

THE STRUGGLE FOR RECOGNITION: ANALYSIS OF TACTICS USED
BY THE UNITED FARM WORKERS, 1962-1975

by

KALPANA KRISHNAMURTHY

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Approved: _____

[Redacted Signature]

Peggy Pascoe

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One of the most exploited and impoverished communities in the early 1960's, creating a viable farmworkers' union would be a rigorous assignment. In studying the methods used for gaining official recognition of the United Farm Workers, three tactics played different, but significant roles in achieving the overall goal of the recognition farmworkers' rights to organize: the strike, the boycott, and legislative action. Emphasizing the strength of the analysis is the broad range of primary sources found in the Cesar Chavez Collection of the University of California at Santa Barbara, alongside a wide range of biographies. Between 1962 and 1975, the UFW would employ all three tactics, this thesis is a study of the development and an analysis of the successes and failures of the tri-fold strategy pursued by the UFW.

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INTRODUCTION

It Ain't About Cesar Chavez

The history of movements for social change in America is fascinating, complicated, and ongoing. It is a history based on a subset of the population having a fundamental disagreement with the structure of society and attempting to change larger societal institutions. It is a history in the struggle for power and recognition. As an organizer, it is critical for me to understand this history. This thesis is my attempt to analyze how one organization struggled for power and recognition.

The history of the United Farm Workers (UFW) has been completely enmeshed in the history of Cesar Chavez. A charismatic, visionary, and eloquent man of humble beginnings, Chavez has come to epitomize the farmworker movement. It is only within biographies, films, and articles about Chavez that the UFW is discussed. However, with this recognition and acknowledgment of his contributions, historians have come to focus solely on Chavez -- his leadership style, decision making, delegation of authority, and building of the overall organization. This myopic focus on Chavez has diminished the understanding of the UFW in its quest for recognition. The struggle for recognition by a social organization or movement is a critical period for the success of the group. It is the yardstick by which the potential success of the movement is measured -- because it foreshadows the organizations' strengths and weaknesses. There has been no analysis of the struggle for recognition of the UFW or the tactics used during these formative years to pressure decision makers and growers.

From where the farmworkers stood in the early 1960s, creating a viable farmworkers' union would be a rigorous endeavor. One of the most exploited and impoverished of American communities, farmworkers simply had no political power. In order to build power, support, and recognition for *la causa* (the cause), Chavez would go

directly to the farmworkers and the public at large. During its inception, the struggle to legitimize farmworkers' rights to organize was the primary focus of the United Farm Workers and its preceding organizations. The fight for recognition would lead the UFW to pursue a tri-fold strategy of strikes, boycotts, and legislative action. While some of these tactics brought initial smaller victories, it was the combination of all three tactics that achieved the goal of recognition of farmworkers' rights to organize.

In outlining the dynamics of agricultural labor relations, it is easy to recognize the unique marriage of agribusiness interests with the traditional government sponsorship of agriculture. Analyzing the unique circumstances arising from this mutual "back scratching," it is possible to recognize how the UFWOC was able to bypass these relationships by bringing economic pressure on the growers. Also, the traditional relationship between the federal government and workers in America must be explored to realize the unique and unprecedented relationship the federal government had with farmworkers. Chapter 1 focuses on the conflict between government support of labor and government support of agriculture and analyzes the difficulties of farmworker organizing. It concludes with a brief analysis of the early years of the UFW, then known as the National Farm Worker Association (NFWA), and its noted difference from other farmworker organizing efforts.

In studying the methods used for gaining official recognition of the union, three tactics played different, but significant roles in achieving the overall goal of representation. Chapter 2 focuses on the use of strikes, especially a strike in Delano, California, started in September of 1965. By constructing a broad civil rights message and in carrying the strike cause to sympathetic institutional supporters like the civil rights community, the church, and the AFL-CIO the farmworkers were able to build their base of support. This support, however, was not enough to achieve the short or long term goals of the UFW. In comparison to the successful strike of auto workers in Flint, Michigan in 1937, I have formed a critique that highlights the unique production stoppage issues facing striking

farmworkers. While the Delano strike was unable to accomplish major work stoppages and thus was ultimately unsuccessful, it built the foundation for the next tactic employed by the farmworkers: the boycott.

The consumer boycott has been one of the least used tactics in organizing because it has traditionally been difficult to build public following and support of a boycott. Consumer fidelity to a boycott is questionable -- because it necessitates the consumer's identification with the organization calling for the boycott. The California Grape Boycott remains one of the most successful boycotts in history and was one of the primary vehicles used by the UFW to gain recognition from growers. Chapter 3 highlights the reasons for this success, focusing on the use of boycott organizers in targeted markets and boycott support committees. By involving community members, the general public in their fight, the UFW formed successful coalition partners and gathered critical grassroots support. Public support was reinforced by the UFW's proclivity for garnering official endorsements from organized unions, religious institutions, civil rights organizations, and leading political figures. In reflecting on some of the social and economic conditions necessary for successful boycott organizing articulated by sociologist Harry Laidler, the UFW's boycott tactic can be analyzed as a success in achieving both the short term goals and creating an environment in which the long term goals of the organization could be met.

The final section of this analysis is reserved for legislative action on behalf of and by the farmworkers in their struggle for recognition. Chapter 4 chronicles the marked shift of UFW support for specific pieces of legislation in 1966 to its position on the same legislation after ten years of successful organizing in 1975. This transition shows the effectiveness, strength, and political clout the organization had gained via its use of strikes and boycotts. The final victory of farmworker organizing in 1975 was built upon ten years of coordinated tactics, a decline in government sponsorship of agriculture, and a desire on behalf of growers to restore peace (and profits) to the fields.

This thesis analyzes the first successful attempt to build an agricultural union in the continental United States. It is my hope that exploration of the organizing tools employed by the farmworkers will help fill the existing vacuum of analysis of the tools organizers use to accomplish their goals. In order to gain an understanding of the tools used by the union, I have looked at a number of primary and secondary sources. The most important primary sources were found in the Cesar Chavez Collection at the University of California at Santa Barbara, one of the only West coast depositories of a near complete collection of *El Malcriado*, the farmworker newsletter. Included as appendixes are a few copies of selections from *El Malcriado* that show the breadth and depth of the newsletter and the development of the UFW. In addition, other primary sources critical to understanding the nature of support received by the UFW were newsletters, magazines, and private papers of the strongest institutional supporters of the farmworkers -- groups like the United Auto Workers, the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations, the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee, and the Congress On Racial Equality. Finally, using the media reports of the day, as found in the New York Times and Los Angeles Times, I was able to obtain both a national and more local perception of the escalating struggle. Secondary sources included a range of biographies of Cesar Chavez -- some from as early as 1973 and others as recent as 1997. These biographies helped create a vivid sense of Chavez's leadership, the day to day struggles of the farmworker organizers, and contained excellent interviews with both primary and peripheral figures within the movement. Other secondary sources were critical in constructing the history of labor and understanding the influence of agribusiness in politics. The broad range of primary and secondary sources explored during the course of writing this thesis emphasizes the strengths of my analysis of the tri-fold strategy employed by the UFW in their struggle for recognition.

CHAPTER ONE

At the Crossroads of Power: Government and Agribusiness, and the Powerlessness of Farmworkers

To truly understand the history of the farmworkers, one must first understand some basic concepts of labor relations in America. The labor fight is a good story -- it is a fight between good and evil, a fight that played itself out in the halls of Congress and in the minds of Americans. The federal government began to take a role in labor relations via legislative regulations during the Depression, resulting in significant impacts upon working people across America. In excluding farmworkers from legislation protecting workers, the federal government followed a tradition of collusion with growers around agricultural issues. This bond between the local, state, and federal government entities and the interests of the agricultural industry came into direct conflict with the bond that these same government bodies had with workers. At this crossroads of agriculture and workers' rights were the farmworkers. Recognizing the challenges of an oversupply of workers, the general disempowerment of the community of migrant workers, and the powerful opposition of well-established growers, establishing a farmworkers' union would be an ambitious goal.

Federal involvement in United States labor relations was almost non-existent until the 1930s. With the signing of the National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA) in 1933, this "hands-off" attitude was brought to a dramatic end. By acting in defense of unionization efforts, the federal government was for the first time politically legitimizing the issues that unions and labor organizers fought for. The impact of this federal intrusion cannot be overstated. Section 7(a) of the NIRA stipulated that all approved codes of fair competition must include provisions guaranteeing workers the right to organize and bargain collectively through their own representatives -- and that employers were

restricted in coercion or other tactics that would impede the workers in their efforts.¹

Other provisions of NIRA included banning “required” company unions, the setting of maximum hours and minimum pay rates. It was, in the words of William Green (President of American Federation of Labor), “[a chance for] millions of workers throughout the nation [to stand] up for the first time in their lives and receive their charter of industrial freedom.”² It is easy to wonder why legislation should be seen as the cornerstone of labor organizing efforts. Labor organizing began long before it received federal recognition, but federal sanctions offered labor organizers protections that would significantly ease the difficulties of union organizing. In addition, when labor organizing gained the protection and recognition of the federal government, it was automatically legitimized to millions of Americans and employers.

The Wagner Act of 1935 continued this federal sponsorship of labor. The NIRA had been ruled unconstitutional subsequent to its passage, but the issue of a federal guarantee of labor rights had significant support within Congress and the court of public opinion. Senator Wagner (NY) proposed the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) in 1935, legislation that remains the cornerstone of labor rights to this day. The Wagner Act was a remarkable shift in the federal administrative position on labor issues. The ideas of a laissez-faire attitude towards employers were removed and the Wagner Act can be seen as watershed legislation that introduced the idea of federal and employer responsibility in regard to the health, safety, and rights of workers. The Wagner Act essentially codified existing federal labor legislation, and “declared that unionism [was] the single best instrument for establishing industrial democracy, spreading wealth and income more

¹ Ronald Filipelli, Labor in the USA: A History (New York: Random House, 1984) 182.

² Foster Dulles & Melvyn Duobofsky, Labor in America: A History (Arlington Heights Ill: Harlan Davidson, Inc. 1984) 258.

widely, and averting Depressions.”³ Of the Wagner Act, President Roosevelt stated, “by preventing practices which tend to destroy the independence of labor, it seeks, for every worker within its scope, that freedom of choice and action which is justly his.”⁴

Wagner was a critical juncture for the relations of business and the federal government -- it was the first time long term federal power was being inserted into an arena that considered compliance with the federal government voluntary. Opposition to Wagner was wide ranging. Corporate executive officers, business association leaders, attorneys, and company union members all testified at the Wagner hearings. They couched their arguments in terms of the employer, arguing that the employer was denied due process and protections. In arguments used time and time again in the farmworkers' struggle, they testified that the Wagner Act would increase strikes and discord and would retard economic recovery, and that the Act did not protect workers from union coercion.⁵ Agricultural workers, along with domestic servants, family employees and establishments with fewer than ten employees were excluded from the final version of the Wagner Act. These exceptions were made to build consensus in Congress and to appease industries that had influence with various representatives. Significantly, these exclusions have not been given much notice in labor histories and narratives, and at the time labor representatives (the AFL and the CIO) made no efforts at to include the excluded sectors of the workforce. As with NIRA, the Wagner Act went to the Supreme Court, where its constitutionality was upheld in a series of decisions in 1937, culminating in *N.L.R.B vs. Jones & Laughlin Steel Co.* Chief Justice Charles Evans Hughes stated:

³ Melvyn Dubofsky, The State and Labor in Modern America (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press. 1994), 128

⁴ Dubofsky, 286.

⁵ Dubofsky, 120-122.

Long ago we stated the reason for labor organizations. We said that they were organized out of the necessities of the situation; that a single employee was helpless in dealing with employers; that he was dependent ordinarily on his daily wage for the maintenance of himself and his family;...that the union was essential to give laborers opportunity to deal on an equal level with their employer.⁶

Public opinion also resided with the laborers and polls showed overwhelming support in the late 1930s for labor's aspirations.

This public and federal government support of labor waned significantly during World War II, no doubt as a direct result of the 1943 coal strikes. In 1943, the United Mine Workers began a strike that debilitated the industry, resulted in crisis level work stoppages, and eventual federal government seizure of the mining operations. The coal strikes greatly incensed corporate and Congressional conservatives and fostered a popular anti-union mood that was enhanced by patriotic wartime emotion. The strike and the workers came to be seen as anti-American, harming the war effort and hurting Americans abroad. Fueled by strong public support, Congressional representatives were able to pass significant war time anti-union legislation. On the heels of an anti-union campaign run by corporate interests, a wave of post-war strikes in 1946-47 led to remarkable declines in public support of union activities. Unions were seen as special interests in need of curbing and as militant organizations with a no-compromise ethic. In amending the Wagner Act with the Taft-Hartley Amendments of 1947, Congress was making an effort to "restore the balance of bargaining power" between employer and employee. Unions were severely curtailed in their ability to influence the political process and the changes to the Wagner Act were a step back from the strong federal endorsement of labor that the early 1930s had witnessed. The amendments also limited union rights to boycott by banning the secondary boycott -- a tactic that was critical to the farmworkers' cause.⁷

⁶ Dulles & Dubofsky, 270.

⁷ Filipelli, 221-223.

Thus within a little over a decade, the labor movement had experienced significant growth and stabilization alongside political loss. The involvement and role of the federal government in labor issues would only get more complicated and more controversial, moving from an era of public acceptance and strong support to a more cautious and somewhat hostile attitude toward union organizing. At the start of the 1950s, the union movement was stable, yet without momentum, as labor had not had any significant victories since the post-World War II years. The efforts to unionize farmworkers were both politically prudent and a boost to the overall movement.

Agriculture has always been treated differently in America -- from receiving huge government subsidies to outright control of many state legislatures by agribusiness interests -- wherever one looks, agriculture is king. The desire to please agricultural interests has expanded beyond traditional government kickbacks of tax subsidies to the federal government pursuing workers in foreign countries on behalf of growers and agricultural interests. In looking at the behavior of the federal government and the growers, it is easy to see the mutual back scratching inherent in the relationship.

Before launching into the specifics of the relationship, one must first understand the arguably unique features of specialty crop production in America. Fruits, nuts, vegetables, and many other agricultural products have a very discontinuous production cycle that is also highly seasonal. The discontinuous nature of many agricultural crops leads to deflated profits as major fixed capital investments (i.e. machinery) are often idle. Labor intensive methods of speciality crop production lack technical progress and rely on some of the same labor practices that have been around for decades, so the rate of technological advancement is very slow in comparison to non-specialty crop agriculture. Finally, the perishability of crops makes agricultural employers vulnerable to disruption.⁸

⁸ Craig J. Jenkins, The Politics of Insurgency: The Farmworker Movement in the 1960s (Ithaca, New York: Columbia University Press, 1985) 30-33. [This book is one of the only books that analyzes the politics of era in tandem with the farmworker organizing efforts -- however, it still lacks an analysis of the tactics employed by the farmworkers.]

As we all know, politics, land and wealth traditionally meet. The unique features of specialty crop production have led to a remarkable level of group cohesion among growers. This has had phenomenal affects on rule and law making processes. Land barons depend on special relationships with politicians, created by campaign contributions and extensive political corruption, to acquire policy which is favorable to their needs. Ranging from public subsidies, to volume discounts and preferential tax treatments, to government-sponsored cheap labor, agribusiness has historically enjoyed a very high level of government cooperation in advancing its interests. Even the structure of local and national government has helped agricultural interests -- as Craig Jenkins, a noted farmlabor historian states, "seniority rules and legislative specialization insure that the representatives from rural districts dominate the major legislative committees controlling the authority and appropriations for agricultural programs."⁹ Associations and industry sponsored groups for decades pushed a pro-agriculture agenda that included federal construction of irrigation systems, obtaining research and development from state universities, and discouraging government attempts to meet of even the most menial migrant worker needs.

Procuring cheap labor has been one of agricultural interests' primary concerns throughout the twentieth century and federal collusion in this procurement has been unprecedented. Depending on the crop, wages could represent between 5% and 28% of a farmer's total production cost. The percentage of expenses going to wages is highest in capital intensive crops and particularly high in the fruit industry. Farmers often felt they were at the mercy of food processors, retail chains, and even the natural elements. Thus wages were seen as one of the only controllable costs. To keep wages low, growers had come to rely on imported, cheap, foreign workers.¹⁰ Growers placed pressure on the federal government, which consistently and actively pursued treaties and agreements

⁹ Jenkins, 64.

¹⁰ Jenkins, 22.

with other nations to acquire cheap laborers. In California, Chinese, Japanese, and Filipino immigrants were used as laborers throughout the early 1900s. Through their experiences with these early Asian labor immigrants, growers learned that employing a multi-ethnic labor force impeded labor organizing. This “divide and conquer” philosophy of diversification within farm labor work forces also ensured that the workers were not deportable, deterring nativist efforts to force growers to accept higher wage domestic workers. During the Depression era, growers were able to break the strikes of Filipinos and Mexicans in certain agricultural industries with the influx of dust bowlers. However, during World War II, harvest worker shortages led to agribusiness pushing the federal government to arrange for temporary workers from Mexico. Known as the bracero program, thousands of temporary workers were brought to farms for the duration of the harvest season with a contract stipulating, in advance, the wages and length of services of the worker. While originally a temporary program, agribusiness received a Congressional stay beyond 1945, and in 1951, Congress codified the bracero program in Public Law 78. Public Law 78 created an administrative framework supervised by the Department of Labor for the recruitment, contracting, and transportation of bracero workers. Bracero worker use skyrocketed in the early 1950s and accounted for 50-80% of all agricultural workers in California and Texas by 1956.¹¹ Bracero program supporters were also very clear on the role they wanted the temporary workers to play in their communities -- none. Ernesto Galarza, a historian who has written many influential works on the plight of farmworkers, states the Bracero program was created such that “the nature of the program completely removed the possibility of the bracero ever becoming a part of [America].”¹² The overall impact of the bracero program on

¹¹ Patrick H. Mooney and Theo J. Majka, Farmers’ and Farmworkers’ Movements: Social Protest in American Agriculture. (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1995) 152.

¹² Ernesto Galarza, Farm Workers and Agri-Business in California, 1947-1960. (University of Notre Dame: Indiana, 1977) 32.

domestic workers was obviously negative and wages were driven down in areas with high bracero populations. In addition, in explicit violation of the bracero agreement, bracero workers were often hired over domestic workers and used as strikebreakers, leading to the dislocation and migration of many domestic farm workers. Labor historian Craig Jenkins notes that in demanding and receiving a “system of sponsored immigration administered by the federal government, the position of the employer cartel was strengthened,”¹³ and government and agribusiness were drawn inextricably closer.

The administrative framework outlined by the bracero program helped to establish the role of farm associations as partial government agencies in charge of bracero worker recruitment and delivery. These associations were backed up by farm-specific government agencies -- all of which were either strongly influenced or controlled by the growers. Organizations like the Agriculture Advisory Council and the County Farm Placement Committee were all controlled by legislatively appointed agribusiness representatives. The control over government bodies by agribusiness interests extended even further, as witnessed in the California State Chamber of Commerce, whose express mission, Galarza notes, was to “combine into one organization both urban and rural [interests]... and the agricultural, commercial, and industrial [concerns] of the entire state of California.”¹⁴

While labor and agribusiness interests experienced government sponsorship of their needs, the farmworkers received no government support. Traditionally, farmworkers have been minority groups, foreign nationals brought to America for the purpose of agricultural labor. The technicalities of farmwork and multi-ethnic composition of the workforce have led to specific challenges facing those who have tried to organize agricultural workers' unions. Any attempt to organize a successful

¹³ Jenkins, 78.

¹⁴ Galarza, 53.

farmworkers' union, would have to address the complex realities of labor organizing compounded by the unique situation of migratory labor.

Historically, the Chinese were among the first of the immigrant farm workers. After finishing up the California railroads, Chinese immigrants were unable to find other construction jobs and turned to agricultural labor. However, during the economic crises of the late 19th Century, the Chinese were driven from the fields and eventually from the country by xenophobic policies, such as the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. Agriculture then turned to Japanese immigrant workers, but again mass unemployment led to attacks by domestic workers and led eventually to an unofficial exclusion act, the Gentlemen's Agreement, that targetted Japanese immigrants in 1908. Mexican workers began drifting and immigrating into agricultural areas in the 1920s and 1930s after the Mexican Revolution. With the introduction of the bracero program in 1942, Mexican immigrants began to dominate the agricultural fields for decades to come (See Table 1).

Table 1: Ethnic Diversity in the Fields: 1940-1970

	Anglos	Mexicans	Blacks	Filipinos
Late 1940s	75%	15%	5%	3%
Late 1950s	33%	40%		
Late 1960s	<30%	50%	6%	6%
1970s		60%+		

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Aside from increasing the Latino portion of the farmworker population, the bracero program also increased the number of hours that workers were in the fields because extended hours were written into the government sponsored contracts. Farm labor historian Marlayn Edid notes, "The federally sponsored bracero program satisfied peak labor needs and also undermined attempts to permanently settle migrant and seasonal farm workers, sabotaged union organizing activities, and froze farm wages at rock bottom levels." ¹⁶ With the end of the Bracero program the ethnic composition of the fields changed, shifting towards Mexican migrant laborers.

¹⁵ Galarza, 85.

¹⁶ Maralyn Edid, *Farm Labor Organizing*. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994), 33.

The technicalities of farm work are not terribly complicated. Farm work divides into the two traditional categories of skilled and unskilled labor. Skilled laborers tended to work in specific crops and had work units and stable crews. The skilled jobs may have been short term but it was easier to develop a routine migration cycle. Many skilled Mexican workers lived in temporary housing provided by growers and returned to villages in Mexico in the winter.¹⁷ Unskilled workers were able to develop the same migration patterns but could not count on work units or crews, and were paid even less than skilled workers. Another delineation in farmworkers occurred between the seasonal and permanent workers. Permanent workers participated to varying degrees in the management of production and worked at ranches or farms year round, while seasonal workers carried out heavy manual labor on short contracts or for short duration of time. Seasonal workers were found in a number of different ways -- via self-recruitment, labor contractors, the bracero program, or rationalized recruitment through labor bureaus.¹⁸

The challenges in organizing farm laborers have been many and have changed as the population in the fields has changed. The chronic oversupply of labor has been the most difficult problem to master. The unique traits of the 1950s California farm labor market had led to the creation of an industry in which anyone could enter as a worker due to four characteristics. First, entry to the market was unlimited and free to workers. Second, the nature of the relationship between farmworkers and employer was highly impersonal and characterized by anonymity, large turnover, and a lack of long term commitments. Next, the pay structure via a piece rate system voided the need for worker competence. And finally, the farm job itself required minimal amounts of capital investment for equipment like hoes or buckets.¹⁹ All of these factors made the situation of farm worker employers very favorable in the 1950s as there was simply an oversupply of cheap labor. Due to the fact that farmworkers were desperate for work, they were

¹⁷ Jenkins, 71.

¹⁸ Jenkins, 72.

¹⁹ Edid.20.

willing to accept substandard wages, horrible working conditions, abuse and violence, and many other atrocities in order to provide for themselves and their families. Another challenge to farmworker organizers has been the incredible diversity within the population. Historically there has been virtually no class consciousness or group identification among farmworkers that was present in the unionization of other industries during the 1920s or 1930s. Often different ethnic groups have been played off one another due to the fact that various ethnic groups specialize in certain crops and production tasks. Gender and age divisions also contributed to the difficulty in organizing farmworkers, with women and children concentrated in seasonal, lower pay, and low skill jobs.²⁰

Even with the challenges of a diverse population, high turnover, and an oversupply of labor, efforts by farmworkers and others to improve farm work conditions have occurred since the early twentieth century. One of the first efforts at collective protest was the Wheatland Riots in 1913. Over three thousand men, women, and children on hops ranches protested the inhumane working, housing, sanitary conditions, and the gross overhiring of workers. Dissatisfaction continued and during the Depression era efforts to change the situation of farmworkers led to mass demonstrations and strikes by Filipino, American, and Mexican nationals. In 1933, fifteen thousand cotton workers in the San Joaquin Valley walked out for twenty four days, and on farms and ranches across America, workers staged strikes over wages and other issues of control. By the late 1930s, efforts at organizing farmworkers were underway by the Congress of Industrial Organizations. These efforts were not successful due to the difficulties stated earlier and petered out by early 1940. The most successful attempt at farmworker organizing was made by the Southern Tenant Farmers Union, a racially integrated Southern union that lobbied in Washington D.C., organized plantation by plantation, collected dues when possible and mounted a few strikes between 1934 and 1937. The Depression and post-

²⁰ Jenkins, 73.

Depression eras of farmworker organizing are hard to quantify in terms of net successes or net gain for farmworkers but remain an important embryonic time for farmworker union activism. While the organizing of farmworkers was sporadic during this period, in every major agricultural region, at one time or another, farmworkers attempted unionization or some other form of organized protest to address their concerns.

Thus the situation of the farmworkers in the late 1960's, on the eve of the United Farm Workers' organizing efforts was a complicated patchwork of realities. The majority of farmworkers were found in California, Texas and Florida, although migrant and seasonal workers were found in all fifty states.²¹ In these high density areas, the workforce was primarily Latino, with Filipino and other Asian sub-populations ranking a close second. Due to government- sponsored farmworker recruitment programs and agribusiness domination of politics, the destitute working conditions and wages of farmworkers were practically institutionalized. Early experiences with farmworker organizing had been met with coercion or direct force, witnessed in growers' dramatically violent reactions to the sporadic strikes of the 1930s.²² Thus farmworkers were in a basic situation of powerlessness that arose from two conditions: 1) serious obstacles to mobilization (lack of resources, oversupply of labor, &c.); and 2) a weak strategic position -- enforced by the farmworkers' marginal position in society.

Into this reality of the farmworkers, the Civil Rights movement of the late 1950s and early 1960s. Social protest, a nationally liberal mindset, and discussions of equality added an element of radicalism to the situation that could not be contained by the growers. Used to controlling the arena of debate, growers found themselves in a position in which their normal tactics of oppression and repression of farmworkers' voices only added fuel to the fire. In a classic David and Goliath story, the battle for farmworkers' rights had arrived at the right time. It had all the makings of a great fight.

²¹ Edid, 19.

²² Jenkins, 75.

Facing the seemingly insurmountable challenges of an oversupply of labor, a lack of group identity, and a lack of resources, farmworker organizing in the 1950s and 1960s had not been successful. Yet Cesar Chavez, a charismatic Mexican-American former farmworker, was able to create an organization that would eventually bring the agribusiness interests of California to their knees. In focusing the first few years of his organizing on creating a strong base of support and coalition building efforts, Chavez foreshadowed the use of tactics that would be critical to the eventual success of the union.

The only significant farmworker organizing of the mid-1950s was done by the Agricultural Workers' Organizing Committee (AWOC), an AFL-CIO chartered organization. However, AWOC consistently used tactics to organize farm labor that were unsuited to the specifics of the farmworkers' situation. By relying on organizing techniques used in its private manufacturing sector worker organizing efforts, the AFL-CIO's AWOC would never reach its full potential.²³ The National Farm Workers Association had a significantly different focus. In Chavez's own words, he wanted to build an "independent farmworkers union that would force growers to sit at a bargaining table face-to-face with the people who had helped make them rich."²⁴ Originally called the National Farm Workers Association, the union was founded in 1962 at Delano, California. To build support and have the farmworkers see the organization as their own, Chavez traveled to various farmworker laden communities getting input from workers, holding house meetings, and having the workers prioritize their needs. Out of these initial outreach efforts, the NFWA began providing the most basic services. Among the first services provided by NFWA was a funeral benefit fund, a credit union, a gasoline co-operative, and immigration and citizenship counseling services. By solving the farmworkers' most immediate problems, NFWA built strong organizational solidarity and loyalty.

²³ Edid, 35.

²⁴ Susan Ferris and Ricardo Sandoval. The Fight in the Fields: Cesar Chavez and the Farmworkers Movement. (Harcourt Brace & co: New York, 1997) 62.

Over the next few years, NFWA built itself internally, focusing on membership recruitment, strengthening services, and expanding its network of support. One critical method of outreach was *El Malcriado*, the underground farmworker newspaper that debuted in 1964. *El Malcriado* was NFWA's chance to communicate with a broad array of farmworkers, put out an organizational platform, and recruit members. NFWA also sought out organizational support from other institutions. Most significant was support by the National Migrant Ministry, a missionary agency of the National Council of Churches. Migrant Ministry was guided by a "social gospel" philosophy that evangelical work needed to address critical social problems. Later, other organizational support came from organized labor, private foundations, the Catholic Church, liberal politicians, and Civil Rights leaders. By focusing on coalition-building efforts during the early phases of the union, Chavez was able to drill the importance of networking into farmworkers. This tactic would be significant in the eventual ascendancy of the farmworker cause.

From the start NFWA was a different animal than the preceeding farmworker unionization efforts because it focused on building the union internally and coalition building externally. Using the Civil Rights movement as a model, NFWA understood the need to expand the farmworkers' cause -- to legitimize *la causa* to the American public. But these efforts faced significant institutional barriers. While it is true that during the late 1950s and early 1960s, labor did not enjoy the federal sponsorship it had earlier in the twentieth century, the connection between agricultural interests and the federal government remained as close as ever. Facing a secure fortress of combined agricultural and local, state, and federal government interests, the NFWA's farmworker unionization efforts were initially successful because they targeted the growers rather than the government structure.

CHAPTER TWO

The Delano Strikes and the Production Conundrum

Delano. It is the heart of the table grape industry, a valley surrounded by second and third generation growers, a valley that is the institutionalized agribusiness community. It was in Delano that the National Farm Workers Association first declared war and made history, bringing *la causa* to the American public. In the late 19th Century, Delano had been populated by immigrant families, hailing from eastern and central Europe. The names of the farmers and their ranches told a history of immigration: Guimarra, Zaninovich, and Dispoto. By the mid-twentieth century those growers had become some of the wealthiest land owners in the state, building fortunes using the well established system of government sponsorship and agribusiness influence to amass power and money. These families had carved out their fortunes under the blazing California sun, survived the Great Depression, and built empires on an individually minded labor and work ethic. Now wealthy enough to be agricultural patrons, these growers thought of their farmworkers with a sense of familiarity. Many farmworkers had worked for the same ranches season in and season out and there was a well established paternal relationship between growers and farmworkers.

Yet in September 1965, Filipino farmworkers went on strike in the table grape fields of Delano, California. The strike began as a demand for a living wage that would provide security for workers and their families through the winter. Filipino workers from nine Delano area vineyards went on strike under the AWOC banner. Larry Itliong, the Filipino AWOC organizer, knew that he needed to get the support of Mexican workers to sustain the strike. Approaching Chavez and NFWA, he asked for an endorsement of the strike. To vote on the issue, Chavez called a meeting of all NFWA members for September 16, Mexican Independence Day.

In the sweltering Delano heat, fifteen hundred farmworkers crowded into Our Lady of Guadalupe Church to vote on joining the AWOC strike. By using personal testimonies, the emotion of Mexican Independence, and the church support, Chavez rallied his troops and the crowd responded: "the crowd was excited. Angry. Responsive. When Chavez asked for a strike vote, they overwhelmingly raised their hands, and their voices. They chanted: '*Huelga! Huelga! Huelga!*'...The NFWA would join AWOC." ¹

To begin, sustain and maintain a successful strike is an enormous effort in any situation. In the case of farmworkers, strike efforts were even more challenging because of the varied ethnic composition and economic disempowerment of the workers. Due to the specifics of farm labor, growers could seek workers from other areas, ethnic groups, or even crop specialities. ² In addition, during its tenure the bracero program had effectively provided strike insurance for growers by allowing the deportation of striking workers and banning their re-entry into the United States. The secondary cause of strike difficulty in the farmworker community was the severe poverty of the population. Even in the best of circumstances, when striking workers had savings or strike benefits, it is hard to maintain a strike effort. However, in the farmworkers' case the workers fell below the federal poverty line on a routine basis, making it economically infeasible to maintain a prolonged strike.³

While recognizing the challenges facing striking farmworkers, growers still reacted harshly to strikes. Considering the depth and nature of corporate and government interests in agriculture, strikes in the fields can not be characterized as strictly local employer-employee conflicts. Strikes and their goal of increased wages have significant impacts on increasing harvest costs. Galarza notes price increases are passed on down the line, from grower to processor to shipper, "creating ripples if not waves of

¹ Taylor, 128.

² Jenkins, 74.

³ Jenkins, 74.

apprehension that [reach] even the board rooms of banks." ⁴ Historically, growers had been successful in crushing strikes or containing victories in the past, but they viewed each strike effort as a serious threat to the status quo. Therefore, their reactions to strike efforts were harsh, and in the not so distant past, growers had resorted to violence. In burning union halls, hiring thugs to beat union organizers, supporting sporadic vigilante attacks, chasing pickets off the roads in pick up trucks -- growers had well established their dislike of striking workers.

Facing this tradition of brutal farmworker oppression by growers, and recognizing the solid strength of the agribusiness community, the strike presented the fledgling organizations with serious organizational challenges. The original goal of the strike was an increase in wages for the Delano area farmworkers, matching the wages won by workers in nearby Coachella earlier in the harvest. The first month of the strike proved challenging due to the number of farms and workers involved. Deciding to focus only on the nine farms selected as targets, AWOC and NFWA attempted to limit the number of Delano area farms at which pickets had to be sustained. Each morning strikers would travel to the targeted farms and wait at the gates or drive into the fields -- unloading a caravan of strikers shouting "*Huelga!*" when they would happen upon a work crew. A few farm workers would throw down their tools and join the pickets, but the bull horns and signs were more often greeted with uneasiness and confusion by workers in the fields. Because pulling a few workers straight from the fields was not enough to stop the harvest, NFWA and AWOC realized they had to expand the strike beyond farm workers.

The two organizations realized they needed more support because the fundamental goals of the strike were changing. Within weeks the purpose of the strike effort had grown, from a fight for wage increases to a demand from NFWA and AWOC for the right to represent farmworkers. In shifting the focus of the strike from wage increases in the Delano area to the larger issue of union recognition and basic union

⁴ Galarza, 53.

organizing, the NFWA was able to build increasing support for the Delano strike. By constructing a civil rights message (the right to unionize) and by clearly defining the opposition (agribusiness interests in Delano), NFWA had crafted themselves as the good guys and the underdogs. At the same time, and in contrast, the public viewed the agribusiness industry as a corporate special interest that was attempting to crush dissent and deny laborers their rights. In the fight between these two groups there appeared to be little room for compromise. During a television interview Cesar Chavez defined the new message of the strike and defined the new vision of the strikers: "Every labor guy knows that when you're talking about recognition, you're really talking about the guts of the union. We're not striking, *really* striking, for a wage increase or a pension fund. We are striking for the very elementals." ⁵ Chavez recognized that his small organization could not sustain a strike and achieve his broader goals without public support. Using an effective method of outreach that was employed time and time again, Chavez took his cause public. Chavez traveled to university campuses and churches, asking for donations of time, money, clothing -- and more importantly, he asked people to come to Delano to see firsthand what life was like. Chavez also took the strike cause to audiences that he knew would be supportive, the Civil Rights movement and the churches.

The appeal to the Civil Rights community could not have come at a better time. One of the most active Civil Rights organizations was the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), an organization that emerged during the early days of the Civil Rights struggle and was dedicated to addressing issues of racial equality. Many of the lead student organizers with SNCC had left the organization by 1965. Fresh from the Freedom Summer campaign over voter registration in Mississippi, they flocked to Delano. Chavez encouraged student members of the UC Berkeley Free Speech Movement and civil rights movement to join the farmworker fight, and actively recruited

⁵ The Fight in the Fields . Directed by Rick Tejada-Flores and Ray Telles. Paradigm Productions, Inc. 1996.

volunteers from Berkeley and Stanford. During the first few months of the strikes, most picket captains were SNCC or Congress on Racial Equality (CORE) veterans, people experienced in leading non-violent actions. Along with their knowledge and experience from previous campaigns, many of the civil rights students also brought tangible and much needed equipment to NFWA and their strike effort. The volunteers brought two-way radios, which were instrumental in establishing which fields would be picketed each morning; mimeograph machines, critical to the production of *El Malcriado*; and contacts of supportive community members. Along with Civil Rights workers came a host of supportive student volunteers who had been involved with other groups, like Students for a Democratic Society, W. E. B. DuBouis Clubs, as well as hippies and students who were not previously members of an organized group. This addition of students and Civil Rights supporters lent radicalism and idealism to the young farmworker movement, their contributions of time, money, and support were indispensable for the duration of the strike.

The other major source of support that the farmworkers drew on was the Catholic Church. In relying on his personal connections and the social theology of the Church, NFWA harnessed the energy of clerical supporters. Many NFWA organizers also had well-established contacts within the clerical community due to their work with Community Service Organization, but to the farmworkers Church backing seemed like a foregone conclusion. In Chavez's own words, "[The Church support] didn't start when the strike began. I'd been making friends with the clergy for ten years...How could Catholic clergy stay out of this one? All Mexicans are Catholic."⁶ Actually, clerical support was not a forgone conclusion according to the churches. Cardinal Roger Mahony summarized the internal conflict well: "Virtually all of the growers and all of the farm workers were Catholic. So what happened overnight was both sides said, 'Well, because we're Catholics, the church must be on our side.' Well, the problem was we had both sides

⁶ John Gregory Dunne. Delano. (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1971)

saying the same thing."⁷ In fact, the Delano area church leaders felt that they were in an vastly difficult situation. Financially, the area churches (especially Catholic churches) were sustained by large donations from the various growers and thus the question of which side to support left the churches in a quandry. In order to avoid losing this financial support, many Delano area churches did not support the farmworkers and actively criticized clergy who took a supportive role. However, in general, clerical support was with the farmworkers and their strike. The Catholic Bishops of California supported the clerics, and found refuge in the words of Vatican Council II in the Constitution on the Church in the Modern World:

Among the basic rights of the human person is to be numbered the right of freely founding unions for working people...Through this orderly participation joined to progressive economic and social formation, all will grow day by day in the awareness of their own function and responsibility...⁸

With this moral backing, many of the most vocal and supportive members of the strike were members of the clergy. They came to organizing meetings, stood on picket lines, and marshaled their flocks with strong sermons on Sunday morning.

One other major arena of support came from the AFL-CIO and the established unions. Already protected by federal legislation dating back to the 1930s, the AFL-CIO recognized that federal recognition of the right to unionize was critical to the ability to build a strong labor movement. The AFL-CIO had a brief history of attempts at farmworker organizing, and in the 1950s had tried their own farmworker unionization efforts. AWOC was an organizing committee established by the AFL-CIO, when then-president George Meany had made a commitment to farmworker organizing. However, until Itliong and other Filipino organizers came on board, the AFL-CIO's efforts were wasted on methods that simply did not suit the farmworkers. By concentrating on organizing farm labor contractors and using other private sector organizing tactics, the

⁷ Tejada-Flores and Telles, documentary.

⁸ El Malcriado, #48, November 4, 1966.

AFL-CIO had not been effective in building a strong union. The strength of the Delano strike came as a surprise to many union organizers and garnered their unadulterated enthusiasm and support -- financially and personally. As early as 1960, *The Federationist*, the magazine of the AFL-CIO, carried stories about farm worker organizing efforts in an attempt to build support amongst union workers. In February 1960, John Livingston, the AFL-CIO Director of Organization, wrote:

when we speak of the benefits of union organizing we do not refer only to wages. Wages are a definite factor. Farm workers should not be asked to produce the nation's basic commodities while receiving less than a decent living...In addition to an improved wage level, through collective bargaining these workers will bring a hitherto unknown component to agricultural employment -- stability. ⁹

An excellent example of union support for the farmworker strike was the refusal of the International Longshoremen and Warehousemen's Union to handle scab grapes, which resulted in 1,000 ten-ton cases of grapes rotting on the Oakland wharves in 1965.¹⁰ In December of 1965, Walter Reuther, president of the United Auto Workers (UAW), visited Delano, fresh from an official AFL-CIO vote to endorse the strike. He walked with strikers on the picket lines, held meetings with the press, and bolstered the spirits of workers who had been on strike for four long months. At a rally of farm workers, Reuther stated, "There is no power in the world like the power of free men working together in a just cause...This is not your strike, this is *our* strike!" Reuther went on to pledge \$5,000/month from the UAW to support the strike until the end.¹¹

Local residents and the local government were overwhelmed by the influx of students, clerics, and other outsiders. Delano was clearly unprepared for the response of Chavez's call to the public. Inundated by student, community, and clerical activists, the citizens of Delano were shocked by the level of support for the farmworkers. The traditional sponsorship of agribusiness interests by government representatives was

⁹ John Livingston, *The Federationist*, February 1960:Vol. 67 #2

¹⁰ Jenkins, 152.

¹¹ Ferris and Sandoval, 114.

reinforced when law enforcement officials in the Kern County sheriffs office banned the use of the word "*huelga*," which by early October had taken on public significance. This action on behalf of the sheriff's office had a catalyzing effect on the strikers. As reported on October 20, 1965, by the Los Angeles Times, "Forty-four persons, including nine ministers, were arrested Tuesday in the 6-week-old grape harvest strike...The arrests resulted when the group stood by the side of a field shouting: 'Huelga,' Spanish for strike." ¹² Chavez had been searching for an issue that would resonate with the public. The farmworkers needed a David-and-Goliath sized issue, and this initial arrest of clerics, civil rights workers, and volunteers had garnered significant national media attention.

The citizens of Delano rushed to defend their town from the "left wing press" attacks and the outside agitators. Delano citizens formed Citizens for Facts from Delano, an organization dedicated to disseminating the "truth" about the situation in Delano. They organized meetings, printed leaflets and pamphlets, broadsides and posters, telling the story of Delano and expounding the "truth" about its agricultural history.¹³ They picketed in Delano and tried to rally public support for their case by branding the agitators as outside influences -- muckrakers and communists. An unidentified Delano citizen, in response to a television newscasters' question of "why are you here?" responded:

Because I don't like these people here in our town, they don't belong here -- and I wish they'd all go back to where they came from.

Newscaster: Which people are you referring to?

Delano citizen: I'm talking about the outsiders that have come into this strike and interfered with our workers.

Newscaster: Do you have labor troubles?

Delano citizen: We have no labor troubles.¹⁴

Not suprisingly, support for this position was reinforced by many California state government entitites. The well established marriage of agribusiness and politics at the

¹² Harry Bernstein, "9 Ministers Jailed in Grape Strike," LA Times 20 October 1965.

¹³ Dunne, 111.

¹⁴ Tejada-Flores and Telles, documentary.

state level led to institutional support of the growers' position. A statement made by the future Governor, Ronald Reagan, summed up the California opposition: "No one has ever been able to find anyone picketing in the vineyards who ever worked in them...there is no strike."¹⁵

Thus at the outset, while building support within the farmworker community and actively organizing to build support within specific populations of larger society, the farmworkers were challenged by organized agribusiness and government opposition to their initial efforts to organize the strike. Even with a strong base of grassroots support, the strike was a challenge for the NFWA to organize. While the numbers of strikers grew significantly in the first few weeks, the base of support was in a state of flux as people moved in and out of the Delano-Earlimart-McFarland strike zone. In an area 15 miles long and 20 miles wide, the pattern for the strike remained the same. Workers were indecisive and hesitant to join the strike, but were also wary of crossing the picket line made up of their neighbors and friends. Farm labor historian Maralyn Edid notes, "No one will ever know how many thousand farmworkers really walked off their jobs in the Delano strike within those first few weeks; the pickets would appear, strikers would chant and extol and cajole, and workers walked out, only to be replaced the next day."¹⁶

In undertaking a strike, striking workers hope to halt the production or distribution of goods to such an extent that the employer is forced to bargain. But the Delano strikers were unable to significantly halt production during the 1965 harvest season. The growers had access to a significant number of farm workers who were prepared to and who did go to the fields and work, even if it mean crossing the picket line. Growers in the Delano area continuously pointed to the bumper crop of 1965, literally one of the best growing seasons in recent recollection, as a sign that the strike had not hurt them at all. Their claim, that "the workers already voted against the union - with their feet, so to speak - by

¹⁵ Tejada-Flores and Telles, documentary.

¹⁶ Taylor, 141.

staying on the job and working during the so-called strike,"¹⁷ may not have seemed true to farmworkers, but lacking a significant shortage of harvest workers or a significant profit decline, the growers still held the power. The New York Times reported in 1966 that "Despite the refusal of hundreds of farm laborers to go to work in the vineyards...the growers have grown, packed, and shipped a crop that is at least ten percent larger this season than last."¹⁸ Thus at the end of the grape season, the situation for the striking farmworkers looked bleak. They had been unable to halt or disrupt the production of grapes to such a point that the growers would bargain with the union, the growers had refused to settle and had proven they could bypass organized farmworker efforts in the field with little or no trouble.

Historically, strikes have met with little success in forcing employers to the bargaining table when they were unable to halt production. By studying the successful strike of autoworkers in Flint, Michigan in 1937, one can see some of the unique challenges faced by farmworkers in their unsuccessful strike efforts.

The autoworkers faced some of the same challenges that farmworkers faced in their efforts to bargain collectively and establish strong unions. Automobile manufacturing in the 1930s was a collaborative effort and due to the minute subdivision of labor in the industry, the assembly line auto worker was hard pressed to have contact with other workers involved in production. The autoworker could not control the pace of his work, but instead was controlled by a centralized standard of production. In the same way the farmworker was alienated from the complete picture of production by being uninvolved with the processing, shipping or distribution of food products. Additionally, the farmworker was also estranged from controlling the pace of his work due to the competitive nature of the pay structure and contracting. Consequently, both farm and

¹⁷ Dick Meister & Anne Loftis. A Long Time Coming: the struggle to unionize America's farm workers. (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co. Inc, 1977)

¹⁸ Peter Bart, "Focus Shifted in Grape Strike" NY Times, 20 February 1966.

auto workers were divorced from other workers involved in production and were unable to significantly impact the centralized standard of production. Another challenge faced by both groups was the fear factor. Workers within both the auto and agricultural industries may not have had Harvard educations, but they clearly recognized the substantially better organized employer opposition that unionization and strike efforts would face. Autoworker historian Sidney Fine notes that workers understood that "if identified with an outside union, they might be discriminated against in layoffs and rehiring or dismissed altogether, the automobile workers understandably hesitated to commit themselves to a cause so fraught with danger to their livelihood."¹⁹

Flint, Michigan was to the auto industry what Delano, California was to the table grape industry -- the heart of production. Both towns had no other major enterprises, and had been built and sustained by these crucial industries. Both cities were also predominantly native-born white and there were strong patterns of economic and political similarities within the townspeople. Most importantly, both towns could be characterized as supportive of the industries that had helped create and sustain these towns. There is no doubt that the general consensus of the populations of each town, while separated by time and industry, were unquestioningly supportive of the respective enterprises.

The UAW had won against GM on their major issue of collective-bargaining and representation, and built significant public sympathy for the union at the end of their strike in early 1937. The strike began at the end of 1936, when workers at the Flint Fischer Body plants sat down and halted auto body production. Broadly speaking, the workers supported the principle issues of collective bargaining, seniority, speed of work, rates and methods of pay and were building on strikes from Atlanta, Kansas City, and Cleveland. Over the course of two months, the strike had expanded to idle over 135,000 GM workers nationally, had cost GM almost \$175 million in lost car production, and

¹⁹ Sidney Fine, Sit-Down: The General Motors Strike of 1936-1937. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press 1969) 70.

significantly affected the subsidiary suppliers, dealers, and firms that handled the cars. Fine states the strike ended with an agreement which included "GM recognizing the UAW as the collective-bargaining agency for all employees of the corporation who were members of the union. It recognized and promised not to interfere with the rights of its employees to be union members...[and] a five-cent hourly pay increase for the workers."²⁰

The analysis of the GM Strike begins with the original choice of strike tactics. Strikes are traditionally associated with the refusal of workers to perform job duties and the formation of picket lines. The picket action is characterized by the fact that it occurs outside of the place of production. The term "sit-down strike" is used to describe work stoppages in which workers cease labor for a few minutes, hours or shifts, until grievances are settled. As opposed to the picket, the sit-down is characterized by the worker remaining within the factory or area of production. The reasons the UAW chose a sit-down strike in 1936 were extremely strong and should be examined closely, in contrast to the decision of the farmworkers to focus on more traditional strike tactics.

Perhaps the most significant reason to choose the sit-down strike is the removal of the effectiveness of strikebreakers. By achieving worker control of the place of production there are remarkably few alternatives for the employer to pursue and strikebreakers become irrelevant as there is no access to the factory in a successful sitdown. Over the course of strikes in America, the strikebreaker and general ability of employers to use replacement workers has crippled the use of the strike tactic in organizing efforts. Using traditional methods of organizing strikes, the employer remains in control -- because one will always be able to find replacement workers. In addition, in low-skill jobs like agricultural and assembly line productions, the lack of skill involvement only adds to the strengths of the employer in finding temporary or permanent replacements. Another reason to chose the sit-down strike over the traditional

²⁰ Fine, 304-307.

strike is employer hesitancy to use force around expensive machinery. Any action taken to dislodge workers from the Flint plants ran the serious risk of destroying very expensive machinery. Finally, even if the sit-down strike is not successful in achieving its goals, there are two logical conclusions, both of which enhance the workers' position. Scenario One is the violent break up of the take over, which will tend to build public support for the worker. Scenario Two occurs when the workers disengage from the tactic on their own. However, public support may still go to the worker, who is seen as the victim and underdog.

In viewing the marked difference in the situation, tactics, and outcome of the strike efforts of GM autoworkers and UFWOC farm workers, one can see the challenges faced by the latter organization and how those challenges crippled the strike effort. One of the primary reasons the autoworkers could use the strike so effectively was due to their ability to completely shut down the production lines. By occupying the body factory, the autoworkers immediately halted further production of automobiles in Flint. In contrast, the farmworkers were unable to completely, or even substantially, shut down the fields. Therein lies the inherent problem: how does one shut down a field? There were no machines to halt, as grape picking was not mechanized, and there were no set areas to overtake -- the fields proceed for acres upon acres. Taking over the fields was impossible without a human carpet to cover the 15-by-20 mile area. Because they lacked a limited area in which to picket, the farmworkers strike tactic was substantially more difficult to maintain. The morale issue was another area in which farmworkers were challenged. The entire group of autoworkers was locked in the factory together for a period of over 35 days forming a solid bond. Once again without a defined location, the farm workers drifted into and out of the Delano-Earlimart area. Morale was kept up through *El Teatro Campesino* (the farmworkers' theater), *El Malcriado*, and the participation of non-farmworkers in the strike -- but when it was crunch time, it was an impoverished,

disempowered, and unrecognized portion of the population that was required to keep up the strike for nearly four years. Morale was obviously a serious issue.

To increase its chances of success and bypass some of the challenges facing the farmworkers, the Delano Grape Strike could have been improved by using more aggressive tactics in halting production and via use of guerrilla warfare tactics. Obviously table grapes do not need further processing when they are picked, they are basically a finished product. Taking this into consideration, there were few other methods of halting production. However, the farmworkers could have pursued a more aggressive policy in upending distribution patterns. Farmworker organizers could have expanded the strike by getting locally unionized shippers and distributors to boycott handling scab grapes -- thus leaving the Delano growers few options in distributing their product. Farmworkers did in fact win one victory when the Longshoremen refused to handle scab grapes, but this was an isolated incident. An expansion of a scab grape mishandling would have put significant pressure on growers. The farmworkers also could have pursued the sellers of strike grapes by picketing stores that sold scab grapes. Farmworkers also could have pursued more aggressive monkey wrenching and guerrilla tactics. The UFWOC was committed to non-violence, but there were plenty of actions farmworkers could have taken to disrupt production and distribution via non-violent actions. By sitting-in at distribution locations, lying down in front of delivery trucks or monkey wrenching the train yards, the farmworkers could have had significant impact on distribution patterns. The most successful non-violent tactics in the history of organizing have often been these types of guerrilla actions and they have been at the heart of American civil rights successes, the Indian Independence movement and many other movements for social change world wide.

However, regardless of improvements that could have been made, the Delano strike should not be viewed as a failure. While it did not meet its goals of grower recognition of UFWOC as the official voice of farm workers, it was a tactic that

undoubtedly brought unprecedented local and national attention to a previously unrecognized cause. It allowed the farmworkers to build support within specific communities -- like students, clergy, and other unionized workers. It was a tactic that nationalized the farmworker problem and raised it as an issue of conscience to a generation of Americans involved in a Civil Rights struggle. It was also the critical action that brought the farmworker movement to a point where their next organizing tactic, the boycott, would be an unprecedented success.

CHAPTER THREE

Boycotts and Momentum to Success

The strike had been in full effect for a little over three months by December 1965. It was winter in Delano, and it was getting more and more difficult to awaken picketers in the chilly morning. Men and women bundled up in hats and gloves in the cold dawn hours and lined up for their daily assignments. The harvest was over, and all that remained was to strip the vines and clear the fields. Many of the migrant workers had returned to Mexico, and the Delano farmworker population was decreasing as winter took hold. The NFWA realized that the struggle for recognition and farmworkers' rights to organize would fail unless growers felt more pressure. Facing this reality, the striking organizations called a consumer boycott.

The strength of the boycott tactic lay in its ability to shift the arena of debate. While the inability of the growers to effectively counter the farmworkers' message was significant, it was the consumer boycott that yielded the strongest results. Within the first three months of the strike in Delano, the UFWOC had recognized that it could not compete effectively against the industry. Farmworkers would never be able to control the conflict if they concentrated solely on the fields. By expanding to a consumer boycott, UFWOC recognized they could place substantial pressure on the growers through coalition building and public education. In shifting from the agribusiness stronghold of the fields to the public domain, the farmworkers significantly enhanced their chances of success. In their struggle for recognition, UFWOC would come to rely on the boycott tactic to bring attention to their cause and build public pressure on growers. Engaging in a series of boycotts after the initial months of the Delano strike, UFWOC built its farmworker base, institutional organizing expertise, and institutional support. These initial boycotts were a critical learning experience that culminated in the larger fight for recognition posed by the Great Grape Boycott.

In mid-December of 1965, the NFWA called for a boycott of all products made by Schenley Industries and the DiGiorgio Corporation. The boycott targets were chosen wisely, reflecting the concerted effort to focus on long range effectiveness. Both Schenley and DiGiorgio were companies that only relied minimally on their vineyards in their net profits, and were likely to be negatively impacted by a boycotts. Schenley Industries, through its sale of liquor (I. W. Harper, J. W. Dant, and Cutty Sark) and other products, drew in nearly half a billion dollars in annual sales; while the DiGiorgio Corporation earned a little under \$250 million via canned goods (S & W) and juice (Treesweet) sales. These were corporations who made relatively little from their ranches. As historian John Dunne notes, "Less than ten percent of DiGiorgio's \$232 million annual revenues came from farming; the bulk came from the processing and sale of canned goods. Similarly, only a fraction of Schenley's \$500 million annual sale...derived from its farming properties."¹ In addition, both companies produced easily recognizable products and had firmly established labels for their various products. At the outset, the farmworkers focused the majority of the boycott energy on Schenley, realizing "in the first place, booze is easier to boycott. And then it is usually the man who goes into the liquor store and he's more sympathetic to labor as a rule than his wife."² Another reason to target these corporations was both were major national conglomerates that had recognized other unions covering their processing, trucking, and packing employees. Because of their recognition of other unions, Chavez hoped these companies would be unable to rationalize the non-recognition of the farmworkers' union. Calling for a boycott of the products of two corporations who relied minimally on their Delano ranches for profits placed a great deal of pressure on Schenley and DiGiorgio.

In order to build public support, UFWOC sent nearly two dozen lead farmworkers and volunteer staff members to thirteen targeted cities to coordinate boycott activities. The

¹ Dunne, 127.

² Cesar Chavez, quoted in Dunne, 128.

boycott staff arrived in their respective cities penniless, with no place to stay. They understood that their success depended on their abilities to sell the farmworker story. The majority of these organizers were under twenty-five and had a wide range of experience -- from veteran SNCC and CORE organizers to farmworkers whose only organizing education had been the previous three-month strike effort. Chavez purposefully sent these young men and women out without a support system as a rite of passage and a test of their abilities. In being forced to rely upon their wits and the kindness of strangers, the boycott effort was built upon a foundation of community outreach and support. In almost every community, boycott organizers turned to local churches and unions, relying on these two bases of support for housing, office space, and resources.

The primary goals of the boycott organizers were to build public support and promote the boycott in their area in order to build pressure on Schenley and DiGiorgio. Schenley and DiGiorgio products were targeted in a general way, but the primary emphasis of the boycott was on table grapes. Volunteers followed (or hopped) railway cars and trucks of grapes from the Delano strike area to their destinations. Upon arrival, volunteers dispersed into the city to build support or contacted organizers to create an action at the distribution site. Using highly visible tactics to garner attention, the organizers used as much free media as possible. In one case, a Boston organizer staged a Boston Grape Party and threw several crates of grapes into the Massachusetts Bay; in another instance a New York City organizer printed leaflets and had Transport Union Workers distributed them on the subways.³ The boycott effort was recognized nationally, and in February 1966 the New York Times reported, "The once modest grape strike is already being widely hailed as a milestone...This week significantly, the focus of activity in the grape strike shifted from the vineyards to some 70 cities around the nation."⁴ With support from local church leaders and unions, SDS chapters, and SNCC and CORE volunteers, the boycott

³ Dunne, 129.

⁴ Peter Bart, "Focus is Shifted in Grape Strike," (NY Times), February 20, 1966.

organizers mobilized volunteers to picket store entrances, harass liquor store owners, and pass out leaflets. In all, over fifty million leaflets were distributed.⁵ The emphasis on creating public pressure worked, and Schenley and DiGiorgio corporate headquarters received hundreds of postcards per week from irate consumers.

In order to generate support for the strike and boycott, NFWA began organizing a massive march. Aimed at bringing media attention to the cause, the 250-mile march was set to end Easter Sunday on the steps of the Sacramento capitol building. Leaving Delano with 67 marchers on March 17, 1966, the marchers trudged from town to town, carrying signs and placards, chanting and singing, building awareness for their cause and building pressure on Schenley and DiGiorgio. They marched from Delano northwards, on roads next to fields that many of the marchers had picketed less than six months before. The coordinated march and boycott were the NFWA's first attempt at a "media strategy," and they hoped to be able to use the press from the march to "project their boycott tactic into the public conscience."⁶

The press coverage and overall public pressure was effective, and Schenley became the first to cave in. As the marchers rallied in Stockton, CA, Schenley was ready to sign with the union. The significance of the march on Schenley's corporate officers is hard to measure, even with national media coverage of marchers carrying boycott signs. The final straw seems to have been a rumored expansion of the boycott from its farmworker beginnings to a California local of the Bartenders International Union. Facing the perceived threat of a widened boycott to the main artery of profit for Schenley (liquor sales), the company quickly agreed to recognize the National Farm Workers' Association.⁷ Tired of negative publicity and dropping profits, Schenley signed on. In explaining Schenley's actions, President James G. Woolsey stated:

⁵ Jenkins, 152.

⁶ Taylor, 174.

⁷ Ferris and Sandoval, 122.

These reprisals and the publicity presented a threat of serious damage to our business on a nationwide scale. Our sales department felt that even more damaging than any decline in our sales was the adverse publicity that accompanied the boycott and NFWA organizing activities.⁸

By responding quickly to the Schenley signing and placing pressure solely on DiGiorgio, the NFWA was able to sway DiGiorgio as well. Reversing decades of precedent, a DiGiorgio spokesman asked, "Why shouldn't farm labor be organized? Why should they be second class citizens?"⁹ However, the DiGiorgio proposal was quickly seen as having major faults: DiGiorgio was proposing that only current workers, strikebreakers, would be allowed to vote. And so the boycott effort continued.

DiGiorgio was a company with a history of outliving farmworker organizing efforts. In 1939, 1947, and 1960, Joseph DiGiorgio had broken strikes through violence, intimidation, and the help of local law enforcement officials. If there was ever a company that exemplified the networking and influence held by agribusiness interests, it was DiGiorgio -- in fact, Robert DiGiorgio sat on the board of directors of Bank of America.¹⁰ Soon after announcing its support for workers' elections, DiGiorgio had begun negotiations with local Teamsters. While some Teamsters had been instrumental in supporting the efforts of the NFWA strike and boycott, a rift was emerging between the two organizations. The Teamsters national organization began efforts to organize farm workers into Teamster unions to protect the one-fifth of their union members reliant upon agriculture.¹¹ This competition between Teamster and UFWOC farm worker organizing efforts was clearly demonstrated at DiGiorgio. By working with Teamsters, the DiGiorgio corporation hoped to divide the farmworkers and steal the spotlight away from AWOC and the NFWA. AWOC and NFWA merged before the vote and formed the United Farm

⁸ Jerald Barry Brown, The United Farm Workers Grape Strike and Boycott, 1965-1970. (Cornell University: Ithaca, NY, 1972) 131.

⁹ Lawrence Davies, "2d Grape Grower Agrees to a Union," (NY Times) April 8, 1966.

¹⁰ Ferris and Sandoval, 126.

¹¹ Griswold Del Castillo and Richard Garcia. Cesar Chavez: A Triumph of Spirit. (University of Oklahoma Press: Norman, 1995) 54.

the NFWA. AWOC and NFWA merged before the vote and formed the United Farm Workers Organizing Committee (UFWOC) under AFL-CIO charter, and were able to carry the elections in September of 1966.

The Schenley/DiGiorgio boycott had significant support in the public sphere, had mobilized support of AFL-CIO unions and expanded clergy and student involvement in *la causa*. But UFWOC still had only minimal recognition in California as the rightful voice of the farmworker. While this initial victory was one to be savored, UFWOC was still in a weak bargaining position overall. Although elections were held at DiGiorgio and the farmworkers overwhelmingly voted to have UFWOC represent them at these ranches, there were still many vineyards in the Delano area that failed to recognize UFWOC. With only two of the major Delano area growers signed on and many other growers courting the Teamsters, UFWOC needed to be recognized by a significantly larger number of growers in order to achieve the ultimate goal of being *the* farmworkers union. It was essential that the UFWOC continue to build internally and broaden its base of support externally in order to increase the legitimacy of the union.

The next opportunity to build and broaden presented itself when workers at Perelli-Minetti walked out of that company's Delano area fields a few days after the September 1966 union elections at DiGiorgio. The workers wanted UFWOC to represent them; instead, Perelli-Minetti signed a contract with the Teamsters. In response, throughout 1966 and 1967, UFWOC promoted a boycott of Perelli-Minetti brand labels and asked consumers to engage in a secondary boycott by refusing to shop in stores that sold Perelli-Minetti wines. The UFWOC sent organizers, farmworkers and volunteers to the Bay Area, Los Angeles, and New York to picket stores and leaflet, laying the foundation for more ambitious boycotts to come. Perelli-Minetti initially took the same stand as DiGiorgio and Schenley, refusing to recognize the UFWOC. In this case, the success of the boycott of Perelli-Minetti products hinged on the farmworkers' boycott of Tribuno Vermouth. The vermouth was bottled by Perelli-Minetti and accounted for a significant portion of the

company's sales. The farmworkers focused on a boycott of ten major cities in California. *El Malcriado* chronicled the "The Boycott Network" in California that created a thousand mile network.¹² Tribuno sales were concentrated in four major cities and one of them was Los Angeles, so the boycott in LA was particularly effective in forcing Perelli-Minetti to come to the table.¹³

With the felling of Perelli-Minetti, UFWOC went on to win contracts from nine major wine grape growers without having to resort to strikes or boycott efforts. Almaden, Beringer Brothers, Franzia Brothers, Ernest and Julio Gallo Wineries, Paul Masson Vineyards, Monte La Salle Vineyards, and Novitiate of Los Gatos all signed contracts with UFWOC. These contracts were substantial, and the fact that they were won without implementation of strikes or boycotts showed the success of the UFWOC in its boycott organizing efforts. However, although the wine grape industry was unionized, the contracts only covered 5,000 agricultural workers. This left over 90% of the farmworkers in California out in the cold. The broader goal of grower recognition of UFWOC could not happen until other farmworkers had the option to be represented by UFWOC.

The last and most successful of all the boycotts, the Great Grape Boycott began as an action against the Guimarra Vineyards, the largest table grape producer in the nation. Based in Arvin, California, Guimarra owned 12,170 acres of arable land in California, with over 6,340 acres devoted to table grapes. With annual profits of over \$12 million, Guimarra was a major player both in California and nationally. In early August 1967, UFWOC contacted Guimarra about representation elections. Guimarra did not respond. In protest, 950 of Guimarra's 1,000 person labor force walked out of the fields. This was an unprecedented number of strikers, but Guimarra simply recruited green card and other replacement workers. UFWOC responded by launching a boycott of Guimarra label table grapes.

¹² "The Boycott Network" (*El Malcriado*, Vol.57) March 29, 1967.

¹³ Brown, 135.

The growers' label on grape boxes is important to shippers, the wholesaler, and retailers, but holds little weight with the consumer. Recognizing this fact, UFWOC organizers targetted wholesale produce brokers and retailers, picketing them in an attempt to stop them from handling Guimarra table grapes in fifteen North American cities. The initial efforts were very successful, and Guimarra produce disappeared from the stores' shelves. Guimarra retaliated by borrowing labels from other growers and marketing their grapes under 100 different labels. This show of grower unification was in direct violation of US law. Jerry Cohen, UFWOC general counsel, recalled the beginning of the grape boycott: "We kind of stumbled into the grape boycott...we started boycotting the Guimarra label...and the Delano brothers came to their growers' aid by trading labels...and our only response was 'Hell, we'll boycott ALL table grapes.'" ¹⁴ In January 1968, UFWOC called for a boycott of all table grapes.

The table grape market has some unique features that make it susceptible to a consumer boycott. First, while there were over 2,000 table grape producers in California, only 30 large-scale growers, packers, and shippers handled over 75% of the grape processing and sales. The grape business remains, however, a highly competitive industry, fostered by the hundreds of private labels used by those involved in grape production. Due to the cohesion and consolidation of the larger growers in the industry, it was uniquely sensitive to an industry wide boycott effort. In addition, the distribution patterns were also highly vulnerable because over half of the harvest was marketed in only ten urban North American markets.¹⁵ The United Farm Workers recognized this vulnerability and exploited it through their use of organizers and boycott committees.

One key to the boycott's success was its use of volunteers and organizers. Initially, in January 1968, fifty farmworkers went to New York City with Fred Ross to start the campaign. By the summer of 1968, all the Delano striker leaders except Chavez and a

¹⁴ Jerry Cohen, UFWOC Legal Counsel, in Tejada-Flores and Telles.

¹⁵ Brown, 118.

skeleton office crew were in the cities across North America to open over fifteen boycott offices in major urban markets. By the following year, UFWOC had thirty-one of the forty-one influential urban markets staffed with full-time organizers and had established over two hundred volunteer boycott committees. A look at the cities involved and the background of the organizers shows the determination of UFWOC in fostering direct farmworker involvement in the Grape Boycott (See Table 2).

Table 2. Grape Boycott Committees Organized by UFWOC or by Local Supporters in the Top 41 North American Table Grape Markets, 1969-1970 Season.¹⁶

<u>CITY</u>	<u>Committee Organized by</u>	<u>Background of</u>
<u>Organizer</u>		
1. New York	UFWOC	farmworker
2. Los Angeles	UFWOC	farmworker
3. Chicago	UFWOC	farmworker
4. San Francisco	UFWOC	farmworker
5. Philadelphia	UFWOC	farmworker
6. Toronto	UFWOC	volunteer
7. Boston	UFWOC	farmworker
8. Montreal	UFWOC	farmworker
9. Detroit	UFWOC	farmworker
10. Cleveland	UFWOC	farmworker
11. Pittsburgh	UFWOC	farmworker
12. Baltimore	UFWOC	farmworker
13. Minneapolis	UFWOC	farmworker
14. Seattle	UFWOC	volunteer
15. St. Louis	UFWOC	farmworker
16. Atlanta	UFWOC	farmworker
17. Cincinnati	UFWOC	farmworker
18. Washington, DC	UFWOC	farmworker
19. Buffalo	UFWOC	farmworker
20. Dallas	none	----
21. Miami	UFWOC	farmworker
22. New Orleans	UFWOC	volunteer
23. Portland	UFWOC	volunteer
24. San Antonio	Supporters	----
25. Vancouver	UFWOC	volunteer
26. Denver	UFWOC	farmworker
27. Houston	UFWOC	farmworker
28. Kansas City	UFWOC	farmworker
29. Salt Lake City	none	----
30. Columbia, S.C.	Supporters	----
31. Birmingham	none	----
32. Winnipeg	none	----
33. Indianapolis	UFWOC	farmworker
34. Louisville	Supporters	----
35. Albany	Supporters	----
36. Providence	UFWOC	farmworker
37. Ottawa	Supporters	----
38. Milwaukee	UFWOC	farmworker
39. Ft. Worth	UFWOC	farmworker
40. Memphis	UFWOC	volunteer
41. Nashville	Supporters	----

TOTAL UFWOC BOYCOTT CITIES: 31

¹⁶ Brown, 192.

The organizers, farmworkers and volunteers were trained in major cities, and the most promising organizers were sent out to new territories to coordinate the campaign activities. Boycott organizers had to be creative, able to work on a shoestring budget, good volunteer coordinators, satisfied with little pay and long hours, and able to remain away from home or relocate their families to their boycott city assignments. It was an incredibly hard job. Mark Day, a boycott organizer recalled, "In the cities I worked in we used every possible technique to win the support of the public. [We held] a sit in at the headquarters of Jewel Tea Company in Chicago, had housewives write postcards and place calls to the A & P [grocery] executive offices in Philly."¹⁷ The boycott committees were very independent of UFWOC headquarters and were given creative license to use tactics that would be suitable locally. Actions ranged from standard leafleting and picketing to the Boston Grape Party. Guerrilla theater became one of the UFWOC organizers' primary calling cards. In Toronto organizers held a balloon-in at several supermarkets, in which helium-filled balloons with "Boycott Grapes" painted on them were released inside stores.

Volunteers on the campaign broke down into three broad categories and each fulfilled a separate role in the public education efforts. Full time United Farm Worker volunteers were committed farmworkers, students, religious, and civil rights leaders who were campaign coordinators. Their responsibilities included organizing pickets, making leaflets, arranging for financial contributions, and general promotion and volunteer recruitment. Many of these coordinators had been in the fields as farmworkers and had gotten their "official training" through working on the boycott campaign. Part time volunteers were sympathetic supporters who sustained the boycott activities. Primarily from the community, these volunteers were the bodies that walked the picket lines, attended rallies and distributed leaflets. Their responsibility was to build public support within their own community and use their standing as community members to bring in more volunteers. They were housewives, teachers, youth group pastors -- everyday people.

¹⁷ Day, 71.

The final category of supporters were institutional supporters, for example politicians, churches, union officials. They lent their organizational names and personal support through endorsements, solicited money for the cause, offered office space to organizers and advised the boycott organizers. These three types of volunteers were the backbone of the boycott, together they lent credibility to the movement and engineered the boycott success.

Perhaps the most critical element of the overall success of the boycott effort was the union's use of institutional support. By gaining the institutional support and endorsements of unions, civil rights organizations, and many public officials, the boycott was legitimized to the American public. In addition, the UFWOC organizers understood that boycott committees needed to be free to organize in ways that would best suit the cities in which they were organizing. Exploring how UFWOC gained institutional support and used the boycott committees is critical to analyzing their successes.

UFWOC, as a chartered organization of the AFL-CIO, had connections to the vast network of unions under the AFL-CIO banner. However, in pursuing a boycott strategy, UFWOC was likely to run afoul of its natural constituency of organized workers because it was promoting a boycott of stores that were worked by unionized clerks, meatcutters, and butchers. They were able to avoid dividing unionized workers due to a strong endorsement of the boycott by AFL-CIO executive committee and by working with, rather than against unionized workers. The UFWOC message was never "Boycott this store because it is anti-union." Instead, by focusing on national grocery chains which sold over 60% of the table grapes in America, and crafting a broader message that did not alienate fellow unionized employees, the farmworkers were able to garner strong support from local workers. The AFL-CIO, United Auto Workers, Canadian Labor Congress and International Confederation of Free Trade Unions all offered support to local boycott organizers and signed on as official endorsers of the boycott. The worker connections did not stop in North America. In February 1969 dock workers in London, England, refused to unload

70,000 pounds of grapes. In addition, the European Transport and General Workers Union endorsed the boycott, while Swedish Transport Union Workers created a grape blockade of Northern Europe.¹⁸ Perhaps the most satisfying union endorsement came from the National Farmers' Organization and the National Farmers' Union. Both unions' constituents were small farmers who used collective bargaining principles to get higher prices on farm commodities. UFWOC was able to tout this endorsement as the small farmer joining hands with the farmworker to battle the big corporate ranches.¹⁹

In addition to unions, the civil rights community offered public support and was well respected by national media and many politicians. UFWOC was able to garner endorsements of the boycott by the Urban League, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Southern Christian Leadership Conference, the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee, and the Congress On Racial Equality. By using the boycott, a tactic used effectively by the civil rights movement in the 1950s and 1960s, the farmworkers gave new life to the non-violent direct action movement supported by many of these civil rights organizations. Also, in crafting their message of unionization as a civil rights case, the farmworkers joined their cause to earlier struggles for equality within the American public consciousness. Dorothy Coyle, a boycott supporter, showed the effectiveness of this message in her reasons for support: "I didn't feel people needed to suffer or live in horrendous conditions to feed us grapes."²⁰

In addition to the civil rights community, another important victory for the farmworkers' boycott was the endorsement of many organized religious groups. The World Council of Churches, the General Board of the National Council of Churches (representing over 34 Christian communities), the National Bishop's Committee for the Spanish Speaking, and the Union of American Hebrew Congregations all endorsed the

¹⁸ Day, 90.

¹⁹ Brown, 197.

²⁰ Tejada-Flores and Telles, documentary.

boycott effort. They stood unified behind the social justice message of the farmworkers' fight for equality and their fight against poverty and disempowerment. More importantly, however, these organizations lent their clerical support. Nothing could be more legitimizing than having a priest or rabbi hand a leaflet to a potential customer. While some members of the public expressed disapproval at the involvement of clerics in the boycott, in general, the public was able to find comfort in the fact that even religious leaders were on the side of the farmworkers.

Finally, UFWOC was able to gain momentum for the boycott by the remarkable support it obtained from leading political figures of the day. Supporters of the boycott ranged from city council members to mayors to Congressional representatives to U.S. presidential hopefuls. Over thirty-three mayors from major urban centers, thirty Congressional Representatives, and eight Senators signed on. Perhaps most influential politician to show support of the boycott and farmworkers in general, was Senator Robert F. Kennedy, who consistently spoke in favor of the farmworkers' efforts and became a close friend to Cesar Chavez. Senator Kennedy, Senator Eugene McCarthy, Senator George McGovern, and Vice Presidential candidate Hubert Humphrey all endorsed the boycott during the 1968 Presidential race. This type of political support for union efforts had not happened since the original drafting of labor laws in the 1930s, and the public recognition of the farmworkers' cause by legitimate political figures heralded a previously unimaginable sanctioning of the broader representation goals of the UFWOC.

The boycott was an unprecedented success in disrupting the growers' finances. At the conclusion of the 1969 growing season, US Department of Agriculture statistics reported that shipments to New York City, Chicago, Detroit, and Boston were down thirty to forty percent. If grapes arrived, there was usually no market for them. This lack of market forced table grape growers to sell table grapes in less profitable markets, reducing their profit margin even further. In the summer of 1969, ten growers from Arvin and Coachella acknowledged having been severely affected by the boycott. They started

negotiations with UFWOC by the, negotiations broke down over the issue of pesticide use and farmworkers' health concerns. The break was significant because it marked the first time that the UFWOC attempted to expand their representation abilities beyond contracts and wages to other critical areas of worker health and safety issues. The growers were outraged and broke off negotiations. In their mind, it was one thing to discuss contracts, but it was a completely separate idea to talk about health, pesticide, and worker safety issues.

The growers were like dominos, lined up one behind the other against UFWOC. But like dominos, when one falls, the rest came toppling after. If the smaller growers had to face another season with the boycott in effect, many would have taken potentially bank breaking losses. The impetus to renew negotiations was strong, and many growers returned to negotiations. The end of the Grape Boycott came swiftly, in 1970. Once Steinburg signed a contract, the cohesion of the growers had been split. Steinburg grape boxes left the Coachella area with the red and black stamp of the UFWOC and the end of the boycott on Steinburg's products was felt immediately. Supermarkets and grocers created displays with the union label signaling "these are union grapes!" By July of the same year, the rest of the grape growers in Coachella and Arvin, California, and Arizona signed contracts as well. The last bastion of defiance were Delano growers. Guimarra and twenty-six other Delano area growers signed with UFWOC on July 20, 1970. Quite befittingly, the initial tentative pact between Guimarra and UFWOC was signed in the office of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles in the presence of many Roman Catholic bishops who had been integral to the organizing efforts of the farmworkers.

The Great Grape Boycott was over. In its first seven years of existence, the UFWOC had done what no other farmworkers' union had been able to achieve -- it had brought the growers to the table. It was a momentous occasion. John Guimarra, Jr., who had represented the most outspoken critics of the union, addressed farm workers at UFWOC headquarters. "The eyes of America are focused on Delano," Guimarra said.

"Can we work together for a common success? We have a historic task before us. You, the farmworkers, will be able to show other people. You did it well here and you can damn well do it anywhere in the country."²¹

Over the course of the Great Grape Boycott, the growers had attempted to respond to the organizing efforts of UFWOC and turn the tide of public support in their favor. Their strategy was a combination of public relations and reliance upon their traditional political allies. In 1969, the California Table Grape Growers Association (CTGGA) hired the nations largest advertising agency, J. Walter Thompson, to create a campaign for California table grapes. Glossy advertisements appeared in magazines across America, focusing on women's magazines in particular, with pictures of plump California grapes in the foreground. More ominously, the CTTGA hired the firm of Whitaker and Baxter, a public relations firm specializing in political causes and most noted for their work in California against Medicare legislation, to create a viable public message for the growers. Whitaker and Baxter tri-fold strategy focused on litigation, pushing a legislative solution to the strike, and a consumers' rights campaign. Litigation was an unsuccessful tactic, as the lawsuit filed by 81 grape growers was thrown out of court in 1969 during a five-minute hearing by a San Francisco federal judge.²² Legislation crafted with the help of Whitaker and Baxter lawyers was introduced in the 91st California Congress under the innocuous name of the "Consumer Food Protection Act" by Senator George Murphy. However, the agricultural industry as a whole was divided about the bill, which never made it out of committee. The final and potentially most effective tactic employed by Whitaker and Baxter was the use of the Consumers' Rights Committee. The Committee, based in Washington, D.C., focused on a consumer rights message and their pamphlets discussed the boycott tactic as a "violation of the basic rights of consumers to chose what they - as individuals - wish to buy or not buy."²³ Ultimately this tactic, too, failed as the committee was unable

²¹ "Huelga Ends!" (El Malcriado, Vol. 4, #4) August 1, 1970.

²² Brown, 239.

²³ Brown, 238.

to mobilize grassroots support, neutralize UFWOC volunteers, or capture the attention of the national media.

While putting some of their resources into public relations and image improvement, the growers relied more directly upon their political connections at the federal and state level in their attempts to break the boycott. President Richard Nixon, elected after the assassination of Senator Robert Kennedy in 1968, unofficially backed the growers and used his federal-level connections to help the agribusiness community. In 1969, Department of Defense table grape purchases soared 40% from the prior year to a record 9.69 million pounds of grapes. As Dolores Huerta stated, "The Department of Defense is obviously acting as a buyer of last resort scab grapes and is, in effect, providing yet another form of federal subsidy to the anti-union growers."²⁴ Governor Ronald Reagan also threw his weight behind the grape growers, stating that he had in the past publicly declared the boycott "as immoral, and I [continue to] think it is...The only contracts signed between Mr. Chavez's union and a few wineries were signed under coercion...the grape boycott is a failure."²⁵ But there was precious little that federal or state entities could do in the presence of strong public support for the farm workers. The brutality of the growers was well-established and in the political climate of the 1960s public sympathy rested with the farm workers.

In analyzing the boycott as a tactic to achieve the UFWOC's broad goals of recognition, it is easy to see that the boycott was successful. As outlined by Harry Laidler, an early 20th Century boycott historian whose pioneering analysis is still accepted by modern writers on the subject, determined there are sixteen elements of success in boycotts. Some of Laidler's elements hold true while others are proven false by the success of the UFWOC. Amongst the most important elements are the character of the market, the frequency of consumption of the good, the strength and capital of the industry and the

²⁴ Brown, 140.

²⁵ Tejada-Flores and Telles, documentary.

nationwide nature of the good, the extent of monopoly of the boycotted firms, and the causes leading to the boycott.²⁶ In discussing the character, Laidler believed that boycotts of goods primarily purchased by the upper-class were unsuccessful. It is important to structure a boycott so that those most likely to support the boycott are in the market for the good. If the UFWOC had been boycotting an agricultural product with a larger portion of upper-class buyers, it is possible that the net effects of the boycott action would have been detrimental. Historically, "dealers in such articles certify that they have oftentimes been benefited by the boycott, as their well-to-do patrons have come to their rescue."²⁷ Since grapes were an item that crossed economic lines, and were purchased by all sectors of the population, they could be characterized as neither bourgeoisie nor proletariat in nature. Another key to success of boycotts is the frequency of consumption of the good -- the more the product is consumed and the higher frequency with which it enters into the daily routine of consumers, the greater the expenditure of energy is needed by industry to maintain pre-boycott profits. Grapes were neither caviar nor bread -- the consumption rate fell somewhere in between, but the decline in profits were significant enough that growers had to spend over \$2 million on advertising and public relations campaigns. Laidler also warned against taking on a boycott of products with a nation-wide character because "an effective boycott against such articles entails an extensive campaign, costing thousands of dollars."²⁸ In this area, Laidler was correct. It cost UFWOC thousands of dollars to carry out the boycott. For a fledgling organization with few full-dues-paying members, the boycott was a severe financial drain, costing at least \$50,000/month. But the limitation of the budget were met with ingenuity and success in building coalitions with organizations that could donate financial support. Laidler also warned would-be boycotters against taking on organizations that have a monopoly over production of the boycotted good, "as it

²⁶ N. Craig Smith. Morality and the Market: Consumer Pressure for Corporate Accountability. (London: Routledge, 1990) 222.

²⁷ Harry W. Laidler. Boycotts and the Labor Struggle. (New York: John Lane Company, 1913) 161.

²⁸ Laidler, 162.

is difficult or impossible for the public to obtain duplicate [goods] and thus purchasers are loathe to join the crusade of boycotting."²⁹ Once again, Laidler was proven wrong in his analysis -- the American public was more than willing to stop eating grapes, as witnessed by the sharp declines in distribution at major cities across the United States. Laidler's final element of success revolves around the causes leading up to the boycott. Laidler argues that social and moral laws espoused by unions that are not generally held by the public are a risky basis from which to organize a boycott. Using Laidler's model, the Montgomery bus boycott should never have been launched, as segregation was a widely held value in the South. In evaluating the farmworkers' case, it is necessary to take into account the social construct created by the Civil Rights movement. N.Craig Smith, a modern market analyst, finds the success of the Grape boycott in its broad message that suited the time, "[the California grape boycott] was not simply about the right of labor to organize. It also involved minority rights, poverty, pesticide misuse, and civil rights."³⁰

In July of 1970, the UFWOC had become the recognized representative of farm labor and a major player in agricultural relations. It had gained this status via grassroots mobilization efforts that culminated in the most successful consumer boycott ever. UFWOC was in a position to move forwards with farm worker unionization efforts outside of California, Texas, and Arizona. By utilizing strong coalition building with labor groups, civil rights and Church organizations, and political figures, the UFWOC had used a consumer boycott to gain the strength they needed to bargain with the growers. In removing the fight from the agribusiness dominated fields and creating a space in public life to discuss the issue, UFWOC garnered the support of the majority of the American people. Farmworkers turned the issue from the interests of a small minority of workers to an issue of greater social justice.

²⁹ Laidler, 163.

³⁰ Smith, 250.

Of all of the organizing efforts that UFWOC undertook, the group is best known for the Great Grape Boycott, a boycott that has been widely touted as a case study of how successful boycott efforts can be. The boycott brought formal recognition to the farmworkers' cause, due to the success of the UFWOC's efforts to obtain coalition support and broad public acceptance. The grape boycott was a massive effort which included mobilizing volunteers, creating viable boycott committee structures, and building institutional support for the farmworker cause. The support of important public institutions was critical to its success. The unions, religious communities, civil rights organizations, and politicians that endorsed the boycott significantly legitimized the efforts of UFWOC to the American public. In the presence of an extremely organized farmworkers' movement, the growers relied unsuccessfully on a broad public advertising campaign and their traditional ties with the political system. In the end, UFWOC had been too effective in dominating public opinion; even government intervention on behalf of the growers via federal purchasing powers could not make up for the losses sustained by the growers. The recognition of the union by Delano grape growers, on the heels of the wine industry contract negotiations, clearly established UFWOC within the agribusiness community.

CHAPTER FOUR

Legislation and the Right to Organize

Despite the stunning success of the boycotts, the UFW's organizing in the 1960s and 1970s fell short in one crucial respect: they failed to win the recognition of farmworkers' legal right to organize by federal or state governments. While growers had acquiesced to the UFW in regards to contract negotiation and union representation elections, lacking official legislative concurrence, the UFW might spend the rest of its existence in hand to hand combat with growers. Without government recognition, the union would have no legal protections -- and thus the workers would have no protection. During the first ten years of its organizing, the UFW aspired to build the union internally while concurrently running campaigns that built the credibility of the organization externally, with the public and influential organizations. This credibility is critical to pursuing a legislative strategy, which requires influence with decision makers or the ability to mobilize public support. The UFW had organized to gain both types of influence by building a strong following of public support (as witnessed by the success of the boycott) and by placing pressure on decision makers by antagonizing growers. For the farmworkers, legislative success would be the final victory on the long road to recognition.

Senator Harrison (Pete) Williams, Jr., (NJ) had long been concerned with the status of farmworkers. In 1966, he introduced federal legislation that would provide farmworkers with minimum wage protections, collective bargaining under NLRA, and regulations preventing the exploitation of child labor in the fields. Williams, head of the Senate Subcommittee on Migratory Labor, part of the Committee on Labor and Public Welfare, said, "Any thoughtful person who observes the poverty and total wretchedness of migratory farmworkers and their youngsters will never leave the work of trying to improve their lives until it is done."¹ On the other side stood the growers. They opposed all of

¹ Matthiesen, 125.

Williams' bills, consistently arguing that collective bargaining would disable America's food supply and focusing their arguments against the bills on the proposal to include farmworkers in the NLRA. With all of the UFW activity being focused on California farms, Williams convened hearings in Sacramento, Visalia, and Delano in March 1966.² With so much national attention focused on the situation in Delano, Senator Williams recognized that holding the hearings in Delano would dramatically publicize his pieces of legislation.

The hearings were a symbolic victory for the farmworkers. While there was little chance that federal legislation would pass, it was absolutely remarkable that within a little over six months a fledgling union had brought national decision makers to the site of their conflict. This recognition of the triumph of the boycott and strike had on Congress showed the effectiveness of UFWOC's organizing.

Addressing the subcommittee, Cesar Chavez crafted his testimony in a civil rights vein, arguing passionately for equality of all workers before the law:

All we want from the government is the machinery - some rules of the game. All we need is the recognition of our right to full and equal coverage under law which protect every other working man and woman in this country. What we want is simple: equality.³

Over the course of the six months since the initiation of the strike and boycott, Chavez and UFWOC had learned that the message of the farmworkers needed to focus on equality. Drawing upon the prevailing national liberal mindsets and heightened political sensitivity to civil rights issues, UFWOC could gain significant support by drawing parallels between the civil rights struggle and the farmworkers' cause.

In addition to using the hearings to publicize the farmworker case, the hearings provided farmworkers an official public endorsement by the Catholic Church. Speaking for California's seven Catholic Bishops, Stockton area Bishop Hugh Donohoe built his

² United States. Senate. Subcommittee on Labor and Public Welfare. Hearings. 89th Cong., 1st and 2nd sess. S. 1864-1868. (Washington: GPO, 1966).

³ Matthiesen, 126.

statement around Vatican II and Papal doctrines of a social justice theology. In his statement, Donohoe recognized the rights of farmworkers to strike when all other recourse had failed, and highlighted the importance of the farm labor organizer. Bishop Donohoe discussed the NLRA specifically, stating, "It is not sufficient to recognize the right to organize in theory only. In order that this right to be recognized in fact it is of crucial importance for the various governments to legislate criteria and techniques for determining the legitimacy of a particular effort to organize workers and protect these workers from reprisals."⁴ Previous church involvement, while critical to the endeavors of the farmworkers, could be interpreted as a small percentage of Catholic clergy. However, Donohoe's statement for the official Congressional record, gave guidance to supportive clergy and concerned laity, and once again placed the church behind the farmworkers.

No action was ever taken on Williams' bill, but it had significant impact upon the farmworkers' fight. By capturing the attention of the federal government and having hearings in Delano, the farmworkers had proven their effectiveness and impact on public and political opinions. In addition, the Catholic church's strong sign of support for the farmworkers' cause had garnered UFWOC a significant boost in public opinion.

It would be nearly ten years before another serious attempt at passing farmworkers' legislation was made. In 1974, the UFW, then involved in a boycott of Gallo wines, was fighting the Teamsters on a number of representation elections, and had wreaked havoc on the growers of multiple products (lettuce, table grapes, wine grapes) in California. The political climate had shifted dramatically with the 1974 election of Edmund G. (Jerry) Brown as governor and a Democratically controlled California State Legislature. Previously, any attempts at California legislation would have been vetoed by Governor Ronald Reagan. The election of Brown, who had addressed the farmworkers' fight in his campaign and had been elected with the support of many farmworker sympathizers,

⁴ Testimony of Bishop Donohoe at United States. Senate. Subcommittee on Labor and Public Welfare. Hearings. 89th Cong., 1st and 2nd sess. S. 1864-1868. (Washington: GPO, 1966) 634.

heralded a new dawn for the farmworkers' cause. The political climate was ripe to make changes in the laws governing farmworkers.

By 1974, the UFW had dramatically changed their stand on farmworkers' legislation. In the years between 1966 and 1974, the UFW had won representation elections throughout the state of California and had carried on successful boycotts of lettuce, grapes, wine, and other agricultural products. Their power came from their ability to mobilize and gain support of the public via the secondary boycott. Due to their strength and political base, the UFW no longer sought inclusion in the NLRA because the NLRA included a ban on the use of the secondary boycott, a tactic critical to the success of the UFW. Instead, the UFW had come to support state based legislation that would allow unrestricted strikes, secondary boycotts, and representation elections timed for the harvest season peak, when migrant farmworkers would dominate the fields.⁵ The UFW was a serious political player in the California game -- giving campaign contributions to politicians, carrying out voter registration drives, and doing significant 'get out the vote' work within their base of support. Growers and politicians recognized the significant impact the UFW could have and were ready to sit at the table and negotiate.

Negotiations eventually resulted in the California Agricultural Labor Relations Act (ALRA) of 1975. The primary purpose of ALRA was to make unionization easier, and to make the process run more smoothly. The lack of an orderly, legal unionization process for farmworkers to follow had led to years of litigation between the Teamsters and the UFW, had tied up growers in expensive court cases, and overall, had hurt agriculture in California. Governor Brown's compromise between growers and farmworkers resulted in legislation that protected the critical interests of both parties. His proposal gave growers protection against strikes and boycotts until after recognition elections, gave the Teamsters guarantees on their contracts unless contested by the courts or new elections, and gave the

⁵ Jenkins, 196.

UFW the right to use the secondary boycott and strikes after elections, as well as ensuring elections were timed with the harvests.⁶

By 1975, the growers of California were ready for a break in the constant strife that had plagued their industry for almost a decade. The agriculture bill was seen as a way to end the boycotts and strikes that had cost the industry millions. The Los Angeles Times reported, "Governor Brown today signed hisotric farm labor legislation intended to end a decade of conflict and violence in California agriculture...Brown said he believed the federal government should follow California's lead and enact a national farm labor law."⁷

ALRA was a major breakthrough for the UFW in its fight for recognition. It was the first legislation that protected collective bargaining for agricultural workers in the continental US, the state of Hawaii had passed an earlier measure. Governor Brown had to call a special session of the California State Legislature to pass ALRA, but politicians, growers, and the farmworkers were ready to end the ten-year battle. On June 5, 1975, the legislation was signed into law. Governor Brown stated, "I think today marks a significant victory, not only for the legislature, not only for farmworkers, but for all people of California. In my mind [this law] restores great confidence in the ability of the legislative process and the goodwill of the people to work together."⁸

ALRA was passed in the hope of restoring order to an industry that had been in a state of upheaval. Support for the legislation came from all sectors of the population -- growers, workers, labor and public advocates. Looking at the effectiveness of the UFW's organizing actions since 1965, it is easy to see why the growers were ready to bargain. A Louis Harris Poll (Table 3) showed support for the farmworkers was extremely high. While ALRA was not the first farmworker-specific labor law (agriculture worker legislation had passed in Arizona, Kansas, Hawaii, and Idaho) it was by far the most progressive

⁶ Jenkins, 196.

⁷ LA Times, "Farm Labor Law Signed," June 5, 1975.

⁸ Ferris and Sandoval, 200.

legislation in existence and the UFW would promote ALRA as model legislation to be enacted by other states.

Table 3. Public poll on effectiveness of UFW boycotts in 1975:

12% of adults (17 million) stopped buying grapes due to the grape boycott	
11% of adults (14 million) stopped buying lettuce due to the lettuce boycott	
8% of adults (11 million) stopped buying Gallo wine due to the Gallo wine boycott	
45% of those surveyed supported the UFW over other unions	
34% of those surveyed supported the UFW over the growers.	9

The ALRA legislation was the culmination of a ten-year fight for recognition by the UFW and the legislative action would not have been possible without the constant pressure of the boycotts. The shift in goals of the UFW from inclusion in the federal NLRA to support of the California state ALRA occurred after the union recognized that its most effective tool for putting pressure on growers was the boycott. By building public support for a series of boycotts and impacting the profits of the agribusiness interests for almost seven years, the UFW had been able to strong-arm the growers to the table. ALRA was an attempt at restoring the peace and profit margins of the growers, but was a nonethelss also a clear victory in the UFW's battle for recognition.

Legal authentication and protection of agricultural workers' rights to organize had been at the roots of the UFW since its inception in 1962. Chavez, Huerta, Itliong, and Padilla had struggled to build a union that would represent the multiple interests of farmworkers -- safety in the fields, wage increases, and health standards. ALRA was the legislation that provided a safety net for workers' rights. To restore order to the fields, growers admitted that farmworkers had the right to bargain collectively and had the right to unionize. These concessins were unmistakable signs that agribusiness interests had acceded to the will of the farmworkers. By proving they could organize and mobilize

⁹ Meister and Loftis, 219.

public support, the farmworkers left growers no options. Legal recognition for the rights of farmworkers was a significant victory of recognition for UFW.

CONCLUSION

The Significance of Union Recognition

Throughout the early years of the organizing done by the United Farm Workers, they were consumed by the struggle for recognition. It was a necessary precondition of the union, which needed to be recognized as the official and legitimate representatives of the farmworkers in order to achieve their goals of increased wages, better working conditions, higher health and safety standards. In order to accomplish these goals, organizers pursued a tri-fold strategy of three primary tactics to gain legitimacy: strikes, boycotts, and legislative action.

While some farmworkers' strikes were successful in achieving limited goals, such as contracts, the original NFWA and AWOC strike was unsuccessful in achieving the broader goal of garnering recognition for the union. Due to a number of challenges -- the inability to significantly halt production, the growers' ability to find replacement workers, and the length of the strike -- the farmworkers were unable to force the growers to recognize the union. However, the farmworkers created strong ties to the civil rights community, gained student and cleric support, built a strong base of experienced farmworkers for other actions, and received national media coverage for the strike action. In this way, strikes gave the unions a base to build upon for the next action they endeavored, the boycott.

The Great Grape Boycott was one of the most brilliant boycott campaigns in recent history. Continuing to build upon the strengths of the strike, UFW launched a series of boycotts that climaxed in the Great Grape Boycott. The Grape Boycott was victorious due to its strong public support and ability to impede the sale of grapes. In carrying it out, the UFW pursued a dual strategy of public education and building institutional support. UFW placed boycott organizers in the major grape markets and coordinated volunteer boycott committees, thus building their base of support within each market from members of the

local community. In addition, UFW legitimized the boycott with endorsements from civil rights organizations, religious leaders, unions, and politicians. UFW removed the battle from the fields, the growers' arena, and in doing so were able to create an arena in which the farmworkers had more influence -- in the hearts and minds of the consumer. Few boycotts since the Grape Boycott have so actively consumed the minds of Americans. In a highly political era, when political turmoil seemed to be the norm, UFW constructed a civil rights message about the rights of farmworkers that struck a chord with a significant majority of the public. Yet the representation elections and other short term victories of 1970 were to be enjoyed, they were only a stepping stone on the way to official recognition.

The legislative strategy pursued by the UFW changed after the successes of the boycott became apparent. Upon recognizing that inclusion in the NIRA would limit boycotts and ban secondary boycotts, Chavez and the UFW pushed for legislation that would specifically address agricultural laborers. It was nearly ten years after the original inception of the union that the California Agricultural Labor Relations Act was passed, and the victory was sweet. Nearly every demand the farmworkers had made was met within the legislation: it protected the ability to use secondary boycotts, timed elections for the peak of the season, and protected the ability of the union to carry out strikes. With official legal protection for the existence of the union, the UFW could focus its energies on meeting the needs of the farmworkers.

This thesis is different than anything else that I have read in my three months' of immersion in literature on the farmworkers' movement. It is different partly because it is not focused primarily on Cesar Chavez. Although a great leader and a significant reason for the farmworker organizing of the last three decades, Cesar Chavez is only one piece of the puzzle. Social movements must be studied within the constructs of the era from which they emerged, the influences of popular culture, and the tactics which they used to achieve their goals. We must continuously re-evaluate and re-analyze the tactics that we use as

organizers, because only then are we answering the question of whether we are being effective in realizing our greater goals. Movements for social change are not centered around individuals; when they are successful it is due to the fact that they are built on the larger community. A good organizer is one who can make her issues the ones of the larger community. It is of critical importance to efforts to change the dominant power structure to connect with the grassroots. This is why we must continue to study efforts of mass mobilization like the farmworkers.

We live in a culture that reinforces values of individuality, that persists in telling us to lock our selves into our homes, guard our possessions, and remain aloof from the problems and the greater ills of society. In this day and age the most subversive action we can take is to form a sense of community. The struggle for recognition by farmworkers is a clear and brilliant example of the changes that can take place in society when we form a community with one another and it is a model that organizers should learn from, systematize, and expand upon -- because it works.

Appendix A. LAIDLER'S ELEMENTS OF SUCCESS IN BOYCOTTS ¹

- (1). The Character of the market for the article
Whether the market consists primarily of unionists and sympathizers or of the employing class
- (2). Whether the articles boycotted are purchased by men or by women
It is unusual for the women of the family to feel keenness of the tradition union struggle, and to recognize the utility of inconveniencing themselves in order that other workers might be assisted thereby.
- (3). A strong organization among the employees
- (4). The frequency and regularity of the consumption of an article
If it is an article which enters into daily consumption, and is of such a character that it can be made the subject of ordinary conversation, it will soon force the employer to spend money in advertising it, in order to counteract the silent influence of the boycott.
- (5). The character of the population in the locality of the firm
If the boycotts are of a local nature, and the trade of the boycotted firm is also for the most part in the surrounding neighborhood, the surrounding population can affect the boycott.
- (6). The strength and capital of the boycotted firm, and the nation-wide character of sales
An effective boycott against such articles entails an extensive campaign, costing thousands of dollars, the ability of firms with a big capital to withstand a boycott has been pointed out
- (7). The extent to which the boycott firm is a monopoly
If it is difficult or impossible for the public to obtain the duplicate of the goods manufactured by the boycotted concern, the purchasers are loathe to join the crusade of boycotting, especially when the article is considered a necessity.
- (8). Degree to which the efforts of the entire labor body are concentrated in one or more important firms
- (9). Amount of favorable publicity
Unless something of a particularly striking or unusual character occurs in the course of the boycott, the public at large, however, rarely hears of its existence through medium of the daily press.
- (10). The character of the distinguishing mark on the goods
If it is difficult to trace the good back to the boycotted industry, it is more difficult to diminish sales.
- (11). The character of the competition
When competitors of the boycott industry are unsavory, the consumer is unlikely to remain true to the boycott.
- (12). Directness of the boycotting attacks

(13). The causes leading to the boycott

Labor organizers sometimes recognize and insist upon the enforcement of moral and social laws not recognized by society at large, and boycotts based upon these reach no further than the organizations upholding the assumed law. Boycotts based upon the employment of non-union men rarely succeed, because society is not prepared to assist either in driving men into unions or out of employment.

(14). The vigor with which the boycott is pushed at the outset

The vigor and effectiveness of the methods employed during the first few weeks, determine to a very large extent, its ultimate outcome.

(15). The attitude of the law

(16). The more thorough the deliberation of the organization before the boycott, the more likely for success.

¹ Harry W. Laidler. Boycotts and Labor Struggle. (New York: John Lane Company, 1913) 161.



THE BISHOPS SPEAK OUT

Chancery Office
Diocese of Stockton

1105 North Lincoln St.
P. O. Box 4237
STOCKTON, CALIFORNIA 95204

MOST REVEREND HUGH A. DONOHUE, D.D.,
Bishop of Stockton

October 18, 1966

Dear Mr. Chavez:

The critical situation in the organization of field workers in the Southern San Joaquin Valley calls for an equitable solution. I strongly recommend that your union allow free elections to determine which union the grape workers want as their representative.

Enclosed is a statement issued this morning by the Catholic Bishops of California asking for immediate action in the farm worker elections.

Justice and equity would indicate that the allowing of free elections would bring about a peaceful solution to this crisis.

Sincerely yours,

Hugh A. Donohue

Most Reverend Hugh A. Donohue, D.D., Ph.D.
Bishop of Stockton



STATEMENT OF CALIFORNIA BISHOPS



We note with approval the settlement of the strike at Delano through free, supervised elections whereby the worker himself decided on the union of his choice.

This one election, however, has not settled the problem. Many farms are still being struck and there is the ever present danger of incidents that will prove harmful to all citizens of the State.

Justice and equity demand that every reasonable method be employed to bring this matter to a peaceful and just solution. Certainly free elections have much to recommend them as a first step in the right direction.

Wherefore, we earnestly ask the growers and the unions to agree on free elections as a pledge of good faith in effecting a peaceful solution in this most serious situation.

Once again we would recall the words of Vatican Council II in the Constitution on the Church in the Modern World:

"Among the basic rights of the human person is to be numbered the right of freely founding unions for working people. These should be able truly to represent them and contribute to the organizing of economic life in the right way. Included is the right of freely taking part in the activity of these unions without risk of reprisal. Through this orderly participation joined to progressive economic and social formation, all will grow day by day in the awareness of their own function and responsibility, and thus they will be brought to feel that they are associates in the whole task of economic development and in the attainment of the universal common good according to their capacities and aptitudes."





The Boycott Network

+++++THE BATTLE OF MAYFAIR+++++

MAYFAIR MARKETS IN A DOZEN CALIFORNIA CITIES ARE UNDER FIRE BECAUSE OF THEIR REFUSAL TO TAKE PERELLI-MINETTI PRODUCTS OFF THEIR SHELVES. SOME ARE IGNORANT OF THE MEANING OF THE STRIKE, OTHERS ARE OPENLY HOSTILE. SO IN ADDITION TO THE JOB OF DOUBLE-CHECKING ON A TOTAL OF 1250 STORES THAT HAVE AGREED TO COOPERATE, THE DELANO STRIKERS AND THEIR FRIENDS HAVE BEEN FORCED INTO A BATTLE AGAINST THIS FOOD GIANT.

THUS, STRIKERS ARE AGAIN SPREAD OUT IN A THOUSAND MILE NETWORK MUCH LIKE THE ONE WHICH STOPPED SCHENLEY A YEAR AGO. THEIR FRIENDS IN THE CITIES ONCE AGAIN HAVE THE TREMENDOUS BURDEN OF FEEDING AND HOUSING THEM. BUT THE END RESULT WILL BRING MINETTI TO HIS KNEES, AND OBTAIN JUSTICE FOR HUNDREDS OF FARM WORKERS WHO HARVEST HIS GRAPES.



Sacramento

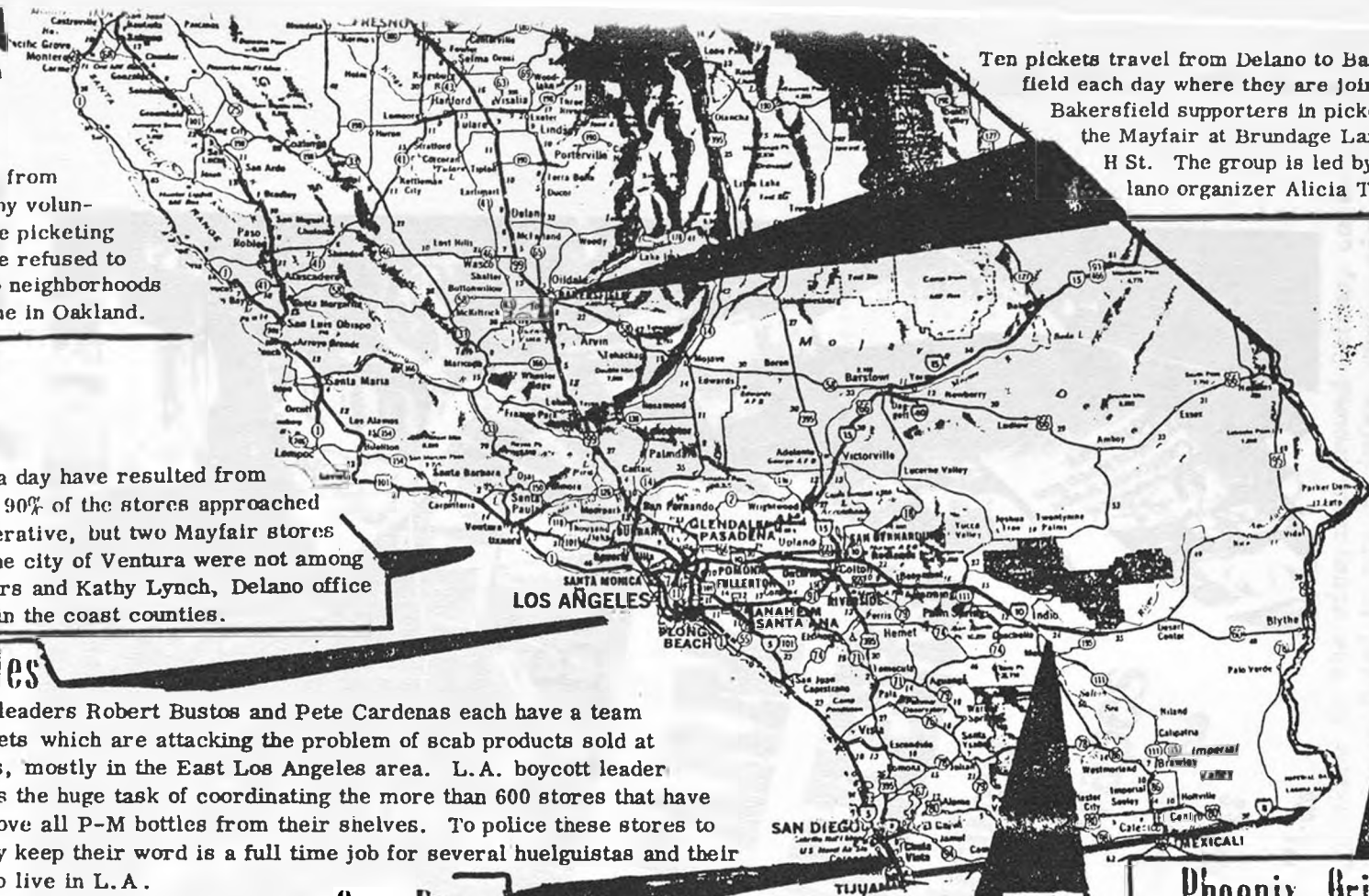
One large Mayfair market in this city found themselves surrounded by a picket line when they refused to cooperate with the strike.

This line, led by Marcos Munoz of Delano, has had great success in stopping business at this market.

Fresno

The Mayfair Market at Kings Canyon Blvd. & Clovis Avenue is the target of the United Farm Workers' Fresno County Strike Committee. The managers here failed to understand the importance of stopping Perelli-Minetti's Tribuno Vermouth and

five strikers working full time under John Schroyer—the huelguista who was beaten two weeks ago by Teamsters. Their job is to police the 500 Bay area stores that have already removed P-M products from their shelves. Also, helped by volunteers, the Delano strikers are picketing two Mayfair Markets that have refused to cooperate. Both are in negro neighborhoods --one in San Francisco and one in Oakland.



Ten pickets travel from Delano to Bakersfield each day where they are joined by Bakersfield supporters in picketting the Mayfair at Brundage Lane and H St. The group is led by Delano organizer Alicia Tapia.

Oxnard-Ventura

Losses of thousands of dollars a day have resulted from Mayfair's lack of cooperation. 90% of the stores approached by the strikers were very cooperative, but two Mayfair stores in the Oxnard area and one in the city of Ventura were not among them. Five Delano farm workers and Kathy Lynch, Delano office manager, are leading the fight in the coast counties.

Los Angeles

Delano picket leaders Robert Bustos and Pete Cardenas each have a team of Delano pickets which are attacking the problem of scab products sold at Mayfair stores, mostly in the East Los Angeles area. L.A. boycott leader Ed Frankel has the huge task of coordinating the more than 600 stores that have agreed to remove all P-M bottles from their shelves. To police these stores to make sure they keep their word is a full time job for several huelguistas and their supporters who live in L.A.

San Diego

The Federal Avenue Mayfair in this city has been very uncooperative, and must therefore pay the price. The price is very high, since Tony Mendez and the four farm workers he brought with him have done an effective job of mobilizing the whole city against Mayfair.

A representative group of 6 strikers from Delano travelled to Indio last week to begin action against non-cooperating stores in the desert cities. Indio's Mayfair on old Highway 111 was the first target because of their refusal to take the scab wine off their shelves. The customer of this store who is sympathetic to the strike and to the farm workers, is being turned away at the door by his own conscience.

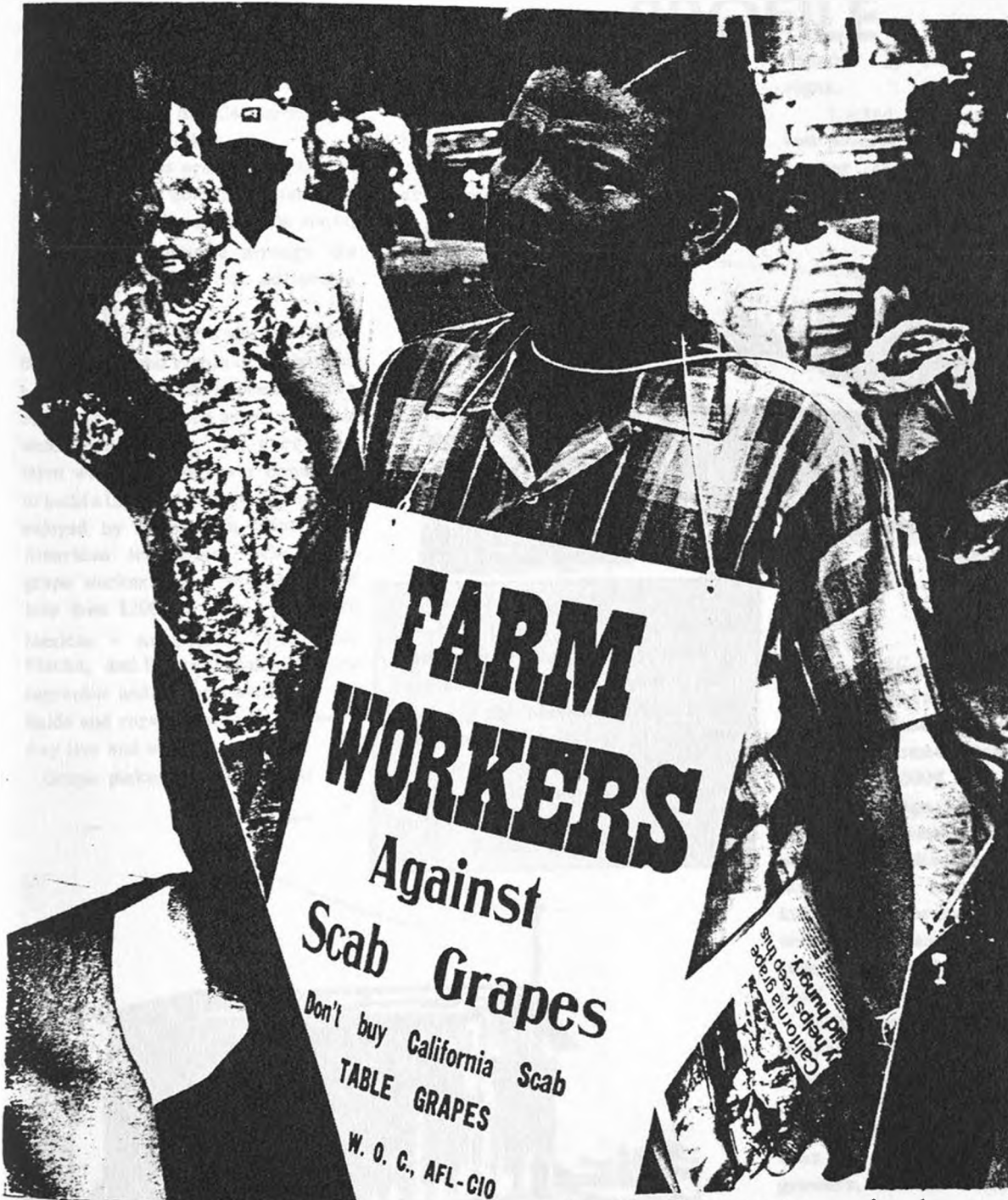
Indio

Phoenix, Arizona

The entire Valenzuela family from Delano has pledged their aid, travelled to Phoenix and is picketing El Rancho markets there, which are owned by Mayfair.

**PLEASE DON'T BUY ANY
PERELLI-MINETTI PRODUCTS**

The Delano Grape Strike and Boycott



In September, 1965, over 4,000 grape pickers in the vineyards around Delano, California went on strike, when their employers refused to pay a living wage, sign a written contract, or recognize the workers' union. Since then, over 13000 workers have joined in that strike. For four long years, these farm workers, led by Cesar Chavez and the United Farm Workers Organizing Committee, have struggled non-violently for social and economic justice. Here is our story:



FARM WORKERS IN AMERICA: PROFILE OF

Human dignity and the right of farm workers to organize are the basic issues of the California and Arizona grape strikes.

Farm workers are striking for the right to build a community union of their own, which can provide social and economic justice through the proven procedures of collective bargaining.

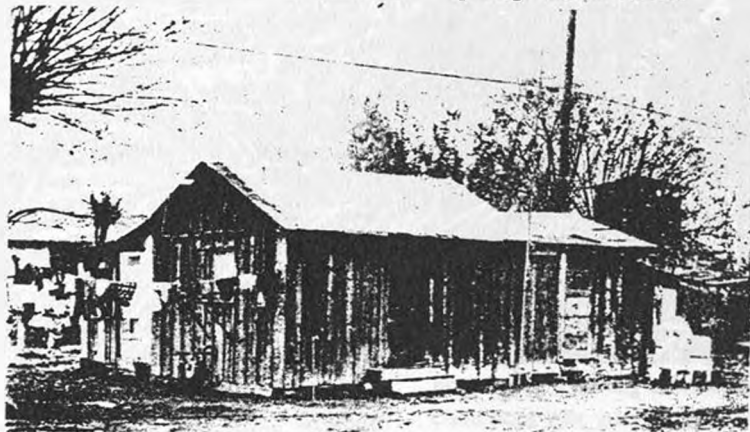
For decades, farm workers have been denied the rights of collective bargaining and Union representation elections guaranteed other workers under Federal law. As a result, farm workers have never been able to build a Union or gain those benefits enjoyed by workers in most other American industries. California grape workers earn an average of less than \$2000 a year. Most are Mexican - Americans, Filipinos, Blacks, and Puerto Ricans who face segregation and discrimination in the fields and rural communities where they live and work.

Grape pickers are seasonal mi-

grant workers, who receive no unemployment insurance for those months when they are unemployed. Migrant families often live in crowded barrack-type labor camps which are fenced off to visitors and sur-

rounded by NO TRESSPASSING signs.

Locked in a cycle of migrancy and poverty, over half of all farm worker children never get past eighth grade in school.



"Chavez has made an effort on behalf of people who suffer so tremendously in this country, namely, so many of our farm workers, particularly the Mexican - Americans and others of minority groups who have not had the protection of the laws as exist in so many other elements of society."

Robert F. Kennedy, 3/10/68

Farm workers' infant and maternal mortality rates are 125% higher than the national average, and incidence of infectious disease, including TB, is 300% higher than the national average. Direct exposure to pesticide poisons contributes to an occupational disease rate among farm workers twice that of other industries. The average life expectancy for migrant workers is only 49 years, compared to a 70-year life span for the average American.

Politicians have excluded farm workers from most protective labor legislation passed over the last 30 years. But even the few existing health, safety, sanitation, and labor laws are openly violated by the growers, who know that pro-Agri-Agribusiness officials will not enforce them. Child labor is common in the vineyards. Ignoring sanitation laws, growers create a public health hazard by subjecting men and





POVERTY

women to the indignity of working in fields without toilets or handwashing facilities. Labor contractors frequently pocket social security payments, preparing a bleak future for elderly workers.

Powerless, farm workers must endure inhuman and exploitive working conditions. Table grape workers do not have contracts. Company stores cheat them of their meager earnings. There are no holidays or vacations with pay, only the lay-off when the harvest is done, when the worker is discarded like a used and no longer needed piece of equipment. Workers do not have health or pension plans, unemployment insurance, or (except in a handful of states) even workmens' compensation for accidents. Safety provisions, especially for workers exposed to poisonous pesticides, are nonexistent. Cool drinking water is rarely provided, although summer harvest temperatures often top 105%. Work speed-ups and abusive



supervision are common. Workers can be fired at any time without explanation.

In the past, because laws have been unenforced or are designed to be unenforceable, legislation has failed to lighten the heavy burden of injustices heaped upon farm workers

ers. Only a strong union and written contracts can guarantee that these abuses will be ended and that employers will deal with their workers with fairness and respect. Contracts signed by wine grape growers have successfully solved almost all these problems at the ranches under contract. The Union is asking for similar contracts with grape growers and hopes someday to extend these protections to other farm workers. There is no attempt or intention to "control" or "dominate" agriculture or any segment of agriculture, as some anti-union propagandists have charged. We are seeking those basic rights, benefits, and protections which most other American workers have enjoyed for 20 years or more.

ABOVE: Women and children work in the fields, to supplement the meagre earnings of their husbands.

LEFT: Farm workers are herded, transported like cattle, to and from work.



AGRIBUSINESS: CALIFORNIA'S

Agriculture is California's largest and richest industry, producing over \$5 billion gross income in 1969. The trend is toward bigger and richer farms. Only 7% of all farm owners possess 79% of the land and employ 75% of all farm labor. In Kern County, where Delano is located, the average farm has 2,279 acres (U. S. average is 351 acres) and is valued at \$590,000, according to the 1964 U. S. Census of Agriculture. The trend towards fewer and larger farms has increased rapidly since then.

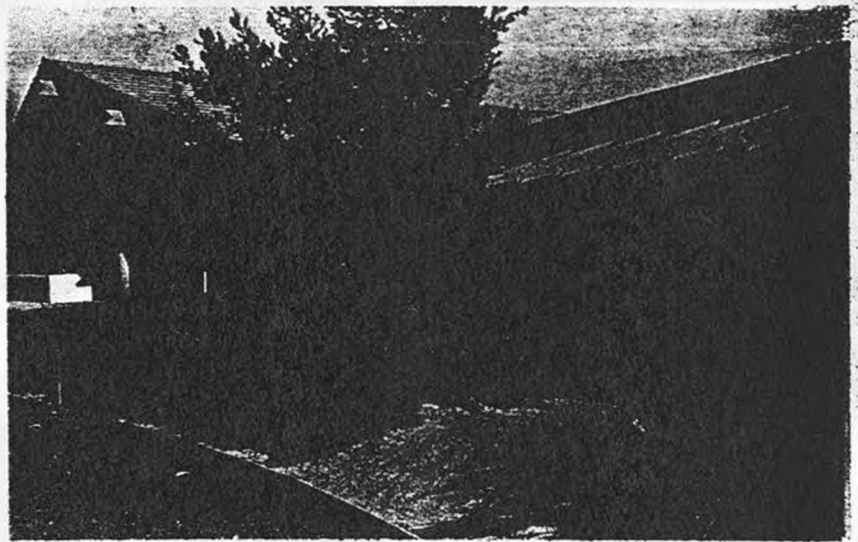
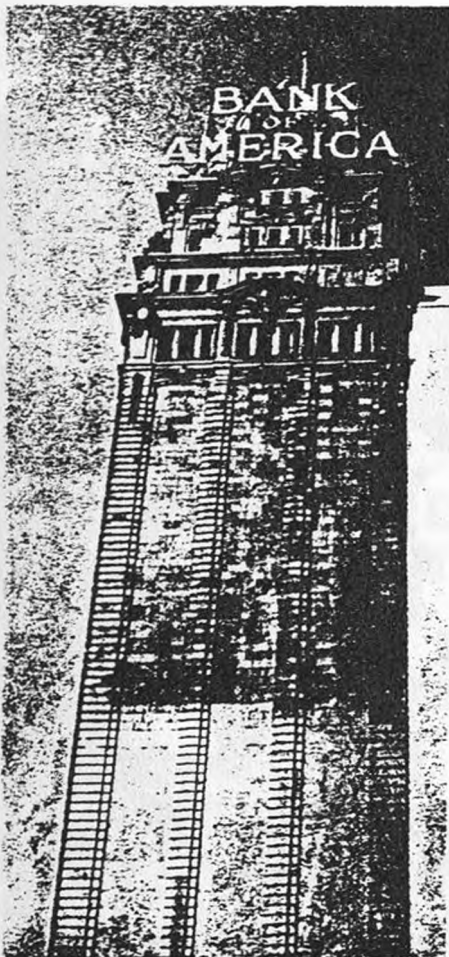
Corporate conglomerates like Tenneco's Kern County Land Co. (348,026 acres in California alone), J.G. Boswell Co. (70,000 acres), Giumarra Fruit Corp (12,000 acres) and Bank of America's front-organization, the Agri - Business Investment Corporation dominate the table grape industry. The table grape industry centers around 30 grower-packer-shippers who handle

85% of all production.

California - Arizona growers have a virtual market monopoly over table grape production, raising 98% of the U.S. supply; imports account for less than 1% of total sales. From 1956 to 1966, table grape yields, productions and profits increased steadily, all signs of a dynamic industry which can afford to pay living wages.

Many growers are absentee landlords with holdings throughout the Southwest, who are expanding steadily as federally subsidized

irrigation water becomes available. Meanwhile, the vast agribusiness lobby perpetuates the myth of the "family farmer" to maintain taxpayer-paid privileges, such as free labor recruitment through the Farm Labor Service, state university research and technical assistance, and over \$4 billion annually in federal farm subsidies. In 1967, J.G. Boswell, who is a grape grower and sits on the Board of Directors of Safeway Stores, topped the hand-out list with \$4 million. Seven Delano table grape growers receive



ABOVE: Headquarters for S. A. Camp Co., a "family-farm" of Shafter, Kern Co., California. Camp owns a string of cotton gins, cotton compresses, cotton seed oil plants, a pump company, a fertilizer and insecticide company, a farm machinery and equipment company, the Circle Petroleum Agency, and 16,000 acres of cotton, 40,000 acres of potatoes, and over 231,000 acres of grazing and cattle land. Mr. Camp collected \$517,285 for not growing cotton on some of that land last year.

As a hobby, Camp built a harness racing stable of fine thoroughbred horses. Camp's income from horse racing in 1958 alone was \$466,908.

In March, 1969, Camp bought out a major portion of the old DiGiorgio Ranch, an estimated 6,000 acres for over \$6,000,000. This new acreage included plums, asparagus, peanuts, and other crops, but was mostly in grapes. Camp has refused elections or to recognize the union.

RIGHT: Bank of America, grape grower, financier of grape growers, controller of grape growers.

RICHEST INDUSTRY

over \$645,000 worth of this "elfare for the rich" every year, mostly for agreeing not to grow cotton that year.

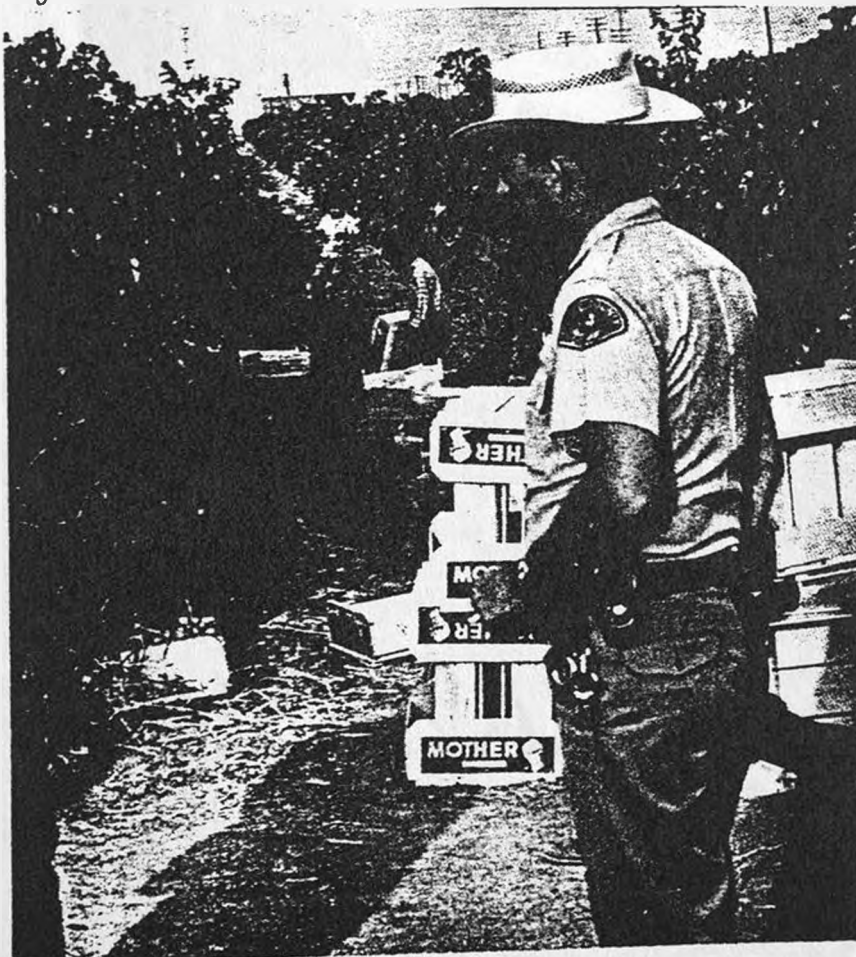
While other industries pay living wages and unemployment insurance, it is the taxpayer who bears the

burden of rural poverty, agribusiness' main by-product, by paying for federal and state health and meager subsistence to impoverished farm workers. Welfare and charity are not the answers for America's agricultural working poor. Growers

can afford to pay decent wages. The growers have been able to avoid this social responsibility in the past only by successfully defeating all attempts by farm workers to form a union and bargain collectively.



ABOVE: Cadillacs lined up at Bianco Fruit Co. Packing shed in Delano.



WHAT ABOUT THE SMALL FARMER?

As a man who works the land, the small farmer is also the victim of agribusiness power. The low wages paid by the corporate farms with whom small farmers must compete depress the value of the small farmers' labors. The welfare and survival of small producers is not dependent on keeping farm laborers poor, but on organizing -- as workers are doing -- to bargain for a fair price for their products in the market place.

However, it must be remembered that even the small farmer is not in the same desperate economic position as the impoverished farm worker. The 1964 Census of Agriculture reports that 90% of all California farms of 10 acres or less in size are valued at \$10,000 or more. Thus even the small farmer has savings and credit at the bank, and an established place in the community. As California Migrant Ministry Director, the Reverend Wayne C. Hartmire, reminds us, "Humanly speaking, the plight of the workers still demands priority attention."

LEFT: Tulare County Cop calmly watches as children work as strike-breakers. Rural Police protect the growers' society from the law.



THE FARM WORKERS' FIVE YEAR STRUGGLE "La Huelga"-- The Grape

Farm workers have made many attempts to organize. However, over the past half century, agricultural unions were crushed in rural courts by injunctions and by jailings, and broken in the fields by the mass importation of strike-breakers from other areas or even other countries. Excluded from the protection of labor laws passed in the 1930's, farm workers have never been able to build unions, bargain collectively, and gain those benefits enjoyed by most other American workers.

In 1962, California farm workers under the leadership of Cesar Cha-

vez founded a self-help community union, the National Farm Workers Association. They established the first farm workers credit union, death insurance program, and newspaper. The NFWA was largely composed of Mexican and Mexican-American farm workers. At the same time, an increasing number of Filipino-American workers were joining the Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee, founded in 1959.

The grape strike began in September, 1965, led by AWOOC, and spread rapidly throughout the vineyards around Delano, as growers re-

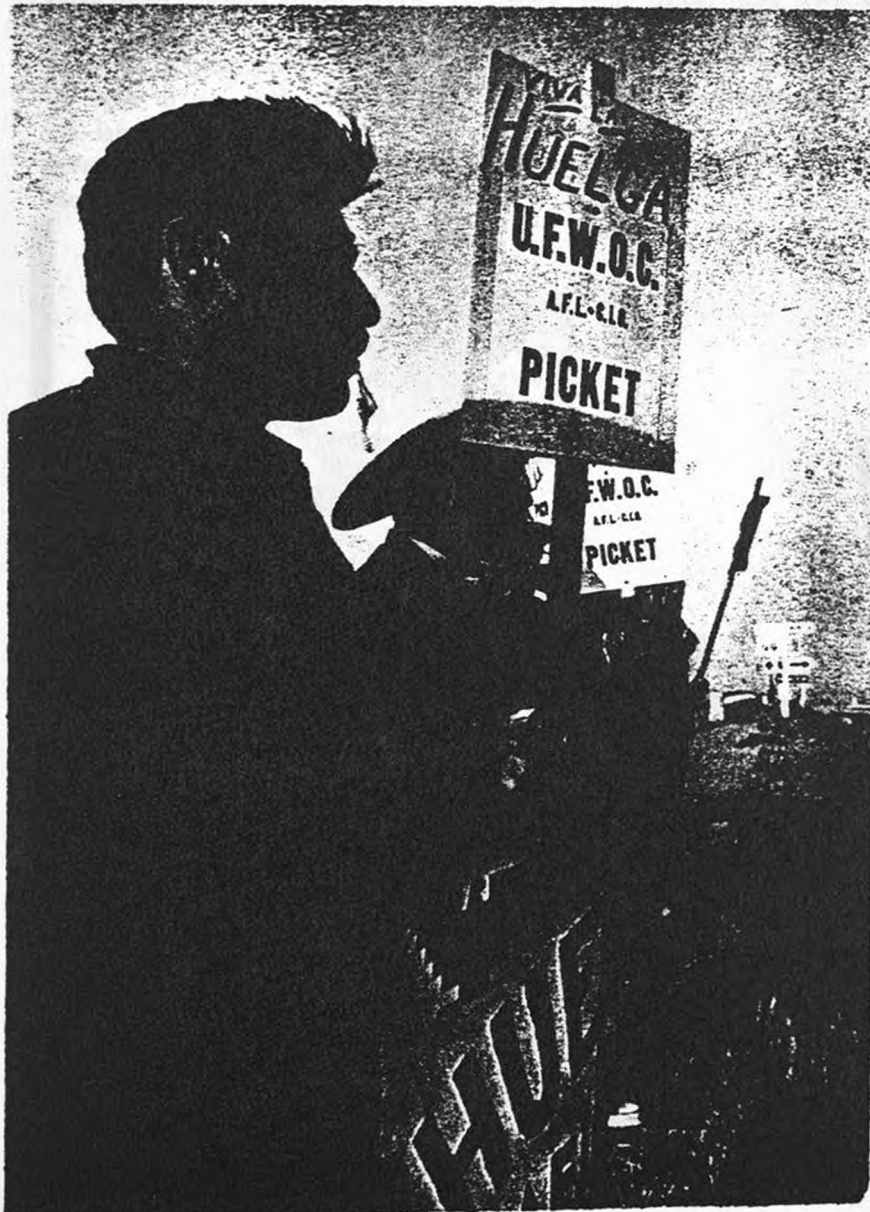
fused to meet with their workers to discuss union representation elections or improvements in wages and conditions. Thousands of farm workers walked out of the fields in support of the strike, only to be replaced rapidly by imported scabs.

The grape industry retaliated by beating and ordering the arrest of nonviolent pickets, and by evicting strikers and their families from their homes in the labor camps. Delano city officials, police, and courts openly allied themselves with the growers by harassing strikers and arresting workers for shouting, "Huelga," ("strike" in Spanish) on the picket lines. Soon other unions, churches, students and ethnic groups throughout the country rallied in support of the farm workers struggle.

The growers' extensive use of foreign strike breakers forced the union to seek economic power through consumer boycotts, and, after two years of struggle, the pressure from these boycotts or threats of boycotts brought ten major wine grape growers to the bargaining table with UFWOC. The result was contracts with the growers covering several thousand farm workers at such ranches as Schenley, Gallo, Almaden, and Franzia Bros. These wine grape contracts provide the best wages and working conditions in American agriculture.

Farm workers, who suffered and sacrificed for the right to organize, demonstrated their overwhelming support of the Union, in every election and impartially supervised election procedure agreed to by the growers.

During the wine grape campaign, UFWOC continued to organize workers in the table grape industry throughout California's Coachella and San Joaquin Valleys and Arizona. The vast majority of table grape workers have signed cards authorizing UFWOC to represent



FOR JUSTICE Strike

them in negotiations with the growers.

In early 1968, UFWOC notified all California table grape growers that it represented their workers, and called for elections and negotiations. Similar telegrams were sent to Arizona growers in May 1969. NOT ONE GROWER RESPONDED TO THESE REQUESTS BY THE FARM WORKERS FOR ELECTIONS AND NEGOTIATIONS.

Only after trying to reach a peaceful negotiated settlement did grape pickers turn to the strike and boycott. Rather than negotiate, the growers fired union members, formed company unions and are using illegal foreign strikebreakers from Mexico to pick the grapes. While the Justice Department closes its eyes to the open violation of the letter and intent of the immigration laws, the growers ruthlessly pit brother against brother, the

poor of Mexico against the poor of the United States, to undermine the farm workers movement.

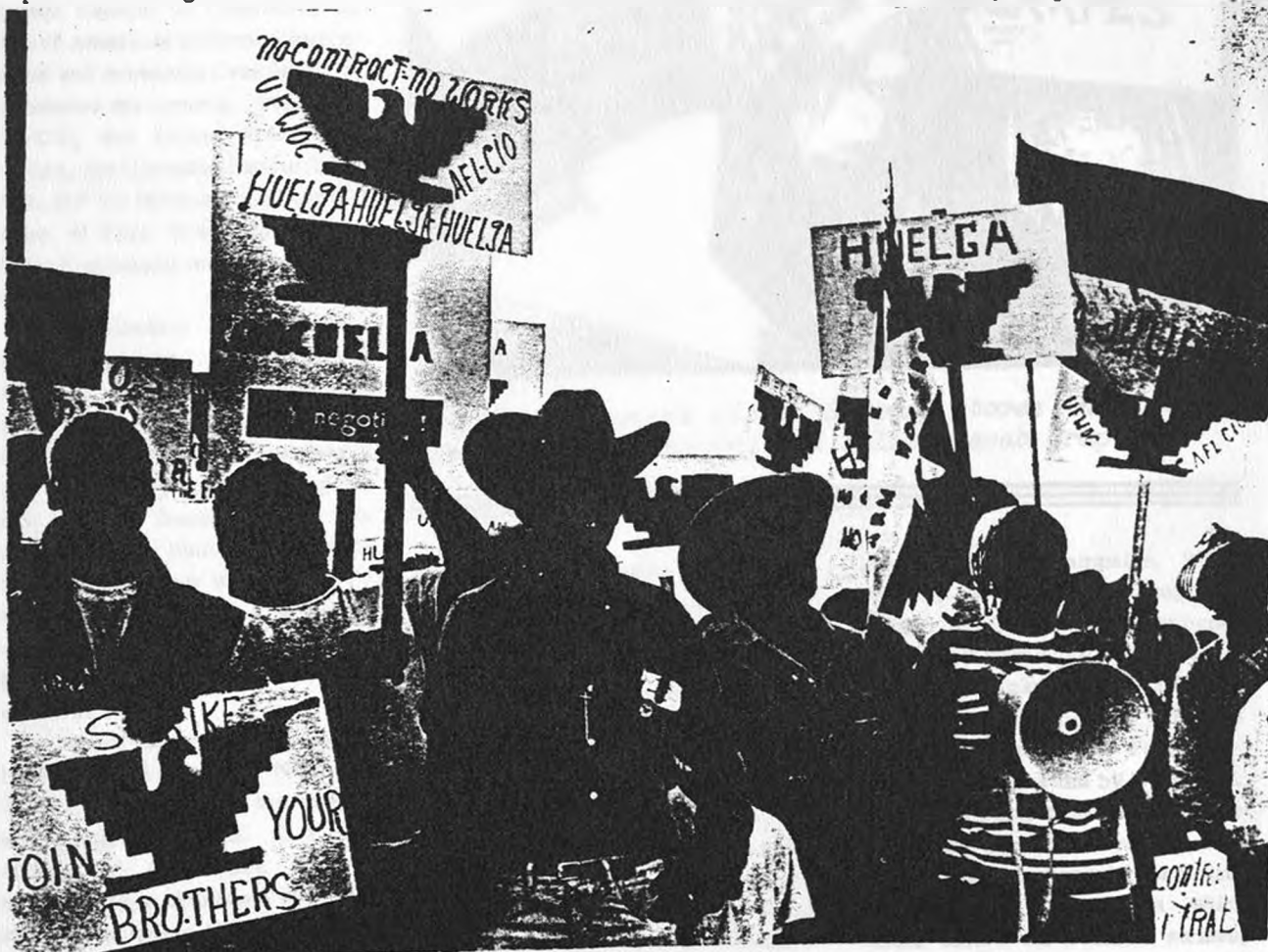
Faced with the repeated importation of foreign strike-breakers, farm workers were forced to extend their picket lines from the fields to the cities and call for an International Table Grape Boycott to gain union recognition and just contracts.



ABOVE: Cars of workers leave the fields to join the strike, Coachella grape strike, June, 1969.

BELOW: Workers picketing and calling on others to join the strike, Coachella grape strike, June 1969.

OPPOSITE: Delano grape strike, September, 1967.



THE GRAPE BOYCOTT: CONSUMER POWER STRIKES A BLOW

The grape boycott is a consumer boycott. Striking farm workers are asking consumers not to buy grapes and not to shop at stores that sell grapes.

Since the days of the Boston Tea Party, Americans have used their legal right to boycott as a legitimate, non-violent means of achieving social justice. Today, housewives boycott supermarkets to protest skyrocketing food prices and black Americans boycott bigoted merchants who refuse to employ minorities.

The boycott is supported by civic and religious groups, trade unions, political leaders, students and consumers all over the world. The World Council of Churches, the National Council of Churches, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations and numerous Catholic bishops endorse the boycott. The entire AFL-CIO, the United Automobile Workers, the Canadian Labour Congress, and the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions are all standing behind their brothers in the fields.

Political leaders and legitimate consumers groups, including the Consumer Federation of America and the National Consumers League, have reaffirmed the consumer's right "not to buy" by endorsing the grape boycott. Small farmers, like those within the National Farmers Union, also support it. America's family farmers share a common interest with field workers in fighting agribusiness control of the nation's food supply.

The moral decision by millions of concerned Americans NOT TO EAT GRAPES has made the boycott increasingly successful. U.S. Department of Agriculture reports show that grape shipments to major markets, including New York, Chicago and Toronto, have dropped 30 to 50% since the boycott began.



ABOVE: Consumers picket Safeway stores in Washington, D.C., for buying and selling scab grapes.

However, the Defense Department is helping growers counteract consumer support for farm workers by providing a scab grape market of last resort. The military, acting as strikebreaker, has doubled its table grape purchases and is increasing grape shipments to Vietnam by 800%.

Drawing financial support from the right-wing, the grape industry has hired the arch-conservative public relations firm of Whitaker & Baxter, which stopped Goldwater's

1964 presidential campaign. W&B, in turn, has set up the phoney Consumers' Rights Committee to break the boycott with a multi-million-dollar publicity campaign. Under the guise of Senator George Murphy's so-called "Consumers' Food Protection Act"—drafted by Whitaker & Baxter—agribusiness is seeking to take away the farm workers' non-violent weapons through repressive, anti-consumer legislation which would outlaw farm labor strikes, peaceful picketing and boycott BY

N FOR JUSTICE

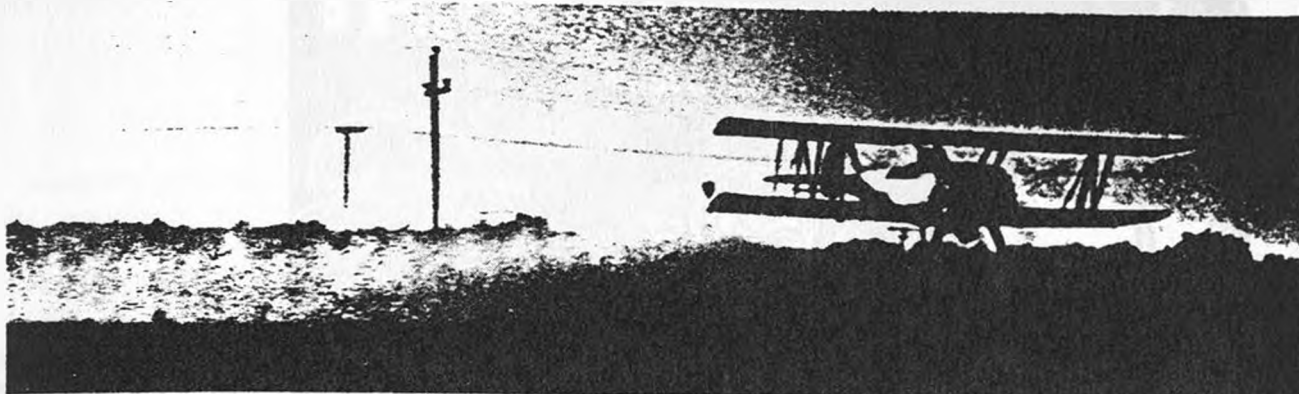
ANY CONSUMER GROUP IN THE NATION!

Murphy's bill echos the growers claim that the "special problems" of agriculture require outlawing harvest time strikes in perishable crops. Most farm workers work only during the harvest. Furthermore, the rest of the foodpacking-processing industry has been organized for decades with decent contracts and healthy working conditions insuring an orderly flow of food to the consumer. In their concern for products over people, the growers fail to mention that farm workers and their children are also perishable.

RIGHT: Mayor John Lindsay of New York presents UFWOC Director Cesar Chavez with the keys to the city.

BELOW: Young French Canadians picket stores in Montreal asking customers to shun grapes.





Pesticides: The Growing

Unrestricted Use of Poisons Threatens Consumers, the Environment

The increasingly successful grape boycott brought 10 grape growers to the bargaining table with UFWOC in June of 1969, but the negotiations broke down over the issue of pesticides. Grape growers rejected all

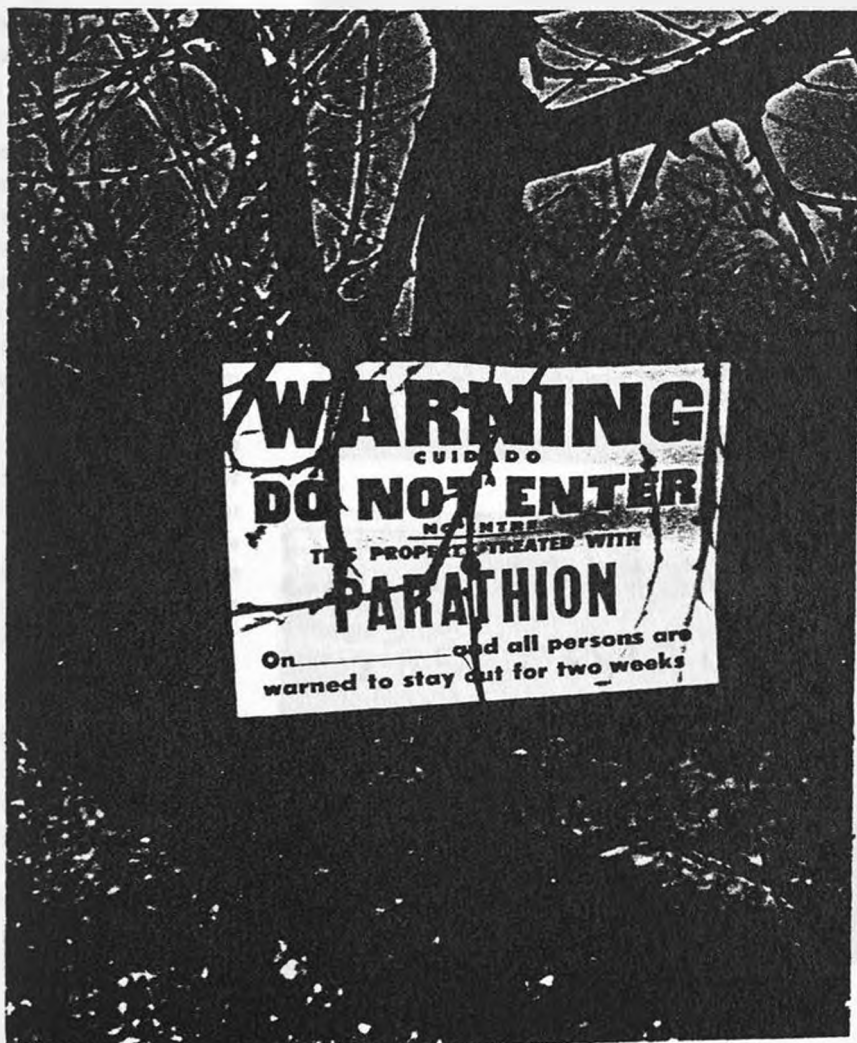
union proposed protections for workers and consumers.

UFWOC first became concerned about pesticides as grape workers suffering from injuries caused by them began seeking treatment at the

union clinic. A 1969 California Public Health Dept. survey, conducted primarily among grape pickers, found that 80% of the workers investigated suffer from symptoms of pesticide poisoning, including rashes, loss of hair and fingernails, vision impairment and convulsions. Farm worker children, too, are victims of this "pesticide epidemic" according to clinical evidence collected by Dr. Lee Mizrahi, Tulare County, the nation's major grape growing region.

Laboratory analyses conducted on table grapes being sold in supermarkets around the country have consistently revealed significant DDT, Aldrin, Parathion and other chemical residues. Pesticide residues can often be seen on grapes in the stores. Since they penetrate the fruit, pesticides cannot be washed off or cooked out. They are stored in the body tissues. Solid medical evidence links pesticides with birth deformities, sex organ disorders, DDT-laced mothers' milk, leukemia and cancer. Food and Drug Administration statistics show that 1,000 Americans are killed and 90,000 injured each year by agricultural chemicals.

Public outrage by injured farm workers and concerned consumers has forced California to prohibit the use of DDT on grapes after March 1970. Merely banning DDT,



Menace Workers,

however, does not afford protection from the wide variety of more toxic pesticides used on grapes.

Cesar Chavez spoke for all Americans concerned with pesticide pollution of the environment when he warned grape growers, "We will not tolerate the systematic poisoning of our people." UFWOC is demanding that table grape growers sign contracts containing health and safety protections similar to those in the union's wine grape contract with Perelli-Minetti. This contract provides for a joint worker-employer safety committee, prohibits the use of "hard" chlorinated hydrocarbon pesticides such as DDT, Aldrin and Dieldrin, and strictly controls the application of organo phosphate

Through the grape boycott, farm workers and consumers can join together in a practical step to stop the misuse of pesticides on table grapes, and eventually throughout agriculture. Union contracts are the only sure way to secure safe job conditions for corkers and pure food for consumers.

RIGHT: Fields, orchards, and vineyards, sprayed with parathion, can be deadly to farm workers for weeks after the spraying.

LEFT: Advertisements for chemical poisons applied to your food.

ADVAN

THIODAN-PARATHION

with cottonseed oil



Controls bollworms, tuberworms, loopers

ADVAN

"Botran" reduces grape rots in field and storage

TUCO

ADVAN

ETHION Combinations



Unresistable for hoppers and mites

Niagara makes the difference



HE MAY BE A GROWER HIMSELF!

YOUR GROCER PROMOTES POVERTY BY SELLING GRAPES

Stores that sell grapes -- a luxury, seasonal item of no importance to their profits -- are helping the growers perpetuate rural poverty among the families who harvest the nation's crops.

For this reason, any store that buys grapes from the growers for sale or display is not "neutral", as store managers sometimes claim, but directly assisting the growers.

Some stores will take into consideration the views of their customers, and will stop buying grapes after receiving appeals and petitions from consumers. Other stores refuse to listen to appeals from their customers and continue to buy grapes. Some buy more grapes than they can possibly sell, even at discount prices, as a political act of solidarity with the rich growers. And some big supermarket chains are so deeply involved in agribusiness themselves as to become part of the agribusiness power structure.

Safeway Stores, the country's major grape buyer and the largest supermarket chain in the West, is a prime example of the field-to-table corporate control of the food supply that has taken over American agriculture. Safeway directors control conglomerates which own over 1,000,000 acres of prime farm land and which received more than \$6 million in federal farm subsidies last year for NOT GROWING food and fiber.

One of the Directors of Safeway, J. G. Boswell, is also president and director of J. G. Boswell, Inc., one of the largest cotton growers in California and the largest grape grower in Arizona. Last year Boswell received \$4,091,818 from the Federal Government for NOT growing cotton, the largest subsidy paid to any rancher in the nation.

The Chairman of the Board of Safeway, Robert Magowan, is a director of J. G. Boswell, which owns more than 135,000 acres of

prime California land.

Ernest C. Arbuckle, another director of Safeway, is also a director of the Kern County Land Co., with 350,000 acres in California, \$838,000 in cotton subsidies, and thousands of acres of grapes. Arbuckle also has interests in Ewa Plantation Co, Waialua Agricultural Co. Ltd (Dole products), Kohula Sugar Co., and other agribusiness firms.

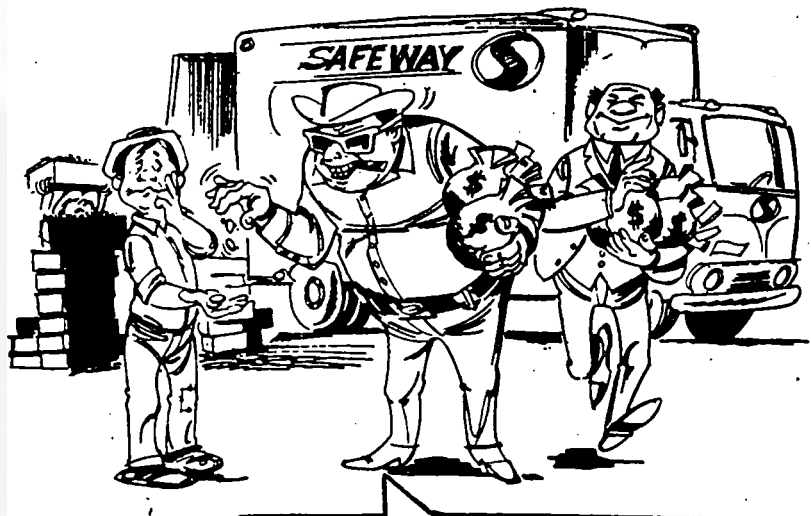
Another Director of Safeway, Charles de Bretteville, is president-director of Spreckles Sugar Co., which with one or two other giant sugar companies, has a near-monopoly on the sugar industry.

Another director of Safeway, Norman Chandler, is Vice President and director of the Tejon Ranch, a 168,000 acre spread which will soon be irrigated by the billion-dollar federal - state "Westlands Water Project." Taxpayers will foot the entire cost of this irrigation scheme, which will almost exclusively benefit the huge corporate ranches on the west side of the San Joaquin Valley.

While Safeway claims it is "neutral" in the grape strike, Safeway President Quentin Reynolds, director of the California Chamber of Commerce, had the Chamber send out anti-UFWOC kits to 80,000 business men urging them to fight the farm workers' union.

While over 200,000 Safeway consumers have signed a petition asking Safeway to stop handling grapes, Safeway continues to subsidize the growers by buying more grapes than they can sell. Safeway alone pays grape growers \$1 to \$5 million a year, helping them to fight the Union.

To date, millions of Americans have stopped eating the Grapes of Wrath, and responsible, community-minded chain store managers have stopped handling grapes in response to their consumers' requests. At this time, Safeway and other stores handling grapes are acting against the farm workers and against the struggle for human dignity and a living wage in the fields and orchards of America. This is why we ask you to boycott Safeway and other stores handling grapes.



"We've got a good thing going, boy, and we just can't afford to let you in on it..."

NEEDED: LAWS TO HELP US BUILD

In 1935, Congress passed the Wagner Act and other progressive labor legislation which enabled industrial workers to build unions. Farm workers were specifically excluded from that legislation because of the political power of the big agri-business interests. For the last thirty years, farm workers have pleaded in vain for legislation which would enable them to build a union, protect workers from unfair labor practices, and provide a framework for constructive collective bargaining.

Now agri-business interests are uniting behind national legislation which would not only ignore these basic problems, but which would also outlaw strikes and boycotts. This legislation, introduced by Senator George Murphy (R-Ca), would take away the only non-violent weapons the farm workers have left, and would in effect outlaw the Union.

The Union has repeatedly stated its legislative position. UFWOC is in favor of extending the original Wagner Act, the "Bill of Rights" for labor, to include farm workers. "For 35 years, we have been denied those rights other workers enjoy, and now we want those protections and benefits which enabled them to build their unions," stated UFWOC legislative counsel Bob Mc Millan.

Another key law which at present excludes farm workers, The Occupational Health and Safety Act, should be extended to cover farm workers. Farm labor is one of the most dangerous and hazardous of all occupations in the U.S., yet there are almost no laws protecting the workers.

"As part of this legislation, we want special provisions dealing with

pesticides and economic poisons," stated UFWOC Director Cesar Chavez in recent testimony before Congress. "We must put an end to the systematic poisoning of farm workers by the mis-use of these chemicals," he said.

The Union has also stated repeatedly that the first responsibility of Congress is to enforce regulations making it illegal to hire as strike-breakers illegal entrants (wetbacks) or residents of foreign countries who enter the U.S. under "Green Card" immigration permits. Such regulations should be made a part of the law, with financial and legal penalties for growers convicted of such illegal hiring. Such hirings should be made an unfair labor practice.

At present there are no penalties for the employer who illegally hires such workers, and the laws are completely unenforced.

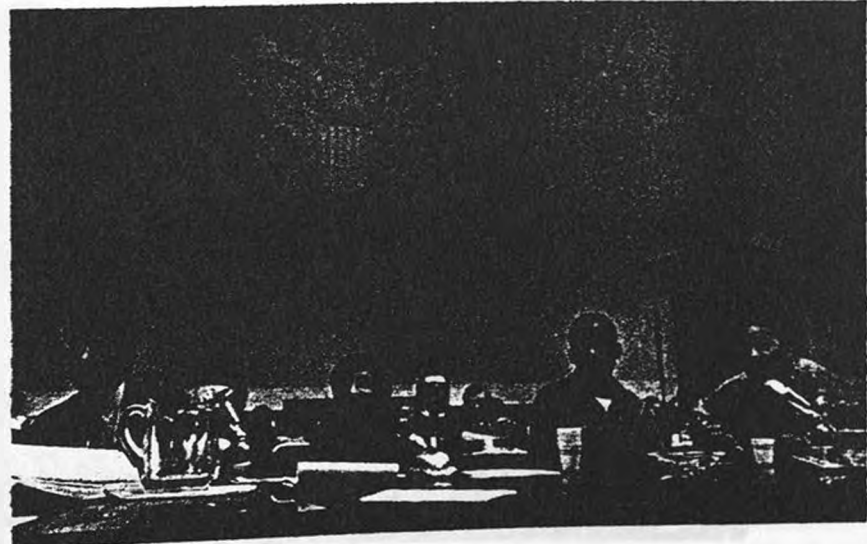
"Our experience in the past has been that what little legislation has been passed to aid farm workers is unenforced, or has no teeth," stated one union spokesman. "Consequently, we are putting our main energy into winning the boycott, into winning contracts through economic pressure on the growers. We feel a strong Union and written contracts between growers and will solve the problems of the farm workers. We support legislation that will favor that end."

THE SAD LESSON OF WISCONSIN

The cucumber (pickle) harvest in Wisconsin lasts little more than the month of August, but feelings among farm workers in favor of the union was so strong in 1967, that they prevailed upon the state of Wisconsin to set up a representation election for the workers on August 31, 1967. The employer, Libby, McNeill, and Libby, had steadfastly refused to recognize the Union, bargain with the workers, or hold elections. The vote among the cucumber pickers at Libby's was 405 in favor of the Union, and 8 opposed, a 98% majority.

But such an election merely proves what we and the growers already know, that the workers want a Union. When union representatives sat down with Libby officials in the fall of 1967 to write a contract, Libby pointed out that the election was not legally binding, that the harvest was now over, and that the Union had no power with which to enforce its demands. Libby refused to sign a contract and broke off negotiations almost as soon as they had begun. The workers were by then back in Texas or other areas, and no boycott with which to exert pressure on the company.

The lesson to be learned is that election victories are hollow if there are no procedures to guarantee collective bargaining, and if the union has no muscle or economic power with which to back up its demands. We won't let that happen again.



RIGHT: Cohen, Chavez, Lyons, and Imutan testify before Congress in September, 1969.

OUR COMMITTMENT TO NON-VIOLENCE

UFWOC is committed to the principles of non-violent change espoused by Ghandi and Martin Luther King. Despite the beatings and provocations inflicted upon farm workers by growers and their agents the workers have maintained their pledge of non-violence throughout four years of struggle.

In March 1968, Cesar Chavez undertook a 25-day fast to reaffirm the Union's commitment to non-violence. Upon breaking this fast, Cesar spoke to a mass attended by 10,000 farm workers and supporters:

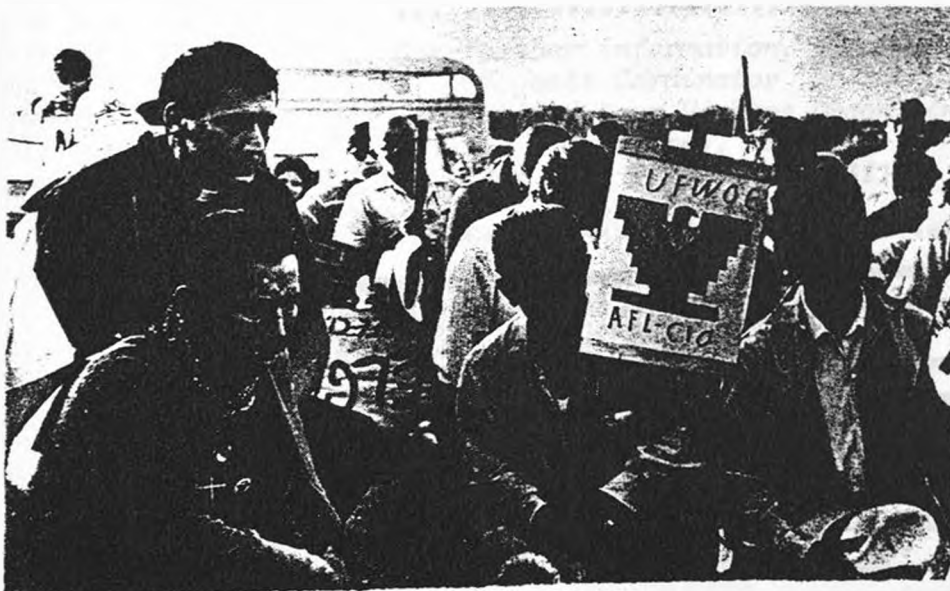
"Our struggle is not easy. Those who oppose our cause are rich and powerful and they have many allies in high places. We are poor. Our allies are few. But we have something the rich do not own. We have our bodies and spirits and the justice of our cause as our weapons.

"I am convinced that the truest act of courage, the strongest act of manliness, is to sacrifice ourselves for others in a totally non-violent struggle for justice.

"To be a man is to suffer for others.

"God help us to be men!"

ABOVE: Cesar Chavez speaks on non-violence.
BELOW: A song and a prayer on the picket line remind the workers of our pledge of non-violence.



How You Can Help Farm Workers



EL MALCRIADO, The Voice of the Farm Worker, is published twice monthly by the UNITED FARM WORKERS ORGANIZING COMMITTEE, AFL-CIO. Subscriptions in the United States and its possessions are \$3.50 per year, and foreign, including Canada and Mexico, US \$5.00. Subscriptions for members of UFWOC, AFL-CIO are included in monthly dues. Editorial and business offices located at the northwest corner of Garces Highway and Mettler Avenue, Delano, California.

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Don't Buy Grapes ..

Don't Eat Grapes

Ask Your Store Manager

Not to Handle Grapes

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Involve Your Organization

Write Your Congressmen

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26 RANCHES, OVER 7,000 WORKER

HUELGA

DELANO STRUG WITH DRAMA

The Delano Grape Strike came to a dramatic ending at 11:10 a.m. on Wednesday, July 29th at UFWOC's headquarters at Forty Acres, one mile west of Delano. Five hundred farm workers and boycott supporters jammed the hall, sang *Nosotros Venceremos*, and shouted *Viva la Huelga!*, *Viva la Causal* and *Viva Cesar Chavez!*

When the twenty-six grape growers entered the hall, strikers began to shout "HUELGA" in unison, and then broke into the verses of another popular song of the five year long struggle: *De Colores*. It was an emotional occasion. Farm workers had suffered many long years. They had fought patiently and non-violently and had made many sacrifices. The signing of the Delano grape growers was always a distant hope. It was an event their bosses swore would never



Included in the twenty-six Delano growers who signed with UFWOC are the following: Giumarra Vineyards Corporation, M.B. Zaninovich, Inc., Pandol & Sons, M. Caratan Inc., Anton Caratan & Son, George A. Lucas & Sons, Gene Radovich & Sons, Jack & Marion J. Radovich, John Pagliarulo Inc., Louis Caric & Sons, Nick Bozanich, Jr., Sandrini Bros., John Dulcich & Sons, Frank A. Lucich Co Inc, Jack G. Zaninovich Farms, A & N Zaninovich, Mid State Horticulture Co., Inc., Morris Fruit Company, Stephen Pavich & Sons, Dan Tudor & Sons, Vincent B. Zaninovich & Sons Inc., Sam Barbic, Jake J. Cesare & Sons, Jasmine Vineyards, Marlin Brothers, Vincent V. Zaninovich.



S COVERED BY LATEST CONTRACTS

ENDS!

GLE CONCLUDES TIC SIGNING



Cesar Chavez, left, extends a hand of truce to grower John Giunarra Jr., while Martin ("there is no strike") Zaninovich signs the UFWOC contract.

continued from page 5

happen. But it happened and there was an electric sense of joy that ran through the crowd.

The San Francisco Chronicle stated the next day that Cesar Chavez finally had his day. And no one expressed the meaning of the events at Forty Acres better than Chavez. "Today," he stated, "when we see so much violence in our midst, this event justifies the belief of so many people, that through non-violent action across the world, that social justice can be gained. We are proving this here every day, without the help of those millions of good people who believe as we do that non-violence is the way to struggle, we would not be here today." THE 42 year old union leader also thanked his supporters throughout the United



Cesar shows the union label, which now appears on 85% of all California table grape boxes.

States and abroad for their dedication and support of his movement. He also commented on the sacrifices of the Delano strikers "The strikers sacrificed all of their worldly possessions," he stated solemnly. "Ninety-five per cent of the strikers lost their homes and cars. But I think that in losing their worldly possessions they found themselves, and they found that through serving the poor and through complete dedication they could find themselves."

Newsman, cameramen and supporters pressed tightly around the table where Chavez sat with assistant director Larry Itliong, UFWOC Vice-Presidents Dolores Huerta, Julio Hernandez and Philip Veracruz, AFL-CIO Director of Organization Bill Kircher, and AFL-CIO



John Giannarra, Sr., after signing a contract with his workers. The Giannarra Vineyards Corporation is the largest table grape producer in the world.



"Viva Cesar Chavez"

negotiator Irwin de Shettler. The UFWOC team was flanked on both sides by Delano grape growers, including the Giumarras, John Sr. and John Jr. The press conference was chaired by Bishop Joseph Donnelly of the Catholic Bishops Farm Labor Committee.

Cameras rolled and clicked and reporters strained at attention as Chavez continued: "The strike has been long and costly for both the employers and the strikers. The material losses can never be regained, but I think that despite our unfortunate experiences, we have created the foundation upon which we hope to build a very good working relationship with the grower community in Delano. In our negotiations sessions we in the union developed a decent respect for one another. We had expected a lot of bitterness in these

negotiations. Instead they turned out to be most pleasant."

"The boycott is not over yet. About 25% or more of the growers have not yet signed contracts. As soon as all the contracts are signed we will turn the boycott around and make grapes sweet again."

Concluding his remarks, Chavez stated: "We did not want only to sign contracts. We wanted industry peace. Both sides gave a little during negotiations to bring about this peace."

Larry Itllong alluded to the bitterness of the struggle when he told how strikers were called outside agitators, Communists, etc. "But today is the beginning of a new era on behalf of farm workers in our country," stated the Filipino assistant director of UFWOC. "Hopefully for better conditions and

a better way of life for our people."

Itllong recounted the sad history of Filipino farm workers in California. He mentioned that thousands of Filipinos risked their lives in the bloody campaigns of World War II, and when they came home they were denied the justice and rights they had fought to defend. The assistant director alluded to the vicious coalition between growers and Teamsters in Salinas and praised the unity of the Delano movement under the direction of Cesar Chavez.

William Kircher conveyed congratulations on behalf of President George Meany of the AFL-CIO to the strikers. In a telephone conversation, Meany alluded to the problems with the Teamsters: "...your success and your strong support throughout the world has given you the right to be THE union in farm labor. It is THE which will continue to build a collective bargaining base for progress for workers, and it is going to get additional support from the AFL-CIO for its endeavors."

Bishop Joseph Donnelly, chairman of the United States Catholic Bishops Farm Labor Committee summed up the efforts of his own group. "We have sought to make recommendations which would bring the parties together," he began. "We have always felt that, given good will on the part of the growers and the union, a just settlement could be reached, ensuring continuing prosperity for the table grape industry and just wages and proper conditions for the workers in the industry. We are happy to report that we have found good will in our visits and talks with union officials and more than seventy growers."

Delano grape grower Johnny Giumarra Jr. introduced the principle grower representatives, including his father John Giumarra Sr., and Martin Zaninovich, head of the South Central Farmers Committee. John Giumarra Jr. called

continued on page 8



"The eyes of the world are on Delano." Left to right, seated, Bill Kircher, Cesar Chavez, Bishop Donnelly, John Giumarra, Martin Zaninovich. Assistant director Larry Itliong stands behind Cesar.

the occasion a mutual victory, and stated that the farm workers would have better wages and better working conditions under the terms of the contract. "The power of the union and the power of the industry can now work together so that we can get a higher profit at the market place," he stated. "This will be of benefit to both the farmers and the workers."

Referring to the new relationship between grape growers and UFWOC, Giumarra stated: "The eyes of America are focused on Delano. Can we work together for a common success? We have an historic task before us. You, the farm workers, will be able to show other people. You did it well here, and you can damn well do it well anywhere in the country. It is my hope that with this first step you can move forward so that we will prosper and so will you."

Applause broke out as Giumarra finished his speech. The applause grew louder as the contracts were signed.

Cesar Chavez explained the terms of the agreement. Farm workers who had only received \$1.10 an hour and fifteen cents a box during the harvest season in 1965 would now receive \$1.89 an hour and 20 cents a box. It would be increased to \$1.95 next year and to \$2.05 an hour in 1972. Ten cents an hour would be contributed

to the health and welfare fund and 2 cents a box would be contributed to a special economic development fund which would help workers face mechanization and other problems in the future. The three year agreement follows the pattern set by other table grape contracts,

including protective clauses on the uses of pesticides and barring lock-outs and strikes during harvest time.

The remaining grape growers who have not signed agreements reside in northern Tulare County, in Fresno County and in the Lodi area of San Joaquin County.



Some of the ex-strikers get a closer view of Wednesday's proceedings. Seated, facing camera, are members of UFWOC's Board of Directors, from left: Phillip Veracruz, Julio Hernandez, and Dolores Huerta.

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