close to the northern border, including the abuse of immigrants by the Border Patrol. It is headed by Rosalinda Guillén, who spearheaded the union organizing of farm workers in the state, today it sets up rural cooperatives.

This is not in any way meant to be a list of all grassroots or community based organizations that have advocated a progressive vision of immigrant rights, but to highlight some of the key players, and show the diversity of the groups involved.

The critique shared by all these organizations contends that the CIR framework ignores trade agreements like NAFTA and CAFTA, which produce profits for U.S. corporations, but increase poverty in Mexico and Central America. Without changing U.S. trade policy and ending structural

adjustment programs and neoliberal economic reforms, millions of displaced people will continue to come, no matter how many walls are built on the border.

Under the "comprehensive immigration reform" (CIR) proposals promoted by Washington DC advocacy groups for several years, some of which were introduced as bills into Congress, people working without papers would continue to be fired and even imprisoned and raids would increase. Vulnerability makes it harder for people to defend their rights, organize unions and raise wages. That keeps the price of immigrant labor low. This will not stop people from coming to the U.S., but it will produce a much larger detention system. Last year over 350,000 people went through privately-run prisons for undocumented immigrants. At the same time, the Washington DC-based CIR proposals all expand guest worker programs, in which workers would have few rights, and no leverage to organize for better conditions. Finally, the CIR legalization measures would impose barriers making ineligible many of the 12 million people who need legal status. They condition legalization on "securing the border," which has become a Washington DC euphemism for a heavy military presence augmenting 20,000 Border Patrol agents, creating a climate of wholesale denial of civil and human rights in border communities.

"The governments of both Mexico and the U.S. are dependent on the cheap labor of Mexicans. They don't say so openly, but they are," Domínguez concludes. "What would improve our situation is legal status for the people already here, and greater availability of visas based on family reunification. Legalization and more visas would resolve a lot of problems – not all, but it would be a big step," he says. "Walls won't stop migration, but decent wages and investing money in creating jobs in our countries of origin would decrease the pressure forcing us to leave home. Penalizing us by making it illegal for us to work won't stop migration, since it doesn't deal with why people come."

Changing corporate trade policy and stopping neoliberal reforms is as central to immigration reform as gaining legal status for undocumented immigrants. It makes no sense to promote more free trade agreements, and then condemn the migration of the people they displace. Instead, Congress must end the use of the free trade system as a mechanism for producing displaced workers. That also means delinking immigration status and employment. If employers are allowed to recruit contract labor abroad, and those workers can only stay if they are continuously employed, then they will never have enforceable rights.

The root problem with migration in the global economy is that it's forced migration. A coalition for reform should fight for the right of people to choose when and how to migrate. Freedom of movement is a human right. Even in a more just world, migration will continue, because families and communities are now connected over thousands of miles and many borders. Immigration policy should therefore make movement easier.

At the same time, workers need basic rights, regardless of immigration status. It would be better to devote more resources to enforcing labor standards for all workers, instead of penalizing undocumented workers for working, and employers for hiring them. "Otherwise," Domínguez says, "wages will be depressed in a race to the bottom, since if one employer has an advantage, others will seek the same thing."

To raise the low price of immigrant labor, immigrant workers have to be able to organize. Permanent legal status makes it easier to organize. Guest worker programs, employer sanctions, enforcement and raids make organizing much more difficult. Today the section of workers with no benefits and the lowest wages is expanding the fastest. Proposals to deny people rights or benefits because of immigration status make this process move even faster. A popular coalition should push back in the

other direction, toward more equal status, which will help unite diverse communities.

Building a political coalition for a more pro-worker and pro-immigrant reform has to start by seeking mutual interest among workers. That common ground is a struggle for jobs and rights for everyone. Black unemployment, for instance, is at catastrophic levels. Very little unemployment is a result of displacement by immigrants, and is caused mostly by the decline in manufacturing and cuts in public employment. In the 2001 recession 300,000 out of 2,000,000 Black factory workers lost their jobs. But in the growing service and high tech industries, displaced African American and Chicano workers are anathema. Employers think they're too pro-union. They demand high wages the companies don't want to pay.

It's not possible to win major changes in immigration policy without making them part of a struggle for the goals of African Americans, unions and working-class communities. To end job competition, for instance, workers need Congress to adopt a full-employment policy. To gain organizing rights for immigrants, all workers need the Employee Free Choice Act and labor law reform. Winning those demands requires an alliance between workers – immigrants and native-born, Latinos, African Americans, Asian Americans and whites. An alliance with employers, giving them new guest worker programs, will increase job competition, push wages down, and make affirmative action impossible.

The Dignity Campaign proposal, therefore, is not just an alternative program for changing laws and policies, but an implicit strategy of alliances among those communities and constituencies based on their mutual interest. The basic elements of such an alternative include

* Giving permanent residence visas, or green cards, to undocumented people already here, and expanding the number of green cards available for new migrants.
* Eliminating the years-long backlog in processing family reunification visas, strengthening families and communities.
* Allowing people to apply for green cards, in the future, after they've been living in the U.S. for a few years.
* Ending the enforcement that has led to thousands of deportations and firings
* Repealing employer sanctions, and enforcing labor rights and worker protection laws, for all workers.
* Ending all guest worker programs
* Dismantling the border wall and demilitarizing the border, so more people don't die crossing it, and restoring civil and human rights in border communities.
* Responding to recession and foreclosures with jobs programs to guarantee income, and remove the fear of job competition
* Redirecting the money spent on the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan to rebuilding communities, refinancing mortgages, and restoring the social services needed by working families.
* Renegotiating existing trade agreements to eliminate causes of displacement and prohibiting new trade agreements that displace people or lower living standards, including military intervention intended to enforce neoliberal reforms.
* Prohibiting local law enforcement agencies from enforcing immigration law, ending roadblocks, immigration raids and sweeps, and closing detention centers

There is no shortage of needed work in the U.S., but budget priorities must be changed to redirect resources to the areas that will produce jobs and increased well-being. To resolve the dilemmas of migration and globalization, the U.S. needs a system that produces security, not insecurity. Corporations and those who benefit from current priorities might not support this alternative, but millions of people will.

A new era of rights and equality for migrants won't begin from Washington DC, any more than the civil rights movement did. A human rights reform will be a product of the social movements of this country, especially of people on the bottom outside the beltway. A social movement made possible advances in 1965 that were called unrealistic and politically impossible a decade earlier. The Dignity Campaign proposal may not be a viable one in a Congress dominated by Tea Party nativists and corporations seeking guest worker programs. But just as it took a civil rights movement to pass the Voting Rights Act, any basic change to establish the rights of immigrants will also require a social upheaval and a fundamental realignment of power.

Kennett Square, Pennsylvania - On May Day, 2007, immigrants and their supporters marched through the streets of a small town where thousands of immigrant workers labor in sheds growing mushrooms. Marchers protested anti-immigrant bills in Congress and local anti-immigrant initiatives. Many called for amnesty -- permanent residence visas which would give the undocumented immediate legal status and rights -- and equality -- opposing second-class status as temporary workers.

# Sources for Further Investigation

David Bacon; Illegal People -- How Globalization Creates Migration and Criminalizes Immigrants; Beacon Press; 2008

Bacon; Communities Without Borders; Cornell University/ILR Press; 2006

Bacon; The Children of NAFTA, Labor Wars on the U.S./Mexico Border; University of California; 2004

Raúl Delgado-Wise, Humberto Márquez Covarrubias; The Reshaping of Mexican Labor Exports under NAFTA: Paradoxes and Challenges; IMR Volume 41 Number 3 (Fall 2007)

Dignity Campaign; www.dignitycampaign.org; 2011

Jonathan Fox and Libby Haight, Mexican Agricultural Policy: Multiple Goals and Conflicting Interests; Subsidizing Inequality – Mexican Corn Policy Since NAFTA; Woodrow Wilson Center; 2010

Frente Indigena de Organizaciones Binacionales; www.fiob.org; 2011

Kevin P. Gallagher and Timothy A. Wise; Reforming North American Trade Policy: Lessons from NAFTA; Americas Policy Program; 2009

Hein de Haas , Simona Vezzoli; Migration and development - Lessons from the Mexico-US and Morocco-EU experiences; International Migration Institute. University of Oxford, 2010

Richard Mines, Sandra Nichols and David Runsten; California's Indigenous Farmworkers; The California Endowment; 2010

Pew Hispanic Center, Mexican Immigrants in the United States, 2008

Public Citizen's Global Trade Watch, U.S. Farmers: Broken Promises of the NAFTA/WTO Trade Model Show Why NAFTA Expansion to Peru Should Be Rejected, 2011

Gaspar Rivera Salgado and Jonathan Fox, eds.; Indigenous Mexican Migrants in the United States; Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies, University of California in San Diego; 2004

Timothy A. Wise, Reforming NAFTA's Agricultural Provisions, in The Future of North American Trade Policy: Lessons from NAFTA; Boston University The Frederick S. Pardee Center[ 2009

Wise; The Impacts of U.S. Agricultural Policy on Mexican Producers; Subsidizing Inequality – Mexican Corn Policy Since NAFTA; Woodrow Wilson Center; 2010