

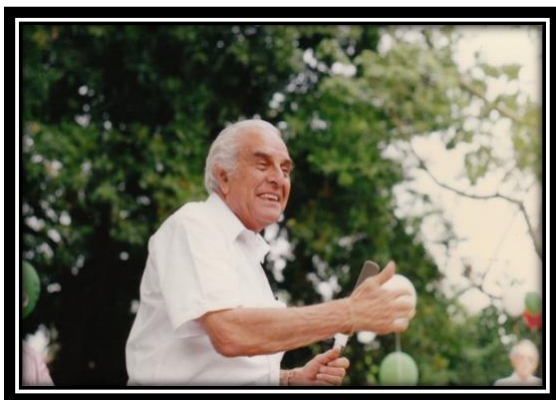
PROFILE OF RESISTANCE

HUMBERTO NOÉ “BERT” CORONA

activist, organizer

“I’m proud that I was able at certain times to help organize a plant or a community group and that these organizations helped people struggle to better their lives.”

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COURTESY OF LATINOPIA

Background Information

Born May 29, 1918; Died January 15, 2001

Humberto Noé “Bert” Corona was born in Texas. Because both of his parents were from Mexico, he spent some of his childhood in Mexico as well. Corona’s family moved back to the country for some years but after his father’s death they returned to the United States. Corona attended an all-boys school in the U.S. upon arrival. He had a long organizing career alongside Latinx workers for better conditions. Corona’s goal was to

empower and give a voice to undocumented workers.

Corona’s Resistance

In the United States, Corona noticed how people treated Mexican Americans and Mexican immigrants. He attended a segregated public school in high school and later a predominantly white school. Consequently, these environments are where Corona began to advocate for himself and others. He became involved in student activism and learned more about politics. After high school, he received an athletic scholarship to attend the University of Southern California, but after an injury, he decided to pursue a career in labor within the Los Angeles area. His passion led him to work with other activists, like Cesar Chávez and Jose Angle Gutierrez. In 1968 he established a Los Angeles branch of La Hermandad Mexicana, one of few grassroots organizations to help Latin undocumented workers. He later built the Centros de Acción Social Autónomo, or Centers for Autonomous (Independent) Social Actions. The group gave undocumented Latinx workers housing, medical, and legal support.ⁱ By the 1960s and 1970s, Corona was fondly known as “*El Viejito* (The Old Man)” because of his long history as an activist and organizer.

Achievements

Corona coined the phrase, “No Human Being is Illegal”, which is still used today.ⁱⁱ In a *Los Angeles Times* article, Mario T. Garcia said of Corona, “He did what no one else had successfully done—organize undocumented workers.” He was later involved with the Coalition for Fair Immigration Laws and Practices, the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, and consulting for the United States Department of Labor.

Essential Questions

1. At an early age Corona noticed that he was being treated differently from his white school peers.
 - a. How do you think that experience influenced him to fight against injustice?

2. Corona was heavily involved with several organizations advocating for change within the organized labor movement for those who were underrepresented, undocumented workers.
 - a. What challenges did he face in this work?

3. ***“I’m proud that I was able at certain times to help organize a plant or a community group and that these organizations helped people struggle to better their lives.”***
 - a. Corona left a legacy because of his work for undocumented workers. What cause do you want to leave a legacy for?

ⁱ Editors, Biography.Jrank.org (2022). “Bert Corona: 1918-2001: Labor Organizer.” Biography.Jrank.org. Retrieved from <https://biography.jrank.org/pages/3058/Corona-Bert-1918-2001-Labor-Organizer-Fought-Crackdowns-on-Undocumented-Latinos.html>

ⁱⁱ Lopez, N. (2013). “COMMEMORATE THE 95TH BIRTH ANNIVERSARY OF BERT CORONA.” NatiboLopez.Blogspot.com. Retrieved from <http://nativolopez.blogspot.com/2013/05/commemorate-95th-birth-anniversary-of.html>