

GRAPE S O F W A R

1. U.S. Grape Shipments to South Vietnam

In 1965 and 1966, when the Delano grape strike began, South Vietnam was the 25th largest importer of U.S. fresh grapes, importing under 350,000 pounds or \$40,000 worth of grapes (U.S. Dept. of Commerce figures). California produces over 90% of U.S. fresh table grapes. During this period, UFWOC was striking several major California wine grape growers.

In 1967, the year UFWOC initiated the boycott of Giumarra grapes (the Giumarra Corp. is the worlds largest grape grower). In 1968, with the UFWOC boycott expanded to all California grapes, private shipments to South Vietnam were nearly tripled to \$476,607 (2,855,016). This impoverished nation has become the worlds second largest importer of California grapes.

It should be noted that these export figures are for private, commercial sales and do not include grape shipments to U.S. Armed Forces, to U.S. government employees overseas, or to the Canal Zone. However, in addition to private exports shipments, these U.S. Department of Commerce figures DO NOT INCLUDE shipments under foreign aid under Foreign Assistance Act, for Dept. of Defense Military Assistance Program grants and for agricultural commodities under P.L. 480. Since specific breakdowns of U.S. grape exports under these government programs are not shown in this report, the following questions arise: (1) are non-union California grapes being exported to South Vietnam under U.S. government programs? (2) are California grapes transported to South Vietnam in U.S. government ships and planes? (3) are these grapes imported by South Vietnamese middlemen for resale to U.S. government commissaries and PX's? In short, is the U.S. Government using public programs to break the UFWOC strike and buy it by providing new markets for struck grape growers?

<u>USE</u>	<u>GRAPE PURCHASES</u>		
	<u>FISCAL YEAR</u>	<u>POUNDS</u>	<u>DOLLARS</u>
1. Total Department of Defense Purchase ¹	1966-67-68 (3 yr. average)	7,500,000	1,200,000
	1969-2 quarters	8,000,000	1,260,000
	1969-estimate	16,000,000	2,500,000
2. Department of Defense Purchase for S. Vietnam	1967	468,000	70,200
	1968	555,000	94,350
	1969-2 quarters*	2,047,695	n.a.
	1969-estimate	4,000,000	n.a.
3. Private Commercial Shipments to South Vietnam ²	<u>CALENDAR YEAR</u>		
	1965	244,952	32,438
	1966	331,662	67,533
	1967	1,194,988	214,330
	1968	2,855,016	476,607

Source: 1. U.S. Dept. of Defense fact sheet Dept. of Defense use of table grapes, 2/12/68: Frank Mankiewicz and Tom Braden "Eight Pounds of Grapes Per Man" Fresno Bee 4/25/60.

2. U.S. Bureau of the Census, U.S. Exports, Report ft 410, annual.

*July-December only: n.a., not available

(con't on other side)

2. Military Grape Purchases

The military has been buying up dumped California grapes, especially for shipment to South Vietnam. In response to repeated requests by U.S. Senators and Representatives, concerned religious groups, the press and UFWOC, the Pentagon has finally made public information on its grape purchases.

In 1969, the Defense Department was shipping EIGHT POUNDS OF GRAPES PER MAN to American soldiers in South Vietnam.

A recent SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE (10/4/68 p.2) article notes that "local Defense Department officials acknowledged buying the grapes, and in ever increasing amounts, from some of the growers who are targets of a nation wide farm union boycott.

At 15¢ per pound, one fact is clear--the U.S. Dept. of Defense is providing a market of last resort for the grapes struck growers are dumping on the market.

The gigantic jump in Dept. of Defense grape shipments to Vietnam in 1968-69--at a time when the troop level there had been stable for two years--raises other disturbing questions. Who's eating all these grapes--certainly they are not flown in refrigerated mess kits to our boys in the field? Also which growers provided the Dept. of Defense with table grapes? Are the contracts allocated across the boarder or are they concentrated in the hands of a few grower-packer-shipper conglomerates like the Giumarra Corp., which has 12,459 acres of land and receives \$278,721 subsidy from the U.S. Government under the 1967 agricultural soil bank program?

Why is the Pentagon giving increasing aid to the growers? The Dept. of Defense claims that the existence of a labor dispute has no bearing on the allocation of defense contracts and contends that:

"The resolution of labor disputes involves complex and delicate areas of judgement and interpretation for which the responsibility has been vested by the Congress in other agencies of the Government. FROM THE DIVERSE OPINIONS THAT HAVE APPEARED IN VARIOUS NEWS MEDIA, it is quite apparent that the dispute over California table grapes falls in this category." (Fact Sheet, p.1 emphasis added)

When the Pentagon begins formulating the law of the land on the basis of "diverse opinions" in the newspapers, then we are all in trouble. This incredulous statement reflects an ignorance of the U.S. Labor law that is only surpassed by President Nixon's claim during the campaign that the boycott is "clearly illegal" and that farmworkers have "...the National Labor Relations Board to impartially supervise the election of collective bargaining agents, and to safeguard the rights of the organizers." It is precisely because farmworkers have been specifically excluded from the National Labor Relations Act for over 30 years that the grape boycott is necessary. Either the Dept of Defense and President Nixon, a lawyer himself, are ignorant of the law, or they are lying. In Nixon's case, it seems that telling the truth is less important than getting campaign contributions from agribusiness.

At a recent speech to the National Security Industrial Association, outgoing Secretary of Defense, Clark Clifford, urged that the Pentagon has "not only a moral obligation but an opportunity to contribute far more to the social needs of our country than we have ever done before." This is rank hypocrisy. The U.S. government declares a "War on Poverty" on one hand and systematically subverts, by buying up huge quantities of struck California grapes, the American farmworkers efforts to better himself through organization.

UNITED FARM WORKERS
ORGANIZING COMMITTEE AFL-CIO
WESTERN DIVISIONS OFFICE
1912 S. 6TH AVE.
MILWAUKEE, ILL. 53153

FILE: CHICAGO LEAFLETS

THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT IS BREAKING THE BUD ANTLE LETTUCE STRIKE

Department of Defense direct lettuce purchases from boycotted grower Bud Antle increased from under 10% to 30% of the total purchases of lettuce this last quarter, and are still increasing, Roberto Acuna, a lettuce worker representing farm worker leader Cesar Chavez, charged today.

Acuna stated that it was Bud Antle, Inc., an affiliate of Dow Chemical Company, which procured the court injunction in Salinas, California, under which Cesar Chavez was imprisoned December 4, 1970 for twenty days. Chavez is now free on appeal by the California Supreme Court. Due to the enjoined but successful boycott, Bud Antle has been shut off from market after market and has been selling at distress prices. Last week in Chicago, Antle sold wholesale at 4.5 cents per pound while other wrapped iceberg lettuce sold for 7.5 cents per pound (averaging 24-head boxes at fifty pounds each.) Antle's price to the Department of Defense this last quarter averaged 16.06 cents per pound. Department of Defense purchases from all suppliers averaged 15.95 cents per pound. Bureau of Labor statistics reports that wholesale prices averaged 12.9 cents per pound.

The volume of Department of Defense lettuce purchases in fiscal 1970 was 71,726,000 pounds. During the 1967-70 boycott of table grapes, Defense Department grape purchases suddenly soared upward by millions of pounds, with a 350% increase to Viet Nam in one year, and was also accompanied by purchases above prevailing market prices. In UFWOC's view, the same manouever is being performed by the military suppliers again.

The figures presented for Bud Antle above represent only his direct car-lot sales to the military. He also sells to jobbers and wholesalers who sell to the Pentagon, which buys 40% of its lettuce this way. Acuna charges today that it appears that in Denver, Oakland, Seattle, and elsewhere, Bud Antle lettuce is being specifically bought by Defense Department agents in the produce terminals in preference to competing brands, at jacked-up prices. The complete statistical proof of these assertions has not yet been assembled; but in city after city, as grocery chain and other business has dried up for Antle as a result of boycott activity, his military sales have boomed.

Since August 30, when the largest shipper of lettuce, Interharvest, (a subsidiary of United Brands) signed a contract with UFWOC, they have experienced a very dramatic withering away of military sales while other sales have gone very well.

Acuna stated that this entire factual picture is due to opposition to the farm workers union by the heads of the federal government. He called on the Pentagon to stop buying Bud Antle produce and asked the Senate Subcommittee on Migratory Labor and concerned investigative reporters to probe deeply to further disclose and stop this blatant move to keep poor working people, denied decent wages, from having the union of their own choice.

STATISTICAL SUMMARY

(1st quarter
only)
FY 1971

	FY 1969	FY 1970	(1st quarter only) FY 1971
(in pounds) D.D. TOTAL LETTUCE PURCHASES	75,828,000	71,726,000	16,046,000
(in dollars) D.D. TOTAL LETTUCE PURCHASES	10,461,000	8,962,000	2,560,000
PRICE PAID PER POUND	13.80¢	12.49¢	15.95¢
(in pounds) D.D. PURCHASES FROM ANTLE*	7,550,000	5,960,000	4,690,000
(in dollars) D.D. PURCHASES FROM ANTLE*	840,000	730,000	750,000
PRICE PAID PER POUND	11.13¢	12.25¢	16.06¢

*These figures only show direct car-lot sales, and do not include many sales.

% OF D.D. PURCHASES OF BUD ANTLE
LETTUCE

9.9% 8.3% 29.1%

BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS:
AVERAGE WHOLESALE PRICE OF
LETTUCE PER BOX

\$4.734 \$4.531 \$6.458

PER POUND

.095 .090 .129

1ST QUARTER ONLY - PER BOX

4.541 4.208 6.458

1ST QUARTER ONLY - PER POUND

.090 .084 .129

Acuna also stated that when the figures from the present quarter are in, combining direct and terminal market purchases, Bud Antle will have supplied a boycott-busting 60% of the entire military purchase of western iceberg lettuce, at prices outrageously above market wholesale averages city by city.

opeiu30/afl-cio

SALAD DAYS AT THE PENTAGON

"Ours is a gentle movement. We oppose ~~people~~ but we don't forget they're still our brothers."

It seemed almost ironic to hear Cesar Chavez talk of treating people as brothers at that cold January 15 rally, for moments later he walked into the Federal Court Building to file a suit against the Department of Defense—so often characterized as a huge, impersonal complex—and the commanding general of Fort Hamilton in nearby Brooklyn. That suit was followed by others filed against military installations around the country seeking to enjoin the Pentagon and the various bases from using the extensive buying power of the military to break the lettuce boycott of the UFWOC (United Farm Workers Organizing Committee, AFL-CIO). That power has so far proved to be as untouchable as it is extensive. Countering it may be a crucial test of Cesar's remarkable farm workers union as it struggles to bring economic justice and a better life to farm laborers.

This latest instance of "Pentagon Power" came to light in the first quarter figures of the Defense Department's lettuce purchases, which revealed that the share of the Bud Antle Corporation, chief target of the boycott, had tripled in one year. As recently as December, it looked as though the UFWOC had a chance to bring the growers to the bargaining table after the setbacks of last August and September. (See *Commonweal* 11/6/70.) The union was concentrating on just a couple of growers (Bud Antle averages about 10 percent of the market) and could offer alternatives to concerned consumers. Since September, over 20 percent of the lettuce sold in the U.S. has come in boxes bearing the UFWOC eagle symbol, something that wasn't achieved until the end of the five-year grape campaign. The union made the most of this advantage and the boycott proved extremely successful across the country on the market and chain-store level.

However, no boycott can withstand the kind of outside help Antle is getting. Especially when that "outside help" buys at above the market price and in sufficient quantities to allow Antle to dump its boycotted lettuce

elsewhere at lower prices; and when the Pentagon further tipped the balance by reducing its purchases from growers who have signed with the UFWOC, including Interharvest, the only lettuce-grower larger than Antle.

Of course, the Pentagon has had its own interpretations of the first quarter report, versions it has not seen fit to express very loudly. A telephone call from the *National Catholic Reporter* to the Pentagon brought this first one to light early this January, asking for an explanation of the charge appearing in a Mankiewicz and Braden syndicated column that Antle sold more lettuce to the government in the first quarter of fiscal '71 than in the entire fiscal year of 1970.

Navy Lt. Frederick Gorell responded that although the figures given were accurate it is unfair to compare a first quarter figure to another entire year's total since the government generally makes its major lettuce purchase from Antle in the first quarter of each year. Secondly, the Pentagon spokesman claimed that last year's purchase from Antle went down considerably because of labor problems that would have prevented contract fulfillment.

Going back two years doesn't make the government look any better, however, when viewed in terms of Antle's share of Defense Department purchases, which would reveal any evidence of favoritism better than simple cost figures. Thus during fiscal '69, Department of Defense lettuce purchases from Bud Antle Corporation amounted to 9.1 percent of its total. For fiscal '70, it was 8.3 percent. During the first quarter of fiscal '71, the percent was 29.1. It would be interesting to hear what terms the Pentagon would use to describe the rise from 8.3 to 29.1 percent if the '69-to-'70 drop is called a "considerable" one. The government doesn't come out much better in a comparison of first quarter figures: 16 percent in 1970 compared to the 29 percent in '71.

The clincher came a few weeks ago when second-quarter figures became available. Antle's second quarter share of the governments purchases was 14 percent in 1971, an increase of almost 500 percent over 1970's

19 February 1971: 485

Coast, have acknowledged that their union has no
s in this field. But most of the Salinas growers
to relinquish their pacts with the Teamsters,

and been his executive assistant since 1965; Glen Gersmehl is on the staff of Christianity and Crisis.)

Quarter 2.9 percent. Nor do these figures tell the whole story. Perhaps half of the lettuce Antle sells to the Defense Department is sold locally so that, while Antle's share of the overall market in the second quarter is about 7 percent, Antle claims 14 percent of the Pentagon's purchases and possibly another 14 percent from local military purchases. As Cesar put it a few weeks ago, "Only half of the cat is out of the bag."

A more recent Pentagon interpretation, this one cited in *Newsweek*, holds that "the increase was caused by union jurisdictional disputes and the shortages resulting from UFWOC picket lines that closed down other growers." The latter reason is suspect when one considers that the second quarter showed an even greater increase over fiscal '70 than the first quarter one did. And the UFWOC had switched from a strike to a boycott two weeks before the second quarter even began. One further wonders why the Pentagon couldn't have bought from the growers who had signed with the Farm Workers and certainly weren't being picketed by them.

The credibility of the "jurisdictional dispute" story is similarly weak. It is important enough, though, to merit a close examination since it has been the chief means by which Antle and the other growers have excused their refusal to bargain with the UFWOC.

For months, Antle and an association of about 60 Salinas growers have hid behind the whirlwind contracts they signed with the Teamsters Union within days after the iceberg lettuce campaign was announced. Those contracts are the basis of the growers' claim that the dispute is not between them and the UFWOC over the latter's right to organize lettuce workers, but between the Farmworkers and the Teamsters over which union has "jurisdiction" over lettuce workers.

The UFWOC, on the other hand, asserts that the lettuce workers aren't legitimately represented by the Teamsters since no elections were held. When attempts to get the growers to relinquish the contracts proved unsuccessful, fully 80 percent of the workers "voted with their feet" by going on strike, clearly rejecting the Teamsters Union as their representative and the contracts it signed without their consent.

Secondly, since 1967 when they gave up their "sweetheart contract" signed with the Perelli-Minetti Wineries, the Teamsters have had a jurisdictional *agreement* with the UFWOC, an agreement that was reinforced by a co-existence pact made between the two unions early in August of 1970 and broken by the Teamsters a few months later.

Furthermore, the Teamsters have long since stopped denying their end of the lettuce contracts. As a *New York Times* editorial stated early in December: "The leadership of the truck union, both nationally and on the West Coast, have acknowledged that their union has no say in this field. But most of the Salinas growers refuse to relinquish their pacts with the Teamsters,

even though that union has instructed its locals not to collect any dues or provide any service under the rust contracts."

Fourthly, Bud Antle himself has had to tell under oath the whole truth regarding an argument he frequently used to bolster the "jurisdictional dispute" story: that he has had contracts with the Teamsters since 1961. In his testimony before the California State Supreme Court he admitted that in that 1961 election, 45 out of 50 of his workers voted to ratify a Teamster agreement. At the time, Antle had 1500 workers, 45 of whom scarcely constitute a majority.

Furthermore, the contracts specifically excluded braceros, Mexican nationals who in 1961 comprised three-fourths of all lettuce workers in California, and hourly workers, who account for almost all the rest. In other words, 3 percent of the work force ratified a union that covered about as many of the workers while effectively preventing the rest from organizing their own union. The 1961 contracts don't even stand up on their own, much less lend any legitimacy to the Teamster-grower contracts of last August.

The "jurisdictional dispute" story is a handy device to distract our critical attention from the real problems, the working conditions and life situation of farm workers and the continuing suppression of their right to organize.

Although the UFWOC sees real hope in the California State Supreme Court hearings on the jurisdictional dispute issue, the second-quarter Defense Department figures have produced largely negative reactions among the Farm Workers. A sharp drop in second-quarter purchases of scab lettuce would have indicated that the Farm Workers were at least getting through to the Pentagon. Instead, Antle lettuce has been found on every base checked by the UFWOC.

What has the reaction been among the Farm Workers? Just a few days ago, Cesar said on the phone, "At first it looked like an impossible task to keep up consumer organizing plus taking on the job of trying to organize within the military. The response has already been greater than we had hoped for. Here's another case where what looked like an obstacle may turn into an opportunity."

What are some of those responses? A lieutenant in charge of supplies for a ship in Baltimore refused to allow Antle lettuce on the ship. An Air Force captain from Sawyer Air Force Base sent a letter and a check requesting that we send him leaflets. All over the Presidio in San Francisco, bumper stickers have appeared, "Lifers eat lettuce." It's happening just like everything else that has happened in the union—plenty of patience, plenty of hard work, plenty of caring, and then things begin to change.

JIM DRAKE and GLEN GERSMEHL
(Jim Drake has worked with Cesar Chavez since 1962 and been his executive assistant since 1965; Glen Gersmehl is on the staff of Christianity and Crisis.)