

# FOOD AND JUSTICE

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**1987 GRAPE SEASON —  
OFF TO A BAD START**



## Chinks in the Armor

They said it couldn't be done. We knew it could. A chorus of scorn and derision from California table grape growers greeted our announcement three years ago that we were beginning another table grape boycott.

"They'll never win this one. This isn't the '60s or '70s. People are different now. More for themselves. They're sick and tired of boycotts, Chavez and the farm workers are going to meet their Waterloo this time."

Flushed with success after electing Gov. George Deukmejian in 1983 with millions of dollars in campaign contributions, growers set out to destroy our union by breaking the 1975 farm labor law with impunity, knowing Deukmejian and his appointees would stand by winking at their crimes.

Astounded at how worthless a law could become overnight, stymied in our efforts to organize workers who were fired, beaten up, and killed just for supporting our union, we turned to our most reliable resource for help: decent men and women we knew would faithfully support our grape boycott again.

Now, as our cover story (page 3) demonstrates, chinks are appearing in grape growers' armor. Even though they still say the boycott is having no effect, they aren't quite so cocksure as they were three years ago.

We said at the beginning, we knew we could win this boycott — with your help. Thanks for your support. Thanks for your faith in us. Thanks for believing, with us, that winning this grape boycott is a matter of when, not if.

It's just a matter of time. ♥

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COVER: Coachella Valley grape workers Maria Zamora (left) and Yvonne Velez (right) are away doing their boycott work this year's season because it rains.



Down in the Coachella Valley things are looking up as workers keep marching and grape growers begin to feel the effects of the boycott.

## Grape Boycott: Starting to Sting

The California Table Grape Commission's television ad campaign featuring Adam and Eve munching grapes in the "Garden of Eatin'" may have been a devil of an idea, but it didn't do much for grape growers in the Coachella Valley.

All agree — grape growers, UFW officials, and both union and non-union grape pickers — that the 1987 Coachella table grape season, from May to July, was a loss.

Vladimir Tudor, one of the valley's major grape growers, said he expected to lose money this season, and he thought the total losses for all grape growers in the valley would be very high. "This is one of the worst seasons I can remember," he said.

Other growers interviewed by *Food and Justice* in early July confirmed Tudor's comments. "Right now," said Ron Armstrong, speaking for grower

Oscar Ortega, "we have 60,000 boxes in the cooler and we can't move 'em. That's roughly 17 to 20% of our crop."

Growers acknowledged that, in spite of statistics showing the 1987 yield to be roughly equivalent to last year's, the prices were drastically lower. Some grape varieties that should have been selling for \$12 to \$16 per box were as low as \$5 for comparable periods but still were not selling. "In fact," Tudor conceded, "we tried marketing them 'on the cuff' [on consignments] — in other words, sell them for whatever price you can get — and we still couldn't get rid of them."

"We're Stinging 'Em!"

While everyone agreed that the 1987 Coachella Valley grape season was a disaster, there was sharp disagreement about the cause. Farm labor leader Cesar Chavez had no doubt that one of



*The so-called labor shortage in California is just "a sham" by growers to get a warmed-over, cheap-labor Bracero Program from the government.*

the reasons, perhaps the major one, was the current UFW boycott. At a march and rally on June 21, before the full extent of the disastrous grape season was evident, he told 500 farm workers:

"The boycott's working. We're stinging 'em. I know it. All our work and all the support we've gotten since we began the boycott three years ago — trips throughout this country and Canada; boycotters in the cities; thousands of "The Wrath of Grapes" video cassettes distributed; millions of direct mailings; generous financial contributions from our supporters; almost 1,000 official endorsements of the boycott; our help from American, Canadian, and European labor leaders — are beginning to pay off. We're hurting them."

#### Grower Explanations

Because Coachella growers were not selling many grapes this year, they weren't buying either — least of all Chavez' boycott explanation of their problems. All the growers interviewed denied that the boycott was hurting them. (In one case, however, the denial was inferred, not heard. A company official at K. K. Larson, full of tight-

lipped, teeth-clenched, white-hot fury, had this writer removed from his office even before the question could be posed.)

The growers blamed everything but the boycott: roller-coaster weather changes, a labor shortage, and increased competition from Arizona and Mexico. David Serena, UFW crop manager in Coachella, discounted the weather excuse. "If that was the reason for the poor prices, why did we see just as many high-quality, luscious-looking grapes

*Maria Serrano: "There were plenty of workers..."*



this year? They weren't damaged by the weather."

Grape workers interviewed at several ranches said growers' claims that there was a shortage of workers this year simply were not true. Maria Serrano spoke for scores of both union and non-union grape pickers when she said: "There were plenty of workers around here to pick every single grape in the valley if growers had wanted it. The truth is, even those of us who were working had our hours cut back a lot this year."

Dolores Huerta, first vice-president of the UFW, denounced the growers' labor-shortage claim as "a sham to pressure the government into giving them a steady supply of cheap labor. They're drooling at the prospect of turning the new immigration law into a warmed-over H-2 or Bracero Program." And at a press conference in Sacramento on July 1, David A. Roberti, D-L.A., president pro tem of the State Senate, declared flatly: "There is no shortage of farm labor workers in California."

Growers' contention that increased

competition from Arizona and Mexico ruined their 1987 season was brought into question by statistics from the Federal-State Market News' "Western Grape Report." "The report does show a slight increase in the sale of table grapes from Arizona and Mexico, but not enough to explain the severity of the growers' problems in Coachella," said Ken Schroeder, UFW researcher.

In view of grape growers' losses so far this season, Bruce Obbink, president of the California Table Grape Commission, might want to save money for growers by cutting back on their 1987 advertising budget of \$7.3 million — at least enough to cut out the TV portion allotted to Fischer Associates/FQK, Inc. of San Francisco.

For whatever reason, boycott or weather, and in spite of Fischer's revisionist treatment of Genesis for television ads, the majority of the Adams and Eves in the "Garden of Eat'n'" are apparently still sticking with the apple. Heaven knows — and so do the growers — they sure as hell ain't eatin' grapes.

*At K. K. Larson, a solitary truck at shipping stalls that should have been full testifies to the growing impact of the boycott.*





Canadian supporters join Cesar Chavez on a picket line in Toronto. Pictured left to right are: Ralph Ortlieb, CLC Ontario director of organization; Gerard Docquier, USWA Canadian national director; Gord Wilson, president, Ontario Federation of Labour; Fortunato "Lucky" Rao, retired Steelworker; and David Martinez, Canadian boycott director.

## UFW and Canada: Twenty Years of Solidarity

The first UFW boycott organizers arrived in Toronto in 1967. Canadians opened their hearts to these organizers and soon found themselves on picket lines and at rallies. Their support has never faltered.

Cesar Chavez visited Canadians in nine cities in June to celebrate 20 years of solidarity and to continue promoting the present table grape boycott.

In Montreal, Mayor Sean Dore, who said pesticides threaten both consumers and workers, endorsed the boycott after meeting with Chavez and viewing "The Wrath of Grapes." The mayor said Chavez' message contains valid information that requires close scrutiny.

Marvin Rotrand, Montreal City Council member, said the mayor's endorsement could lead to a resolution by the City Council supporting the boycott which would help inform the

public about the pesticide issue and the farm worker cause.

While in Montreal, Chavez also met with officials from the Quebec Federation of Labour, the Confederation of National Trade Unions and the Union of Agricultural Producers.

In Ottawa, Chavez met with Nancy Riche, executive vice-president of the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC); with Members of Parliament Rod Murphy, Dan Heap, Charles Caecia and Michael Cassidy; with the Social Justice Committee of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops; with Daryl Bean, national president of the Public Service Alliance of Canada and with John Fryer, president of the national Union of Provincial Government Employees.

In Hamilton, Mayor Bob M. Morrow and 15 religious groups heard Chavez speak and in Toronto, Chavez, Sean

O'Flynn and Gord Wilson of the Ontario Federation of Labour and Gerard Docquier of the Canadian Steelworkers joined a picket line at a New Dominion Store. And in St. Thomas, the Ontario Provincial Council of Machinists led by President Tom Lee generously donated \$1,000 to the boycott.

In Sudbury, Paul Labelle of the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union joined Chavez on an A&P picket line, and in London, Chavez met with members of the Catholic Rural Life Conference and other religious leaders. In Windsor, Chavez joined Gary Parent, president of the Windsor and District Labour Council, and Canadian Auto Workers on another A&P picket line and at a press conference.

### Other News

A Canadian Board of Inquiry visited California in May to investigate the reasons for the UFW grape boycott.

Those on the Board included Nancy Riche of the CLC, retired Steelworker Fortunato "Lucky" Rao from Toronto, Sean O'Flynn of the OFL, Jesus Falcon of the International Ladies' Garment

Workers Union and Father Jim Roberts from Vancouver.

The Canadians first went to Coachella to investigate violence during union elections; then to Delano to discuss pesticides; next to Parlier to talk with ex-Agricultural Labor Relations Board member Jerome Waldie and ex-staff attorney Miles Locker; and finally to Sacramento to interview ALRB General Counsel Dave Stirling and ALRB Chairman Ben Davidian.

"During our trip, we realized that in 1987 in the United States of America, there is still major exploitation of workers," said Nancy Riche. "The blatant election violence and the lack of convictions of those responsible and the pesticide abuses are of immense concern to us."

"In our meeting with Stirling and Davidian, we found the ALRB to be clearly anti-UFW and anti-worker," Riche added, "and the ALRB seems intent on diminishing the UFW."

The Board of Inquiry will publish its findings and recommendations later this summer. ♡

The Canadian Board of Inquiry hears testimony in Delano. Pictured (left to right) are: Sean O'Flynn, Jesus Falcon, Nancy Riche, Fortunato "Lucky" Rao, and Father Jim Roberts.





*The National Council of Churches endorses — and calls on its congregations with 40 million members — to endorse the grape boycott.*

Photo by Mark McDonald

## National Council of Churches, More Groups Endorse Boycott

Farm workers rejoiced when they got the Good News that the governing board of the National Council of Churches of Christ, USA (NCCC) had endorsed the UFW boycott of California table grapes at its meeting on May 15 in Kansas City, Missouri.

Present at the meeting to seek the boycott endorsement were Olga Sierra Sandman, president of the executive board of National Farm Worker Ministry, and Rev. Sharon Streater, NFWM staff member. Their presentation included showing of the UFW boycott film, "Wrath of Grapes."

### Farm Workers Testify

But the most moving moments of the presentation took place when Ruben and Dora Rodriguez, farm workers from

McFarland, California, told the delegates about the suffering farm workers endure from pesticide poisoning. The Rodriguezes, after having had five healthy children, lost their sixth through stillbirth last November two years after Ruben took a new job as a pesticide sprayer for the Sandrini grape ranch in Delano. They are convinced that their exposure to parathion, captan, paraquat and sodium arsenite caused the death of their baby. (See *Food and Justice*, March 1987.)

The board, having already examined documentation of the boycott request, bypassed further committee study and expedited its endorsement of the boycott. "I think their definitive approval of the boycott reflects the members' understanding both of the issues involved

and their urgency, especially the pesticide threat to both farm workers and consumers," said Sister Pat Drydyk, OFM, executive director of NFWM, who also heads the NFWM-sponsored Ministry Among Pesticide Victims project based in Delano.

### Call to Congregations

The NCCC, the most influential Protestant body in the U.S., is comprised of 31 mainline denominations with congregations totalling 40 million members. The NCCC is asking all local congregations to implement a special boycott program: to highlight the dangers of pesticides to farm workers and grape consumers; view and discuss the issues raised in the film, "The Wrath of Grapes"; and contribute funds to help finance the boycott.

### Message to Governor and Growers

The NCCC boycott resolution urges California Gov. George Deukmejian and legislators "to enforce present state laws that are intended to protect the rights of farm workers, their health and well-being." It also asks them "to

encourage grape growers to come to the bargaining table and negotiate a resolution to the concerns of farm workers."

The resolution also specifically "requests the California Table Grape Commission to urge grape growers to cease using deadly pesticides that endanger the life and well-being of farm workers, their families, and consumers of grapes."

## MORE ENDORSEMENTS

### Columbia School of Public Health

The student body of one of the top-rated schools of public health in the nation, the Columbia University School of Public Health, New York, following an earlier endorsement by the American Public Health Association, voted unanimously at its spring meeting to endorse the UFW table grape boycott.

Shortly afterward, on April 21, the Faculty Assembly also endorsed the boycott by a 26-to-1 margin. The endorsements express concern about the threat to farm workers from toxic pesticides in the fields and to consumers from pesticide residues on table grapes. The

*Los Angeles City Councilman Richard Alatorre informs the media of the council's endorsement of the UFW grape boycott.*



endorsements urge "Columbia University to instruct food services to refrain from purchasing and serving table grapes until the misuse of pesticides is corrected."

#### Los Angeles City Council

Responding to a personal presentation by UFW President Cesar Chavez, the Los Angeles City Council on March 25 passed a resolution endorsing the grape boycott. The council urged grape growers to bargain in good faith and to end the threat of dangerous pesticides to farm workers and consumers.

The council also called on the city water department to test the water supply for pesticide contamination and requested the county Agricultural Commissioner to do a random sampling of fruits and vegetables in area supermarkets to determine pesticide-residue levels.

#### Detroit Rabbi

Moved by the biblical injunction, "Justice, justice, you shall pursue," the Detroit Rabbinical Commission endorsed

#### Rabbi Ernest Conrad



Rabbi Paul Yedwab

the boycott of California table grapes in March. The commission, made up of rabbis from 18 temples in metropolitan

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*"Our generation has been privileged to enjoy so much of the fruit of the earth because of the men, women and children who work in the fields."*

— Rabbi Ernest Conrad

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Detroit, adopted an endorsement drafted by Rabbi Paul Yedwab.

Rabbi Ernest Conrad expressed the sentiments of the members of the commission when he said, "Our generation has been privileged to enjoy so much of the fruit of the earth because of the men, women, and children who work in the fields, but we must forego that luxury when we look at the medieval work conditions that enslave body and soul."

Including the above, the UFW has now obtained nearly 1,000 boycott endorsements from U.S., Canadian, and European labor, church, community, and minority organizations and their leaders. ▼

## More Evidence Against Residues

The National Research Council, part of the prestigious National Academy of Science (NAS), reported in May that 28 pesticides found in 15 commonly eaten foods may pose a significant cancer risk to humans.

The report, requested by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and based on a theoretical "worst case" scenario, suggests that the 28 pesticides and the 15 foods could account for 80 percent of the tumor risks due to eating pesticide residues on food. These residues could cause 20,000 cancer cases each year resulting in up to 400 deaths.

Among the 15 foods mentioned in the two-year study are grapes which include table grapes that are heavily sprayed just to make them cosmetically attractive.

Of the 28 pesticides studied, 12 of them account for a hefty 95 percent of the risk. Among the 12 most dangerous pesticides are the fungicides captan and benomyl, both used on California table

grapes (which account for 2 percent of the risks). On the NAS list of 28 are parathion and guthion, two insecticides also used on table grapes. And three additional table grape pesticides — methomyl, paraquat, and dicofol (which contains as much as 2.5 percent DDT) — made the EPA's list of 53 pesticides cited in the NAS report that have a potential to cause tumors.

The dangers posed by residues from pesticides are no secret. The U.S. General Accounting Office recently found that many pesticide residues on domestic and imported food go undetected because of inadequate Food and Drug Administration testing. (See *Food and Justice*, February 1987). Also suggesting danger, the California Department of Food and Agriculture last year began its own risk assessment of captan and paraquat and four other pesticides used on grapes cited by the Academy.

The NAS report though, has its skept-

*Residues from 28 pesticides on commonly eaten foods could cause up to 20,000 cancer cases each year.*





*Farm workers are poisoned by pesticides in the fields and consumers by residues that remain on common foods.*

tics — mainly growers and manufacturers who say the risks are "overstated" and not based on "reality." But the researchers say the report, while "conservative," could easily underestimate the risks for several reasons: the researchers lacked toxicological data for many active ingredients, inerts, breakdown products and metabolites (which result from cooking); the report omitted the possibility that consumers are exposed to pesticides by air, water and soil contamination; and the report omitted the risk when two or more residues on food interact.

The evidence against dangerous pesticides, especially those registered before the EPA tightened its standards in 1978, continues to mount with every new government or scientific report.

While the latest report is useful, it is also limited because it only addressed the 28 pesticides' potential to cause tumors and did not examine their potential to cause birth defects or damage reproductive systems in either consumers or workers.

The EPA and FDA have been called "toothless watchdogs" of the public

interest whose performance has been a "mind-boggling failure." At the minimum, the NAS report calls for closer scrutiny of the most worrisome pesticides, for manufacturers to fill data gaps and for pesticide re-registration or cancellation.

Unfortunately, government agencies react slowly. Consumers, meanwhile, must begin to protect themselves and farm workers by demanding safer food from their grocers. ♡

## Correction

On page six of our June 1987 issue, a caption under the picture of Justin Ostro refers to him as general vice-president of the National Maritime Union of America. He is, in fact, general vice-president of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers. We regret the error. ♡

# EVERY YEAR MORE THAN 300,000 FARM WORKERS ARE POISONED BY THE FOOD YOU EAT.



Welcome to Death Valley.

Each year, hundreds of thousands of people who labor in the fields are poisoned by toxic pesticides like those used in the cultivation of table grapes.

The fruits of their labor are birth defects, cancer, chronic illness. And death.

But the danger of pesticides isn't just to field workers. The danger sits right on your table.

You see, one third of all pesticides are known to cause cancer. And some of them won't even wash off under your kitchen tap. Which means that you could unwittingly be poisoning yourself or your family with every table grape you eat.

There is only one way to know the whole story. Send for our free video cassette, "The Wrath of Grapes," and see how the farm workers have dedicated themselves to saving their lives. And yours.

What you choose to do after that is up to you. After all, we don't want to poison your mind. We just want to give you food for thought.



UNITED FARM WORKERS OF AMERICA



UNITED FARM WORKERS OF AMERICA  
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YES! Please send me a free copy of "The Wrath of Grapes." (Available in VHS format only.)

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## Friends in Deed Make Maggio Appeal Possible

**N**o prayer-tower dramatics, no divine death threats, no phony publicity stunts were resorted to by the United Farm Workers last January when it faced a monumental financial crisis that threatened its very existence — just a sincere, truthful letter calling on friends for help.

And plead for help was just about all there was left for farm workers to do after Imperial Valley Superior Court Judge William E. Lehnhardt ruled in favor of the Carl Maggio company in its suit against the UFW. He then awarded Maggio damages of \$1.6 million. (See *Food and Justice*, April 1987.)

In order to appeal the decision, the UFW was required to post a bond of twice the amount — \$3.3 million. Even though that was later reduced to \$2.5 million, it was justification for a cry for financial help if there ever was one.

### Record-Breaking Response

The response to Cesar Chavez' letter to supporters in March was astounding. Contributions quickly poured in. Rev. Chris Hartmire, who handled the returns, said, "This is by far the best response we've ever had — both in the number of people and their generosity. It was amazing!"



UFW Attorney Barb Macri says it is "inconceivable" that an unbiased court could uphold Judge Lehnhardt's decision.

**"This is by far the best response we've ever had — both in the number of people and their generosity. It was amazing!"**

— Chris Hartmire,  
Social Marketing

Chavez expressed his reaction simply: "Grateful? Yes! I don't have enough words to express my thanks. But surprised? Not really. When I think of how people have rallied to our cause over the past 25 years, and the way they're doing it again in this grape boycott, I can honestly say I'm not surprised. What we want to do now is win this appeal. That'll be the best way I can think of to thank people for their loyalty and generosity."

The record-breaking contributions,

including an unusually large one from an anonymous donor (not a race-track owner), not only averted the financial threat but also proved to farm workers once again that having many friends in ordinary places more than offsets enemies in high places — such as Judge Lehnhardt.

### Biased Judge

Incredible as it may seem, Lehnhardt claimed to be impartial even though his wife, Sara, went to work for Maggio to help break the UFW's strike in 1979. But even if his wife hadn't been an anti-UFW strikebreaker in the case he was judging, farm workers still would have had little reason to hope for fairness from him. It was Lehnhardt who, in February 1979, had dismissed charges against foremen at the Saikhon company for the murder of UFW member Rufino Contreras shortly after the start of the strike.

Add to that the common knowledge among farm workers that Imperial

*Judge Lehnhardt: a biased judge in southern California's virulently anti-farm worker Imperial County.*



Carl Maggio, pictured outside courtroom with legal aide, gloated over the prospect of attaching UFW assets.

Valley is controlled by growers and their allies, and it is easy to see why farm workers were eager to call on their friends to raise money to appeal Lehnhardt's decision — to get the case out of his hands and the anti-farm worker atmosphere of the Imperial County and into the hands of a court where fairness could be hoped for.

### The Appeal

Maggio and his attorneys, who gloated about attaching UFW assets right up until the last second before the UFW posted the \$2.5 million bond, will now have to plead their case before the California Appellate Court in San Diego.

Barbara Macri, UFW attorney, said the entire appeal process could take from three to five years. "But now at least we know we're beginning a process that isn't doomed from the start — as was the case in the Imperial County. It is inconceivable to me that an unbiased court could uphold Lehnhardt's decision."



from **The Graphics Workshop**



## Eagle Knit Shirts

*Now in a Variety of Colors*

Wear these comfortable, stylish knit shirts embroidered with Cesar's signature and the UFW eagle, or embroidered with the eagle only.

Choose your red, turquoise, navy, or pink shirts with complimentary colored embroidery.

These 50-50 cotton-polyester shirts are proudly crafted by members of the Amalgamated Clothing & Textile Workers Union of the AFL-CIO.



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black embroidery

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white embroidery

pink with  
white embroidery

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