

Letter from Mike Miller to Cesar Chavez. 1966

May 5, 1966

Mr. Cesar Chavez
National Farm Workers Association
P.O. Box 894
Delano, California

Dear Cesar,

I am sorry to be so long writing the “Minutes” of our discussion of several weeks ago, but here goes:

1. You will come to the Bay Area to spend the day with SNCC Staff and Friends of SNCC, talking about FWA, support work and so on. I spoke with Jim yesterday about a weekend — would that be suitable?
2. You will talk to Jack Ybarra about treating the Friends of SNCC Growers Groups — that is finding some way for them to support FWA while retaining their identity as Friends of SNCC.
3. 4,000 of the Di Giorgio Boycott Supplements will go to Dick Booth of the Citizens Crusade Against Poverty, as the FWA mailing they have promised to do. (I am afraid that you thought I was saying both instead of Booth — Terry will be in touch with you about this.)
4. 15 to 25 Students will be assigned to experimental Boycott project in San Francisco and the Bay Area under my direction. Since I have heard all kinds of gossip regarding what is supposed to have transpired in our Delano Meeting, let me state simply what my understanding of the situation is. On the basis of his experience, Jim had a model of how he thought Summer Project Boycott work ought to progress. I had a different approach. You agreed with him, and I am not particularly interested in working in the Boycott approach that you guys have agreed upon, so I am not going to become very involved in the Summer Project. It should be obvious that this is no way says I am not interested in finding other ways of working with FWA. By the way, we had a kind of informal staff meeting with Jim when he was up here and my impression that no one on our staff is interested in the Summer Project is correct.
5. We are to itemize our expenses incurred in work with FWA so that we can be reimbursed—such itemization is necessary for your bookkeeping purposes.

6. You will write to SDS "New Left Notes" some kind of letter indicating FWA's appreciation for SDS's support on the campuses across the country. (New Left Notes
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is an international SKS publication that goes to their student mailing list of about 6,000 people.) The following is a suggestion of what you might write to them:

Mr. Paul Booth, Secretary
SDS
1103 East 63rd Street
Chicago, Illinois

Dear Paul,

I am writing to express the deep appreciation the Farm Workers Association of Delano feel for the support given our strike by thousands of students across the country. It is our opinion that the Schenley consumer boycott was largely responsible for the willingness of Schenley liquors to finally negotiate with us. The Farm Workers have enjoyed working with the Students as well as benefiting from them.

In our Boycott staff planning meeting, as we listen to reports from cities across the country, we found that it was SDS students who provided much of the manpower for our picket lines.

From your point of view, I hope the students have gained a new sense of what the Movement among low-income people in America is about through our experience with the Farm Worker Boycott. I hope the students will find in their work with the Farm Workers a source of inspiration for their work.

Now, when we have a new challenge – the Di Giorgio Corporation, there is still much to be done. The strike is far from finished.

Viva la Huelga,

Cesar Chavez

7. A similar letter to James Foreman, c/o Elizabeth Sutherland, SNCC, 1005 Fifth Avenue, Room 803, New York City, New York, expressing thanks for the help from SNCC Staff and Friends of SNCC Groups would help us also

You might be interested in the following from John Lewis,

SNCC National Chairman in Norway – he writes, “Even in Europe people are talking about the strike – good luck”.

Jim Foreman, our executive Secretary writes, “congratulations on the March and the Strike Success”.

I think that kind of brings us up to date. Like everybody else, I have kind of shared the assumption that a Charter as an International from the AFL-CIO was the best that FWA could hope for. On the basis of conversations with a very good Longshoremen friend of mine, who is quite a student of labor history (he is just a rank and filer in Local 10), I now have some questions and wonder if you have given any consideration to a Teamster or Longshoreman hook-up or remaining as an independent with Fraternal relations with Teamsters, Longshoremen, other independent Unions and go International in the AFL-CIO? Specifically, would you be interested in meeting with local Lou Goldblatt to talk about where FWA goes as far as trade union hood-up?

The enclosed memo from Claude Ramsey, State of Mississippi, AFL-CIO Secretary, will give you some idea of AFL-CIO things in the South. I think you will find it an interesting document.

Looking forward to your trip up here.

Freedom,

Mike

MM:eb

Enclosures

P.S.: I have a list of people who participated in a conference on organizing in the South. A lot of them have done work with SNCC in the South and are now working at other things, but might be interested in joining your organizing staff. Marshall probably knows more about that conference than I. Highlander Research Center is where the conference was held. If you are interested in the list of participants, I would be happy to send them to you.