

To be brutally factual, the present California grape dispute is not concern over migrant workers (there are few in California); wages are not the issue (California farm workers are now the highest paid farm workers in the nation); the issue is not a "strike" because there is no strike by a union (Chavez's group is not a union, it is an organizing committee); the issue is not protective legislation since California farm workers are covered by more protective laws than farm workers in any other state—the issue is compulsory unionism. The truth is that the present grape boycott is the last weapon in a failing campaign to force the grape growers to force the grape workers to join a union they will not join voluntarily!

The only contracts Chavez has signed have included a compulsory union shop clause. Chavez and the union officials are not interested in the slightest in a contract without compulsory membership.

To help the workers tell their side of the story, the National Right to Work Committee (a coalition of employes and employers opposed to compulsory union membership) is helping to sponsor a nationwide speaking tour by José Mendoza, General Secretary, Farm Workers Freedom to Work—a group representing the grape pickers. Mr. Mendoza is a picker himself and his group represents more workers than Chavez's.

HUGH C. NEWTON,
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Washington.

The author replies: "As anyone who has studied the vineyard dispute knows, the so-called 'Right to Work Committee' and the 'Farm Workers' Freedom to Work Association' work closely with the growers (one of the largest growers, in fact, serves on the governing body of the committee's California organization). Thus Newton is not expressing a 'third view.' This should be obvious to anyone who read my article, since the growers quoted, and some of the workers, made virtually the same claims as Newton.

"I'm not certain Newton has read it, however, since he seems to be saying that these claims were not mentioned, and argues against irrelevant assertions that were not even noted in the article (raising some false claims of his own in the process of defining 'the

"LA CAUSA"

TO THE EDITOR:

The key to "La Huelga Becomes 'La Causa,'" Nov. 17, and the foundation for the basic argument with the approach to the article, is contained in the statement that "it may be that farm workers really do not want a union." With these 12 words Dick Meister reveals the truth of the California grape dispute. Most of the workers, the grape pickers in California—Delano, Bakersfield, etc.—oppose Cesar Chavez and his so-called "union."

Let's look at the dispute another way. If after three years of intense organizational effort supported by student and clergy activists, if after the expenditure of some \$10-million by the A.F.L.-C.I.O., if after a year-long national boycott, less than 2 per cent—yes, that's right, less than 2 per cent—of the California farm workers have joined Chavez and his organization, then it should be obvious that the workers oppose Chavez. It should be equally imperative for an objective newspaper to delve into the why behind this situation. The New York Times has not, nor has Dick Meister.

It would appear that there are three views to the grape dispute and not two, as Meister writes. The first view is that of Cesar Chavez, a paid professional organizer. The second view is that of the grower, paid professional management. And the third view is that of the rank-and-file grape picker who opposes Chavez, opposes compulsory unionism.

issue'). The principal contention that most of the workers oppose unionization cannot be proved, since the committee's grower allies refuse to allow the workers to vote on the matter. Nevertheless, the article did 'delve into the why' behind the fact that relatively few workers belong to the union—and delve deeply.

“There's no point, however, in repeating the facts Newton seems to have missed in his eagerness to express the standard line of his organization.”

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