



President Vince Sombrotto and
Letter Carriers' Union Support
UFW Table Grape Boycott

FOOD AND JUSTICE

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EDITORIAL



Who is going to protect consumers and farm workers from pesticide poisoning?

The Environmental Protection Agency certainly won't do it — in this century or the next — if they continue their present snail-like pace of clamping down on pesticide producers.

Regulatory agencies are not going to do it — if the ineffectual, grower-dominated California Department of Food and Agriculture is any example of what needs to be done.

Legislation? The many toxic disasters and near disasters across the nation clearly show that relying on legislation at the city, county, state, or national level for protection would be about as reassuring as hearing the band play "Nearer My God to Thee" on the Titanic.

And to ask growers and pesticide manufacturers to do it themselves — along with the equally guilty supermarket owners who knowingly sell poisoned produce — would simply be a waste of words.

The consumer — only you, the consumer — can do it! You are paying good money for your food and you have a right to demand that it be clean and healthy.

If you stop buying poisoned food, such as the table grapes we are boycotting, growers will have to quit using pesticides, manufacturers will have to quit making them, farm workers' lives won't be threatened by them, and you, the consumer, won't have to worry about their poisonous residues on your food!

Boycotting grapes is the only way we can stop growers from poisoning consumers and abusing farm workers.

The marketplace is the only place we can find justice.

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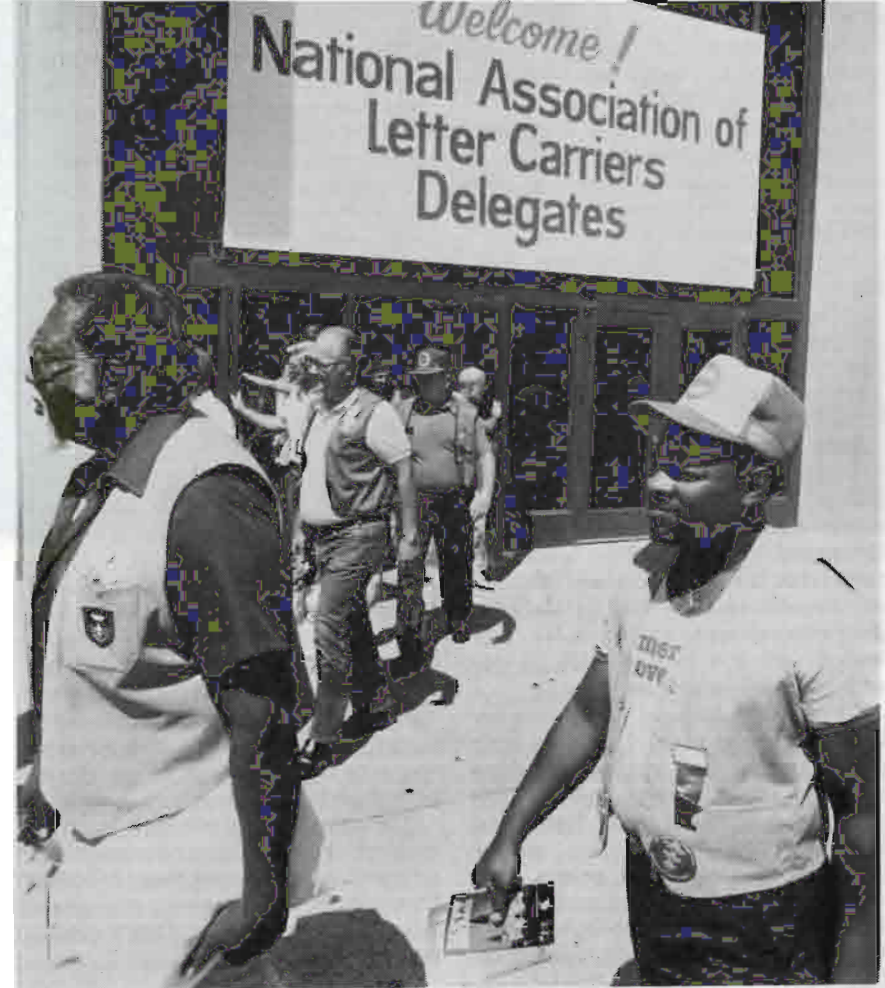
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Members of the letter carriers' union donated \$10,000 to the Wrath of Grapes campaign and endorsed the grape boycott.

Letter Carriers Deliver Farm Workers Big Boycott Boost!

The United Farm Workers' boycott of all California table grapes received a big moral and financial boost when UFW President Cesar Chavez addressed the 55th Biennial Convention of the National Association of Letter

Carriers in St. Paul, Minnesota on July 24.

More than 7,000 delegates and auxiliary members rose to their feet and gave Chavez a standing ovation as he was led to the podium by a large

honorary escort of delegates from California, Texas, and Florida.

Vince Sombrotto, president of NALC, whose union boasts a membership of 280,000, introduced Chavez to the convention and praised him as a labor leader "who represents all that is best in the trade union movement."

In his speech to the delegates, auxiliary members, and guests, Chavez thanked the assembly for its rousing reception and for the support the NALC and the entire labor movement gave farm workers in its nearly 25 years of struggle.

"We absolutely would never have been able to endure this long without your support," Chavez said. "And now, when our very existence is again threatened by growers who ignore the farm labor law and a governor [California Republican Gov. George Deukmejian] who refuses to enforce it, we come back to ask you to stand side by side with us in solidarity once more."

Chavez then outlined the reasons for the new boycott of all California table grapes and its threefold objectives: to make growers guarantee free and fair elections, bargain in good faith, and agree to stop their reckless use of dangerous pesticides that poison farm workers in the fields, contaminate the drinking water of people living in nearby towns, and leave pesticide residues on food consumers buy at the market.

Chavez prepares to take the stage at the letter carriers' convention to thank the union for its support.



"We are again boycotting table grapes to win back all the rights farm workers have lost since Gov. Deukmejian took over," Chavez said. "But because you as consumers are threatened by pesticide residues almost as much as farm workers are from working in pesticide-drenched fields, we will keep up the boycott until growers stop the excessive use of these dangerous chemicals that threaten all of us."

After Chavez finished his speech, Sombrotto signed a large grape boycott pledge card entitled "The Wrath of Grapes," the theme of the UFW campaign against all California table grapes. He pledged his personal support and called upon the delegates and the entire NALC membership not to buy or eat table grapes.

In a dramatic gesture the next day, which was also the last day of the convention, Sombrotto announced that the NALC would make a \$10,000 contribution to the boycott. "These brothers and sisters are folks who are far less fortunate than we are," he said, "and we owe it to them to do all we can to support them in their struggle."

The letter carriers put their stamp of approval on the solidarity donation with a tremendous roar and then, following Sombrotto's lead, took up the chant, "Don't eat the grapes! Don't eat the grapes!"



Stop or Be Stopped

If American agriculture and agribusiness want to stop poisoning consumers, farm workers and water supplies, they must abandon their pesticide dependence and grow food organically.

Statistics show that chemicals have failed from the start. Between 1942 and 1984, pre-harvest crop losses to pests increased from 31.3 to 33 percent. Ironically, the list of chemical resistant pests rose sixteenfold between 1966 and 1980.

"We have to force the pesticide issue now," said Dr. Marion Moses, a health scientist with the National Farm Workers Health Group. "We must ask why almost everyone connected with agriculture is delaying the move away from pesticides — and that includes farmers, government and the universities," she said. "The chemical company delays are obvious," she added.

Many scientists and agricultural extension agents offer an integrated pest-management method to control pests. This method, because it still depends on at least one chemical to control key pests, is inadequate. The only sure way to rid the environment of poisons is to

farm organically. And it can be done.

As in pre-pesticide times, crop rotation can control both weeds and insects. Manual labor, weed-eating geese and better cultivation are methods that work. Conservation tillage, if used in tandem with other organic methods, can stop soil erosion and can help soil microbes produce plant nutrients.

Instead of insecticides, predator and sterilized insects can control emergency pest outbreaks while "trap crops" can lure insects away from important cash crops. Farmers can also use more insect resistant plant stocks.

One farmer in Florida collects unwanted insects, puts them in a blender and makes a spray with the mixture. The result: the bugs go elsewhere. Most recently, the Environmental Protection Agency approved testing for a genetically altered strain of bacteria that attacks pests and leaves the environment unaffected.

Pesticide contamination is inexcusable. The "abundance through chemistry" myth must go. For agriculture and agribusiness, it's stop or be stopped.

Growers Turn ALRB Against Farm Workers

By Jerome Waldie

California farm workers were elated when the state legislature, led by Gov. Jerry Brown and pressured by a phenomenally successful grape boycott, passed the Agricultural Labor Relations Act in 1975. That landmark law, vigorously advocated by the United Farm Workers and Cesar Chavez, attempted to give farm workers the right to organize into unions, a right other workers in this country had possessed for years.

Chavez and the UFW, believing in the fairness and protection of the law, shifted much of their effort and resources away from the boycott and relied on the California courts to protect workers. California growers hysterically fought the act and with the election of Republican Governor George Deukmejian in 1983 successfully eliminated that law as a protection for farm workers.

Growers contributed over a million dollars to Deukmejian's campaign. In return for the largess, the governor promised to put the growers in control.

Enforcement of the act has become a mockery of justice. Deukmejian appointee Dave Stirling, General Counsel of the Agricultural Labor Relations Board, has ignored the act and has converted the board into a tool to further exploit workers and their unions.

As a former member of the ALRB under Governors Brown and Deukmejian, I can say that the board has been gutted — turned over to agribusiness and its lawyers. Politicians catering to the wealthy and powerful, have abandoned farm workers — not an uncom-



Jerome Waldie has been a Democratic nominee for governor of California, a state legislator, and a U.S. Congressman on the House Judiciary Committee. He also served on the ALRB for eight years.

mon experience in the long struggle of poor people.

In my opinion, no farm worker can now expect help from the ALRB — given its present leadership. Farm workers that do seek help risk having their complaint files turned over to their employers who will then surely retaliate. The ALRB is now a hollow and pathetic shield.

Because of the short-sighted anti-labor Deukmejian administration, farm workers have no recourse but to do what they do best — strike, demonstrate, picket and, most of all, **BOYCOTT.** ♡

Ruben De la Loza's doctor diagnosed his condition as varicose veins.



It Started As A Rash

Ruben De la Loza is in the hospital with open sores on his feet and legs. He said it started with a rash.

"A year ago, when the first rash started, I thought it would go away," De la Loza said. "But it became worse. It got so bad that I couldn't walk. That's when I went to the hospital. It's related to pesticides."

De la Loza is an employee of Salyer American, a cotton ranch in Corcoran, California. He believes that exposure to pesticides used to treat the soil is responsible for his condition.

As a tractor driver for Salyer, De la Loza said he often has to get off the tractor to adjust cultivators and other farm machinery. "When I adjust the machines, the pesticides in the dirt come up. And when I move the machines, the

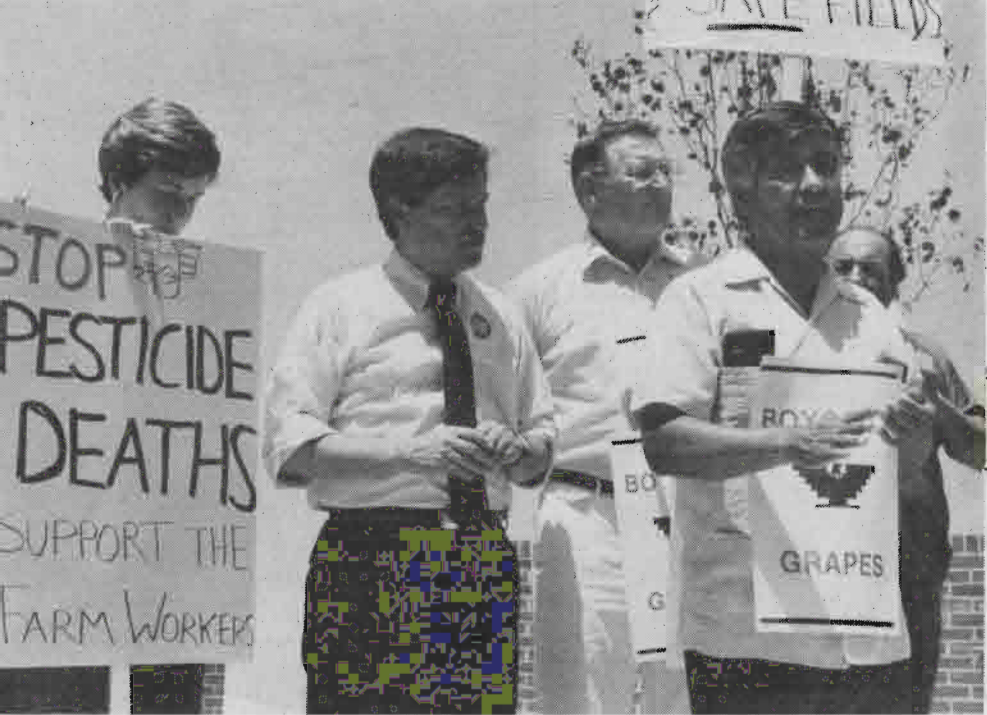
pesticides get in my face and eyes. The pesticides also penetrate my shoes and socks."

Because the pesticides irritated the skin on De la Loza's legs and feet, he began to scratch the rash. This caused, De la Loza said, the skin to open, and sores soon covered his legs.

"I have worked at Salyer for over 10 years," De la Loza said. "And I've seen them spray pesticides all year long. They don't just spray at certain times."

De la Loza has been in the hospital for over two weeks. He has had one operation and has not yet been told when he will be released. He said that his doctor refuses to diagnose his condition as pesticide related.

Instead, the doctor told De la Loza that he has varicose veins. ♡



Joining Chavez at a Baltimore rally are Eleanor Carry, candidate for Maryland Attorney General (far left), and Steve Sachs, current Maryland Attorney General (center).

Baltimore Supports Boycott

During a four-day trip in early July, Cesar Chavez took the "Wrath of Grapes" boycott message to Baltimore, the eighth largest table grape market in the country.

On the first day of his trip, Chavez met with the Rev. Wendell Phillips of the United Church of Christ for a breakfast and a discussion with other ministers. Phillips was instrumental in getting the Maryland Legislature to support the grape boycott — the second state to do so after Massachusetts.

Baltimore Mayor William D. Schaefer, who had supported a United Farm Workers grape boycott in 1975, declared July 8 "Grape Boycott Day." He was joined by the City Council and the Health Department.

At a noon rally and picket line at Baltimore's Lexington Market, the largest produce outlet in the city, Chavez outlined the reasons for the boycott: to force growers to stop their reckless use of deadly pesticides, to get them to obey California labor laws and to protect consumers from unsafe pesticide residues on food.

Among those who picketed at the market, which was selling grapes, were Maryland Attorney General Stephen Sachs, a long-time UFW supporter and farm worker rights advocate, State Senator Nathan Irby, who co-sponsored the legislature's resolution with Phillips and Henry Koellin Jr., president of the Baltimore AFL-CIO.

On Wednesday, Chavez began his day

with a mass at St. Ann's Parish. Pastor Father Joseph Muth, a friend of Chavez, graciously shared his home with Chavez during the trip.

During the day, Archbishop William D. Borders, Bishop John H. Ricard and Dick Dowling, executive director of the Maryland Catholic Conference, all gave Chavez support.

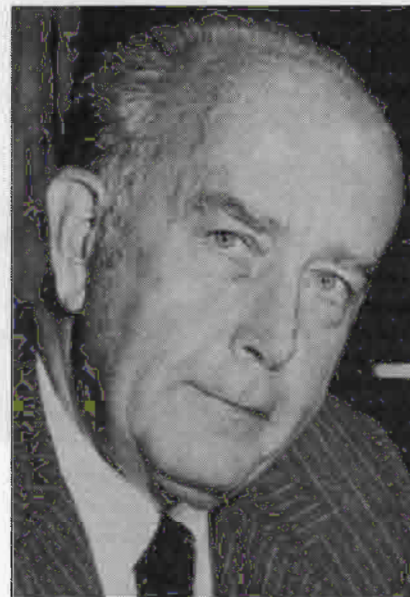
Throughout the four-day trip, Chavez was featured on numerous radio and television programs, both taped and live. At least 12 media stations had attended Chavez' Tuesday press conference.

The organization Maryland Citizen Action hosted Chavez at a fundraiser. Janelle Cousina, the executive director of the organization, had walked the picket line at the Lexington Market.

On Thursday, John Sweeney, international president of the Service Employees International Union, endorsed the boycott after seeing the "Wrath of Grapes" film. He called it a "powerful and disturbing" message.

Tom Donahue, secretary-treasurer of the AFL-CIO, met Chavez for lunch and offered his support. Gerald McEntee,

Mayor William Schaefer endorsed the grape boycott and declared July 8 "Grape Boycott Day."



Grape boycott supporters listen to Chavez describe pesticide abuses.

international president of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, also supported the UFW's struggle.

Later in the afternoon, Kenneth Blaylock, president of American Federation of Government Employees gave Chavez a warm reception, good support and invited him to AFGE's national convention.

On the last day of the trip, Chavez met with Jewish leaders at the Oheb Shalom Congregation. The American Jewish Committee, the Associated Jewish Charities and the Jewish Labor Committee were among 20 groups represented at the meeting, arranged by Elias Lieberman.

After returning to UFW headquarters in California, Chavez said he could see the boycott's momentum building throughout the country — that people are beginning to come out of the woodwork in support. "People are beginning to understand how pesticide residue on food relates to the daily poisoning of farm workers," he said. 🍷

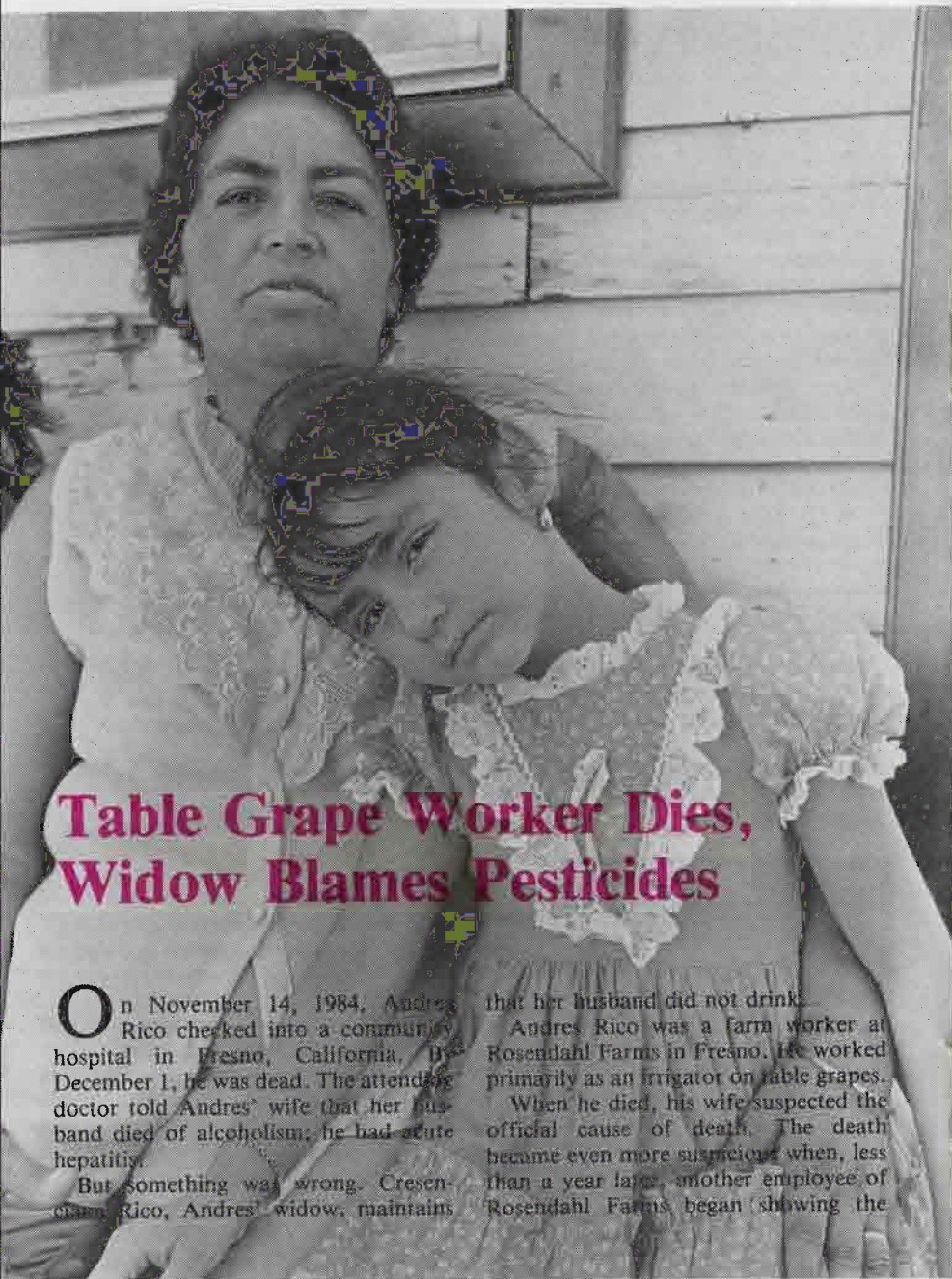


Table Grape Worker Dies, Widow Blames Pesticides

On November 14, 1984, Andres Rico checked into a community hospital in Fresno, California. By December 1, he was dead. The attending doctor told Andres' wife that her husband died of alcoholism; he had acute hepatitis.

But something was wrong. Crescenciana Rico, Andres' widow, maintains

that her husband did not drink.

Andres Rico was a farm worker at Rosendahl Farms in Fresno. He worked primarily as an irrigator on table grapes.

When he died, his wife suspected the official cause of death. The death became even more suspicious when, less than a year later, another employee of Rosendahl Farms began showing the

same symptoms that Andres had.

The first symptom Andres experienced was a feeling of fatigue. "Suddenly he was tired all the time," Crescenciana said. "Before he got sick he was always energetic. He was always healthy and never had physical problems. Two years before he died he began feeling weak."

Crescenciana is convinced that her husband died as a result of pesticide exposure at Rosendahl Farms.

Andres was afraid to tell his employer,

"My husband is not a drinker. He's a worker. So you better find another cause of death."

Don Rosendahl, he was sick. "He didn't tell the grower," Crescenciana explained. "When workers would tell Rosendahl they were ill and needed to see a doctor, Rosendahl would accuse them of lying. He said they just didn't want to work."

So Andres shared his suffering only with his family and close friends. Then in November 1984, he experienced extreme fatigue and his skin and eyes turned yellow. Crescenciana said, "One day he went to the hospital. Then he died. When the doctor told me he died of alcoholism, I said, 'My husband is not a drinker. He's a worker. So you better find another cause of death. I think it's pesticides.'"

According to Crescenciana, her husband and other workers were frequently, and illegally, exposed to pesticides. She said that although Andres was an irrigator, he sometimes applied pesticides.

She said that her husband was never issued protective clothing or given the proper training required by state law.

Andres primarily applied pesticides to grapes. According to his widow, Andres was exposed to parathion, paraquat and other pesticides.

At the time of her husband's death, Crescenciana and her four children were living in a house owned by Rosendahl.

She said that the grower kicked her and her children out of the house a week after Andres died. She also said that Rosendahl cancelled her insurance. Andres had worked at the farms for 15 years.

Marina Macias is a friend of the Rico family and the wife of a former Rosendahl employee. "Rosendahl is a bad man," Marina said. "He is seven foot tall, and if he gets angry at a worker, he picks the worker up and throws him."

Rosendahl would not even help Crescenciana with funeral expenses. The widow currently supports herself and her children on Social Security benefits. Out of this money, she makes payments incurred from Andres' funeral.

Several attempts were made to contact Rosendahl. The grower refused to return the calls.

When Andres died, the illness had already affected his liver, kidneys and brain. The UFW is pushing for a state-level investigation into Andres' death.

Andres Rico was buried December 7, 1984. He was 43 years old. His family still grieves. ♡

Andres Rico and his children.



Andres Rico's wife, Crescenciana, and his daughter, Maria. Crescenciana believes that pesticides killed her husband.

UFW Leaders Given Boycott Positions

The Wrath of Grapes campaign began a year and a half ago. In that time, the UFW has created a great deal of public awareness about the poisons used on table grapes.

Now the UFW is ready to take this campaign the next step and has staffed the major grape markets in the U.S. and Canada. Many members of the union's leadership have been sent to major cities to garner support for the table grape boycott.

A national executive board member, Arturo Rodriguez, has been assigned to the New England area. Rodriguez and his staff have offices in New York City.

Roberto de la Cruz, the union's former political director has been assigned the mid-Atlantic states. De la Cruz and his staff have offices in Boston.

The Midwestern states have been divided into two sections. Frank Ortiz, the union's second vice-president, will be in charge of most of the Midwest and is stationed in Chicago.

Arturo Mendoza, a national executive board member, is in charge of Michigan. Mendoza and his staff will be working out of Detroit.

The Pacific Coast is the area assigned to Oscar Mondragon. Mondragon is also an executive board member, and he has an office in Los Angeles.

Finally, David Martinez, third vice-president of the union, has been assigned to eastern Canada. Martinez and his staff will be working out of Toronto.

All of the union staff would appreciate help from consumers and supporters. If you can assist the union, please contact the personnel at the addresses below.

The staff will be stationed in the cities until the growers finally stop using poisonous pesticides and treat their workers with dignity — in other words, until the boycott ends. ♡

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Workers Want Free and Fair Elections

For farm workers, a free and fair election means a chance to vote for union representation without company harassment. To the California Agricultural Labor Relations Board, the same term means just the opposite.

In late 1983, the United Farm Workers won the right to hold a state sponsored certification election at 20,000-acre McCarthy Farming, Inc., a King City, California grape ranch. But the day before the January 2, 1984 election, the state, the UFW and the company held a pre-election conference.

During the conference, held to discuss voting procedures, a pro-company worker pulled a gun, pointed it at union supporters and said he would kill anyone who voted for the UFW.

Five company officials attending the meeting did nothing to defuse the incident. State election officials summoned police who arrested the man. By the next morning, company officials had bailed the gunman out of jail and he was back at work where he again threatened workers, this time verbally.

The result of the threats: the union lost the election.

In an unfair labor practice charge, the UFW claimed the company sanctioned and authorized the gunman's actions. The company replied that the meeting occurred off its property, on a holiday and that the gunman acted independently.

General Counsel Dave Stirling of the ALRB, who is often criticized by labor and his own agency for grower favoritism, believed the company's version of the story and dismissed the charge. Stirling is a Gov. George Deukmejian appointee.

"We originally wanted a union because of the sexual harassment and favoritism on the job," said Rosa Morfin, a union representative at the McCarthy ranch.

"The company still threatens workers," said Morfin, "And they now say they will close operations if the workers organize — they keep workers docile and scared."

So much for free and fair elections. ♡

Rosa Morfin wants workers to have the freedom to vote in union elections.



Bad Faith Bargaining — A Repeat Performance

Delay tactics, layoffs, firing threats, a phony union and a phony strike — these are the tactics 800-acre Arakelian Farms of Modesto, California has used to avoid signing a contract with the United Farm Workers.

This story about bad-faith bargaining by a California grower began in October 1975 when the UFW became certified as the bargaining representative of Arakelian's 150 wine grape workers.

For three years after the certification election, the UFW and ranch officials bargained. Finally, in September 1978, the UFW thought it had reached an agreement and submitted a proposal to the workers for ratification. But, unknown to the union, Arakelian hired a new negotiator and at the next bargaining session submitted new proposals for most of the contract articles. The UFW could not accept the company's offer and charged that Arakelian was bargaining in bad faith.

In December 1978, a company union, the Amalgamated Farm Labor Union (AFLU), circulated a petition to be certified to represent workers in contract negotiations. The AFLU members picketed Arakelian, and the ranch sym-

thetically shut down operations for four days in an attempt to force a new certification election. A California court denied the petition saying the AFLU workers had been hired to replace pro-UFW workers in order to force a new election.

In 1981, a labor judge found Arakelian guilty of bad faith bargaining and ordered it to negotiate. When the UFW thought it was close to an agreement, the company once again wanted to change articles, just as it had done in 1978.

A judge again ordered the company to bargain in 1984 — nine years after the certification election.

"We had a few minor disagreements and we got those out of the way quickly," said Ken Schroeder, a UFW negotiator. "But then Arakelian came back and wanted to change 20 contract articles saying the economics of the grape industry had changed."

"They do the same thing over and over again with impunity," Schroeder said. "They obviously don't want a union and they've already spent over \$100,000 to keep us out — money that could have gone to workers." ❖

Ken Schroeder, on the UFW staff for more than 12 years, served as the union negotiator for workers at Arakelian Farms.



Mary Jo and her parents are boycott supporters. From left to right are: Judith, Mary Jo, David and Karen Bagley.

From the Mouths of Babes

Mary Joanne Bagley of West Newbury, Massachusetts is an unlikely consumer activist. After all, Mary Jo is eight years old. Yet this child has a message she wants to share.

"You who buy grapes at the stores are in danger of being poisoned," Mary Jo said. "The sprays [pesticides] don't wash off like they should."

Mary Jo became interested in the table grape boycott and the plight of farm workers over a year ago. At that time, Cesar Chavez traveled to Boston to announce the new grape boycott. Mary Jo's parents, Judith and David Bagley, decided to boycott grapes.

"We supported past UFW boycotts," Judith said. "When I read about the new boycott, I talked to my kids. I told them that we wouldn't be buying grapes anymore, and I told them why. Mary Jo, my youngest, seemed very interested."

Judith explained that Mary Jo had

recently been given a school assignment to do a special project. Mary Jo wanted to study migrant workers. She researched the problems common to farm workers and completed a poster.

Then Mary Jo composed a letter with her mother's help. This letter summarized her feelings about pesticides on grapes and the injustices farm workers face. She sent the letter to editors of local newspapers and a copy to Cesar Chavez.

Although Mary Jo misses eating grapes she said she will continue to boycott. She said, "I feel very bad for the migrant workers. The sprays [pesticides] are poisonous, and those sprays are going into their bodies and not coming off. Sometimes they [pesticides] are killing the migrant workers."

"I am asking you to boycott grapes," Mary Jo said. "The growers treat the workers horribly, and when you buy grapes you buy poison." ❖

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