

Bracero program

[Sociology](#), [Immigration](#)



The Bracero Program The Bracero Program was a temporary contract labor program initiated in 1942 by the United States and Mexico. Designed originally to bring a experienced Mexican agricultural laborers to harvest sugar beets in Stockton, California, but soon spread to most of the United States and to the railroad industry. Although the railroad program ended in 1945, after World War II the agricultural program continued until 1964. Originally, the program was designed to protect the illegal migrant workers against the exploitation by American farmers.

However, it was criticized and was viewed as a failure from the humanitarian point of view. Workers in the Bracero Program continued to face struggles with the United States and Mexican governments. Many workers did not receive the mandatory savings accounts that were legally guaranteed to them upon conclusion of their contracts to work in the United States. In many states, specifically Texas, the local governments and authorities also took advantage of the workers. Graft and corruption on both sides of the border enriched many Mexican officials as well as unethical “ coyote” freelancers in the United States who promised contracts in Texas for the unsuspecting Bracero. ” reported by The Handbook of Texas Online (Handbook of Texas Online, s. v. , 2001.) Because of the abuse of authoritative power, such as perfunctory arrest for petty causes, and obvious discrimination, Mexico excluded Texas was excluded from the labor-exchange program. Wages paid to legal contracted braceros were low. As well, these workers often encountered poor substandard living conditions.

Many braceros left contracted work to return to home or to find better paying jobs. These braceros became known as “ wetbacks. Farmers and ranchers

became dependent on a low-cost, docile, illegal labor force. The search for jobs began to move the illegal immigrants farther north into Texas and California. However, there were still many braceros that continued to work under contract and work as law-abiding members of the community. The program became a political issue for the Americans. The United States wielded the power of negotiations with both the Mexican government and the

Mexican people. Mexico lost all real bargaining power in the 1950's. Along with opposition from Cesar Chavez and Dolores Huerta, the United States determined that the program was no longer vital to the American's; it discontinued the program in 1964. Chavez and Huerta fought the program because it undermined American workers and exploited the migrant workers. Nothing says it more obvious than the account from Walt Edwards (as cited in Dillin, 2006), When we caught illegal aliens on farms and ranches, the farmer or rancher would often call and complain [to officials in El Paso].

And depending on how politically connected they were, there would be political intervention. That is how we got into this mess we are in now. (Dillin, John, 2006) By the end of the program, farm labor unions began to form which eventually led to the abolishment of laws stating it was illegal to organize farm labor. This lead the way to the grape strikes in California and the boycotts in stores, lead by Filipino farm workers. After the first strike several various organizations began to form and led similar movements around the country.

Through the 1960s to the 1980s, Cesar Chavez was a major inspiration to such movements and organizations. One of the most notable protests was when Chavez and the UFW marched from the Coachella Valley to the Mexican border to protest grower's use of illegal aliens as strikebreakers and replacement workers. References Bracero Program. Bracero Program in Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia. Retrieved on July 29, 2007, from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bracero_program. Cesar Chavez. Cesar Chavez in Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia.

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