A Farm-Bred Unionist
Cesar Estrada Chavez

The deep hunger that Cesar Chavez felt yesterday, as he came off his twenty-five-day fast in California was not entirely new for the Mexican-American labor leader. He had experienced hunger before.

The unionist was born on March 31, 1927, on a small Arizona farm near Yuma, where his family was living in a precarious living. His father's job broke when Cesar was 10 years old.

and the family began to trail the harvest as migrant workers.

The young labor leader remembers the winter of 1938, when he stopped on the way home from school to fish and cut mustard greens to keep the family from starving. More than 30 school days, Cesar had climbed to the pestilent slum near San Jose, Calif., called "Sal Si Puedes (Get out if you can)."

Even today, director of the United Farm Workers Organizing Committee of the A.F.L-C.I.O., Mr. Chavez, his wife Helen and eight children live in a one-room frame house in Delano, Calif., and scrape along on about $300 a month.

Cesar Estrada Chavez's almost complete lack of interest in material comforts tells a great deal about the short (5 feet 6 inches) and once sturdy labor leader with the shot of jet black hair. He is soft-spoken and unassuming, but he burns with a consuming desire to lift the lot of his people.

Talented and Energetic

When does a talented and energetic young man make such a sacrifice? "For many years I was a farm worker," he once explained to a visiting worker, and, well, personally, and I'm being very frank, maybe it's just a matter of trying to even the score, you know."

Mr. Chavez first came to wide public attention in 1955, when he called a strike of grape pickers in the fertile Sal Joaquin Valley around Delano. Since then, has led on, including a boycott of 200,000 contracts with major wine processors. The struggle, Mr. Chavez himself admitted, is far from over. But he has succeeded, where others failed for 30 years, in blocking legislation for the nation's first viable farm worker union.

We can see the reason is that Mr. Chavez is a charismatic leader who has capitalized on the ethnic bonds among the Mexican-Americans, and invested his cause with religious and civil rights overtones. The growers fight-

Published: March 11, 1968
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