



united farm workers of america, afl-cio

NEW ENGLAND REGIONAL OFFICE

173 HARVARD STREET ● DORCHESTER, MA. 02124

(617) 536-9465 or 288-4347



Brothers and Sisters,

It would be good if we began sharing ideas and organizing tips between boycott cities. Since we are getting pressured and in some cases attacked by some of our union brothers I think that the labor support committee is needed more than ever to insure peace and help among other unions in our areas. The trade union committee wasn't too difficult to organize but took a couple of months to pull off.

Here are the steps we followed:

- 1) small meetings and lots of advice from our most friendly labor contacts
- 2) picked a good meeting place (union hall) and hand typed about 200 letters inviting the labor person to the "founding" meeting over the signature of Cesar Chavez. (see invitation)
- 3) followed up Cesar's mailing with nose to nose contact and telephone calls
- 4) planned a good agenda along with the strike slides - had the appropriate officials give short talks about the labor movement's support and responsibility
- 5) officially baptized the support committee and discussed the program that the committee would try to put together. They are a) official letterhead mailing to every union in Mass requesting financial help from their local. b) education of every union member in their union thru plant leafletings and newsletters - mailings. c) requesting every union body to pick one day per month to help us picket. d) union people to do high level delegations to stores, hotels institutions selling or using lettuce or grapes
- 6) got agreement from the 50 present on the above program
- 7) followed up the founding meeting with minutes and phone calls to people who showed interest in the support committee but couldn't be present
- 8) got everyone's name and title to the printer along with the financial appeal letter. the afl-cio provided addressed envelopes to all affiliated unions
- 9) each area organizer is now doing the most important step in the whole process
-setting up meetings with every union in his or her area
-with or without addressing the union pushing the union officials to vote money for the monthly pledge, picking the picketing day per month, arranging the leafleting in the plants about the farmworker's struggle followed up where possible with gate collections.

We feel the letterhead and other official stuff is important to give the committee identity so we get away from just calling on our labor friends in a disorganized fashion. Please send us a break down on how your city is organizing the boycott or the most imp. ways that you work. Our best.

solidarity,

Nick Jones



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November 28, 1973

ORIGINAL INVITATION

Matthew Taylor, President
New England Council
International Assn of Iron Workers AFL-CIO
14 Temple Street
Framingham, Ma. 01701


Dear Brother Taylor:

During my recent visit to New York City, I asked Nick Jones, our New England Regional Co-ordinator, to help form a Massachusetts Trade Union Committee to Support Farm Workers. He has asked labor leaders and union members from many cities and towns in your great state to be present at an organizational meeting at the Packinghouse Workers Hall on December 7, beginning at 1:30 p.m. The hall is at 626 Dorchester Avenue, South Boston. I am therefore personally requesting that you attend this extremely important meeting. The future of our struggling union depends on the solidarity of our friends, and especially on the continued support of those who have fought the battles we now face in order to build strong unions.

You know about the strikes of 8,000 farm workers last summer. These courageous men and women faced beatings, arrests, and destitution to protest the miserable sweetheart "contracts" of the strike-breaking Western Conference of Teamsters. Four thousand workers were jailed. We were able to conduct our militant strikes because of the aid, both financial and organizational, which we received from our fellow trade unionists. The next eight months will bring more hard confrontations with the ruthless growers and their Teamster allies. There will be a new harvest of shame for them, and our union must be prepared for new job actions and an intensified boycott of scab products. But for these, we will again be relying on the help of our brothers and sisters in the mines, workshops and mills of this country.

Our boycott of non-union grapes, lettuce, and wines is getting stronger. Nick tells me that there has been a 21% drop in the volume of scab farm products coming into New England. The National Conference of Catholic Bishops, meeting recently in Washington, D.C., fully endorsed our boycott. Your own Cardinal Medeiros was instrumental in passing that resolution. We know we will win because History is on the side of those who will no longer live on their knees. VIVA LA CAUSA!

Fraternally yours,


Cesar E. Chavez, President
United Farm Workers of America
AFL-CIO



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December 13, 1973

FIRST MINUTES

TO: All Members of Mass. Trade Union Committee to Support Farm Workers.
FROM: Nick Jones, Regional Co-ordinator, United Farm Workers of America, AFL-CIO.
RE: Organizational Meeting Packinghouse Hall, South Boston, 12/7/73.

We would like to thank all of you who attended our Committee's first meeting. It was a great success, both in terms of attendance and the formation of a program that will greatly strengthen the overall boycott. Following are the minutes of the meeting:

The meeting came to order at 1:30 p.m. Nick introduced Father Mort Gavin of the Catholic Labor Guild, who gave a peppery talk on defending the UFWA. Mort offered a short convocation prayer. Brother Joe Sullivan, President of the State Labor Council and sponsor of the Committee's work, then gave the keynote address. He explained the continued help the AFL-CIO is giving the UFWA nationally. He described the formation of a committee within the Executive Council of the AFL-CIO to aid the Farm Workers. Brother Sullivan promised the full backing of the State Labor Council for the lettuce, grape, and wine boycotts.

After viewing an action-filled slide show on last summers Coachella General Strike in California, the meeting heard Jonathan Heller of the Farm Workers Union outline a brief history of Teamster strikebreaking since 1966. The meeting then moved on to the specific tasks the Committee will set for itself during the next eight months. These include:

1. Preparation of the Committee's letterhead, on which all of the members' names are to appear. To be used for a general fund raising appeal to every local union in Massachusetts, and for communications with supermarket owners. Farm Workers will have printed, Committee will share cost.
2. Scheduling of Committee members for picketing at a food store one day per month. Farm Workers are preparing a schedule.
3. Plant and job site leafleting. To be arranged through local unions.
4. Regular contributions of printing stock by Committee members, through their unions or Labor Councils. Farm Workers will call for confirmation.
5. Committee members will help negotiate with grocers, restaurants, and hotels from time to time for the removal of scab produce from their shelves.

Forty-five people came to our first meeting. Represented were twenty three AFL-CIO and Independent unions and delegate organizations. There were good suggestions from the floor. Elliot Small of 1199-Mass. offered security forces for UFWA pickets being harrassed by goons. Mike Ryan wants us to leaflet his fellow rank-and-file Teamsters. Mike Eisenscher of UE District 2 feels that cleaning up all union-sponsored dinners of scab products is a priority.

We have called the next meeting for January 4, Friday, at 2 p.m. at the Packinghouse Hall. We will call you on it before Christmas. VIVA LA HUELGA!