More than 1,000 workers demonstrated here yesterday in front of the office of the Defense Department to show solidarity with Cesar Chavez, leader of the California grape boycott.

The grape pickers say the Defense Department is acting as strikebreaker by increasing its shipments of table grapes to Vietnam eight times the previous level.

The picketers represented more than a dozen unions.

Harry Van Arsdale, president of the Central Labor Council; Albert Shanker, president of the United Federation of Teachers, and a number of local politicians joined the demonstration at 525 Seventh Avenue.

After speeches by several politicians, including Representative James H. Scheuer, Bronx Democrat, and Carter Burden, Democratic candidate for the City Council in Manhattan, Mr. Chavez stood on top of a car and thanked the "sisters and brothers for helping your brothers in California."