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**University California San Diego**  
**History of the Chicano Movement**  
**Committee on Chicano Rights**

**INTERVIEWEE:** Baca, Herman  
**INTERVIEWER:** Gutierrez, David G. PhD and Patino, Jimmy, Historian, UCSD  
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[1 TAPE – 90 Minutes]

**BEGIN SIDE 1, TAPE 8, SESSION 6.**

**PATINO:** August 28, 2006, UCSD.

**BACA:** 11:20 a.m.

**PATINO:** Let's just start it after the KKK March, how you started to mobilize for the next march.

**BACA:** Yeah. Like I was saying, the KKK March really wasn't a march that was highlighted as a march against the Klan, that we saw as insignificant, (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) that basically we saw it as another symptom of the failed policies that had permitted the exploitation and the manipulation of immigration to exploit Mexican labor. So, really we billed it as a march against the Carter Immigration Plan. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) And, like I stated to you, our definition of the Carter Immigration Plan was it was a monstuo, a Frankenstein, that, the Carter Immigration Plan was just another collection of discarded used policies that had failed to resolve this issue that was affecting our communities and our people.

**GUITERREZ:** Which aspects, particular, Herman, were you guys focused on? The guest worker part, (Baca: Well . . .) or the . . .



**BACA:** There was several elements. There was, obviously it was, the carrot-and-the-stick approach that they have always utilized and are still utilizing to this day that is causing division, because the extreme right now wants, you know, a complete military and law enforcement solution. And, you know, like I said it's a system. It's a system. And, but the main component was, of course, the law enforcement/military solutions. Increase the Border Patrol. Bring in Vietnam Era, military technology. And then there was the carrot, which was the amnesty. (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) And, of course, there's always that "Guest Worker Program" that have always been Bracero programs, (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) or slave programs, you know, as the past INS commissioner defined the old Bracero Program as a slave program. That's what he defined it. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) And so, you know, it wasn't nothing new and it's nothing new today. It's the same old, same old discarded policies that have failed and, you know, I mean there's been some changes. Like I said, one of the major changes of course is the demographics of our community, of our people. And, but the Carter Immigration Plan, like I stated, in the context of the Chicano Movement, the Movement basically had, if you would have talked to Chicano activists in 1970, 1972, was that, "It had nothing to do with us." That, "Yeah, they were breaking the law," and some people went as far as to repeat the charges that they were stealing jobs. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) "And, if we only got rid of them we'd have an easier time of doing what we're doing," blah, blah, blah.

**GUTIERREZ:** Strike breakers, blah, blah? Yeah.

**BACA:** And not understanding that, you know, we didn't have the power to bring about any of those things, you know. The name of the game, the name of the effort was to try to franchise our communities and our people. So, around 19 – yeah – well, '77, yeah, after Carter came in there was a further attempt to manipulate the immigration issue, for whatever reasons the system had.



They named Lionel Castillo as INS commissioner, or "Coyote Castillo" as we used to refer to him, as we labeled him to dramatize the massive contradictions of the policies, and of them attempting to, you know, to put a brown-skinned person to soften the effort to continue this system. And, so the issue was taking a completely different definition within the Chicano Movement. We've always had a saying that "Whatever happens in San Diego first is going to happen in other parts of the Southwest (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) and the United States."

**GUTIERREZ:** Can I interrupt you?

**BACA:** Sure.

**GUTIERREZ:** I'm real curious about this, because, you know, I noted the conflict with Chávez back, way back in the day, (Baca: Uhm-hmm.) and Galarza before him. Right? It must have provoked a lot of internal debate among Chicano activists at that particular moment? So . . .

**BACA:** Well there was. There was a big split.

**GUTIERREZ:** So, I've got two questions for you.

**BACA:** Sure.

**GUTIERREZ:** Number one, you're a Manito from New Mexico?

**BACA:** Correct.

**GUTIERREZ:** Now, how did you get, come to that conclusion and when? I mean, what was the process of you seeing that solidarity? And then explain the dimensions of that split that you talked about.

**BACA:** Bert Corona, (Gutierrez: Right.) Bert Corona was a mentor, a political mentor, one of, him and Abe Tapia were my political mentors. And, I was telling Jimmy that when I first got involved one of the first issues that I had to deal with was this Memorandum that was put out by Sheriff Duffy, the San Diego County sheriff. He, the San Diego County sheriff used to license



the taxicab drivers at the county. And, Duffy put out the Memorandum, who ironically we, as MAPA, had supported. And, I think he won by a thousand votes out of 285,000 votes. [Laugh] So, I was telling Jimmy that politically we were given credit and by both Duffy and the District Attorney that we also supported, Ed Miller, and I was stating to him that lasted like around six months because then Duffy came out with this Memorandum. And, he was instructing taxicab drivers that if they had picked up a "illegal alien" that they "would know by their dress and mannerism," that's what the Memorandum said, that they were to call in this special phone number and the sheriff's department would stop the taxicab and determine, you know, documentation, or if there was documentation. So, of course, that was the intent. But, the unintended result of it was that Mexicanos and Chicanos were not being picked up by taxicab drivers. The taxicab drivers said, "Hell, I ain't going to get myself in that situation." So, there was this individual that used to work for Assemblyman Waddie Deddeh. Some way, somehow he got the Memorandum and he brought it over to the office. He says, "Hey, Herman look at this." His name was Ernie Azhocar. He was a school board trustee there in Sweetwater, Sweetwater School District, and was a liaison, the Mexican-American liaison for Assemblyman Waddie Deddeh. So, you know, people started complaining about not getting picked up and being picked up, being bypassed, and they couldn't figure out why. So, we went on the attack and, you know, started accusing the sheriff's department of racism and stereotyping and that, you know, this was affecting. But, it was more in a political context than as an immigration issue. So, we got involved with that. And also, in the political arena, MAPA was attempting to register people. That was one of the goals of MAPA.

**GUTIERREZ:** And this was the early '70s?



**BACA:** This is early '70s. (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) So now, people are coming back, the registrar's stating that, "Hey, people don't want to register." Because within a family you might find one member was a U.S. citizen, another one who was in the process of getting their documentation, and auntie, or a tio, or grandma, or grandpa being undocumented. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) So, the fear factor. "We don't want to get involved," you know. "We don't want to bring any attention to us." So, that was affecting. So, I knew already that basically there was something out there that wasn't right. But, it must have been around '71, '72 when La Raza Unida Party started. We were organizing and trying to register people into La Raza Unida and Bert Corona was the national organizer for La Raza Unida. Self-appointed, but [Laughter] no argument, you know. I mean, he was, he had been around since 1935, you know. If anybody knew politics it was Bert. And, I was telling Jimmy I remember Bert and Chole Alatorre coming over one night, and like was his M.O. I mean, he'd just parachute in from somewhere, and we were laying out the first La Raza Unida newsletter. And back then, you know, you had to type it, and then if you made a mistake you had to type the sentence over and paste it in. (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm. Uhm-hmm.) So, Bert comes in and we lollygag for around twenty, thirty minutes, and at that time I had Aztec Printing and we had CASA Justicia next to it, on 18<sup>th</sup> and Highland Avenue, National City. So, Bert says, "Hey Herman, can I talk to you next door?" I said, "Yeah." So, nobody's in there so we go in there. I said, "What's going on?" He says, "We've got to get on this immigration issue." And, I looked at him like, in my mind like saying, "You on peyote, or something? What does that got to do with us?" you know. (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) I said, "What are you talking about?" He said, "No." He said, "We've got to get on this. This is going to be an issue. It's going to be with us probably until the Year 2000." Well, he's already missed it by six years because, [Laugh] you know, we're still, we're



still here. And, like I told Jimmy, I said, Bert was my mentor. He was, it was a generational gap. I mean, he was an elder (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) and I respected his political judgment and I said, "Well, you know, what do you propose?" He said, "Well, you got this office here, CASA Justicia." He says, "Why don't you, you know, start looking at the issue." And, he already knew we had the Duffy Memorandum going on. And by then it might even been, it jumped over to the Huebner Memorandum, the San Diego Police Department. So, I remember the UFW, César, they had a mini Border Patrol in Calexico. (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) I think they even had a little plane that they used to go around. And, their political line was, was that these were strikebreakers and some way, some how they were to be stopped or gotten rid of then things would be a lot easier. And, like I stated most of the mentality within the Movement was likewise. I mean, people didn't, they hadn't connected the dots. So, you know, there was either disinterest or there was that right-wing definition. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) And so, we got into the immigration issue, you know. I mean, and I remember at the time there was a state law, the Dixson/Arnett bill, (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) and we got involved with that. Wound up picketing a couple of individuals, like Assemblyman Pete Chacon, who I had worked on his campaign, you know. Assemblyman Waddie Deddeh you know. I mean, that was the accepted definition that, "Hey, you know, we, go after the employers." So, it was the forerunner of the employer sanction, (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) the federal. And, our position was, was "Hey, get the hell out of here." Just like with the sheriff's department. "This is a federal matter. We don't need two targets. We don't need two fronts." So, our position was that, "You got no business in it. No matter how well intended you are, you don't enforce customs laws. You don't enforce income tax laws. Those are federal matters." So the issue, even then was starting to percolate. I remember, I guess, in '72, somewhere around there, CASA had a march against the



Dixon/Arnett bill in L.A. and 10,000 people came out, (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) which was probably the largest march to date. And, wow, I remember stating that, "Man, where did all these people come from?" And so, like I told Jimmy, I had met César in 1973, I guess. I had seen him before while we were at the opening of Forty Acres in Delano. (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) But, there was a strike. There was a strike and, as a matter of fact we were just talking about that on the way up here, because Rene Nunez, and Carlos Velez, partook in that strike. There was a strike in Imperial Beach. You get off the Five onto Palm Avenue, (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) right there on the right. There was a farm called the Ghio farm. And, I was still with MAPA, so it must have been '72-'73, somewhere around there, and they called. I mean, they just walked out on their own. There wasn't no organized outside. I mean, they just walked out and some way, somehow they got my name and they called, and said, "Can you help us?" you know. "We need food. We need whatever you can help us with." So, we went down there and, you know, through our contacts, like up in L.A., there were some projects that sent out truckloads of food, unbeknown to their bosses. [Laugh] So, I met César there in San Ysidro. After a couple of months the UFW came in. They sent down an organizer. So, it got, the strike got kind of taken over, you know, by them. Rightfully so. They were the ones dealing with that issue. And, we met at the local Farm Workers, the organizer's home in San Ysidro. I, you know, just probably said, "Hi. Nice meeting you." and what have you. And, like I was telling the César Chávez breakfast celebration in Southwestern, where I keynote the breakfast I says, I was telling the same story I'm telling you right now. And, I says, "You know, I hate to say this but history is history." I said, "The farm worker's whose home we had been in and who had organized the walkout, the strike, took off with a younger woman and that was the end of the strike." [Laugh] So, that's what happened to the Ghio Strike. I said, "He took off with a younger woman," you



know. [Laugh] So, but César and myself met at the Christ the King church in Imperial, '74 I guess. Somewhere around there. And, the issue was hot and heavy, because you had Bert Corona on the one hand, who was traveling all over the U.S. trying to raise awareness of this whole issue and how it was affecting us. And, then you had César on the other hand that was going around saying, "Here's the solution." Our solution was that they were workers. Our position was that this was a system that, you know, that had been manipulated to continue that historical exploitation of Mexican labor. And, that only power could, you know, overturn that system, which is exactly what the Chicano Movement was attempting to do, franchise our community. So, we met at the Christ the King church, and to be honest it was hot and frank, the discussion. César's position was that they were breaking their strikes and that he didn't care who they were, that anybody who broke their strikes was the enemy, and blah, blah, blah. So, I remember telling him, I says, "Well, you haven't been able to incorporate the union because for the lack of power. So, how is it that once you get rid of this people that that's going to be, come about?" (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) I said, "Aren't these people 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 round and round, and, you know, like I always tell people, "Hey, that was the context of the time." I, myself, like I told you when Bert told me, "Hey, we got to get this immigration issue." "Hey, wait a minute. You're the national organizer of La Raza Unida Party. What happened to that?" you know. (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) And so, and most of the Movement was the same font. I mean, they just hadn't connected the dots. So, now it's a completely different story. You know, fortunately now the Movement's at, in a valley instead of a mountain, you know. (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) But, nonetheless – so anyway, I think if we're going to talk about the Carter Immigration Plan, or Dixon/Arnett, or the Rodino, the Rodino



bill, the Reagan, and now the No Sense No Brain bill that's, you know, before the congress. You know, Chicanos have to understand that this is a system. It's a system and it has ramifications.

And, like I was telling Jimmy, I says, "As long as activists remain in the box and allow the system to define the issue as immigration (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) they're going to get their ass kicked every time, (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) every time as they, as is happening right now."

(Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) You can't argue against, there is an immigration policy. Mexico has an immigration policy. You can't argue that "there isn't law breaking." So, that sticks. You can't argue that there's ramifications within our own community. People saying, "Hey, those guys underbid me by \$200 on a gardening job." So, you got the same concept in, as the César analogy. You got two poor people going after the same piece of bread, (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) with no alternatives, (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) no other options. So, there are ramifications. Like I was telling Jimmy, I said if you take the slave system and the so-called immigration system, you now, I'm sure the old blacks were resentful when they brought in the new black slaves (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) because they felt threatened, because within the box, you know, working inside the house was better than being out there in the field. So, I'm sure that the plantation owners were smart enough to tell the poor whites that the reason that they were poor was because the slaves had their jobs. [Laugh] Had stolen their jobs. (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) Which is incredible to think about it, but that's, that was the charge, (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) that you know, "They took your jobs." And, like I always tell people, or Mexicanos or Chicanos, I said, "How do you steal a job? Do you break in at midnight and, you know, sign your own timecard or, I mean, and throw the other guy's one away? I mean, how do you steal a job?" They go, "Well, low wages." "Well, they ain't paying themselves. (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) You know. Somebody's paying them. So, aren't you aiming at the wrong target?" So, the



immigration issue really is a labor issue. It has been for Mexicanos and Chicanos, and it's always the, the immigration policy has been manipulated, you know, to turn it on and off according to need. In World War II they needed workers. "Hey, they're our buddies." And in the '50s they no longer need them, "Hey, Operation Wetback." [Laugh] (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) And, the propaganda starts with all the charges, you know. So, the Carter Immigration Plan really was an accumulation of all those failed policies, all those discarded parts and plans that had been around since, you know, 1850, you know, since the U.S./Mexican War, you know. And so, but politically, like I stated, the Carter Immigration Plan was sort of the apex of the immigration issue being incorporated as a frontburner issue for the Chicano Movement. There was, but not only the Chicano Movement. After the Carter Immigration Plan was proposed the churches started speaking out, even though it was within the box, the thinking within the box of the amnesty. "Hey, they're going to get amnesty." See but they never asked themselves, "There's probably 110 million more people that would like to come over. (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) So, what's the solution there?" you know. So, there's a lot of factors. There's a lot of factors that go into making the immigration issue, so-called immigration issue. There's international factors. There's foreign policy. There's social factors. There's, obviously, economic factors. There's political factors.

**PATINO:** In the late '70s, why do you think there was more awareness then, because the president is issuing a national policy?

**BACA:** I think, you know, going along with that you get back what you put in. That within our community that was the end result of the work of people like Bert, you know, that were giving, that had the historical background (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) and were given, was giving definition to people that were active, people that were involved, people that were searching. It's like I told



you, the Chicano Movement has always been a question mark, you know. The solution's out there with the people. I mean, that's the power. That's, you know, if those people are educated, politicized, and organized then you'll get power. Until that time you won't have power.

**GUTIERREZ:** And were there other guys that were working together at that time, Armando in Riverside, and Bert, and Munoz, [phone ringing] and people like that, were you on the same page? Or were you . . .

**BACA:** We were all on the same page. And, (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) you know, basically, everyone understood that San Diego was the Vietnam of the Southwest, (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) regarding the immigration issue, you know. People looked because, like I said, the stage was here. We have the busiest border, international border, the crossings, you know, fifty million a year. You had the highest number of undocumented coming across. You had the stage, you know, the infamous soccer field, like I told you. (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) You know, people, if you're a politician running for office you go to the soccer field and make your proclamations, you know, and the press would be there. If you're with the media looking for, you know, to try to, a news story, you would get the tour package, the package you know. The Border Patrol, depending, you know, what newspaper or what station you're with, if you were the *New York Times* you got the helicopter tour, (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) you know. They take them and shine the lights on, you know, and show the soccer field. If you were the, you know, the local paper you might get the Jeep tour, and the Border Patrol. Like I was telling Jimmy, one of the interesting things about, about the immigration issue was when we started, when we first started we realized that in trying to give definition that the media was a very, very useful tool, and we would make mincemeat out of the INS. They had no media savvy. [Laugh] We'd go down to Tijuana and, you know, and "Gestapo" and "Nazis" and, you know, Rinches, you know, the



"bastard sons of the Texas Rangers," you know. "Hey man, Mexican media. Ah!" [Laughter]

And, we also understood that the local media, the right-wing reactionary republican *San Diego Union* [Laugh] was not going to give us any coverage of any significance. So, we figured it out, especially after the Klan march, because the Klan march, what it did was it sort of focused the attention on this issue that, of course, was being discussed in Congress, you know. And, you know, the president had launched or proposed his solution. So, so a lot of media started coming down there, especially Mexican media. But, during the Klan issue, I mean, there was media from Germany, Brazil, South Africa, Spain, but especially from Mexico, *Excelsior*, you know, *Uno Mas Uno*. And, I got to know a lot of the reporters on a first-name basis. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) And, dealing with the Mexican media is completely different than dealing with the [Laugh] U.S. media, you know. Like, I remember, you know, a guy from *El Excelsior* would be down here and we'd be at a little community meeting, right, fifty people, and that guy would be on the phone and say, "Hey Herman, como se llama este lugar," you know. And, you know."

"Say, St. Ritas. Que tanta gente alli." So, he'd have his hands over the phone. I'd say, "Around fifty." "Hey, Aqui estamos en la iglesia de Santa Rita y hay como cinquenta mil de personas en la reunion." [Laughter] Oh man. Man. So, you know, we figured that, you know, we would send our stuff to Mexico City, (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) our press releases, and then they would publish it and then it would go to D.C. (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) where they had, they had bureaus there. And then from there it would go all over South America and the United States. So, what was happening is media from all over the world would come in and they would check in with the *San Diego Union*, and one of the stops was, "Where's this guy? Where's this organization at?" (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) So, the *Union* had no, like they were being outscoped in their own backyard. (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) (Patino: Uhm-



hmm.) So, we figured that out, you know. But, they also started getting media savvy, you know. Putting on, like I said, little tours and what have you. So, they'd go around. They'd go down to the soccer field and they would stop at the Aztec Print Shop. And, I said, "Oh," I said, "Did you get the tour? Did you get the high-class tour or the low-budget tour?" They said, "What do you mean?" I said, "Did you go in the Jeep or did you go in a helicopter?" [Laugh] And, "They gave me the Jeep." I said, "Oh man," I said, "The guy from the *New York Times* was just here and he got, you know, the helicopter." So, that would piss them off. [Laughter] And then we'd get into the thing about, you know, the whole issue, you know. "Hey." I remember there was a reporter from the *New York Times* and he said, you know he says, "There's a lot of opposition in the Mexican-American community against the illegals, you know?" He says, "I just saw a poll, sixty-eight percent are in favor of stricter law enforcement and that it's impacting their community negatively." I said, "Sixty-eight percent? Is that all?" I says, "I'll show you a group one hundred percent against illegal immigration." That guy says, "Who's that?" I said, "The guys that just jumped the fence five minutes ago." (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) "Close it!" [Laughter]

**PATINO:** Uhm-hmm. "Behind me"?

**BACA:** I said, "But you know what?" I says, "You look like an educated person." I says, I says, "Now, do you want to talk about that clap trap or do you want to talk about an issue that, you know, has international factors, social, economic, political factors?" And most of them had no choice. They said, "Oh, okay, let's talk about it, you know." But, you know, they would come semi-brainwashed, you know, because "Hey. Hey look, they're jumping. Hey look, they're rocking my Jeep," you know, and what have you. And, but like I, like I stated as long as the issue is defined as immigration they're going to whip their butts every time, because, you know,



because – and, you're not going to get a solution. All you're going to get is another generation of manipulation of the policy and the exploitation of their labor, (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) and the disenfranchisement of our community. So.

**GUTIERREZ:** How did you guys, did you see a distinction between the democratic and the republican position on this at that point?

**BACA:** Nah. No.

**GUTIERREZ:** Because, I remember, I was in D.C. at the time and all of Carter's Hispanic advisors were completely shocked by what was happening in L.A. and down here in San Diego (Baca: Oh yeah.) in response. They thought it was kind of a liberal, you know.

**BACA:** Yeah. It was a – well, you know, that's in-the-box thinking. (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) That's the Hispanic mentality that, you know, they give us one crumb and I get it, I guess it's good for everybody. (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) But, and you still have it right now. (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) There's no thinking. (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) And, consequently, that's a perfect example of, "You can't have a solution unless you first know there's a problem." And, those guys had no idea of what the problem is let alone the solution.

**GUTIERREZ:** So, were you guys already advocating sin fronteras at that point?

**BACA:** It wasn't so much the sin fronteras as it was, you know, us building power (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) in our community. It was always our position that, you know, the "Mexican government ain't going to do nothing. (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm. Uhm-hmm.) Never have."

(Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) The ricos as a matter of fact, encourage it. (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) I was telling Jimmy, I remember when I first started going down to Tijuana the accepted thought over there was, "traidores." (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) [Laugh] (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm. Uhm-hmm.) They were, you know, out-Klanning the Klan. You know, "Hey, there's plenty of jobs



here in Mexico." It's like "un caso que --- compatriotas" you know, blah, blah, blah. And so "que es una traidores de la patria" blah, blah, blah, you know. And, what was happening, when I first started going down there there was issues that, you know, just like any Mexican knows, you know, "Something's not right." Any Chicano knows that. You know, you give them enough tequila and, you know. (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) And, one of the first issues that I remember going down to Tijuana and dealing with the media, and being a pocho and not having that great a command of the Spanish language was, where there was this border patrolman raped this woman and so that was something that they couldn't, couldn't ignore, couldn't justify, you know, couldn't define any other way, you know. So, they also were getting an education on, I'm sure, feelings that they already had, you know, having to cross the line and be disrespected, or abused, or misused, or what have you, like happens everyday. And, the second one, I remember, was these two individuals that were handcuffed getting shot by the Border Patrol. (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) And, the Border Patrol saying they had been attacked, you know, that they shot in self-defense. Well, the guys were handcuffed. So, those were issues that, you know, there was no justification, that, you know, they just couldn't be dealt with. You know, "Hey, no traitores and what have you. But, that was the basic position. So, we knew that the Mexican government wasn't going to do anything. Our position always was and still is that anybody who crossed that border became part of the "Chicano problem," whether they knew it or not. (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) You know, the fallout and the spinout of the effects of the conquest, you know. So it was, you know, people were talking about sin fronteras, but you know realistically, you know, sin fronteras for what, you know? [Laugh] (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) And see, it was like La Raza Unida. I remember, like I was telling Jimmy, our position has always been rooted or based on self-determination. (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) We are not the power. The people are, you



know. And, La Raza Unida was, I remember we were trying to get 68,000 people, one percent of the last general election. So, our position was a little bit different than some of the other organizing efforts throughout California. We had, our contributions going to be to register 10,000 and then we'll have a convention, and then we'll, they'll decide (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) what they want. (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) Because, at the time you remember there was Corky, and José Angel, (Gutierrez: Right.) and Corky saw it as an organizing tool, raising awareness and, you know. And, Jose saw, "Hey, let's take control wherever we can." (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) Those were the concepts that was tearing the party, and did tear it apart. And so, it was the same with immigration, which differed with what came later on with some of the other "activists" that we used to define as "bleeders," you know. "Oh, they're beating up the undocumented." "Yeah? Well, it's been going on for 150 years. When did you find out?" (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) Versus our position was, "Hey, you know, what? We're talking about grown men, grown women that are being affected and they've got to be educated. And they got to be politicized. They got to be organized, or they got to do it themselves," you know. I don't care how well intended you are, there isn't that many hours or there isn't that much money for you to take care of their problem. (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) You know, this is a historical problem. This is a social, economic, and political problem and it affects us across the board. It's a system, in other words, and you need power to change that system or do away with it. So, you know, there was a lot of concepts around the immigration issue, you know.

It's, like getting back to the Klan March. That conference, the national conference that José Angel organized with the help of the SWP, the Socialist Workers Party, (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) that was an idea that came out of that meeting in Riverside, (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) or Ontario, I think. And, I forget, [Laugh] I'd have to go back to the boxes to find out the reason



why we were there, (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) you know. But, there was a reason. I remember Navarro, Armando Navarro had organized it. That's why we were there. And, that's when everyone was basically still speaking to each other, you know. (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) And, but the concept came out of there, "We have to do something on the national scale (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) because of the Carter Immigration Plan." And, José, who was probably the most profiled Chicano activist there took the idea and then when he got back to Crystal City, started sending out invitations or letters to organize this. And, we saw the SWP name that Corky had had problems with, (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) and that we had had problems with them trying to subvert that principle of self-determination.

**GUTIERREZ:** Down here?

**BACA:** Yeah. Down here. We organized an organization coalition, or not coalition, but a meeting where we put out a proclamation denouncing it.

**GUTIERREZ:** I remember that. Were there a lot of Chicanos in SWP, or no?

**BACA:** Oh, there was some, you know. (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) There was some. And so, that created problems. (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) The first problem was was that what we had agreed on in Ontario at, it wasn't even addressed by José. (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) He got the ball and he ran with it, and I guess he figured he needed a national type organization. These guys had chapters all over, all over the U.S., so he plugged into them, (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) and it was totally unacceptable to us. We were already on record. (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) Corky was on record that they had had some problems in the crusade. We were on record so we, you know, "Hey, no dice." So, we attempted to organize a national immigration conference. Too many differences, not enough resources. And, I was telling Jimmy, ironically two weeks before the national immigration conference the Klan was given this tour and it was like



everything, whooshed, shifted back to California. (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) So, those two things were going on, which was a manifestation, you know. Here you had Corky Gonzalez. You had Bert Corona. You had Mario Cantu. You had Dr. Navarro. You had Raul Ruiz. (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) You had Ed Tapia. Like they defined it the nationalists, you know, were here, and then over there you have more broader, I mean, type of individuals, you know, Anglos, blacks, you know, I guess people that the SWP had brought in. (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) So, but I would venture to say most of the attention was over here because of the (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) because of the Klan.

**GUTIERREZ:** Uhm-hmm. And did that mark the break that you've been talking about, or was that the beginning of it?

**BACA:** I think, you know, there was always difference of opinions, (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) about on how to proceed, you know, (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) on all of the issues. (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) You know, like I was telling Jimmy about César and El Partido de La Raza Unida. If César would have shown up at, in El Paso in 1972, at La Raza Unida there's no doubt in my mind he would have been booed off the stage. (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) [Laugh] César was not César like César is today. (Gutierrez: Right.) César was just another (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) activist, more highlighted, (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) but nonetheless just another activist along with, you know, people that were also winging it out there, you know.

**GUTIERREZ:** Primarily on the immigration issue or on a whole other?

**BACA:** No, his alliance with liberal (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) Democratic Party, you know. That was a big conflict, you know. (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) So, you had those differences, you know. You had, of course, the social services and poverty pimps. [Laugh] [Recording paused]



The people that I started out with had gone their own different ways by '73, '74. (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) The War on Poverty had come in. People that had . . .

**END SIDE 1, TAPE 8, SESSION 6.**

**BEGIN SIDE 2, TAPE 8, SESSION 6.**

**BACA:** ...been working in slaughter houses and were now wearing suit and ties, (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) making good money, (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) being invited to parties thrown by politicians, (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) congressmen, supervisors, you know, the mayor. (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) And, all of a sudden, "Hey, tone it down. Hey, don't do that. Hey, don't rock the boat, man. I mean, (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) we're making progress, you know. (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) Everybody will get theirs as soon as I get mine," kind of, you know. (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) And, so you had that happening. Like I said, within, within the immigration issue that was becoming a hot and heavy issue. You had different, you know, approaches that, you know, people advocating different things, you know. Some, some of the national organizations going along with the Carter Immigration Plan. But, you know, ironically that's not true. If, at that point most of the organizations, besides differences, were opposed to the Carter Immigration Plan. (Patino: Right.) Yeah. So, I take that back. There was very, very few, maybe some of the funded agencies. (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) But, you know, really what did the immigration movement in was the amnesty program. (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) I mean, there was so much money that that became the new poverty pimp, funded agency, movida, for people involved with the immigration issue. And, you know, even right now I'm sure that I'm sure that people are salivating at the mouth about what could be this gigantic amnesty program. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) You know, because they've seen it before. I remember, I remember in L.A., after '86, after the Simpson/Rodino immigration bill, [Laugh] groups were pulling guns on



each other there was so much money. (Patino: Hmm.) You know. As a matter of fact, not right now but that caused the split between Bert and myself, you know. But, we'll get into that, you know, and into the reasons and the factors behind that. You know, like I was telling Jimmy I says, you know we are a very, very young people. I mean, what are we, five hundred years? Compared to the [Laugh] Egyptians. Hey, we're not even out of diapers. (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) For Chicanos, really, outside of the Chicano Movement there really was never any movement rooted or based on that historical struggle of the Mexicano. (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) So, when you put it in that context, hey, we've been exercising and playing politics '65 to, forty-five years, is it? (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) Forty-five years. [Laugh] And, we're wondering why we get our lunch? I mean, you're fighting somebody like Mike Tyson and you don't even know what a glove is, (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) you know. So. (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) So, we're very, very new and, you know, to me you only learn, you know, people have to learn the good, the bad, and the ugly of what happened. Nobody walked on water, you know. And, the system is smart enough to get someone like Martin Luther King and take out what is advantageous to them. (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) You know. "Hey, Martin Luther King, nonviolent. Nonviolent." And they do the most violent acts all over, from the president, from the barrios, to the ghettos, to, you know, Iraq. (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) No problem. (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) But hey, "Martin Luther King, nonviolent. That's what you guys ought to be." You know. (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) Same with César. And, to me that's a manifestation of our powerlessness, our lack of having, defining our own leaders. I've got an old saying that, "Mexicans, all Mexicans, all persons of Mexican ancestry love heroes from Quetzalcoatl to Cuatemoc to Morelos, to Hidalgo, to Benito Juarez, to Zapata, to Villa, and now to Chavez, but they all require one thing, that the leaders be dead. (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) That way they can



paint them any way they want to, you know. You know, they don't have read. They don't have to know anything. They don't have to be involved, you know. They just paint them any which way, you know, just put them up there, you know. So, you know, this to me is people are going to come back forty, fifty years, when we're not here any longer, and they're going to ask. "Hey, why were they doing this?" And, they're going to come because probably the same problems that we're talking about here, that we're confronting today, are going to be present. (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) You know. My historical analysis is, is that we're going to see some dark, dark days, and it's going to be three or four generations before people come together and deal with this whole problem, you know. Because you know, like I said we've only been at this for forty-five years, realistically speaking, you know. All of the other movements, if you study them, you know, was running away rather than, you know, dealing with the conditions. "I'm a Latino," you know. The LULACers, you know. (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) You know, "What's a Latino? Is that a mass or something? Is there a country named Latino?" I mean, I, you know. But, I understand why they did it, you know, is to get away from those signs, you know, "No Mexicans, niggers, or dogs allowed," you know. (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) So, that was their solution, which was a nonsolution, you know. "Let's make the plantation a little bit more livable," you know, kind of thing. "And, let's make sure they've got running, you know, drinking water," you know. But, the issue was the plantation. The Mexican-American, you know, they're, same thing just a little, couple degrees hotter, you know. "Hey, we're Mexican-Americans. Okay, you know, and we're confronting." But, very, very tied in to what had been set up for them, you know. Democratic Party, Franklin Roosevelt, you know, gave us a job when we didn't have one. The church, and now the military, (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) you know. That was the Mexican-American. And, like I always tell people, identification has always been a



problem for the people that were conquered in this country, you know. Hell, nobody wanted to be a Mexican that was, you know, lumped together with dogs and, you know, ex-slaves. "Hell no, man," you know. And, like you said, "I'm a manito." [Laugh] (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) And, in New Mexico I remember we had Españolas. We had Hispanos. We had Latinos. We had Mexican-Americans. We even had Chicanos. Not in the sense that we're talking now, (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) but, you know, there was a group called Chicanos. There was, there was, I remember Mojados. There was Chuntaros. [Laugh] So, identification has been a problem, you know. Who are we? And, like I always tell people, the only historical term that I've seen that we, *we* used to identify ourselves was "Chicano," you know. (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) It was a breakaway from that conditioned mentality. That, "Hey, you know what? You're not going to tell us who we are, you know. We're going to tell you who we are." What I was saying about, you know, when you go to kindergarden you go in as Jorge and in the afternoon you come out George, you know. (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) Nobody asked your parents. Nobody asked the people that you're, your padrino that baptized you, and nobody even asked you, you know. "Hey, that's your name." And so, identification has always been a problem. Now, you've got Hispanic. So, just like that poor little kid that, you know, was powerless, that's the Hispanics, you know. I would say the, like the Mexican-American has, there's Mexican-Americans in Mexico. I mean, they're part of the American continent, you know. [Laugh] Right? So, they're Mexican-Americans, you know. We ain't Mexican-Americans. I mean, when you really look at it, I mean, you know, you've fallen in the trap of "Hey, the only, we're the only Americans on the American continent." "No, you're not, you know. It's a continent. [Laugh] People in Peru are Americans too. Canadians are Americans too, you know, Canadian-Americans, you know. Part of the American continent." So, the



Hispanic, like Latino, it's a running away. It's unrealistic. It's untruthful. It's bullshit. [Laugh] I mean, what's a Hispanic? I mean, what happened to your Indian mother? [Laugh] I mean, explain that one to me. (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) And, how can you be a complete human being if you're going to deny half of yourself? You know, because nowhere in that word, nowhere in that mentality is there any reference to what makes up the other half, if not the predominate part of our being.

**GUTIERREZ:** When did you see the Hispanic Movement emerge?

**BACA:** You know, I'll be very honest with you. I remember at the height of the Chicano Movement, (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) I mean everybody was a Chicano back then. Even Nixon when he came into his campaign literature, Chicanos por Nixon. And, that was even with Mexican-Americans, Chicanos. And, I always remember, all right, reading that Spiro Agnew, his convicted-felon vice president gave a speech in L.A., and I remember reading that he had addressed the Hispanics. I said, "What the hell's a 'Hispanic'?" I mean, [Laugh] who are these? Is there a new group in L.A. that I don't know about, the Hispanics?" And, you know, it was after that that the corporations joined in. It was then that the, I guess, funded agencies were forced to join in. You know, it was a catch-all, you know. It was accepted, respectable, you know. Like I told you that story about, in Mexico, the professor telling one of our members in Culiacán that "la palabra 'Chicano' es una palabra muy baja." you know. So. And, that older member that the reason the guy, the professor, had said it because he had some buttons from that march. (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) The Carter Immigration, the march against – yeah. It was, yeah. I think Portillo and -- I get the marches mixed up. [Laugh] (Patino: Yeah. That's all right.) I'm going to have to go back and look at the posters and – but anyway, we had some buttons left over that said, "Time for Resistance." Big two, three-inch buttons, and we had like a



thousand left over from this, this conference, and I was, this elder gentleman went with us to Culiacán. I got invited to a symposium. And like I was telling Jimmy, I says, "Hey, the colleges ain't nothing like the colleges here, you know, over there." (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) You got mariachis strolling around, trios, and you got guys selling tacos, and, you know. Like the students are, you know, going out the windows, you know, instead of the doors, you know. [Laugh] You've got bandas all over the place. But anyway, this elder member started giving these buttons away. So everybody on the campus had an orange button, "Time for Resistance. Committee on Chicano Rights." you know. The professors had them on. The guys that are selling tacos. The bands had them on. The participants in the conference had them on. So, this professor comes up to this individual, José. May he rest in peace. He passed away last year. And told him that, "Hey Esa palabra "chicano" es una palabra muy bajo aqui en Mexico." So, this member turned it around and says, "Hey," he says, "you know the history of Mexico?" "Si, como que no." He said, "Do you know about the Aztecs?" "Si, como que no." He said, "Well, you know, when they first came in they threw them in that lagoon over there because they thought the rattlesnakes were going to finish them off, they were so low." And the professor said, "Yeah, but look how, look at what height they reached and achieved." And, José turned around and said, "Well, the Chicanos are going to do the same, and probably higher." And, all the students started laughing that were around them, and the guy took off, you know. [Laughter] So that, that classism that exists within our people, you know, to the 50,000<sup>th</sup> degree, (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) I'm sure that had a lot to do with it, you know. "This is acceptable, 'Hispanic,' you know. Ties me back to Spain." Or, I don't know.

**PATINO:** During the march they were concerned with President Carter meeting with Portillo, president of Mexico.



**BACA:** Yeah.

**PATINO:** Here's that drawing I told you about where – and there's a migrante and then moving the PEMEX oil. (Baca: Yeah. Well, no . . .) What was the dynamic?

**BACA:** Well, the dynamic was, like I told you, that, you know, the ricos, the "free" you know, it was, they weren't going to say anything. Their policy was, "Get them out of here, you know."

[Laugh] (Patino: Okay.) "Hey, just get them out of here. The less fear of any revolution."

(Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) So, that was the Mexican position, other than the rhetoric about human rights. And, let me say, for all the faults of the Chicano Movement that's one thing that cannot be denied. Human rights was a concept that the Chicano Movement established and that others started to parrot, or mimic, or talk about, or do something about, from the United Nations to the Pope, to even the governments, you know, had to acknowledge, "Hey, we're concerned about the human rights of the undocumented, you know. (Patino: Uh huh.) And, that is one contribution that did come out of the Chicano Movement. Before that, like I said, that didn't exist. That didn't exist for the undocumented, you know. But, yeah, PEMEX, remember the context of the time. Mexico had just discovered oil. They, more oil than the Middle East or something, and you know, every Mexican was supposedly going to be a millionaire and, you know, the tables had been turned and, you know, it was a new ballgame, and this and that, and I don't know what happened to the oil.

**PATINO:** I guess it ran out. [Laugh]

**BACA:** So. So, yeah, as a matter of fact, see now, let's see I . . . there was that march, I remember, because the "Hispanic leaders" (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) and you see that video that Channel 9 did, *A Different Perspective*. I don't know if you've seen that one or not. (Patino: Hmm-uhm.) And, Channel 39, Maria Velasquez, who was a newscaster at Channel 39, asked if



they could do a video on the Chicano perspective, and it was based on that meeting, Carter and Portillo. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) And, like I said, the dynamics of the time were that Mexico had discovered oil. It was a new ballgame, you know, blah, blah, blah. Mexicans were spending all this money. And, I remember a cartoon where the Border Patrol is stopping these two undocumented immigrants that are coming underneath the wires and said, and said, and the Border Patrol said, "Pancho, you old rascal." He says, "Welcome. Welcome." [Laughter] Because of the oil, right? So, that was the context and the "Hispanic leaders" were meeting with Carter. And, I remember the, that march was a like a week before. And, if you look at the film, you know, what happened was we attempted to do a historical analysis of the issue. And, you know, it goes, starts with the U.S./Mexico war and, you know, people just crossing at will. And then in 1924 they established the U.S. Border Patrol. And then, the Bracero Program and, you know, the repatriation in the '30s, and then the Bracero Program in the '40s, and then it jumps into the local situation, (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) The Duffy Memorandum and then they bring in the Klan. So, they make reference to that and then at that, we had, we held a press conference there at Larson Field and Bert's there, and Antonio Rodriguez, and Corky, Armando. There was an individual, Alberto Garcia. And, my speech was specifically on the meeting, you know, and solutions, you know, and now was the time to start a dialog, you know. As a matter of fact, it was against the Carter Curtain. That's what it was. (Patino: Yeah.) Okay, you see that's, see. So, I'm mixed up on my marches, okay.

**PATINO:** You had a bunch of them. So.

**BACA:** So we, so you had all those things going on and like I said, after the, after the, that march there was a tribunal.

**PATINO:** Right. Early '80s, right?



**BACA:** Yeah. We called a tribunal on the violence, (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) on the, sort of memorial. And, that march we had a bunch of coffins, you know. They had made some coffins to dramatize the violence. And if I remember right, that march was a conference. We had a conference the day before at St. Rita's. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) And, you know, Corky spoke there and Bert was supposed to speak there. That was when we were mad at Bert. [Laugh] And . . .

**PATINO:** He stood you up?

**BACA:** Yeah. And, we wound up together at the symposium in Culiacán, and like I said everybody had those orange buttons. So, I was telling Jimmy it was like 116 degrees and it was underneath a basement, and I told the guys, you know, I said, "Call me when it's my turn." I said, "I, you know, really," I said, "I don't listen to those guys." [Laugh] So anyway, so I always remember this guy José Berrellez, he comes up to the room and he says, "Hey Herman," he says, "you know," he says, "you're supposed to give a polemic." Is that what it is? (Patino: Yeah.) [Laugh] I had never heard that damn word, man. I said, "What's a polemic?" Polemic," or whatever it is in the Spanish. (Patino: Yeah.) He says, "What's that?" He says, "You know those guys that, they're giving position papers on, you know, they're talking about health for the undocumented. They're talking about unionizing the undocumented. They're talking about education," and blah, blah, blah. I said, "Damn," I said. "I didn't know that. I was just going to give them my usual, you know, Gestapo, Border Patrol, and Texas Ranger, and you know, the Hisputnics," you now, messing everything up, you now. I said, "Damn." I said, "What am I going to talk about?" And he said, "You know what?" He said, "All those guys are going to talk about after the undocumented comes across the border," he said, "but first they got to get across alive." I said, "That's a good one, man." I said, "I'll address that issue." [Laugh] And, yeah, it was like 116 degrees. So anyway, like I said, this guy had given all those orange buttons away,



and we were teed off at Bert because he never showed up to the conference. So, I walk in and guess who's sitting up there with an orange button like he had been at the conference. Bert. [Laughter] I said, "That's a real politician." [Laughter] "I was always with you." Well, I guess. So . . .

**PATINO:** I see on the UFW, is that the protest, the Carter Curtain protest?

**BACA:** Yeah. They were supposed to be there but Richard never showed up down there.

**PATINO:** Had they turned a leaf?

**BACA:** Yeah, basically. Yeah, they started, you know, they, you asked me what created all the tension, I guess that would be the same thing like demographics, and Chávez's union [Laugh] became basically undocumented, you know, the majority, (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) you know. And, I would say that probably what prompted the Chicano Movement was an attempt to change the demographics. (Patino: Yeah.) (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm. Uhm-hmm.) I'm sure that also spurred the establishment efforts to institutionalize, you know, like through the Carter Immigration Plan, the manipulation of the immigration policy. See, a lot of people – because, getting back to CASA Justicia. CASA Justicia, in National City, A, we had a board of undocumented or people that were trying to get documentation. (Patino: Yeah.) I was the chairperson, because of, you know, the press conferences and what have you.

**PATINO:** This is early '70s?

**BACA:** Yeah, '70s. Yeah, '74. And, you know, it's, you could see that the demographics changing and I think that, that's what spurred a lot of the response from all sectors, whether it was the government, whether it was the educational institutions, the religious... Even the funded organizations, like I said they, there was some state money to be got. And, politically, you know, our numbers were growing. Our numbers were growing. We were no longer, like I said,



the "sleeping giant," or the "silent invisible minority." You know, by then, I remember, you asked me about the Hispanic. Remember the Decade of the Hispanic?

**GUTIERREZ:** Uhm-hmm.

**BACA:** Of course. [Laugh] (Patino: Yeah.) So, there was even an effort to market economically by the corporations. (Patino: Yeah.) Politically there was an effort like with Coyote Castillo, to personalize or politicize, I guess, the existence of a people that had never been. Remember, this is during that decade that Mario Obledo was Health Education and Welfare for the State of California. So, "Hispanics" started getting high profile appointed positions. There was because of the reaction to La Raza Unida, more politicians within the Democratic Party of Mexican ancestry that were elected. And, as you can see right now, higher of use to us, I don't know. I guess, maybe that's a step in the right direction. And, but I think, I think we started looking at the contemporary that what's missing. [Cell phone rings]. What's missing is, was Bert had provided a person of Bert's stature, a person of Bert's background, (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) his historical background. Like I was telling Jimmy, I said, hey, Bert was organizing in 1935, which is eight years before I was born. (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) You know, and so that's what is missing now at a national level. (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) (Patino: Yeah.) People educating, defining the issue to people that are more emotional than political. (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) Look at the marches, you know.

The marches that took place was a reaction by the people that were affected, that were being tagged or attempted to be tagged and defined as criminals. [Laugh] You know, "Hey, wait a minute." So, like they would stay on the farm, respingado, you know, they rose up. But, that wasn't enough to carry them over to the next stage. (Patino: Yeah.) There was no infrastructure to continue that education. "Hey, you know, it's not just about your documents."



You know, I spoke at that Riverside on May 1, and like I told them, "You know, what you're dealing with here is a problem of this country, the United States, being addicted to free or cheap labor." I said, "That's been going on since the first black slave was brought into Jamestown in 1600." I said, "There's always been somebody that they've used." I said, "Even their own people, the Irish, the Okies," I said, "the Chinese, the Philipinos, Arabs." And since 1850, we've been the main ones, the Mexicanos. I said, and the question for the U.S. is, because every generation that went through that process turned around and did it to the next generation, you know, like an initiation into American society. "You've first got to get exploited." [Laugh] You know. And then I says, "So, the question is, if you get your documentation are you going to continue that system?" Of course, everybody shouted "No." But, the biggest response that I got was, I asked, "Well, where's the politicians at?" (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) "Where are Hispanic politicians?" And like I said, there were around seven or eight thousand people there and we were in the center there, not auditorium but city hall. I said, "Let's look around." I said, "Is there any up here?" you know. "Over here?" [Laughter] "No." Donde estan? Donde estan? you know. And, I remember the, there was a conference that Navarro, that Armando Navarro held. I think it was in April, right before, before – there was two conferences. There was one in, I think, January or February and there was a second one, I think, April. And, the first one was to talk about, about the "no sense no brain" legislation. (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) And, the Minutemen were present, you know. And, you can Google that speech now.

**PATINO:** I think I've seen it.

**BACA:** Yeah.

**PATINO:** Riverside, right?

**BACA:** Yeah.



**PATINO:** Yeah.

**BACA:** Okay.

**PATINO:** On the Minutemen website?

**BACA:** Yeah. You've got to give them credit. They did a real good video, [Laugh] you know.

**GUTIERREZ:** Of you?

**BACA:** Yeah, when I was speaking. (Patino: Okay.) That's where, that's where I stated that "President Bush, the U.S. Congress, and the extreme right-wing have declared war on you, persons of Mexican ancestry." And I went into the whole thing about, "Hey, we ain't little no more." (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) "We're forty percent of the population, thirty-five forty percent in California, you know. What are we doing demonstrating and picketing? We ought to be running the show." I talked to them about the whole thing about power, you know. "Hey, this isn't 1970 when we were fifteen, twenty percent, (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) and we had no choice." I said, "You know, we got the political mass if (Patino: Yeah.) you're educated, politicized, and organized." So, but I said, "What happens," I says, "what you're seeing now is going to continue. It's a historical problem." So, I was talking about that change in demographics. And, at the second conference, Jimmy Carter asked me a question. He said, "Mr. Baca," he said, you know, "you've been around a long time." He said, "Let me ask you," he says, "what's the difference from this conference from all the other conferences that you attended?" I said, "The same thing what you see out in the U.S. society." I says, "Demographics." I says, I says, "Look in that room." I says, "There's people from Central America. There's people from South America. There's the Oaxacans. There's people from, you know, el Northe, from Culiacán." I says, "There's people from all over." I says, "The difference is demographics." Even though Chicanos put on the conference we're now the minority, within our own



conference." I said, "That's what changed. That's the difference from this conference than all the other conferences I've attended." So, you know, the numbers are going to continue. Like I said a little while ago, looking at the broader issue of all of our status, the next couple generations might be having some dark, dark days. What you're starting to see now is right here in our backyard, Escondido, (Gutierrez: Right.) even Ramona, the proposal to establish apartheid. That's what it is. (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) You know? That's what it is. And once you get on that slippery slope, you know, it's going to be, it's going to lead to, "Hey, you can't sell hamburgers to illegals," you know. (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) But, how do you tell a so-called illegal from someone who's been here since the 1600s, whose families have been here since the 1600s. You don't. It's a system again. (Patino: Yeah.) A system who will render you even more powerless. It's a system of continued, you know, there must be a reason why this is being done. (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) Obviously, this society don't do anything unless there's profit. [Laugh] So, there must be a profit motive behind it somewhere, which there is. I mean, let's face it. Agribusiness is this state's largest industry.

**PATINO:** Yeah, but on that issue now I'd like to get your thoughts. My students have asked the same thing, you know. The ultimate meaning of the marches and what's likely to happen in the future, blah, blah. And one option I've offered, and this is, you know, playing devil's advocate, (Baca: Yeah.) these kinds of things that you're talking about Escondido, and Vista, and elsewhere, don't you think it might provide the catalyst for people to stand up and say, "No. We're not going to put up with it" ?

**BACA:** Don't get me wrong. Something is better than zero. (Gutierrez: Right.) You know, what I'm saying is the political thought goes a little bit deeper than that. (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) Like I told this other activist, he was telling me about being up in Ocampo because the



Minutemen were up there. He came back and were at a function. And, he was saying, you know, "Hey, the KKK was out there with them," and blah, blah, blah. And I says, "You know what?" I says, "That's good that you're doing that. Somebody has to do it." I says, "And, more power to you." I says, "But, there's a B side to that equation." I said, "I've been there. I've done it." I says, "And, I did it because that's the only option at the time." I says, "Now, the real question is, is where are all the Hispanic representatives? Where's all those Hispanic national organizations?" I said, "I know you don't have that kind of resources. I know you don't have that kind of title and you don't have that kind of money. And, I know there's not enough to do what has to be done." I says, "You know, if I was you, if I was doing it, I'd be picketing and making those individuals that we broke the door in so that they could go in, making them accountable, and making them to take what they say they are, the leader's position on this issue." I said, "Because back then we were fifteen, twenty percent. Now we're forty. We're going to be the majority." I says, "And you have to understand," I says, "those KKK, those Minutemen, those green-tooth southerners that you see out there," I said, "they're like those believers in the Confederate Army, in the South, 'The South will rise again.' No it ain't. [Laugh] No it ain't. You're pipe dreaming. Wishful thinking," you know. [Laugh] The Union's got a nuclear bomb, [Laugh] you know. You know, they've got a bigger army. The South ain't never going to rise again. Not what you're talking about." I said, "And this guy is the same way. They like what they had in 1950, but this ain't the 1950s." I said, "Sorry, you know, you got a population that is not increasing." I said, "So who's doing the work? Who's going to run the schools? Who's going to run the factories? You know, it ain't you. Sorry. There's not enough of you." So, I said, "You know what man? Does anyone pay no attention to those confederate guys that say 'The South will rise again.'" I said, "It's the same thing here." I said, "That doesn't mean it



doesn't have to be confronted," I says, "but I'm saying that in the political give and take, you know, we all got to not mix up our tactics and our strategies with our political reality. I says, "What's missing in confronting this problem is power. And, that goes for any problem that we have." You know, you ask people, "Hey, what's the biggest problem confronting you guys?" "Education. No its not. Political representation." " No it's not." " Housing." " No it's not." " Our youth in prison?" " No, it's not. It's the lack of power. You ain't got no power the car don't move. (Patino: Yeah.) You ain't got no power. They define it. They control it. They direct it. They drive the car. You go along with it wherever you're going." I said, so, that's what I want to leave somebody that comes fifty years from now. And like I said, I do see apartheid and people have to have to have an honest discussion. I've got a picture at the shop from that march right there, Portillo and Carter. Bert Corona, I'm sitting next to Bert Corona, Corky, and Armando. And, like I always tell people I said, "Look at the picture, 1967. Bert Corona's probably got forty years of experience. Corky is like twenty. Me and Navarro, probably eight, nine years." I says, "So, we were fortunate to have somebody like Bert that has been through trials we had never been, to point out things to us." I says, "And consequently, hey, we knew we weren't going to solve the immigration issue or that we were going to get Jimmy Carter and Portillo to say, 'Hey, let's listen to those guys.' But, we were putting the seed in the right historical place. Not like the Hispanics that are trying to drop seeds on rock, you know. Ain't nothing going to grow, I said because of experience, you know." That's what's lacking in all those marches. There's not even a definition. (Gutierrez: Uhm-hmm.) You've got some people, and that's understandable. "Hey, these people need documents to come out." People that are trying to unionize. That's true too. (Patino: Yeah.) But, this issue is one of many, many issues affecting communities and our people, you know. Their mother and fathers, they have no documents, want their documents.



That's understandable. But, what kind of schools are their U.S.-born children going to go to, or are going to? That has to be talked about. I probably the rhetoric of people that have no documents. "I'm going to go back to my little ranchita in Mexico." They ain't going to go. [Laugh] My father came here in 1950 and said he was going to go back to New Mexico. He never left. [Laugh] And how many people can, (Patino: Right.) you've got some guy eighty-five years old. He's going to go back to his ranchita, and he's been here for fifty years, [Laugh] in Mexico. Now he . . . .

**END SIDE 2, TAPE 8, SESSION 6.**

**END INTERVIEW**