

LA LUCHA

la voz del boicoteo



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June 15, 1975

Farm Workers Say:

"Boycott Until We Win Contracts"

On June 5 farm workers in California won an historic victory when Governor Brown signed into law a bill that establishes secret ballot union election procedures for the fields.

In the Coachella Valley the 1975 harvest has begun and scab grapes are arriving at Lucky and other Bay Area stores. The growers are calling for an end to the boycotts of non-UFW grapes, lettuce, and Gallo wine. But farm workers throughout the state are calling for an intensification of the boycotts while they prepare for the coming elections

Why?

The new law is a tremendous step forward, but it is just that, a step. The law guarantees elections, a right farm workers have never had. But no law, not this one or any other, can guarantee strong union contracts, and strong contracts are what farm workers have been fighting for over the past ten years.

Experience in that fight has shown that only power forces the growers to respond to the demands of their workers--the power of the workers united in support of the UFW and the power of the boycotts backed by millions of people in the Bay Area and all over the US and Canada.

It was this power in the first place that led the growers to agree to the law. The UFW did not die as the growers had hoped when they brought in the Teamsters. Rather, the boycotts were renewed and have become an ever-tightening vise on the growers' profits. Faced with this force which they could not stop, the growers have finally agreed to let the workers vote.

Even so, the law will not change the growers' traditional hatred of militant unionism in the fields. Bitter experience shows that if they think they can get away with it the growers will try to stall the election procedure and tie it up in the courts. They may even try a last ditch effort to sign more sweetheart contracts before the law goes into effect in late August.

A powerful boycott will prevent this sabotage from happening.

Once the first elections have been held this fall, the boycott becomes even more important. The power of the boycott will enable the workers to put forth their contract demands during negotiations from a position of strength.

The demands which are the most important to the workers are the ones which the growers have always resisted: the union hiring hall to put an end to the labor contractors, the workers' grievance and safety committees, better wages, the medical plan.



Elections in the Fields!

These farm workers and more than 1000 others celebrated their victory on the steps of the state capitol in Sacramento on May 26 when final agreement on the farm labor bill was announced by all sides. In this issue of *La Lucha* farm workers from Coachella, Delano, Salinas, and Gallo talk about the upsurge of enthusiasm in their areas that has resulted from the passage of the new law and the coming of the first round of elections this fall.

A powerful boycott will insure that the growers sign contracts that really protect the workers.

After the Wagner Act was passed in 1935 to give industrial workers the right to these same union elections, a great wave of strikes and boycotts was needed to build the industrial unions. In recent years in the south textile unions have won many elections but never been able to sign contracts because of company power. After the Farah pants workers voted for a union it took a two year nationwide boycott to force the company to sign a contract.

Now the grape growers, Gallo, and the lettuce companies must feel the boycott bear down upon them even harder than in the past. In the Bay Area we must demand that Lucky's remove the Gallo and the scab grapes. Our efforts to build the boycott will reinforce the farm workers' strength in the coming elections. Join us on the picketline: boycott non-UFW grapes and Gallo wine!!

Nationwide Boycott Report

These are some of the large supermarket chains around the country which will not be selling scab grapes this summer in cooperation with the UFW boycott:

All New England states: A & P
Cleveland: Fisher-Fazio
Mississippi and Georgia: A & P
Atlanta: Colonial
Montreal: Steinberg's and 1100 other stores
Bay Area: Co-op and Cala

Next: LUCKY'S

Elections in the Valley:**"A Great Step Forward in Our History"**

Jose Gutierrez

Gallo

LIVINGSTON -- Along with hundreds of other farm workers, Gallo strikers Jose and Katerina Gutierrez went to every committee hearing in Sacramento over the past six weeks to support the passage of a law for secret ballot elections in the fields. Usually they took their three young children as well.

"This law is very important to us," Jose says, "and I felt very proud to see so many of us together and interested in the same thing. The Union has been bringing us together, unifying us, and that's why we went to Sacramento to observe and put pressure on Mr. Brown and the legislators so they could see we were with Cesar Chavez."

The Gutierrez's went on strike in June of 1973 with almost all of the other Gallo workers in Livingston when the company invited in the Teamsters to avoid renewing its UFW contract.

They and seventy other families were eventually evicted by Gallo from the labor camp where they lived. After the summer was over the whole family moved to San Francisco for eight months of boycott work before returning to Livingston.

"Here in Livingston, what we are thinking is that this is a great step forward in our history as farm workers," says Jose. "We are talking with the other workers here, not just those at Gallo but at the other ranches as well, ranches that never had contracts like we did but who want them."

"The migrant workers are beginning to arrive here in the valley. One man from Texas said he was very grateful for everything that people had done to outlaw the short hoe, and he wanted to know who had started it all. So we explained to him that it was the UFW that began pushing for this, many years back, and he was very pleased."

"Gallo knows that the workers will vote for Cesar Chavez and not the Teamsters. But we are going to continue the boycott like we have for the past year until we either win an election and get a contract or lose an election. Gallo said it wasn't true that the Union has helped us and that the boycott wasn't hurting him. But I know within me that the boycott is hurting him because if it wasn't he never would have agreed to these elections."

Salinas

SALINAS -- "One thing we have to be careful of is that the growers will try to pull some things on us," says Ernesto Moreno of the ranch committee under the UFW contract at Interharvest, the largest lettuce company in the US. "That's why we are explaining to the people very carefully what the law says."

"We've been going to the fields to talk about what the law means for us as farm workers, and at every company we get a good response. People's spirits are very, very high ever since the law passed."

Interharvest has had a contract with the UFW ever since the big general strike in Salinas in 1970. Cesar Chavez and many other farm workers were sent to jail because of that strike, which involved more than 8000 workers.

Most of the companies held on to the contracts they had signed with the Teamsters, however. The California Supreme Court later ruled that the companies had signed with the Teamsters even though they knew that the Teamsters didn't represent any of the workers. But at that time there was no law to force the growers to recognize the union that the workers did want.

Under the UFW contract at Interharvest the 1800 workers elect their own leadership, called the ranch committee, to deal with the company.

Ernesto is one of six members of this committee at Interharvest. "We'll ask the workers at the Teamster ranches to set up their own committees to gather petitions for the elections. We had twenty buses full of people from here who went to Sacramento for the last committee hearing, so there's already a lot of excitement about it."

"Usually the growers try to keep the people who live in the labor camps scared by threatening to kick them out, but already we see that the people in the camps aren't afraid any more because the elections are part of the law."

"Still I think the growers will try to take the people and the Union to court over procedures. They'll try to slow things down in court and maybe try to stop elections from happening this year. But we won't let them do that, because there's too much at stake for us."



Ernesto Moreno



Pablo Lopez

Delano

DELANO -- The United Farm Workers Union began in Delano in 1965, but many of its members here went through union struggles for years before that. One of these workers is Pablo Lopez, who later worked under the first contract that the UFW ever won, with Schenley, in 1966.

"But that company was bought out by Buttes Gas and Oil," Pablo explains, "and in 1972 they refused to renew our contract so we went on strike and then to the boycott." During that strike Pablo and other strikers were arrested three or four times because of court orders that restricted picketing at the fields. Vigilante groups attacked and destroyed a nearby UFW office.

After the strike Pablo spent two years living in Wisconsin and New York City asking the support of the city people for the farm workers' struggle in Delano.

"I feel that it was all worth it," he says. "We have won this legislation because we struggled for many years, and with this bill we'll have an election at White River Farms [the name of the ranch owned by Buttes]. Those of us who went on strike will be able to vote, and I'm sure we'll win easily."

"People here in Delano are just eager to vote. We've been getting more and more people coming to our weekly meetings. We have people coming into the office and we get a lot of phone calls. The people want to know how to go about having an election."

"We tell them they should talk to everybody else where they work and then when the peak season comes we'll ask for elections."

In 1974 the Delano growers found that the boycott left them with more unsold grapes than during the most effective year of the first grape boycott, 1969. "We're not about to stop the boycott, either," says Pablo. "If we did we could win elections but the growers wouldn't negotiate in good faith. We saw what happened in Salinas in 1971 when we stopped the lettuce boycott and we bargained in good faith for eight months and all of a sudden the growers said, just forget it."

"So this time we're not going to give up the boycott until we have contracts. And not just any contracts but contracts with the job security of the hiring hall. They'll want us to give up the hiring hall but we'll never do that, because that's what it's all about."

Self-determination in the Fields

How the Elections Will Take Place

How will farm workers vote for union representation under the new state law signed by Governor Brown on June 5?

PEAK SEASON: The elections must take place at the peak harvest season of a crop, when the migrant workers are present at a ranch. This insures that the largest number of workers possible will be able to vote.

At peak season, an election must take place within seven days of the time that 50 percent of the workers present a petition demanding such a vote. The election must take place within two days, however, if more than half of the workers go out on strike in addition to presenting the petition. The short time requirement is necessary to make sure that in crops like melons, whose harvest season is very short, the workers are still able to choose a union.

DECERTIFICATION: An election may take place at any ranch where there has not been an election in the past year. At ranches where there are now existing contracts, the workers may request elections to throw out, or "decertify" the union that holds the contracts. This will allow the workers at the ranches where the growers signed sweetheart contracts with Teamsters to vote them out and bring in the UFW if they wish. Workers who went on strike as far back as August, 1972, will be able to vote.

INDUSTRIAL UNIT: All the agricultural workers at a ranch will vote as members of the same "industrial unit," meaning there will be only one union at each ranch. An effort in the legislature to allow the workers to be divided into "craft units" such as field workers, tractor drivers, etc., was defeated.

If craft units had been allowed the historical pattern of racism in the fields would have been written into law. Minority workers would have been frozen into the low paying stoop labor jobs while the higher paying, more respected machine jobs would have remained entirely in the hands of white workers. Furthermore, because of these divisions the overall power of the workers would have been considerably weakened.



During the legislative committee hearings on the farm labor bill farm workers came from all over the state to show their support for the proposals made by the UFW. Car caravans from as far away as San Diego and Calexico, 15 hours on the road, would come to Sacramento and return, and come back again the next week. In some areas farm workers paid for charter buses out of their own pockets to be able to attend the hearings.

All UFW contracts in the past have used the single "industrial unit" structure, and at these ranches minority workers have begun moving up the job ladder. The new law requires this arrangement and for this reason will be an effective weapon against racism.

ELECTIONS: The elections themselves will be supervised by a state-level 5-person commission appointed by the Governor. The Commission will "certify" the union that wins an election and then the grower will be required to negotiate with that union. No contracts can be signed except by a union that has won an election, to prevent the kind of sweetheart deals that have plagued the farm worker movement in the past.

STRIKES AND BOYCOTTS: Following an election the grower will have to negotiate with

the workers, but during that time the union has the right to use certain economic pressure to overcome the traditional resistance on the part of agricultural companies to bargain in good faith or to sign contracts. The farm workers at the ranch may strike in conjunction with negotiations. And they can picket stores where the company's produce is sold, either asking people not to shop there or simply not to buy the produce itself, until a contract is signed.

The procedures established in this law have never been available to farm workers before. They are things that the UFW has fought for over many years of organizing experience, and together make up what Union attorney Jerry Cohen called "the best labor law in the country," one that will help guarantee self-determination for farm workers.

Coachella: Boycotters Tear-Gassed

COACHELLA -- Even as election legislation neared its final passage in Sacramento, farm workers in the Coachella Valley were stepping up their boycott of Gallo wine. A night of police tear gas in nearby Indio didn't stop them from cleaning out five stores in three days.

No elections under the law will be possible in Coachella until 1976, but UFW members said they are working to help the Union win its contracts elsewhere in the state. "We picket against Gallo because the strikers there are union members and so are we," says Rudy Reyes, who works under UFW contract at the Freedman ranch and is picket captain in Coachella. "Their problem is our problem.

"In fact, there more Gallo gets hurt now, the easier he will be to negotiate with later, even after we have an election, because after the election he knows we will still have the power of the boycott and the strike. The stronger you are the better contract you get."

On May 27, Indio police arrested 17 farm workers picketing the Brown Jug Liquor Store and then broke up the rest of the picket line with tear gas. An hour later they tear-gassed a protest vigil held outside the police station, and then followed the farm workers through the town

lobbying more tear gas at them. The next day, however, the picket line was even bigger, and by the day after the Brown Jug and four other stores in town had taken off the scab wine.

Freedman worker Enrique Lara said afterwards, "The boycott is a way to open the door to people who can't know what a union is, who don't know how the United Farm Workers operates. There are still many people who don't know about unions' they are lied to and confused. Instead of being told the truth, they are told the opposite.

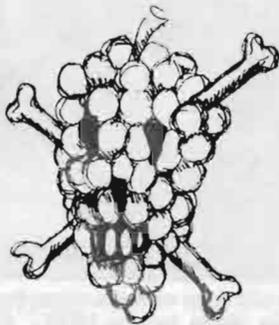
"Last Sunday we had a march here to celebrate the new law, and the people responded beautifully. From their houses they yelled to us, 'Viva Chavez!' I think they have seen in the news that the new law is in favor of the farm worker.

"We are fighting down here with the boycott, and in the Bay Area the boycott helps us by explaining to people about the goals of our union, the benefits it has given to us, the reason we are struggling, the suffering we have lived through, the harm done to us by the labor contractors--all the problems we have had in the fields. And that's why we ask people not to buy the grapes that aren't from our union."

COMING EVENTS

June 21st...

STOP THE GRAPES!



- * Car caravan from San Jose to San Francisco
- * March on Lucky's

- Assemble at 9:30 in San Jose at Lucky's (Story and King)
- Drive to San Francisco for noon rally at Lafayette Park (Laguna and Sacramento Sts.)
- Afternoon picket at Lucky's (Laguna and Eddy)

Boycott Non-UFW Grapes!

June 28th...

PICKET JULIO GALLO!

"Wines and Vines" Magazine will give Julio Gallo its "MAN OF THE YEAR" Award on June 28th in San Francisco.

Let's give him the welcome he deserves!

*Hyatt Regency Hotel
Market and California Sts.
downtown San Francisco
6:00 pm*

Boycott Gallo!



A New Film...

Fighting For Our Lives



An incredible story of a people's determination, struggle and sacrifice

The strength of the farm worker movement is vividly portrayed in a new one-hour color film about the 1973 UFW grape strike. The following showings of the film **Fighting For Our Lives** are scheduled for the Bay Area in upcoming weeks:

San Francisco: Friday July 11, 8 pm at Glide Memorial Church, Taylor and Ellis. Also: The San Francisco Mime Troupe's new act about agribusiness, "Frijoles." \$2.00.

Oakland: Friday June 20, 8 pm at APUMEC Hall, 3256 East 14th St. Also, music by Jose Luis Arozco. \$2.00.

San Jose and Palo Alto: dates yet to be announced, call the San Jose Boycott office, 292-4651 for details.

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE: _____

_____ I want to participate in boycott picket lines.

_____ Enclosed is \$_____ to help boycott non-UFW grapes and Gallo wine

send to:

UFW
316 29th St.
San Francisco, Ca. 94131
415-824-6616

UFW
1422 8th Ave.
Oakland, Ca. 94601
415-444-6008

UFW
P.O. Box 373
San Jose, Ca. 95103
408-292-4651



Work For the Farmworkers This Summer

Gallo and the grape growers spend a lot of money trying to keep their workers disorganized. We fight them with sacrifice and a lot of hard work.

The power of our boycotts helped us win this new legislation, and it will be crucial to gaining strong contracts after we win elections.

Organizing the boycott is exciting and creative. Join us for the summer, either as a full time volunteer for \$5 a week plus room and board, or part time. We need you in San Francisco, the East Bay, San Jose, or in our new offices in San Mateo and Marin County. Already we have 25 new volunteers but we need 25 more.

The work begins in June with a training session conducted by experienced organizers. Call us at 826-7735 in San Francisco or 326-3816 in Palo Alto.

