

Report From Jerry Sampson – Los Angeles Boycott Trip – December 30, 1965

Dec. 30th

To: Mike Miller & Jim Drake

From: Jerry Sampson

Los Angeles Trip (12/28 and 12/29)

What will eventuate from my stirrings–up is unpredictable, but these main possibilities were developed:

1. A letter to 30 ACLU Chapters from Eason Monroe about the grape strike and boycott operation seeking pickets and chapter meeting time for brief presentations by someone involved in the supportive strike picture. (If anything comes of this we get beginnings toward group support for the NWFA and group interest in poverty problems and poor persons orgs!)
2. A letter to be written by Ron Ohlson, with cover memo by Joe Wolf (regional V.P. of the C.D.C. for the L.A. Metropolitan area plus some adjoining counties) covering these same points. Wolf promised to send such a letter and memo to 400 CDC club presidents, assembly and congressional district, and CDS activists as soon as it was delivered to him.
3. More interest from KPFFK including the possibility of a documentary on the grape strikers, Cesar, FWA, etc. My contact and stimulation of this was with Katherine Cory Gumperts, who is in a major “supervisory” and fund-raising relationship to KPFFK, KPFA and Pacifica Foundation which operates both stations.

I made a raft of collateral phone calls (and have given him a list!) while in the area, relying heavily on my old friend Marvin Schacter (member of ACLU Board, ditto United Civil Rights Committee and the California Center for CD) to steer me toward the currently key liberals in the area. Ruoss (at Westminster Neighborhood Ass’n) also promised to try to help and to send his list from the Alinsky July deal for the Episcopalians at Claremont. I was told by Max Richardson of the big Bldg. Service Employees Local #399 (with janitors in the supermarkets, for example that the L.A. Labor Fed was soliciting pickets for 1/6,7 and 8 to aid the L.A. Friends of the Grape Strikers, and Ohlson who knew nothing of this is following up on it with leads I gave him.

My impression is that Ron Ohlson has done an excellent job as an amateur, and has attracted a lot of good people to work with him—the best of these seemed to be Dan Lund of the Emergency Committee to Aid Farm Workers (who told me he and the committee were not in Max Mont’s pocket) Ralph Kennedy of the Orange County group,

and Mrs. Cecil Hoffman—both of the latter are part of the P.I.C. (Presbyterian Interracial Council?) I met with these and a small group of area chairman on 12/28. Ohlson goes 12/30-2

back to school next week but intends, if he stays firm about it, to continue as half-time on the boycott operation. As you know Ron's activities have apparently brought not only the Alexander's market public announcement of "no Delano grapes sold here" but have stopped the buying of grapes by two large supermarket chains—Safeway and Ralph's—verified by reports from the Teamsters. The boycott is scheduled to have a big "thank you" picket event at Alexander's today, and to concentrate this week and subsequently on two other chains—Mayfair and Von's. Ohlson is hot for the stop. Buying of grapes but feels that the Schenley tie-in complicates the activity—for example Safeway and Ralph's won't move on Schenley but want signs for their stores in coop with the boycott. I suggested special signs re Delano groups but somehow this seemed complicated to Ron.

Sacramento Plans

Unless the weather kills us we resume picketing tonite. We have things in motion for a one-day event for Cesar on Friday Jan. 7th. This is being typed before I have been able to reach some of my key people, but I know that with Father Kenny's help we have reserved the Sutter Junior High (400 plus seats) for Friday evening, and Bud Aronson of the B.S.E. local #411 (state employees) promised to move for arrangements on the capital steps rally at noon that day. Aronson told me on 12/27 that Cesar's hope that the rally could be converted into a protest by state employees on their own time at 1.p.m. could not be worked out—they are not sufficiently involved yet in the grape strike issues to fight with their bosses this way, etc. so the best we can do is to try to get a large crowd at noon and catch the staggered lunch hours of state employees (11:30 to 1:15).

I assume that Fa. K. may wish to arrange something private for Cesar to meet with Catholics and Mexican-Americans but will know more about this later. Rev. MacMurdo was interested in two ideas—a private session for Cesar with Prot. ministers and/or lay leaders, and the participation in the 1/7 evening meeting of Chris Hartmire. As we know more today and tomorrow about the Catholics plans (the bishops participation? Etc.) we will be able to check as to what makes best sense on the Protestant front, and then try to manage it.

4 p.m. on Sunday the "committee" meets at Guadalupe with Fa. K. etc. Before then, if all our signals are still green we push for some pulpit announcements on Sunday, both Cath. and Prot., and then move as strongly as we can with mailing list announcements, press and t.v. promotion etc.