Farm workers killed, injured in Florida 'accidents'

E I Malcriado investigates Ayala, High and Mighty Farms, CHP

Conversations with the grieving families and farm workers

Memorial mass, march, funeral

La Causa mobilizes in Calexico

Editorial: NO MORE DEATH TRIPS!

Drowned in ‘prison of seats’

19 lettuce workers die in contractor bus massacre

ELYTHE, Ca. — A slow and watery death came suddenly to nineteen farm workers before dawn January 15 when the labor contractor bus taking them to work plunged into an unmarked and unguarded irrigation ditch several miles southwest of Blythe. 28 farm workers were injured.

The bus, owned by labor contractor Jesus Ayala, had already travelled nearly 100 miles that morning from the California town of Calexico. The workers were enroute to the backbreaking work of the short hoe in the lettuce fields of High and Mighty Farms, near Blythe.

At least 18 of the workers, six of the dead and seven of the injured, were current or former members of the United Farm Workers. The UFW sponsored an unprecedented mass march across the international border on January 19 in memory of all those killed in the massacre.

A ‘prison’ of seats

According to survivors, the bus went off the road because it was travelling too fast to make the sharp right-hand turn at the corner of 20th Ave. and Rannells Blvd. It plunged headfirst into the drainage ditch and fell onto its side.

The force of the impact in the ditch tore the seats loose from the floor of the bus, trapping the victims in what one survivor described as a ‘prison’ of seats. Passengers in the first rows of seats were immediately thrown forward, crushing the driver against the steering wheel. They in turn were trapped by the weight of the seats and people behind them. When the bus fell over onto its side, all the seats and people on the right side fell onto those on the left, further trapping them.

All nineteen workers who were killed were seated on the left side of the bus.

Water: ‘the sound of death’

‘When we began to hear the sound of the water, everyone began to scream,’ said Andres Fierro, one of the survivors, ‘for it was the sound of death itself. It was terrible. The water caused the deaths. And those that didn’t escape drowned because they were trapped.’

‘Then Ayala’s son told us to get back to work. He didn’t want us to talk about it, he said it was over. You know, he didn’t want us to talk about it because he didn’t want us to work slower.

‘We were weeding lettuce and he told the people to keep moving and not to talk. To him the money was more important than the lives of the people who were going to work for him.’

Ayala’s son accused

Workers who were aboard a second Ayala bus accused Ayala’s son Clifford, a foreman, of the deaths. According to survivors, Ayala’s son told them to ‘get back to work’ after the accident. He didn’t want them to talk about it, he said it was over.

‘Then Ayala’s son told us to get back to work. He didn’t want us to talk about it, he said it was over. You know, he didn’t want us to talk about it because he didn’t want us to work slower. We were weeding lettuce and he told the people to keep moving and not to talk. To him the money was more important than the lives of the people who were going to work for him.’

Those that didn’t escape drowned because they were trapped.

‘At first I couldn’t find my way out because there were so many people piled on top of me. And the seats were piled around us like a prison, and they stuck to our skins. I couldn’t free my hands from below the seat, they were in the water with my legs too.

‘Everyone was stuck, how could we get out? To see the people as we called for help screaming ‘Help me!’, everyone scared to death and in pain!’

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Angry farm worker reaction to massacre

of trying to prevent them from helping the victims in the ditch. According to Pablo Lara, the second bus arrived at the scene about 15 minutes after the massacre and the driver was

ordered by Ayala to continue on to work.

Lara said he and six other workers forced the driver to stop about a mile beyond the ditch and ran back to help: 'A woman who was with us stood up and said, 'Stop! I think my son is in that ditch.' We got off and hurried back to the ditch and told the foreman that we weren't going to work.'

'But it was already too late when we returned. Everyone was already dead, already drowned. We were weeding lettuce and he told the people to keep moving and not to talk. To him the money was more important than the lives of the people who were going to work for him.'

Chavez blames company, contactor, patrol

In Calexico, UFW President Cesar Chavez accused High and Mighty Farms and Jesus Ayala of criminal negligence in failing to provide for the safety of the workers in the bus.

He said that the use of small metal screws rather than strong bolts to anchor the seats, as well as the tired and over-worked condition of the driver, were responsible for the crash and the deaths.

The driver, Pablo Arrellano of Calexico, worked an 18-hour day. Chavez said, that included 7 1/2 hours of field work, 6-7 hours of driving, and three hours of preparing the bus for travel and finding workers in Calexico.

Chavez also demanded an investigation into the crash by the Riverside County Grand Jury and the enactment of strong legislation requiring inspection of farm labor buses.

He blamed the California Highway Patrol for failing to conduct regular inspection of these buses. ‘Why do we not get the same protection as passengers riding on a Greyhound bus?’ he asked a meeting of 700 farm workers in Calexico on January 17. Ninety percent of the labor buses in California could not pass inspection and are not fit to be on the road.’

He also said a CHP report on the accident was incomplete and contradictory, and demanded further investigation into the condition of the bus. The report found several major mechanical problems with the bus but contended that they were not related to the cause of the crash.

The inside of a flat bus after removal from the drainage ditch shows the seats which trapped and drowned 19 farm workers. Seats were fastened with metal screws less than one-half inch long to a floor that was so thin that only one thread in each screw actually held seats. (See page 5 for related articles.)

The massacre touched off a massive and angry reaction and an outpouring of public sympathy by farm labor in the Imperial Valley.

The United Farm Workers of America organized a march of 7000 persons across the border January 19. Thousands were prevented from entering the U.S. to begin the march joined when it crossed the border, singing ‘Solidarity Forever.’

Workers at the Calexico UFW hiring hall launched a safety campaign aimed at eliminating unsafe conditions in the remaining contractor buses.

Over 700 farm workers met in a local elementary school two days earlier on January 17, and formed a Committee of Assistance to aid the survivors and the families of the dead.

A moment of silence at the end of the meeting began a nationwide week of mourning for the victims.

Within three weeks after the massacre, nearly $2,300 in voluntary contributions were collected and distributed to the families by the Committee.

No knowledge, no comment

The morning after the massacre, Supervisor Angel Soto was parked near the ditch where the 19 workers had been killed. He waited from dawn until about 10:00 a.m. for an Ayala bus from Mexico.

Ayala had promised the company ‘another bunch’ that day, Soto said, ‘But there’s no way they would come.’

Jesus Ayala refused comment on the details of the massacre but insisted that the bus was in good mechanical condition. ‘I don’t know what happened,’ he said, ‘but I don’t want any trouble.’

Andy Sarkisian, ranch foreman for High and Mighty since 1953, told El Malcriado that he felt no responsibility for the workers who died. ‘I don’t even know who they are,’ he said. ‘I pay the contractors to take care of that.’

Sarkisian said his company had a contract with the Teamsters Union but he didn’t know if anyone on the bus was a Teamster member.

A Teamster spokesman in Salford said six passengers in the bus were members of the Teamsters, but he declined to say whether they were among the dead or the injured and refused to reveal their names.

He also refused to state what if any measures the Teamsters were taking to assist the survivors and the families of the dead, or to prevent such massacres in the future.
Recall petitions called valid

**Arizona officials broke law**

Recall election now

The Union wrote to Nelson on January 23 demanding that a new recall election be set up immediately, since his ruling had been found illegal. Nelson has yet to reply, Rutkowski said.

Rutkowski and Union attorney Bruce Meyerson have filed a $3 million lawsuit charging that Nelson and other state officials conspired to use their governmental authority to deny Arizona citizens the right to vote on the ballot.

The human element

"We'll win a lot of money from the state with the suit," said Jim Drake, "but the state doesn't seem to care as long as they keep Williams in office for another year."

"We registered over 100,000 new voters in the process of gathering signatures. Not many people know it, but by doing this we really changed the political structure in the state," Williams said. "It has brought the people into the political system." Williams said the signatures had been gathered from all over the state with the suit," said Jim Drake, "but the state doesn't seem to care as long as they keep Williams in office for another year."

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**ILWU stops Gallo on Oakland docks**

Oakland, Ca. -- In solidarity with the UFW's Gallo wine boycott, clerks from the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union Local 10 and 34 refused to tally a cargo of 4,113 Gallo grape concentrate imported from Spain January 23. When two fork lift drivers, pro-UFW members of Oakland Local 70 of the Teamsters, came to load pallets of concentrate, they said "we can't unload without a clerk."

The shipment consisted of 2,666 metal, oil-sized drums of concentrate that had arrived on the freighter Grebbysky on January 14 at the Oakland pier. Fairbanks Trucking Company, a subsidiary of Gallo had been transporting the drums daily to Gallo's plant near Madera.

UFW supporters picked the entrance to the pier while Gallo strikers formed a semi-ring around the 700 lb. drums near the front of the Oakland pier, and remained there until the pier closed down at 5 pm.

The clerks, members of the ILWU, told picketers that ships arrive at the pier with heavy shipments of grape concentrate until June of every year. A clerk was told by one of the truck drivers that one drum alone makes 800 gallons of wine.

One leaking metal drum caught a plastic container that resembled molasses. An ILWU clerk remarked, "it's not like the Gallo ads on TV showing a dark, bandanna man on a white stallion riding through Gallo's California Vineyard savoring the quality of each grape."
Worker safety "not in the contract"

"The workers on that bus? Hell, I don't know who they are. I don't know if they were Teamsters or what because I don't know anything about them. I pay the labor contractor to take care of that, I don't pay them."

The speaker is Andy Sarkisian, general foreman of High and Mighty Farms near Blythe, one of the main producers of Indian melons in the mid-1970s. The fields the workers abused were owned by high and mighty farms located near the city of Fresno, Sarkisian was speaking to an El Malcriado reporter last month outside the company's packing shed in Blythe, to the obvious displeasure of a Teamster organizer who was present with his shiny green radio-equipped station wagon.

"Becoming absentee Kay Kayan lives in Fresno, Sarkisian runs the ranch, which has had a contract with the Teamsters since the spring of 1973. Rather than hiring workers from around Blythe, Kayian said the contractors didn't like the Teamsters because they were "a hiring hall," he explained.

"The contractor tells me what he pays the workers. That's about $16 or $17 a day these days. I pay him that much plus about $20 for the fumes. Usually more than one foot away, to break the strike."

"If the workers want to find out about the contract," he said, "they can ask the Teamsters."

"I want to sign up the workers," he explained, and some (and some don't. But mostly they say, 'Why don't you just leave them alone?"

"I think one union is no different than another. With these unions it's not money, it's that they're always trying to tell you what to do. With Chavez, the worker is always right. We have problems with the Teamsters, but not as bad as what we've been through."

"It looks like Communism to me," Kayian said.

"It's not in the contract!"

"The problem with the Teamsters," according to Sarkisian, "is that they have too many organizers who don't know their ass from a hole in the ground. They give phony information to the workers because it makes it easier to sign them up."

"They say the grower will do this and the grower will do that, but it's not in the contract. Then the workers come and complain but all we can say is that it's not in the contract!"

As farm workers board the contract buses in Calexico each morning, the bus massacre is still the major topic of conversation. And the angry questions frequently asked are, "Where were the Teamsters? Aren't the Teamsters supposed to provide for the health and safety of farm workers?"

The Teamsters remain silent. Perhaps they could only answer, "It's not in the contract!"

Boycott humbles High & Mighty!

"We spent $600 an acre putting 388 acres of lettuce this year," says High and Mighty Farms general foreman Andy Sarkisian, "but we haven't gotten a penny back. There's too much lettuce around and there's no market for it."  

"There's no justice, is there, Andy?"

South Bay, Fla. -- The sun had just risen on the first Monday of the New Year when a windowless van packed full with about 130 Jamaican farm workers slid into a roadside ditch and overturned, killing one and injuring at least 56 others. The name of the dead worker has never been released.

This week earlier, on December 16, 1973, 39 Jamaican cane cutters employed by the same company, Gulf and Western Products Company, were injured when the truck they were riding in flipped over along the same road.

Almost all the injured workers were immediately deported back to Jamaica.

"We treat cattle better" Florida Highway Patrol officials estimated that there were 130 workers in the 8 by 5-foot van which crashed January 9, although the company claimed there were less than 100. The van had been ordered to board.

"To say that they were packed like cattle would be no special occasion," commented Vandenbosche of the Florida Migrant Ministry. "The cooks had an investigation. Gulf and Western is a multi-millions dollar conglomerate which owns Paramount Pictures in addition to other valuable properties."

On August 9, 1973, the company was granted permission by the regional director of the Rural Manpower Commission in Atlanta to import Jamaicans for the cane harvesting season with the understanding that "fixed seats" would be provided. The vehicles transporting workers to and from the fields had no such seats in either of the trucks which overturned.

"No one was only seats provided," said Reverend Smith, "but the men were loaded so closely together that, often times, according to one of the patients in the hospital, they did not have room to put both feet on the floor, but had to put on top of the other.

Florida law requires that a company must file a workmen's compensation report within ten days of every accident. But Gulf and Western filed no such report on the first accident after the second accident, when it was discovered that the reports from the first were missing. Since Gulf and Western carries its own insurance, it apparently hopes to escape having to make any payments to its injured workers."

No charges can be brought against the company, according to the Highway patrol, because Florida law exempts company-owned tracks from laws concerning worker safety.

"It's not in the contract!"

"If they were afraid to talk for fear of immediate deportation, according to Diana Lyons of the UFW Field Office in Avon, Workers of America were kicked out in mid-visit from the Belle Glade hospital by a doctor who turned out to be a Gulf and Western employee."

The doctor charged the visiting clergy with being 'agitators.'

After visiting the hospital and talking to a few injured workers, Rev. Franklin Smith of the Florida Migrant Ministry might have avoided deportation, according to Diana Lyons of the UFW Field Office in Avon, Workers of America were kicked out in mid-visit from the Belle Glade hospital by a doctor who turned out to be a Gulf and Western employee."

The doctor charged the visiting clergy with being 'agitators.'

"Either they find out how bad it is and never come back, or else they complain and get shipped back immediately and blacklisted." In a statement to a Miami newspaper, UFW Executive Board Member Mack Lyons and August Vandenbosche of the Florida Migrant Ministry write, "It is long past time when giant agritronics interests in workers of Florida should be permitted to treat their work force as pawns in their unregulated quest for profit."
Highway Patrol won't act on bus massacre

CALIFORNIA, CA. - Labor contractor Jesus Ayala has a record of continual disregard for farm workers' rights and safety, an investigation by El Malcriado has revealed.

Yet, he has never been punished for violations of California labor, health and safety laws, despite a long string of convictions. His sentences have always been suspended.

And almost unbelievably, his labor contractor's license was renewed less than two weeks after the Blythe bus massacre in mid-January when 19 lettuce workers drowned in one of his buses.

Super-Scab

Ayala's reputation in the Imperial Valley is as bad as his record. Since the massacre he has only been able to run two buses from Blythe instead of his usual four.

(Two buses belonging to Ayala were destroyed by fire in Calexico on the night of January 21. Ayala has reportedly purchased two new buses since that time.)

'Shit, no, I wouldn't work for Ayala,' said a worker named Juan Olivares early one morning at the buses in Calexico. He's got all kinds of old buses; he chooses people by who he likes. If the foreman doesn't like you, you don't work.'

'There is a super-scab,' charged Ryfne UFV organizer Al Figueroa. He broke our strikes at Alti Brothers, at D'Arrigo, at High and Mighty. He's really hard on the workers.'

Ayala, who is 76 years old and has been contracting since the 1950's, denied charges that he has any UFV strikes and that the bus was in poor mechanical condition.

'I never did anything to hurt you people, why do you want to give me any trouble', he asks.

The accident wasn't my fault, it was an act of God. Accidents happen - planes fall out of the sky, and there's no one to blame.'

Ayala was merely warning to make sure his drivers were properly licensed.

No worse than the others

California Department of Industrial Relations investigations indicate that Ayala has been cited 13 times in the past 3 years, more than any of the other contractors.

We warned Ayala in 1971, 1972 and 1973 were caused by mechanical defects.

El Malcriado asked a number of highway patrol officials if a campaign to crack down on unsafe buses is planned.

'I don't know of any such plans,' said Lt. Wilson in Blythe. 'What would take would be legislation requiring mandatory inspections.'

'There's nothing planned that I know of,' said the MCOD in San Diego. 'We try to get as many as we can but we have other jobs to do.'

'I don't know of any such plans,' said Captain Strong of the El Centro Police. 'Try the Commissioner's office.'

'I'm not aware of anything,' said another highway patrol official.

Information staff of CHP Commissioner Putsinke. 'That bus was clean and that suggests that there's no need for such a campaign, doesn't it?'

Ayala told reporters after the massacre, 'Not Chavez, not Ayala.'

Examples of exploitation

A few examples of prosecutions Ayala has faced demonstrate his continual abuse of his workers' rights and safety and the indifference of the state of California towards cracking down on such violations.

Ayala was sentenced to 30 days in jail October 21, 1965 because he failed to carry Workers' Compensation Insurance for his workers as required by law. Like former vice-president Spiro Agnew, he pleaded 'nolo contendere', which means he neither admitted nor denied guilt. But his jail term was suspended and he was placed on three years probation.

He was convcted October 14, 1968 for violating state regulations requiring the posting of wage payment rates and requiring that toilets be provided at the worksite. He was fined $350, but the fine was suspended.

On September 23, 1970, one of his drivers, Mike Velasquez, was charged with driving without a proper farm labor bus drivers' license. After failing to appear in court, Velasquez was arrested. He posted $62 in bail and then failed to show up for trial, thus losing the bail. Despite the violation, Ayala was merely warned to make sure his drivers were properly licensed.

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Report avoids cause of deaths

BLYTTE, CA. - Within two days of the Bus massacre, the California Highway Patrol has issued an official report which concluded that no mechanical defects in Jesus Ayala's buses had caused the 'accident.'

Indeed, the report said, the accident was the fault of the driver. Several mechanical defects found in the bus, it concluded, were apparently not connected with the cause of the crash.

The report was signed by Robert Doyle, investigator for the CHP's Motor Carrier Safety Division (MCSD) and by Lt. Art Wilson, commander of the CHP post in Blythe.

Officia reports such as this one play an important role in the aftermath of a disaster, for they can become weapons in the hands of those who seek to expose responsibility or who seek to cover up their own negligence.

Report's findings

The defects found in the bus included: an inoperative emergency brake system; a faulty exhaust system; a punctured hoisting mechanism; a broken piston; a damaged control valve and loss of the hydraulic brake system; two seats in the bus had been replaced and were not properly secured.

Thus, the report concludes, violations of the California vehicle safety code.

But the report also stated: 'All the passengers and the driver's seat were ripped loose from the floor and side wall mountings. The remaining two seats were held in place by 5/16 inch sheet-metal screws on each inside leg and by 2 3/4 inch sheet-metal screws on the outside rail.'

Here, buried without further comment in the report, is the cause of the deaths of nineteen farm workers - who were crushed to death when the bus overturned in the desert.

(A National Transportation Safety Board report determined that the floor was so thin that only one thread of each screw was actually holding the seats down.)

Dodging responsibility

California law allows the CHP to inspect farm labor buses but does not require it. However, if a bus is ever involved in an accident, the CHP must meet certain safety standards set by law.

The regulations say that the seats must be securely fastened to the floor, but it is a simple fact, the seats in Ayala's buses were not.

Yet the CHP found no violation of the safety code in the seats.

'The seats were not what we might have thought,' William Doyle told reporters on January 17 when his report was released, 'but this would not have contributed to the accident.'

The seats may have nothing to do with the cause of the crash, but they had everything to do with the cause of the deaths. The CHP cannot dodge its responsibility here.

Lt. Wilson of the Blythe CHP offered this explanation: 'There was no violation found in the conditions of the seats, because the code only takes into account normal forces such as the impact that would result if the bus struck a pedestrian. Impacting the driver is not a typical stress that the seats might have been designed to accept. But it was an unfortunate thing that the seats weren't fastened more securely.'

However, it is not clear how the CHP ever inspected this bus.

If it did, were the seats determined to be safe or unsafe?

Such information about inspections is not public information, according to an official at the Motor Carrier Safety Division in San Diego who asked that his name not be used.

Ayala's vehicles have access to these records, has refused to speak to El Malcriado reporter, Doyle answered.

A CHP official has already said it's very difficult to inspect buses because it's hard to find the owner of the driver, and they try to hide out from us. We have to do the inspections when we are able to get the buses without interfering with a farmer's operation of without inconveniencing the farmer's crops.'

In the most recent roadside check conducted by the CHP in the Blythe area, for example, four out of four buses stopped had mechanical violations, according to Lt. Wilson.

'The standard we use is an actual condition. It indicates that Ayala has been cited for violations of the regulations if not to protect workers drowned in one of his days in jail October 21, 1965 because he failed to carry Workers' Compensation Insurance for his workers as required by law. Like former vice-president Spiro Agnew, he pleaded 'nolo contendere', which means he neither admitted nor denied guilt. But his jail term was suspended and he was placed on three years probation.

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On September 23, 1970, one of his drivers, Mike Velasquez, was charged with driving without a proper farm labor bus drivers' license. After failing to appear in court, Velasquez was arrested. He posted $62 in bail and then failed to show up for trial, thus losing the bail. Despite the violation, Ayala was merely warned to make sure his drivers were properly licensed.

License granted

The renewal of Ayala's license only weeks after the Blythe bus massacre was 'standard procedure,' according to Ruth Spiers, the commissioner's information staff. And almost unbelievably, his labor contractor's license was renewed less than two weeks after the Blythe bus massacre in mid-January when 19 lettuce workers drowned in one of his buses.

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No worse than the others

California Department of Industrial Relations investigations indicate that Ayala has been cited fourteen times in the past 3 years for failure to post the wage rates he was paying workers. These violations, the latest of which occurred December 5, 1973, were the result of random inspections.

Hiding the wage sheet from workers is a common trick of labor contractors - to attract workers by promising them one wage rate and then paying them a lower rate after a day's work is completed.

But the authorities are apparently not alarmed by this amount of deception. 'Ayala is no worse than any of the other contractors on this,' according to California Labor Commission Investigator Mary Ridinger of El Centro.

'He's not a deliberate attempt to mislead anyone. If we warn one of them, say three days in a row, and they still don't post them, then what the hell, we write him a ticket.'

Another report on Ayala from the Labor Commission's Division of Labor Law Enforcement (DLLE) dispute Ridinger's interpretation of the intent of the contractor. It states of Ayala's fourteen citations, 'They were almost invariably corrected at the time of inspection.'

This suggests that the violations were deliberate - the foreman was hiding the wage rates until an inspector chances to catch him.

'The law is kind of loose,' Ridinger said.  

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The renewal of Ayala's license only weeks after the Blythe bus massacre was 'standard procedure', according to Ruth Spiers, the commissioner's information staff. Ayala had entered his application for a renewal at a time when he was convicted of a new crime and so he was entitled to a renewal. But, she said, the license could be revoked after a formal hearing, and she said that an investigation was being conducted to decide if a formal hearing would be necessary.

Ayala almost didn't get his license renewed once, in 1964, when the Labor Commission held up the renewal for nearly five months because Ayala misrepresented his criminal record and unpaid taxes on the application. The renewal was finally granted, however.
ROBERTO GONZALEZ

"No papers, no pass" they told me.

For some of the workers in America, the terrible minutes of being trapped inside a choking coffin will never be forgotten. Many days after the virtual massacre Roberto Gonzalez, one of the injured, still cannot sleep. He has three broken ribs, an injured pelvis, numerous bruises and what a doctor describes as a "nervous condition." His eyes are scarred and his body shakes constantly.

For ten days and nights in the Palo Verde Hospital, Roberto Gonzalez had a recurring nightmare: the screams and convulsions of nineteen fellow farm workers that he couldn't help. He is remorseful. He knew them all by name and they continue to live in his mind. The doctor says that the shock will pass, but I don't know," he said.

On January 25 the 26-year old farm worker left the hospital and boarded a Greyhound bus for Calexico. He had not seen his wife, Dora, Gilberto and Maria for 11 days since a sight before the fatal bus ride. She had no passport and the American immigration authorities would not let her enter the U.S. to visit her husband.

He went directly to the border, but his green card and Mexican passport brought him to the ditch along with so many lives. He asked the US authorities for a temporary permit to see his family and to return again to the U.S.

He carried a letter from a lawyer stating the situation, but the officials refused to listen. "No papers, no pass," they told him again and again faced the guards. This time a call to the Mexican consular and a complaint in charge brought different results: the promise of a temporary green card in several days.

He was finally able to see his wife again. She was waiting in front of his home the "Colonia de Baja California," the poorest barrio in Mexicali, watching the children. She crowded her face as she watched her husband return: joy, and perhaps sadness, because she knew he soon would have to go back to ride the death buses again.

MARIANA CARBERA

"I just keep crying until the tortillas are wet with tears."

Maria Luisa Cabrera, Dora, Gilberto and Maria near their home in Ejido Sonora, Mexico.

Maria Luisa Cabrera wrung her hands and looked down to the ground.

"I look alright on the outside," she said, "but I'm sick and dying inside."

"I haven't been able to sleep since Teodolo died, and every night the younger children cry until I have no more consolation to give them."

Teodolo Cabrera was one of the men of the Ejido Sonora who had to leave his family and his country during the week and look for work as a greenhead farm worker 40 miles away in Calexico.

He rented a room in Mexicali for $3 a day and arose each morning at 1:30 to cross the border to the work. Each weekend when he first heard the news of the crash over the radio, he knew there was no way to get food for tortillas, the shoes for the children, Dora, Gilberto and Maria. He smiled and came home to see his sick wife.

"I haven't been able to sleep since Teodolo died, and every night the younger children cry until I have no more consolation to give them."

As he talked about his father, and his brother, Gonzalez "no papers, no pass" and turned him away.

With his old Mexican passport, he was a man without rights in a place where human life is measured in the number of hours worked.

He wandered the streets of Calexico. In his hand was a paper bag that contained five bottles of medicine. "But," as he said, "I can't take them. They would make me drowsy and I had no where to sleep."

He did sleep that night, in a field outside of town with other Mexicans without papers hiding from the border Patrol. In the morning he found the Calexico Campesino Center and told them his story. He had heard about the Unica. Max Huerta from the Coachella Field Office had visited him in the hospital and given him the address of the Campesino Center. But he had been embarrassed to come, until now.

Together with Campesino Center worker Tina Solinas, Roberto Gonzalez brought his story to the border and again faced the guards. This time a call to the Mexican consular and a complaint in charge brought different results: the promise of a temporary green card in several days.

Roberto Gonzalez and others cried again. "Why did I have to care for my brother?" his widow said, crying again. "Why do I have to care for my children?"

Mario refused to go back to Mexico. "They killed my land," he said. "I was afraid to come back to the border to the work."

The nine children of the Martinez family tasted the bitterness of polluted salty water for the second time when their mother, Angelina lost her brief but desperate battle to free herself from the jumbled bus seats in the cold and murky Rannells drain ditch.

The salty water which killed her flows south to Mexico, to further destroy the land in the Mexicali Valley where the family once had a farm.

The farm was located in the Ejido Narvay in the Mexicali Valley. But, recalls twenty-two year old Maria Martinez, the land began to go bad about seven or eight years ago, and Angelina, who was a U.S. citizen, decided to go north to the border to look for work in the fields of the American farmers.

"It was the salt, the salt that killed the land," she says in a quiet voice. "We all worked on the land to try to make it productive, but every year the wheat got shorter and shorter. We could not understand.

"We couldn't live any more without another way to get food and money. She went away to Mexicali for five days a week and came home on the weekend."

"She never told us much about the work," says Edela, two years younger than Maria. "She didn't complain, we didn't ask. She brought us the money we needed."

"There was a lot of water in the fields, the water overrode the dirt, a plan to increase the yields, a plan to increase the yields, a plan to increase the yields."

The Mexican Valley could have been as rich as the Imperial Valley, with the water bringing life to the desert, life to the land, life to the people of the land. "Without the right and the ability to cheat, a plan to increase the yields, a plan to increase the yields, a plan to increase the yields."
Esther Mendoza: "We must fight for an end to all this now."

"Esther Mendoza is a quiet woman, a confident woman, a firm woman. She speaks softly, and her gaze can bring tears to your eyes as fast as her smile can wipe them away."

"Her family of seven is now a family of sores -- her husband Manuel, teenage son Javier, and daughters Lucia and Maria died in a labor contractor's bus."

"But it is still a family: Manuel, Antonio, Nicolas, Julia, and Pedro."

"The small house of the Mendoza family in Mexicali is simple but warm, filled with all the gatherings of a family who has lived in one place for nine years."

"In the front room is a double bed and two single beds, as well as a few chairs and on the dining table, the alter used for the Novena, a picture of Our Lady of Guadalupe, four glasses of water and lighted candles."

"Now that the house is empty we have to try to raise our spirits," she says, "because however you look at it, they're gone away. I hope it doesn't happen to others."

Angelina Hernandez: "My husband talked to me as if he knew he were going to die."

"The three children of Francisco Nuñez Castillo play in the puddles in front of their house in Colonia Baja California, Mexicali. Inside the fatherless home there are no blankets on the beds no milk for the baby, no money to buy either water or tortillas."

"Angelina Hernandez looks first to her children and then to the cross painted in flour on the cement floor, as she talks about her life:"

"My husband talked to me as if he knew he were going to die. He told me, 'Look, one day when I have time, I'm going to register our daughter with Social Security, because I know how I have to travel here and there and something could happen to me one day.'"

"My oldest son fainted, he got very sick. They took him to the Red Cross hospital."

"Esther Mendoza, 20, and Esther, 6. "I used to notice how Ayala's buses were," says Manuel. "I always tried to sit near the back, because, well, there's more of a chance of getting free if there were any problem." 

Jesus Gonzalez: "It's been hard for me."

"Jesus Gonzalez has been in a hospital paralyzed from the waist down since the morning he was caught in Jesus Ayala's death trap."

"He would have been his second day working in Ayala's crews. Job shortages in the tangerines had forced him to go to the rated short-handled hoe and the long unpaid bus rides."

"Now, he may never walk again. Jesus Gonzalez is far from home, a pale-woven 'Cachanita' in the Elidas Nayarit farms, some 40 miles south of Mexicali where his wife Matilda and large family wait for his return."

"He lies in an antiseptic room in the Loma Linda Hospital, where no one speaks Spanish. 'It has been hard for me, since no one knew about me,' said the 48-year-old farm worker, who is a Union member."

"He did not yet know that his brothers and sisters on a UFW crew at the Freeman ranch in Coaxehila had taken up a collection and sent him $28.50 as soon as they heard about him."

"Still, it will be a long struggle for Jesus Gonzalez. He will probably return home to his family in a wheelchair. The doctors plan a massive rehabilitation program for him, for they see he is a strong man. In addition, says Campesino Center staff trainer Ann McGregor, who initially handled his case, an insurance settlement will be a long time in coming and his family's needs will have to wait."

"But he is not alone. In Calexico, Tina Solinas of the Campesino Center and Dr. Graham Fincke of the UFW clinic are ready to accompany him on his long road to recovery. Union members are planning to visit him at the hospital. And letters of hope and solidarity to him can be addressed to:"

"Loma Linda, California 92540"
'THE UNION WAS THERE'

There are many sides to a tragedy. Lives are lost for no other apparent reason than greed, homes are destroyed, grief is deep.

The days and weeks after the Blythe massacre are such a time for hundreds of persons. As one man expresses it, 'Of course we cried when the coffins went by, for those that were killed were all of us.'

For many families struck by this horror the National Farm Workers Service Center in Calexico became a sort of life line, a human connection to the largely unresponsive and impersonal bureaucracies of the U.S. Dept. of Immigration, Social Security, Labor Commission, and other agencies.

A widowed mother with no milk for her child, an injured man who cannot return to his wife in Mexico, a paralyzed brother that asks for someone to talk to, these are but a few of the farm workers that came to the Service Center every day after the bus massacre.

The dimension of human problems is huge, while the staff of the Centro de Servicio is small. But Gilbert Rodriguez and Vitoriano Gutierrez, John Osborne and Tina Solinas don't go home each night until every farm worker is in the small office has been cared for.

Tina Solinas doesn't sleep very much — she says she doesn't have time. But one evening she took a few minutes to talk about her work after the bus 'accident':

'We tried to locate the families, made sure they saw doctors, took them food, offered the legal advice of the Union lawyers, making sure people didn't get lost in the shuffle.

'All this time Union members were there ... at the Mass and march the Union sponsored, in the Palo Verde hospital did an X-ray on the injured, the Union came through.

'We talked to the people and made sure that whatever they wanted we tried to fight for. That's when the people started looking at things differently, since the other agencies had made their promises and left.

'All they (the agencies) think of is, 'Oh, an accident, money!' Lawyers coming from all over hounding the widows, trying to get them to sign up so that they can get in on the money.

'The funeral director getting as much money and giving as little as possible, nothing.

'The Industrial Indemnity Insurance lawyers not sending out checks to the families as soon as they could and not going out to try and find the people, or even trying to find the people who could find them, because they wanted to save money.

'The worst thing is knowing that some women are not going to get anything at all and knowing they deserve it more than any one else, all because of some discriminating law that says that anyone living on the other side of the line is ... they prove that she was his wife, that this man was sustaining her. This is the law only for aliens.

'The families that live here on the border face big financial problems ... they face insecurity problems, women alone with young kids.

'All farm worker families face the problems of seasonal work because only 3-4 months out of the year is there work to be found here. Either their husbands have to go up north and they don't see them for 3-6 months at a time, or their husbands stay here and they don't have much to eat at all.

'There's no doctor, or no money for the doctor.

'The prices of food are going sky high, doubling, tripling.

'Their husbands cross the line and the women don't know what happens to them because they can't pass.

'The officers on the line think they're gods — they think they're better than everyone that crosses that line. They consider the people like flies they want to get away from.

'The Union members have been wherever the people needed them. For the families of the dead and injured, the Union came through.

'The sooner we get these con­tracts the sooner more people will be able to go to Union members. 'Union members are different, you know. Once they've been a member or through a strike they're different. They don't take as much bullshit from the mayor­domos and the contractors.

'There are a lot of Union mem­bers around here. You go into the other fields where these members are and these fields are different.

'They keep together — it's something that people learn that you don't lose your grip of.

'There is something that I learned and I can't quite figure out what it is, but it came from facing all those women ... and facing all those men, the dead husbands.

'I saw the things they left undone ... he was going to immi­grate his family some other day ... he was going to tell his wife about certain things another day ... he was going to finish building his house another day ... she was going to get back to­gether with her husband another day.'

CALEXICO CLINIC OPENS DOORS

CALEXICO, Ca. -- Injured survivors of the bus massacre in Blythe have found a warm and friendly source of follow-up medical treatment at the UFW clinic in Calexico.

'We've opened our facilities to all the injured workers on the bus,' said clinic administrator Heidt Urich. "People immediately turned to the Union for help, and we've done all we can to care for their injuries and help them get over the trauma of the experience.'

As soon as the clinic learned

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As soon as the clinic learned
Farm workers fight terrible trinity

'The time has come for us to move!'

Ricardo Villalpando

‘Let’s go. To the buses’ shouts a voice from the California Union office field in the early morning hours of January 25.

50 men and women take to the streets to carry out the campaign against the abuses of the terrible trinity: the ranchers, the labor contractors and the Teamsters.

One of the Unionists is Ricardo Villalpando, an organizer of the UFW. He knows the people, he knows farm labor — that’s why he is in charge of the inspection and education campaign on the buses in Calexico.

He boards a crowded bus of the William Hubbard Co. greets the farm workers, the crew, and begins to speak to them. ‘We are here to tell you that you can revoke the signatures made with the Teamsters. What has happened from the beginning is that they say, ‘Look, you have got to sign this paper so that the company can deduct your insurance coverage for the doctors in Mexico.’

‘But it is a lie, isn’t it, because on the back side where you signed your name it says, ‘I authorize the company to deduct Teamster dues from my salary.’

‘That’s happening now is that the Teamsters and the growers have become sweethearts, because the Teamsters are the ranchers and the hired persons for $375 a week to push you, and steal your signatures for the $8 dues.

‘Has any one of you ever received Teamster benefits?’ asks Villalpando to the 40 workers. ‘No one!’ responds a voice from the back of the bus.

‘On the other hand,’ returns Villalpando, ‘our organization has a medical plan, the Kennedy Plan, and many other services that the grower has to pay. And that’s why the grower doesn’t want to sign with the United Farm Workers, because it’s more money for him.

‘What they are interested in is land, more and more land, and higher production so they can grow still richer. And their earnings come out of our salaries.’

‘Stop the death buses

‘We must realize that if we do not take action now, we will never do it. It’s the same thing with the buses — we are going to put on the pressure so that these things don’t continue.

‘Many of you can remember that in 1955 in Soledad there was a bus crash in which 27 brothers were burned and many of them later died. They never got a penny. They sent them to a hospital in Monterey and after about three months sent them off back to their homes. I can tell you about it because I was there. It was the same thing that happened in Chula Vista.

‘We’re not going to lose this struggle because there are many campesinos involved. We must take our anger to those in the companies who have robbed us. They have become rich while we remain down here. The time has come for us to move!’

Workers donate to bus victims

Widow Maria Luisa de Cardenas received a check for $27,45 from Pablo Garcia, treasurer of the Bus Accident Victims’ Benefit Fund. The presentation of the check January 30 in Ejido Sonora, Baja California, to Mrs. Cardenas is the first of many. made from a fund of over $2,500 collected by the committee from individual donations, the majority made by farm workers.

‘This is a generous example of all farm workers,’ said Pablo Garcia, ‘because it is proof of the solidarity of our brothers. We farm workers have always been aware of our brothers. Since we are all campesinos, we feel the pain.’

The beneficiary fund was established in a meeting of the United Farm Workers of America January 17 at the Jefferson School in Calexico. The elected officers of this committee are: President, Cirilo Cordova; Secretary, Armando Ruiz; Treasurer, Pablo Garcia; Sergeant-at-Arms, Rosario Pelayo and Rebeca Buelna.

This farm worker committee will administer all monies collected for distribution for the nineteen crash victims.

Anyone, individual or organization, wishing to contribute to this most worthy fund in solidarity may do so by addressing: Comite por Ayuda de Accidentados de Hythe P.O. Box 1940, Calexico, California

Rosario Pelayo told El Malcriado, ‘We are here in the hiring hall and outside on the buses at five in the morning because we know that we must keep working together to sign with more companies. Right?

‘We must work for those who are outside the Union, who have to get up at two and three in the morning to see if by chance they’ll be given work.

‘The struggle of our brothers and sisters is crucial, because we know that we are now struggling not for ourselves, but for the well-being of our children.’

We must all become organizers’

El Malcriado February 22, 1974 9
"We are united in our sorrow but also in our anger... This tragedy happened because of the big growers who do not care about the safety of the workers and who expose them to grave dangers when they transport them in wheeled coffins to the fields..."

—CESAR CHAVEZ

**FARM WORKERS KILLED IN THE BUS MASSACRE**

*IN BLYTHE JANUARY 15, 1974*

PABLO NAVARRO ARELLANO, 54, OF CAL- EXICO, CA., SURVIVED BY HIS WIFE, CON­ SUELO ARELLANO AND 4 CHILDREN.

TEOODOLO GILBERTO C. CABRERA, 43, OF MEXICALI, B.C., MEXICO, SURVIVED BY HIS WIFE, MARIA LUISA RODRIGUEZ CHAVEZ DE CABRERA AND 3 CHILDREN.

LIBRADO ZAZUETA CARDENAS, 62, OF MEXICALI, SURVIVED BY HIS WIFE MARIA LUISA DE CARDENAS AND 3 CHILDREN.

JULIO RAMIREZ FERNANDEZ, 60, OF MEXICALI, SURVIVED BY HIS WIFE SUSANA RAMIREZ AND 5 CHILDREN.

SANTO MORALES GAITAN, 67, OF SAN FER­ NANDO, CA.

JUAN CASTRO HURTADO, 45, OF MEXICALI, SURVIVED BY HIS MOTHER, CRUZ CASTRO.

CARLOS OLIVIA LOPEZ, 53, OF MEXICALI, SURVIVED BY HIS WIFE, DORA LIZARDI RINGO OLGUIN.

JUAN PEREZ MANRIQUEZ, 26, OF MEXICALI, SURVIVED BY HIS MOTHER, REMEDIOS PEREZ AND TWO YOUNGER BROTHERS.

ANGELA VERDUDE DE MARTINEZ, 43, OF MEXICALI, SURVIVED BY HER HUSBAND, JUAN F. MARTINEZ AND 10 CHILDREN.

JOSE ANGUIANO MARTINEZ, 43, OF MEXICALI, SURVIVED BY HIS WIFE, CLARA MELGOZA AND 2 CHILDREN.

MANUEL MENDOZA COVARROJAS, 42, OF MEXICALI, FATHER OF THREE CHILDREN KILLED IN THE CRASH, AND SURVIVED BY HIS WIFE, ESTHER VILLA DE MENDOZA AND 5 CHILDREN.

JAVIER MENDOZA, 16, OF MEXICALI.

LUCIA VILLA MENDOZA, 18, OF MEXICALI.

MARIA MENDOZA. 17, OF MEXICALI.

FRANCISCO CASTILLO NUÑEZ, 53, OF MEXICALI, SURVIVED BY HIS WIFE, ANGELINA HERNANDEZ AND 3 CHILDREN.

GREGORIO PEREZ PEREZ, 22, OF MEXICALI,

PABLO TANGUNIA, AGE UNKNOWN, OF BLYTHE, CA.

MANUEL REYNA TORRES, 57, OF MEXICALI, SURVIVED BY HIS WIFE, MARIA ALVARES, DE TORRES, AND DAUGHTER, AND THREE GRANDCHILDREN.

PABLO RAMIREZ TORRES, 38, OF CALEXICO, SURVIVED BY HIS WIFE, FRANCISCA BERNAL MONTES AND 2 CHILDREN...

**FARM WORKERS INJURED IN BLYTHE BUS WRECK**

KIELO AHE, 44, MEXICALI.

RODRIGO JACQUIEZ BARBENA, 38, MEXICALI.

MARIO CALDERAN, 35, BLYTHE, CA.

ANDRES R. FERREIRO, 29, MEXICALI.

FELIX S. ALVARES, 21, MEXICALI.

ROBERTO GONZALEZ, 57, MEXICALI.

LUCIA VILLA MENDOZA, 16, MEXICALI.

SANCTO JACQUES BARIENDA, 29, MEXICALI.

ALBERTO CALDERAS, 25, HURON, CA.

ARMANDO MANZANARES, 17, MEXICALI.

ISIDRO LOZANO, 17, MEXICALI.

JOSE ANGUIANO MARTINEZ, 17, MEXICALI.

JUAN PEREZ MANRIQUEZ, 26, MEXICALI.

ANGELA VERDUDE DE MARTINEZ, 43, MEXICALI.

SANTO MORALES GAITAN, 67, OF SAN FER­ NANDO, CA.

JUAN CASTRO HURTADO, 45, OF MEXICALI,

CARLOS OLIVIA LOPEZ, 53, OF MEXICALI.

JUAN PEREZ MANRIQUEZ, 26, OF MEXICALI.

SOFIA A. NIEMELA, 18, MEXICALI.

LUIS LOPEZ RAMIREZ, 54, MEXICALI.

VICTORIAL SOLARIO OCHOA, 56, MEXICALI.

PABLO TANGUNIA, AGE UNKNOWN, OF BLYTHE, CA.

SANTO MORALES GAITAN, 67, OF SAN FER­ NANDO, CA.

JUAN CASTRO HURTADO, 45, OF MEXICALI,

CARLOS OLIVIA LOPEZ, 53, OF MEXICALI.

JUAN PEREZ MANRIQUEZ, 26, OF MEXICALI.

...Brothers and sisters, the men and women we honor here today are important human beings. They are important because they are from us. We cherish them. We love them. We will miss them.

They are important because of the love they have given to their husbands and wives and children and parents and all those who were close to them and who needed them.

They are important because of the work they do. They are not implements to be used and discarded. They are human beings who sweat and sacrifice to bring food to the tables of millions and millions of people throughout the world... 
"The Growers are to Blame"

Eliseo Sierra

"Contractors? I work with them and I work with companies. I'm a crew boss. I get crews from all over - that's why I know that the people you've got to treat them right.

But the contractors are safe with the people, because they don't care if you have a driver's license or not. A crew boss isn't sleepy, or drunk and say, 'Hey man, go get some sleep and work tomorrow instead.' But no, they don't care how the people get around. There is plenty of time to sleep.

The Imperial Valley has become one of the richest agricultural centers in the nation, thanks to a $123 million a year federally subsidized irrigation system and starvation wages paid to farm workers.

In the Union

The Imperial County Agriculture

From the Office of the Agricultural Commissioner

Million Dollar Crops 1971 - 1972

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<td>Hay, Alfalfa</td>
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<td>Tomato</td>
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Farm worker liberation:

From ‘El Hoyo’ to the Hiring Hall

Carlos Baraja
‘The people are very united.’

Rebecca Buelna
‘As a woman here, there’s security.’

2:30 a.m. – At El Hoyo (the Hole). Most of these men and women got off yesterday’s contractor bus only six or seven hours earlier, but they cannot rest. Work here is for the young and strong, who have not yet ruined their health and suffered disabling injuries in farm work. For the old, the sick and the injured there is no work today or any day — yet they come and wait and return home to hungry families.

6:00 a.m. – Workers of the Inner Harvest Co. meet at the UFW hiring hall in Calexico. They do not have to leave for work until 7:00, but many of the Union members come here hours earlier to plan and carry out the campaigns against unsafe buses, Teamster abuses and corrupt labor contractors. Hiring here is done by seniority and each works as best as he or she can.

I was born in La Rosa Michoacan; I’ve been here since 1964, as an immigrant. I was here since 1951 as a bracero and then in ’61 I had my papers fixed. Almost everyone came as braceros.

Since 1970 I have been in the Union picking whatever it may be, cherries, peaches, oranges — because we didn’t know anything about the movement when this movement of the grapes began the foreman said that Chavez was no good.

But I saw the movement in Salinas begin, in the lettuce, and I saw that the Union is good, because they treat people well and all. Since then I’ve liked the Union very much.

Now after the accident, the people say that there is no other Union than Chavez’s. We carried the companeros, those that came from Calexico, 3 bodies in hearses and the rest thirteen, on our shoulders from here to San Ysidro as far as you could see.

The Mexican army arrived to tell Chavez that the government was at his service to help with whatever was necessary, there were the police, and everything was beautiful. In all the time I’ve been here never have I seen so much spirit, so much respect, because of this the people are recognizing this Union.

The people are very united. If there will be a strike, they won’t wait any longer, they are pretty fed up.

Some companeros used to arrive at the fields at 4:00 a.m. and were there 9 hours. When they went home the children were already in bed, so that they left and arrived already seeing their children awake. They never had the chance to show them anything or anything.

Now I leave home at 7:30 and the bus will wait for me until 8:00 a.m. to take me to work. With the labor contractors, if you don’t arrive at the bus on time they grab whoever to fill the bus and go. The worker himself is of no importance to them, only the work.

I am a member of the Union. I have the obligation to come and help my brothers. I am enjoying my benefits and I want my brothers who aren’t in the Union to enjoy them also.

This is why I am here early in Calexico, with all of those companeros who worked in the same company, all of us are struggling so that our brothers will have the same benefits that I enjoy.

It’s much better here (at the hiring hall) because they don’t exclude persons because they are too old, too fat or because they’re ugly. Here the company asks the hiring hall for a certain number of persons and by previous agreement doesn’t specify how many men and women it should be. Here it just specifies the numbers of workers, so old and young, men and women can get the jobs.

Outside they don’t want old people — just the young to work them to death. There comes a time when work gets scarce and one goes to work and they tell you, ‘We don’t want women, we want just men to do it.’

As a woman here, there’s security that you’re going to work, but not outside. You have to go and beg them, and still they ask you if you can work fast enough for them and if you can’t, you just better not get on that bus.

Here in the crews of Inter Harvest you work responsibly, you work normally. You’re not going to be standing still, but not running either. You work like human beings, and not outside like animals where they’ve got you running back and forth all day long. And there are times when they don’t eat, when they don’t give them time to drink water.

Pushers on our backs either...

There’s nothing like the Union. Why go scabbing outside and one day you get work and the next day nothing. That’s the way it is outside of the Unions one day you go in one bus and the next day in another.

We’ve got security here, the family is insured. But with a labor contractor not even the worker has insurance.

Because I’ve worked with contractors that never even asked me my name or social security number. And what if something should happen? With what proof can my family make demands (for benefits) if they don’t even have my social security number?

They pay you in the field in cash — no check or receipt. I’ve worked for contractors that I didn’t even know their name, I just got on the bus, they pay me and the next day with somebody else.

El Malcriado February 22,1974
Grami fails in bid for top Teamsters Union post

While farm workers prepare for another round of strikes against the Teamster-grower alliance, the most hostile anti-UFW forces within the Western Conference of Teamsters have been seriously weakened in recent months. Grami, who was driven out of Los Angeles, Grami has been known to want the job very badly as a means of stepping up his attacks on the UFW.

Goons make headlines

Grami dispatched the goons to the UFW strikes last year allegedly to protect Teamster farm workers. But since none of these could be found, the goons instead turned their attention to harassing UFW picket lines.

For months newspapers around the country carried photos of these assorted filthy-looking thugs armed with chains, baseball bats, lead pipes, and ‘Viva Iguana’ buttons attacking strikers and organizers in the Coachella and San Joaquin valleys.

Newlyweds picket

SEATTLE, Wash. -- Newlyweds Sulema and Antonio Diaz brought their wedding party of 12 persons to picket Safeway January 15. ‘We are part of the farm workers’ struggle for liberation,’ said Sulema Diaz, ‘being on the picket line today, our wedding day is the right way to celebrate our marriage.’

Ohio boycott victory

CINCINNATI, Ohio -- Liberal Markets, a 35-store chain centered in Cincinnati, has agreed to remove immediately all Gallo wines from its three stores in the OXnard-Santa Barbara-Ventura area has agreed not to reorder Gallo wines for any of its stores after the present stock is sold. Negotiations with the management of Safeway, which has also agreed not to reorder Gallo, have resulted in a boycott agreement that will be renewed every 90 days.

N.J. clergymen boycott

CAMDEN, New Jersey -- The Commission on Social Justice of the Diocese of Camden, headed by Bishop George H. Guigliofte, gave its support to the UFW grape and lettuce boycott. The Commission said it ‘publicly identifies with, and completely supports, the Catholic Bishops of the United States in their call for justice on behalf of farm workers in the basic right to organize.’

Target Tehachapi

TEHACHAPI, Ca. -- Members of the UFW La Paz administrative staff have begun a boycott campaign in nearby Tehachapi, aimed at cleaning out the town’s stores of scab grapes, scab head lettuce and wines. La Paz customers voted to stop shopping at Tehachapi stores until they are clean. A boycott committee has already visited store managers and informed them of the boycott. A leafleting campaign is planned to build public support for the boycott.

Safeway bias charge

SEATTLE, Wash. -- Former Safeway guard Harold Evans recently joined the Safeway boycott here and said he was filing charges against Safeway with the Seattle Human Rights Commission for discriminatory hiring and promotion policies.

‘Safeway employees are quietly but firmly discouraged from sympathizing with the UFW,’ he said, ‘and as a black man, I cannot put my identity as a black man nor my pride, I publicly apologize for any part I may have played in hindering your progress and effectiveness in your present boycott.’

Rev. Day goes to jail

INDIANAPOLIS, Ind. -- Rev. Garnett Day, Jr., a member of the National Farm Worker Ministry Executive Board and a strong La Causa backer, has begun serving a ninety-day jail sentence following a conviction for involvement in a draft-board anti-war sit-in here in March, 1970.

Under the terms of the sentence, Day is allowed to work at his job with the Church in Society organization during the day and must spend his nights in jail.

Day was among over 400 picketers arrested in Lamont in late July of 1973 for violation of an injunction at Robert Parvin. He spent three days in the Bakersfield jail at that time, but no charges were filed.

Questions demand answers

But once they were gone, the UFW pressed its efforts to keep them out. Unions lawyers asked Riverside Judge Fred Metheny to make permanent a temporary order he had issued in June ordering the goons not to come closer than 60 feet to UFW picket lines. This would allow the goons to entertain themselves by screaming and yelling, but strikers would be protected.

The WCT agreed to the restrictions rather than fight the UFW and have to reveal information about the goons.

Answers too hot to handle

Why do the Teamsters fear such simple questions? What do they have to hide? Would the answers to these questions reveal a pattern of grower payoffs and systematically-planned violence? The Teamsters should learn from the Watergate scandals that all their efforts to conceal the truth about their conspiracies against the UFW will be in vain.
N.J. unionists picket Exxon

LINDEN, New Jersey -- Members and officers of three unions picketed the research center of Exxon Corp. here Janu­ary 16, protesting the oil company's staging of the fuel shortage for the pur­poses of driving up prices and increasing profits.

The unions represented were the United Auto Workers, the International Union of Electrical Workers, Radio, and Machine Workers, and the New Jersey Industrial Union Council. Shown here are members of the UAW local 806.

Uphold right to picket

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Monsignor George Higgins, research secretary for the United States Catholic Conference, recently exposed an attack on the National Confer­ence of Catholic Bishops' support for the Farah strike as being based almost entirely on a pro-company pamphlet.

In a weekly syndicated column, 'The Yardstick,' Higgins charged that Father Daniel Lyons 'paraphrased' the pamphlet, which attacks El Paso (where Farah is located) Bishop Metzger, who has supported the strike since it began in 1971.

Lyons, who writes for 'Twin Circle' and other right-wing Catholic publications, is a long-time foe of the United Farm Workers, as well as other progressive movements.

Exposes Farah propaganda

ROCHESTER, N.Y. -- Supporters of the striking Farah workers won a battle against a department store at a National Labor Relations Board hearing here which will allow them to keep picketing the store.

The store, Sibley's, had attempted to pro­hibit picketing on the grounds that the picketers violated the secondary boycott provision of the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA).

The picketers, members of the Center for United Labor Action (CULA) - a national workers' support group not affiliated with any union - argued that they were not subject to the law because they were not members of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers Union, the union fighting for a contract with Farah in Texas.

A CULA spokesman said the attempt by the store to prohibit picketing was aimed at forcing any citizen support group of any labor union to submit to the boycott restrictions of the NLRA.

"Right-to-work" set back

LOS ANGELES, Ca. -- Organized labor won another round in early January in its continuing campaign against so-called "right-to-work" forces which seek to destroy the union shop.

The victory came when U.S. District Court Judge Harry Pregerson threw out a six-year-old suit against the International Association of Machinists filed by a small group of non-union workers at an aircraft plant in Los Angeles.

The workers had charged that the union violated the upstairs-to-work* principles with which they did not agree. But

Prepersion ruled that the union had a pro­per procedure for refunding a portion of their dues to such workers.

"In my view, political activities are ga­rantee to collective bargaining in many ways," said Prepersion, "One would have to be blind to history not to understand that political activities in a sense are the blood and sinews of the American labor movement.

The people are catching on

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- According to a recent public opinion survey, 78% of the American people believe that "special inter­ests get more from the government than the people do."

The poll, conducted for a senate com­mittee by Louis Harris also reveals that more than three-fourths of those questioned believe that "the rich get richer and the poor get poorer."

And 55% believe that "the people who run this country don't really care what happens to you." In 1966, according to Harris, only 4% of the people agreed with this statement.

Wounded Knee victories

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- As the trial of militant Indians in Wounded Knee was about to begin, three Indians were reported killed and others injured at a National Indian Affairs Bureau office in Rapid City.

The workers had charged that the union violated the upstairs-to-work* principles with which they did not agree. But

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San Quentin Six jury bias

SAN RAFAEL, Ca. -- 'The means used by the selectors of the grand jury (Marin County judges) did not assume a fair repre­sentation of Blacks, Latin Americans, the blue collar working class, and the young,' said visiting Judge Vernon Stoll of Nevada County, when he dropped all murder and conspiracy charges against the San Quentin Six January 10.

The Six, following Spanish. Richard Tamam­Ber, Hugo Pinell, David Johnson, Willie Tate, and Fleta Drumgo, militant black and brown prisoners, had been held in connection with the alleged escape attempt of black revolutionary George Jackson from San Quentin August 21, 1971.

They maintain that the alleged escape, in which Jackson was killed, was actually a conspiracy carried out by prison offi­cials to murder Jackson.

Southern clashes continue

NASHVILLE, Tennessee -- The battle between police and the black communities continued on a day-by-day basis in the South. In late December, a number of angry demonstrations by black residents of Nashville forced the city's police chief Hugh Mott, to resign. The demonstrations followed a series of police killings of young black youths in Nashville.

In Memphis, Tennessee, meanwhile, an all-white jury acquitted eight policemen and sheriff's deputies of first-degree murder charges in connection with the slaying of a black youth named Elton Hayes.

Hayes died from head injuries received after a high-speed chase. The eight offi­cers were among forty on the scene when Hayes was apprehended.

And in Atlanta, Georgia, two white police­men were arrested and released on their own recognizance after allegedly choking a young black man to death in the city jail.

Labor and movement news

El Malcriado February 22, 1974
Richard M. Nixon has committed an impeachable offense by consistently deceiving the American people.

The President said on April 30, 1973:

"I have personally assumed the responsibility for coordinating intensive new inquiries into the Watergate matter, and I personally ordered those convictions and other reports to the contrary.

But on August 7, former Attorney General Richard Kleindienst and Assistant Attorney General Henry Petersen denied before the Senate Watergate Committee that such a tape had been found.

The President said on April 30, 1973:

"I have given him (Attorney General-designate Elliot Richardson) absolute authority to make all decisions bearing upon the prosecution of the Watergate case and related matters."

He also said on May 22, 1973:

"With the selection of Archibald Cox as special supervisory prosecutor for matters related to the case, Attorney General-designate Richardson has demonstrated his own determination to see that the truth is brought out. In this effort he has my full support."

But Cox was fired by President Nixon on October 20 for refusing to create a "compromise" on the tapes which included turning over "memoranda of presidential conversations." Richardson refused to fire Cox and resigned.

The President said on May 22, 1973:

"When he first learned on March 21 of the break-in at the office of Mr. Ellsberg's psychiatrist, I specifically authorized the furnishing of this information to Judge Byrne, presiding over the trial of the burglars.

But on April 25 Attorney General Kleindienst came to me and urged that the fact of the break-in should be disclosed to the Ellsberg court at once, since no evidence had been obtained, the law did not require it, and I concurred.

But on May 11, 1973, Judge Byrne dismissed all charges against 25 defendants in the Pentagon papers trial against Daniel Ellsberg because of government misconduct—evidence of the burglary and of other Ellsberg matters.

The President said on May 22, 1973:

"Because approval (of a plan to establish a secret police force) was withdrawn before it had been implemented, the result was that the plan for organized intelligence activities never went into effect.

But on June 25, 1973, former White House Counsel John Dean told the Senate Watergate committee that two months after the secret plan for expanding domestic intelligence activities was approved, he was asked to get it started, and that he never saw any document showing a revocation of the plan.

And on July 9, 1973, Tom Charles Huston, the former White House aide who directed the secret police plan, told the House Armed Services Committee, under oath, that the plan was never formally canceled.

The President said in late April, 1973:

"According to testimony by Petersen before the Senate Watergate committee (which I believe President) that a crucial April 15 conversation with Dean on "tape"

But on October 31, the White House announced that the President had never met with Dean on "tape.

And on July 5, 1973, the President told the Senate Watergate committee that two months after the secret plan for expanding domestic intelligence activities was approved, he was asked to get it started, and that he never saw any document showing a revocation of the plan.

AND on July 9, 1973, Tom Charles Huston, the former White House aide who directed the secret police plan, told the House Armed Services Committee, under oath, that the plan was never formally canceled.

The President said on November 17, 1973:

"Neither party was without fault. . . . They raised in the campaign and some of that, like some of ours, came from corporate sources and was illegal because the law had been violated, and apparently I did know it."

But, the Washington Post said on November 23:

"Now the fact is that no corporations have admitted or been charged with any illegal gifts to the Nixon campaigns, while six so far have been convicted of making large unlawful donations to Mr. Nixon's reelection drive. Furthermore, the law barring such corporate gifts is hardly new; it was enacted in 1967."

The President said on November 17, 1973:

"I paid $79,000 in income tax in 1969. In the next two years I paid nominal amounts. (The reported amounts of $792 in 1970 and $387 in 1971 on an annual salary of $200,000 have never been denied by the White House.) Whether these amounts are correct or not, I do not know. . . . Now, why did I pay this amount? It was not because of the deductions.

Could We Believe Nixon?

It's a sad, sad day when Americans cannot believe their President. Not agree with him, but believe him.

We have disagreed with Presidents in the past and we have said that their policies were not in the interests of working people, or of the nation as a whole.

We have certainly disagreed with the policies of the Nixon Administration. Everybody knows what these disagreements are.

But these differences, serious as they are, have nothing to do with the central issue confronting the American people today.

The issue is not the President's policies but presidential credibility.

This is the inescapable issue raised by the literally incredible events of recent weeks and months, which are the subject of this page.

The President cannot meet this issue convincingly by launching "Operation Candor" or any other public relations gimmick. He can meet it only by telling the truth—the whole truth and nothing but the truth—now.

In the current setting of Disney World, on November 17—the 45th anniversary of Mickey Mouse—the President told the AP editors:

"People keep getting ideas whether or not their President is a crook."

They also have a right to know whether their President is a liar.

Mr. Nixon's reluctance to resist full disclosure has left the people with only one avenue to the truth—the avenue urged on this page. Impeachment.

The President said on November 17, 1973:

"Lydell Johnson came in to see me shortly after I became President, and he told me that he had given his presidential papers, or at least most of them, to the government. By the end of 1969, presidential or vice presidential papers given to the government . . . could be taken as a deduction from the President's tax. Yes, the President ought to do the same thing. . . . You have got your vice presidential papers, . . . I can only say we did what we were told was right."

But in 1969, former President Johnson made a careful decision not to take a deduction because in that year Congress was debating the opening law. He decided it would be useless for a former President to attempt to make such a deduction on a congressional deadline. The President, however, did just that.

The President said on November 17, 1973:

"I have referred to what I call the Jefferson rule (defending executive privilege as an answer to a subpoena) . . . Jefferson . . . had correspondence which it was felt might bear upon the guilt or innocence of Aaron Burr (in his treason trial). Chief Justice Marshall, sitting as a trial judge, said that Jefferson, as President, had to turn over the correspondence. Jefferson refused. What he did was to turn over a summary of the correspondence, but not all that he knew. . . . The President turned over for the purposes of the trial. Then Marshall, sitting as Chief Justice, ruled for the President."

But, Jefferson sent the subpoenaed documents to the U.S. attorney in Richmond, who brought suit in court to use those portions relating to the case. Marshall would not rule as Chief Justice on the case in which he had been the trial judge. It never went to the Supreme Court.

The President said on August 22, 1973:

"I met at great length with Mr. Ehrlichman, Mr. Haldeman, Mr. Dean, Mr. Mitchell on (March) 22. I discussed the whole matter with them. I kept pressing for the facts that I had for a long time. I wanted to get this story out, get the truth out, whatever and whenever it's going to hurt . . . ."

But, on July 11, 1973, Mitchell testified before the Senate Watergate Committee that the President never asked him about Watergate at any time.

The President said (according to Republican congressmen) on November 13 and 14, 1973:

That Richardson had fully agreed to the compromise plan in the tapes dispute which would have ordered Cox to take no further judicial actions to get evidence from the White House.

But, on November 6, in testimony under oath before the Senate Judiciary Committee, Richardson said he never approved limits on Cox.

The President said (according to Republican congressmen) on November 13 and 14, 1973:

That Richardson "did not tell the truth" to the Senate Judiciary Committee and that Richardson had a "truly redact.

But, on November 27 in an interview, Richardson revealed additional documents supporting his sworn testimony and quoted Presidential Assistant Alexander Haig, a former general, in a phone call after the meeting with Republican congressmen, as saying: "I told them anything you said in your testimony."

The President told Republican governors on November 20:

"If there are any more bombs, I'm not aware of them."

But, on November 21, White House lawyers told Judge Simma that there was an 18 minute gap in one tape, and that President Nixon personally had known that since October 1. Governor Dan Evans of Washington said:"I just did not believe what the President had said that we would get this story out, get the truth out, whatever and whenever it's going to hurt . . . ."

According to Cannon's Portend's of the House of Representatives, which governs House procedure:

"Impeachment may be based on offenses of a political character, on gross breach of public trust, or on a pattern of culpable neglect of duty, tyrannical abuse of power and offenses of conduct tending to bring the office into disrepute."

Richard M. Nixon has committed an impeachable offense by consistently deceiving the American people, by submitting false statements to the courts, and by holding the public in contempt.

American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations, 815 Sixteenth Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20006

16 El Malcriado February 22, 1974
Siqueiros dies at 77

A People's artist for 50 years

MEXICO CITY, Mexico -- David Alfaro Siqueiros, who fought for the rights of working men and women and painted revolutionary murals depicting their struggles over a span of more than 50 years, died of cancer in Cuernavaca January 6. He was 76.

A telegram sent to Siqueiros' widow from United Farm Workers of America President Cesar Chavez expressed the impact of the artist's life and work:

"In the name of the United Farm Workers of America, AFL-CIO, I wish to express our deep sorrow for the loss of your illustrious husband, David Alfaro Siqueiros, (R.L.P.)."

Farm worker alert

State disability benefits pregnancy

For the first time in history, a farm worker who is pregnant can apply for California Disability Insurance benefits. Benefits may be paid if a doctor certifies that the pregnancy involved abnormal complications or disabling conditions. The effective date of this new benefit is January 1, 1974. Such benefits are payable for up to 56 weeks. Some of the complications of pregnancy covered are Caesarian sections, childhood fever, and extrauterine pregnancies.

The United States Supreme Court has agreed to rule on the constitutionality of the California law that denies disability to all pregnant women and new mothers who cannot work. The high court’s ruling is expected by next June.

Under California law a worker pays 1% of his wages for disability coverage. When he suffers illness or injury, the covered employee receives basic benefits extra-uterine pregnancies. depending on earnings, for up to 26 weeks. Hospitalization, if necessary, brings extra benefits.

For further information and help in filing claims, go to your nearest Campesino Center. There is no charge for this service. Centers are located in Selma, Lamont, Delano, Coalinga, Calexico, Oxnard, Santa Maria and Stockton, California and in San Luis, Arizona.
Supports British dockers

Dear Sirs,

I recently viewed on television a documentary about Mr. Chavez and your struggle for a fair wage and decent conditions of work. I was filled with great admiration for you all and a terrible anger at the men who would seek to exploit their fellow men, as they seek to exploit you.

I am happy to learn that our own Transport and General Workers Union, ... (has) ... "blackened" California grapes and as far as "Safeway" is concerned, I for one would starve before entering one of their shops.

May God bless you all - be strong!

Yours faithfully,

F. A. Floyd
London, England

‘Boycotters are our defenders’

Sisters and Brothers:

I send you my warmest greetings all the way from Coachella, California, especially to my friends that I left in Detroit. There will always be a place in my heart for you.

The holy Gospels command us to hear the voice in the desert that comes to save souls, but we should also hear the voice of the Union, the United Farm Workers of America, which will bring about the betterment of our situation and give our rights more importance.

Dear sisters and brothers, I ask you to continue supporting La Causa, which is your cause too.

Our boycotter sisters and brothers who find themselves in distant lands along with their children, are committed with their whole hearts to suffer for the good of the farm worker. The boycotter are our defenders.

In their daily work they are exposed to the terrible cold, to dangerous traffic in the large cities, as well as humiliations, blasphemies, and insults on the part of anti-UFW customers and store managers.

All this they suffer for us. But thanks to God, we believe in non-violence, our boycotter don’t respond to these attacks with violence.

They think of the final victory of La Causa, So that is why they ask your help. Don’t buy where there are boycott picket lines.

Don’t, with you money, give arms to our enemies, who are yours also.

Our boycotter sisters and brothers are like doves crossing the ocean looking for food to eat. They went from one coast to the other looking for justice and a better life for farm workers.

Onward boycotters! You are not alone! Here in California we are also boycotting.

Viva el boicoteo! Viva la Causa! Viva los Hijos! Viva Cesar Chavez! Si, se puede!

Your brother,

Francisco Gonzalez
Coachella, California

‘Much inspiration’

Sisters and brothers:

May peace and justice prevail throughout the new year. I spoke out at the bishops’ meeting in favor of the boycott. Much inspiration came from my visits with UFW organizers and my visits to migrant labor camps in Virginia.

God’s blessings to all of you and on your work.

Bishop Walter Sullivan
Richmond, Virginia

Repudiates Teamsters

For personal reasons I had to work under the Teamsters last summer and now they send me this membership booklet, but I don’t want it because I don’t want that union. I would appreciate it if you were to return this booklet to its label.

I could do it but I want you to demonstrate to them (Teamsters) that the only union farm workers want is the UFW.

As a last favor, please let me know what happens.

Sincerely yours,

Salvador C. Maldonado
Bakersfield, California

(This letter, along with the Teamster membership booklet, was sent to us by the Salinas Field Office. —El Malcriado)

‘Never admit failure’

Sisters and brothers:

May peace and justice prevail throughout the new year. I spoke out at the bishops’ meeting in favor of the boycott. Much inspiration came from my visits with Teamster membership booklet.

We move out to the picket line which has been assigned to us, not to find results and achievements than the day before.

Greetings from
Bakersfield, California

Bishops are like doves crossing the ocean looking for food to eat. They think of the final victory of La Causa, So that is why they ask your help. Don’t buy where there are boycott picket lines. Don’t, with you money, give arms to our enemies, who are yours also.

Our boycotter sisters and brothers are like doves crossing the ocean looking for food to eat. They went from one coast to the other looking for justice and a better life for farm workers.

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Your brother,

Francisco Gonzalez
Coachella, California

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A scuffle has broken out somewhere in the crowd, a young man leaps to a nearby cartop with a loud cry; we do not want hatred and violence here. We do not wish to fight each other.

My people are simply tired of this senseless, saddening disruption by so-called Justice (police). We have journeyed through the world of constant neglect. We have worked our land with our blood, sweat and tears. We have reached a series of nameless breaking points. Perhaps we have been, just like you and me, are sensitive and quite willing to go all out for the better things in life. Apparently viewed from the other side this young man has added fuel to the fire, soon there is a call for (law) enforcement. Yes, Enforce the already below knee-level laws.

Yet there’s something inside of us that tells us that we must go on fighting for the Cause! Never admit failure until you have succeeded, “Sock it to ’em.”

Que Viva la Causa,

Freddie Tabarez
Friso, California

Boycott Guild wine!

Dear Editor:

The boycott of Guild liquor is growing more effective in Minnesota. We have 180 liquor stores clean. It is 20 BELOW zero here, but 40 people joined us on a pre-holiday picket line which even included a pre-UFW Santa Class.

Viva la Huelga,

The Minnesota Boycott

Greetings from

Norfolk boycott

Sisters and brothers:

All of us from the Center for United Labor Action wish you all the struggles workers a year of victory.

Boycott activities have been extended somewhat here to Portsmouth and Virginia Beach, The "farmers of the Farm Workers" group is also growing.

Saturday, December 14th there was a rally in Durham, North Carolina for the UFW. The Herreria Family and several of us from Norfolk and Portsmouth went. About 80 people attended the rally and march through Custis.

There is picketing and leafleting at 3 A & P’s in Norfolk each week, plus a lot of meetings, film showings etc. The Herrerias are very strong fighters.

The miners’ success in Mississippi and the UFW success in Detroit recently, encourage us in our struggle to make Norfolk the next city free of scab lettuce and grapes.

Until victory,

Dianne and Tom

Norfolk, Va.
‘It keeps happening every day’

by Rev. Wayne "Chris" Hartmire (Hartmire is director of the National Farm Worker Ministry -- El Malcriado)

Standing in parking lots talking to people is what boycottors do all the time. It is hard work. You talk to a lot of different people in a day's time. Some are afraid to talk. Some seem not to care about anything.

A whole lot are sympathetic but unwilling to do that which is needed. A few are just mean. But a boycottor lives on the spirit of the beautiful man who cares about farm workers and who agree to turn away from the store.

In early December I was in Cleveland with members of the National Farm Worker Ministry Board. We went out to Fisheker-Fazzio Stores to help with the boycott. I talked to a whole string of those "sympathetic-but-un­quite" folks. I was feeling the weight of time and of other people's apathy and the world was beginning to look like a place where justice might never find a home.

But like every boycottor worth his salt, I kept talking to people. "I'm afraid you will please help farm workers by not shopping at Fisher-Fazzio today."

Woman: "I'm sure but how today I have to shop here." (She was Black, on welfare, and tired.)

Boycotter: "Do you have to shop here? It would definitely help the farm workers' cause if you'd go a short two miles to that other store."

Woman: "But, mister, I only have $25.00 for a whole week's food."

I didn't talk to anyone else for a few minutes looking at the parking lot with tears on my cheeks and my heart aching with love for that beautiful woman and for all humankind. What she gave me was so precious that it can't be measured. From her own spirit she gave to my spirit and out of that gift of herself came more energy and more hope. There was no way that anyone could get me down the rest of the day!

It keeps happening every day: a word in the right place, a faraway smile of a girl who decides to leave the fields, a song for a poem, a few hours on the picket line, in a million different ways we feed each other's spirits and keep alive the struggle for justice.

It is not an accident. People decide to do things that give strength to other people and to the movement. And the same ruffles and the deeds and the specific forms of caring come together into a mighty stream that will in time bring a new day of justice and hope for farm workers. Si, se puede! Force in order to attain those ends.

How many employers would sign Union contracts if Unions could not strike or boycott?

From California Farmer: "In this issue are dedicating some space to the third alternative. The first two choices are: Either join the AFL-CIO Chavez union or the Teamsters union. The third choice is: Jobs in union.

'Some of the suggestions for working towards a non-union situation are: Schedule your time so you can't afford to be union. And by the way, you remain the boss of the ranch, and you don't have union officials telling you that you cannot use mechanical grape pickers, as one example.'

An article titled 'New Year May Signal Labor Crisis' stated: "As bad as things were in California this past year, it seems the real year or years of crisis lie ahead for the agricultural community. It simply is not realistic to expect the United Farmworkers (sic) of America (AFL-CIO) and the International Brotherhood of Teamsters to allow the relative peace which existed in early November to continue indefinitely.

In November, the UFW legal staff took the deposition of Mike Botick, general manager of the Richard Sargent Corporation, which is the biggest snack-ranch in the Coachella Valley. Botick: "I was asked how many workers we have in the field. I refused to answer that."

On the following conspiracy hearing, Botick: "I was asked how many workers we have in the field. I refused to answer that."

Botick: Cesar Chavez, the Catholic Church, and the AFL-CIO, Nathan: 'Those are the members of the conspiracy?'

Botick: "Yes. Nathan: 'How was it they conspired? Botick: All three of them got together to raise hell with our vineyards.

Winograd: Were there any other organizations or significant individuals?

Botick: The United Auto Workers. I don't know if they Quakers were there or not. The news media, the Quaker Church, Winograd: Radio, TV, and newspapers?

Botick: Everything, right away.

Botick: What do you want, my opinion? Cesar Chavez and the Catholic Church have 95%. Winograd: Is there any separation that you can make between Cesar Chavez and the Catholic Church?

Botick: Absolutely right down the middle. Winograd: The remaining five percent, Botick: Belonging to the rest of them.

Emigio Galacio talked about the Project Manongs in Oakland, asking for volunteers to go and help them too. Alfredo Vasquez also talked about El Malcriado, Voice of the Farm Worker, and was able to sell several copies. "Decision in Delano and 'Salt of the Earth' are moving pictures shown by Chris Braga. In summary it was a great and beautiful evening. The entire staff of the Agavani Village are very grateful to all those beautiful people and to all those who have come to help us in making the dream home of retired farm workers come true. We are hoping and wishing that 1974 will be a year of peace, justice, and dignity to all farm workers and to all hard working people and may the strong tie of brotherly love bind us and all mankind always together.

by Sebastian Sahagun

Togetherness gets the job done

Another year has gone by and when one reads the newspapers and watches TV or listens to the radio, all he hears or reads about only suggests that things are getting harder and tougher for the working people to survive.

We have the wages frozen by the Nixon administration, yet he lets food prices keep going higher and higher. The energy crisis makes gasoline prices soar up so high that poor people can hardly afford to pay at all.

Above all, living costs are sky high but this administration is not doing much to ease this horrible situation confronting us.

But in spite of all these inconveniences confronting us, several groups of hard working people, a lot of them from Santa Barbara worked on the heating and cooling system and Lervis Suzuki and wife and son from Berkeley walked a mile to the Village. December 23 will for a long time be remembered as one of the Village's brightest get-togethers. The KDP (Katipunon Democratic Pilipinos) and the Third World Women's Alliance, groups composed of Pilipinos, Chicanos, Chinese, Blacks, Japanese, and Anglos, dug holes for trees in landscaping, dug trenches for gas pipes, and laid tiles on the roof.

The sheet metal workers from Santa Barbara worked on the heating and cooling system and Lervis Suzuki and wife and son from Berkeley walked a mile to the Village. December 23 will for a long time be remembered as one of the Village's brightest get-togethers.

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El Malcriado

February 22, 1974
NO MORE DEATH-TRIPS!

The crash of the labor contractor bus in which 19 farm workers drowned in a 'prison of seats' was a massacre, not an accident. The overturning of two windowless vans within a month in Florida in which one Jamaican sugar canecutter was killed and 125 others injured was not an accident.

The tragedies are the results of a brutal agricultural system in which growers treat workers like agricultural implements to be used, abused and discarded at will.

We condemn the growers for trying to wash the blood off their hands by passing the blame for the bus massacre to the labor contractors they created.

We demand the growers sign Union contracts that guarantee safety on the roads as well as in the field.

We condemn the labor contractors for putting the lives of our people in jeopardy each day in their wheeled coffins to provide growers with cheap labor.

We demand the outlawing of the labor contractors.

We condemn the Teamsters for conspiring with the growers and labor contractors to destroy our Union, our only hope for an end to the death trips.

We demand the Teamster get out of the fields. Their indifference and inaction during this time of mourning and crisis is the ultimate proof of their cynical and callous attitude toward our rights, health and safety.

We condemn the California Highway Patrol officials for their misleading report, which tries to pin the blame on the driver, instead of focusing on the real cause of the deaths; the bus seats that were so easily torn from the floor to trap our sisters and brothers under three feet of water.

We demand the California Highway Patrol provide us with equal protection in vehicle safety standards and conduct an emergency program of safety inspections for all farm labor buses.

The history of our Union shows us our demands will not be met without strong Union contracts. To win contracts, we must strike and boycott. Only then will there be no more death trips.

‘The most important thing is to educate people why they must not buy lettuce and not buy grapes and not buy scab wine. This is the principal force that the Union has, because for us it is much harder to hold and win a strike, because we are poor.

90% of the people here are aware that we need the Union. But the same poverty forces us to put up with conditions that we don’t want. Sure we know that it is unjust that a contractor takes you with him for $16 and you have to spend 18 hours with him. But what are we going to do back at home if we don’t take home any money that day? And how can it be just that a woman leaves her children at two in the morning and comes back when it is dark -- for $16 in pay?

For me, the most important thing is that it is much less sacrifice for people not to eat these three things than it is for a farm worker family not to eat anything.’

--Angel Quintero, Calexico