

Farm Union Seeks Help of Mexicans In Coast Protest

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CALEXICO, Calif., May 18—The midday sun settled like a thick blanket over the Imperial Valley, baking and cracking the brown earth at the side of Highway 86, trying, it seemed, to suffocate the vast green fields of sugar beets irrigated by a stream of sluggish brown water.

Willie Varientos, 61 years old, and a farm worker all his adult life, trudged through the dust at the side of the road, holding aloft a red flag with a white circle in the center that surrounded a fearsome black eagle.

Willie Varientos was one of hundreds of people who marched 12 miles today from El Centro to this town on the Mexican border, the last leg of a 100-mile journey that has wound for eight days through the deserts and lush farmland of Southern California.

The march was called by the United Farm Workers Organizing Committee, a group which, under the leadership of Cesar Chavez, has been trying for the last seven years to unionize grape pickers and other agricultural workers.

The purpose of the march was to ask the cooperation of Mexican workers who commute across the border every day willing to work for far lower wages than the union demands.

Their cooperation will be particularly crucial in the coming weeks when Mr. Chavez calls a strike against grape growers in the Coachella Valley, about 75 miles north of here.

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