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Farm Worker Delegates
Call for Store Boycott

FOOD AND JUSTICE

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October 1986



Our national executive board — with the resounding approval of the delegates to our eighth constitutional convention — is calling for a boycott of stores that refuse to take contaminated table grapes off the shelf.

We are demanding that stores take poisoned grapes off because store owners are just as morally responsible to consumers as the growers who produce them. Unfortunately store owners, especially the huge supermarket owners, are like growers: they will not accept their responsibility unless they feel pressure on their pocketbooks.

To avoid their responsibility, store owners argue that they have an obligation to keep table grapes on the shelf so consumers have the option to buy them. But what kind of option are markets offering consumers these days? Because most consumers do not know about the danger of pesticide residues, the option is a consumer's unwitting decision to buy or not buy, eat or not eat, grapes with poisonous residues on them!

As the workers said in their convention resolution, "... the supermarket industry cannot wash its pesticide-laden hands of its responsibility of exposing workers and consumers to deadly poisons any more than growers can."

Using a combination of modern marketing strategies and the boycott of stores, we know we will eventually win this grape boycott — for the restoration of the rights of our workers and the good of consumers.

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Farm worker delegates vote unanimously to begin new store boycott.

UFW Convention Approves Store Boycott

More than 200 United Farm Worker delegates, plus scores of alternates and guests, had boycott on their minds as they gathered for the UFW's Eighth Constitutional Convention in Bakersfield, California on August 30.

Delegates shouted their approval as President Cesar Chavez called on farm workers to embark on the next logical step in the table grape boycott: the boycott of stores. "We will go to the big supermarket chains in our cities and demand that they stop selling grapes produced by growers who have robbed you of your rights and who could care less about the pesticide residues that threaten consumers," he said. "Stores have no more right selling contaminated grapes than growers have marketing them."

Chavez bitterly condemned the Deukmejian Administration for making the 1975 farm labor law as worthless as the 11-year-old paper it was printed on. "You can no longer vote freely; growers don't have to bargain with you in good faith anymore; and they recklessly flood the fields with pesticides without concern for your lives or the health of consumers," he said.

"Once again," Chavez continued, "with the help of good people in this country who will boycott grapes and the stores that sell them, we will make grape growers feel the pinch in their wallets — the only 'moral imperative' they can understand — and force them to restore your lost rights and quit poisoning the people of America."

Widow Donates \$1,000 to Pesticide Residue Testing Fund at Convention

Jose Luis Bonillas, a former grape worker and pesticide sprayer for two table grape growers in Delano, California, died of cancer last April. Died of Captan poisoning would be more accurate.

Bonillas was only 48 years old — one year short of the life expectancy of 49 for migrant farm workers and about 25 years short of the life expectancy for American males. But then the average American male doesn't endure the working conditions of grape picking for more than 10 years, doesn't get cancer from spending much of that time spraying the deadly pesticide Captan on vineyards, and doesn't become the grim statistic Bonillas did: one of 300,000 U.S. farm workers poisoned by pesticides each year.

However, thanks to his widow, Bernice, Jose Luis will not remain just a statistic. Delegates at the UFW convention gave her a heartwarming ovation when she presented a donation of \$1,000 to Cesar Chavez in memory of her

husband.

"My son Gino and I would like to see this money used to cover the costs of your proposed plan to test table grapes for pesticide residues," Bernice said. "Once the American people learn that the long-term effect of eating Captan residues on grapes is as deadly as spraying them, they will join the boycott, force growers to quit using Captan, and save the lives of farm workers and consumers."

Grape growers have so far ignored Chavez' call to take part in a joint table grape residue-testing project. "All we are asking is that the table grapes be tested by random sampling at the supermarket level, that the results be made public, and that growers share expenses with us," Chavez said. "They should welcome this invitation if they have nothing to hide. But if they won't do it, we'll do it and pay for it ourselves — with the help of good people like Bernice Bonillas." ❖

Bernice Bonillas presented the UFW with \$1,000 to begin testing for pesticide residues on store grapes.



Rabbi Kasden presents Cesar Chavez with the shofar, a ceremonial ram's horn used as a symbol to the people to action.



Temple Declares Grapes Non-Kosher

In a dramatic ceremony before the congregation of Temple Emanu-el in Livingston, New Jersey in early September, Rabbi Peter E. Kasdan presented farm labor leader Cesar Chavez with a resolution declaring California table grapes non-kosher.

The strongly phrased resolution said that, in keeping with the age-old wisdom of Jewish judges and sages, "food produced through the exploitation of people is not Kosher (not fit for consumption by Jews)." Table grapes deserve that indictment because growers are producing grapes "grown with the use of pesticides harmful to farm workers and consumers."

The resolution, which was approved by the temple's board of trustees, is in harmony with previous endorsements of the boycott by the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, the Central Conference of American Rabbis, the Commission on Social Action of

Reform Judaism, and several other Jewish individuals and organizations.

The non-kosher declaration by Temple Emanu-el is also in keeping with the spirit of many Jewish leaders, temples, and organizations that declared table grapes non-kosher in the first UFW grape boycott in the 1960s.

Rabbi Kasdan told Chavez the temple will practice what it preaches. He pointed out that the resolution calls for action: "In an effort to combine moral encouragement with positive action, Temple Emanu-el will not serve table grapes . . . at any function sponsored by the Temple or any of the Temple's organizations."

The endorsement concludes: "The Temple further commits itself to inform its membership of this policy and requires all who use the Temple facilities to follow the practice of the Temple as regards the use of table grapes." ❖

On the Grape Boycott Front



Ed Snider

Edward Cleary (center) is the president of the New York State AFL-CIO. Cleary is with UFW personnel (from left to right) Irv Hershenbaum, Ed Sanchez, Arturo Rodriguez (national executive board member) and Pam Driggers.

In addition to a steady stream of meetings, speeches, and film presentations about "The Wrath of Grapes," boycott leaders in the major cities of the U.S. and Canada reported that they are busy researching and targeting supermarkets as the United Farm Workers begins to implement its decision to start boycotting stores that sell California table grapes.

Arturo Rodriguez, boycott director in New York, reported that in late August 500 labor leaders at the New York State AFL-CIO Convention, led by President Edward Cleary, signed boycott pledge cards and unanimously passed an

endorsement supporting the table grape boycott.

Rodriguez and the boycott staff have been given office space and other resources by District Council 1707 of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, AFL-CIO (AFSCME), whose executive director, Robert W. McEnroe, met with farm labor leader Cesar Chavez during a recent visit to New York. McEnroe assigned a staff person, Andre Hershman, to help mobilize AFSCME workers in support of the table grape boycott.

During his New York visit, Chavez

also met with and won endorsements of the boycott from Temple Emanu-el (see page 5) and the Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW). He addressed a luncheon meeting of CLUW's national executive board after being introduced by Joyce Miller, international president.

... growers who put profits before people, grapes before human beings ...

In Canada, David Martinez, boycott director, and his staff are occupying office space provided by the Canadian Labour Congress in Toronto and are concentrating their boycott efforts in the Ontario Province. Martinez said Ontario, which purchased \$66.4 million worth of U.S. table grapes in 1985, buys more table grapes from the U.S. than all other provinces combined.

Martinez was enthusiastic about the response labor, religious, and other groups have given to "The Wrath of

Grapes," the 14-minute UFW documentary film that shows the horrible suffering California growers are causing farm workers, townspeople, and consumers by their reckless use of pesticides. Recent showings for the executive council of the Canadian Labour Congress, the Ontario Council of the Communication Workers of Canada, and other groups have evoked angry responses from viewers. "People who see the film are astounded at the callousness of growers who put profits before people, grapes before human beings," Martinez said.

Frank Ortiz, boycott director in Chicago, echoed the reports of other directors in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Boston, Detroit, and Texas when he said he and his staff are in the process of researching, targeting, and contacting major supermarkets to ask them to quit buying and selling all California table grapes.

"We're almost ready to go," Ortiz said. "Even though all the preliminary work is tough, it's worth it — it'll shorten the boycott in the long run."

Frank Ortiz (right), second vice-president of the UFW, thanks Bob Gibson, president of Illinois State Federation, AFL-CIO for his support of the grape boycott.





Haas receives no salary from the water company. Instead he makes a living as a liquor store owner. If the truth ever came out about McFarland's water, it could be bad for Haas' business.

McFarland Water Official: His Story Doesn't Wash

Fred Haas says he is proud of the job he is doing. Haas is the president of the McFarland Mutual Water Company.

The town of McFarland, California, readers may recall, is a cancer cluster — a town with 400% the expected rate of cancer. Thirteen McFarland children have been diagnosed with cancer since 1981, and four have died. Many of the town's residents blame the water. Many people believe the water has been contaminated by pesticides and fertilizers used by area growers.

But Haas is proud. He said that he is

proud because the water company has provided "an adequate water supply" to its customers. In fact, Haas seems more concerned about the quantity of his company's water than the quality.

This does not mean much, however, because Haas is a man who changes his story each time he is interviewed. In late July, Haas said that his personal theory was that the nitrates which contaminate many of McFarland's wells come from "an excessive use of nitrogen on our crops." He went on to say that there is so much contamination it could take 50

years to clean up the water.

Haas became even more specific and said that dairy farms were partially to blame. He said the farms' cows "discharge fertilizer and there is a high nitrate level in that." He added, "I'm sure that has contributed to some of it [the high nitrate levels in the water]."

Finally, Haas said in July that he was aware of laboratory tests which linked nitrates to cancer. He said, "I won't deny that there's that possibility" that nitrates cause cancer.

In an interview conducted in September, Haas did an about-face. When asked again about the connection between nitrates and cancer, Haas claimed he had no knowledge of the link.

When asked about the growers and how responsible they are for contaminating the water, Haas claims to have no opinion. He said if he did have a theory, he would not make it public.

There are, however, a couple of points upon which Haas remains consistent. He acknowledges that the wells in his town have high nitrate concentrations — have had high concentrations for years — and he claims that he is somehow not respon-

sible. Repeatedly he said, "I don't feel like the water is to blame."

Another point upon which Haas is consistent is this: the water company's customers will have to pay to clean up the water. The EPA gave the water company a million dollars to study the problem and build a treatment plant at one well. The state of California gave Haas another \$400,000 for a second plant. But this is not enough. Haas claims that the people will have to pay to maintain these plants.

The irony of this is, of course, obvious. Parents of children with cancer — cancer they blame on the water — will have to pay to clean up the wells. The growers, meanwhile, have to make no admission of guilt nor do they have to pay full costs for cleaning up the water.

There is one final telling characteristic of Fred Haas. He said he has talked to the parents of the children with cancer. He said he has "had discussions about what may cause the cancer in their children." He knows that many of them blame the water, but this does not give him a guilty conscience. He is, after all, proud of the job he has done. ▼



Angela and Raquel Esparza (left) and Candy Rosales (right) live in McFarland. Both the twins and Candy have brothers with cancer.

CDFA Director Clare Berryhill:
pawn of California growers.



UFW Demands Berryhill's Resignation

Clare Berryhill, director of the California Department of Food and Agriculture, jeopardized the health of farm workers and the public on September 3 when he rescinded his own five-day-old ban on Dinoseb, an ingredient in herbicides that the EPA now says causes birth defects and male sterility.

UFW President Cesar Chavez wants Berryhill to resign now because he continues to ignore a public danger, is incompetent and favors growers over the public and farm workers — all actions unbecoming a public official.

After consulting with growers and the California Farm Bureau, Berryhill, who is himself a grower, substituted this order for the ban: no woman of child-bearing age will be involved in any way with Dinoseb.

This substitution is discriminatory because it excludes women from the workplace and is reckless because it doesn't protect the reproductive health of men.

Berryhill knows that California growers use over 700,000 pounds of

Dinoseb annually, 17 percent of it on grapes. By rescinding the ban, he has given growers and pesticide manufacturers time to find alternative herbicides and deplete current inventories while leaving the public at risk.

Berryhill also knows that Dinoseb has a hazardous history: a Texas farm worker without protective clothing died after three days of spraying Dinoseb from a leaking backpack tank; also, a California farm worker is going blind in one eye after a sprayer hose broke and splashed it with Dinoseb.

"This chemical cannot be used safely in California," said Dr. Marion Moses of the National Farm Workers Health Group. "It is too toxic, employers do not protect workers, hot weather increases the chemical's strength and absorption, and it can accumulate in the body in potentially fatal amounts."

"Berryhill's first decision was the right one," said Dr. Moses.

It doesn't take a Sherlock Holmes to discover why grower Berryhill changed his mind. ♡



Wanda London believes her son, Michael (insert), was needlessly killed by pesticide poisoning.

Mothers Wants Justice for Son's Death

Michael E. London, an employee of Bill Long Termite Control of Bloomington, California, died in an unventilated crawlspace on June 11, 1985 from a heart attack triggered by methylene chloride — an "inert ingredient" in the pesticide he was using.

"Long's negligence and not employee carelessness caused my son's death," said Wanda London of Palmdale, California.

The California Department of Food and Agriculture investigated and found that Michael was improperly trained, didn't have ventilation fans and had to use faulty equipment. Despite the violations, CDFA ruled after a review hearing that Michael caused his own death. CDFA dropped a \$500 fine against Long Termite.

"We weren't even notified of the hearing where CDFA decided not to prosecute the company," said Mrs. London. "But the company was represented," she added.

California Occupational Safety and Health Administration officials also investigated and fined the company \$420 because it delayed reporting the death and didn't provide an assistant for Michael in case of an emergency.

"What angers me is that those government agencies responsible for safety act like nothing happened," said Mrs. London. "Their regulations allow those responsible for my son's death to continue doing business."

Mrs. London also blames the EPA for not requiring health studies for many "inerts" or industrial solvents that cause cancer, birth defects and leukemia, and, in this case, a worker's death.

"The pesticide manufacturer didn't even have to list on the label the thing that killed my son — the government allows them to keep that portion of the formula secret," Mrs. London said.

"To Long Termite and the government, Michael's life was only worth a few hundred dollars," she said. ♡



Do you know any of these people? If you do, you probably worked for the UFW, and we would like to hear from you.

UFW Alumni Alert — “La Causa” is Coming!

For the past several years, UFW President Cesar Chavez has dreamed of developing a publication to keep in contact with the thousands — no exaggeration — the thousands of volunteers who worked for “La Causa” since the early 1960s.

But for almost the same number of years, the fulfillment of that dream had to be postponed for reasons former UFW volunteers will easily (and often humorously) remember — a variety of lacks and a continuum of crises!

Even though not every obstacle has been overcome, the union now possesses the writing staff and modern printing equipment to fulfill that dream. And so the UFW will soon begin publishing “La Causa,” a modest little monthly just for former full-time volunteers — folks of

all ages who worked a year or more for board and room, few benefits, and \$5 a week.

In other words, “La Causa” will be for the volunteer alumni of “The University of Farm Workers” who can’t make it back to California every year for homecoming but who constantly ask about the union, former co-workers, current staff, and, of course, the usual question: What are WE boycotting now?

If you are a former volunteer and would like the inside scoop on the UFW each month, fill out the tearoff below and send it (along with the names and addresses of other former volunteers you might know) to: Cesar Chavez, La Paz, CA 93570. ♡

Present name: _____

Name while with UFW: _____

Address, Zip, Phone: _____

Postal Workers Continue Boycott Support

Cesar Chavez went to San Francisco on August 11 for the American Postal Workers Union convention where he urged the delegates to continue their support for the “Wrath of Grapes” boycott.

The APWU, which has 260,000 members, endorsed the boycott in September 1985. APWU president Moe Biller, a long-time friend and supporter of the UFW, led the 3,000 delegates at the convention in giving Chavez a warm welcome and boycott support.

“It is extremely important for unions to support other unions,” said Janice Wood, president of the Oceanside, California local. “Cesar’s speech reminded us that we are all in this together and that the boycott calls for safer working conditions.”

APWU officials support Chavez in his belief that the cavalier attitude of California Governor George Deukmejian’s administration toward the Agricultural Labor Relations Act is a signal to growers to ignore pesticide

regulation and thwart farm workers’ attempts to organize.

Chavez urged the delegates to fight the growers because they are “selfish men that are indiscriminately and undeniably poisoning us all.”

On the second day of the convention, Chavez and all the APWU delegates joined 1,000 Hotel and Restaurant Employees and Bartenders Union members in Union Square where Local 2 President Sherri Chiesa led a protest against demands by hotel operators and owners that wages and benefits be cut because of poor business.

At the rally, called one of San Francisco’s biggest in years, Chavez pledged UFW support for the hotel workers. “When you win new contracts, we will celebrate with you,” he said. “When you strike, we will come and walk the picket lines and when you boycott, we will help.

“We know something about boycotts, too,” Chavez said as the crowd of 4,300 cheered. ♡

Courtesy of Justine Perez



Cesar Chavez talks with Father Will Wauters during a labor rally in San Francisco. Seated at Chavez’ right is Alvin Gruhn, president of the California State Labor Federation, AFL-CIO.



Cesar Chavez and Lynn Williams, president of the United Steelworkers of America, demonstrate solidarity at the USWA convention.

Steelworkers Renew UFW Solidarity

On August 29, UFW President Cesar Chavez spoke at the United Steelworkers of America convention in Las Vegas where 2,900 delegates representing close to a million workers from the United States, Canada and Puerto Rico renewed their support for the UFW's table grape boycott.

The United Steelworkers, who originally endorsed the boycott in 1985, are now among 22 national and international unions that support UFW efforts to ban five dangerous pesticides (Dinoseb, Phosdrin, Captan, Methyl Bromide and Parathion), force growers to negotiate contracts and join the UFW in a pesticide residue testing program.

"I have always been impressed with Cesar's quiet perseverance and patience in the fight for farm worker rights," said Steelworker President Lynn Williams. "I regret that the past has been so difficult for him and for farm workers — that the UFW struggle has been opposed at almost every point. We are going to

do everything we can to support the grape boycott," Williams said.

"When President Williams first introduced Chavez, the delegates stood and cheered," said Dick Miller, communications director for the Steelworkers union. "After seeing the 'Wrath of Grapes' film, our delegates signed almost 2,000 pledge cards on the spot."

In his speech, Chavez reminded the delegates that 20 years ago, over 17 million Americans united in a boycott that turned the act of refusing to buy grapes into a powerful force against poverty, injustice and pesticides such as DDT, DDE and Dieldrin.

"And now we still seek to limit the spread of poisons in our fields and in our food," Chavez said.

The National Director of the Canadian Steelworkers, Gerard Docquier, also renewed his delegation's endorsement of the boycott and offered help and office space to UFW organizers in Toronto. ♡

New "Wrath of Grapes" Film Depicts Deaths and Birth Defects of Children

Readers of *Food and Justice* can now write us to get a free brochure about the new UFW *Wrath of Grapes* film detailing the horrors of pesticide poisoning on everyone, especially children.

The 14-minute color film, narrated by TV actor Mike Farrell (*M.A.S.H.*), translates into unforgettable scenes the demands of the current "Wrath of Grapes" boycott of all California table grapes: (1) free and fair elections, (2) good-faith bargaining by growers, (3) a joint UFW-grower project to test grapes at city supermarkets for pesticide residues, and (4) the banning of the five deadliest pesticides growers are now using on grapes.

Especially dramatic are interviews with farm worker parents whose children were born armless and legless or with other severe birth defects. And city parents poignantly express grief over their children dying — several have already died — of cancer from deadly pesticides leaching into city water systems from nearby vineyards and fields. Also shown is the danger to townspeople when pesticides drift over cities after being applied by crop-dusting airplanes.

Viewers will be shocked to see live footage of grower thugs beating up farm workers, knocking over voting booths, and stealing the ballots during a "free and fair" election. They will be moved to hear Dolores Lopez tell how her son was murdered by a company gunman on the same day he voted for the UFW in another "free and fair" election.

The film's realism, dramatic impact, and urgency about the pesticide peril threatening all Americans make it ideal for both large audiences and small groups in homes and offices.

Hundreds of copies of the film are now available for wide distribution — free. Send for a free brochure. Today.



Pesticide poisoning victims featured in UFW film: (from top to bottom) Felipe Franco, Salvador DeAnda and Amalia Larios. ♡



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