

Nation's Business

Business outlook: Up

Employees who ride the gravy train

How to be of two minds

BELLWETHER COUNTIES:



**HOW POLITICAL
WINDS ARE BLOWING**

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You will be denied the opportunity to buy grapes this fall and winter if a massive nationwide boycott of California grapes is successful.

From July through November, California is the source of virtually all the grapes sold in consumer markets.

To some extent customers already have been denied the right to buy grapes in some stores and in some areas as a result of the partial success of the boycott.

If the current effort were to be successful, similar efforts could be expected for other commodities.

The AFL-CIO has threatened a similar nationwide boycott of products produced by the Campbell Soup Co.

This type of nationwide product boycott would deny to retail stores the right to choose what they would stock and display. The effect on farmers would be most disastrous. Faced with the need to harvest perishable crops, they would be forced to agree to almost any union demands, no matter how arbitrary or unreasonable they might be.

The success of the effort with respect to grapes could thus open the door to a growing degree of union interference with the marketing process.

During the past few months, delegations representing the AFL-CIO's United Farm Workers Organizing Committee, headed by César Chavez, have visited most of the major markets. This effort has been financed by AFL-CIO funds, since UFWOC itself has only a few members.

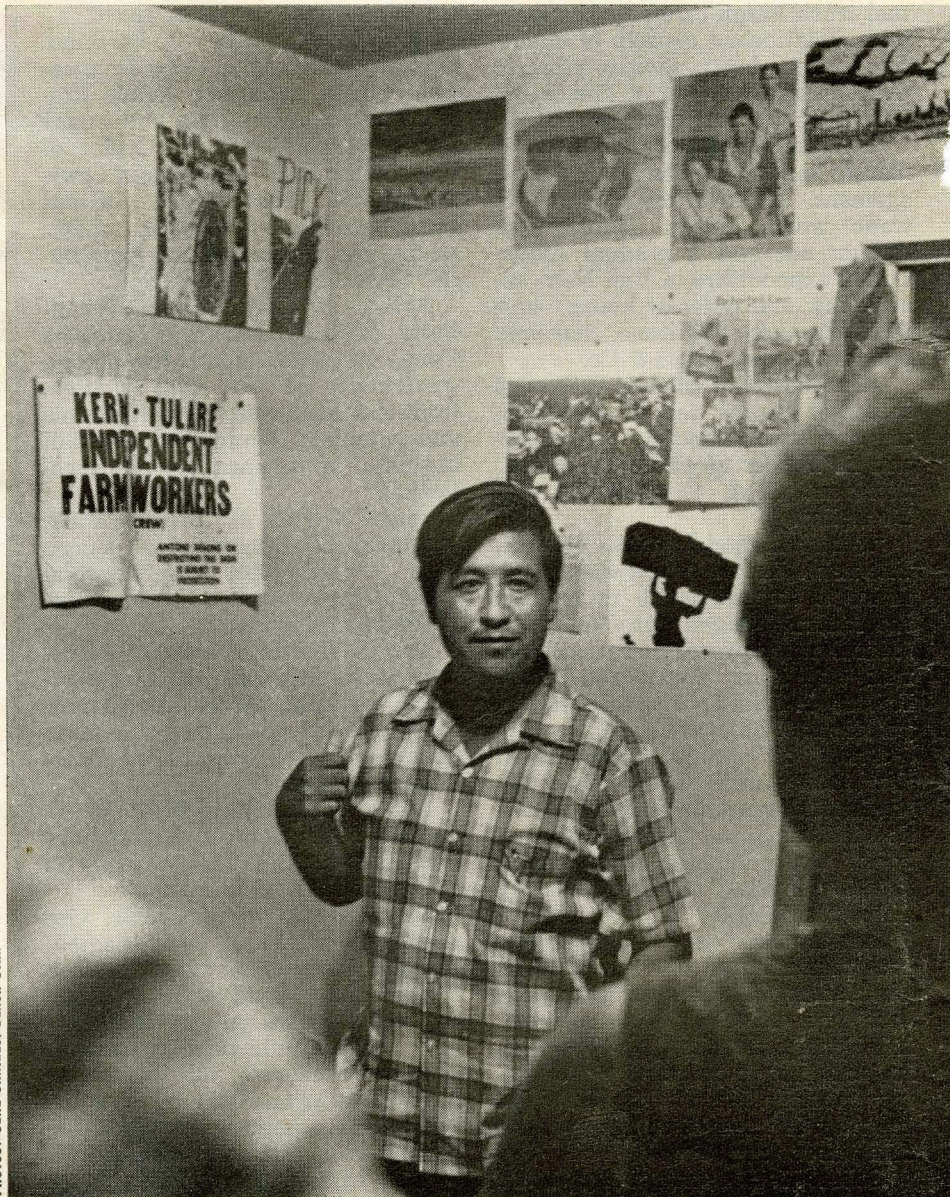
The UFWOC is promoting what Chavez calls "the biggest boycott in the history of the labor movement." The UFWOC has threatened to place picket lines around retail outlets which handle California grapes, has persuaded public officials to use their official positions to urge consumers to refuse to buy grapes, has enlisted support of church groups and civil rights organizations and obtained from the Canadian Labor Congress a pledge to withhold patronage from California table grapes.

UFWOC delegations have called on food trade unions in major market areas to assist them in boycotting California grapes.

Their reception has not been the same in every city, but in most cities the local food trade unions have cooperated by bringing pressure on food chains and other distributors and retail stores to stop handling California grapes.

Such efforts have been undertaken

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Maverick labor leader César Chavez, organizer of mass grape boycott, at union headquarters of United Farm Workers Organizing Committee.

in New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Milwaukee, Buffalo, Chicago, Detroit, Lansing, Boston, Cleveland and other cities. UFWOC claims boycott activity in 35 cities in the United States and Canada.

The effort has been partially successful. Some of the food chains and wholesalers have bowed to union pressures and reduced or curtailed their purchases of grapes.

New York hit hard

The initial focus of the boycott was in New York City, which normally receives about one seventh of all the grapes shipped from California.

Here the boycott was almost completely successful in its early stages. Receipts of California grapes in New York City were virtually zero from June 10 to July 15.

California growers in June filed with the Regional Office of the National Labor Relations Board a complaint that an unlawful secondary boycott had been instituted by the local food trade unions.

After investigation of this complaint, the Regional Office negotiated a settlement agreement with the unions. Under the terms of this agreement, the unions promised not to undertake a specified list of boycott activities and agreed to post a notice on union bulletin boards to this effect.

This action opened up the New York market to a degree, but shipments of California grapes to New York City continued below normal.

The situation in other cities varies. In Cleveland the unions and the chain stores agreed that the stores would continue to stock grapes, but each store would prominently display a sign reading: "Please don't buy California table grapes. Help the California grape-workers better their living conditions."

Behind the boycott of California grapes is the continuing effort of the UFWOC to enlist farmworkers as members of the union.

This effort has not been successful and the union has therefore turned to the national boycott as a means of accomplishing what they were unable to accomplish on a voluntary basis. Their goal is to compel farmers to force their workers to join the union, although the workers themselves have chosen not to do so.

Governor Reagan says the boycott has nothing to do with working or living conditions, adding that "the boycott is an attempt to com-

pel employers to force farmworkers to join the United Farm Workers against their wishes." Governor Reagan said federal statistics place California farmworker earnings as the highest in the nation, well above those of agricultural workers in either New York or Michigan where boycott efforts so far have been successful.

If such blackmail tactics of UFWOC are successful and the boycott of California grapes in eastern markets forces compulsory unionization of grape workers, producers of all farm products in all states would be affected adversely. Other

boycotts could be expected for other perishable, vulnerable, specialty crops.

There are several things about the situation in California which have not been generally reflected in the sketchy accounts which have appeared in the press.

1. UFWOC does not represent workers in vineyards producing table grapes.
2. There is no strike of workers in the table-grape industry.
3. A successful boycott would force farmworkers who have chosen not to join the union to become union members on a compulsory basis.

Speaks for a handful

Reports filed with the U. S. Department of Labor by UFWOC under the Labor Management Reporting Act of 1959 disclose that the total dues income of the union in 1967 was \$82,424 and that annual union dues range from \$24 to \$42 a year. Thus, the average membership of UFWOC in California in 1967 was somewhere between 1,962 and 3,434 members. Since most workers pay dues of \$42 a year (\$3.50 a month) the actual membership is closer to the smaller figure.

Thus, UFWOC represents about 2,500 to 3,000 California farmworkers.

The total hired farm labor force in California averaged 170,000 in 1967 (U. S. Department of Agriculture's "Farm Labor") and peaked at 246,000 in September.

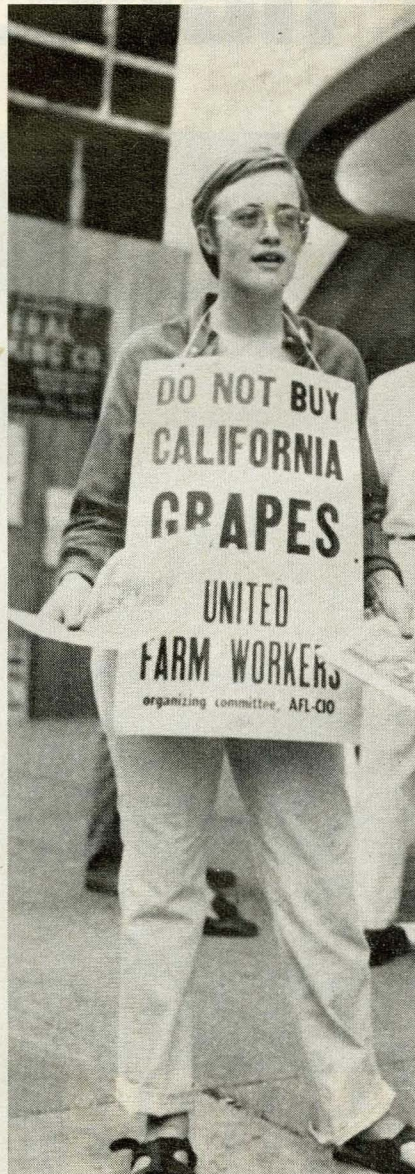
Thus, UFWOC has enrolled less than two per cent of the total number of farmworkers in California. Further, almost all of UFWOC's members are employed by wineries. In the last two years a number of wineries, faced with a boycott of their wines, signed union shop contracts covering the employment of workers engaged in the production of grapes for wine. This is where the union has its membership. And this is not a voluntary membership. Workers are required to join the union as a condition of employment by the wineries involved.

Obviously then, the total number of UFWOC members employed in all California agriculture other than the wine industry is negligible.

As a matter of fact, UFWOC's efforts to sign up workers on fresh table-grape farms has been a failure. They have tried. They have picketed farms. They have held all kinds of meetings. They have sent delegations of organizers to call on workers at their homes.

But, despite this effort, table-

PHOTO: THE WASHINGTON POST



Ann Hart, daughter of Michigan Senator, toting boycott sign for great California grape rebellion.

We grow plants and they live better here.

Here in Tennessee we think we've got the best climate in the world for growing plants. Manufacturing plants. We've got the labor and the schools to train it with. Good land and low cost construction. Plenty of water and abundant, low-cost electricity. Local financing and no state income tax on personal income. Over 13,000,000 acres of timber and enough coal to last 5,000 years.

We're within 500 miles of 75% of the entire U.S. population. And we're sitting smack on a crossfire of Interstate highways that's unequalled coast to coast.

The only thing that may do better than your plant here is you.

Write for "Industrial Tennessee," Office of the Governor, Cordell Hull Building. Nashville, Tennessee 37219.



THE 3 "STATES" OF
Tennessee

3 STATES IN ONE



CAN THEY PULL OFF A NATIONWIDE BOYCOTT? *continued*

grape workers have not joined the union.

Farm workers rebel

In fact, at least three other organizations of farmworkers have sprung up during the last year which are opposing UFWOC's campaign.

One of them is the Agricultural Workers Freedom to Work Organization which has as its stated purpose: Opposing union harassment on the job and ending demonstrations at workers' homes at night by union organizers.

Another new organization is Mothers Against Chavez. This consists of wives of farm workers, some of them workers themselves, who have rebelled against the abuse they have suffered from union organizers.

Have workers been denied the opportunity to join UFWOC? The answer is clearly No. They have certainly been asked and urged and harassed into joining.

Under California law, any employer, including farmers, is prohibited from firing or otherwise discriminating against any worker who joins a union. This law is enforced and is effective.

There is no strike of California table-grape workers. On several occasions, UFWOC has called what is termed a "strike." But workers employed by farmers have not heeded this call.

Farmers have continued to produce and harvest table grapes without unusual difficulty. No grapes have been lost because workers stopped working.

The "strikes" have been more in the nature of demonstrations. Quite a few people have participated in such demonstrations, but not the workers themselves.

To sum up, the union is trying to force farmers to sign union shop contracts with UFWOC by boycotting grapes in major markets.

If this were successful, farm workers who have chosen not to join UFWOC would be compelled to join against their will.

Obviously, the boycott is an exercise of arbitrary power. One solution would be prohibiting product boycotts under the Labor Management Relations Act and antitrust legislation.

In the meantime, growers are urging that consumers help offset the losses of markets in some cities by buying more grapes. **END**