

CONVENTION CALL TO THE FIRST CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION

To Be Held In The

SELLAND ARENA

OF THE FRESNO CONVENTION CENTER

FRESNO, CALIFORNIA

UNITED FARM WORKERS NATIONAL UNION, AFL-CIO

To All Members:

Greetings:

The First Constitutional Convention of the United Farm Workers National Union, AFL-CIO, will be convened in the Selland Arena of the Fresno Convention Center, Fresno, California, at 8:00 Friday morning, September 21, 1973, and will remain in session until 2:00 Sunday afternoon, September 23, 1973.

This Convention comes at a time of increasing struggle for our Union accompanied by increasing strength. It is a time when growers and their allies in Government and business are making a concerted and vicious effort to destroy our Union. But farm workers, arising from generations of suffering and exploitation, are more determined than ever before to have their Union.

As free and sovereign men and women, we have resolved to end the injustices that oppress us. Today we seek our basic God-given rights as human beings, prepared to give up everything, even our lives, in our struggle for social justice. We seek the right to collective bargaining to improve our living and working conditions.

As we look back, we see the long hard road we have travelled since April 1962, when we planted the seeds of our Union in Delano. There the grape workers, the largest farm labor force in the State, employed by the largest agricultural industry, were being exploited the most. Hungry for justice, the workers joined together, and on September 30, 1962, formed the National Farm Workers Association. On that day, at our first Convention in Fresno, California, we adopted a Constitution, made a firm commitment to organize our union, passed Resolutions affirming our belief that the strike was the best weapon to organize our Union and that the boycott was a valid, moral and legal instrument to bring pressure on our oppressors. We also founded our newspaper, El Malcriado, and adopted our emblem, the Aztec eagle.

For three years, the National Farm Workers Association continued to build a solid membership base and to organize farm workers. In the meantime, the Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee, AFL-CIO, largely Filipino American, which had been organizing farm workers since 1959, struck the grape growers on September 8, 1965. The National Farm Workers Association joined in on the strike September 16, 1965, resulting in the Great Grape Strike and Boycott.

Through combined strength and the use of our boycotts, we were able to bring most of the wine grape industry under contract between 1966 and 1968. In 1970, the table grape growers capitulated and signed agreements with us. In that same year, the vegetable workers of the Salinas Valley joined in the largest strike in U.S. agricultural history, resulting in contracts with two of the largest lettuce growers. Repressive court orders, since declared unconstitutional by the California Supreme