

Alfredo Acosta Figueroa's Family Struggle for Justice

Track 01 – Introduction: The following thirteen selections of corridos (ballads) and songs each preceded by an introductory summary represent a chronological historical musical narrative of my family's participation in the struggle for justice for farm workers. I am pleased to submit them to the Documentation Project at the request of fellow friend and brother in the struggle, LeRoy Chatfield. ¡Viva La Union!—Alfredo Acosta Figueroa 2/05

Track 02 – “De Colores”

“De Colores” symbolizes the spirit of a new beginning. It may possibly be the most popular and widely sung of any farm worker movement song. (Note: even the creatures of nature sound differently in other languages.) According to writer, Chuy Varela of El Tecolote Magazine, the song, “De Colores,” was brought to the Americas from Spain in the 16th Century, and is a traditional song sung throughout the Spanish-speaking world.

De Colores

In Colors

De colores, de colores se visten los
campos en la primavera
De colores, de colores son los parjaritos
que vienen de afuera
De colores, de colores es el arco iris que
vemos lucir

In colors, the fields drape themselves in
profusion of colors in springtime.
In colors, in colors the young birds
arriving from afar
In colors, in colors the brilliant rainbow
we spy

Y por eso los grandes amores de muchos
colores me gustan a mi
Y por eso los grandes amores de muchos
colores me gustan a mi

And that's why the great love of infinite
colors is pleasing to me
And that's why the great love of infinite
colors is pleasing to me.

Canta el gallo, canta el gallo con el kiri
kiri kiri kiri kiri
La gallina, la gallina con el kara kara kara
kara kara
Los polluelos, los polluelos con el pio pio
pio pio pi

The rooster sings, the rooster sings with a
cockle doodle do (kiri, kiri)
The hen, the hen with a cluck, cluck,
cluck (kara, kara)
The baby chicks, the baby chicks with a
cheep, cheep, cheep (pio, pio)

Y por eso los grandes amores de muchos
colores me gustan a mi
Y por eso los grandes amores de muchos
colores me gustan a mi

And that's why the great love of infinite
colors is pleasing to me
And that's why the great love of infinite
colors is pleasing to me

(translated by Abby F. Rivera 1/05)

Track 03 – "El Contrato del Limon" (The Lemon Contract)

The composer of this corrido is Jesus Lopez Chavez, a United Farm Worker member, who was working in Blythe in 1980, for the Coachella Growers Company. The United Farm Worker struggle in Blythe began in the early sixties, and the first contract was signed in 1970 with Freshpict Incorporated. Many contracts followed in the lettuce industry.

The struggle in the fields continued through the early part of the seventies until the enactment of the California Agricultural Labor Relations Act of August 28, 1975, which allowed for democratic elections in the agricultural industries that had been previously denied. Twelve elections were conducted by the ALRB in the area of the Palo Verde Valley and they were all won in favor of the United Farm Workers Union. The regional UFW Field Office was the only one in California where all the elections were won. The local Coachella Growers Company was one of the first companies to negotiate and sign a contract with the local UFW office. Since then, there have been ongoing contracts with this company. During the latter part of 1979, when the United Farm Workers were struggling to maintain their contracts, and renegotiate a new one, an incident happened that inspired Jesus Lopez Chavez to write the words to the following song. It speaks of what took place at a union meeting that was held to decide whether or not to strike.

Farm workers lemon pickers in Blythe, California have organized a strong union. It was a meeting day where an incident took place that provoked the ensuing conflict. Voices were raised between Rodolfo the company supervisor. He was fired from the job, the company hoping the union would fail, but since they were Chicanos, this tactic just fueled more flames to the fire. The company sent individual letters offering more money to those that wanted to work. The workers rejected the offer because they wanted a contract with essential basic guarantees. The leaders of the Union Ranch Committee, Rodolfo and Gerardo Perez, lead the triumph with the help of the women. It was the 3rd of November, 1980, when the contract was finally signed between the union and the company. Rodolfo returned to work like he said he would at the beginning and they all received him with the organized clap. At the end the song closes by stating that workers guard really well your contract, under seven locks, this is my advice to you, your friend Don Jesus Lopez Chavez!"

El Corrido del Contrato de Limon de
Coachella Growers
(Jesús López Chávez: November, 1980,
Blythe, CA)

Trabajadores del campo
Piscadores de limón
En mero Blythe California
Se ha puesto fuerte la union

Era un dia de junta
Se provocó un incidente
Se levantaron las voces
Rodolfo con el gerente

Lo corrieron del trabajo
Pa' que la union fracasara
Pero como éran Chicanos
Se levantó más la vara

La compañía les manda
Una carta individual
Ofreciendo más dinero
Al que quiera trabajar

Decían los trabajadores
“Éso no podemos aceptar
porque queremos contrato
con base fundamental.”

Los jefes del comite
Rodolfo y Gerardo Perez.
Los hacen llegar al triúnfo
La ayuda de las mujéres

Se ha firmado el contrato
La union y la compañía
Un día tres de noviembre
El año ochenta corria

Ballad of the Coachella Growers Lemon
Contract
(Jesús López Chávez: November, 1980,
Blythe, CA)

Workers of the field
Lemon pickers
In Blythe California to be exact
The union has taken a strong stand

It was on a meeting day
The incident was provoked
Voices were raised
Rodolfo's against the manager's

They fired him from work
So the union would fail
But since they were Chicanos
The bar was just raised higher

The company sends each
A personal letter
Offering more money
To those who want to return to work

The workers would reply
“This we can't accept
because we want a contract
with essential basic rights

The Committee leaders are
Rodolfo and Gerardo Perez.
Helping them reach triumph
The help of all the women

One day, the third of November,
The year '80 running its course
The contract has been signed
The union and the company

Rodolfo vuelve al trabajo
Como se dijo primero
Toditos lo recibieron
Con un aplauso sincero

Rodolfo returns after being fired
As explained at the beginning
Sincerely greeted
With resounding unified applause

Guarden muy bien su contrato
Debajo de siete llaves
Les aconseja un amigo
Don Jesus Lopez Chávez

Guard your contract closely
Under seven locks and keys
Is advice given to you by a friend
Don Jesus Lopez Chávez

(translated by Abby Rivera, 02/05)

Track 04 – "El Corrido del Boycott"

After the numerous setbacks of the Lettuce Strike in 1973, due to the hostilities of the Imperial County sheriffs and the close proximity to the availability of strike breakers from Mexico, it is decided to launch the Lettuce Boycott of D'Arrigo lettuce. It was at a send-off rally at a Calexico school from which over 100 volunteers left to go back east to boycott lettuce. This following song composed by Francisco Nuñez Gomez with musical arrangements by Alfredo Figueroa relates that it is dedicated as an affront to the growers in order that they understand the sacrifices of thousands of farm workers who are seeking justice. It reveals that the farm workers are not alone and that the churches help and follow the struggle of Cesar Chavez, the Little Giant.

The song gives an accounting of how those leaving feel. The strikers say goodbye to beautiful Calexico and the Imperial Valley. They are leaving to boycott in the cities because the growers don't want to sign a contract. They say goodbye to beautiful Mexicali and to their loved ones. "If I don't stay in Chicago I will go to New York; I'm going to leave because its time to go, but farm workers don't get discouraged. You continue the strike while I boycott. Long live the "causa" and our union." It is truly a melancholy song which speaks of the courage of the farm workers, men, women and children, who left all behind to travel to distant, unfamiliar destinations with nothing but determination in their hearts. Yet as they depart they leave encouraging words to those left behind at the home front.

El Corrido Del Boicot
(Francisco Nuñez Gomez; music by
Alfredo Figueroa, 1973)

Voy a cantar un corrido
dedicado a los rancheros
pa' que sepan los sacrificios
de miles de compañeros
vamos buscando justicia
huelgistas y boicotos

Campesinos no estas solo
Todo el mundo ya lo sabe
Nos aydan las iglesias
Sigue tu lucha adelante
Cesar Chavez va contigo
Sigue al pequeño gigante

Adios Calxico hermoso
Adios al Valle Imperial
Vamos peñando una causa
Ya vamos a boicotear
Los productos del ranchero
Que no ha querido firmar

Adios Mexicali hermoso
Adios tambien a me amor
Si no me quedo en Chicago
Me voy hasta Nueva York
Cesar Chavez va conmigo
Viva nuestro defensor

Gritemos "Viva La Causa"
Que "Viva Nuestra Union"
Que "Vivan Los Boicotos"
Azote de los rancheros
Que "Viva el Pequeño Gigante"
Y "El Sindicato Primero"

The Boycott Ballad
(Francisco Nuñez Gomez; music by
Alfredo Figueroa, 1973)

I'm going to sing a ballad
dedicated to the growers
So they can know of the sacrifices
Of thousands of brothers and sisters
We're seeking justice
Strikers and boycotters

Farm workers aren't alone
Everyone already knows
The churches give us help
Continue forward in the struggle
Cesar Chavez is with you
Follow the small giant

Goodbye beautiful Calxico
Goodbye Imperial Valley
We are fighting a cause
We are going to boycott
The grower's harvest
For which he has not wanted to sign

Goodbye beautiful Mexicali
Goodbye also my love,
If I don't stay in Chicago
I will go to New York
Cesar Chavez goes with me in spirit
Long-life our defender

We shout "Long Live the Cause",
"Long-live our Union", "Long-live the
Boycotters",
The punishment of the growers,
"Long-live the Small Giant",
and "Up with the Union".

El Corrido Del Boicot

Ya me voy, ya me despido
Ya el hora de caminar
Campesino no te aguites
El ranchero va a firmar
Mientras tu le haces huelga
Yo les voy a boicotear

The Boycott Ballad

I am leaving, I say farewell
It is time to move on,
Farm workers don't feel down in the
dumps
The growers will sign
While you maintain the strike
I will continue to boycott.

(translated by Abby Rivera, 02/05)

Track 05 – "Corrido de Cesar Chavez, La Llegada al Valle de Coachella" (The Arrival of Cesar Chavez to the Coachella Valley)

This corrido/ballad was written in 1967 in Coachella, California by Bernie Lozano and Alfredo Figueroa in honor of the farm worker labor leader, Cesar Chavez for his dramatic leadership in the early days of the grape strike of 1965 that began in Delano, California. It is believed to be the first corrido composed in honor of Cesar Chavez. It relates his efforts in organizing the Coachella Valley grape farm workers despite tremendous odds. It expresses gratitude for his efforts to lead the farm workers in the fight against the growers. The corrido describes how the growers treated the workers like slaves but this courageous labor leader was here to protect their rights. It relates the first strikes and first UFW contracts that were signed by DiGiorgio and Schenley Farms due to the efforts of the organized raza (people of color) who came together under the banner of "Viva La Huelga!" It compares Cesar Chavez to other great indigenous leaders of Mexico, General Emiliano Zapata, Father Guadalupe Hidalgo and not forgetting the Father of the Mexican Constitution, Presidente Benito Juarez who rose from a lowly station in life to courageously lead his country. The song tells how he came to the valley seeking support for the strike and grape boycott. Finally, we are reminded not to forget his wife, Helen Chavez, who was forever at his side in the farm worker struggle.

Corrido De César Chavez
(Bernie Lozano and Alfredo Figueroa,
1967)

Y viene del norte
un hombre muy grande
de todo el país.
Ya viene con gusto
de ver a su gente
que encuentra aquí.

The Ballad of Cesar Chavez
(Bernie Lozano and Alfredo
Figueroa,1967))

And he comes from the north
a very great man
in all of the nation
And he comes with joy
to see his people
he encounters here

(continua el Corrido de Cesar Chavez)

28 de mayo para honorario
por lo que empeso
allá en Delano
en el Valle de Infamia
de nuestra nación

Lleva por su nombre
que es Cesár Chavez
y con su sonrisa
nos da el entender
de lo que el siente
en su corazón
en ver a su gente
contra la tracción

Rancheros demonios
que tratan la gente
de esclavos nomás
pero éste gallito
ley del trabajo
les viene aplicar

Los Latifundistas
están asombrados
en al ver llegar
a éste Caudillo
que busca injusticias
para conquistar

DiGiorgio and Schenley
quisieron peliar
péro éste Caudillo
pudo demostrar
que unidos a La Raza
podémos ganar
Que Viva La Huelga
No la han de olvidar

(The Ballad of Cesar Chavez continued)

On the 28th of May to honor in
remembrance
Of what happened there in Delano
In that Valle of Infamy
In our nation

He carries the name
which is Cesar Chavez
and with smiling countenance
conveys the understanding
of what he carries
in his heart
against the powers that be

The demon ranchers
that treat the workers
only as lowly slaves
But this young rooster
the labor law
to them does come to apply

The land barons
Are surprised
In seeing the arrival
Of this Leader
That seeks out injustices
To conquer

DiGiorgio and Schenley
decided to fight
But this Leader
Was able to demonstrate
That united as people
we can win
Long live the strike
It 's not to be forgotten

(continua el Corrido de Cesar Chavez)

En todas las luchas
habido hombres grandes
que han sido iguales,
igual que Zapáta
tambien Hidalgo
no olvidando Juarez.

Nos pide ayuda
para combatir
a cuasiques de alla
no compren las uvas
maduras o en bote
pa' poder ganar

Tambien no se olviden
de la esposa de él
que siempre a su lado
se encuentra muy fiel
Y en sus trabajos
en busca del bien
para toda su gente
son deseos de él

(The Ballad of Cesar Chavez continued)

In all of the struggles
there have been great men
of identical likeness,
identical to Zapata
Also Hidalgo
Not forgetting Juarez.

He asks for our help
to fight
the many over there
not to buy the grapes
both fresh or in cans
In order to win

Also do not forget
That wife of his
Who always at his side
Is faithfully found.
Nor that his desire
In his search for right
for all his people
is why he labors

(translated by Abby Rivera, 02/05)

Track 06 –“ El Grito del Campo” (The Cry in the Fields)

This corrido is another great composition written by Aurelio Hurtado who composed it in honor of the United Farm Workers Union during the height of its struggle in the agricultural fields of California. It was written in 1971 and has never been recorded. In the year 1970, one of the most historical agricultural strikes involving a great number of companies took place in the coastal valleys of Salinas. It was during this time that most of the United Farm Workers' contracts were signed with the growers of the lettuce and grape harvests. The author was a farm worker living in Napa, California and working in the grape vineyards. His knowledge of the tremendous effort and will power of the people under the leadership of Cesar Chavez inspired him to compose this song.

It state that, "There is a cry under the sky that trembles with the thunder reaching all winds; it is the struggle of Delano. It is the echo of a thousand voices that are torn from the hurt they suffer reclaiming justice that comes to the least, the downtrodden people who work under the California sun. In these people a new hope surges. Throughout the fields, a new chant is heard, the birds are singing, and in their chirping are saying, "Let's go with Cesar Chavez!" The lettuce of Salinas and the grapes of Delano are seen as gold by the rich; each harvest brings bigger riches. The lettuce of Salinas and the grapes of Delano are looked upon by the poor with love, because every year they are irrigated with pain and sweat. It's our eagle of the strike that with its beak tears at the greed of the rich. The arms of our struggle are stronger than steel, "justice that comes from the least of downtrodden people, under the sun of California surges a new hope, they're the laws and justice against the power of the rich. If the shield of the rich is the police and their clubs, we the poor are protected by the Virgin of Guadalupe. From Napa, I bid goodbye, but I leave you my song, and advise you to join the Union. Long live Cesar Chavez and the strike! Long lives the revolution!"

El Grito del Campo
por Aurelio Hurtado)

En los cielos se oye un grito,
que retumba como un trueno,
pregonando por los aires
esa lucha de Delano,
En los cielos se oye un grito,
que retumba como un trueno.

Es el éco de mil voces
arrancadas al dolor
que recláman el derecho
a una existencia mejor,
Es el éco de mil voces
arrancadas al dolor,

Bajo el sól de California
ya surgio nueva esperánza,
la redención del que sufre
en los campos de la labranza
Bajo el sól de California
ya surgio nueva esperánza

The Cry in the Fields
(by Aurelio Hurtado)

In the heavens is heard a cry
that resounds like thunder
announcing through the wind
the fight in Delano
In the heavens is heard a cry
that resounds like thunder

It is the echo of a thousand voices
wrenched in pain
that clamor for the right
to a better existence
It is the echo of a thousand voices
wrenched in pain

Beneath the California sun
has surged new hope
the redemption of the sufferer
in the toiling fields
Beneath the California sun
has surged new hope

(El Grito en el Campo)

En los campos se oye un canto
que ya aprendieron las aves
En sus trinos van diciendo,
“Vámonos con Cesar Chavez.”
En los campos se oyé un canto
que ya aprendieron las aves.

Las lechugas de Salinas
(o: Esas uvas de Delano)
las vé el rico como oro,
porque con cada cosecha
les aumenta su tesoro
Las lechugas de Salinas
las vé el rico como oro

Las lechugas de Salinas,
(o: Esas uvas de Delano)
las vé el pobre con amor
porque cada año las riega
con su llanto y sudor
Las lechugas de Salinas
las vé el pobre con amor

Nuestro Aguila de la Huelga
destrozara con su pico,
la sierpe que representa
toda la ambición del rico,
Nuestro Aguila de la Huelga,
Destrozara con su pico

Las armas con que luchamos
Son más fuertes que el acero
Son la ley y la justicia
Contra el poder del dinero
Las armas con que luchamos
Son más fuertes que el acero

(The Cry in the Fields)

In the fields is heard a new song
that the birds have learned to sing
In their trilling they are saying,
“Let’s go with Cesar Chavez.”
In the fields is heard a new song
that the birds have learned to sing

The lettuce from Salinas
(or: those grapes from Delano)
the rich growers eye them like gold
because with each harvest
their treasure increases
The lettuce from Salinas
the rich grower eye them like gold

The lettuce from Salinas
(or: Those grapes from Delano)
the poor look upon them with love
because every year he waters them
with his tears and sweating brow
The lettuce from Salinas
the poor look upon them with love

Our Strike Eagle
will destroy with her beak
the serpent that represents
all the ambitions of the rich
Our Strike Eagle
will destroy with her beak

The weapons with which we fight
are stronger than steel
They are the law and justice
against the power of wealth
The weapons with which we fight
are stronger than steel

(El Grito del Campo)

Si el escudo de los ricos
son policías con macana
A los pobres nos protéjete
La Virgen Guadalupe
Si el escudo de los ricos
son policías con macana

En Napa ya me despido
Allí les déjete mi canción,
Y a mis amigos les digo
que se méten a la Union
Viva Chavez y la Huelga
Viva la Revolución!

(The Cry in the Fields continued)

If the shield of the rich
is the police with their heavy clubs
The protector of the poor
is the Virgin of Guadalupe
If the shield of the rich
is the police with their heavy clubs

From Napa I leave with a farewell
and there I leave you my song
And to my friends I say
that they join the Union.
Long-live Cesar Chavez and the Strike
Long-live the Revolution!
(translated by Abby Rivera)

Track 07 – "The Picket Sign"

This song was composed during the early Delano and Coachella Grape Strikes in 1967-1968 by Luis Valdez and the Teatro Campesino. The stanza that speaks of Coachella was altered so that workers there could identify with it and also served to tie the struggle from Coachella with the one taking place in Delano. It has the melody of "Se va el Caimon" a well known Mexican song. It relates the bad wages that the growers were paying during the strike that had been going on for a long time in Delano. An increase to \$1.20 an hour was offered and it attracted greedy scabs (strike breakers). It speaks of how some of the workers didn't want to understand, acted dumb and just ignored the pleas of the strikers. It is a humorous piece making it a favorite to strikers

El Picket Sign
(Luis Valdez, Teatro Campesino)

Desde Tejas a California
campesinos estan luchando
Desde Tejas a California
campesinos estan luchando
Los rancheros a llore-llore
de huelga ya estan bien pandos

El picket sign, el picket sign
Lo llévo por todo el dia
El picket sign, el picket sign
Conmigo toda la vida

The Picket Sign
(Luis Valdez, Teatro Campesino)

From Texas to California
farm workers are fighting
From Texas to California
farm workers are fighting
And the growers a'-cryin, 'a'-cryin'
from the strike they're knuckling under

The picket sign, the picket sign
I carry it all day with me
The picket sign, the picket sign
With me throughout my life

(El Picket Sign)

Ya tenemos más de siete años
Luchando por esta huelga
Ya tenemos más de siete años
Luchando por esta huelga
Un ranchero ya murio
Y otro si hizo abuelo

(Coro)

El picket sign...

Cuando comenzó la huelga
mi tío estaba en Coachella
Cuando comenzó la huelga
mi tío estaba en Coachella
Le dijeron que “uno veinte”
Pa’ Delano pronto péla

(Coro)

El picket sign...

Y ahora organizando
la raza en todos los files
Y ahora organizando
la raza en todos los files
Porque muchos siguen comiendo
tortillas con puros chiles

Me dicen que soy muy nécio, nécio,y
alboroto pueblos
Me dicen que soy muy nécio, nécio y
alboroto pueblos
Pero Juarez fue mi tío y Zapáta fue mi
suegro

Hay unos que no comprenden aunque
muchos les dan consejos
Hay unos que no comprenden aunque
muchos les dan consejos
La huelga es buena pa’ todos pero unos
se hacen pendejos

(The Picket Sign)

We’ve been more than seven years
fighting for this strike
We’ve been more than seven years
fighting for this strike
One grower bit the dust, another’s a
granddaddy

(Coro)

El picket sign...

When the strike first started
My uncle was in Coachella
When this strike first started
My uncle was in Coachella
They told him “one-twenty”
Ta’ Delano he peeled off quickly

(Coro)

El picket sign...

And now organizing
the workers in all of the fields,
And now organizing
the workers in all of the fields
Because many continue eating
tortillas with nothing but chiles

They tell me I’m too head-strong, head-
strong and incite people,
They tell me I’m too head- strong, head-
strong and incite people
But Juarez was my uncle, my father-in-
law, Zapata

There are many who don’t understand
Though favored with advice,
There are many who don’t understand
Though favored with advice
The strike is good for everybody
But many play the stupid fools
(translated by Abby Rivera, 02/05)

Track 08 – "Huelga en General"

This corrido/ballad was composed by Luis Valdez, Augustin Lira and the Teatro Campesino during the first months of the General Grape Strike in Delano California in 1965. The melody was taken from a Cuban song by Luis Valdez during his trip to Cuba. This was the first corrido of the strike. The song relates how the huelga first started by the Filipinos on September 8, 1965 followed by the Mexicans two weeks afterwards. It tells that it is a general strike and how the news got heard all the way to Mexico; also it relates that they are bringing scabs (strike breaker) from Texas and the state of Nuevo Leon in Mexico. Its cry is, "long live the strike in the fields and in history".

Huelga En General
(Luis Valdez, Teatro Campesino, 1965)

Hasta Mexico ha llegado la noticia muy
alégre que Delano es diferente
Pues el pueblo ya está en contra, los
rancheros y engreídos que acavaban con
la gente
Y como somos hermanos, la alegría
compartimos con todos los campesinos
Viva la revolución! Viva nuestra
Asociación! Viva huelga en general!

El día ocho de septiembre de los campos
de Delano salieron los filipinos
Y despúes de dos semanas para unirse a
la batalla salieron los mejicanos
Y juntos vamos cumpliendo con la
marcha de las historia para liberar el
pueblo
Viva la revolución! Viva nuestra
Asociacion! Viva huelga en general!

(Coro)
Viva la huelga en el fil
Viva la causa en la historia
La raza llena de gloria
La victoria va cumplir

General Strike
(Luis Valdez, Teatro Campesino, 1965)

All the way to Mexico the happy news
has been transported that Delano is
different
The people are in battle with the growers
and their flunkies that abused and
crushed the workers
And since we are all bothers, we share
our happiness with all farm workers.
Long-live the revolution! Long-live our
Association! Long-live the general strike!

From the fields In Delano on the 8th day
of September Filipinos walked out
And two weeks later to join in the
struggle, the Mexicans walked out
And together we're succeeding with the
march of history to liberate our people
Long-live the revolution! Long-live our
Association! Long-live the general strike

(Chorus)
Long-live the strike in the field
Long-live the cause in history
The people filled with dignity
The victory will win

(Huelga En General)

Nos dicen los patroncitos que el trabajo
siempre se hace con bastantes esquirols
Y mandan enganchadores pa' enganar
trabajadores que se matan por frijoles
Pero hombres de la raza se fajan y no se
rajan mientras la uva se hace pasa
Viva la revolución! Viva nuestra
Asociación! Viva huelga en general!

(Coro) Viva la huelga en el fil...

Ya saben los contratistas que ni caro ni
barato compraran nuestros hermanos
Y como es bien sabido que pa' mantener
familias mas sueldos necesitamos
Ya esta bueno compañeros como dice
Cesar Chavez esta huelga ganaremos
Abajo los contratistas! Arriba nuestros
huelgistas! Que se acabé el esquirol!
Asociación! Viva huelga en general!

(Coro) Viva la huelga en el fil...

(General Strike)

The lil' growers tell us that the work is
always done with lots and lots of scabs
And they bring smooth-talking labor
contractors to entice and trick workers
who kill themselves working for beans
But men of the movement tighten their
belts and stand their ground while the
grapes turn into raisins
Long-live the revolution! Long-live our
Association! Long-live the general strike!

(Chorus) Long-live the strike...

The contractors know that neither at
great expense nor at a cheap price will
they buy out our brothers
And since it is well know that to maintain
our families we need much higher wages
Enough already brothers and sisters as
Cesar Chavez says, "We will win this
strike!"
Down with the labor contractors! Up
with our strikers! An end to the scab!

(Chorus) Long-live the strike...

(translated by Abby Rivera, 02/05)

Track 9 – "La Mula Teamster"

It had the melody of the "La Mula Bronca" composed by the famous Lalo Guerrero, Father of Chicano Music. The UFW words were included during the D'Arrigo Farms Lettuce Strike in Imperial County in 1973. The Teamsters Union became involved in the agricultural fields and had signed a lot of sweetheart union contracts with the lettuce growers without the vote or signed agreements with the workers. The workers under the leadership of Cesar Chavez and the United Farm Workers had no other option but to strike during the winter lettuce harvest. The Imperial Valley growers had always had full control of the Imperial County political power and they had the courts and sheriffs at their

command. More than 100 strikers were arrested. When the strikers were released from the Imperial County jail in El Centro, it is when this song was first sung on the jail steps. The song relates that the gangster Teamsters, portrayed as a mule, is coming from Chicago and now the growers don't know what to do because we reject her; how the mule rears up, bucks, and starts to shrill. It continues by stating that it's a criminal mule that just wants to deceive us and all it wants to do is kick us around. We are wise to her. Because of her evil behavior, the singer recommends that you watch out. It is a hilarious piece filled with innuendo and it can be said that the workers got a real "kick" out of it because it made asses of the Teamsters.

La Mula Teamster
(Lalo Guerrero)

La mula Teamster lléga de Chicago
y los rancheros la quieren vender
Cuando dicen que es un buen caballo
quieren pasárla y no háyan como hacer

Es una mula chueca y muy cochina
Y su maniobra me hace renegar
Si alguien la monta ella se empina
Y comienza a respingar

(Coro)
Con ésa mula criminál
No hay que dejárnos engañar
No es un caballo y se lo dígo
No más nos quiere patalear

En mi caballo negro pajarero
Voy a buscárla y dárle una lección
Para que sienta el temple campesino
Voy a lazarla y dárle un reboltón

Cuando la tenga dentro del potrero
La enseñaré que me had de respetar
Con mi patada muy bien dada
Hasta Chicago va a llegar

The Teamster Mule
(Lalo Guerrero)

The Teamster mule arrives from Chicago
and the growers want to sell her off to us
When they say she is a fine horse.
They want to pass her off as one and
don't know how to convince us

She's a crooked mule and quite filthy
And her performance makes me
complain
If someone mounts her she bends over
And begins to buck and shrill

(Chorus)
With that criminal mule
Don't allow ourselves to be deceived
She's no horse and I tell you
She just wants to kick us around

On my blackbird of a horse
I am going to find her and teach her a
lesson
So she can feel the iron strength of the
farm worker
I am going to rope her and give her a
good thrashing

When I have her fenced in
I will teach her that she is to show me
respect
With my well-placed kick
She'll likely reach Chicago

(La Mula Teamster)

(The Teamster Mule)

Coro

Chorus

Con ésa mula criminal
No hay que dejárnos engañar
No es un caballo y se lo digo
No más nos quiere patalear

With that criminal mule
Don't allow ourselves to be deceived
She's no horse and I tell you
She just wants to kick us around

Por su maldito proceder
Voy a tratarla con rigor
Nos apachurra la media burra
Se las encargo por favor

For her evil maneuverings
I am going to treat her harshly.
Oppressively pushy that half-donkey
Keep an eye out for her please

EL FIN HUELGA
EL FIN HUELGA
EL FIN HUELGA
¡VIVA LA CAUSA!

THE END STRIKE
THE END STRIKE
THE END STRIKE
LONG-LIVE THE CAUSE!

(translated by Abby Rivera, 02/05)

Track 10 – “Massacre de Blythe y Riply” (Massacre in Blythe & Ripley)

This song was composed to document the tragic accident that happened January 15, 1974. It was when a farm labor contractor's bus fell into a deep drain ditch, and where 20 of the 48 passengers drowned in the ditch. Many of the farm workers were killed due to the dangerously loose seat bolts that caused the seats to be compressed against each other, trapping the victims between the seats. The tragedy happened during their daily commute of over 100 miles from Calexico, on the U.S. Mexican border, to the fields in the Palo Verde Valley.

The authors are farm workers that traveled to work in similar conditions. The incident caused great consternation throughout the country and up to then was one of the worst farm worker tragedies. This tragedy brought many State and Federal agencies together to remedy the inadequacies and lack of protection that farm workers were forced to work under. As a result, new legislation was enacted and many changes were brought about. The transportation department intervened by requiring that labor contractors maintain their buses in operable and safe conditions. The Department of Labor intervened and provided certain hours for bus drivers to work and drive. Legislation was finally approved for a 100 unit migrant state camp in the Ripley, where the incident took place. It was of great benefit to the workers and to the growers as well. The descendents of the deceased were compensated when they won a lawsuit that was brought forth on behalf of the families. The corrido advises those that are still living to be very cautious because of the conditions faced.

“Massacre de Blythe y Ripley”
(letra y música de Marcelino Alcaraz,
1974)

Año del '74 de Calixico salio
un camion lléno de gente
para Blay(the) se dirijió

El martes 15 de enero
Que fecha tan señalada
Cuando pasó la desgracia
En ésa curva mentada

Como a las cinco serían
De la desgracia fatal
Fueron diez y nueve muertos
Y otros para el hospital

El que se salió primero,
A la Virgen se aclamó
Iba junto de Paulíto
No sé como se salvó

Fué el primero que salió
Como si no fuera sierto,
Escuchaba los lamentos
De los que estában adentro

En el camion de la muerte
Que llevaba su destino
El camion que los seguía
No fué pa' darles auxilio

Paulíto cuando salió
Ya la llevaba de malas
Accidente cometido
En los camiones de Ayala

Adios hijos y mi esposa
Madre de mi corazón
Tú tendrás muchos recuerdos
Cuando oigas ésta canción

Señores aquí les canto
Ya con ésta me despido
Pues téngan mucho cuidado
De los que quedamos vivos

“Massacre in Blythe & Ripley”
(song/music by Marcelino Alcaraz, 1974)

The year '74 from Calixico
A busload of people
Traveled the road toward Bly(the)

On Tuesday the 15th of January
What a fateful day
When the unfortunate event transpired
On that aforementioned curved way

It must have been around five
The time of the fatal occurrence
There were nineteen dead
And others to the hospital transported

The first to come out of the wreckage
Cried out to the Virgin
He was next to lil' Paul
I don't know how he was spared

He was the first to free himself
All too unbelievable to understand
He could hear the cries
Of those still inside

In that coffin of death bus
That carried the fated passengers
The bus following close behind
Did not so much as stop to offer aid

Lil' Paul when he got out
Was already a in a fine fix for
Accident he commits
In Ayala's contractor bus

Goodbye my children and my wife
Mother of my heart
You will have many memories
When you hear my tune

Workers with this my song
I sing my parting words
Be cautious of conditions is my plea
To those who remain here still

(translated by Abby Rivera, 02/05)

Track 11 – “No Nos Moverán” (We Shall Not Be Moved)

This song was sung during the Civil Rights Movement led by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and in 1965 at anti-Vietnam War rallies. Joan Baez was one of its principal singers. The U.F.W. added its own words and sang it in Spanish during the picket lines, rallies, and marches. Its message tells of unity among the working people and the union. We can become strong like the tree standing by river and that the people will not be moved.

“No Nos Moverán”

Unidos en la lucha,
No nos moverán
Unidos en la lucha,
No nos moverán
Como el árbol que es
firme junto al río
No nos moverán

(Refrán)

No, no, no nos moverán
No, no, no nos moverán
Como el árbol que es
firme junto al río
No nos moverán.

Unidos en la union
No nos moverán
Unidos en la union
No nos moverán
Como un árbol que es
firme junto al río
No nos moverán

(Refrán) No, no, no nos moverán...

Unidos en la huelga
No no nos moverán
Unidos en la huelga
No nos moverán
Como el árbol que es
firme junto al río
No nos moverán

“We Shall Not Be Moved”

United in the struggle,
We shall not be moved
United in the struggle,
We shall not be moved
Just like a tree standing
by the water
We shall not be moved

(Refrain)

No, No, we shall not be moved,
No, No, we shall not be moved,
Just like a tree standing
by the water
We shall not be moved.

United in the union
We shall not be moved
United in the union
We shall not be moved
Just like a tree standing
by the water
We shall not be moved

(Refrain) No, no, we shall not be moved

Untied in the strike
We shall not be moved
United in the strike
We shall not be moved
Just like a tree standing
by the water
We shall not be moved

(No Nos Moverán)

(We Shall Not Be Moved)

(Refrán)

(Refrain)

No, no, no nos moverán...

No, no, we shall not be moved...

Juntos con César Chavez

United with Cesar Chavez

No nos moverán

We shall not be moved

Juntos con César Chavez

United with Cesar Chavez

No nos moverán

We shall not be moved

Como el árbol que es

Just like a tree standing

firme junto al río

by the water

No nos moverán

We shall not be moved

(Refrán)

(Refrain)

No, no, nos moverán...

No, no, we shall not be moved...

Track 12 – “Solidaridad Pa’ Siempre” (Solidarity Forever)

The melody is from the ballad of John Brown sung during the Civil War of the U.S.A. in 1860's. John Brown was an abolitionist who led a revolt to free the slaves. In 1861, Julia W. Howe attracted by the marching beat of the tune, altered the words and wrote the Battle Hymn of the Republic. In later years, the communist labor organizers put the modern day words and sung it in the early part of the twentieth century. When the Delano grape strike started in 1965, Spanish wording was added that spoke of the struggle in the grape strike. It tells of how nothing in the capitalist world can function without organized worker.

“Solidaridad Pa’ Siempre”

“Solidarity Forever”

(Sung to these lyrics in Spanish)

(*Music:* “John Brown’s Body,” Camp song)

Solidaridad pa’ siempre

Solidarity forever

Solidaridad pa’ siempre

Solidarity forever

Solidaridad pa’ siempre

Solidarity forever

Que viva nuestra union

Long live our union

En las viñas de la ira luchan por su
libertad

When the union’s inspiration through the
workers blood shall run

Todos los trabajadores quieren ya vivir en
páz

There can be no power greater anywhere
beneath the sun

Y por eso compañeros nos tenemos que
juntar

For what force on earth is weaker than
the feeble strength of one

Con solidaridad

But the union makes us strong

Vamos, vamos campesinos los derechos a
pelear
Con el corazón en alto y con fé en la
unidad
Que la fuerza de los pobres como las olas
del mar
La injusticia va a inundar

They have taken untold millions that they
never toiled to earn
But without our brain and muscle not a
single wheel can turn
We can break the growers' power,
gain our freedom while we learn
That the union makes us strong

“Solidaridad Pa’ Siempre”
(Sung in Spanish)

“Solidarity Forever”
(Literal translation of Spanish lyrics)

En las viñas de la ira luchan por su
libertad
Todos los trabajadores quieren ya vivir en
páz
Y por eso compañeros nos tenemos que
juntar
Con solidaridad

In the vineyards of wrath they fight for
their liberty
All the workers now want to live in peace
And that is why companions we need to
unite
With solidarity

Vamos, vamos campesinos los derechos a
pelear
Con el corazón en alto y con fé en la
unidad
Que la fuerza de los pobres como las olas
del mar
La injusticia va a inundar

Come, let's proceed farm workers
To fight for our rights
With our spirits held high and with faith
in unity
Because the strength of the poor like the
waves of the sea
Will inundate injustice

(translated Abby Rivera, 02/05)

Track 13 – “Trabajadores Campesinos” (Farm Workers)

The California Agricultural Labor Relation Act was enacted August 28, 1975. It was the first time in California that the farm workers were allowed to vote in their work place to decide if they wanted a union or not. Governor Jerry Brown initiated the A.L.R.A. The UFW was having a hard time fighting the Teamster Union, the grape contracts had terminated and not renegotiated. Therefore, it was agreed by the UFW and the other interested parties to have elections in the fields. Some of the first elections were held in the Palo Verde Valley in Southern California. All 12 elections held in the Palo Verde Valley were won on behalf of the UFW. Nowhere else in California did the UFW have this record. This prompts Cesar Chavez to commend our office and to say that no other union field office had achieved what Blythe had.

"Trabajadores Campesinos" was composed by El Teatro Campesino in the early days of the Delano Strike. This version was rewritten to be sung during the Cesar Chavez March from San Ysidro on the U.S. and Mexico border in San Diego County. The marcher walked up from San Diego country and through all the various counties leading north until Cesar reached Sacramento. The song urges the farm worker to organize to fight the bosses with valor and that the march started in San Ysidro in order to inform the people of the new labor law. Long live the struggle; the strike in the field, the Virgin of Guadalupe and our union invigorates the marchers. It was in August 28, 1975 when it began, the law to protect the farm workers, and it made the world stop and take notice.

Trabajadores Campesinos
(Luis Valdez & Teatro Campesino 1965)

Farm Workers
(Luis Valdez & Teatro Campesino 1965)

Trabajadores campesinos
A luchar con valor y con tezón
Sin dar páso para atrás todo unidos
Y a luchar en contra del patron

Farm workers
Fight with courage and with strength
Without taking a step backwards united
all
And do battle against the grower

En el puebo de San Ysidro
Empezáron los huelguistas a marchar
A informar al pueblo campesino
De la lucha que vamos a empezar

In the town of San Ysidro
The strikers begin to march
To inform the farm worker community
Of the battle we're going to start

(Coro)
Viva la huelga por cual luchamos
Viva la huelga en el fil
Viva la Virgen De Guadalupe
Viva nuestra union

(Chorus)
Long-live the cause for which we fight
Long-live the strike in the filed
Long-live the Virgin of Guadalupe
Long-live our union

Viva la huelga por cual luchamos
Viva la huelga en el fil
Viva la Virgen De Guadalupe
Viva nuestra union

Long-live the cause for which we fight
Long-live the strike in the filed
Long-live the Virgin of Guadalupe
Long-live our union

En el año de '75
28 de agósto comenzó
Una ley pa' proteger al campesino
Y que el mundo
Les presta sus atención

In the year '75
August 28th, it began
A law to protect the farm workers
And one the world
Gives its attention to

(Trabajadores Campesinos)

A volar patronos barateros
Contratistas del pueblo explotador
Mayordomos con todos sus lacayos
Ya el campesino tiene protección

(Coro)

Viva la huelga por cual luchamos...
Viva la huelga en el fil
Viva la Virgen De Guadalupe
Viva nuestra union

Viva la huelga por cual luchamos...
Viva la huelga en el fil
Viva la Virgen De Guadalupe
Viva nuestra union

(Farm Workers)

Fly away cheap paying growers
Labor contractors who exploit the people
Foremen with their leech lackeys
The farm worker now has protection

(Chorus)

Long-live the cause for which we fight
Long-live the strike in the field
Long-live the Virgin of Guadalupe
Long-live our union

Long-live the cause for which we fight
Long-live the strike in the field
Long-live the Virgin of Guadalupe
Long-live our union

(translated by Abby River, 02/05)

Track 14 – “ Yo Soy Chicano” (I Am Chicano)

This song was classified as the Chicano National Hymn. It was composed by a woman from Denver Colorado during the Poor Peoples Campaign at Washington D.C. in 1965. Its melody was taken from the Mexican Revolution Era, corrido "La Rialera". It describes that Chicanos have color. We are Americans with honor and when there is a revolution we defend our race with valor. The song portrays the Chicano Movement goal and also states to never forget our culture. Nobody can take away our traditions. One of the struggles that the Chicano Movement was involved in was with the U.F.W. struggle to upgrade the lives of the farm workers.

YO SOY CHICANO

Yo soy Chicano tengo color
Americano, pero con honor
Cuando me dicen
Que hay revolucion
Defiendo mi raza
Con mucho valor.

I AM CHICANO

I am Chicano imbued with color
American, but with honor
When they tell me
There is revolution
I defend my race
With great valor.

(Yo Soy Chicano)

Tengo todita mi gente
Para la revolución
Voy a luchar
Con los pobres
Pa' que se acábe el bolón

(Coro)

Yo soy Chicano tengo color
Americano pero con honor
Cuando me dicen
Que hay revolución
Defiendo mi raza
Con mucho valór

Tengo mi orgulló
Y machismo,
Mi cultura y corazón
Tengo me fé y diferencias
Y lucho con gran razón.

(Coro)

Yo soy Chicano...

Tengo mi par de cabállos
Para la revolución
Uno se lláma El Canario
Y el otro se lláma
El Gorrión.

Tengo mi orgúllo
Tengo mi fé
Soy diferente
Soy color café.

Tengo cultura
Tengo corazón
Y no me lo quita
A me ningún pelón.

(I Am Chicano)

I have in ready all my people
For the revolution
I am going to fight
With the poor
To put an end to strife

(Chorus)

I am Chicano imbued with color
American, but with honor
When they tell me
There is revolution
I defend my race
With great valor.

I have my pride
And machismo,
My culture and spirit
I have my faith and differences
And fight with great truth

(Chorus)

I am Chicano...

I have my a pair of horses
For the revolution
One is named The Canary
The other one's name is
The Sparrow,

I have my pride
I have my faith
I am different
I am the color brown.

I have my culture
I have spirit
And it can't be taken from me
By any baldheaded fool

(translated by Abby Rivera, 02/05)

Addition the the Documentation Project music history:

The following lyrics were composed by singer Joan Baez when she attended the funeral services for UFW martyr Juan De La Cruz in 1973. I stood nearby and observed her writing the song which she stood up later to sing to all attending that day: the De La Cruz family, all the farm worker union friends, the religious, Cesar Chavez and UFW Board Members. I asked if she could send me a copy of the lyrics and she did. She wrote on the corner of the page the following note: "Please share these words with whoever wants them. Love Joan. I'll send you a tape when I have more time." She made some notations on the page changing the placement of two of the stanzas (interchanging stanza four with stanza eight) which I have done in the copy I am submitting. She also tells me to "Please correct the spelling" but she took care of any errors herself. It was a moment I will never forget how she was able to sit and spontaneously write a song from what she had learned about Juan's death and while observing all that was going on around her at the funeral for our beloved Juan De La Cruz. In her song, she captures movingly the unjust sufferings of Juan, his wife and all farm workers in a way only one who feels our pain can relay.

I never received the tape and have not been able to find the music accompaniment that Joan played that day. Joan Baez is a true friend of the farm worker and I am honored that she was kind enough to send me the lyrics which I now share with you in loving memory of our friend and fellow worker, Juan De La Cruz. – Alfredo Acosta Figueroa

Juan De La Cruz

(Joan Baez, 1973)

Once again the workers rise with the lark
There's a mass going on in the people's park,
Silent and determined they set to embark
On a three day fast and a five mile march,

For a man's been shot on the picket line
Sixty years of strength was young for dying,
His family is here with eyes of red
His wife steps down with feet of lead,

And the sun shines down upon
The old man whose days are done,
For a martyr has been taken,
He is Old Juan De La Cruz

A century of women pray
At the casket before them laid
And the Virgin of Guadalupe
Watches over De La Cruz

As the heat poured down on the field below
The lead came a' flyin' from the vineyard row,
De La Cruz and his wife never ducked or ran
They were Union folks since the fight began,

People scattered out laying low to the ground
Then slowly arose as the dust died down
Birds fluttered soft in his sweet wife's breast
As the bullet sank deep in the old man's chest

And the tears fell as Cesar read
The eulogy for the dead
And the Bishop broke the people's bread
Over old Juan De La Cruz

In the pitch of night a deal was made
The deck's oldest card was played
And the devil watched someone get paid
For the Death of De La Cruz

Thirty years ago in the same damn spot
The people who ordered the workers shot
Fought as the poor for the same damn right
Of their children to sleep well fed at night

Oh, children of the brotherhood, how you've grown,
But the seeds of hate were early sown,
And I see that your souls have long since flown
To the river of greed where the angels moan

Midst flowered veils and weathered graves
And the flags where the great black eagle waves,
Nosotros Venceremos plays
For Old Juan de la Cruz

The rest of our story now fast and clear
How half our daily bread appears
Picked through the summer by young and old
Whose earnings must last the winter's cold

By children who have stood with their backs bent down
To scrape the roots from the grower's ground
And mothers who have wept the night away
For a child born dead on a rainy day

So the handkerchiefs unfold once more
Through an iron mist, I can't be sure
But it looks like I see heaven's door
Swinging wide for De La Cruz

The nuns and the priests and the workers sing
Through the valley of blood their voices ring
Hallelujah, He is risen and Thank You Lord
For Old Juan De La Cruz

"Valle del Puro Trinfo (The Valley of Perfect Triumph)"
por Patricia Figueroa

The final and 13th corrido is entitled "Valle del Puro Triunfo". It was selected because 13 is the number of knowledge that the Creator Quetzalcoatl gave us. Also because it signifies that the struggle continues and that the Palo Verde Valley, La Cuna de Aztlan is truly the Valle del Puro Triunfo.

According to the songwriter, Patricia Figueroa, she composed this selection in loving honor of her father, Alfredo A. Figueroa. After years of observing her father's involvement in endless struggles against the injustices committed against farm workers, against community activists and against civil rights leader and their supporters, she was inspired to pay tribute and to document the underlying principles she felt drove her father to become so passionately involved in the many struggles. The song assigns her father's birthplace, and that of his family, the name Valley of Triumph. The song celebrates all the victories that have taken place in the Valley of Triumph. It also tells of how oppression was not the destiny of her people and therefore her father's fight for justice is not in vain. The theme of the song is her father's endless fight for what he believes to be right. It is a fight he will fight until the end of time. It is about his struggle for the achievement of equality, peace and harmony among all people. And thus the fight goes on and on!

**Valle del Puro Triúnfo: Dedicado A
Mi Padre**

El sól éra mi compañero
Lo conocí desde muy chica
Tantos años en el campo
Y yo pensé, “Tanto trabajo
y el dinero siempre es poquito.”

Voy descubriendo una luz
más allá de éste mundo
Desde aquí la puedo ver
Es el Valle Del Triúnfo

Se van abriendo los caminos
Siento orgullo en el corazón
Ahora se que no fué el destino
quien nos trájo tanta opresión

(más rápido)
Nunca
nos irémos de éste lugar
sabiendo
que todos no vivimos igual
Se que todos unidos
un día podremos
liberar éste pueblo
Ésta lucha ganaremos

Seguiré, Seguiré, Seguiré,
Seguiré, la lucha que empecé
hásta que se acaba el mundo
Si no hay justicia
no descansaré

Seguiré, Seguiré, Seguiré,
Seguiré, la lucha que empecé
hásta que se acaba el mundo
Si no hay justicia
no descansaré

Seguiré, Seguiré, Seguiré,

**The Valley of Perfect Triumph: A
Song Dedicated to My Father**

The sun was my companion
It was introduced to me as a child
So many years in the fields
And I thought, “So much work
and the money earned so little”

I begin to discover a light
far from this world
From here I can see it
It is the Valley of Triumph

The roads begin to open
I feel pride in my heart
Now I know it wasn't destiny
that brought us so much oppression

(faster tempo)
Never
will we leave this place
knowing
that not all live in equality
I know that all united
one day we can
free our people-
We will overcome in the struggle!

I will continue, onward, onward
Continue the fight I began
until the world comes to an end
If there is no justice
I will not rest

I will continue, onward, onward,
Continue the fight I began
until the world comes to an end
If there is no justice
I will not rest

Continue, Onward, Onward
(translated by Abby Rivera, 02/05)