



Instituto de Educación Popular del Sur de California

## Stop Arizona, Now!

It is now clear more than ever that we must truly, fully resurrect the spirit of resistance of the civil rights movements of the 1960's. SB 1070 passed by Arizona state legislature and signed into law by Governor Brewer on Friday, April 23 denies immigrants' basic dignity and humanity in much the same way that southern Jim Crow laws did to millions of African Americans in decades past. SB 1070 not only gives license to, but actually *mandates* that local police in Arizona confront and interrogate "suspected" immigrants as to whether they have the right to be in this country, thus institutionalizing the already widespread policies of racial profiling, police harassment, and violence that have been visited on immigrant communities in Arizona and around the country in recent years. Just as segregation laws targeted black people in the South, SB 1070 degrades and dehumanizes undocumented workers and immigrants generally.

After the arrest of Rosa Parks, the black people of Montgomery along with individuals of many races and backgrounds organized and promoted a boycott of the city bus line that lasted 381 days. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. expanded local organizing efforts through strategies of non-violent resistance and protest. The struggle in Montgomery spread throughout the south and the rest of the country in the form of sit-ins, eat-ins, swim-ins, freedom rides, and similar struggles. Thousands of courageous people joined the "protest" to demand equal rights for all people.

Those of us experiencing injustice today must remember the courage and dedication of those who rose up during the civil rights movement. We must disobey laws that operate to enslave working people, and we must organize to resist laws that dehumanize any among

us. In particular, those of us who are privileged to be able to do so should stand up like Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King, and many others did, in solidarity and struggle with those who are most violently and openly targeted by racist policies. We should sit where we are not allowed to sit; we should go where we are not supposed to go. And as we do so, we also liberate ourselves.

As the civil rights movement taught us, the struggle for human dignity must not only address a given racist ordinance or unjust law; rather, as we organize, we must always remember that the laws are symptomatic of an economic and political system which scapegoats poor and disenfranchised individuals, rather than the wealthy and powerful who benefit from the injustices of such a system.

Above all, the legacy of the civil rights movement assures us that no laws and no individuals can deny our dignity or our humanity if we, as loving, decent people, refuse to allow it.

Under the guise of “security,” Arizona’s Governor Brewer has added another brick to the police state and its ever-attendant prison industrial complex. We must unmask such rhetoric and refuse to allow anyone to continue blaming the victims of “free” trade agreements and unjust labor laws for any “crisis.” Rather than spending millions of dollars to build fences, prisons and detention centers, we at IDEPSCA and around the country must work to break the chains of these oppressive laws and ideologies.

IDEPSCA and its constituents demand that President Obama and Congress establish a comprehensive and humane legalization process that is consistent with our human and democratic values. For over two hundred years the U.S. has received, supported, and improved the lives of millions of honorable immigrant men, women, and children. Immigrants have made critical contributions, strengthened and supported America’s stated commitment to democracy and progress as a global leader.

IDEPSCA calls for a legalization process that moves beyond immigration reform and into a thoughtful and strategic long-term plan that addresses the complexity of this issue in a more humane and democratic fashion. We support an immigration reform that will stop deaths at the border, stop the abuses of unscrupulous employers, and put an end to the disruption and division of innocent families. We support a reform that will address the complexity of these issues in a manner consistent with the U.S. Constitution, and which respects the dignity of us all.