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USA

"The power to stop the system"

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At an April 22 meeting of organizers in Chicago, Nativio Lopez, president of the Mexican American Political Association, spoke about the importance of the next step in the struggle against vicious anti-immigrant legislation - the Great American Boycott on May 1.

WE HAVEN'T seen anything as odious and hateful as the Sensenbrenner legislation since the Fugitive Slave Act of 1857. People should look it upâ€”another law that asked citizens to participate in the persecution of others and the returning of escaped slaves to their former masters.

HR 4437 is the culmination of state and local legislation that we have been faced withâ€”persecution in different places for the past 10 years.

It's also the product of 10 years of hate speech on right-wing radio. The level of hate speech and hate-mongering coming from the Clear Channel and others is unprecedented.

This is also globalization coming home to roost. There is a dynamic with the economic powerhouses of Europe and North America in relation to developing countries. The powerhouses are extracting as much wealth as they can from those countries. Legal and undocumented immigration is going to continue in a structural and profound way as long as this is the case.

Our greatest fear is that the Democratic Party is going to cut a deal behind closed doors and contain the movement that has been born.

Capital is creating for us a movement that we didn't have 20 years ago. Capital has sent immigrants to every corner and every town of the country, so that mass demonstrations are possible everywhere.

Therefore, I'm going to go to the capital and invite George Bush to join us in "One Day Without Immigrants" on May 1 and participate in the movement that he is helping to create.

There are some people who are criticizing the call to boycott, but nevertheless, the call has been made, the word is out there, and people are ready to pursue it.

I happened to be at a conference last Friday at the Catholic Cathedral of Los Angeles, right after Cardinal Mahoney made the announcement not to boycott. I talked to the workers who work at the Cathedral. They came up to me and told me excitedly, "Nativo, we're not going to work on May 1!"

This movement is based on the Ghandian principals of non-cooperation. It's also based on the idea that the only power we possess is our labor power. The only power we have is the power that creates value in this society. When workers refuse to cooperate, they realize the power they have to tinker with and stop the system.

The immigrant "problem," as some call it, can only be resolved when workers themselves refuse to cooperate with the system until it fairly remunerates them. And in this case, fair remuneration is full unconditional legalization for all workers past and present.

"The power to stop the system"

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