

June 7, 1963

Hon. Albert Pena
County Commissioner
San Antonio, Texas

Dear Albert:

I read the enclosed clipping from the Corpus Christi Caller of this morning with great concern and considerable worry. I consider that it will be a calamity if the Teamsters Union takes over PASO in Texas, or even if PASO allows itself to be aligned with the Teamsters Union. I must not be considered as a "butinsky" in writing now, but as doing my official duty to the citizens of both races, not just in the Valley, but in the entire State of Texas.

I have lived here more than fifty years, and have been in the Court-house, as County Attorney and County Judge, more than forty years, and if I have left anything undone to create peaceful relations between the two races, I don't know it. I defy anyone to show where I have ever in any respect treated a Latin unfair, unjustly or discourteously. And I was thrilled when our mutual friend, Hon. Bob Sanchez of McAllen, made a report on the fine relations here in Brownsville. If Brownsville is better than the balance of the County, or even the Valley, it will be because the two races have lived here together for more than a hundred years. They have inter-married; and there is no racial discrimination here in Cameron County.

The rank and file of the Teamsters Union are doubtless as good people as the rank and file of any other union or, for that matter, of you or Oscar Dancy, or anybody else.

It is tragically unfortunate that since the death of Dan Tobin that they have suffered from their leadership, or more truly speaking, from their misleadership. We all know of George Beck. No one respects him. He was just a dirty thief; and is now behind the walls, where he belonged many years ago, and from which place he should really never be released, but used as a horrid example for all days to come.

Unfortunately, yes very unfortunately, James R. Hoffa, present Dictator of the Teamsters, has both guts and brains; and figuratively speaking, gets away with murder. He has escaped justice, and his henchmen have escaped justice, largely by standing behind the Fifth Amendment. Some of his friends point to the fact that they have not been able to pin anything on him. Well, no wonder! they bribe juries, and his collaborators at least, hide behind the Fifth Amendment, which is a great protection for civil rights; but the most shamefully abused of any right in the Constitution.

Frankly, I think it would be a mistake to align with any Union, even George Meany's Union. I think George Meany is doing more than most anybody else to fight off that awful menace of Communism; but if you see fit to align with any Union, for Heaven's sake, align with George Meany's Union. I think he is one of the greatest patriots in this nation - just the opposite of James Hoffa.

What have the Latins to worry about in Texas? Starting in with Roosevelt, have not Democratic Administrations helped them in every way in Texas, and especially in the Valley? What President has ever recognized Latins as has John Kennedy? I am assuming that you are a friend of the Kennedy's, just like I am - and I call your attention - look what they have done for the Latin people. First, Mr. Reynaldo Garza was appointed U. S. District Judge - the first Latin ever appointed to such high office, and - did not Reynaldo make up in the upper five per cent of Judges who did good jobs in the very first year he was in office.

Here in Cameron County, Hon. H. A. Garcia is one of our three District Judges. Our Judge of the County Court-at-Law is a Latin. We have one Justice of the Peace, who is a Latin, and one who is an Anglo. Thus in Brownsville, the County seat, we have equality of representation. But it was not planned on that basis. We just vote for whom we think is the best man, with-

out regard to his sur-name. God forbid that this should ever be changed in Cameron County, or any other County in the State of Texas.

Then Kennedy appointed the Hon. Ramon Telles, former Mayor of El Paso, as Ambassador to Costa Rica, the most progressive and most democratic nation in Latin America. El Paso Anglo leaders tell me that he could have held the office of Mayor as long as he wanted to; and that he would make an excellent Governor for the State of Texas. I hope to be in Costa Rica later this month, and have the opportunity of meeting and shaking hands with Mr. Telles, as well as that of the Hon. Jose Figueres, former President of Costa Rica, and who is in my book as one of the most outstanding, honest and progressive Latin leaders, or even leaders of any kind in the western hemisphere.

But think of the great justice that the Administration is doing by admitting the old Latins, whose hard work has helped build this Valley and this country, to American citizenship, so that they can go to the Welfare Offices and be so deservedly recognized.

Albert, when you first read this letter, you may be disgusted, thinking that I am butting in where I have no right to butt in - I not only have a right, but I have a duty. No one will question that during my more than fifty years residence in Cameron County and over forty years as County Judge, that I have left anything undone to promote peaceful and cooperative relations between the two races. I defy anyone to show where I have ever let race cut any figure in my official duties, or where I have ever mistreated a Latin, or even treated him discourteously. Ask Mr. Duarte and Mr. Vela and Mr. Sanchez about this.

I have the kindest feeling for all of you; and if there is anything in this letter that is not said with the utmost kindness, it is just because I don't know how to express myself that way.

What our good Latins need more than anything else is EDUCATION, especially including adult education. I don't know of anyone more calculated to lead in promoting adult education and getting the masses to follow him than you and Felix Tijerina of Houston and Dr. Hector Garcia of Corpus Christi.

The most pitiful and pitiable human being in the world is the laborer, who cannot read or write his own language -- let alone speak the English language. Let's help him to help himself.

Read the enclosed clipping again. Follow the leadership of Dr. Garcia. Note what the clipping says about his stand for adult education. And while we are at it, let's back Gov. Connally in his movement for higher education. I hardly know which to class first - higher education to train badly needed technicians and specialists in Latin America and elsewhere, or adult education for the common, everyday laborer. Let's push both.

I have made two trips to Central America, and am planning the third trip, beginning next Saturday; and the cry over there is not only for adult education, but for scientific men and specialists - and this requires the higher education. Let's back the Governor in his move; and then let's back a movement for adult education, which Ralph Yarborough is sponsoring and taking the lead in Washington. Talk to him about this while he is in your good city.

I would like to meet with you, Mr. Tijerina and Dr. Garcia one of these days, to lay the predicate to try to get the Ford Foundation, or some other Foundation or Agency, to come in and at least furnish us the benefits of their research. The legislature made a start by appropriating \$15,000 to be spent by Southmost College in Brownsville.

Albert, let me say again, and reemphasize, that I am writing this in the kindest of spirit to all of you. And I want you to hand copies of this letter to Dr. Garcia, and Messrs. Vela and Duarte of this County - to Judge Benavides, and to anyone else you see fit.

I am just standing up and being counted. The importance of keeping perfect race relations, especially in the Valley, cannot possibly be over estimated in our future dealings with Latin America, as well as among ourselves.

Thanking you for due consideration, and with every possible good wish, I am as ever,

Sincerely your friend,

OCD/cga

Oscar C. Dancy - County Judge
Cameron County, Texas