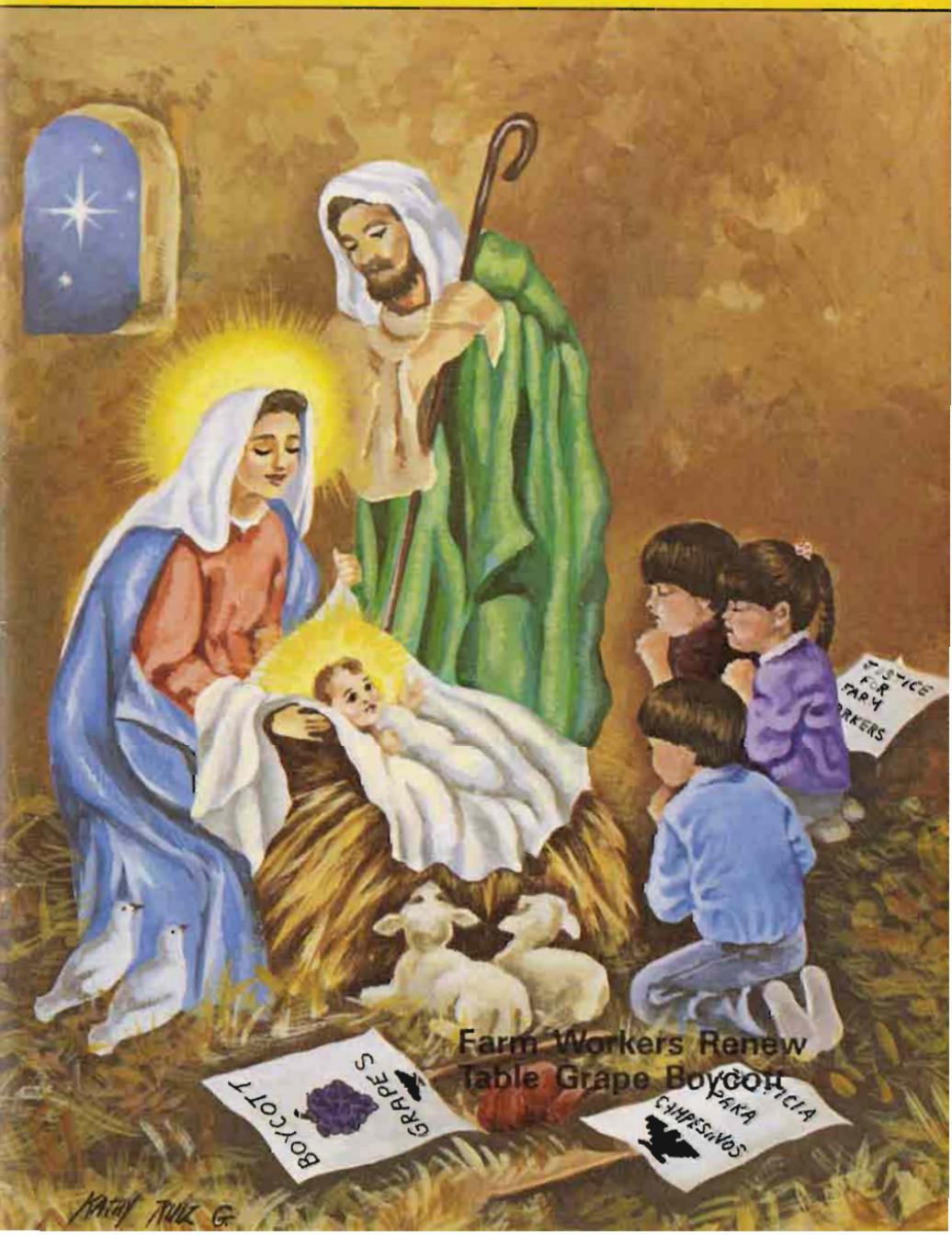


# FOOD AND JUSTICE

December 1984



Farm Workers Renew  
Table Grape Boycott

BOYCOTT  
GRAPES

JUSTICE  
FOR  
FARM  
WORKERS

KATIE TULLY '84



We often hear these days why farm workers should be discouraged and pessimistic: Ronald Reagan and George Deukmejian control the White House and the California governor's office. It is said that there is a conservative trend in the nation.

Yet we are filled with hope and encouragement.

The reason is simple. In 1975, the Louis Harris survey revealed that 17 million Americans supported the farm workers by boycotting grapes. We are convinced that the 17 million are still there; they are still inclined to respond to an appeal from farm workers who are fighting non-violently for a better life. We have faith that our mission still has meaning for those Americans who believe in fairness and justice.

*Food and Justice* will play an important role keeping our friends informed and involved in the farm workers' movement. It responds to the appeals voiced by so many supporters from all over the country for regular information on our cause. It will help those who have followed the movement keep up with events. It will enable new supporters to join our ranks. 

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December 1984

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Workers of America, AFL-CIO  
La Paz, Keene, CA 93531



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The United Farm Workers of  
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*Cesar Chavez (center) leads hundreds of farm workers marching in the streets of San Francisco to proclaim the renewal of the grape boycott.*

# The New Grape Boycott

The United Farm Workers' boycott of California grapes became a rallying cry during the 1960s and '70s. It symbolized the farm workers' hopes for a better life. And it worked!

Over 17 million Americans boycotted grapes. As a result, farm workers won better wages and working conditions, and protections from dangerous pesticides and other abuses.

During the early 1970s, when most grape workers were covered by UFW contracts, they were the best paid and protected farm workers in the nation. But that changed. In 1973, growers gave the contracts to the Teamsters Union and most grape workers have been unprotected ever since.

Now, because few vineyard workers have union contracts, wages and benefits have fallen far behind what farm workers who labor in other crops receive.

Many grape workers have tried to bring back the UFW by voting for the union in elections held under California's pioneering farm labor law. But most growers won't sign contracts. Under Republican Governor George Deukmejian, the nine year old law which requires growers to bargain in good faith with their workers has stopped working.

So the UFW has returned to the non-violent tactic that served farm workers so well. On July 11, UFW President Cesar Chavez declared a new boycott of California grapes (except the 3% of grapes produced under union contract) with a news conference in Fresno and a large rally with grape workers in Delano.

"Today we are going back to where we left off in 1975," Chavez said, referring to the year the UFW dismantled its last grape boycott after the Agricultural Labor Relations Act



*Farm labor leader Cesar Chavez listens to reporters' questions at the July 11 news conference where the new grape boycott was announced.*

became law. "We take this action because, under Deukmejian, the law that guarantees our right to organize has been shut down. It doesn't work anymore!"

The farm labor leader said Deukmejian's failure to enforce the law has taken a "terrible toll in human tragedy (among) thousands of farm worker families that are already poor during the best of times. Families whose hopes for a better life have been destroyed" by the governor's actions.

More than 36,000 farm workers are waiting for growers to sign contracts after the workers voted in secret ballot elections to be represented by the UFW, he added. "Many have been fired for supporting the union. Many others have lost their jobs because growers illegally changed the names of their companies to avoid signing union con-

tracts."

The non-partisan state Legislative Analyst reported that a review of the ALRB's performance shows that the number of unresolved farm worker charges against growers has more than doubled since Deukmejian took office. ALRB statistics reveal that the numbers of complaints issued against growers by ALRB General Counsel David Stirling -- a Deukmejian appointee -- has been cut by more than half.

Chavez said the "last straw" that prompted farm workers to declare the grape boycott was Deukmejian's veto June 28 of \$1 million in the state budget to expedite payment of millions of dollars in back pay awards owed workers by their employers.

The Legislature, on the recommendation of the Legislative Analyst, added \$1.09 million to the Agricultural Labor Relations Board's 1983-84

## Boycott California Grapes For Everyone's Fair Share



*Grape workers and Hispanic community leaders joined Cesar Chavez (left-center) at the Fresno announcement of a new international grape boycott.*



*About 1,000 grape workers attended a Delano rally to help kick off the renewed grape boycott.*

# Boycott California Grapes\* ...So Everyone Can Give Thanks



Farm workers and supporters in San Francisco: "Placing our faith in the court of last resort."

budget to create a special compliance enforcement unit under the five-member board. The unit was to eliminate a backlog of cases where the ALRB and the courts have already ruled farm workers should receive back pay checks from growers.

"But many of the corporate growers who owe their workers millions of dollars are also major contributors to Deukmejian," Chavez said.

By vetoing the ALRB budget item, Chavez said the governor "is using the hard-earned money of poor farm workers to help pay his political debts to corporate agribusiness."

Deukmejian controls the enforcement arm of the ALRB through his appointment of David Stirling as the agency's general counsel or chief prosecutor.

The UFW president said it is time for farm workers to "place our faith in the court of last resort once again with the table grape boycott that symbolized the farm workers' strug-

gle during the 1960s and '70s."

"If Deukmejian thinks he can defeat the union by shutting down the law, he has another thing coming," Chavez said. "We built the union without the ALRB, and we can survive now without the ALRB."

Chavez insisted the boycott, which became a cause for students, minorities, labor and church members during the '60s and '70s, will work again in the mid-1980s. "(The boycott) was a rallying cry among an entire generation of young Americans -- millions of people for whom boycotting grapes became a socially accepted pattern of behavior."

The members of that generation, Chavez said, "are still alive and well. They are still inclined to respond to an appeal from farm workers."

"We're prepared to stake our future on their good will," Chavez concluded. "It's a safer course of action than relying on Governor Deukmejian to protect farm workers' rights." 

Americans are gathering to enjoy the holiday season and take part in the rich bounty of food that this nation produces.

But for thousands of California farm workers there is little to be thankful for. Their rights under the law have been ignored by Republican Governor George Deukmejian. Many workers have been fired from their jobs by corporate growers because they stood up for their rights. Others have been victimized by intimidation and physical violence.

Their hope is your good will. The farm workers are counting on you once again as they renew the boycott of California grapes\*.

Where else can they turn for help if not to you?

If there is a friend or relative who you would like to be informed on the farm workers' latest struggle, please forward their name and address by returning the attached tear-off.



\*except the 3% of grapes produced under UFW contract

(tear off and return to:)

**Cesar Chavez, UFW, P.O. Box 62, Keene, CA 93531**

**Dear Cesar Chavez:**

**Please send information on the farm workers' current activities to:**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_  
(please print)

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**City:** \_\_\_\_\_ **State:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Zip:** \_\_\_\_\_



*Cal Coastal workers picketing at company headquarters in Salinas for a union contract and safer working conditions in the fields.*

## Pesticide Poisoning is More Than an Accident

When lightning strikes twice in the same place it is considered an accident of nature. But when farm workers are poisoned twice in three years at the same ranch because of carelessness in applying deadly pesticides, it is more than an accident.

Twice in the last three years, farm workers at the non-union California Coastal Farms, Inc. have suffered pesticide poisoning. Pesticide contamination is a persistent problem for many farm workers in the fertile Salinas Valley, the "Salad Bowl of the Nation," where Cal Coastal grows lettuce and other crops.

Last August, a crew of 35 lettuce workers was ordered into a field which was "collared" or surrounded by adjacent fields which had been

sprayed only two hours earlier with Phosdrin. Phosdrin is a highly toxic insecticide which is 1,000 times more potent than Malathion, a commonly applied pesticide, according to William Monning, an attorney and member of the Monterey County Pesticide Coalition.

Shortly after beginning work the workers complained of strong pesticide smells. Many became dizzy and nauseous. Farm worker Juan Cardona, who was later hospitalized, said he noticed the smell right away, "but it was 30 to 45 minutes before the foreman (Faustino Mora) got us out of there."

UFW Vegetable Division Director Arturo Mendoza said the Cal Coastal workers should never have been sent



*One farm worker poisoned by Phosdrin (right) motions as he explains how his crew was contaminated.*



*Part of the crew poisoned by pesticides at California Coastal Farms are seen here cutting and packing lettuce in the rich Salinas Valley.*



*Members of California Coastal Farms lettuce crew during lunch break. Facing the camera is company foreman Faustino Mora, whom farm workers hold responsible for forcing them to work in a contaminated field last August.*

into the field in the first place. "Sending workers into a field collared by sprayed fields is inexcusable," he said.

In 1981, at the same ranch, 38 farm workers entered a lettuce field shortly after it was mistakenly sprayed with Phosdrin. An order to cancel the spraying was carelessly handled by office personnel at SoilServe, a local pesticide application firm. Lettuce crew members began to show symptoms of Phosdrin poisoning only a few minutes after starting work: weakness, dizziness, abdominal pains, vomiting, blurred vision, and headaches.

A 1983 article in the *Toxicology Journal* reported on a four month follow-up study of 19 farm workers poisoned by a combination of Phosdrin and another pesticide used at a different Salinas Valley field. Although most poisoning symptoms

were resolved in two to three months, 12 of the sampled workers were still experiencing vision problems four months after the incident.

Statistics show that migrant and seasonal farm workers are the most exposed group in the nation to pesticides. In 1982, according to a state report, 1,388 agricultural workers in California -- mostly farm workers -- suffered pesticide poisoning. And because of inadequate reporting procedures, that is probably only a fraction of the poisoning cases which actually took place.

Legislative critics of pesticide enforcement by the Deukmejian Administration say the reported cases of pesticide poisoning are only "the tip of the iceberg." Many more poisonings go unreported or are ignored by state and county farm officials who are often influenced by corporate agribusiness. ▼

## 'The Union makes a difference'

"The union really does make a difference," according to Jose Garcia, a lettuce cutter and packer at Green Valley Produce in the Salinas Valley. "It's the difference between night and day."

Jose Garcia knows the difference the union can make in farm workers' lives. At 48, he's been a farm worker for nearly 30 years -- 15 without a contract and 15 under the protection of UFW collective bargaining agreements.

After Jose joined the union in 1970, he began making a good hourly wage and was later able to escape from the migrant stream. He settled down in Salinas where he met and married his wife, Sara.

Jose and Sara Garcia have three sons and they are grateful for the maternity benefits made possible by the union's Robert Kennedy Medical Plan. But they were really relieved when their oldest son, Jose Angel, required heart surgery when he was five years old. "The bill was over \$13,000, and the union medical plan paid nearly all of it -- thank God," Jose Garcia said.

Jose and Sara now own their own home and Jose will qualify for pension

benefits when he decides to retire from farm work. Jose Garcia is grateful for what the UFW has brought because he has vivid memories of the miserable days before the union came.

His worst memories are of working under the infamous Bracero Program, a grower-supported plan that provided cheap Mexican labor for Southwest farm employers during and after World War II. Jose can easily recount the abuses bracero farm workers suffered: low wages, no toilets in the fields, no rest periods, and housing fit only for animals.

"I remember a favorite trick of the growers," Jose said. "A grower would ask for 40 bracero workers when he only needed 10. That way he could collect rent from 40 of us who had to live in his housing. We made just enough to pay the rent and then went home with practically nothing. It was terrible."

Jose Garcia believes the greatest thing the union brings to farm workers is not better pay or improved benefits and working conditions...It's respect. "Now the grower has to treat us like human beings," he said, "like the skilled workers we are. That's a great feeling." ▼



*Jose and Sara Garcia enjoy a moment's rest at home: "The union really does make a difference."*



*The evening meal symbolizes the importance Mexican Americans place on their families. Here Mrs. Garcia serves the children first and then her husband and herself.*



*The Garcias get ready to visit relatives. Hardship and abuse are now only memories for some farm workers.*



*The Garcia children do their homework. Education was something their father was denied.*



*Sara Garcia sees her children off to school.*

## Serving Farm Workers From Connecticut to California

Ten years ago Ken Schroeder and Debbie Miller, a young couple from Connecticut, packed up and headed west to become full time volunteers for the United Farm Workers. They were inspired to make that move by the boycotters they worked with during the grape and Gallo boycotts in the early 1970s.

"I was so impressed by their dedication and good results," Ken said, "and I liked my spare-time work with them so much that, when the chance came to be a full-time volunteer with the UFW, I took it."

After a decade of various assignments with the union, Ken and Debbie work in the UFW's Grape and Tree Fruit Division as crop managers -- organizing farm workers, negotiating with growers, and administering union contracts. They help grape harvesters and almonds pickers in the northern San Joaquin Valley. Ken works in the UFW's Stockton office; Debbie in the union's Livingston facility. They make their home in Modesto, midway between the two UFW field offices.

Ken and Debbie are both natives of Torrington, Connecticut. They attended the same elementary and high schools, but didn't get to know each other until after college. Debbie is a sociology graduate of Muhlenberg College. Ken received a teaching degree from Union College and completed his graduate work at Southern Connecticut State University.

One of Debbie's jobs while attending college was working as a teacher's aide with emotionally disturbed children. After college she coordinated a study of alcoholism and drug abuse

program needs for a mental health planning council. Before joining the UFW staff, Ken taught school and worked as a youth jobs program supervisor.

During their last years of college and while holding full-time jobs, Ken and Debbie participated as volunteers for various causes. They did youth work, helped in political campaigns, and were active in the anti-war movement. But they spent most of their volunteer time organizing support for the farm workers' boycotts of grapes and Gallo wines. Debbie formed the Torrington UFW Boycott Support Committee.

"It got to the point where I found myself liking my part-time boycott work more than my full-time job," Debbie said. "By then I knew it was time to make a long-term commitment to the farm workers."

Meanwhile both gradually found themselves with another commitment -- to each other. So in 1974, they joined the UFW together as full-time volunteers.

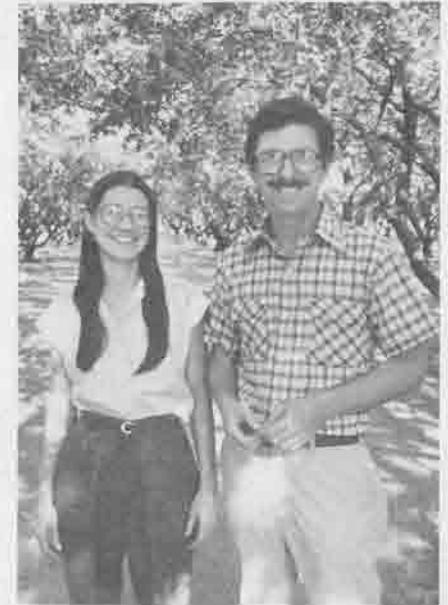
Since then they have worked on the boycott in Montreal and Toronto, took part in farm worker political races in California, and organized farm workers and bargained with growers for union contracts throughout the state.

Ken and Debbie echo each other's views in discussing the rewards of their 10 years with the farm workers' movement. Ken appreciates the "good people to work with and many opportunities to be challenged and to grow." Debbie also rates high the chance to work with "the best and most concerned people in communi-

ties across California and North America -- both farm workers and UFW supporters."

"It's a job that's more than a job," she said. "You become part of a movement that is hopeful, that has a *si se puede* (yes, it can be done) attitude about working for justice. And it's a movement that gets results for people."

Ken and Debbie were married in Delano in 1979. They are looking forward to birth of their first child in early 1985. ♀



*Ken Schroeder and Debbie Miller pose in an almond orchard in the northern San Joaquin Valley.*



*Ken Schroeder (right foreground) meets with the elected leaders of a ranch prior to an important negotiations session with the grower and his attorneys.*

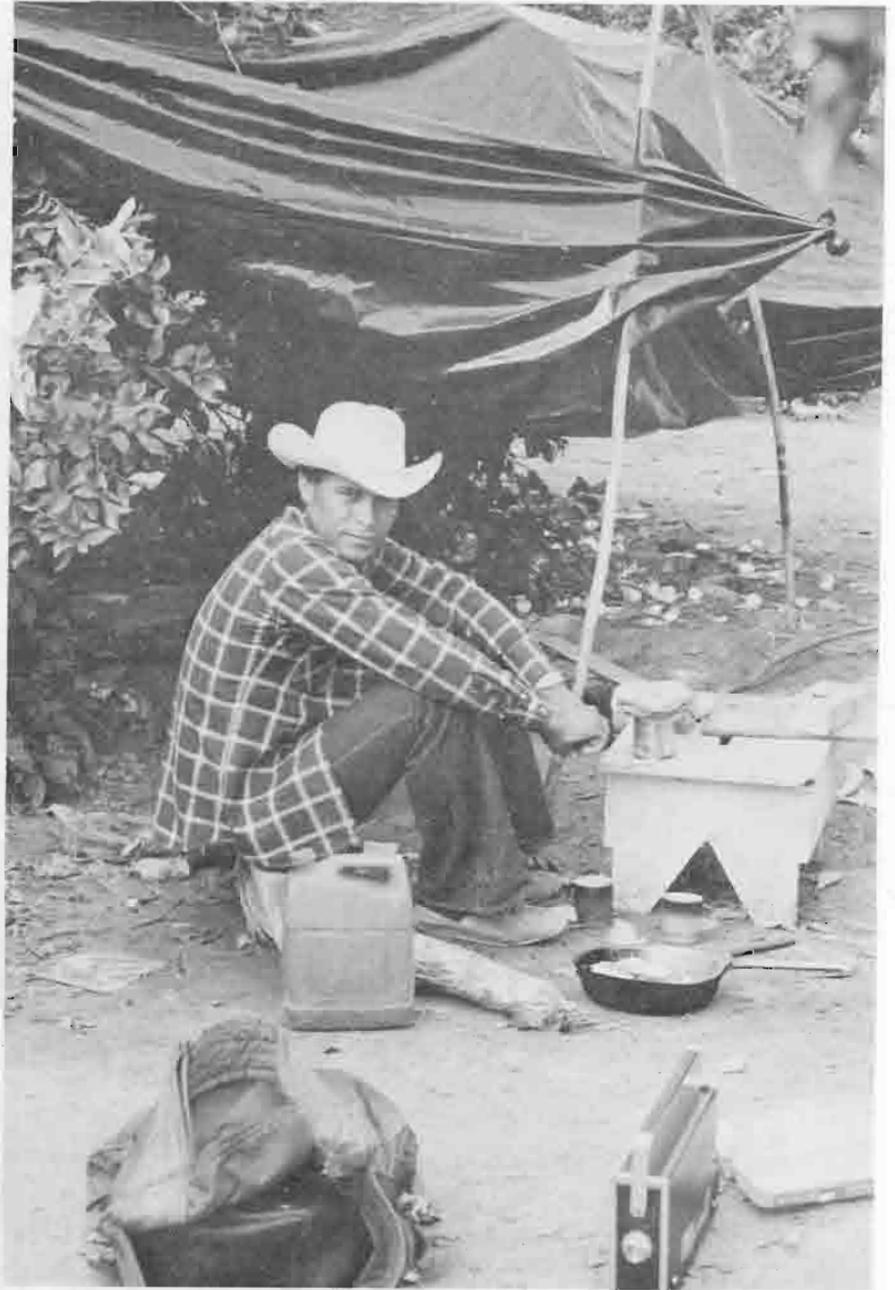
# The Farm Workers... keeping body and soul together.



Housing for farm workers...



...in the richest nation on earth.



We are not agricultural tools; we are not beasts of burden.



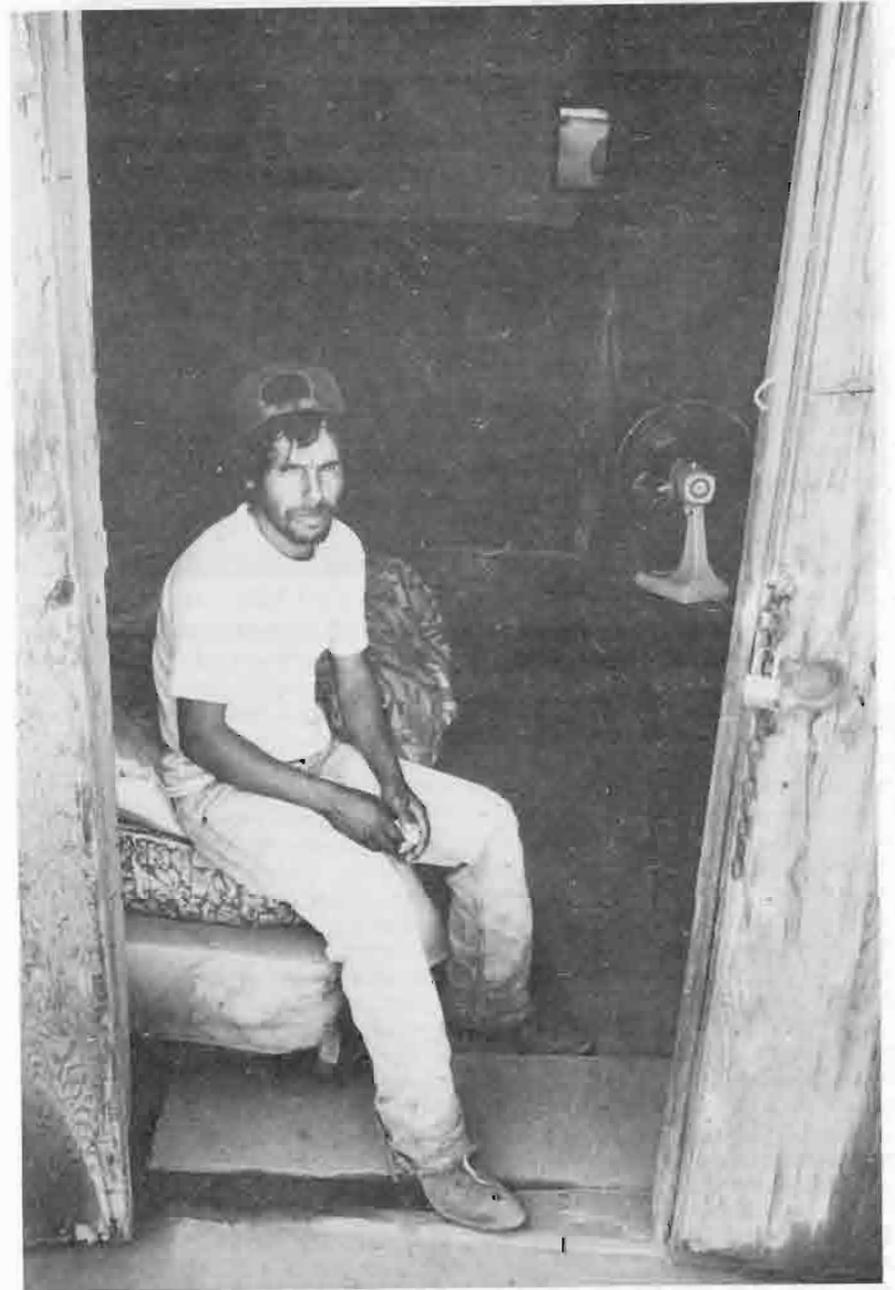
*Does anyone care in this land of wealth and promise?*



*Squalor amid wealth.*



*Maybe my children will know a better life.*



*Perhaps tomorrow will be better.*



by Assemblyman Richard Alatorre

Some things change and some things don't.

Nine years ago, California growers agreed to support a law guaranteeing farm workers the right to organize. It was the only way growers could escape from the farm workers' international grape boycott.

That year a national survey revealed that 17 million American adults were boycotting grapes. The stores that sold grapes and other farm products told the growers to support the Agricultural Labor Relations Act...or they would honor the boycott.

Soon after the ALRA took effect, the growers changed their minds -- after farm workers started voting in great numbers for Cesar Chavez's union. A farm workers law was acceptable to growers so long as farm workers didn't vote for the union.

Republican Governor George Deukmejian and the growers are trying to destroy the ALRA. It's a good law; they're just not enforcing it. But Cesar Chavez and the farm

workers built their union without the law. And they can survive now without the law.

Deukmejian thinks he can protect the growers by not enforcing the law. But he can't protect the growers from the new grape boycott.

The growers changed their minds about supporting the ALRA. But the American people haven't changed their minds about supporting farm workers.

Someday, the boycott will convince growers to change their minds once again...and support the law. That day will come because millions of Americans still support farm workers and will support the new grape boycott.

*(Democratic Assemblyman Richard Alatorre was a leading sponsor of the farm workers' collective bargaining law in 1975. He has been a strong supporter of the UFW since he was first elected to the Legislature in 1972.)* ▼



Ken Schroeder and Debbie Miller (see story, page 14) are two examples of the many full time volunteers helping farm workers in their struggle for social justice in California and in other states. There are so many farm workers who need help...and so much work to be done.

If you or someone you know is interested in serving full time with the farm workers' movement, send in for more information by returning this form.

(tear off and return to:)

Cesar Chavez  
*Food and Justice*  
P.O. Box 62  
Keene, CA 93531

Dear Cesar Chavez:

I would like more information about your work for social justice.

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
(please print)

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_



*UFW President Cesar Chavez reports to the membership at the union's 7th Constitutional Convention.*

### The UFW's 7th Constitutional Convention. ...union democracy in action.

The membership and leadership of the United Farm Workers are proud that the UFW is one of the most democratic unions in America.

Nowhere can that be seen more clearly than when farm workers gather every two years for their union's constitutional convention. Nearly 400 delegates and hundreds of guests and observers assembled over the Labor Day weekend (September 1-3) in Bakersfield for the UFW's 7th Constitutional Convention.

The constitutional convention represents the highest authority in the union. It is literally the members of the union acting directly through the delegates they elect to represent them. Through the convention, farm workers who are union members decide important issues and make the policies which guide their organization.

Much of the Bakersfield convention focused on the farm workers' renewed international boycott of Cali-

fornia grapes (except the 3% of grapes produced under UFW contract). The three day session was also devoted to kicking off a successful campaign to defeat three statewide ballot propositions in California that attacked minority groups and the poor.

The UFW led the way in forming a broad-based coalition of Hispanic church, labor and political activists in opposing Republican-backed initiatives to slash aid for poor and low-income Californians, and deprive Hispanics, women and other groups of the ability to influence the state political process. All three measures were decisively rejected by the voters on November 6.

The delegates also heard reports on the drive to strengthen and revitalize the union from within in the face of renewed attacks on the UFW by growers and the administration of Republican Governor George Deukmejian. "We realize our future depends, to a great extent, on our



*The convention focused on the UFW's revived international grape boycott.*



*Farm worker delegates decide important issues and vote to make the policies which guide the UFW.*

## The Issue at Bruce Church, Inc. is Respect!

It is true that the UFW brings farm workers higher wages and benefits such as medical plans and paid vacations. But there is something else the union brings that cannot be measured in money alone: respect!

Too many growers treat their workers as if they were only agricultural tools. They behave as if farm workers are not important people. Some growers behave as if they own their workers. Perhaps it is because farm workers have dark skin and many do not speak English.

Bruce Church, Inc. is one of these growers. Sure, Church opposes the UFW because it knows the union brings better wages and working conditions. But it also opposes the union because the company wants to treat its workers however it wishes... without the UFW standing in the way.

Listen to how some Bruce Church farm workers were treated.

Martina Zuniga was a lettuce worker at Church for many years in Arizona, Fresno County, and the Imperial Valley. Because she had worked with the company for many years, she was employed on the lettuce wrap machines where the pay is better and the work is easier.

But Martina was demoted to cut lettuce on the ground because she would not accept propositions for sexual favors from the company foreman. She saw other young women workers who were also demoted for refusing advances from foremen. When Martina Zuniga and other women workers raised this problem during contract negotiations with company lawyer Ken Ristau, he replied, "I didn't know the union is against love." Martina Zuniga didn't



Delegates from Florida to California were represented at the convention in Bakersfield.

ability to use the modern methods of mass communications," UFW President Cesar Chavez declared. "So we have created a special new department within the union to better take our message to the public." By the end of 1984, the UFW will have sent out over 2 million pieces of mail asking Americans who live near targeted stores to support its boycotts. "The direct mail campaign is having a profound effect on our opponents," Chavez said. "Many of the nation's largest supermarkets that did not respond to the traditional tactics of picketing and leafletting are now honoring the boycott because of our mailings." He added that the new boycott strategies are used in addition to the UFW's more traditional methods.

The new communication systems -- which include state-of-the-art printing presses and mailhouse equipment -- are also being used to produce two new publications: a new Spanish version of *El Malcriado* in an easy to read magazine style to keep union members informed and a new magazine called *Food and Justice* which will offer up-to-date information to supporters.

Union delegates also learned that efforts to renew the UFW's jurisdictional or peace agreement with the Teamsters Union were unsuccessful. After the UFW decisively beat the Teamsters in organizing and union elections during the mid-1970s, the two unions signed a peace pact in 1977 to put an end to years of bitter strife. Now the Teamsters say they will return to the fields.

The convention honored Rene Lopez, a 21-year old farm worker shot to death in September 1983 because of his support for the UFW, as the union's fourth official martyr. Lopez was killed by grower gunmen after voting in a secret ballot union election at Sikkema Dairy near Fresno. His killers were two strikebreakers who were imported by the grower to break the union at the company. "Rene Lopez's martyrdom reminds us that the cost of freedom and dignity is often high," Cesar Chavez said. "But his sacrifice inspires us to continue in our struggle without fear, letting nothing stand in our way -- whether it be growers or governors, vicious goons or weak laws." 🍌

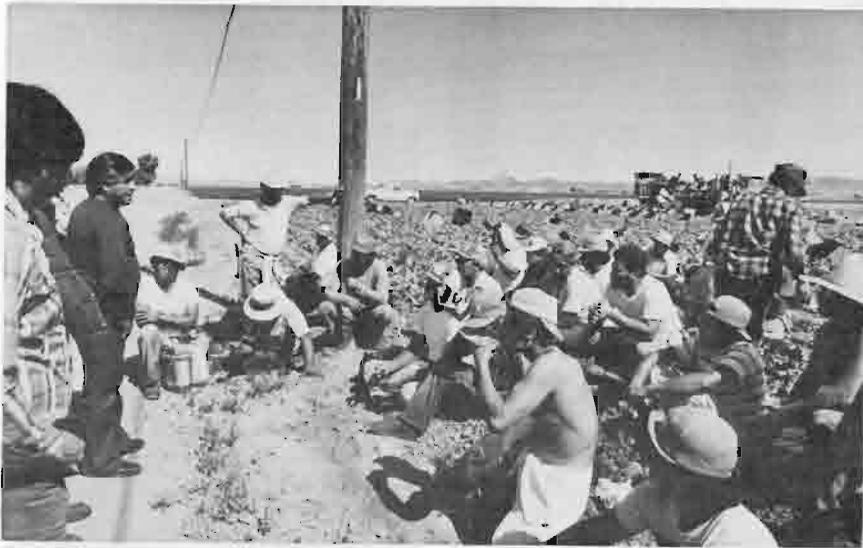


The boycott of Church's "Red Coach" label lettuce is enjoying impressive support. (Left to right) Fr. Luis Olivares, UFW First Vice President Dolores Huerta, Cesar Chavez, and Fr. Juan Romero at a picketline in Los Angeles.

think the advances by the foremen were "love."

Manuel Amaya, 52, was an irrigator for Church for 12 years. His right hand and arm became badly infected from powerful herbicides the company adds to the water that irrigates its fields. He used his right hand to turn on and off the irrigation valves.

Mr. Amaya didn't have the money to pay for a doctor. So he asked Church for help. The company said it was not responsible. By the time Manuel Amaya saved money for a



*Cesar Chavez talks with Bruce Church farm workers at the edge of a field in Arizona: "The issue is respect."*

doctor, his hand had to be amputated. The doctor said there was nothing else to be done by that time. It was too late.

Then the company fired Manuel Amaya. It had little use for a one-handed irrigator. Now he must support his wife and family with whatever work he can find. It isn't easy for a farm worker with one hand.

Aurelia Pena was another Church worker who had many years with the company. She was exposed to poisonous fumes on the lettuce wrap machine. She fainted and became very ill. By the time she was taken to the hospital, she was dead.

The company didn't send a representative to express sympathy to the family. It didn't send flowers to the funeral. It didn't even send a card of condolence. But 15 days after she died, Mrs. Pena's widowed husband and his two young sons did receive an official notice from Bruce Church, Inc. in her name informing Aurelia

Pena that she was fired for having died. That was the only communication Mr. Pena and his sons received from the company after her death. Mr. Pena thought the company was ridiculing him.

In December 1983, the Agricultural Labor Relations Board ruled that Church is guilty of refusing to negotiate in good faith with the UFW. Church was found to have violated the most basic principles of American labor law. Church still refuses to negotiate a fair contract -- the very same contract other vegetable growers have signed with the UFW. The union is meeting with much success in its nationwide boycott of "Red Coach" label lettuce, which is produced by Church.

Bruce Church, Inc. has a long history of bitter opposition to the UFW. It is easy to understand why Church hates the union when you consider how its workers are treated: without respect! ▼

## Deukmejian Sells Out to Growers

What happens when the public officials who are sworn to enforce the law that protects farm workers don't believe in the statutes they are duty-bound to uphold? What happens when the same officials are more interested in protecting the special interests which they should be prosecuting.

Since George Deukmejian took office in 1982 as the Republican Governor of California, the state agency that was created in 1975 to guarantee farm workers' rights has been largely taken over by corporate growers...the same growers who contributed heavily to Deukmejian's election campaign.

The state Agricultural Labor Relations Board is divided into two parts: the five members of the board act like judges, but they can only hear cases which are brought before them; the general counsel acts as a prosecutor, bringing cases before the five-member board.

Shortly after his inauguration, Deukmejian named David Stirling, a former conservative Republican legislator with an anti-farm worker voting record, as ALRB general counsel. Under Stirling, many farm worker cases against growers have been unjustly dismissed. The number of charges against growers that are not investigated has more than doubled, while the number of complaints issued by the general counsel against growers has been cut by more than half.

According to official ALRB statistics, there was a backlog of 392 uninvestigated unfair labor charges filed during the fiscal year that Deukmejian took office. Most charges are filed by farm workers against growers for breaking the law. By August 1984 -- during the

second year of Deukmejian's term -- the backlog of unprocessed charges had grown to 1,073.

At the same time the Deukmejian Administration stopped investigating farm worker charges against growers, it also brought the issuance of official state complaints against growers for violating the law to a near standstill. In fiscal year 1981-82, when Deukmejian was sworn in, the ALRB general counsel issued 137 complaints, most of them against growers. During the first part of fiscal year 1983-84, Deukmejian's ALRB appointees had only issued 24 complaints.

The men Deukmejian has appointed to enforce the farm labor law are also dismissing increasing numbers of farm workers charges on procedural grounds, before evidence against growers is even examined. Before Deukmejian, ALRB investigators helped farm workers prepare what are often complex legal documents that make up an official charge. Now farm workers, many of whom are not literate in either English or Spanish, are forced to prepare and submit the documents themselves.

The result: In fiscal year 1981-82, the ALRB dismissed 46% of the charges that were filed with the agency. By the end of 1984, the Deukmejian Administration was dismissing 90% of the charges.

Deukmejian's appointees at the ALRB are also responsible for ensuring that farm workers are paid the out-of-pocket money they are owed due to growers' illegal acts, such as firings and refusals to bargain in good faith. In many key cases, David Stirling, Deukmejian's appointee, has worked to drastically reduce the amount of money growers owe. He has offered to settle farm workers'



*Farm workers picket the State Capitol in Sacramento to protest Governor Deukmejian's failure to enforce the law.*



*Hundreds of farm workers packed legislative hearings to lobby against Deukmejian's appointment of David Stirling (front row, second from left) as general counsel of the ALRB. Cesar Chavez is seated behind Stirling.*

cases for a fraction of what they are worth.

In one instance, it was revealed that Stirling travelled to a hearing between the UFW and Abatti Farms, a large Imperial Valley vegetable grower, in a private plane arranged for by Abatti's lawyer. Abatti owes its

workers about \$10 million in back pay. At the hearing, Stirling sold out the farm workers by offering the company only \$1.76 million -- a little over 10¢ on the dollar. The five-member ALRB rejected Stirling's deal with the grower. He later offered even less to "settle" the case. ▼



### A Legacy of Cheap Labor and Exploitation

Agriculture is California's richest industry. It produces billions of dollars in profits. For over 100 years, growers have built their wealth through the cheap labor and exploitation of one group of immigrant workers after another.

Each group or nationality of dark-skinned farm workers resisted the growers' exploitation. Many tried to organize themselves into unions. All of them failed until Cesar Chavez founded the United Farm Workers of America in 1962.

The farm workers' history in California goes back to the 1800s. Chinese laborers, who were imported to help build the railroads, turned to farm work when there was no more railroad work. The Chinese were poor and needed jobs. Even then, farming was becoming a big industry and the

Chinese became a cheap supply of labor.

The Chinese were savagely oppressed by the white growers. They were subjected to much racial bigotry. They never became strong enough to form a union. (In those years, few industrial workers had unions and the power of the bosses was unchallenged in both the factories and the fields.)

But the Chinese did form private hiring "associations" which recruited and hired Chinese farm workers. These associations were called "Tongs." Even though they did not have unions, the Chinese sometimes resorted to strikes and boycotts. Unfortunately, the Tongs led to development of the labor contractor system that exploited later groups of immigrant workers.

The Chinese were followed by



Japanese, Hindus, Filipinos, and Mexicans. In each case, farm workers were paid very little. Growers relied on this never-ending supply of cheap labor. Every time a farm workers' union began to get strong, the growers found another immigrant group that would work for less than the people who were trying to organize. ▼

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### 'They still haven't got a single penny!'

Hermenegildo and Teresa Melendez are only two of the thousands of California farm workers who are suffering because Governor Deukmejian and the growers have made a mockery of the law that is supposed to protect farm workers.

In 1980 they were both illegally fired from their jobs as grape workers at Tex-Cal Land Management Corp. near Delano. It took two years for the Agricultural Labor Relations Board to order Tex-Cal to pay the Melendezes \$1,700 each in back wages\*.

That was in 1982. They still haven't got a single penny!

They are two reasons why farm workers are returning to the boycott of grapes\*\*. We must contact the 17 million good people who helped during the 1970s...plus others.

The farm workers are mailing appeals to thousands of supporters and potential supporters. But that costs money...about 25¢ per mailing.

We think Hermenegildo and Teresa Melendez are worth it!

\*For verification see ALRB cases 83-CE-300-D and 8-ALRB-No. 85.

\*\*except the 3% of grapes produced under UFW contract

(tear off and return to:)

Cesar Chavez, *Food and Justice*, P.O. Box 62, Keene, Calif. 93531

Dear Cesar Chavez:

Enclosed is my gift to help the farm workers' boycott.

\_\_\_\_\_ \$25    \_\_\_\_\_ \$10    \_\_\_\_\_ \$5    \_\_\_\_\_ other

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
(please print)

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

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