

Letters to the Editor

Chavez—Power Hungry

To the Editor:

This is in reply to your Dec. 8 editorial "Jailing of Cesar Chavez" and the Dec. 20 letter in support of your editorial.

The great hoax that Chavez is perpetrating on the American public must end. Mr. Chavez is neither a believer in nonviolence nor the farm worker's savior. When confronted recently on a national television show with charges that the United Farm Workers Organizing Committee which he heads engaged in threats, violence and intimidation, Mr. Chavez made no denial. Nor could he, because there was documentary evidence to disprove that his union engages in nonviolent organizing tactics.

By seeking to force growers to abandon their valid collective bargaining agreements with the Teamsters and instead recognize his union, he is engaging in typical union raiding tactics.

Chavez refuses to have his union become subject to the National Labor Relations Act. He refuses to permit the farm workers he claims to represent to have a secret ballot election to determine if, in fact, they want his representation.

Instead he is attempting through the means of an economic boycott to force the growers to sign agreements with him, although the employees covered by these agreements have not designated him as their representative.

The Teamsters contracts covering farm labor in California provide wages and benefits which equal or exceed any of the benefits Chavez has won for farm workers. Teamsters agreements provide for company contributions to medical plans at the rate of 15 cents an hour against ten cents an hour in the U.F.W.O.C. contracts.

Teamsters employees in the lettuce industry are protected by unemployment insurance. U.F.W.O.C. employees in the same industry do not receive unemployment compensation, but are forced to go on county relief rolls.

Teamsters agreements provide for time and one-half for work on Sundays and holidays, whereas U.F.W.O.C. agreements make no provision for overtime on these days except if the work week exceeds 54 hours.

Chavez was jailed because he was found guilty of violating California labor laws which bar jurisdiction disputes. While farm workers deserve the same rights and protections which other segments of the American work force now have, they must also be subjected to the same restrictions and penalties which accompany those rights, among them being the prohibition against secondary boycotts.

Mr. Chavez should be recognized for what he is—just another labor leader who believes the end justifies the means.

MARTIN F. PAYSON
Morganville, N. J., Dec. 24, 1970