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JOURNEY'S END
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A mile-long line of 3500 cheering demonstrators, banners flying high, marched to the steps of California's Capitol yesterday to demand "a new social order" for the farm worker.

They were met, as they paraded into tree-shaded Capitol Park, by another 4000 supporters of the cause which has inspired 80 of the marchers to tramp 300 miles through the fertile San Joaquin valley.

But missing, to the outspoken disgust of the crowd, was Governor Edmund G. Brown – the man the marchers had most wanted to see when they set out 25 days ago from the little town of Delano in Kern county.

Although endorsing their demands for State laws to give them the rights granted non-farm workers, Brown had told march leaders he would not break a promise to spend the day with his family in Palm Springs, at the home of singer Frank Sinatra.

The spirited crowd, pressing about the Capitol steps for a three-hour rally, gave a noisy ovation to the Rev. Wayne C. Hartmire for his attack on the Governor's refusal to be there.

The Rev. Mr. Hartmire, of the Protest Council of Churches' migrant ministry, denounced Brown for "turning his back" on farm workers and "embracing...suffering and social unrest."

"Thank God for the hope of this day," said the Rev. Mr. Hartmire, as he looked on the demonstration, unprecedented in the history of California's large Mexican-American community.

Dolores Huerta, the fiery vice president of the National Farm Workers Association – the march sponsor – angrily demanded that the Governor immediately call a special session of the Legislature to consider the marchers' demands.

They want laws to guarantee poverty-stricken farm workers a minimum wage, social insurance, the right to bargain collectively with their employers, and other protections

Citing the support received along the route by marchers from fellow workers who supplied them food and shelter, Mrs. Huerta said the march and the seven-month-long strike in Kern and Tulare counties that inspired it are "only beginnings."

Speaker after speaker echoed the marchers' legal demands, and pledged support to the strike by the Farm Workers Association and the AFL-CIO's Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee against grape growers from whom they seek the same rights.

The crowd, in an optimistic festive mood despite occasional sprinkles of rain, filled the void between speeches with singing and the now familiar chants of their cause – wishing long live to their strike, their leaders, and to Mexico's patron saint, Our Lady of Guadalupe. Her likeness stood in the place of honor before them.

The Rev. Mr. Hartmire was but one of dozens of State and national church leaders – Catholic, Protestant and Jewish who were here to back the marchers.

Also on hand were top union leaders, from the AFL-CIO, the Teamsters, and the International Longshoremen and Warehousemen's Union; civil rights officials; the State's chief Mexican-American spokesmen; and several Democratic office holders and candidates.

The political backers included Congressman Philip Burton, Assemblyman John Burton, Supervisor Terry Francois, and gubernatorial candidate Carlton Goodlett, all of San Francisco.

Most of these supporters marched with the demonstrators from West Sacramento on the last five-mile leg of their trek from the Delano headquarters of the Farm Workers Association.

Their journey was reminiscent of the traditional Mexican pilgrimages combining religious penance with protest by the poor. On the final day, demonstrators marched four abreast from a Catholic school where they had spent the night and held Easter morning church services.

Two horsemen led the way, in front of standard bearers carrying a tapestry of Our Lady of Guadalupe and the United States and Mexican flags. On their heels, a barefoot marcher carried a large white cross intertwined with flowers.

A drummer tapped out a snappy cadence. He was followed by Mexican-American farm workers, waving picket signs and the bright crimson banners of their association; nuns, priests, ministers; old-time union leaders chomping on cigars; young civil rights advocates, children, on foot or in their parent's arms.

Some marchers wore rumpled work clothes, some the colorful suits of the Mexican charro, some their Easter Sunday best. They had come from all over Northern California, a few from as far away as New Mexico and Arizona.

Singing, chanting and joking, they made their way past crowds of well-wishers, constantly exchanging shouts of "viva la huelga (strike)" with them.

Sacramento City Councilman Richard Marriott greeted the marchers as they crossed the Sacramento River bridge into the capital. Guitar and accordion music broke out, he

welcomed them, praised their cause as “just,” their progress as “great,” and gave strike leader Cesar Chavez the key to the city.

After the Capitol rally, marchers took one last journey – to the church here that bears the name of their patron saint, where they held a candlelight service and were blessed by Bishop Alden Bell of the Sacramento Diocese.

Then it was fiesta time. Thousands jammed South Side Park adjacent to the church to hear mariachi music, watch dancers and stuff themselves with hot dogs and flautas.

Some lined up inside a hall where free beer and tequila were dispensed by Schenley Industries – a prime target of strikers until last week when it recognized the Farm Workers Association as the employee bargaining agent.

As darkness fell, the weary vanguard which had walked all 25 days began climbing into trucks and buses for the long trip home to Delano.

“We’re overwhelmed,” said Cesar Chavez, “very happy and proud. The march has done more than even we expected.”