

***LA CAUSA PARA LA RAZA: THE EDUCATIVE PROCESSES AND
DEVELOPMENT OF KNOWLEDGE IN THE UNITED FARM WORKERS
FROM 1962 TO 1970***

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(ABSTRACT)

This historical study examined the educative processes and development of knowledge in the social movement of the United Farm Workers from 1962 to 1970. Materials for this study were found in the archives of Labor History and Urban Affairs at the Walter Reuther Library at Wayne State University and from secondary sources. A conceptual framework for this study was built upon the theories and positions of those from adult education, educational history, and sociology.

This study found that adult learning outside of formal, institutional education can be empowering and life changing as well as providing valuable skills. The learning that occurred in Cesar Chavez's adult life strongly influenced him to leave the migrant stream and establish a community union and social movement. Likewise, the educative processes within the United Farm Workers (UFW) were empowering and prompted farm workers collectively to take risks to challenge the status quo in their quest for social change. In addition to empowerment, this study determined that the UFW provided numerous educational opportunities for its members to enhance their work, writing, speaking, leadership, and organizational skills.

This study determined that Chavez's role in the UFW was inherently educative and that the UFW generated knowledge to society that affected social change. As the

movement intellectual, Chavez defined the identity and interests of the social movement to society. Chavez's message was clear. *La Causa Para La Raza* sought dignity and economic and social justice for the farm workers. The purpose of *la causa* was for farm workers to gain greater control over their lives and to become more active participants in a democratic society. In 1970, for the first time in the history of farm labor, the UFW succeeded in gaining union contracts from twenty-six major growers in California. Social and economic justice had been won.

Conclusions drawn from the study indicate that as a social movement during the period between 1962 and 1970 the UFW offered unique and diverse educational opportunities and experiences for Mexican American farm workers that would not have been possible in institutional education. The UFW demonstrated the diversity and power of educative processes in a social movement for those alienated from formal education. In the tradition of Dewey, Lindeman, and Freire, the UFW represented education for social change.

For my parents, Arlene and Frederic Boyer and
my children, Edan and Ian Ali

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In a democratic society social movements are important learning sites and sources of empowerment for participants (Dykstra and Law, 1989; Finger, 1989; Holford, 1994; Welton, 1993). Additionally, social movements generate and disseminate knowledge to society at large and act as agents of social change (Eyerman and Jamison, 1991; Holford, 1994). Through their involvement in social movements, adults learn important skills such as critical thinking, organizing, speaking, and writing. In addition to these specific skills, participants in social movements learn about themselves and the world around them. They see the world differently and gain the courage and self-confidence to take collective action to seek changes in society. Through this collective action, social movements define themselves and become the source of new thoughts and ideas within society. This bearing or shaping of knowledge can add to or alter the perspective of society, and, consequently, bring about social change.

One social movement in the United States that succeeded in bringing about social change was the United Farm Workers (UFW). Led by Cesar Chavez, the UFW became the first union in the history of farm labor in the United States to achieve success at the bargaining table with agricultural growers. By July 29, 1970, the UFW signed contracts with all the major grape growers in California -- thus, winning its fight to represent farm laborers. Yet, for Cesar Chavez and its members, the UFW was much more than a labor union; it was a social movement of the poor and disenfranchised. Chavez frequently referred to the UFW as *la causa para la raza* (the cause for the Mexican race). It became a movement to restore the dignity of oppressed farm workers to build a better life and to gain their greater participation in a democratic society. It was a social revolution of the poor.

Adult education played a major role in the formation, growth and success of the UFW and in the empowerment that allowed Cesar Chavez and union members to struggle against the establishment to make changes in their lives. This study explores the process of intellectual development and social awareness in Chavez's adult life

which led him to form the UFW and his subsequent role as the spokesperson or "movement intellectual" of the social movement. This study also explores the educative processes within the UFW from its inception in 1962 to its success at the bargaining table in 1970 and how the struggles and successes of the UFW educated the public and brought about social change and the creation of new knowledge in society.

Background of the Problem

At a conference on industrial relations in 1960, the President of the California Farm Bureau, Louis Rozzoni, told the audience that the growers were immovable and that they will not be coerced into signing union contracts. He stated, "Unionizing labor is simply not feasible. Agriculture is different from other industries" (cited in Taylor, 1975, p. 99). This conviction, expressed in 1960, summarizes the entire history of the resistance of agribusiness and the California growers against any farm labor organizing. Historically, California growers took the position that farm labor was different from industrial labor and fought off -- sometimes violently -- all efforts at farm labor organizing. Given this long-standing resistance, the history of the efforts and successes of Cesar Chavez and the UFW is a remarkable story. The words of Delores Huerta, head negotiator of the UFW, crystallize this sentiment when after the UFW signed contracts with all the major grape growers in 1970, she said, "What's happened here is a miracle" (cited in Meister and Loftis, 1977, p. 164).

From the beginning, it was the grower's need for seasonal and cheap labor on large-scale farms that distinguished California agriculture (Galarza, 1964; Jelinek, 1982, McWilliams, 1939). Dating back to the early 1800s, large scale farming dominated California agriculture; and by the turn of the century, California had become the major national producer of specialty crops. Early on, the need for migrant farm laborers to harvest such specialty crops as grapes, lettuce, processing tomatoes, almonds, peaches and other fruits and vegetables became entrenched in commercial California agriculture. The tasks of picking, cutting, pulling, topping, sorting, sacking or boxing are labor-intensive and seasonal; and mechanization was slow to the production and harvesting of specialty crops. The use of man as a "raw material"

(McWilliams, 1939) for its industry has dominated California agriculture. Consequently, since the 1800's, seasonal workers -- mostly in the form of various ethnic waves -- have provided the land-owners a source of cheap labor for their peak loads.

In the late 1800s, the history of the utilization of ethnic laborers on California farms began with the use of Chinese laborers. The Japanese, East Indians, Mexicans and Filipinos followed. For the first time, during the depression and dust bowl years, native white Americans worked in large numbers as migrant laborers. An estimated 300,000 to 500,000 people (Gregory, 1989) came from Oklahoma and other lower plain states to seek work in California, and many of them found work in the fields. In fact, Galarza (1964), an authority on Mexican migrant workers, states that by 1937 an estimated 150,000 Mexicans were repatriated to Mexico to make room for native white laborers.

Although low wages and poor living conditions have been the norm of California farm laborers since the 1800s, the predominance of white laborers during the depression years made the problem visible. The year 1939 marked a period in history when farm laborers, for the first time, became the subject of major national attention. John Steinbeck in The Grapes of Wrath (1939) told the story of the "Oakies" and their exploitation as migrant laborers in California. Carey McWilliam's Factories in the Field: The Story of Migratory Farm Labor in California (1939) chronicled the growth of large-scale farming and its resulting agribusiness and long use of migrant labor. Through prize-winning photographs, Dorothea Lange depicted the miserable lives of the migrant farm workers during the depression. Also, in 1939, the Senate Committee on Education and Labor, headed by former Wisconsin governor Robert LaFollette, began a series of investigations and testimonies, eventually filling 27 volumes, on the status of farm workers and farm labor in California (U.S. Congress, 1942).

Based on the evidence that agriculture, particularly in California, was as concentrated, coordinated and capitalized as the industrial sector, the LaFollette Committee recommended that farm labor should be covered under federal regulation, including the National Labor Relations Act, the Social Security Act, the Fair Labor

Standards Act and individual state and legislation. In describing the condition of the farm worker in California, Senator LaFollette, on behalf of the committee, stated, [there] exists a tragic underlying condition in California which must be remedied if farm laborers are to attain a full enjoyment of their civil rights. That condition is the distressing economic, social and political status of the hundreds of thousands who make up California's seasonal and migratory farm labor population. (U.S. Senate, 1942, p. 1)

Besides the national attention generated by Steinbeck, Carey McWilliams, Dorothea Lange and the LaFollette Committee, Eleanor Roosevelt toured California for five days and reported to Congress that Steinbeck had not exaggerated the deplorable plight of farm laborers (Majka and Majka, 1982).

Given the extraordinary national attention and congressional recommendations, 1939 looked like the year that would herald significant changes to protect the civil liberties of California farm workers and to improve their standard of living. History, however, intervened. By 1940, the attention of the nation turned toward war, and the defense build-up created much needed jobs in California. Most whites left the fields, and once again the growers turned to non-whites to supply them with a cheap source of seasonal labor -- mostly Mexican immigrants.

After the depression years, Mexican immigrants, seasonal Mexican contract laborers known as *braceros* and illegal immigrants dominated California agriculture. Born in 1927, Cesar Chavez began working as a farm laborer with his family in California after his parents lost their small family farm in Arizona in the late 1930s. Chavez joined the ranks of other migrants whose plight was a life of low wages, exploitation and poor living conditions. Although all the efforts of farm laborers to organize and to improve their lives were met with strong resistance from growers -- often resulting in bloodshed -- there had been, nevertheless, numerous efforts at farm labor organizing from the early 1900s (Edid, 1994; National Advisory Committee, 1967).

It was from the National Farm Labor Union (NFLU), chartered by the American Federation of Labor (AFL) in 1945, that Chavez gained his first experience

in farm labor striking. However, just like all the unions before it, the NFLU had limited success, and farm laborers continued lives of poverty and hopelessness. It was not until the successes of the United Farm Workers in the 1960s that the migrant farm laborers found victory in labor contracts with the growers.

A picture of Cesar Chavez appeared on the cover of Time in July, 1969, and the title of the cover story read, "The Little Strike that Grew to LaCausa (the cause)." Cesar Chavez and the successful strikes and national boycotts of the UFW caught the attention of the nation. Never before in the history of American unionization had there been a labor union that was successful in achieving substantial victories and in gaining union recognition from the growers. It wasn't until the advent of Cesar Chavez - a pious, quiet Mexican American with only an eighth grade education - that a farm labor union was able to achieve success at the bargaining table with agricultural growers.

An extensive literature base exists documenting the history of Chavez and the UFW during the 1960s (Abrams, 1979; Dunne, 1967; Jenkins, 1985; Kushner, 1975; Levy, 1966; Matthiessen, 1969; Meister and Loftis, 1977; Pitrone, 1971; Steiner, 1969; Taylor, 1975). These sources show how, for the first time, Chavez and the UFW were able to drive a wedge into the seemingly impenetrable power of the California growers. Not only did contracts with the growers in 1970 bring about higher wages for the impoverished farm workers, but these contracts also provided for grower contributions to health and social service plans and for restrictions on the use of pesticides and for safety provisions. Very importantly, the contracts also established hiring halls which allowed the UFW, rather than the growers, to do their own hiring. These hiring halls shifted the power over the workforce from the growers to the UFW. Social justice had been won, and, for the first time, oppressed farm workers would begin to have control over their own lives.

Historians mainly attribute the remarkable success of Chavez and the UFW to the changing political climate of the 1960s and to Chavez's organizing strategies. The student, civil rights and anti-war movements, as well as President Johnson's war on poverty and the budding Chicano movement, heightened the public's awareness of poverty, oppression and social justice. As a farm worker himself, and not an outsider,

Chavez used organizing techniques that worked with the fearful farm laborers. Chavez's background was community organizing, not labor organizing, and he successfully used these techniques in building solidarity and commitment among farm laborers. The UFW offered more than union contracts; its success was built on the promise of farm workers gaining control over their own lives and becoming active participants -- rather than marginalized members -- in a democratic society. It was, indeed, a social movement of the poor.

Despite this large literature base on the history of Chavez and the UFW, there has been no research devoted specifically to the educational aspects of the movement. It is clear, however, that adult education was a major influence in Chavez's own life and a critical component of the movement itself. There were major educational influences in Chavez's adult life which shaped his thinking and subsequent approach to building the UFW. As an adult, Chavez read voraciously and was influenced by religious and community service leaders. Adult education also became an integral part of the movement for all participants. Through small group discussions, a union newspaper, cultural celebrations, theater, song, union organizing, pickets, boycotts, etc., farm laborers developed an awareness of their oppressed situation and gained the skills and confidence to make efforts to improve their life situation. In addition to these educational processes within the movement itself, the movement was educative to society at large and became an agent of social change.

Statement of the Problem

Several recent adult education theorists have documented the importance of the educative processes in social movements (Cunningham, 1989; Dysktra and Law, 1994; Holford, 1995; Finger, 1989; Paulston, 1980; Welton, 1993). These theorists argue that social movements are important sites of learning and sources of skill building and empowerment for their participants. As inherently educative forces, social movements enable participants to think critically about their lives and the larger society and to acquire the necessary skills to make societal change. Additionally, adult education theory is beginning to recognize the significance of social movements as important sources of knowledge construction within society. As bearers of new ideas, social

movements can be sources of new scientific, social, or political identities.

In addition to an emerging body of adult education theory connecting adult education to social movements, there is a growing attention to historical research which describes and analyzes the educational dimensions of social movements (Boggs, 1991; Boucouvalas, 1985; 1988; Evans and Boyte, 1986; Goodwyn, 1978; 1986; Horton, A. 1989; Horton, M., 1990; Mitchell, 1987; Peters and Bell, 1987; Scheid, 1995; Stubblefield and Keane, 1994). These works examine the educational aspects of social movements. The education that occurs in social movements takes place outside of traditional or institutional schooling and challenges the hierarchies of race, gender and class. The educative processes in social movements are critical components in aiding members to overcome passivity, to understand societal structures, and to gain skills for action. For example, researchers have documented the essential educational components in the Highlander Folk School (Boggs, 1991; Horton, A. 1989; Horton, M. 1990; Peters and Bell, 1987; Stubblefield and Keane, 1994) and the Southern Farmer's Alliance (Goodwyn, 1978, 1986; Mitchell, 1987; Stubblefield and Keane, 1994) whereby participants became aware of their oppressed situation and realized their collective power to make changes in their lives.

Although Cesar Chavez and the UFW have been topics for historical and sociological research (Abrams, 1979; Dunne, 1967; Jenkins, 1983; Kushner, 1975; Levy, 1966; Mattiessen, 1969; Pitrone, 1971; Steiner, 1969), there is no evidence that the educative processes of the movement have been explored. Through the exploration and documentation of the role that adult education played in the formation, growth and success of the UFW, this study fills a gap in the newly emerging adult education research on social movements. This study adds to the historical adult education research which demonstrates how adult education becomes a source of empowerment for participants in social movements to seek economic and social justice. Of equal importance, this study shows how the UFW became an important source in the development of new knowledge for society at large. As a social movement, the UFW educated a nation about the plight of farm workers, and this knowledge was instrumental in affecting change through democratic processes.

Purpose of the Study

Beginning with an historical background in farming, farm labor and unionizing attempts in California and proceeding to the establishment of the UFW, this study identifies and analyzes the critical events, educative processes and generation of knowledge to the larger society in the movement from 1962 to 1970. As an educational historical study, it provides a context to the educational dimensions of the movement through an understanding of the social, economic and political conditions of the time. It shows the interrelationship between adult education and the collective empowerment that developed within a social movement that enabled the farm workers, an oppressed segment of society, to challenge the status quo and to seek economic and social justice.

Research Questions

The following questions provided the research framework for the study:

1. What were the learning processes that led Chavez to form the UFW?
2. What was Chavez's role in defining the UFW to movement members and to society at large?
3. What were the critical adult education activities and processes in the movement?
4. How were the educational activities and processes of the movement intrinsic to the empowerment of the farm workers and the development and successes of the UFW?
5. How did Chavez and the UFW contribute to the construction of knowledge within the greater society about the economic and social conditions of the farm workers, and what social changes occurred because of this knowledge?

Significance of Study

In democratic societies social movements play a critical role in bringing about social change. In recent years, adult education researchers have begun to recognize and document the educative components of social movements. This study adds to this

limited body of research by exploring and analyzing the educative processes of the UFW. Through this exploration, this study provides insight into the importance of adult education in the development and success of social movements. This study examines how the UFW changed the lives of participants and how the achievements of the movement altered societal knowledge about farming and farm workers. It was through the generation of knowledge to the larger society about the plight of farm workers that social change occurred. This social change occurred against the backdrop of an historical period that was receptive socially and politically to the demands of the UFW. Thus, this study provides a unique opportunity to contribute to adult education research of the learning that occurs within a social movement at a particular time in history and to examine the contribution that a movement makes to societal change.

In addition to the contribution that it makes to educational research on social movements, this study adds to the adult education research on the Hispanic population. Even though Mexican Americans predate the Anglo settlement of the Southwest, and even though Hispanics will become the largest minority population in the United States by the year 2020 or before, for the most part, the historiography of adult education has ignored this population (Montero-Sieburth, 1990). Therefore, this study also makes a contribution to this neglected area of research.

Last, but very significantly, this study is a case study of how a minority population challenged the dominant society and how adult education is interwoven within a particular historical, social and political context. Since mainstream adult education research traditionally has marginalized or not addressed the contributions of groups who seek to change the status quo, this study contributes to the historiography of a minority group and the learning that occurs within a particular historical context.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study, an understanding of the meaning of education and its relationship to social movements and an understanding of the meaning of the term social movement is needed.

Education and Social Movements

Several adult education theorists and others have documented the importance of educational processes in social movements (Dykstra and Law, 1994; Evans and Boyte, 1986; Finger, 1989; Holford, 1995; Goodwyn, 1976; Goodwyn, 1978; Mitchell, 1987; Paulston, 1980; Stubblefield and Keane, 1994; Welton, 1991). Stubblefield and Keane (1994) in Adult Education in the American Experience summarize this importance by asserting that social movements challenge the hierarchies of race, gender and class and that educational processes within these movements are critical in aiding movement members to overcome passivity, to understand societal structures, and to gain skills for action.

Because the education that takes place in social movements is outside of traditional schooling, or formal educational institutions, the notion that education is an inherent component of social movements requires a broad definition of education. The writings of both Bailyn and Cremin provide a reference point for this broad perspective. Cremin (1970) defines education as an intentional and organized activity to transmit or to acquire knowledge, skills, or attitudes. These activities can occur in many forms outside of formal pedagogy, including family, press, church, clubs, voluntary organizations, etc. Bailyn (1960) also views education as more than institutionalized schooling and urges historians to "think of education not only as formal pedagogy but as the entire process by which a culture transmits itself across generations" (p. 14). Therefore, all educational elements, both inside and outside of formal pedagogy, work in combination to perform the process of cultural transmission.

Although the elements of education, both within and outside of formal schooling, work along side each other, Bailyn (1960) and Cremin (1970; 1976) also emphasize that there can be a conflict between institutionalized and noninstitutionalized learning. Cremin (1976) states that "there is often a conflict between what educators are trying to teach and what is learned from the ordinary business of living" (pp. 134-35). The learning that occurs in social movements is not only outside institutionalized learning but it also is normally in conflict with formal pedagogy. Using Coomb's (1973) division of formal, nonformal, and informal education, the education that occurs within social movements can be described largely as nonformal. According to Coomb,

nonformal education refers to organized, systematic educational activities that occur outside of the formal educational system. By contrast, formal education is synonymous with schooling from primary grades through university study, and informal education is unsystematic and unorganized learning that occurs in the family, media, with peers, etc.

In light of this broader definition of education, social movements provide important opportunities for adult learning outside of traditional pedagogy. Members develop a deepened or new understanding of the world around them; they learn specific skills, such as critical thinking, organizing, speaking and writing. Through participation in social movements members also develop self-confidence and the ability to take political action. Welton (1993) calls social movements "privileged sites for emancipatory praxis" (p. 152). Hence, social movements combine the cultural and political. Dykstra and Law (1994) contend that, in addition to the recognizably educative aspects of social movements (seminars, workshops, lectures, teach-ins, printing and distribution of materials, etc.), the full cultural life of social movements (through poetry, music, petitions, pickets, etc.) combine culture and politics in an inherently educative way. Paulston (1980) in a series of articles on the roots of folk colleges and social and ethnic movements examines the nonformal learning programs that have empowered individuals to make numerous collective efforts to seek social change.

Social Movement

In their study of education within social movements, Paulston and Lejeune (1980) use Saul Alinsky's definition of a social movement: "the orderly development of participation, interest and action by a group of people, for the purpose of articulating demands for change or resistance to change in the social order" (p. 28). In their examination of the educational processes within social movements, Dykstra and Law (1994) also offer a similar definition of a social movement as a relatively large number of people who hold commonly held values or rights (human and/or social) coming together to bring about social change. The definitions offered by Alinsky and Dykstra and Law express the essence of how the term is used in this study. Paulston and

Lejune (1980) indicate several assumptions that are inherent in Alinsky's definition. By its nature, a social movement is an organized group, and the viability of the group is dependent upon its organizational capabilities. Although the internal structure and hierarchy of social movements vary, the concerted efforts of movement members -- specific programs, defined goals, ideology and leadership -- define the character of the movement. Additionally, the ability of a social movement to arouse and channel interest, to mobilize participation, and to organize action influences the movement's direction. A social movement is, therefore, the result of the desire of a group of people to find solutions for their own problems and to direct change according to their perceived needs. This desire is based generally on a feeling of real or perceived powerlessness to make changes within traditional or existing institutions and the necessity to affect change from below. Social movements articulate a change in the social order which could include bringing about social, political, economic or cultural change. In many instances, social movements confront traditional institutions and can become a threat to the established order. In order to win adherents to their position, social movements must educate people. Hence, an essential function of social movements is education to change the hearts and minds of people.

Research Method

Research Design

This research study traces the educational influences in Chavez's life that led him to form the UFW, the adult educational processes in the UFW from 1962 to 1970, and the generation of knowledge about the movement to the larger society that resulted in social change. The historical research method utilized for this study followed Barzun and Graff (1992); Carr (1961); Litchman and French (1978) and others who argue that the historical research is the method by which the researcher systematically and objectively reconstructs the past. In an attempt to learn about man's past, the researcher must collect, categorize, analyze, synthesize, integrate and interpret historical evidence. Careful gathering of evidence and objective inference are at the heart of historical research.

Because historical research provides an account of events, personalities,

institutions and the times and context within which events occurred, it was an appropriate method to trace the origin, development, and educative processes of the UFW. Stubblefield (1982) contends that historical research is important in establishing the role of adult education as an instrument of social change. To understand this role, one relates events to the context of the times and connects them with prior and subsequent events. History interprets the events that occur in the past; thus it can provide an understanding of adult education within a specific historical context.

This study derived its focus from a conceptual framework which was drawn from the theories and positions of adult educators and those in other disciplines. This conceptual framework was built upon the following concepts:

1. An examination of the educative processes in social movements necessitates a sociological perspective of adult education which is based on critical theory.
2. An inquiry into the educational components of social movements requires an understanding of social movement theory and the application of current social movement theory to the UFW.
3. Adult education can be an agent of social change within democratic societies.
4. Social movements are important learning sites and sources for skill-building and empowerment for their participants.
5. Social movements become important sources of new knowledge construction to society at large.
6. Movement intellectuals in social movements articulate and define the movement identity and knowledge interests to society at large.
7. Historical studies have documented the importance of adult education in social movements.
8. Outside of traditional education, Mexican Americans have a rich educational history which often has served as a source of empowerment.

Chapter II, An Examination of Relevant Literature in the Building of a Conceptual Framework, sets forth these concepts.

Sources of Data

The sources of data for this study were: primary, unpublished materials, and published materials. The historical files and personal papers of Cesar Chavez and others associated with the UFW were examined at the archives of the special collection of the Walter Reuther Library of Labor and Urban Affairs at Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan. In 1967, Cesar Chavez designated the Walter Reuther Library as the official repository of the Union's historical files and Chavez's personal papers. At the same time, other organizations and other persons associated with Cesar Chavez and the United Farm Workers, such as the California Migrant Ministry, a non-denominational religious organization that worked with migrant farm workers, and Fred Ross, Chavez's friend and mentor, also deposited materials at the Walter Reuther Library. The proceedings of Congressional Hearings on farm labor were examined at the Library of Congress. Doctoral dissertations related to California agriculture, farm labor, Cesar Chavez and the UFW were gathered through Virginia Tech and through the University of Michigan Dissertation Services. In addition, there is a vast amount of published material on Cesar Chavez and the UFW in books, journals, magazines and newspapers. These published sources were gathered from Virginia Tech and other area college libraries.

Data Collection

Data collection was accomplished through wide reading and note taking in the archives of Labor History and Urban Affairs at the Walter Reuther Library at Wayne State University. These archives contain a comprehensive collection of first hand materials. Materials examined in these collections included correspondence, notes, office files, reports, issues of *El Malcriado* (the official UFW newspaper), flyers, interviews with Chavez, etc. Archival material was examined and collected from the following collections: the *El Malcriado* Collection; the National Farm Workers Association Collection; the United Farm Workers Organizing Committee Collection; the United Farm Workers Office of the President Collection; the United Farm Workers Research and Information Collection; the California Migrant Ministry Collection; the Cesar Chavez Collection, Part II; the Fred Ross Collection; and the William Kircher

Collection.

The proceedings of congressional hearings on farm labor, the doctoral dissertations, and the numerous secondary sources were also of great value to this study. These materials were read and notes taken. Data from both the archival and secondary material were recorded on 5 x 8 cards according to the topic.

Data Analysis

The collected data was sorted and categorized according to topic, and a comparison and analysis of the data followed. During this process, themes emerged. These themes provided a logical organization of the study. A careful analysis and interpretation of all materials followed to determine the educational processes and the development of knowledge in the UFW within the context of the research questions and the conceptual framework.

Organization of the Study

This study is organized into seven chapters. Chapter One introduces the background, purpose and rationale for a study of the educational processes and development of knowledge in the UFW from 1962-70. It presents the research questions and outlines the importance of the study for the field of adult education. Chapter One also provides: a) a definition of terms; b) the research design; c) the sources of data; d) the analysis of data.

Chapter Two, Relevant Literature in Building a Conceptual Framework, reviews the pertinent literature on which the conceptual framework of this study is built and from which the study derives its focus.

Chapter Three, Historical Background on Farming, Farm Workers and Farm Labor Organizing in California before 1962, reviews the history of agriculture and farm labor organizing in California from the 1800s to 1962. It sets the historical, social and political context for the advent of Cesar Chavez and the United Farm Workers.

Chapter Four, The Learning Processes that Inspired Chavez to Form the UFW, provides a background of Chavez's life and explores the learning processes that led him to form and build the UFW. Particular emphasis is placed on the educational

processes that occurred in Chavez's adult life, including his own reading and his association with people who influenced his thinking, philosophy, motivations and goals.

Chapter Five, Chavez Begins a Community Union and Social Movement: 1962-1965, tells the story of how, before the Delano strike occurred in September 1965, Chavez established and built a community union and social movement of farm workers. During this period, Chavez was able to engrain a strong movement identity among the farm workers which prepared them for the strikes and boycotts that followed.

Chapter Six, Chavez Reaches Out to the Larger Society: 1965 to 1970, explores how, after the Delano strike began, Chavez communicated, at every opportunity, the message of the movement to the larger society. This communication resulted in the union becoming an educative force within society and gaining wide-spread support across the nation. Chapter Six also shows how, in a relatively short period of time, Chavez's community union was able to move from a disputed social movement to an accepted movement that succeeded in winning contracts with the growers.

Chapter Seven, The Educational Activities of the UFW: 1962-1970, explores the rich array of empowering educational activities in the union which prompted its members to examine their lives and to realize that collectively they could improve the quality of their lives. In addition to the union being an intrinsically empowering experience, this chapter explores the multitude of educational opportunities that the Union offered its members to gain specific skills and to express themselves creatively and artistically.

Chapter Eight, Summary and Conclusions, provides a summary of the research based on the data gathered and draws conclusions about the role of adult education in the UFW. Chapter Eight also draws conclusions about how the movement contributed to generating knowledge within the greater society about the condition of the farm workers and what social changes occurred because of this knowledge. It also interprets the findings within the larger context of the study of social movements and their relevance to adult education and offers possible topics for further research.

CHAPTER TWO

RELEVANT LITERATURE IN BUILDING A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework of this study is drawn from the theories and positions of adult educators and those in other disciplines and is built upon the following concepts:

- 1) An examination of the educational processes in social movements necessitates a sociological perspective of adult education which is based on critical theory.
- 2) An inquiry into the educational components of social movements requires an understanding of social movement theory and the application of current social movement theory to the UFW.
- 3) Adult education can be an agent of social change within democratic societies.
- 4) Social movements are important learning sites and sources for skill-building and empowerment for their participants.
- 5) Social movements become important sources of new knowledge to society at large.
- 6) Movement intellectuals in social movements articulate and refine the movement identity and knowledge interests to society at large.
- 7) Historical studies have documented the importance of adult education in social movements.
- 8) Outside of traditional education, Mexican Americans have a rich educational history which has often served as a source of empowerment.

Each of these concepts is examined and the relevant literature documented.

Sociological Context and Critical Theory

Sociological Perspective of Adult Education

Looking at the educational processes of social movements requires a sociological perspective of education. Although early adult education theorists, such as Eduard Lindeman, Joseph Hart, and Harry and Bonita Overstreet emphasized the social nature and social purpose of adult education, the North American focus since the 1950s

has been psychological rather than sociological. Hence, the theoretical focal point for most adult education researchers has revolved around the individual and not the social or collective aspects of adult education (Collard and Law, 1989, Griffin, 1991; Jarvis, 1985, 1987; Rubenson, 1989; Stubblefield, 1988; Stubblefield and Keane, 1994; Wilson, 1991). Jarvis (1985) states that even though educational sociology has a long history, the sociology of adult education does not exist in the same manner as sociological studies of initial education. Rubenson (1989) argues that it is only recently that there has been an increased interest in the sociological aspects of adult education.

Adult education theorists stress that the heightened interest in the sociology of adult education comes from the realization that learning is a social as well as an individual phenomenon. Adult learning does not happen in isolation from the world but is an intimate part of the world and very much affected by it (Griffin, 1991; Jarvis, 1985; 1987; Rubenson, 1989). Theorists concerned with the sociology of adult education maintain that separating the individual from his/her social context reveals only a partial understanding of the learning process. Hence, no person can be a social isolate; acculturation is a social process. One brings to the learning process a social construct or worldview that is an integral part of the process and can not be separated from it.

Although the psychological focus still dominates current adult education research, changing viewpoints in social science theory have encouraged adult education theorists to become aware of and to place equal emphasis on the sociological aspects of the educative process (Rubenson, 1989). Education theorists (Jarvis, 1985, 1987, 1992; Griffin, 1991; Merritt and Coombs, 1977; Rubenson, 1989) argue that the greatest stumbling block for educators in their efforts to consider the social context of learning has been the predominance of the structural-functional conceptual framework of sociology and educational sociology. The emergence of critical social theory and its application to educational sociology has caused theorists to pay more attention to the societal aspects of adult education.

The structural-functional framework of the sociology of education, based on the work of Talcott Parsons and others, emphasizes consensus (Griffin, 1991; Rubenson,

1989). The consensus paradigm assumes that the educational system is a great "equalizer," which promotes education in a fair and equal way; it neglects to examine inequitable power relationships in institutions. In assuming the social parity of groups, it fails to address issues of power, race, class or gender in the educational process.

Critical Social Theory

In contrast to the structural-functional framework, critical theory addresses issues that create conflict in society -- power, race, class and gender. Critical theory largely comes from the Frankfurt School and the work of Jurgen Habermas. Instead of viewing education as fair and equal, critical educational theorists view the world from a conflict rather than a consensus paradigm and maintain that the "...structure of symbols and of knowledge in educational institutions is that of the dominant culture and is therefore intimately related to the principles and practices of cultural and social control" (Rubenson, 1989, p. 55). Education, then, becomes an instrument of hegemony which perpetuates the existing inequalities of society.

Critical social theory not only interprets the world but emphasizes the possibility of changing it. Undergirding critical theory is the notion that existing social structures and beliefs are socially constructed and that these social structures can be transformed through social action (Ewert, 1991). Adults' emancipatory interests and their abilities to transcend, grow and develop factor heavily in adult education theory which draws from critical theory. Mezirow is the most well-known adult education theorist who looked to Habermas and critical theory to develop his theory of perspective transformation. Perspective transformation emphasizes man's ability for self-knowledge through self-reflection -- to understand our past and self-imposed restraints and to achieve freedom through emancipatory action. Both enlightenment and action are required for emancipation (Ewert, 1991). Mezirow (1981) states, "Dramatic personal and social change become possible by becoming aware of the way ideologies - sexual, religious, education, occupational, political, economic and technological -- have created or contributed to our dependency on reified powers" (p. 5-7). Although Mezirow writes about the possibility of societal as well as individual change, he has been criticized by some adult education theorists (Hart, 1990; Collard and Law, 1989)

for neglecting the inherently radical nature of Habermas's theory which emphasizes the societal as well as individual change through emancipatory action.

Through his concept of "hegemony" and "counterhegemony," Gramsci (1971) had a significant influence on critical theory and its application to education. While Gramsci's writings on education referred mainly to the schooling of children, he spoke to the importance of the process of reflection in adults to expose the exploitation of the ruling class (hegemony). Gramsci argued that the social, political, cultural and economic control of the dominant hegemony exists through the consent and acquiescence of the majority of individuals in society. After becoming aware of their situation in society, adults can empower themselves to break control and make changes (counterhegemony) (Deshler, 1989; Rubenson, 1989).

The concept of adult education for empowerment is best known in the works of Freire (1970), who argues that the purpose of adult education is for people, particularly the oppressed, to develop "conscimiento," or deepened consciousness, to comprehend their social reality and ultimately to transform it. In contrast to Mezirow, Freire stresses the importance of collective rather than individual empowerment. Freire affirms that it is only through collective empowerment that individuals can change society.

Social Movement

Collective Behavior Interpretation

Sociologists have studied social movements since the 1930s. Although oversimplified, the collective behavior approach dominated the North American theory of social movements until the 1960s. Additionally, North Americans and Europeans have differed in their view of social movements. For many North American sociologists the emergence and success of Communist and Fascists movements in the 1930s appeared irrational. To explain such developments, they drew on the theory of collective behavior and developed the "collective behavior approach" to social movements which emphasizes the irrational and even pathological side of people's behavior in crowds. This attempt to explain in rational terms what North Americans perceived as irrational behavior in Europe is described in the works of Talcott Parsons

and others (Cohen, 1985; Holford, 1994; Eyerman and Jamison, 1991). Even though there are variations in theories of social movements based on the collective behavior approach, these theories are derived from the assumption that individual participation in social movements is a result of the response to rapid social change when the norms sustaining institutionalized forms of behavior break down. Collective behavior theory emphasizes that such unstructured situations lead to strain, discontent and aggression; therefore individuals participate in non-institutional collective behavior which can lead to the formation of social movements. In summary, collective behavior theorists have an implicit bias which regards participation in social movements as an irrational, psychological response to change.

European Interpretation

In contrast to the predominance of the North American view of social movements as pathological attempts to draw participants away from more rational attempts within democratic institutions to bring about change, social movement theorists in Europe have traditionally held a more positive view of social movements (Holford, 1994, Eyerman and Jamison, 1991). Holford (1994) states that this perhaps can be attributed to the earlier emergence and greater impact of labor movements in Europe where social movements are "valued as precursors of labor or social democratic movements" (p. 98). Eyerman and Jamison (1991) point out that, as a more class and tradition bound society, the interpretation of European sociologists about social movements tended to be more political and philosophical. The interpretations of Max Weber and Karl Marx were the most important in Europe. Weber mistrusted mass movements and pointed out their dangers; however in his writings, Weber, along with Roberto Michels, indicated the necessity and almost inevitability of social movements in bureaucratized societies where the oligarchy of petty bourgeois leaders would be more concerned with reproducing their own power than with making any changes in society. For Marxists, social movements were also inevitable expressions of social discontent. Both Weberian and Marxists theorists agreed that the conflict between labor and capital was the most fundamental conflict in modern society (Eyerman and Jamison, 1991).

Resource Mobilization

When massive student movements emerged in the United States and Europe in the 1960s, and the civil rights movement took hold in the United States, both North American and European sociologists found the need to look for other approaches to understand these social movements. Neither the established North American or European theories could explain the range and force of the social movements of the 1960s. The Marxist and Weberian paradigms of the Europeans could not explain all the contemporary conflicts as merely those between production, labor and capital. Similarly, the collective behavior paradigm could not explain the development of social movements in the 1960s, which were characterized as democratic and which belied the image of irrational participants, as merely a psychological response to change (Cohen, 1985; Eyerman and Jamison, 1991; Goldberg, 1991; Holford, 1994; Klandermans, 1991). Cohen (1985) emphasizes that the movements of the sixties and seventies were not responses to breakdowns or economic crises but involved "concrete goals, clearly articulated general values and interests, and rational calculations of strategies" (p. 763).

In addition to the student and civil rights movements, other movements took hold. Among these were the environmental, peace and women's movements. To account for these new social movements (NSM), theorists in the United States responded with the resource mobilization theory of social movements. The resource mobilization theory, which was influenced greatly by the economist Mancur Olson and his theory of rational choice, has become the dominant theory of social movements in the United States (Cohen, 1985; Eyerman and Jamison, 1991; Goldberg; Holford, 1994; Kanderms, 1991; Morris and Mueller, 1992). The core of the rational choice theory is that "rational individuals will not participate in collective action unless selective incentives encourage them to do so" (Klandermans, 1991, p. 14). The costs and benefits of participation to individuals and the way social movements organize are central to the resource mobilization theory. The resource mobilization paradigm looks primarily at the effectiveness with which movements use resources to achieve its goals and examines why some movements are more successful than others. Resource mobilization accepts as a given condition of society that there will be conflicts between

social groups with divergent interests and repudiates the notion of irrationality or social pathology of social movements. The success of the social movement is defined as how its available resources, including people, materials and ideas, are put to use in both mobilizing support for the movement and in seeing that established institutions take seriously the aims expressed by the movement.

The question of what motivates individuals to join movements is largely ignored in the resource mobilization paradigm, and it is this lack of emphasis on individual motivation which constitutes its major criticism (Cohen, 1985; Eyerman and Jamison, 1991; Holford, 1994, Klandermas, 1991; Morris and Mueller, 1992). Resource mobilization looks at the collective action between groups and opposed interests and largely ignores self-understanding of the individuals involved. In rejecting the classical collective behavior approach and its focus on man's irrational behavior, Cohen (1985) argues that the resource mobilization approach has "thrown out the baby with the bathwater by excluding the analyses of values, norms, ideologies, projects, culture, and identity in other than instrumental terms" (p. 688). Klandermas (1991) echoes this criticism in his assertion that the resource mobilization theory has gone overboard in nearly abandoning the social-psychological analysis of social movements.

New Social Movement (NSM)

While the resource mobilization theory has become the predominant approach for understanding "new social movements" in the United States, theorists put forth another predominant paradigm in Europe. This European interpretation is generally referred to as new social movement (NSM) theory. In contrast to resource mobilization which focuses on analyzing the mobilization processes in social movement formation, NSM theory seeks an explanation for the rise of "new" social movements which differ from "old" social movements. Although varying in interpretation, these theorists agree that new social movements have certain characteristics in common (Cohen, 1985; Eyerman and Jamison, 1991; Holford, 1994; Klandermans, 1991; Morris and Mueller, 1992). New social movements do not accept the premise of a society based on economic growth and control over nature. They have broken with the traditional values of a capitalistic society and seek different relationships to work, nature, the

opposite sex and consumption. New social movements shun formal political associations and prefer small-scale, democratic, anti-hierarchical organizations. Most importantly, new social movements exhibit a dramatic change in values, including materialist to post-materialist values, changing attitudes to work and career, the environment, etc. These changing values come into conflict with political and social systems that are essentially materialistic.

In comparing the two approaches to analyzing contemporary social movements, many critics contend that NSM theorists attempt to answer the "why" of social movements, whereas resource mobilization theorists concentrate on the "how" of social movements. More recent analyses of social movements emphasize that the two approaches are not mutually exclusive, but are complementary. They argue that the strength of one is the weakness of the other. While resource mobilization helps to describe how participants in social movements are mobilized, NSM theory defines the underlying reasons that people join social movements.

Application of Resource Mobilization Theory to UFW

While historians attribute the success of the UFW to the political climate of the 1960s and Chavez's remarkable organizing strategies, sociologists have used the resource mobilization theory to explain how the UFW made inroads with the growers while all previous farm labor unions failed. Using the resource mobilization theory, Jenkins (1985) in The Politics of Insurgency: The Farm Worker Movement in the 1960s argues that the UFW is a model for organizing the powerless. Jenkins maintains that the UFW was one of the most successful struggles of the poor and excluded of the 1960s. Comparing the UFW to previous failed farm unions, he attributes the success of the UFW to its effective use of resources. Most importantly, where previous unions had failed, the UFW was able to build a permanent membership and, at the same time, gain external support from influential leaders and organizations to achieve economic and political change.

Central to the theory of resource mobilization is the rationality of collective action by excluded groups to challenge the social order, and the "insurgency" of the farm workers came about as the consciousness of social justice moved to the national

forefront in the 1960s. Through effective organizing tactics and the offering of collective incentives, the UFW mobilized a backbone of farm worker support. Solidarity was further strengthened through ethnic symbolism and grass roots organizing. Additionally, the UFW persistently pursued external support to secure organizing resources and political support. The UFW mobilized the support of student and civil rights activists, clerics, unionists, politicians and others. The UFW's pilgrimages and boycotts and Chavez's fasts also caught media attention, and there was a massive mobilization of boycotters throughout the nation. Jenkins emphasizes that all of these strategies indicate the effective mobilization of resources, and, along with increased political opportunities, were instrumental in the victories of the UFW.

Adult Education and Social Change in Democracies

Although, in practice, adult education has always existed in some form or another throughout our history, its organization as a distinct body of knowledge only began in this century. From the beginning, there have been different conceptualizations of the meaning and purpose of adult education. Although never embraced by all educational circles, the argument that a major purpose of adult education in democratic societies is to function as an agent for social change has a strong and viable legacy in adult education. This legacy can be traced to the early beginnings of the organization of adult education as a discipline and continues to the present. Theorists and practitioners such as Dewey, Lindeman, Freire and others envision adult education as an agent of social change in the creation of a better society.

John Dewey

Although most of John Dewey's writings centered around the education of children, he also addressed the education of adults. Dewey becomes an important reference point to adult education theorists because of his profound influence on education in the twentieth century and his significant influence on many adult education theorists, who were inspired by the ideals of progressive education. Progressivism has had a greater impact on adult education than any other single movement of educational thought. In addition to the concepts of the importance of needs and interests, lifelong learning, the scientific method, problem solving techniques and the centrality of

experience, the notion of education for social action within a democracy was a critical component of Dewey's philosophy (Archambault, 1964; Bullough, 1988; Darkenwald and Merriam, 1982; Dewey, 1916).

Dewey was socially conscious. As a humanist, he looked at the society around him and believed that man could create a better world. He was concerned about industrialization and did not like the inequities that he saw within American society. He did not believe in a class structure and stated that he did not think that some men should be educated to be masters and others, slaves. Education should provide for cultural renewal and the development of free and creative individuals who would be able to help a democratic society develop, grow and change for the better. The liberation of the learner released the potential for the improvement of society and culture. In his belief that education must not only promote individuality but it must also foster social consciousness, Dewey looked at education from a sociological perspective; throughout his writings he asserted man's power to change society for the better. In The Pedagogic Creed (1964, original publication, 1916), an early writing, "Education is the fundamental method of social progress and reform" (p. 437). Even though this was an early writing, Dewey never wavered from his belief that education could be an instrument of social change.

A prolific writer, Dewey in Democracy and Education (1916) and in other writings, reiterated that education is at the heart of social reform and change within a democracy. For Dewey, democracy was more than a form of government, it was "primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated living" (p. 90). Democracy, then, is not just an end, but a process; it is a way of living. A democratic process is needed in schools to prepare students to participate in a democracy and change it for the better. Dewey's vision was a democratic society committed to change; the aim of progressive education was to take part in correcting unfair privilege and unfair deprivation, not to perpetuate it.

Eduard Lindeman

Eduard Lindeman was directly influenced by Dewey. Although education was only one of his many interests, Lindeman is cited as one of the most influential thinkers

in the history of adult education. He wrote only one book on adult education, The Meaning of Adult Education (Lindeman, 1961, originally published in 1926), but he also wrote about the importance of adult education in many articles. As a social scientist and philosopher, Lindeman sought not only to analyze the world around him but also to apply what he learned from these inquiries to the field of adult education.

Throughout his writings, Lindeman emphasized the social nature and social purpose of adult education. Lindeman crystallized this belief in The Meaning of Adult Education (1961, original publication, 1926) with the statement,

Adult education will become an agency of social progress if its short-term goal of self-improvement can be made compatible with a long-time experimental but resolute policy of changing the social order. Changing individuals in continuous adjustment to changing social functions -- this is the bilateral though unified purpose of adult education. (p. 104)

Like Dewey, Lindeman had a pragmatic approach to adult education and believed that adults could discover the meaning of life through the process of learning and that through adult education adults could understand and respond intelligently to their situations (Brookfield, 1984; 1987; Bullough, 1988; Lichtenstein, 1985; Stubblefield, 1988).

Reacting to the depression, war years and racial strife, Lindeman wrote with increasing force during the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s about the purpose of adult education and its potential as an agent of change (Lindeman, 1944; 1945). Lindeman used the words "adult education" and "social education" interchangeably and defined learning as that associated with social purposes. Lindeman distinguished between education for adults, which includes literacy and vocational training and adult education, which he described as nonvocational and co-terminus with life. Adult education is situation centered and is based on the learner's experience; it starts from the perspective of the adult in the world.

Like Dewey, Lindeman believed that in a democratic society education and participation are necessary to bring about change. It was Lindeman's belief that adult education is the most reliable instrument for social actionists. In fact, Lindeman felt

that every social action group should at the same time be an adult education group, and that at some time every successful adult education group becomes a social action group.

Throughout his writings, Lindeman stressed the sociological aspects of adult education. He viewed adults as operating within a social milieu, and in the article "Sociology of Adult Education" (1945), he emphasized faith in education as an instrument for social progress and further expressed the need for adults to participate in democratic social action. Lindeman stated, "All education is, of course, imbued with purpose. What distinguishes adult education is the fact that its purpose is definitely social" (Lindeman, 1945, p. 8-9). He viewed man as a rational being and believed that adult education could give rise to new social forms.

In his belief of adult education for social change, Lindeman advocated the process of re-education; people can learn in action and people can change through re-education. In fact, he contended that adult education is a laboratory for the democratic experience and that the success of democracy depends upon the capacity of people to generate social movements expressive of their needs. Lindeman used the words social movement and social action interchangeably, and he emphasized that social action must be in conformity with democratic principles.

Lindeman abhorred authoritarianism and believed the major issues of the day - racism, what kind of economy to have, peace, world affairs, etc., were the issues which furnish adult education its program and mission. He believed that these issues could be resolved through the discussion and problem-solving methods of adult education in a democratic atmosphere free of fear. If this could be achieved, democracy could be preserved, for as Lindeman said, "We do not acquire freedom -- we grow into it" (Lindeman, 1961, p. 46). Adult education as social education becomes, then, the alternative to issues such as injustice, dictatorship and violence. It is through education that adults can understand and respond in an intelligent manner to their situation and surroundings.

Paulo Freire

Paulo Freire is another more recent adult education theorist who also conceptualizes adult education as an agent of social change. Like Dewey and

Lindeman, Freire was a humanist who dreamed of a better world; he believed in democratic principles and the power of education to create changes within society. As Dewey and Lindeman, he abhorred the inequities in society. Yet, whereas Dewey and Lindeman were secular humanists associated with the progressive movement of education, Freire was a Christian humanist more closely allied to the radical adult education movement. (Brookfield, 1987; Elias, 1977; Horton and Freire, 1990; Lichtensetin, 1985). Freire held to the ideals of the progressive philosophy. However, his label as a radical educator stemmed in large part from the influence of Marxism on his philosophy, his criticism of existing institutions, and his belief that violence in a political revolution may sometimes be justified in the context of severe oppression in third world countries.

Although critical of the Catholic church as an institution, Freire was a devout Catholic, and his Christian beliefs undergirded his philosophy and can not be separated from his educational beliefs. Influenced by the liberation philosophy of Gustavo Gutierrez and others, the encyclicals of Pope John xxiii and Vatican II, Freire believed that people should treat each other with the dignity and respect that Jesus preached and that no man should oppress another (Elias, 1977). Freire envisioned a transformation of society based on true Christian principles.

Before he was exiled, Freire was involved in literacy efforts in the 1960s in Brazil. Disillusioned with traditional literacy methods because of its inherent paternalism and authoritarianism, Freire became involved with the Popular Culture Movement and organized "circles of culture" where oppressed illiterates could discuss their problems and the underlying causes. Through the discussion of themes, often conceptualized in pictures, the oppressed not only become literate but they also gain "conscimiento," or deepened or critical consciousness, to comprehend their social reality and ultimately to transform it (Freire, 1970). Through this awareness, people become conscious of themselves and their power to make changes. Freire emphasized that no matter how oppressed are those from the "culture of silence," they have the ability to empower themselves to change the reality of their lives, and, collectively, they have the ability to change society (Freire, 1972). Although Freire's concept of

"conscimiento" is similar to Mezirow's notion of perspective transformation, Freire contended that individual and societal empowerment are interdependent. Indeed, it is possible within the framework of Mezirow's (1981) perspective transformation that the awareness which occurs individually does not lead to either individual or collective action. However, for Freire, individual empowerment is impossible without the praxis of collective action (Elias, 1975; Shor and Freire, 1987; Lichtenstein, 1985). It is collective action that transforms society. Freire also believed strongly in democratic principles and contended that the exercise of democracy will help people combat demagoguery. Reflecting on democracy, Freire stated, "they (the Brazilian people) could be helped to learn democracy through the exercise of democracy" (cited in Brookfield, 1987, p. 20).

Contemporary Interests in Social Change

At the heart of the educational philosophies of Dewey, Lindeman and Freire is the belief that education can be a powerful agent of social change and that people collectively can bring about changes in society. They are not satisfied with the status quo and inequities within society and believe in man's potential to create a better society. Although the perspective of looking beyond an individual orientation of adult education to viewing the social purpose of adult education is not a predominant trend in current adult education theory, there currently is evidence that there is growing interest in adult education as an agent of social change.

Cunningham (1989) contends that in a desire for professionalization adult educators generally spotlight the techniques of education rather than the purpose of education; however she states, "The tide may be turning" (p. 42) and cites recent efforts of adult education theorists who emphasize the potential of adult education as an agent of social change. To support her argument, Cunningham offers examples of adult education revisionist historical research and refers to the work of Courtney, Stubblefield and others. She also cites the examples of groups within the International Council for Adult Education which challenge dominant paradigms. In addition, she speaks to the growing number of social policy oriented courses that are now offered in graduate curricula. She also offers examples in the social action arena such as

participatory research and popular, environmental and peace education. Cunningham affirms that all of these efforts point to an optimistic future of the support of adult education for social change.

Quigley (1991) echoes Cunningham's sentiments in his argument that as we are approaching a century with issues of global consequence that adult educators are already involved in social change and social polity. As an example, he gives the formation in 1989 by Mezirow and others of the Educators of Adults for Democratic Social Change whose mission includes such objectives as: "To provide a continuing forum for social activities to develop education for social action" and "To influence public policy and practices which foster education for social action" (Quigley, 1991, p. 116). Other adult education theorists, such as Hal Beder (1989) assert that, whether or not society is good or inherently flawed, adult education should play a major role in improving it. Indeed, these contemporary adult education theorists are following the legacy of Lindeman (cited in Brookfield, 1987) who asserted, "Adult educators are "not commentators of history. They are heralds of the future" (p. 105).

Sites of Learning, Skill-Building, and Empowerment

Despite the legacy of Dewey, Lindeman and Freire emphasizing adult education for social change, it is only in the last few years that adult education theorists actually have linked adult learning to social movements. The works of Finger (1989), Welton (1993), Dykstra and Law (1994), and Holford (1995) argue that social movements are important sites of learning and empowerment for adults.

Finger - Crisis of Modernity

Finger (1989) challenges adult educators to respond to the "emerging crisis of modernity" (p. 15) of our postindustrial society. Now, individuals are faced with an increasing need to cope not only with a rapidly changing society but with threats to civilization in general. He contends that this crisis has led to a cultural transformation whereby individuals seek strategies to cope and that new social movements (NSM) best illustrate this cultural transformation. Finger states that NSMs "herald a new conception of adult education" (p.15).

Finger (1989) distinguishes between old and new social movements. Old social

movements include the labor, feminist, human rights, peace and justice and all kinds of Third World movements. Among the new social movements are the green, new peace and all kinds of religious and spiritual movements. Finger argues that new social movements and old social movements differ in their conception of looking at modernity, their view of political action, and their way of considering education. Old movements see modernity as a struggle for a more just and equal distribution of the fruits of modernization and development. In contrast, new social movements view modernization as having reached its limits where civilization itself is at risk; members of new social movements seek a more personal relationship with modernization -- including rationality, science and technology. In terms of politics, Finger argues that old movements seek transformation by putting political pressure on a variety of political institutions - the state, the political system, etc. However, for new social movements, transformation must rely on and stem from the level of the person.

Finger argues that new social movements are grassroots movements rather than the structured and hierarchically organized mass movements of old social movements and that the education is different in old and new movements. He asserts that old social movements are basically political movements and that education is a means of achieving the political goals of justice, liberty, equality and emancipation. Education, then, is a locus beyond the individual, and such education is programmed and structured so that the individual will be committed to the collective aim of political emancipation. In contrast, Finger argues that adult education in new social movements is not political but "truly educational" (p. 18) and stems from personal transformation.

In contrast to old social movements, the locus of new social movements is the person, not the collective; and education in new social movements is not to achieve societal goals but is to induce the process of personal transformation. In summary, Finger contends that in new social movements the individual must be the "basis and the only unit of social and cultural transformation" (p.18). Through a process of personal transformation, individuals will influence the cultural, political and societal life of society. Hence, new social movements reestablish the link between the person and society and focus on the self-actualizing of the person.

Welton - Learning Sites

Welton (1993) credits Finger (1989) with "situating new social movements in the context of current debates about the crisis of modernity" (p.152) and for heralding new social movements as critical expressions of the practice of adult education. Like Finger, Welton views new social movements as opportunities where significant and even transformative learning occurs. Welton calls new social movements "learning sites" and contends that new social movements are "particularly privileged sites for emancipatory praxis" (p. 152.).

Welton, however, criticizes Finger for radically polarizing new and old social movements. Welton argues that Finger errors in asserting that in old social movements the individual was nothing more than an instrument in what Finger (1989) calls the larger "collective aim of political emancipation" (p. 18). Welton argues that even Marx believed that, as a result of the collective process of improving their working conditions through collective action, the oppressed, degraded workers learned their way out of misery and developed their individual human potential. Hence, Welton argues that Finger mistakenly splits this personal development from the collective praxis of all social movements - new as well as old. Welton contends that new social movement actors "selectively radicalize rather than reject modern values" (p. 153) and that social actors must act collectively to truly democratize our public life. Personal autonomy and individuation can only be achieved through this collective action.

Most significantly, Welton argues that Finger errors in separating the educational dimension of new social movements from the political and in stating that new social movements are interested only in the transformation of the person. Welton laments Finger's preoccupation with the personal transformation to the neglect of structural transformation and identifies ecology, social responsibility, grassroots democracy and nonviolence as four basic principles woven through new social movements. Welton believes that, indeed, new social movements resist the atomization of the individual and "propose instead a concept of social justice attuned to the particular predicament of the marginalized and underprivileged" (p. 161). For

example, Welton argues that a restructured economy and rehabilitated ecosystem are inevitably linked together.

Similarly, grassroots democracy cannot be restricted just to interpersonal relationships; and the principle of social responsibility requires individuals to assume a deepened understanding of justice, freedom and emancipation in an uncertain world. Nature and individuals are embraced as developmental subjects; new social movements press for citizen action at the local level and challenge the hierarchical and bureaucratic institutions of the late capitalist and socialist orders. Welton argues that these challenges and the transition to a renewed world where people and nature live in harmony, and individuals are free from exploitation, domination and oppression may require "...the greatest mobilization of imagination and learning potential yet known in human history" (p. 163).

Dykstra and Law - Educative Forces

Dykstra and Law (1994) argue that social movements are inherently educative forces in themselves. They credit Finger (1989) and Welton (1993) for bringing the debate of new versus old social movements into adult education; however they emphasize that whether social movements are classified as "old" or "new" they are powerful educative forces and "indisputably sites of formative influences" (p. 122). Dykstra and Law argue that the inherently educative life of a social movement (old or new) consists of three interrelated elements: vision, critical pedagogy and pedagogy of mobilization.

The first element - vision - is a necessary part of transformative education; it is the movement vision that enables participants to "construct an alternative map of reality" (p. 123) and to relate their everyday activities to values for a wider community. Critical pedagogy is the second educative dimension of social movements, and within this dimension, social consciousness, imagination and dialogue are significant components. Through the raising of social consciousness, participants unmask the consent they have unconsciously given to those in authority and begin to question their lives. In order to gain an understanding of the political, economic and social forces that influenced their lives, the process of critical thinking is important in

the development of social consciousness. Social movements engage participants' imaginations to transcend the boundaries they have set for themselves; thus an important educational function of social movements is to create among people the ability to "possibilize, to have hope rather than despair" (p. 124). Dialogue, too, among participants becomes a whole way of working in social movements to communicate the meaning of the vision of social movements.

The second educative element - the pedagogy of mobilization - is a bottom-up educative process that has four implicit dimensions: organizing and building, continuing participation, political action, and coalition and network building. The process of organizing and building a social movement requires a complex learning process through which members reach agreement on the meaning of the movement and a course of action. Continuing participation becomes an ongoing educative process where participants share ideas, decisions and work to accomplish their collective efforts. There are opportunities for member participants to learn the skills of leadership development, including recruitment of members, conducting of meetings, negotiating, working with the media and fundraising. In addition, through their participation in a movement, participants develop analytic and strategic thinking which aid in the consideration of options and actions to achieve desired results. Through the learning process of political action members gain a greater willingness to challenge authority and to use methods to realize the aspirations of the movement. The continuous process of coalition and network building requires participants to maintain an ongoing dialoguing process with each other. Consequently, communicative skills and the ability to overcome divisiveness and reach theoretical and practical compromise are strengthened. Dykstra and Law conclude by reiterating that although each social movement is complex and must be viewed in its specific historical, cultural, political, and economic context, they all provide a robust area for the study of educative dimensions.

Holford - Learning and Knowledge Construction

Holford (1995) concurs with Finger (1989), Welton (1993), and Dykstra and Law (1994) that social movements are important learning sites and sources of

empowerment for participants. Participants learn specific skills and gain the courage to collectively seek changes in their lives. However, Holford contends that, even though adult educators have worked closely with social movements, the interconnection and relevance between adult education and social movements have not been explored. He agrees with Griffin (1991) that adult education has been "sociologically naive" (p. 261) and cites two reasons for the marginalization of social movements in adult education theory. First, Holford contends that the decline of adult education as a movement has taken away from the theoretical significance of social movement education. Secondly, he argues that until recently social movement theory has evolved outside of the sociology of knowledge.

With regard to the issue of adult education as a social movement itself, Holford argues that in some countries at certain times adult education was closely related to a social movement. For example, Holford cites the widespread reference of adult education as a "social movement" in Britain and the influence of adult education on the development of international policy during the cold war. Additionally, in the United States, Lindeman referred to adult education as a social movement whose purpose would be to aid social progress and promote democracy, and Knowles portrayed adult education as a common movement consisting of all individuals, institutions and associations concerned with the education of adults. However, Holford argues that by the 1970s few have referred to adult education as a social movement itself or as an agency of democracy or social progress.

Holford's second premise -- that the development of the sociology of knowledge has great relevance to adult education in the study of social movements -- emerges as the predominant theme in his article. After tracing the various theories of social movements including the collective behavior theory, developed in the 1930s; the resource mobilization theory, currently predominant in North America; and the new social movement theory prevalent in Europe, Holford devotes the remainder of the article to the relevance of the sociology of knowledge to the field of adult education. Holford draws from the work of sociologists Eyerman and Jamison (1991) to argue that social movements are important sources of knowledge generation. Holford contends

that it is the cognitive praxis of the creation and generation of new knowledge that enables adult education theorists to appreciate that social movements are "central to the production of human knowledge itself" (p. 101). Social movements become, then, more than important learning sites for participants of social movements; they contribute to the development and shaping of knowledge for entire societies.

Construction of Knowledge for Society

In addition to looking at the inherent educational and skill building processes for movement participants, Holford (1995) argues that an important contribution can be made to the field of adult education by viewing social movements as important sources of knowledge construction within society. In support of his argument, Holford refers to Eyerman and Jamison's (1991) Social Movements: A Cognitive Approach. In what they call a cognitive approach, the sociologists Eyerman and Jamison (1991) view social movements as determinants of knowledge within society. It is the process of knowledge creation that becomes what Eyerman and Jamison call the "cognitive praxis" of social movements. It is the cognitive praxis that transforms individuals and groups in social movements and gives them their particular cognitive identity; cognitive praxis becomes the "core identity of a social movement" (p.44). Eyerman and Jamison contend that, as bearers of new ideas, social movements "have often been the sources of scientific theories and of whole scientific fields as well as new political and social identities" (p. 3). Thus, the knowledge created and shaped by social movements can add to the scientific realm as well as everyday knowledge. Society goes through a constant process of creating and recreating knowledge, and the cognitive praxis of social movements adds to this knowledge creation. Social movements define themselves within society through the creation, articulation and formulation of new thoughts and identities. As sources of new knowledge and inspiration, they are creative forces in society.

Based largely on their interpretation of Habermas's (1972) work on "knowledge constituting interests," Eyerman and Jamison identify three dimensions of cognitive praxis. The first dimension is the "cosmological" and is similar to Habermas's emancipatory interests. The cosmological dimension is necessary to give social

movements their worldview and utopian mission. Jamison and Eyerman state that the cosmological dimension can be read historically through movement documents, books, articles, speeches, etc. The second dimension of cognitive praxis is the "technological," which is a translation of Habermas's "technical-practical interest." The technological dimension identifies the specific technological interests around which a movement develops. Again, like the cosmological dimension, the technological dimension can be read historically through movement texts and contexts. The third dimension is the "organizational," which Eyerman and Jamison have developed from the "communication interests" of Habermas. It is through the organizational dimension that movements get their message across; it is the unfolding of the cognitive praxis. Expanding on this concept, Eyerman and Jamison state that each movement has a "particular organizational paradigm which means that they have both ideals and modes of organizing the production, and even more importantly perhaps, the dissemination of knowledge" (p. 69).

The Movement Intellectual

Within the organizational dimension, the cognitive praxis unfolds. However, the cognitive praxis of social movements does not appear all at once; it evolves and changes over time. Even though the cognitive praxis created within social movements is a collective process, not all members participate equally, and the most visible organizers, leaders or spokespersons in social movements become what Eyerman and Jamison call the "movement intellectual." The movement intellectual - similar to Gramsci's (1971) concept of the organic intellectual - refers to individuals who "through their activities articulate the knowledge interests and cognitive identity of the social movements" (Eyerman and Jamison, p. 98).

Eyerman and Jamison distinguish between the movement intellectual who functions within social movements and the "established intellectuals" who carry out tasks in established institutions - academia, professional institutions, etc. However, particularly in its early stages, established intellectuals, who are disenchanted, may move away from institutions and assume the role of a movement intellectual. As social movements develop, they provide opportunities through organizing, speaking, writing,

etc., for new movement intellectuals to emerge. Through the process of mass communication - television, radio, newspapers, speeches, etc. -- the movement intellectual articulates and refines the collective identity or cognitive praxis of the movement.

Central to the role of the movement intellectual is acting as an intermediary between the movement and the "Other," described as the social force - an authority, the government, an institution, the state, technocrats, etc. - against which protest is directed. The movement intellectual articulates and refines the movement's collective identity and worldview into clearly defined terms for political negotiation with the Other. Thus, movement intellectuals serve an inherently educative role in the development of social movements and in the articulation of movement identity or cognitive praxis to the wider world.

Historiography of Social Movements and Education

Until recently, the standard written histories of adult education (Adams, 1944; Grattan, 1955; Knowles, 1983) have ignored the educational efforts of minorities, women, labor groups, immigrants and others in their struggles to attain equality and justice. The educational histories of social movements that arise from these struggles have also been absent in the literature base of the history of adult education. Adams's Frontiers of American Culture: A Study of Adult Education in a Democracy, Grattan's In Quest of Knowledge (1955), and Knowles's The Adult Education Movement in the U.S. (1977) are important references in chronicling the history of the development of adult educational institutions and associations that are accepted within the mainstream of society. These books also cite the efforts of many individuals who contributed to the success of these institutions and associations.

Noticeably missing, however, from these histories are the educational histories of those who were in conflict with the dominant political, social and economic manifestations of mainstream society (Courtney, 1989). Scheid (1993) contends that mainstream adult education history has given us a censored version of our own past and has denied the existence and experience of people who have challenged the dominant society. In an effort to close this gap, Stubblefield and Keane in the recent Adult

Education in the American Experience (1994) incorporate the educational histories of groups in conflict with the dominant society. Stubblefield and Keane write about the alternative educational efforts of those - minorities, immigrants, workers, and women - who were unwilling to accept the subservient position that society had subscribed to them. These efforts often brought them into conflict with the "dominant culture's denigrating ideology of gender, race, ethnicity, and class" (Stubblefield and Keane, p. 313).

In addition to the efforts of Stubblefield and Keane (1994), adult education theorists, educational historians, and other scholars recently have documented and chronicled through examples the significant role of adult education in social movements in democratic societies. (Boyte, 1980; Boyte et al, 1986; Cunningham 1989; Evans and Boyte 1986; Goodwyn 1978; Horton, 1990; Mitchell 1987). These scholars argue that social movements provide the structure that inspires people to challenge the status quo and to imagine a different world.

Free Spaces

Evans and Boyte (1986) contend that social movements are "free spaces" which they describe as "settings between private lives and large scale institutions where ordinary citizens can act with dignity, independence and vision" (p. 2). In these free spaces, people who are oppressed by the dominant culture are able to struggle for changes and in the process transform themselves; thus Evans and Boyte contend that democratic action in our society depends upon free spaces and "make real the promise of democracy" (p. 2).

Evans and Boyte (1986) emphasize the importance of adult education in the development of social movements. Adult education, through the forms of newspapers, magazines, alternative media, lecture and discussion groups, etc., assists people to question accepted tradition and to seek new visions of a better life. They contend that in movement cultures a "newly open and vital intellectual life takes hold" (p. 192). Movement members become transformed and gain the self-confidence and courage to seek changes individually and collectively. Members gain speaking and writing skills and the organizational and political skills to challenge the establishment. Evans and

Boyte cite the women suffragettes and women's movement, the labor movement, the civil rights movement, the United Farm Workers, the Southern Farmers' Alliance and the Highlander Folk School as historical examples of free spaces where people learn about themselves and the world around them and gain the courage to challenge the status quo and to strive for change.

Southern Farmers' Alliance

Goodwyn (1978), who writes about the Southern Farmers' Alliance and the Populist movement, argues that the prevailing conviction in American society is one of progress. The present is better than the past, and the future will be better than the present. Despite the reality of exploitation and hard times, the masses generally do not rebel because the economic and power elites shape society, and the masses have been "instructed in deference" (p.x). Mass movements question the underlying values of larger society and are exceedingly difficult for people to generate.

Goodwyn contends that mass protest requires both a high level of "cultural education" for its participants and a high order of "sequential processing" (p. xviii). The cultural education and sequential process of building a social movement are essential if large numbers of oppressed and frightened people can engender the psychological autonomy, self respect, and collective confidence to challenge hegemonic structure and authority. These four sequential stages are: 1) "movement forming" where an autonomous institution which contradicts prevailing authority evolves; 2) "movement recruiting" where tactical means are created to attract people to the movement; 3) "movement educating" where a culturally unsanctioned level of social analysis is reached among the participants; 4) "movement politicized" where people in the movement share new ideas through institutional means and express them in an autonomous, political way (p. xviii). Goodwyn contends that mainstream historical tradition underestimates the inherent difficulties in forming mass democratic movements where large numbers of people can "shake off inherited habits of conduct" (p.99) and participate in a democratic mass movement. The Southern Farmers' Alliance and the resulting Populist Movement is one of the few times that this has occurred.

Goodwyn (1978) asserts that, superseding all else, Populism was a movement which provided its members with a sense of self-worth and "instruments of self education" (p. 95) to understand the world around them. Mitchell (1987), an educational historian, continues the theme of the criticalness of adult education in his study of education in the Southern Farmers` Alliance. In the preface of his book Political Education in the Southern Farmers' Alliance, Mitchell (1987) states that the book is a case study addressing Cremin's and Bailyn's broad conceptualization of education which looks at the many ways that education takes place outside of formal schooling. By 1890, the Southern Alliance claimed a membership of one million, and participants were immersed in an educational process. Undergirding the educational efforts of the Southern Farm Alliance was the belief that knowledge is power. Evan Jones, who, in 1889, became president of the Alliance, stated in the Southern Mercury in 1881 that the Alliance is a "school, and through its teachings the road to liberty will soon be available to the oppressed. Knowledge is power and when the masses become educated their power will be irresistible" (Mitchell, p. 47).

The knowledge that the Alliance imparted to its members was an understanding of the current political, social and economic system which had changed the nature of agriculture and impoverished most farmers. Empowered by this knowledge, the members of the Alliance sought collectively to change the trend toward centralized power and wealth and to restore to the common man equal access to wealth and democratic citizenship. Charles Macune, one of the leaders of the Alliance, emphasized that, "The Alliance was founded on education. All it is and all it will ever be must emanate from that source" (Mitchell, 1987, p.5).

One of the major sources of education within the Alliance was an extensive lecture system where farmers and their families gathered to listen to the lecturers talk about the injustices the current political and economic system had created against the farmers and how the farmers could band together to improve their condition and to change the system. The lectures would often be part of whole day events where the farmers and their families could also further their political and economic education through discussions with each other. A strong component of the discussions revolved

around how to put ideas to work. Religious services were a part of the rallies, and singing became one of the most "complete educational tools of the Alliance rally" (p. 51). The messages in the songs clarified the purpose, goals and determination of the Alliance. Alliance supported newspapers such as The Economist and Southern Mercury, and the articles and cartoons in these publications further educated farmers about the changing nature of agriculture as an enterprise and the necessity of farmers to unite to bring about social change.

The Alliance also strongly supported literacy efforts for adults but was critical of traditional education and curriculum which ignored the poverty and oppression of Southern farmers. The curriculum of Alliance members was one of "experience" -- where arithmetic exercises concentrated on the distribution of wealth and reading lessons focused on the increasing poverty and oppression of farmers and their ability to change this. Rather than the social control of traditional schooling, the Alliance viewed education as an instrument of liberation and empowerment. For the Alliance, education became the hope of the masses where farmers could gain an understanding of the current social, economic and political forces that oppress them and learn the means to work cooperatively to change the status quo of entrenched power and privilege. Education became, then, an instrument of liberation and empowerment.

Myles Horton and Highlander

Other historical studies that document the tie between education and social movements are those that set forth the efforts of Myles Horton and the Highlander School to bring about social change (Boggs, 1991; Evans and Boyte, 1986; Heaney, 1992; Horton, A., 1989; Horton, M. 1990; Horton and Freire, 1990; Peters and Bell, 1987; Stubblefield and Keane, 1994; Tjerandsen, 1980). In 1932, Horton established Highlander at Monteagle, Tennessee; Highlander's current location is in New Market, Tennessee. Horton's vision for Highlander was influenced by the Danish folk schools, the works of educators Dewey and Lindeman, the sociologist Robert Park and the theologian Reinhold Niebuhr. Horton's purpose in establishing Highlander was to help people, particularly those who were socially, politically and economically oppressed, to learn to work together to deal with problems that were too difficult to solve alone. The

subject matter at Highlander stemmed from the problems brought by the students themselves, who, inevitably must find their own solutions. Horton's philosophy of education was education for social change; the educator is a facilitator and all education must be based on the learner's experience. Like Freire, Horton believed that through collective action people can change unjust social, economic and political conditions.

In its more than 60 year history, Highlander has been linked closely with social movements. During the 1930s and 1940s, Highlander played a critical role in the education of union leaders and members in the Southern labor movement. Highlander achieved even greater visibility in the 1950s and 1960s with its civil rights leadership training and the establishment of the Citizenship School Program. African Americans and Whites came together at Highlander to identify problems and to find solutions. Rosa Parks was a participant at Highlander. The creation of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) was the result of workshops for college students held at Highlander.

Another important Highlander project was the Community Leadership Training Program on Johns Island. The project resulted in the Citizenship School Program on the island, and the model spread to other states. In 1954, Myles Horton and Septima Clark, a Highlander staff member who was a former teacher on Johns Island, began working with Esau Jenkins, an African American leader on Johns Island to begin literacy training on the island. Literacy instructors were selected not because they were trained teachers but because they were well-respected members of the community and were willing to use innovative teaching methods. The goal of the program was to help participants understand their political responsibilities and to teach them to read and write so that they could pass the literacy tests that were used to disenfranchise citizens.

Teachers and students discussed what citizenship meant and used documents like the Declaration of Human Rights of the United Nations and the constitutions of South Carolina and the United States to learn what citizenship was all about. Demands for these programs spread throughout the South, and in 1961, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference adopted the program as its own under the leadership of Andrew Young, Septima Clark, Dorothy Cotton and others. Evans and Boyte (1986) emphasize

that participants in these literacy programs learned not only how to read and write but they also learned a host of other organizing skills such as how to conduct voter-registration drives, how to combat illiteracy, how to win government benefits for the poor, and how to talk about the meaning of American citizenship and democracy. Even more importantly, participants became empowered to seek social change. Along with becoming literate, participants learned to protest and to demand their rights. As Dorothy Cotton said, "People were going back saying they're not going to take segregation and discrimination anymore....It meant just a whole new way of life and functioning" (cited in Evans and Boyte, 1986, p. 65).

Throughout its history, Highlander has aligned its programs with the larger goals of social movements. Horton's vision was of a more just and equal society, and he sought revolutionary change throughout this country and the world. With this clear vision in mind, Horton, as Freire, did not believe that education could be neutral. Emphasizing this point, Horton stated, "There is no such thing as neutrality. Neutrality is for the status quo. The educator can't be objective. You have to decide what you want to do and who you want to work with. You have to have a purpose" (Peters and Bell, 1987, p. 250). Thus, Horton emphasized that education is a critical component of social movements. However, education is linked directly to a larger political agenda that can only become a reality if acted upon.

Education as Empowerment for Hispanic Populations

Briscoe and Ross (1989) maintain that there is a gap in the knowledge and research regarding the education of minority adults in the U.S. This gap is particularly relevant to the Hispanic population which will be the largest minority in the United States by the year 2020 or before. Mexican Americans make up the largest part of the Hispanic population. Salazar (1994) asserts that there is almost an entire omission of the contributions of Spanish speaking educators of both children and adults in American education texts. Salazar (1994) points out that even educational historians like Cremin pay scant attention to the educational accomplishments of Mexican Americans and attributes this omission to the belief that Mexican Americans have been viewed, even by educators, as outsiders and not full participants in American society.

Those who do write about the education of Mexican Americans and other Hispanics focus on literacy efforts and quickly point out the high percentage of illiterate Hispanic adults. Hispanic adults are almost eight times as likely as non-Hispanics to be illiterate. Using the traditional measure of illiteracy, completion of less than five years of schooling as of 1991, 12.5% of Hispanics 25 years and older were illiterate, compared to just 1.6% of non-Hispanics. Studies of functional illiteracy based on tests of reading, writing, and computation skills have found rates as high as 56% for Hispanic adults, compared to 44% for Blacks and 16% for Whites. Statistics on college completion show that less than one in 10 Hispanics age 25 years and over have graduated from college, as compared to 22.3% of non-Hispanics (National Council of La Raza, 1991).

Despite their cited low educational achievement, Mexican Americans have a rich history of adult education outside of traditional or formal education, and this nonformal education has often served as a source of empowerment. One will not find these rich histories in the education books which concentrate on mainstream education, but they can be found in history books. One interesting history which abounds in examples of adult education is found in the Mexicans of Detroit (Baba and Abonyi, 1979). This study describes the development of Detroit's Mexican American Colonia and discusses the educative role of the church and community based organizations such as the Mexican Mutual Aid Circle, the League of Mexican Peasants, and Workers and the Cultural center in fostering adult education.

Another example of non-traditional adult education which served as a source of empowerment to its participants is the community based Universidad Popular in Chicago (Heaney, 1984). Universidad Popular is based on the Freirian participatory model of education that seeks to teach participants not only literacy but to empower them to make changes in their own lives and, collectively, to create social change. Inherent in this program, which began in 1972, is the desire of Universidad Popular to assume responsibility for its educational program. Universidad won a nine year struggle to retain its independence and not to be taken over by the City Colleges of Chicago and become integrated into a homogeneous skills program that did not suit the

needs of the community. The issue over which they fought was community control, and Universidad Popular won. The school, which still exists, offers programs that provide not only adult literacy, basic education and GED preparation but also programs that address political, economic and cultural empowerment. The philosophy of Universidad Popular rests on the belief that one can not expect positive results from an education program which fails to respect the particular world view of the people it serves. Universidad Popular seeks to link the school to community problems as well as incorporating community resources to an adult education program responsive to neighborhood issues and concerns.

As demonstrated in these examples, and as documented by Briscoe and Ross (1989); Cunningham (1988); Montero-Siebeurth (1990); Neufeld and McGee (1990); Seller (1978); Stubblefield and Keane (1994) and others, adult education outside of traditional mainstream education has served as a powerful force for minorities and immigrants. These studies demonstrate how minorities and immigrants, often subject to discrimination and inferior formal education, have devoted significant effort to their own educational development within their own communities. As education, historically, has been used to transmit the culture and values of the dominant society, minority populations have had to look outside of traditional adult education to either reinforce their own cultural legacy or to seek social change which contradicts the dominant culture.

Summary

Adult educators can study social movements by taking on a sociological perspective of education. As learning is a social as well as an individual phenomenon, we can not separate the individual from his or her social context. The sociological perspective of adult education evolved from critical social theory, which emphasizes emancipatory interests and adults' abilities to transcend, grow and develop. Through emancipatory education adults can become aware of their oppressed situation and collectively empower themselves to make changes in society.

Early studies, particularly in the United States, presented social movements as representative of irrational behavior. Since the 1960s, however, social movement

theory emphasizes that movements are rational responses with concrete goals, values and strategies. The resource mobilization theory dominates social movement theory in the United States; whereas new social movement (NSM) theory is prevalent in Europe. The two modes of thinking are not exclusionary but are complementary (Holford, 1995). NSM theorists attempt to answer the "why" of social movements, whereas resource mobilization theorists concentrate on the "how" of social movements. Sociologists (Jenkins, 1985) have used the resource mobilization theory to explain how the UFW made inroads with the growers while all previous farm labor unions failed to achieve union recognition.

Although few adult educators study social movements, the position that a major purpose of adult education in democratic societies is to function as an agent of social change has a strong and viable legacy in adult education. Theorists and practitioners such as Dewey (1916; 1964), Lindeman (1944; 1955; 1961), Freire (1970), and others envision adult education as an agent of social change in the creation of a better society.

Current adult education theorists, including Finger (1989), Welton (1993), Dykstra and Law (1994) and Holford (1985) argue that social movements are important sites of learning and empowerment for adults. Through their involvement in social movements, participants learn new skills such as organizing, speaking, writing, leadership skills, media relations and fundraising. In addition to specific skills, participants learn about themselves and the world around them. Through this knowledge, movement members become empowered and gain the courage and self-confidence to seek changes in society.

Social movements are not only sites of learning and skill-building, but they also are important sources of knowledge construction within society (Eyerman and Jamison, 1991; Holford, 1995). The process of knowledge creation gives social movements their cognitive identity, and social movements define themselves in society through the creation, articulation and formulation of new thoughts and identities. As sources of new knowledge and inspiration, social movements are creative forces in society.

It is the movement intellectual within social movements who articulates the knowledge interests and cognitive identity within the movement itself and to the larger

society. Movement intellectuals serve an inherently educative role in the development of social movements and in the articulation of movement identity to the wider world.

Until recently, standard histories of adult education have ignored the educational efforts of minorities, women, labor groups, immigrants and others in their struggles to attain equality and justice. In an effort to close this gap, recent adult educational histories, such as that written by Stubblefield and Keane (1994), incorporate the histories of groups in conflict with the dominant society. These histories recognize the importance of adult education in the development of social movements. As evidenced in social movements such as the Farmers Alliance (Goodwyn, 1978; Mitchell, 1987), adult education - through the forms of newspapers, magazines, lecture and discussion groups, etc. - assists people to question accepted tradition and to gain the courage to seek new visions of a better life. Members gain speaking and writing skills and the organizational and political skills to challenge the establishment. Education within social movements means education for social change and is exemplified in the more than the 60 year history of the Highlander School (Horton, A. 1989; Horton, M. 1990) which has been linked closely with social movements.

Just as the history of adult education has neglected the educational dimensions of social movements, there is a gap in the knowledge and research regarding the education of minority adults in the U.S. This gap is particularly relevant to the Hispanic population which will be the largest minority in the United States by the year 2020 or before. Despite their cited low educational achievement, Mexican Americans have a rich history of adult education outside of traditional or formal education, and this nonformal education has often served as a source of empowerment. Only recently has the empowering effect of nonformal education for Mexican Americans been documented (Baba and Abonyi, 1979; Briscoe and Ross, 1989; Montero-Sieburth, 1990). However, the educational dimensions of the UFW, a largely Mexican American movement, have yet to be explored.

CHAPTER 3

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND ON FARMING, FARM WORKERS AND FARM LABOR ORGANIZING IN CALIFORNIA BEFORE 1962

Although migrant farm labor became an integral part of California agriculture from the late 1800s, changes in the social, economic and political status of the migrant farm workers did not occur until the successes of the United Farm Workers (UFW) in the late 1960s. To understand why it would take so many years for a union to gain recognition, one must understand the history of agriculture in California and the growers dependence upon migrant farm labor. Through an examination of this history, one can understand the growers' continued resistance to support any changes in this labor structure. Yet, despite the growers' resistance, the farm workers were not passive, and from the early 1900s, farm workers attempted labor organizing efforts, albeit largely unsuccessful.

In order to provide a context to understand the challenges that would face Cesar Chavez and the UFW in the 1960s, this chapter presents the story of the nature of farming and farm labor in California and how migrant farm labor -- from the beginning -- became an integral part of this history. Additionally, this chapter describes farm labor organizing attempts of farm workers before the advent of the UFW.

Farming and Farm Workers

Early on, large farms and the specific nature of farming set the stage for the use of migrant farm laborers in California. These large farms have always dominated California agriculture; the tradition began with the large land grants of the Spanish and was continued by the Mexicans and Americans (Brown, 1972; Galazra, 1977; Jelinek, 1982; Kushner, 1975; McWilliams, 1939; McWilliams, 1944).

Between 1834 and 1846 the Mexican government authorized 813 rancho grants, which comprised approximately one-quarter of the land in California. Through the Land Act of 1851, many of these *ranchos* passed into the hands of American settlers. In addition to losing their land through this Act, the Mexican *rancheros* were forced to sell their lands cheaply to wealthy Americans and other immigrants during the great drought of 1863-64.

The California government also sold off public land and mission land. It is estimated that in the 1860's the government passed off approximately 8 million acres of public land to private ownership. Additionally, the government granted 20 million acres to railroad companies. Although the land changed hands from Mexicans to Americans, the pattern of large farm ownership did not. By 1870, only two percent of the population owned more than one-half of the agricultural land. Eleven owners each held more than 100,000 acres, and 516 owners had control of 8.6 million acres. In Fresno county alone, 48 owners each held more than 79,000 acres (Brown, 1972; Jelinek, 1982). Thus, from the beginning, it is evident that this land concentration discouraged family farming. Large farms became the normal practice in California and has continued throughout the twentieth century.

From 1935 to 1964, the number of farms in California actually decreased from 150,360 to 80,852. This decrease in the number of farms occurred while farm acreage increased 18 percent. By the turn of the century, California became the major national producer of diverse specialty crops. This agricultural status was aided by the completion of the Central Pacific Railroad in 1869 and the invention of the refrigerated box car in 1868, which allowed entire trainloads of ice-packed produce to be transported to cross-country destinations. An extensive irrigation system, required for the successful commercial cultivation of specialty crops in California's dry climate, was also started in the 1860s. Famed for its production of such specialty crops as grapes, lettuce, processing tomatoes, almonds, walnuts, peaches and other fruits and vegetables, California would eventually become the leading agricultural income producing state in the nation.

Early Dependence Upon Migrant Farm Workers

The large growers' dependence upon migrant farm workers became an early characteristic of commercial agriculture in California. The tasks of picking, cutting, pulling, topping, sorting, sacking or boxing are labor-intensive and seasonal. Mechanization was slow to come to the production and harvesting of specialty crops, and the use of man as a "raw material" (McWilliams, 1939; 1944) for its industry has dominated California agriculture. Consequently, since the 1800's, seasonal workers --

mostly in the form of various ethnic waves -- have provided the land-owners a source of cheap labor for their peak loads. Large growers quickly learned that cheap labor allowed them to make a profit; thus the advantages of large-scale land ownership and cheap labor were reinforced very early in the history of California agriculture. Since the indigenous Indian labor had already been depleted by the Spanish, the American growers needed to look elsewhere.

Chinese Farm Workers

The Chinese were the first wave of ethnic cheap labor for the large land owners. Originally, thousands of Chinese were brought to the U.S. to work in the gold mines and then on the construction of the transcontinental railroad. By the 1870s, large numbers of out-of-work Chinese, who experienced racial hostility in other areas of employment, had little choice but to work on the large farms. Although there is no precise accounting of their numbers, it is estimated that by 1882 the Chinese represented over half of the total farm labor force of California and up to ninety percent of the specialty crop laborers in Northern California. It was the common belief of the time that the Chinese were particularly well-suited to the "squat-labor" of specialty crop farming. In fact, it has been pointed out that the abundance of Chinese labor allowed wheat growers of the time -- who were experiencing a depression in the wheat market -- to make a successful transition to specialty crop farming (McWilliams, 1939; 1944).

Although the Chinese were responsible for much of the land reclamation of the time and taught the novice growers much about specialty farming, the increased hostility against the Chinese, first by urban workers and then by smaller farmers who had to compete against large farmers, led to anti-Chinese riots and the passage of the Chinese Exclusion Acts in 1882, 1892, and 1902 (Galarza, 1964; London and Anderson, 1970). As a consequence of these acts, most of the existing Chinese in California were driven back to urban areas, and the exclusion acts prevented new influxes of Chinese.

Japanese Farm Workers

After the Chinese were excluded from entering the country and the existing Chinese were forced into urban areas, whites worked for large growers during the depression years in the 1890s. However, after the economy improved and whites were no longer willing to work in the fields, the growers faced a labor shortage and were soon looking for another source of cheap ethnic labor. The growers turned to the Japanese. In 1890, there were only about two thousand Japanese in all of California, but by 1909 there were a total of 70,000 Japanese, with about 30,000 working in agriculture (Galazra, 1964; McWilliams, 1939; 1944). To ensure their availability, many large farmers contracted with individual Japanese as tenant farmers under the condition that at harvest time they would deliver labor gangs. The Japanese were very skillful farmers; many who first worked as migrant workers leased and eventually owned their own land.

Their success stirred anti-Japanese feelings among smaller farmers and California whites in general, eventually leading to exclusion laws (Jelinek, 1982; Kushner, 1975; London and Anderson, 1970). First, came the Gentleman's Agreement of 1907 which limited Japanese immigration, and in 1913, California passed the Alien Land Law. This law prevented aliens who were ineligible for U.S. citizenship from owning land or leasing it beyond three years. Although many Japanese were able to circumvent the law by putting their land in the name of their American-born children or other sympathetic U.S. citizens, subsequent legislation made land ownership very difficult for them. The Alien Land Law was strengthened in 1920, and in 1924 legislation prevented further Japanese immigration. Although some Japanese continued successful tenant farming, beginning in 1942, the internment of the Japanese brought about the end to the significance of the Japanese in California agriculture.

Mexican Farm Workers

Since the treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo in 1848, which ended the war between the United States and Mexico, Mexicans have been passing in and out of California. The 1900 census reported only about 8,000 in the state; however with the outbreak of the Mexican revolution this number soared to a reported 100,000 by the 1920 census

(Jelinek, 1982). This figure does not account for the numerous amount of illegal entrants. Although there is no reliable data on the amount of illegal farm laborers who worked California farms, it is estimated that they numbered between 6,000 and 8,000 throughout California before the "bracero" program got underway in 1942 (Galarza, 1964). The bracero program legally allowed contract laborers to come from Mexico to do seasonal work on farms. Even before the bracero program, California received special dispensation from Congress to use contract labor from Mexico during World War I when there was a shortage of cheap farm labor in California and, again, during World War II before the bracero program became official. The bracero program would be in effect until 1964.

As the Chinese and Japanese moved out of agriculture, Mexicans have been the largest source of farm labor in California since 1920 -- except for the depression years when they were replaced by white Americans escaping the dust bowl. For many growers, Mexicans became the perfect solution to their need for cheap, seasonal farm labor. They proved to be very capable workers, who, under various contracts and the bracero program, were able to appear and disappear in the fields as needed. The writer John Steinbeck aptly summarized the situation of the Mexican laborers:

To the large grower the Mexican labor offered more advantages than simply its cheapness. It could be treated as so much scrap when it was not needed. Any local care for the sick and crippled could be withheld; and in addition, if it offered any resistance to the low wage or the terrible living conditions, it could be deported to Mexico at Government expense. (Steinbeck, 1936 p. 53-54)

Filipino Farm Workers

Filipinos also provided another source of cheap farm labor. By the mid-1920's they were coming to California at the rate of more than 4,000 per year. By 1930, Filipinos farm laborers numbered about 25,000 single men (Galarza, 1964; London and Anderson, 1970). Although their numbers never equalled the Chinese, Japanese or Mexicans, they became an important source of cheap farm labor. And, like all the other ethnic workers, they experienced prejudice and hostility. Much later, in the 1960's, it was the Filipinos who joined organizing forces with Cesar Chavez and the

UFW.

East Indian, European Farm Workers

During the early part of the twentieth century, East Indians, mostly Hindus, worked as farm laborers. However, it was only in 1907, 1908 and 1910 that East Indians immigrated at the rate of more than 1,000 a year. After the Immigration Act of 1917, the immigration of East Indians virtually stopped.

At various times in California agricultural history European immigrants, mostly Italians, Portuguese and Spanish, worked as farm laborers. Their numbers were small, however, and they tended to become "regular hands" rather than migrants (Fisher, 1945).

Dust Bowlers

For the first time in California agricultural history, the depression and the dust bowl brought large numbers of native white Americans to work as migrant laborers in the fields. From 1935 to 1938, between 300,000 and 500,000 people came from Oklahoma and other lower plain states, such as Arkansas, Texas and Missouri to find work in California; and many of them sought work in the fields (Gregory, 1989). Many people in the U.S. and abroad became aware of the dust bowlers' plight through the well-known writings of Carey McWilliams and John Steinbeck and the memorable, award-winning photographs of Dorothea Lange. Steinbeck, who stirred the greatest controversy, not only wrote about Oakies in The Grapes of Wrath (1939) but he also wrote many articles about the migrants' low wages, poor living conditions, and general exploitation. In these articles, Steinbeck made policy recommendations including the rights of farm laborers to organize unions and be protected under the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) (Steinbeck, 1936).

Steinbeck and others believed that the dustbowl migration was changing the ethnic composition of California farm labor from ethnic immigrants to white American labor. Steinbeck said that he predicted that farm labor in California "...will be white labor, it will be American labor, and it will insist on a standard of living much higher than that which was accorded the foreign 'cheap labor' (Steinbeck 1935, p. xi)." He continued to say that the Oakies "...will refuse to accept the role of field peon, with

attendant terrorism, squalor and starvation (Steinbeck, 1935, p. xii)." Steinbeck was also a proponent of New Deal programs such as government migrant camps run by the Resettlement Administration --depicted in the Grapes of Wrath (1939) as the idyllic government run "Wheatpatch Camp."

The dust bowlers displaced immigrant migrant labor. Mexican and Filipino farm workers were deported during the depression to make room for "native" white laborers. By 1937, an estimated 150,000 Mexicans were repatriated to Mexico (Galarza, 1964). Although low wages and poor living conditions had been the "norm" of migrant farm laborers since the 1800s, it was largely the predominance of white farm laborers that made the problem "visible" and gave it major national attention in 1939. As long as the farm workers were alien and non-white, the problem remained largely hidden.¹ The migration of the Oakies to California exposed a long standing farm labor problem and agricultural system in California where farm laborers miraculously appeared to work in the "factories of the fields" (McWilliams, 1939; 1976) and then disappeared after cultivation. The notion of the "family farm" in California was also exposed as a long standing myth; agriculture was, and still is, a big business.

National attention to the plight of the dust bowlers prompted a series of investigations in 1939 by the Senate Committee on Education and Labor, headed by former Wisconsin Governor Robert LaFollette. These investigations and testimonies on the status of farm workers and farm labor in California eventually filled 27 volumes (Congressional Hearings, U.S. Senate, 1942). Based on its extensive investigation, the Committee recommended that farm labor should be covered under federal regulations, including the National Labor Relations Act, the Social Security Act, the Fair Labor Standards Act and individual state and local regulations. These recommendations would have resulted in significant changes that would protect the civil liberties of California farm workers and would improve their standard of living. However, by 1940

¹Although African Americans have long been migrant laborers and tenant farmers in the South, there has not been a large number of Black migrant farm workers in California (Brown, 1972).

national attention turned toward war. The defense build-up created much needed jobs in California, and most whites left the fields. Once again, ethnic farm workers were sought out by the growers. And, the 27 volumes of hearings and testimonies were shelved, and all recommendations were abandoned.

Agribusiness

"Factories in the fields" -- this was how Carey McWilliams (1939; 1944) described California agriculture with its large scale business efficiency and dependence on migrant farm labor. The growth of agribusiness with its resulting horizontal and vertical integration and the increasing disappearance of the family farm were issues of major concern for the LaFollette Committee. The Committee came to California to investigate charges of the violation and denial of civil liberties of farm workers. During these hearings the Committee heard forty-five statements from economists, growers, rural sociologists, State and Federal officials and spokespersons from business and labor interests (U.S. Congress, Senate, 1942).

As a result of these hearings, the Committee concluded that large-scale farming was taking over the long tradition of family farming in the United States and that California was leading the nation in the growth of large scale farming and the resulting agribusiness. The following statement released by the Committee expressed this concern:

There are ominous signs that the tradition is confronted with a transition from the traditional family farm toward industrialized or corporate agriculture. Farming as a way of life is threatened. This transition challenges long accepted national ideals of the farmer on his own land. If our national agriculture faces the same cycle that changed the form of industry from 1870 to 1930, the problem should be fully recognized if it is to be checked and reversed. (U.S. Congress, Senate, 1942, p. 3)

Although the LaFollette Committee made this statement in 1940, large-scale farming and its resulting agribusiness had always been the "norm" in California. By the turn of the century, agriculture in California was well on its way to becoming the most complete example of industrialized agriculture in the nation. As horizontal integration

expanded, it encouraged vertical integration whereby large-scale farmers sought not only to grow crops but to process and distribute them. With the merger of four large packing companies with the California Packing Corporation in 1916, Calpak became the largest canning operation in the world (Jelinek, 1982). Not only did Calpak own and lease thousands of acres, but it also contracted with other growers for fruits and vegetables. Once the crops were processed, Calpak shipped them for nationwide distribution under its DelMonte brand name.

Another example of farming integration is what DiGiorgio achieved with fresh fruits and wines. In 1910, DiGiorgio bought the distribution company, the Earl Fruit Company, and in 1915 purchased 15,885 acres in the San Joaquin Valley which became prime fruit and vegetable acreage. By 1930, the DiGiorgio Fruit Corporation had become the largest provider of deciduous fruits and citrus and the second largest private wine maker in the nation (Jelinek, 1982). In addition, through its Earl Fruit Company subsidiary, the corporation owned 11 packing facilities; operated the Baltimore Fruit Exchange and held large stock holdings in other fruit exchanges; possessed one-third of the stock in Italian Swiss Colony, one of the largest wineries in the nation; and controlled an Oregon lumber company, which reduced costs of fruit boxes and crates.

Banking also added to the vertical and horizontal integration of farming in California. By 1929, the Bank of Italy (which became the Bank of America in 1930) held mortgages on 12,147 farms, or one out of every 11 farms in California, and its affiliates lent millions more to farmers and cooperatives. Through its lending practices, the bank encouraged farmers to cultivate the most profitable crops. By 1939, its subsidiary, California Lands, Inc., owned 1,718 foreclosed farms which totaled 395,000 acres at a value of \$25 million (Jelinek, 1982; Vogeler, 1981). In addition, California Lands leased several hundred thousand other acres and became one of the largest farming operations in the world.

Besides individuals, processing companies and banks, large amounts of acreage were also held by railroad, land, petroleum, newspaper and manufacturing companies. Consequently, early on, large companies dominated California agriculture. In

describing this control, London and Anderson (1970) argue, "Through outright ownership, corporate understandings, interlocking directorates and the like, agribusiness is directly tied to transportation, finance, warehousing, food processing wholesale and retail sales and other ancillary industries" (p. 4). The La Follette Commission revealed that by 1936, 83 percent of the lettuce and 84 percent of the cantaloupe acreage were controlled directly by shippers through ownership or indirectly through financing (Congressional Hearing, Senate 1942). More poetically, John Steinbeck (1939) describes the vertical and horizontal integration of California farming in the Grapes of Wrath:

And now the great owners and the companies invented a new method. A great owner bought a cannery. And when the peaches and pears were ripe he cut the price of fruit below the cost of raising it. And as cannery owner he paid himself a low price for the fruit and kept the price of canned goods up and took this profit. And the little farmers who owned no canneries lost their farms, and they were taken by the great owners, the banks and the companies who also owned the canneries. As time went on, there were fewer farms. The little farmers moved into town for a while and exhausted their credit, exhausted their friends and relatives. And then they too went on the highways. And the roads were crowded with men ravenous for work, murderous for work. (p. 387)

Large scale farmers also benefitted greatly from government programs and subsidies which, in theory, were intended to help family farmers. For example, the stated purpose of the federally legislated Land Grant College Act of 1862, which created the University of California and the Extension Service in 1914, was to strengthen family farmers and make them more progressive through education and advisory services. However, the large farmers' demand for increased crop production through scientific, business and mechanical methods took first priority, and large farm owners, who were engaged in agribusiness, became their primary clientele. With the organization of the California Farm Bureau in 1919, county extension agents actually encouraged farmers to join the organization, whose offices were located in the University of California agricultural departments (Jelinek, 1982; London and Anderson,

1970; McWilliams, 1939; 1976). Large farmers dominated the California Farm Bureau, and it became the most powerful and influential lobbyist representing agriculture. Since large scale farming impacted so many other business areas, the Farm Bureau also had support from chambers of commerce and industrial and manufacturing associations.

The Reclamation Act of 1902, which was intended for owner-occupied family farms of no more than 160 acres, also benefitted the large growers (Jelinek, 1982; Vogeler, 1981; McWilliams, 1939, McWilliams, 1976). Since California lacks sufficient rainfall, irrigation has been a problem for farmers in California from the beginning. Under this federal law, the government built dams for the storage of water, flood control and electric power and provided irrigation to farmers for one-fifth to one-third of the actual cost. Large farmers were able to get around the 160 acre limit through a ruling that allowed "family farms" to be multiples of 160 acres for spouses, sons, daughters, nephews and other relatives. Thus, large growers were able to benefit from a program ostensibly created for small farmers.

The Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1933, originally earmarked to shore up the income of small farmers through price controls and curbs on production, ended up benefiting large farmers, also. No ceilings were placed on the subsidy, and since the subsidies were based on the scale of operation, not on the proportional needs of small versus large farmers to realize a profit, large land owners benefitted the most. In 1938, only two percent of California's farmers received 44% of the State's payment under the Agricultural Adjustment Act (Jelinek, 1982; London and Anderson, 1970).

Exclusion from Wagner and Fair Labor Standards Acts

In addition to the agricultural federal legislation that worked to the benefit of large growers, major labor legislation showed preference to the large growers over the farm workers (London and Anderson, 1970; McWilliams, 1939; 1976). The major piece of national legislation protecting collective bargaining rights of American workers is the Wagner Act or National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) of 1935, but farm workers and agribusiness were excluded from it. In fact, farm workers are still excluded from this federal act, and it was not until 1975 that state legislation was passed in California

to give collective bargaining rights to farm laborers.

Farm workers were also excluded from the federal Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), first passed in 1938, which sets minimum wages, gives overtime pay, and protects against child labor. Although the Act has been amended several times since then, agricultural workers, to this day, are largely exempted from this federal legislation.

The *Bracero* Program

Despite the recommendations of the LaFollete Committee to pass legislation to improve the plight of farm laborers in California, by 1942, when the 27 volumes of testimonies and recommendations eventually appeared in the Congressional Record, the nation's preoccupation had already turned toward war. Consequently, the surplus of American-born, mostly "white" farm labor was able to find work in the defense industries, and no federal or state laws were passed which would guarantee farm laborers the same rights and protection as individuals engaged in industry. In fact, the labor shortage brought about by the War generated what the grower's called a "labor crisis" and their stated need for a source of cheap ethnic labor.

Once again, the growers looked to Mexico for a cheap source of farm labor and lobbied for the approval of the Bracero Program. The term *bracero* in Spanish literally means one who works with his arms and is the Spanish equivalent of farm hand. Although California had received previous dispensation to use contract labor from Mexico when there were labor shortages, the Bracero Program, which began in 1942 and lasted until 1964, guaranteed, through Federal participation, a cheap source of labor which could appear for harvesting and then vanish back to Mexico after the season was over.

Many Mexican farm laborers lived in California, legally or illegally, and had since the turn of the century participated in California agriculture, but the growers were interested in a class of farm laborer aptly described by grower G. W. Guiberson in 1951, as "...the kind we can send home when we get through with them (Kushner, p. 95)." The growers were also interested in a class of labor which was not only cheap but who would not attempt to unionize. (Galazra, 1964; London and Anderson, 1975).

Those *braceros* who attempted to unionize could be deported back to Mexico and barred from returning. In addition, the use of *braceros* provided strike insurance, since *braceros* could replace striking American workers (Galazra, 1964; Jenkins, 1985).

Knowing that 50,000 Mexicans were deported back to Mexico during the depression when they were replaced by American white farm workers, the Mexican government expressed misgivings about the program (Galazra, 1964; Kushner 1975; Meister and Loftis, 1977). However, under heavy pressure to provide work for their unemployed masses and to provide legal protection for Mexicans already working illegally in the United States, the Mexican government agreed to the *Bracero* Program. Under the agreement, the growers were not to use *braceros* unless there was a legitimate shortage of domestic labor. The U.S. federal government paid round-trip travel expenses of the *braceros* to the United States, and while in the United States the housing and sanitary conditions of the *braceros* were supposed to be adequate. Hiring was to be done by written contract between the *bracero* and the employer, and the wages were to be equal to those of domestic workers or not less than \$.30 per hour. In addition, *braceros* were guaranteed work for three-quarters of the contract and were not to be discriminated against..

The Program grew rapidly. By 1945, growers in California and Texas alone employed 50,000 *braceros*. At first, the Program was administered by the Farm Security Administration but later was transferred to the War Manpower Commission. Many of the original protective regulations were ignored. In practice, the day-to-day administration of the *Bracero* program was administered by agencies that were very sympathetic to the growers. In fact, the certification for the need of *braceros* was made by the California Farm Placement Service upon requests from grower associations. In addition, the associations set the prevailing wage at the level that they expected to obtain *braceros* and not the prevailing domestic wage. Since these wages were mostly unacceptable to American workers, a labor shortage could be declared very easily. (Brown, 1972; Galazra, 1964; Jenkins, 1985; Kushner, 1975; Meister and Loftis, 1977). Although growers were to be denied *bracero* help if they used illegal Mexican workers, many growers continued to use both legal and illegal help.

Most growers were pleased with the program. Galarza, (1964), who wrote extensively on the bracero program, stated that the growers felt that the program was a success. In describing the growers perspective, Galazra (1964) wrote:

The experiment was a success. Logistically farm labor contracting under government oversight was efficient. Farmers in northern California were supplied with *braceros* from contracting centers 800 miles away on 48 hours notice. Not a crop was lost. Wages were held in line. The *bracero* lived up to his reputation as a tractable, obedient, cheerful and eager worker (p. 26).

The growers were so pleased with the program that when the State Department in 1946 proposed the end of the program within 90 days, the growers objected so vehemently, arguing that they still had a labor shortage, that the program was extended under the administration of the Department of Labor. Each year the *bracero* program was extended, and in 1951 Public Law 78 was enacted. This law codified the conditions of previous agreements, and the bracero program would remain in existence until 1964. At the peak of the program in 1959, *braceros* made up almost one quarter of the total farm labor force in California, and they dominated most of the field crops, such as lettuce and tomatoes. (Jenkins, 1985; Kushner, 1975; Meister and Loftis, 1977).

Although technically in violation of regulations, the growers used the *bracero* program, along with an indeterminable number of illegal farm workers to combat unionization (Brown, 1972; Jenkins, 1985; Kushner, 1975; Meister and Loftis, 1977). Through bilateral agreements with Mexico, illegal farm workers who were deported could even have their status legalized at the border and return to work immediately as *braceros*. Although against the law, *braceros* routinely displaced American workers who wanted more money. Both *braceros* and illegal farm workers provided employers with a cheap and surplus labor pool. The *bracero* program actually drove down farm wages. In 1949, farm wages in California were 64.7 percent of manufacturing wages, but by 1959, wages were down to 46.6 percent of manufacturing (Brown, 1972).

Farm Labor Organizing Attempts Before 1962

From the beginning, large California land owners have combated any kind of farm labor unionization -- sometimes violently (Edid, 1994; Kushner, 1975; London and Anderson, 1970; Meister and Loftis, 1977; Moore, 1965; National Advisory Committee, 1967). Despite this resistance, attempts at farm labor organizing began early in this century. The American Federation of Labor (AFL) considered assistance to agricultural workers as early as 1889, and early in the 1900s the state federation of labor in California passed many resolutions in support of organizing farm laborers. In 1903, a Santa Clara County group was chartered as Fruit Workers Union No. 10770, and several branches followed.

Also organized in 1903, the Sugar Beet and Farm Laborers Union of Oxnard staged a strike when more than 1,000 Mexican and Japanese workers, who had replaced the previous Chinese workers, struck for higher wages and better conditions. One Mexican striker was killed and four others injured. All union officials were arrested. The AFL sent a representative of the California State Federation of Labor, to the union's defense. Although the AFL stated verbal support of farm labor organizing, the leadership was reluctant to support unions which were nonwhite. And, most farm laborers were nonwhite. When the Sugar Beet and Farm Laborers Union of Oxnard applied to the AFL for a charter, AFL President Samuel Gompers replied, "Your union must guarantee that it will under no circumstance accept membership of any Chinese or Japanese" (cited in London and Anderson, 1970, p. 20).

International Workers of the World

The first farm labor union in California to attract brief national attention for its activities was the International Workers of the World (IWW), commonly known as the "Wobblies." The Wobblies began organizing farm laborers in 1905. Although the Wobblies were often condemned for having left-wing leanings and being sympathetic to the communists, the union was successful in organizing a significant number of farm workers in California. By 1913, it was estimated that they had organized about 8% of the migratory farm labor force (Moore, 1965). Whereas the AFL discriminated against those who were not white, the Wobblies were open to all, regardless of race, creed,

color, sex, or immigrant status (Kushner, 1975, p. 41).

In August, 1913, the "Wheatland Riot" occurred, and the Wobblies and the farm laborers briefly made national news (Edid, 1994; London and Anderson, 1970; Moore, 1965; National Advisory Committee, 1967). The Wheatland Riot broke out on a hops farm when two Wobbly organizers, Blackie Ford and Herman Shur, called a mass meeting to protest the terrible conditions on the farm. Ralph Durst, a large land owner and grower, had followed common practice by recruiting many more farm laborers than he needed. Three thousand people arrived at the migrant camp -- two times more people than necessary. There were no provisions for garbage disposal; the water wells were a far distance from the camp; there were no means of bringing the water to the fields; and there were only nine outdoor toilets for all three thousand people. Food had to be bought at Durst's commissary for high prices, and the only way that a migrant who was working in 105 degree heat in the fields could get something to drink was to buy lemonade from Durst's cousin at \$.05 per glass. Although the going rate for hop picking in that area was \$1.00 a hundredweight, Durst paid 90 cents. At least a thousand workers, unable to secure employment stayed through the season with nothing to do, and many migrants became sick with dysentery and heat prostration

Grower Ralph Durst rejected the Wobblies' demands for higher piece rates, water brought to the camp twice a day and one toilet for every one hundred people. The Wobblies called a meeting to determine what course of action the migrants should take. During the meeting, Wobbly leader Blackie Ford held up a child to the crowd and shouted, "It's for the kids we are doing this" (Moore, 1965, p. 125). At this same moment, Durst's lawyer (who was also the county district attorney), the sheriff and several armed deputies burst into the meeting. One of the deputies fired a shot which he later said was to "quiet the crowd" (London and Anderson, 1970, p. 25). A riot broke out which resulted in the deaths of the district attorney, a sheriff's deputy and two farm workers and many injuries, including women and children.

The next day the National Guard and deputized detectives were called in, and several vigilante groups were also organized. Throughout California hundreds of

Wobblies were arrested, beaten and thrown in jail. The prosecution concluded that Herman Shur, who helped organize the meeting but was in Arizona at the time of the riot, would be tried along with Blackie Ford for murder. Both were convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment. Twelve years later, after many appeals, they were freed. For the first time, the Wheatland affair succeeded briefly in bringing state and national attention to the nature of California's industrialized agriculture and the deplorable working and living conditions of the migrants. In response to public pressure, the California legislature enacted a labor camp code and established a new office of Housing and Immigration to enforce it. However, several sources (Edid, 1994; Moore, 1965; National Advisory Committee, 1967) indicate that there was never enough staff to effectively enforce the code.

Mutual Aid Society and Communist Organizers

From 1917 to 1921 there were several strikes throughout California. Some of them were spontaneous; some were led by the IWW who now called themselves "Toilers of the World;" and some were under the leadership of the AFL. Beginning with the sharp decline in farm prices from 1921 through 1928, there was relative peace on the California farmlands. However, in 1928 the peace was broken in the Imperial Valley from a most unexpected farm labor union of Mexican Americans, *La Union de Trabajadores del Valle Imperial*, later changed to The Mexican Mutual Aid Society (Edid, 1994; London and Anderson, 1975; Moore, 1965; National Advisory Committee, 1967). For years, growers had expressed a preference for Mexicans because they didn't complain and "had a great capacity for happiness" (London and Anderson, 1975). However, unbeknownst to the growers, the Mexican union leaders had been organizing quietly for months. They sought to change the contract labor system where contractors regularly pocketed between one-fourth to one-half of the farm laborers wages. Although the union did not have strike plans against the growers, a strike broke out when the union's demands for an increase in piece rate, insurance against on-the-job accidents, free picking sacks, and iced drinking water in the fields were not met. Arrests were made and many Mexicans were deported. The Mutual Aid Society's claim that labor contractors took a significant percentage of their wages was

investigated and verified by the California Division of Labor Law enforcement. As a result, the Division issued a statement that the growers, not the contractors, were the responsible employer. Although a significant statement, the Division had no authority to enforce its position, and it was ignored routinely by contractors who continued to extract money from farm laborers

Although periods of unrest and even bloodshed have always been a part of California farm labor history, the upheaval was at its height during the depression years (Edid, 1994; London and Anderson, 1970; Moore, 1965; National Advisory Committee, 1967). Between 1933 and 1939 alone there were 180 strikes by farm workers. In January 1930, the communist union Trade Union Unity League assisted former members of the Mexican Mutual Aid Association when large numbers -- estimated to be about 5,000 -- of Mexicans, Filipino and other ethnic workers walked off their jobs in the Imperial Valley in protest for more money and better working conditions. With the cry of communist infiltration and the help of the entire community, however, the growers suppressed the strike.

CAWIU, UCAPAWA AND FALA

In 1931, the communist led Cannery and Agricultural Workers Industrial Union (CAWIU) was established and quickly became involved in confrontations with growers, legal authorities, vigilantes and others opposed to farm labor organizing. These were some of the bloodiest confrontations in the history of California agriculture (Edid, 1994; London and Anderson, 1970; Moore, 1965; National Advisory Committee, 1967). In 1933, farm labor strikes were at their height. There were at least 37 documented strikes that year, and an estimated 47,575 workers walked off their jobs or were locked out with a loss of 669,400 man days. CAWIU led 24 of the total strikes. Two of the remaining documented strikes were led by AFL affiliates; two by organizations unaffiliated with the AFL or CAWIU; and the remainder were led by unknown leadership or occurred spontaneously.

The longest and bloodiest strike occurred in the San Joaquin Valley in 1933. CAWIU organized cotton pickers to demand for higher wages. The demand was for \$1.00 a hundredweight, which had been the prevailing wage rate in 1930, instead of

the \$.60 per hundredweight currently offered. The strike spread to three counties and approximately 15,000 workers, about three-quarters of whom were Mexican. From the beginning, the strike was marked with violence; an ambush of farm workers leaving a union meeting resulted in two deaths and several other woundings. By the time the strike was over another worker was shot, 42 were wounded, 113 strikers were arrested, and 9 children had died of malnutrition.

As in the Wheatland Riot of 20 years before, the extreme violence of the strike brought about public attention. California Governor James Rolph appointed a mediation board and its recommendation of \$.75 a hundredweight was accepted by the farm laborers, and, although at no time did the growers recognize the existence of the union, they reluctantly accepted the increase. In all, 29 of the strikes in 1933 resulted in modest gains in wages for the farm laborers (Edid, 1994; London and Anderson, 1970; Moore, 1965; National Advisory Committee, 1967). Due to their communist leanings, in 1934, all the top leaders of CAWIU were arrested under California's Criminal Syndicalism law, and eight were convicted and sentenced to several years imprisonment. In 1935, the CAWIU was formally dissolved.

After the dissolution of the CAWIU, there were other attempts at farm labor organizing during the remaining years in the 1930s; however these attempts were slowed by the jurisdictional wranglings of the AFL and CIO (London and Anderson, 1975). Many of the farm labor strikes that erupted in the later half of the 1930s were local and spontaneous and independent of the AFL or CIO. There were only two formal unions of any significance during this time. In 1937, the United Cannery, Agricultural, Packing and Allied Workers of America (UCAPAWA) with representatives from eleven states, including California, received a charter from the CIO (Edid, 1994; Moore, 1965). Although farm workers were included in this union, its emphasis was more on the processing and transporting of produce, and its impact on farm labor was minimal. UCAPAWA was later excluded from the CIO for its communist leanings. A more successful union was the Filipino Agricultural Labors Association (FALA) which originated in 1939 among 6,000 Filipino asparagus pickers who had walked off their jobs in protest against a threatened wage cut. The FALA was

successful in gaining a wage hike, and in 1940 the union became an affiliate of the AFL. Much later, the FALA joined forces with Cesar Chavez and the United Farm Workers.

National Farm Laborers Union

Prior to World War II, the American federation of Labor (AFL) and the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO), largely ignored farm laborers. During the 1930s both the AFL and CIO spent time organizing the mostly white and definitely better paid packing-house and cannery workers, who were covered by the NLRA. After the war, the abundant supply of bracero and illegal labor discouraged spontaneous strikes; however, after the war there were two major organizing drives among farm laborers. The first was the National Farm laborers Union (NFLU), an AFL affiliate, and the second was the Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee (AWOC).

The NFLU was a direct outgrowth of the Southern Tenant Farmers Union (STFU), which was founded by H.L. Mitchell and others in Arkansas and Louisiana in 1934. The purpose of the STFU, an affiliate of the AFL, was to organize sharecroppers and plantation workers, and its efforts were directed against the Agricultural Adjustment Act from being abused by Southern plantation owners. Under the Agricultural Adjustment Act, the principle of price stabilization through acreage reduction was introduced. Unfortunately, many planters kept the entire acreage allotment for growing crops to themselves and left tenant farmers and sharecroppers with retired acreage on which they were forbidden under the Act to grow cotton, their own cash crop (Brown, 1972; Edid, 1994).

From the beginning, the STFU challenged basic traditions in the South and the militant tactics of previous agricultural unions (Brown, 1972; Edid, 1994; London and Anderson, 1970). It was racially integrated and committed to the principles of nonviolence. It subscribed to an indigenous type of democratic socialism but refused to participate in the internecine ideological warfare of either union movements or outside communist influence. The STFU dealt with the bread and butter issue of land for the landless. By 1947, the NFLU had raised enough money to expand beyond their base in

the Mississippi Delta and moved westward to organized farm laborers in California. The efforts of the NFLU began with a leader in California agribusiness - the DiGiorgio Fruit Corporation, southeast of Bakersfield, California in Kern County. The DiGiorgio ranch contained 10,621 acres, and, as one of the largest wineries in the world, employed eight hundred workers full time and another sixteen hundred workers during the peak of the harvest. DiGiorgio was a powerful foe of farm labor unionism; however the NFLU operated from the strategy that if DiGiorgio could be organized, the rest of the industry would follow.

Organizing efforts by NFLU's Local 218 grew rapidly, and in September, 1947, members agreed upon four basic demands: a wage increase of ten cents an hour, grievance procedures, the principles of seniority, and a union contract. DiGiorgio, however, refused to acknowledge the existence of the union and would not meet with union representatives. By the end of September, 1947, the union membership voted to strike.

The NFLU took significant measures to ensure its success. First, picket lines were organized on the twenty miles of public roads surrounding the ranch. In fact, these twenty miles came to be known as the world's longest picket line; it also proved to be one of the longest strikes timewise, as it was maintained for over two and a half years. Secondly, the union gained financial support from organized labor and the public. Well-known personalities raised funds, and several Hollywood movie guilds produced a well-received pro-union film entitled "Poverty in the Valley of Plenty." Clergy, students and teachers, and other sympathizers from all parts of the country lent their support. Third, the union ran a large secondary as well as a primary boycott against DiGiorgio. In a primary boycott consumers are asked to refrain from purchasing the products of the boycotted company; in a secondary boycott third parties, such as suppliers, transporters and distributors are pressured to curtail activity with the struck company. In this case, the NFLU convinced the Teamsters Union to persuade local truckers to stop supplying DiGiorgio with equipment, and the Teamster warehouse workers refused to work until all DiGiorgio products were removed by the warehouse, forcing Safeway stores in California to stop stocking DiGiorgio products

In addition, the NFLU picket convinced Winery Union members not to unload DiGiorgio wine tank cars.

In its vehement refusal to recognize the union, DiGiorgio responded to the strike by invoking the "red scare" and sporadic violence (Kushner, 1970; London and Anderson, 1975). However, with increasing concern for its public image, DiGiorgio utilized more sophisticated techniques of resistance. A powerful weapon, available to DiGiorgio, which was not available in the 1930s was the *Bracero* Program. At the beginning of the strike, 130 *braceros* were employed on the DiGiorgio ranch. Although the *braceros* originally stopped work in sympathy with the strikers, through the threat of deportation, they were persuaded to go back to work. Even though strikebreaking was forbidden by the *bracero's* master contract, the technique of keeping *braceros* on the job until the bureaucratic process ruled it illegal proved a successful anti-union technique. By the time it was ruled that the *braceros* were being used illegally, the harvest would be over and it would be a moot point. In addition to *braceros*, DiGiorgio employed illegal Mexican farm laborers to help them through the harvest.

DiGiorgio spent large sums of money to fight the union (Brown, 1972; National Advisory Committee, 1967). It initiated a nation-wide publicity campaign claiming that there was no strike and distributed a pamphlet called "A Community Aroused" which was published by a committee of local businessmen who claimed that the city was being disrupted by outside agitators. DiGiorgio also won a libel suit against the film "Poverty in the Valley of Plenty," and the union was forced to withdraw it from circulation.

Very damaging to the union was DiGiorgio's petition to invoke the Taft-Hartley amendment to the NLRA, which outlawed certain kinds of secondary boycotts. Through DiGiorgio's petition, a federal judge ruled that farm workers, even though explicitly excluded from NLRA legislation, could be disciplined under the new amendment and proscribed illegal all secondary boycott activity and picketing against DiGiorgio (London and Anderson, 1976). The union immediately petitioned the NLRA to see if farm workers were now covered under NLRA legislation. The U.S.

House of Representatives Committee on Education and Labor appointed a subcommittee, headed by congressman Richard Nixon from California to look into the affair. The committee made a written recommendation, which came to be known as the "Nixon Doctrine," that asserted that farm workers had been properly excluded from farm NLRA laws and that "it would be harmful to the public interest and to all responsible labor unions to legislate otherwise" (London and Anderson, 1970, p. 43). Fifteen months after the union's petition, the National Relation Labor Board (NLRB) reversed its decision that the farm workers could be covered under the NLRA or its amendments. By this time, the strike had been broken, and the union called off the strike in May, 1950.

The NFLU organized other strikes. In fact, in 1949, Cesar Chavez, at twenty-one years of age, joined a two week strike of several hundred cotton strikers in Tulare, Kern, Fresno and Kings counties. The Union won its demand that a pay cut of \$3.00 per pound from the previous year be rescinded. However, with the end of the DiGiorgio strike, the AFL withdrew its financial support from the NFLU. Also, other outside sources of financial support for the union dropped to almost nothing. With the onset of the Korean War, which gave the growers another reason to push for more bracero workers, rather than organizing farm laborers, the NFLU turned its efforts toward fighting the bracero system. In 1955, the NFLU changed its name to the National Agricultural Workers Union. By 1959, due to lack of support, the Union ceased to exist and was replaced by the Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee (AWOC).

Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee

In 1959, the AFL-CIO formed the Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee (AWOC). The stated goal of the union was to establish a single union for all agricultural workers in the country (Brown, 1972; Kushner, 1975; London and Anderson, 1970). Its headquarters were set-up in Stockton, California, and the veteran labor organizer Norman Smith was made director. Unfortunately, Smith had no experience with migrant labor, and was largely unsuccessful in organizing them. Between 1959 and 1964, the AFL-CIO had invested more than one million dollars in

AWOC's effort to organize farm laborers. However, the union was unable to develop a stable membership and never won a strike or demanded union recognition from the growers.

In the history of farm labor organizing, AWOC is important in its association with Cesar Chavez and the United Farm Workers. Filipino workers were very active in the unionization drive in the 1930s and formed the Filipino Agricultural Workers Association (FAWA). After World War II, FAWA was revived and joined forces with AWOC in several Stockton area strikes. Many Filipinos joined AWOC, and, under the leadership of Philip De La Cruz, the Delano local of AWOC began the Delano grape strike of 1965. Under the leadership of Cesar Chavez, the AWOC and the United Farm Worker's Association (UFWA), would join forces to become the UFW. De La Cruz would become the Vice President of the UFW.

Summary

Early on, the economic, social and political structure of California agriculture laid the foundation for the use of migrant farm labor and the growers' strong resistance to farm labor unionization. The notion of family farms was a myth in California; from the beginning, large scale farming, with its vertical and horizontal integration - or agribusiness - became the norm. Except for the depression years, various waves of ethnic labor, including Chinese, Japanese, Filipinos and Mexicans became the mainstay in the fields that supplied the nation with fruits and vegetables. In the fields of California, Mexicans, including legal residents of the United States, illegal immigrants and those Mexicans under the *Bracero* Program have been the largest source of cheap ethnic labor.

Notwithstanding that they were unprotected by labor legislation and were up against powerful growers and their supporters, migrant farm laborers have not been passive. Attempts at farm labor organizing began early in this century. Organizing attempts included efforts from the International Workers of the World (IWW); the Mutual Aid Society; the Cannery and Agricultural Workers Industrial Union (CAWIU); the United Cannery, Agricultural, Packing and Allied Workers of America (UCAPAWA); the National Farm Laborers Union (NFLU) and the Agricultural

Workers Organizing Committee (AWOC). However, success in the form of contracts with the growers eluded these unions and did not occur until Cesar Chavez and the UFW won the Delano grape strike in 1970 and gained union recognition and contracts with all major growers. Chavez's success was built upon the struggles of California farm workers throughout the century and became a victory for all of them.

CHAPTER 4
THE LEARNING PROCESSES THAT
INSPIRED CHAVEZ TO FORM THE UFW

"Es mejor morir de pie que vivir de rodillas."

("It's better to die on one's feet than to live on one's knees.")

Emilio Zapata, Mexican revolutionary

At 11:00 a.m. on July 29, 1970, twenty-six Delano growers signed a contract with the UFW. This historic signing ended the UFW's five year strike and grape boycott and resulted in the union obtaining 150 grape contracts, 10,000 members, and control over approximately 20,000 jobs (*Huelga Ends*, 1970). Never before in the history of American unionization had a farm labor union achieved success at the bargaining table with growers. As the previous chapter describes, there have been many failed efforts over the course of this century at farm labor unionization. These organizing attempts often resulted in violent conflicts with the growers.

On November 22, 1960, just ten years before this historic Delano contract signing, Farm Bureau President Louis Rozzoni told a Fresno State College conference on industrial relations that "The growers are immovable. They will not be coerced into signing union contracts" (cited in Taylor, 1975, p. 99). Yet, Cesar Chavez, a poorly educated Mexican American farm laborer -- a pious man of dark complexion, small in stature, soft-spoken and self-effacing -- was able to penetrate the power of the growers. Later, reflecting on this victory, Chavez said, "For 80 years farm workers thought the grower was invincible, but now the myth is broken. It was shattered when we found we could win. Now the workers are no longer afraid; they want to take on the growers" (cited in Taylor, 1985 p. 176).

How Chavez was able to build the UFW and to shatter the power of the growers is a remarkable story of a man, who, though lacking formal education, drew strength and knowledge from his early life experiences and the education that he sought as an adult. This chapter explores that story, providing a background of Chavez's life and examining the learning processes that led him to form and build the UFW.

Particular emphasis is placed on the significant influence of his upbringing in a poor

Mexican American migrant family and, as an adult, his own reading and association with people who profoundly influenced his thinking, philosophy, motivations, and goals.

Lessons of Poverty, Discrimination, and Powerlessness

Chavez's intellectual development was based on a history of personal struggle and learning from a "life of hard knocks." The second of five children, Cesar Estrada Chavez was born on March 31, 1927, on an 80 acre family farm near Yuma, Arizona, to Librado and Juana Estrada. Chavez's grandfather bought the farm at the turn of the century after leaving a life of poverty in Mexico, working in the mines of Arizona, and fulfilling a dream of owning his own land. After growing up, Chavez's father stayed on to tend his father's farm; he also ran three small businesses, a grocery store, a garage and a pool hall.

From an early age, Chavez learned how to irrigate, plant and hoe the farm. Chavez loved the farm and in later life reminisced about what he saw as an idyllic early childhood on the farm (Dunne, 1975; Matthiesson, 1969). The effects of the Depression, however, changed his and his family's life. The Chavez family lost their businesses, and, as many crops perished in 1933 in the first severe drought in half a century, Chavez's father was only able to scratch out a precarious living on the farm and eventually lost it.

Describing an early lesson in discrimination and powerlessness, Chavez said that his father "qualified for a loan, a small loan under the New Deal, but the guy next to us who wanted to get the land was the president of the bank, and also of the soil conservation office, so the loan was blocked" (cited in Ferriss and Sandoval, 1997, p. 16). In 1937, unable to pay debts and back taxes, the family lost their beloved farm. Never one to give up easily, Chavez's father even went to Phoenix to talk with the governor to try to get back the family farm, but to no avail.

With the subsequent foreclosure on the farm, the family left for California and began life as penniless migrants, a part of the "Grapes of Wrath." Following the crops over the next ten years, the family trekked hundreds of miles through the Central Valley, the Santa Clara area, the Salinas Valley, the San Joaquin Valley and the

Imperial Valley to harvest fruits and vegetables and pull cotton. The pay was terrible, and there were times when the family was cheated out of their money by unscrupulous labor contractors (Ferris and Sandoval, 1997; Taylor, 1975). Additionally, the living conditions in the migrant camps were deplorable; the housing was often dilapidated, normally a tar-paper shack which lacked heating, plumbing and water. Sometimes lacking any housing, the family slept in a tent, and, at times, with no place to stay, they slept in their beat-up car or under a tree.

Chavez worked alongside his parents. This was the first time that the Chavez family had to work for someone else, and the first time they found themselves without adequate shelter. Recalling his difficult life as a migrant after losing the farm and the profound feeling of losing personal freedom, Chavez said,

I bitterly missed the ranch. Maybe that is when the rebellion started. Some had been born into the migrant stream. But we had been on the land, and I knew a different way of life. We were poor, but we had liberty. The migrant is poor, and he has no freedom. (cited in Taylor, 1975, p. 61)

As a migrant and Mexican-American, Chavez experienced racial prejudice from an early age. He recalled that the teachers seldom took notice of migrant children and would punish those who spoke Spanish. At times, the Spanish-speaking children were shunted into segregated classrooms. Chavez recalled that a teacher once hung a sign on him that said, "I am a clown, I speak Spanish" (Taylor, 1975, p. 64)." Chavez attended thirty different schools before dropping out of school in the eighth grade.²

Chavez also recalled the signs in restaurants or other establishments which read, "No Dogs or Mexicans" or "White Trade Only" (Pitrone, 1972, p. 12). When the family spent the short winter gap between migrant treks doing odd jobs in the town of Brawley, which is near Delano, as all other Mexican-Americans, they lived in the Mexican-Black-Japanese-Chinese and migrant white section of town.

Chavez frequently told the story of a racial incident that occurred to him as a

² It should not go unnoted that several educators contend that during this era there were dozens of masters theses in education which promoted the view that Mexican American children were intellectually inferior to Anglo children (Ferriss and Sandoval, 1997).

teenager in a movie theater in Delano (Dunne, 1967; Matthiessen 1969). The audience was segregated; the Anglos sat on one side of the main aisle and the Mexicans on the other. When the usher told him that he couldn't sit on the "Anglo side," Chavez sat down anyway. When he refused to leave, the manager was called and eventually the police. Chavez was taken to the police station, detained for over an hour and told not to make any more trouble. Chavez said that this incident had a profound affect on him. Reminiscing about the incident Chavez said, "It wasn't a question of sitting there because it was more comfortable or anything...I wanted a free choice of where I wanted to be" (cited in Ferriss and Sandoval, 1997, p. 35). Chavez said that he wanted to take some action at that time but that he didn't know how. He didn't know any lawyers, had no money and felt powerless.

The feeling of discrimination and disparate treatment followed Chavez to his stint in the Navy, which he joined in 1944, when he was seventeen. Chavez said that he joined mostly to get away from the back-breaking farm labor work. However, because of the discrimination he faced, Chavez recalled, "Those two years were the worst of his life...The only black man I ever saw who was better than a steward was a painter. The Mexican-Americans were mostly deck hands. That's what I was" (cited in Levy, 1975, p. 84). Chavez also resented the "super authority which allowed someone to move me around like I was a piece of junk" (cited in Levy, 1975, p. 84).

When he left the Navy, Chavez continued to labor in the cotton fields, fruit orchards and grape vineyards of California and Arizona. In 1948, he married Helen Fabela, whom he met while working in Delano, before he went into the Navy. Helen's family had immigrated from Mexico after the Mexican Revolution, and she had worked in the Delano fields since she was fourteen. After their marriage, Chavez and his wife worked as migrant farm laborers. About a year and a half later Chavez moved to Northern California and worked in the lumber mills.

Tired of the constant rain and winter weather in Northern California, in 1950, the Chavez's, which now included three small children, settled in San Jose, where Chavez worked as a lumber handler in a mill and as a seasonal farm laborer. The Chavez family lived on the east side of San Jose, which was on the "wrong side" of

Highway 101, commonly known among its inhabitants as *Sal Si Puedes* which means "Get Out If You Can." *Sal Si Puedes* was a ghetto with unpaved roads, little money and few opportunities (Matthiessen, 1969). There were no sidewalks in this part of town, and nothing was being done to improve the ghetto.

Indeed, the effects of poverty and racial discrimination and a sense of powerlessness as a migrant farm worker had a profound influence on Chavez's life. He felt anger and frustration by this feeling of powerlessness. In large part, these feelings provided the motivation for Chavez to seek a better and more just life for himself and other migrants. Reflecting on how his experiences as a migrant spurred him to become an organizer, Chavez said,

There are vivid memories from my childhood -- what we had to go through because of low wages and the conditions, basically because there was no union. I suppose if I wanted to be fair, I could say that I'm trying to settle a personal score. I could dramatize it by saying that I want to bring social justice to farm workers. The truth is I went through a lot of hell and a lot of people did.
(Chavez, 1966, p. 50)

Family Loyalty, Religious Faith and Mexican Identity

Obviously, poverty, discrimination and a feeling of powerlessness were painful early lessons for Chavez. Yet, equally important as these harsh realities to his educational development were the lessons he learned from his sense of family loyalty, his religious faith, and his positive identity as a Mexican American.

Even though his parents were strict, Chavez often said they were unusually attentive, affectionate, and patient. Throughout his life, Chavez remained very close to his parents and five brothers and sisters (Dunne; 1976; Matthieson, 1969). Chavez and his family faced migrant life as a family unit. Speaking of the attentiveness of his mother and father and the role models that they were for him, Chavez commented:

She's [mother] a very illiterate pacifist. She never learned how to read or write, never learned English, never went to school for a day. She had this natural childishness about how to live, and how to let people live. My Dad never fought. We never saw my Dad fight or drink or smoke--all the things

that have a bad meaning. My parents weren't too young when they married. They were in their early 30's, so once they married they gave us all their time. (cited in Fitch, 1970, p. 206)

Although reserved and mild mannered, Chavez said that his father refused to take discrimination or bad treatment. If the family was treated badly on a farm Chavez said, "My father never did put up with it -- he'd quit. He'd say, 'Let's go. Let's not work here.' And we'd go look for something else" (cited in Ferriss and Sandoval, 1997, p. 21). Dignity meant more to Chavez's father than money. Again, reminiscing about the strong influence of his father, Chavez stated,

We were constantly fighting against things that most people would probably accept because they didn't have that kind of life we had in the beginning, that strong family life and family tie which we would not let anyone break. (cited in Levy, p. 78)

Chavez's father also supported the notion of farm labor organizing. In the late 1940s, Chavez, along with his father and uncle, joined the short-lived National Farm Laborers Union (NFLU), headed by Mexican American writer and activist Ernesto Galarza. With his father, Chavez marched in picket lines and remained a member for several years. Although the NFLU failed in its efforts to raise wages or obtain union contracts, Chavez later said that he learned firsthand about labor organizing strategy and confrontation with the growers. The NFLU was not his father's first experience with labor organizing. He had also joined the Tobacco Workers, the Cannery Workers, the Packing House Workers and later the Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee. Proudly, Chavez stated, "I must have gotten interested in unions through him [father]" (cited in Levy, 1975, p. 80).

Chavez often said that his mother's strong Catholic religious convictions, which included a belief in nonviolence, were a major influence in his life. Chavez said that his mother was very religious without being fanatic. Although Chavez remained a life-long Catholic, he, like his mother, was very tolerant and accepting of all religious faiths. Indeed, the support of Catholic, Protestant and Jewish groups would become critical to the UFW. In expressing his religious tolerance, Chavez said, "To me,

religion is a most beautiful thing. And over the years, I have come to realize that all religions are beautiful. Your religion just happens to depend a lot on your upbringing and culture" (cited in Levy, p. 27).

Even though she was very poor, as part of her religious commitment, Chavez's mother would go out of her way to help others. It was her religious faith which sustained Chavez's mother, and it was this strong religious faith which became so important to Chavez. Expressing the importance of religious faith, Chavez said, "I don't think that I could base my will to struggle on cold economics or on some political doctrine. I don't think that would be enough to sustain me. For me the base is faith" (cited in Levy, 1975, p. 27).

Later, when Chavez formed the UFW, the importance of religious faith was very evident in the movement. Traditional religious practices such as pilgrimages, public prayers, worship services, fasting, retreats and special observances were important parts of the movement. In particular, the Virgin of Guadalupe would hold a special significance to Chavez and the UFW. For the Mexican American, the Virgin of Guadalupe symbolizes the suffering and struggle of poor and oppressed Mexican people. She is also a powerful symbol of their liberation.³ Describing the importance of the Virgin of Guadalupe to poor Mexicans, Luis Valdez, creator of *El Teatro Campesino* (The Farm Workers Theater), says, "Beautifully dark and Indian in feature; she [the Virgin of Guadalupe] was the New World version of the Mother of Christ....she is a Catholic saint of Indian creation" (Valdez, 1966, p. 42).

Chavez often said that his mother was his original inspiration for his interest in nonviolence, which was basic to his religious faith. From a young age, his mother instructed him with *dichos* (proverbs) on nonviolence, which Chavez quoted throughout his life, like "He who holds the cow being killed sins as much as he who kills her," or,

³As the story is told, in 1531, north of what is now Mexico City at the site of a shrine to the Aztec goddess Tonantzin (our Mother), *La Virgin Morena* (The Brown Virgin, commonly known as the Virgin of Guadalupe), is said to have appeared to a poor, Indian boy. She spoke to him in an Indian tongue and declared herself the protectress of *La Raza*, or the Mexican Race (Steiner, 1969).

"God gave you senses, like your eyes and mind and tongue, so that you can get out of anything" (cited in Ferriss and Sandoval, 1997, p. 13). Although a stereotypical view of *machismo* in the Mexican culture is a man standing up for one's honor, Chavez's mother taught her children, including the boys, to "turn the other cheek." His mother planted the seed for Chavez's belief in nonviolence, and further exposure to the writings of Gandhi as an adult cemented this belief.

Despite the poverty and discrimination, Chavez's parents instilled in him a sense of pride in being Mexican American. Even though Chavez was fond of saying that he went through a rebellious stage as a teenager, wearing his hair long in a duck-tail cut and dressing as a *pachuco* (hoodlum) with pegged pants and a long coat, he asserted that his rebellion never was against being a Mexican American (Ferriss and Sandoval, 1997; Levy, 1966). As a teenager, he rebelled against Mexican *mariachi* music, listening instead to big band, but he was always proud of his heritage as a Mexican American, or, as part of *la raza* (the Mexican race). Indeed, Chavez said that even during his teenage years, "I was pretty strong about being a Mexican" (cited in Levy, p. 83).

Instilling pride in *la raza* later would become an important mission of the UFW. Chavez would often refer to the UFW as *la causa para la raza* (the cause for the race). *La raza* refers to the Mexican people who became a "new race" as a result of the intermixture of the indigenous Indians in Mexico and Spaniards. To instill cultural pride in union members while building the union, Chavez often drew on many Mexican American symbols, stories, and traditions.

One very important hero and symbol of this Mexican pride, particularly to the poor and oppressed, was Emiliano Zapata. Zapata was a Mexican revolutionary of the early twentieth century who fought for agrarian reform. From the time he was young Chavez, like many Mexicans, heard stories of Zapata's battles for poor peasants. Ironically, although Zapata justified the use of violence, his portrait was always next to Gandhi's on the wall behind Chavez's desk in his UFW office (Kushner, 1975; Matthiessen, 1969). It was also very common for farm workers on strike to wear Zapata buttons bearing his portrait.

Education in Social Justice and Nonviolence

Chavez often told audiences that he attended 30 schools before dropping out in the eight grade at age fourteen. He said that he could barely read and write. According to Chavez, his real education in reading and writing began when he met Father Donald McDonnell in 1950, soon after moving to the *barrio Sal Si Puedes* (Get Out if You Can) in San Jose (Day, 1971; London and Anderson, 1970; Nelson, 1966). Chavez attended the church that Father McDonnell established in a dilapidated building in *Sal Si Puedes* for the hundreds of Mexicans who did not have a Catholic Church on their side of town. It was from Father McDonnell that Chavez learned about social justice for farm workers, based on papal social encyclicals and other religious writings. He also introduced Chavez to writings on labor history and congressional hearings on farm labor. Additionally, Father McDonnell introduced Chavez to Gandhi's writings on nonviolence.

A scholar, expert linguist, and well-grounded in the concepts of liberation theology, Father McDonnell had great empathy for the plight of farm workers. He believed that the Church should support social justice for farm workers and asserted that his argument was based on papal encyclicals. Because Father McDonnell inspired him to believe that agricultural conditions could change and that at least certain segments of the church would stand behind him if farm laborers attempted to build a union, Chavez's friendship with Father McDonnell was a turning point in his intellectual development.

From Father McDonnell, Chavez learned the powerful lesson that farm workers had the right to economic and social justice and that there was a religious base to support that notion. Fondly, Chavez recalled his first meeting with Father McDonnell, when the Priest knocked on the Chavez door on a routine round of visits to poor people living in *Sal Si Puedes*, and the profound affect that he had on him,

[Father McDonnell]...sat with me past midnight telling me about social justice and the Church's stand on farm labor and reading from the encyclicals of Pope Leo XIII in which he upheld labor unions. I would do anything to get the Father to tell me more about labor history. I began going to the *bracero* camps

with him to help with Mass, to the city jail with him to talk to prisoners, anything to be with him so that he could tell me more about the farm labor movement (cited in Nelson, 1966, p. 49)

Reflecting on the importance that Father McDonnell played in his life, Chavez commented during an interview (McNamara, 1967, April 21) that he was the first priest he had met who genuinely was interested in the lives of farm workers and in doing something about the injustices in their lives. Chavez said that his fateful meeting with Father McDonnell in 1950 was the beginning of a "long and warm friendship, and there also developed sort of a student-teacher relationship. I knew very little about the Church teachings on social justice, but with him I began to learn and understand" (p. 1).

From Father McDonnell, Chavez learned that Pope Leo XIII began the papal tradition of social reform and wrote many encyclicals on the problems of labor and capital, the needs of the working man and the social duties of the state (Camp, 1969). Pope Leo wrote his most famous encyclical "Rerum Novarum" in 1891 to reinforce the inherent dignity of all individuals created by God -- including workers. Written during the time of rapid industrialization, Rerum Novarum was denounced by many industrialists for defending the rights of workers to establish organizations for improved wages and working conditions.

The writings of Pope Leo XIII made a deep impression on Chavez. Later, he would talk frequently about the encyclicals to the farm workers and publish passages from them in the farm workers newsletter *El Malcriado*. Chavez was particularly fond of the following passage of Pope Leo XIII, from "Rerum Novarum", which demonstrates how the Catholic Church had defended social justice and labor organization:

Everyone's first duty is to protect the workers from the greed of speculators who use human beings as instruments to provide themselves with money. It is neither just nor human to oppress men with excessive work to the point where their minds become enfeebled and their bodies are worn out....Therefore it is desirable that associations of workers multiply and become more effective....It

is beyond doubt that it is just to seek aid if the employers place unjust burdens upon the workers, or degrade them with conditions which are repugnant to their dignity as human beings. (Pope Leo XIII, p. 3)

In addition to Pope Leo XIII's writings, Chavez also read "Quadragesimo Anno," written by Pope Pius XI in 1931. Quadragesimo Anno criticized economic repression resulting from limitless free competition and argued that "workers had a God-given right to organize and to strike when necessary" (cited in Day, 1971, p. 59). Father McDonnell also introduced Chavez to other religious writings, including St. Francis of Assisi and St. Paul.

The religious justification and support of the Catholic Church, as well as protestant and Jewish support, would become critical to the UFW movement. When the Delano strike began in 1965, the Catholic Bishops of the United States would not take an official stand in support of the UFW. However, in 1968, Pope John XXIII convened Vatican II, the first ecumenical council of the Church in nearly a century. From Vatican II emerged an emphasis on social and economic justice; consequently the U.S. Bishops formed the Bishops Farm Labor Committee in 1968 and gave their support to the UFW (Day, 1971).

As Father McDonnell was very knowledgeable about Congressional legislation, he also introduced Chavez to the extensive Senate LaFollette Committee hearings on farm labor, which acknowledged the miserable plight of migrants and recommended that they be given the right to organize (U.S. Congress, Senate 1942).⁴ Father McDonnell also introduced Chavez to the biographies of labor giants like John L. Lewis and Eugene Debs and the political and philosophical writings of de Tocqueville and Machiavelli. Very importantly, Father McDonnell also introduced Chavez to the writings and philosophy of Gandhi on personal sacrifice and nonviolence, which became intrinsic to the UFW. Chavez came to admire Gandhi for his sense of duty and his willingness to undertake personal sacrifice. Emphasizing his belief in sacrifice,

⁴The details of the LaFollete Committee hearings on farm labor are covered in Chapter 3, Historical Background on Farming, Farm Workers and Farm Labor in California Before 1962.

Chavez stated, "I like the whole idea of sacrifice to do things. If they are done that way, they are more lasting. If they cost more, then we will value them more" (cited in Levy p. 93). While forming the UFW, Chavez's belief in personal sacrifice led him to the insistence that farm workers, although poor, must pay dues to belong to the union. In answer to why union dues were required of poor farm workers, Chavez said, "We wanted the worker to prove to us, and we want to prove to ourselves, that they really wanted what we were doing. They assured us that they really wanted a union by their monthly contribution of \$3.50 dues" (Chavez, 1969, p. 9).

Through the inspiration of Gandhi, Chavez would also come to believe that the leader of the poor should live like the poor. Years later, Chavez chose to live in conspicuous poverty while many other union leaders lived in affluence. Chavez said that he chose poverty not for the sake of the poor but for his own sake. Like Gandhi, Chavez believed that poverty was important for the sanctity of his soul and peace of mind. (Dunne, 1967; Kushner, 1975; Levy, 1966; Steiner, 1969; Taylor; 1975).

It was also the inspiration of Gandhi that led Chavez in the 1960s to conduct fasts. Gandhi believed in the purification of self-sacrifice, symbolized by sacrificing the body through fasting. Fasting was a nonviolent act for justice. Chavez powerfully expressed his belief in the importance of nonviolence and sacrificing oneself through fasting when he said, "The truest act of courage, the strongest act of manliness is to sacrifice ourselves in a totally nonviolent struggle for justice, to be a man is to suffer for others; God help us to be men" (cited in Taylor, 1975, p. i)." Commenting on his 25-day fast in 1968, Chavez said that "fasting is the last resort in place of the sword" (cited in Taylor, 1975, p. 229).

Just as Gandhi inspired Chavez to view fasting as a powerful nonviolent act for social justice, Gandhi also influenced Chavez's view of strikes and boycotts as acts of "militant nonviolence." The fasts, boycotts, and strikes were the "weapons" that the UFW would use to bring about social change (Dunne, 1966; Taylor, 1975; Steiner, 1969). So powerful was Chavez's belief in nonviolence, that even when the UFW was confronted with violence, Chavez never wavered from this principle. As head of the UFW Chavez often said that "Violence really doesn't win anything for you in the long

run" (cited in Taylor, 1975, p. 140). Furthermore, in the tradition of Gandhi, Chavez would come to believe that no movement was worth the loss of human life. In 1968, during his fast for penance and nonviolence, Chavez clearly stated his commitment to nonviolence and the sanctity of human life: "Social justice for the dignity of man can not be won at the price of human life. You can not justify what you want for *La Raza*, for the people, and in the same breath destroy one life...I will not compromise" (cited in Taylor, 1975, p. 220).

Encountering Fred Ross

Under the tutelage of Father McDonnell Chavez received the intellectual preparation that was so critical in shaping his life long philosophy. However, when Fred Ross came knocking on Chavez's door one evening in *Sal Si Puedes* in 1952, this intellectual preparation quickly became praxis. Ross had come to *Sal Si Puedes* to organize Mexican Americans. It was Father McDonnell who told Ross to see if he could get Chavez to help him.

At first Chavez did not want to meet Ross. Chavez had a basic mistrust of whites who came to "do good" for the Mexicans in *Sal Si Puedes*. In describing his mistrust at that time, Chavez said,

We never heard anything from whites unless it was the police, or some sociologist from Stanford, San Jose State, or Berkeley coming to write about *Sal Si Puedes*. They'd ask all kinds of silly questions, like how did we eat our beans and tortillas. We felt it wasn't any of their business how we lived. (cited in Levy, 1975. p. 97).

Chavez felt that after these "researchers" got their theses finished that they never came back to help the people. Chavez thought that Ross was one of these *gringo* researchers.

Ross, however, was not a researcher, but, an activist who shared Chavez's dream of improving the lives of Mexican Americans. Five years prior to his fateful meeting with Chavez, Ross established the Community Services Organization (CSO) for the large Mexican American community in Los Angeles. The CSO was an outgrowth of Saul Alinsky's Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF), which was based on the principle that social change is more lasting if the people who are affected by

problems identify those problems themselves and band together in interest groups to solve them (Tjerandsen, 1980). According to a pamphlet explaining the purpose of CSO, it was a:

grass roots, civic action organization, designed to integrate the Spanish-speaking people into our overall community life....It is a self-help, civic action agency, endeavoring to improve living conditions...to protest, remedy and prevent violations of human and civil rights, and to provide a medium for social expression and "on the spot" leadership development. This organization does not endorse candidates or political parties and is adamantly opposed to any form of totalitarianism whether it be Communism or Fascism. (CSO Pamphlet, circa 1950, p. 1)

In 1947, the Mexican American community in East Los Angeles originally asked for the help of the IAF to assist them in voter registration and to organize against police brutality. Ross went to Los Angeles and became involved in the voter registration drive. By 1949, the CSO had registered fifteen thousand new voters who helped catapult the election of Ed Roybal to the Los Angeles City Council, the first Mexican American since 1880 to hold that position (Ferriss and Sandoval, 1997). Since Ross only wanted to stay in Los Angeles long enough to make sure that the local people could take over the leadership, by 1952, he was ready to move on and establish other CSO chapters in California.

As Father McDonnell has suggested to Ross that Chavez would be excellent as assisting him in establishing a CSO Chapter in San Jose, Ross went to Chavez's house to try to convince him to work with him. Ross first came to the Chavez house when Chavez was at work, and Chavez's wife Helen told him to come back in the evening. When Ross returned to the house in the evening, Chavez instructed his wife Helen to tell Ross that he was not home. Ross told Helen that he would come back again the next night. When Ross came the second night Chavez again was not there. When Ross came the third night, Ross not only met Chavez at his house but also encountered twenty of Chavez's friends.

Reminiscing about his first encounter with Chavez, Ross said that he initially

got a "cold reception" and that he learned about ten years later that Chavez had cooked up a scheme to run him out of town (Ross, 1974, October). Chavez had invited some of his tougher friends to his house to drink a few beers and hear the *gringo* ask a few insulting questions about Mexicans. The plan was that when Chavez gave the sign - passing his cigarette from one hand to the other - they would demand that the *gringo* get out of town quickly.

Once Ross began speaking, however, Chavez found that his hostility began to evaporate. At this first encounter, Ross talked about the purpose of the CSO and its major accomplishments in Los Angeles. Ross told the group about how the CSO aided in the Roybal victory as councilman and how the CSO got rid of segregation in schools, theaters and school buses.

To a now mesmerized Chavez, who totally forgot about giving the "cigarette signal" to run Ross out of town, Ross then told the group about the "Bloody Christmas" case which Ross described as, "By far the most notorious case that the organization worked on ..." (Ross, 1974, October, p. 3). News of this case was well known to Mexican Americans, many of whom had experienced first-hand police brutality. The case involved seven men of Mexican American descent who were beaten up by drunk cops for several hours on Christmas Eve in the Lincoln Heights jail in Los Angeles. Two of the men almost died. Through highly publicized pressure, the CSO got grand jury investigation, and five policemen were eventually jailed from periods of one to ten years. This was the first time that policemen in Los Angeles ever got jailed for beating up Mexican Americans.

By the end of the evening, Ross had sold Chavez on the benefit of establishing a CSO in San Jose. Describing his first evening with Ross and how he became convinced to join forces with him, Chavez wrote,

I didn't know what the CSO was, or who this guy Fred Ross was, but I knew about the Bloody Christmas case, and so did everybody in that room. Five cops actually had been jailed for brutality. And that miracle was the result of CSO efforts. Fred did such a good job of explaining how poor people could build power that I could taste it. I could really feel it. (cited in Ferriss and Sandoval,

1997; p. 43).

That same night Chavez volunteered to work as a "bird dog," knocking on doors in the Mexican American community in San Jose to ask them to register to vote. That was the beginning of Chavez's ten year career as an organizer and then as regional Director of the CSO and a life-long friendship with his mentor Fred Ross.

Education in Community Organizing

Chavez became Ross's able student, and it was from Ross that Chavez learned the techniques of successful community organizing, which later became the foundation to his forming the UFW. At the time Chavez volunteer in 1952 to help Ross with voter registration, he was working in the fields and in a lumberyard. After work every night he would accompany Ross and walk from house to house. Although Chavez initially was very nervous and stumbled on his words while he was explaining to people why he was at their doorstep, Ross said, "Cesar Chavez soon became the outstanding leader of the people in that area, and the following year, I got Alinsky to hire him" (Ross, Fred, 1974, October, p. 3) Chavez starting working full-time for the CSO for \$35 per week. Once he had established the *Sal Si Puedes* chapter, his task, along with Ross, was to start more CSO chapters in California. Chavez started on his own first in Oakland and then travelled throughout California staying in each area around four months. Working with Ross in setting up new CSO chapters, Chavez learned and applied principles of grassroots community organizing, which would become invaluable to him in organizing farm workers in the UFW.

In contrast to the IAF, which was formed in 1939 as an "organization of organizations," the organizing technique of the CSO was based on individual membership. As there was no power base of organizations controlled by Mexican Americans, Ross concluded that "among Mexican Americans an organization would have to be built house by house, and perhaps in time several organizations could be brought together into a federation" (cited in Tjerandsen, 1980).

Although based on the premise of one person by one person organizing, the "housemeeting" of groups of individuals meeting together in someone's home became the indispensable organizing tool of the CSO. Ross started this technique in Los

Angeles. After approaching individuals within a community, Ross would ask them to invite other people to their homes for a housemeeting. This technique allowed the organizer to save time and to reach more people. The purpose of the housemeeting was to listen to people's immediate problems and to have them talk with each other. Eventually, through these discussions, people built solidarity and trust and realized that collectively they could change their lives.⁵

Chavez's organizing efforts were so successful that he was able to build twenty-two CSO chapters throughout California and Arizona. Through the CSO's English and citizenship classes and its strong voter registration efforts, Mexican Americans began to be elected to public office. The CSO was able to confront issues such as police brutality, segregated schools, denial of welfare benefits, lack of playgrounds, clinics and libraries, and withholding of neighborhood improvements such as streets, sidewalks, or sewers (Tjerandsen, 1980).

In addition to these successes, as a direct result of CSO efforts two major pieces of legislation were enacted. First, even if they had not become naturalized citizens, first generation Mexican Americans would now receive Old Age Security benefits. Secondly, although farm workers had to pay the 1% premium themselves, the state disability insurance program was extended to agricultural workers for the first time (London and Anderson, 1970).

Although Chavez was pleased with the results that the CSO had in improving the lives of Mexican Americans, his roots were tied to farm workers, and he never wavered from wanting to improve their lives. When he was sent to establish a CSO chapter in Oxnard, California in 1958, Chavez's desire to organize farm workers became even more clear. What Chavez found in Oxnard was a situation where the growers denied local people work in the fields but turned instead to the five thousand *braceros* the Ventura Farm Labor Association brought in every year from Mexico. The practice of hiring *braceros* before local people was clearly against the law. However,

⁵Housemeetings were to become a very important educational activity of the UFW and are discussed in Chapter 7, The Educational Activities of the UFW.

bringing in *braceros*, which drove the wages down and drove the local people out of work, was a common practice (Galazara, 1964).

Although many thought it would be impossible to organize farm workers and bring about any changes at all, Chavez achieved success in Oxnard. Not only was Chavez able to get over 500 farm workers into citizenship and voter registration classes, but he was able to prove that the growers were in collusion with the farm employment service in hiring *braceros* over local farm workers. After more than a year of the CSO fighting the system and deluging the state with hundreds of written complaints, there was a state investigation, and the regional director of the Farm Placement Service was fired. Growers were forced to hire local farm workers in an early morning "shape up" outside the CSO office. Chavez said that he was proud to have also driven up the prevailing wages from sixty-five to ninety cents an hour (Ferriss and Sandoval, 1997). Commenting on Chavez's success, Ross said, "So Cesar began to meet with farm workers exclusively and, as a result, that CSO Chapter became one of the most powerful in the state because of the good job of organizing down there" (Ross, 1974, October, p. 4).

As a consequence of his success with organizing farm workers in Oxnard, which everybody said could not be done, Chavez wanted more and more to work with farm workers. In 1960, Chavez was appointed General Director of the national CSO, but he never lost his dream of devoting more time to farm workers. By 1962, Chavez decided to approach formally the CSO membership about piloting a project to form a farm workers union. When the proposal was put to the membership at its annual meeting, it was voted down.

Chavez was not surprised by the vote of the membership. Increasingly, as the CSO chapters gained success, a majority of CSO members wanted to keep the focus on the growing population of Mexican Americans who had left field work behind them. Additionally, as the CSO became larger, more powerful and achieved more status within the community, it attracted members of the middle class who as Tjerandsen (1980) stated "hoped to use its power for their own ends--whether as would-be power brokers, to further political ambitions, or as a springboard into Anglo organizations"

(p. 89).

In an interview with Chavez, Stan Steiner (1970) reported Chavez's unhappiness with what became the middle-class methods and interests of the CSO. Chavez said that it was "unheard of that they [the CSO] meet in a cheap hall...It had to [be] the best motel in town, very expensive, and it cut off all the farm workers who couldn't afford to be there" (cited in Steiner, 1970, p. 314). Chavez also said that he believed that the CSO wasn't interested in tackling the problems of the farm workers. "They [the CSO] felt that farm workers were outside the jurisdiction of the CSO. It was a labor problem" (cited in Steiner, 1970, p. 314).

Since Chavez's proposal to create an independent farm union was turned down, Chavez resigned from the CSO. Chavez's roots were with farm workers, and he had made up his mind to devote himself fulltime to creating an independent farm union. Therefore, on his thirty-fifth birthday, with his wife and eight children, Chavez left for Delano, California in 1962 to begin his efforts at building a farm workers union. Other than a life-time savings of \$1,200, he had no money.

Chavez knew that Delano would be a good place to begin organizing, and at least in Delano there would always be family to turn to. Chavez knew that he had been well-trained under his mentor Ross. However, what he couldn't know was the difficulty of the task before him. Years later, commenting on the hardships that the UFW would face with the growers, Chavez said, "What I didn't know was that we would go through hell because it was all but an impossible task" (cited in Ferriss and Sandoval, 1997, p. 63).

SUMMARY

Given a broad conceptualization of education, in the tradition of Bailyn (1960) and Cremin (1970; 1976), learning occurs both within and outside of formal schooling. Ending his sporadic formal schooling after the eight grade, Chavez's most significant learning occurred outside of formal pedagogy. From an early age, Chavez learned about poverty, discrimination and powerlessness. Yet, he drew strength and knowledge from his close-knit Mexican American family, and as an adult he read voraciously and encountered people who had a major influence on his thinking and

desire to form a farm workers' union.

Poverty, discrimination, and powerlessness were harsh early lessons and became strong motivating factors in Chavez's decision to work to bring about economic and social justice for farm workers. From his mother and father, Chavez learned the importance of family loyalty and pride in the Mexican American culture as well as a strong religious faith and the will to fight injustice.

As an adult, Chavez encountered two people who would become lifelong teachers and friends - Father McDonnell and Fred Ross. From Father McDonnell learned about the Catholic Church's teachings on social justice, Gandhi's philosophy of nonviolence and labor history. Chavez's philosophical orientation under Father McDonnell became praxis under the mentorship of Fred Ross, who founded the Community Service Organization (CSO) in California. From Ross, Chavez learned the basics of successful grass-roots community organizing. Chavez was so successful in his ten years of working with the CSO that he became its National Director. However, Chavez's roots were with farm workers. When the CSO membership turned down his request to create an independent farm workers' union, Chavez resigned from the CSO in 1962 to build his own union of farm workers.

CHAPTER 5

CHAVEZ BEGINS A COMMUNITY UNION AND SOCIAL MOVEMENT

1962-1965

"It is beyond doubt that it is just to seek aid if the employers place unjust burdens upon the workers, or degrade them with conditions which are repugnant to their dignity as human beings." Pope Leo XIII.

In April 1962, the Chavez family moved from San Jose to Delano. In Delano and in the surrounding San Joaquin Valley, Chavez began organizing farm workers and established the Farm Workers Association (FWA).⁶ Between 1962 and September 1965, Chavez established the FWA as a strong community union and social movement. During this period, he communicated to the farm workers a clear identity of the goals and aspirations of the movement. Later, in September 1965, after the FWA membership voted to join the Delano Strike, Chavez would go public and articulate the meaning of the movement to society at large. However, Chavez's first task was to build a strong identity and strength within his community union of farm workers. This Chapter explores how Chavez, from 1962 to 1965, before the Delano strike, built this community union and social movement and established a strong movement identity among the farm workers.

Building a Self-Help Community Union

Chavez always envisioned the UFW as more than a farm labor union. Arriving in Delano in 1962, his intent was to start what he called a "community union." Chavez's community union was more than a labor union; it was a larger movement --

⁶The first name that Chavez gave to the union he established was the Farm Workers Association (FWA). In 1965, he changed the name Farm Workers Association (FWA) to the National Farm Workers Association (NFWA). In 1966, after officially joining with the AFL-CIO, the NFWA became the National Farm Workers Organizing Committee (NFWOC). Again, in 1973, the name of the union was changed to its current name of the United Farm Workers of America (UFW). In this study, when discussing union events during a specific period of time, the appropriate name of the union at that time is used. However, when referring to the union in general and where there is no reference to a specific period of time, the term UFW is used. Additionally, the words union or community union are frequently used.

la causa para la raza (the cause for the race), or a social movement of the poor (Chavez, 1969b). Chavez's mission was to establish a community union that not only provided fair wages but also offered a diversity of other services that would empower farm workers to seek their rightful place in our democratic society.

The Lessons of Previous Farm Labor Organizing

Before actually organizing the community union, Chavez reflected on his, his family's and others' experiences with farm labor organizing. So that he would not repeat the same mistakes, he read and talked with people about past attempts at organizing farm workers. Chavez found that the most significant mistake of past unions was that they simultaneously attempted to organize the workers and to strike. In the past, the unions went into the fields to organize the workers after the workers had already gone out on strike; consequently, the unions couldn't hold the workers together with any permanence.

In a letter to Fred Ross, his friend and CSO mentor, Chavez wrote why previous farm labor strikes, though well-intentioned, failed:

...a strike which does not include all of the workers in the whole state is not a strike.... a strike which is not continued, is not a strike and a strike which is lost is not a strike but a stupid blunder. A union which tries to organize via the strike route, in the fields, is kidding itself and discouraging the workers from believing that something can really be done to correct the situation. (Chavez, August 7, 1962).

These failures led to disappointment and mistrust. "In the end," Chavez commented, "the people felt that the unions had sold them out, and the leaders felt that the people really didn't want a union" (Chavez, 1969b, p. 4)

Chavez vowed that he would not repeat the past failure of organizing while striking. To organize farm workers successfully, Chavez came to the conclusion that it would be necessary to build a strong base of farm workers, first, before conducting a strike or boycott or exerting any other economic or legal means to gain union recognition (Chavez, 1969b). He decided to build a strong base of farm workers through what he called a "community union." Before they would be ready to organize

any strikes or boycotts, Chavez believed that it would take him at least five years to build a strong community union.

In order not to enrage the growers, Chavez knew that his community union would have to be built quietly (Chavez, 1969b). He also knew that he would have to be careful not to mention the words "labor union" and "strike," which would not only anger the growers but would also intimidate farm workers, who had no trust of unions.

A Grassroots Community Union

Chavez defined a community union as a grass roots organization which addresses not only issues that farm workers have with their employers but also deals with problems that they face in the community. Chavez emphasized his identity as a community organizer in his statement, "I am an organizer, not a union leader" (Chavez, n.d(c), p. 47). Chavez's approach as a community organizer rather than as traditional labor organizer was different from all previous attempts at farm labor organizing (Jenkins, 1983; 1985; London and Anderson, 1970; Steiner, 1970).

To begin talking to farm workers about their problems and convincing them that there was power in numbers, starting in 1962, Chavez spent eight months visiting approximately seventy-eight communities, including small, rural communities as well as large labor camps throughout the San Joaquin Valley. His wife Helen, cousin Manuel Chavez, and former Community Services Organization (CSO) staff members Delores Huerta and Gilbert Padilla accompanied him. Additionally, during the first few months, Chavez was able to recruit about fifteen other farm workers to help in the organizing. Making a calculated decision not to call his organization a "union," which would scare off farm workers and inflame growers, Chavez named his community union the Farm Workers Association (FWA).

Using the techniques that he learned from his CSO experience, Chavez went from house to house, talking to farm workers individually and organizing housemeetings about the FWA. Previous farm labor organizers had been outsiders, but Chavez, as a Mexican American and farm worker himself, was accepted and trusted by many farm workers and welcomed into their homes. He was one of them, and his reputation of helping Mexican Americans from his CSO days was well-known.

Speaking of how he visited homes throughout the valley and became friends with the farm workers and listened to their problems, Chavez wrote:

I visited them in their homes and ate with them (This I had to do because I didn't have any money). If you really want to make a friend, go to someone's home and eat with them. When you get to know people, their homes open to you. They gave me food and a place to sleep. Some gave me money for gas. They had begun to feel sorry for me because I was poorer than they were. Once we had become friends, they would tell me what they wanted (Chavez, 1969, p. 5)

Chavez listened to these problems and discussed with his "friends" how collectively they could make changes. In fact, those who knew Chavez described his ability to listen as one of his greatest characteristics as a leader. Chavez himself once said, "A leader who does not know how to listen does not know how to lead" (cited in Steiner, 1969, p. 311). Within six months, Chavez was able to get about four hundred workers who became the nucleus of the FWA. Commenting later on how he could be so successful so quickly, Chavez said, "The secret was that these people were already organized and that it was just a matter of getting them all together" (Chavez, 1969, p. 6).

A Self-Supporting, Self-governing Community Union

On Sunday, September 30, 1962, in Fresno, Chavez held the first convention of the FWA. About 200 farm workers and their families showed up for the convention. Chavez wanted to show the farm workers early on that the organization was real and that they would have a voice in deciding its goals (Ferriss and Sandoval, 1997). Chavez brought all the ideas that he had gathered at the housemeetings over the last few months, and the members voted on them. Although Chavez said that wages and working conditions were basic issues, his primary objective at the convention was to have farm workers share in the decisions that affected their lives (Report on the National Farm Workers Service Center, Inc. 1968, March 31). The members elected Chavez as President and Delores Huerta and Gil Padilla as Vice Presidents and voted on many services.

Speaking about the services the members adopted at the convention, Chavez said, "There we adopted a very ambitious program. We set up a community program to try to meet the needs of the workers on an individual basis" (Chavez, 1969, p. 7.). The membership services that the FWA adopted came to be known as the "Farm Workers Service Center." These services were based on the concept of collective "self-help." Chavez was adamant that the Farm Workers Service Center would not be misinterpreted as giving "hand-outs" and adamantly expressed this in his statement that, "This Center [Farm Workers Service Center] is not like a welfare agency" (Chavez, 1969, p. 7).

The theme of "self-help" was very important to Chavez. The basic idea behind the Farm Workers Service Center was to inject the spirit of mutual support and cooperation among the farm workers so that by helping each other they would all individually benefit (Day, 1971). Chavez was not interested in hand-outs for the poor. He was determined that the Union would be a self-help grass roots organization, supported by the members themselves, and not controlled by any outside agencies. The members themselves would decide what services they wanted and would support them with their dues.

The members voted to pay \$3.50 a month in membership dues. Although this was not a small monthly amount for a farm worker, Chavez often referred to his conviction that if farm workers wanted a union, they should pay for it. Commenting on the importance of the members supporting their own union, Chavez said "It [the union] is not a missionary attempt. This in the past has hurt more than what it has helped the farm worker" (cited in McNamara, 1967, April 21, p. 2).

Although Chavez knew the time would come in the future when the union would need outside economic assistance to survive a strike or boycott, he was determined that initially the FWA would be self-supporting. Until the Delano strike in September, 1965, he flatly refused all outside offers of financial assistance (Abrams, 1979; Dunne 1967; 1971; Kushner, 1975). To accept money from the outside would create an unwanted dependency. In addition, Chavez believed that it was crucial for the FWA to build only as fast as its resources would allow. Otherwise, Chavez said

that the Association would "get too far ahead of the people it belongs to" (cited in Meister and Loftis, 1979, p. 121).

Rather than accepting hand-outs or being controlled by the wishes of others, Chavez's mission was to empower the farm workers to help themselves. Reflecting on his insistence not to accept outside money and to be in control of their own destiny, Chavez said, "We decided not to accept money so that we could be free to put our own ideas into motion (Chavez, 1969, p. 9.).

Services of the Farm Workers Service Center

During the convention, the members voted on establishing the Farm Workers Service Center which would provide services and programs that were important to them. For instance, since a suitable funeral was very significant to farm workers and their families, members established a Death Benefit Program. The Program provided a cash payment of \$1,000 to the family upon the death of a union member and \$500 upon the death of a member's dependent wife, husband or child. An automobile is the farm worker's most important possession to get from one job to the next; therefore the members voted to establish a cooperative car service center. At the Service Center, members could purchase gas and car parts and also have their cars repaired at a reasonable cost. Often unable to get loans, the members established a Credit union. Additional services included language interpretation, legal counseling, immigration assistance, consumer advice, citizenship and English classes (Report on National Farm Workers Service Center, Inc., 1968, March 31)

In addition to the services voted on by the membership at the first convention, other services were later added. The Rodrigo Terronez Medical Clinic, established in 1965, provided free medical services to members and their families. The farm workers newsletter, *El Malcriado*, which began in 1965, informed members about union and related activities. In addition, a Training Center was established in 1966, which trained farm workers in a variety of skills.⁷

⁷Both *El Malcriado* and the Training Center are examined in Chapter 7, The Educational Activities of the UFW.

The Farm Workers Service Center became the backbone of the "grassroots" community union. From the beginning, Chavez clearly communicated to the farm workers their identity as a group of farm workers cooperating with each other to secure a more dignified way of life. The farm workers did not need to accept hand-outs or welfare; they could help each other. Fred Ross, Chavez's friend and mentor, and Mark Day (1971), a priest who worked with Chavez, said that Chavez never let organizing become more important than the Service Center. Commenting on the importance of the Service Center and the need for farm workers to work cooperatively, Ross said, "Cesar has injected his philosophy of mutual support and cooperation into his whole organization. From the very beginning, Cesar has educated the farm workers as to the significance of cooperatives and credit unions" (cited in Day, 1971, p. 203.) Chavez himself summed up the power of farm laborers working collectively in his statement, "I think it does something to people when they begin to cooperate like this -- it brings them new hope" (cited in McGrath, 1968, June, p. 2)

Besides establishing the Farm Workers Service Center, the members accepted Chavez's proposed plan of lobbying the governor's office in Sacramento for a \$1.50 per hour minimum wage for farm workers and the right of unemployment insurance. Although it would avoid the use of the word "union" and would emphasize that it was an "association" of farm workers, the FWA made a decision to advocate for the right of farm workers for collective bargaining.

Building a Social Movement

As well as stressing that it was a grassroots community union which sought to improve the lives of farm workers through a multitude of services, Chavez communicated to its members and, later, to society at large that the union was more than a traditional labor union which existed only to secure wages for its members. Of course, a decent wage for the farm workers was important, but from a broader perspective, Chavez offered the farm workers a new view of themselves and their place in society. He saw a higher moral purpose to the union, and he dared to challenge the status quo.

La Causa Para La Raza

Throughout all of his communications, Chavez made it clear that he saw the union as a social movement to restore dignity to the poor and disenfranchised - *la causa para la raza* (the cause for the Mexican race). The union came to symbolize the hopes not only of farm workers but of other Mexican Americans and oppressed people who sought to take their rightful place in a democratic society. Luis Valdez, creator of *El Teatro Campesino*, aptly described the UFW as a "radical union" that gave farm workers hope and allowed them to think differently about themselves and their place in American society. Valdez wrote:

After years of isolation in the barrios of Great Valley slum towns like Delano, after years of living in labor camps and ranches at the mercy and caprice of growers and contractors, the Mexican American farm worker is developing his own ideas about living in the United States. He wants to be equal with all the working men of the nation. (Valdez, 1966, p. 46)

A Moral and Religious Basis to Restore Equality

Even in his writing of the first constitution of the FWA, Chavez envisioned and communicated a higher moral purpose to the union. The union sought more than wages; it sought the moral and religious right of farm workers to have equality with other men. Expressing this moral right in the 1962 preamble of the FWA constitution, Chavez quoted from Pope Leo XIII:

Rich men and master should remember this -- that to exercise pressure for the sake of gain, upon the indigent and destitute, and to make one's profit out of the need of another, is condemned by all laws, human and divine. (cited in Constitution of the Farm Workers Association, 1962, p. 1)

Above all else, Chavez saw the Union as a means of restoring "dignity" to poor farm workers and of allowing them to take their rightful place in society.

The issue of dignity and one's rightful place in a democratic society is at the "heart" of what Chavez and union members called *la causa* (the cause). In describing the purpose of the FWA in El Malcriado, Chavez (1964, December 15) said that in addition to being a collective undertaking to provide a better life for the farm worker,

socially, morally and economically, the FWA "works to restore to man that independence and liberty which will assure him his dignity and his solidarity with other men" (p. 29).

Chavez emphasized that dignity and equality were more important than wages. "No issue," Chavez said, "can get people excited and interested in doing something about a problem as much as when personal dignity is involved" (Chavez, 1969, p 16). Neither working conditions nor the lack of education and housing hurt as deeply as not being looked upon as a human being. If the main issue in striking is fair wages, the need for a union would disappear after higher wages were won. However, Chavez saw a higher moral and religious purpose to the union than just wages.

The FWA was a social movement to correct the marginalization of farm workers and to allow them to receive decent treatment and to become rightful members of a democratic society.

In seeking their rightful place in society, Chavez compared the farm workers' movement to the civil rights movement. In an essay entitled, "What is a Movement?" Chavez (n.d.g) wrote that just as the civil rights movement began when "a Negro woman refused to be pushed to the back of the bus" (p. 6), the farm workers movement "started so slowly that at first it was only one man, then five, then one hundred" (p.6).

In the same writing, Chavez described how the FWA, like the civil rights movement, is a "movement" that will continue to grow rather than a "union" with limited goals. He said that the farm workers' movement will be impossible to stop. "It [the movement] will sweep through California and it will not be over until the farm worker has the equality of a living wage and decent treatment, and the only way it will be done is through organization" (p. 6).

In summary, it is evident that Chavez envisioned and communicated to the farm workers that the FWA was a movement that not only would fight for the limited goal of wages but also would strive to bring social justice to the farm worker. As a social movement, the FWA, which existed outside of society's dominant institutions, was a "free space" where Chavez was able to communicate his vision of equality and dignity for the farm workers.

Continued Growth of the FWA

After the first convention in 1962, and before the Delano strike in 1965, Chavez, along with his cousin Manuel Chavez, Delores Huerta, Gil Padilla, and union representatives, patiently continued to build the FWA. Sticking to his original commitments, Chavez avoided using the word "union," refused to accept outside donations, and insisted that the FWA not strike against the growers until the association had a solid foundation.

Financially, these were very difficult times for Chavez and his family. Chavez and his wife worked in the fields to support their family and accepted help from Chavez's brother Richard, a carpenter, and received food donations from FWA members. Determined to stick with *la causa para la raza*, in 1963, Chavez turned down a \$22,000 a year job offer with the Peace Corps as a regional director in Central America.

As the community union demonstrated its value to members by performing personal services, word spread throughout the San Joaquin Valley about the value of the FWA, and by 1964, the FWA had grown to a membership of 1,000 (Brown, 1972). In addition to the programs of the Service Center, Inc., the FWA found lawyers to help workers press wage claims, assist in the appeal of traffic tickets, translate in court, etc. Taking a personal interest in their lives, Chavez tried to be a friend to all workers. He believed that this personal interest would build solidarity and expressed this sentiment in statements such as, "Once you helped people, most become loyal. The people who helped us back when we wanted volunteers were the people we had helped" (Chavez, 1969, p. 4).

Once immediate problems were solved and a sense of solidarity created, Chavez believed that the farm workers would be prepared to confront larger issues. The credit union, which Chavez started by using his brother's \$3,700 house as collateral, became well-established. Administered by his wife Helen, the credit union had \$25,000 in assets by 1964. Although still struggling, the FWA became self-supporting, and Chavez was able to receive a salary of \$50.00 per week, and his wife Helen was paid \$40.00 a week to run the credit union full-time. Chavez and his wife no longer had to

work in the fields to support the family, and Chavez moved the FWA office from his home to another location in Delano.

Chavez and the California Migrant Ministry

Although Chavez insisted that the FWA would not accept aid from outside organizations so that it would have sole control of its programs for farm workers, the one exception he made was the California Migrant Ministry (CMM), which became an integral part of the FWA. The Migrant Ministry was a Protestant organization. Despite the fact that the membership of the FWA was mostly Catholic, in the beginning days, most of the valley prelates and many priests were hesitant to speak out in support of the Union. Since many of the large growers were Catholic, there was a general fear of offending the growers and risking loss of financial support. Many local protestant ministers also shared this fear. Speaking of the lack of support of the Catholic Church during that period, Chavez commented, "The church [Catholic] has been a stranger to us" (cited in Kushner, 1975, p. 120). It wasn't until after the Delano grape strike and boycotts that many bishops openly expressed their support of Chavez and *la causa*.

The Migrant Ministry, however, was not tied to a local church and did not have to contend with losing financial support of the growers, and by 1964, the activities of the Migrant Ministry and FWA were inseparable. Sponsored by the National Council of Churches, the Migrant Ministry originally began its work with dustbowl migrant workers in the late 1930s. Guided by a "social gospel" philosophy that evangelical work first required addressing social problems, the Migrant Ministry's major programs throughout the 1950s were day schools for migrant children, medical services, free emergency meals, and assistance in securing aid from public welfare organizations (Jenkins, 1985). The Migrant Ministry depended almost entirely on volunteer labor from local congregations.

In 1959 the Migrant Ministry Board approved the organization of programs for opposition to the *bracero* program and for voting rights and unionization of the migrant farm workers. In 1961, with an \$112,000 grant from the Schwartzhaupt Foundation in Chicago, a major supporter of Saul Alinsky, the Migrant Ministry was able to send Chris Hartmire to California to begin organizing migrant farm workers (Jenkins,

1985). Hartmire was a minister from an East Harlem Protestant Parish in New York and had been actively involved in civil rights work and community organizing.

Chavez's and Hartmire's Shared Philosophy

Hartmire shared Chavez's philosophy of self-help and empowerment. These goals were clearly outlined in a brochure entitled "National Goals for the 5th Decade of the Migrant Ministry - 1960-1970" (1960), which stated that the Migrant Ministry will be involved in aiding in "social and economic self-help among farm workers" and "legislation action for fundamental justice to farm workers and employers" (pp. 1-2). For Hartmire, just as Chavez, there was clearly a theological foundation for helping the poor, and in a lecture presented on missionary education entitled "Poverty and Evangelism," Hartmire (1962, August 2) stated,

Only as men and women have continuous opportunity to assert their own personhood through self-help action; and only as they come to know one another and share one another's burdens' and only as they become effective participants in all decisions which affect them can they begin to experience the worth that God has given them. (p. 5)

As soon as Chavez started organizing farm workers, Hartmire supported him and immediately secured additional grant money for an "activist" CMM program. Speaking of CMM's support of Chavez, in his "Proposal For An Expanded Ecumenical Ministry to the Farm Workers' Movement," Hartmire (1968, January 3) commented, "In fact, the CMM was the only organized group that actively (and quietly) supported Cesar Chavez from the first day of his farm labor organizing drive, which began in the spring of 1962" (p. 1).

CMM and FWA Assume an Activist Position

Determined to assist Chavez in any way that he could, Hartmire hired the Reverend Jim Drake in 1964 and while paying his salary, assigned him to the FWA in the same year to become Chavez's administrative assistant. By the summer of 1965, the CMM was supporting financially half the professional staff of the FWA. In addition to Drake, the CMM was supporting Chris Hazen, a community organizer, and Gil Padilla, Vice President of the FWA.

Through its participation in three local strikes in the Spring and Summer of 1965, the FWA, with the help of the CMM, took on a more activist position. Although Chavez still felt that the FWA was not strong enough to participate in strikes, he could not ignore pleas for his help (London and Anderson, 1970). The first was a well-publicized rent strike against the Tulare County Housing Authority, which decided to impose a 40% rent increase from \$18.00 to \$25.00 per month at its Linnell and Woodville Labor Camps for windowless shacks with no indoor plumbing (Brown, 1972; Meister and Loftis, 1977). The FWA organized a protest march among the 170 farm worker families in the two camps. This pressure precipitated an investigation of the camps by state health officials who found 51 violations of the state sanitary and housing codes. Following the investigation, the county court declared that the rent increase was not justified and that the Housing Authority had to repair or replace the units within six months.

The other two strikes occurred in the fields. The first dispute was a strike by rose grafters for higher wages and union recognition at the Mt. Arbor Company, a nursery in McFarland California. Mainly because the strike involved skilled workers who weren't easily replaced, a raise was granted after a four day strike; however the FWA was not strong enough to demand that the growers grant power by signing contracts as well as granting a wage increase (Brown, 1972; Meister and Loftis, 1979). The second field strike took place in August, 1965, at the J.D. Martin Ranch, a Delano grape producer. The FWA represented sixty-seven field workers in their demands for a wage increase and union recognition. This strike was still being waged when the NFWA voted in September, 1965, to join the AWOC's general grape strike in the Delano area.

Chavez and the Budding Delano Strike

Although Chavez continued to reiterate that the FWA would not be able to win a major victory until the community union was stronger and had a larger membership, which he thought would be at least three years away, the events in 1965 outpaced Chavez's cautious plan. Precipitating a rapid escalation in events was the termination of Public Law 78, more commonly known as the *Bracero* Program, on December 1,

1964.⁸ Although the *Bracero* Program was declared officially dead, the California growers, who had imported sixty-five thousand *braceros* the year before, were convinced that there would be a shortage of workers and pressed Governor Pat Brown and Secretary of Labor Willard Wirtz to allow *braceros* into California. Thus, the administration agreed to allow a limited number of *braceros* into the country, provided that they were paid at least \$1.40 per hour (Brown, 1972; Ferriss and Sandoval, 1995; Levy, 1975).

Decision of AWOC to strike

When the growers in the Coachella Valley decided to pay their domestic workers \$1.25 per hour rather than the \$1.40 per hour paid to the *braceros*, Filipino farm workers who worked in this Valley became enraged. The stage was set for a strike. Under the leadership of Larry Itliong, a Filipino who had been an organizer for the Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee (AWOC)⁹ for about five years, the Filipino farm workers staged a strike. After ten days of striking, their pay was increased to the same rate as the *braceros*; however, as in all other strikes of all unions in farm labor history, they were unable to get a contract.

As the harvest moved north, other growers continued to make the mistake of paying domestic workers a lower wage rate than the *braceros*. The same growers who had raised the wages in Coachella were only willing to pay \$1.00 per hour in the area around Delano. Obviously, this enraged domestic workers, and by September 19, 1965, 90% of the Filipino workers, numbering more than 2,000 men, at ten Delano area vineyards, "struck" under the AWOC banner. Itliong came up with the strategy of a "sit down" strike, where the Filipinos stayed in their cabins and refused to go to work. Itliong thought the growers might be shocked into paying higher wages. However, the growers retaliated almost immediately, and strikebreakers, mostly

⁸ For an examination of the *Bracero* Program, refer to Chapter 2, Historical Background on Farming, Farm Laborers, and Farm Labor organizing in California Before 1962.

⁹For an examination of AWOC, an affiliate of the AFL-CIO, refer to Chapter 3, An Historical Background on Farming, Farm Labor and Labor Organizing in California Before 1962.

Mexican-Americans, were trucked in. Still, the Filipinos refused to go back to work. Subsequently, the police came out in full force, and the Filipino strikers were threatened with eviction from their farm labor camps of many years, if they did not return to work (Nelson, 1966).

AWOC Seeks Chavez's support

Since Itliong knew that he would need the support of the Mexican American farm workers for the strike to succeed, he approached Chavez to lend his support. Even though Chavez still believed that the FWA would not be financially able to sustain a strike for at least three more years, he felt the union had a moral obligation to lend its support to the AWOC. In asking FWA members to support the AWOC strikers, Chavez said, "Now is when every worker, without regard to race, color or nationality, should support the strike and must under no circumstances work in those ranches that have been struck" (cited in Nelson, 1966, p. 22).

It was one thing to offer unconditional support to the Filipino strikers, but Chavez knew that he would have to give serious consideration to joining them in the strike. Chavez believed that it was morally right to join his Filipino brothers in their struggle against injustice, but he knew that financially his union could not survive if its members went out on strike (Nelson, 1966). To join the strike meant that immediately he would have to reach out for financial and volunteer support from outside the Delano area; otherwise, striking union members and their families would starve. Even though this large scale strike occurred much sooner than he felt prepared to support, after discussions with all those close to him, he decided to go forward and see what the membership wanted to do.

The Vote to Strike

Chavez called for a meeting of the membership on September 16, 1965, Mexican Independence Day, at Our Lady of Guadalupe Church in Delano. Chavez said that he deliberately chose to have the meeting on the Mexican Independence Day, because it marked the end of Spanish rule (Levy, 1975; London and Anderson, 1970). A poster of Zapata, the revered Mexican revolutionary, along with the FWA eagle flag were hung in the church. Approximately 1,000 NFWA members from all over the San

Joaquin Valley attended. There were many testimonies from union members regarding the exploitation of farm laborers and the need to join together and correct this injustice.

Drawing an analogy to the Mexican revolution, Chavez spoke to the crowd and said that they were engaged in a struggle for the freedom and dignity which poverty denied them. He emphasized, however, that they must not engage in a violent struggle, as "Violence can only hurt us and our cause. The strike was begun by Filipinos, but it is not exclusively for them. Tonight we must decide if we are to join our fellow workers in this great labor struggle" (cited in Levy, 1975, p. 184). The vote was taken. The FWA decided to join the AWOC and strike if the growers refused to give them union recognition and agree to collective bargaining negotiations regarding wages, hours and working conditions.

With the vote of the FWA cast to join the strike if the growers did not respond to his demands, the next day Chavez sent registered letters to all the local growers indicating that the FWA was cooperating with AWOC and asked for union recognition. Not one grower responded to his letter. Chavez then asked the California State Conciliation Service to mediate the dispute. Again, the growers were not amenable to any negotiations with the farm workers (Brown, 1972; Taylor, 1975). Since the growers chose to ignore Chavez's requests for negotiations, on September 20, 1965, the FWA actively joined the strike, which originally affected 31 grape ranches, all located within an 11 mile radius of Delano.

Summary

Chavez started the Farm Workers Association (FWA) in 1962. For over three years, he communicated the message to farm workers that by collectively working together they could build a strong community union that would benefit and empower all of them. The community union was a self-help union that offered many services that the farm workers supported through their membership dues. Except for the assistance of the California Migrant Ministry, which from the beginning was an integral part of the FWA, Chavez accepted no financial help from the outside. He wanted the farm workers to have complete control over the development of the union and its services.

Not only did Chavez communicate the identity of the FWA as a self-help, community union, but he also emphasized that it was a social movement of the poor and disenfranchised. Economics was important. But even more important was the morally and religiously based purpose of *la causa* to restore the dignity of farm workers and to empower them to seek their rightful, equal place in a democratic society.

From 1962 to 1965, the membership of the FWA continued to grow. Chavez, however, felt that he would need at least three more years to become strong enough before engaging in any strikes or boycotts. He had built his community union on the principle that one could not organize and strike at the same time. However, in September 1965, he was forced to make a decision of whether or not support the Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee (AWOC), a largely Filipino union of farm workers who went out on strike against Delano growers. Although premature to the goals of his community union, Chavez felt that he had a moral obligation to support his fellow farm workers, and on September 16, 1965, the membership of the FWA voted to join AWOC in the great Delano grape strike.

CHAPTER 6

CHAVEZ REACHES OUT TO THE LARGER SOCIETY: 1965 to 1970

"This isn't a strike; it's a revolution."

Jack Pandol, a Delano grower

From 1962 to 1965, Chavez won the trust of Mexican American farm workers and quietly built his community union and social movement. Chavez communicated to the farm workers how *la causa*, through a self-help community union, would empower them to improve their lives and to restore their dignity within a democratic society. However, when the union membership voted to enter the Delano strike on September 16, 1965, Chavez could no longer keep his message "quiet" from the larger society. In order for the union to survive financially and to achieve its goal of winning contracts with the growers, he would have to reach out and gain the support of a wider audience.

After the Delano strike, Chavez communicated the message of *la causa* to the larger society. This chapter explores the many ways that Chavez communicated this message and how the communication became an educative process that resulted in the movement gaining broad support from people from all backgrounds across the nation. Communication to the wider public was accomplished through the national media, congressional testimonies, fasts, boycotts, and a pilgrimage. This chapter also shows how through this educative process the community union moved from a disputed social movement to an accepted organization that succeeded in gaining union contracts and improving the social and economic conditions of farm workers.

The National Media

Once the Farm Workers Association (FWA) had decided to join the Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee (AWOC), in a multi-employer grape strike in September, 1965, Chavez immediately took action to publicize the strike outside of the Delano area. Shortly after the strike started, reporters came from Los Angeles and San Francisco to report on what quickly was shaping up to be the largest farm worker strike in California history. By September 25, 1965, only five days after the NFWA decided to join the Filipino strikers, Brown (1972) estimated that more than 2,000 of the approximately 5,000 farm workers employed in Delano joined the picket lines or

supported the strike by leaving to find work outside of the 400 square mile strike zone.

Over the course of the next five years while the grape strike and subsequent grape boycott continued, Chavez constantly sought out the national media. In 1966, to reflect the union's new national aspirations, Chavez also changed the name of the FWA to the National Farm Workers Association (NFWA). Referring to Chavez's constant use of the national media to educate the public about the farm worker's plight and the need for social change, Shaw (1982) commented, "The use of the news media by Chavez and the UFW to promote the ideological position of the farm workers was employed at every opportunity" (p. 259).

Genius For Turning Adversity Into Publicity

In late October, 1965, very early in the Delano strike, Chavez showed his genius for turning adversity to opportunity and drawing national attention to *la causa*. The growers, who were anxious to end the strike as soon as possible, had the support of the power structure of Delano, including the Delano police and fire department, the Kern County sheriff's department and courts (Ferriss and Sandoval, 1997; Jenkins, 1985; Levy, 1975; Taylor, 1975). Harassment and surveillance of Chavez and the strikers began immediately. The Delano police department and Kern County sheriff's department snapped photos of everyone on the picket lines and asked them for their names and backgrounds. License plates numbers were recorded of anyone around the strike area, and the fire department and other agencies threatened to close down the NFWA headquarters for violation of fire, health and other codes.

In October, 1965, the Kern County Sheriff's department tightened its stranglehold on the strikers by ordering that henceforth strikers would be forbidden to "disturb the peace" by rallying and shouting on roadsides. The use of shouting by the strikers on the roadside was important because the growers were able to avoid pickets by moving the workers deeper into the vineyards and away from public roads. In addition to forbidding the strikers to shout, the department forbade the use of the Spanish word *huelga* (strike) because it was not "American" and warned that anyone on the picket line using the word *huelga* would be arrested (Brown 1972; Meister and Loftis 1977; Steiner 1969). Not only would Chavez not allow the police department's tactics cripple

the strike, but he also saw the orders as a violation of "free speech," a protected right of all Americans.

Always very much in tune with American sentiments, Chavez believed that publicizing a violation of this basic American right would generate much-needed national attention and support. Taylor (1975), a writer on farm labor and the UFW, commented that "Chavez needed a solid public issue, and freedom of speech was as good as he would get; it would attract national press coverage and project a David-and-Goliath image that would gain support for the strike" (p. 142). Doug Adair, a volunteer worker for the union who also recognized Chavez's ability to turn adversity into publicity, commented on Chavez's decision to publicize this violation of an American freedom with the following: "Chavez's genius was to see that at this moment in American history there was a chance to finesse this local power structure and appeal to the wider community" (cited in Feriss and Sandoval, 1977, p. 88).

Chavez called the press and television stations to alert them of impending arrests of union members and volunteers for defying the sheriff department's orders. On October 20, 1965, 44 NFWA picketers, followed by reporters and television crews, several police cars and a paddywagon to carry the arrested to jail set out to find farm workers in the vineyards. Once a crew was spotted, the 44 pickets lined up and began chanting repeatedly, "*Huelga* (strike), *huelga, huelga*" (Taylor, 1975, p. 143).

The picketers were told to disperse or face arrest. The picketers continued their chant, and while cameramen filmed the event and the press interviewed Jim Drake, Chavez's assistant, the picketers were placed under arrest and herded into the paddywagon and charged with unlawful assembly. Thirty-three chose to remain in jail rather than post bail, and the following day 350 people, chanting *Huelga* and singing "We shall Overcome," staged a protest on the steps of the Kern County courthouse. The protesters remained in jail for three days and then were released. The sheriff's order eventually was declared unconstitutional. Again, the protest in front of the jail and the subsequent violation of the farm workers civil rights received media coverage across the nation through the press and television.

Constant Media Attention

The reporting of these events in the Delano fields and in front of the Kern County Courthouse in October, 1965, was just the beginning of the constant media attention that Chavez and the UFW received throughout the duration of the Delano strike and grape boycott. Magazines like Saturday Evening Post, Look, Time, The New Yorker, and Business Week joined the metropolitan dailies and television news programs in recording the strike and grape boycott.¹⁰ Constant exposure through the media allowed Chavez to articulate and re-articulate the view and ideology of the UFW to the greater society. Representative of the many articles which communicated Chavez's message in major news magazines was the one from the July 4, 1969 issue of Time. A picture of Chavez appeared on the cover, and the title of the cover story read, "The Little Strike that Grew to *La Causa*." Emphasizing how the UFW came to symbolize a movement greater than a union just seeking higher wages, an excerpt from the article says that the welfare of agricultural workers has not captured much attention in the past but the current grape strike and accompanying boycott has engaged a large part of the nation. The article continues:

As if on a holy crusade, the strikers stage marches that resemble religious pilgrimages, bearing aloft their own stylized black Aztec eagle on a red flag along with the images of the Virgin of Guadalupe, patroness of Mexicans and particularly those who work the soil....*La causa's* magnetic champion and the country's most prominent Mexican American leader is Cesar Estrada Chavez, 42, a one-time grape picker who combines a mystical mein with peasant earthiness. *La causa* is Chavez's whole life; for it he has impoverished himself and endangered his health fasting. In soft, slow speech, he urges his people -- nearly 5,000,000 in the US - to rescue themselves from society's cellar. As he sees it, the first step is to win the battle of the grapes. (p. 16)

¹⁰Beginning in 1964, the union also published its own monthly newspaper called El Malcriado. Although El Malcriado publicized news of the latest union activities, as well as other articles, its readership was mostly the farm workers themselves. El Malcriado is examined in Chapter 7, The Educational Activities of the UFW.

Through articles such as this one from Time, Chavez brought before the national consciousness the deplorable economic situation of the farm workers and the need to make social changes to allow the farm workers to take their rightful place within a democratic society. Capitalizing on every media opportunity to make the message of *la causa* known to the American public, besides becoming a nightly news item, Chavez appeared on television talk shows such as David Frost and Johnny Carson.

This constant media attention paid off in bringing *la causa* before the national consciousness. Within a relatively short period of time, Chavez, the Delano strike, and grape boycotts became household words to many Americans. A newspaper poll conducted in Minneapolis in 1969 gave evidence to how aware the public had become of *la causa* when it found that 85 percent of the people in the city were aware of Chavez, the Delano strike and grape boycotts (Brown, 1972).

Nationwide Boycotts

Just as Chavez sought to bring national attention to the farm workers through the media, on December 18, 1965, just three months after the Delano strike began, Chavez, along with the AWOOC, appealed to the conscience of the wider public by launching a nationwide boycott of Schenley products, the second largest grower in the Delano area. The Schenley boycott would be the first of three boycotts against specific growers. The DiGiorgio and Perelli-Minelli boycotts followed. Because these boycotts would prove so successful in gaining contracts, in 1968, the NFWA embarked on a nationwide boycott of all table grapes not identified by the Union label.

By December, 1965, the harvest had been completed, and most of the strikers had left the Delano area. Only a few hundred strikers remained in the picket lines (Brown, 1972). Chavez began to consider that another method besides the strike could carry the message to and gain support from the wider public. From his readings of Gandhi, Chavez believed in the power of militant, nonviolent tactics, and felt that the boycott could be a powerful "weapon" against the growers. Chavez said that he learned from Gandhi that,

the boycott is the most nearly perfect instrument of nonviolent change, allowing masses of people to participate actively in a cause....Even if people cannot

picket with us or contribute money or food, they can take part in our struggle by not buying certain products. It is such a simple sacrifice to make. (cited in Meister and Loftis, 1977, p. 140)

In addition to the boycott being the "last nonviolent alternative" (cited in Meister and Loftis, 1977, p. 140), Chavez believed that while the strike caught the grower in his own surroundings with local police and courts, the boycott would diffuse power by getting away from Delano. By exerting economic pressure on the growers through loss of sales across the nation, Chavez hoped to force the growers to negotiate (Solis-Garza, 1972).

In addition to the economic pressure, Chavez believed that the national boycotts would be yet another form of public education that would win the sympathy of the American public. For Chavez, it was a moral issue, and he believed that once the American public became aware of the farm workers' struggle that they would come down on the side of the farm workers. He felt that a deep-rooted American sentiment was to side with those fighting oppressive systems. In an interview with Bob Fitch (Fitch, 1970), a clergyman who worked as a photojournalist, Chavez commented that he believed that the American public would respond to a cause that involves justice. Chavez commented, "It's just natural to want to be with the underdog...and in this struggle it's not a contest between two people or a team but a lot of people who are poor and others who are wealthy" (p. 204).

Schenley Boycott

Chavez was correct in his assessment that the boycotts would be his most powerful nonviolent tactic in gaining wide support from the American public and in winning contracts. When the NFWA and AWOC announced their first boycott on Schenley Products, which marketed several wines and liquors under nationally known brand names, farm workers and volunteers were sent to organize boycotts in major U.S. cities, and a boycott office was set up in Delano. As the extensive media coverage of the Delano strike had already garnered support from many factions, including students, civil rights activists, clergy, unions, SNCC and CORE Chapters, it was not difficult for Chavez to find volunteers to rally around the boycott.

At the height of the Schenley campaign, boycott organizers were sent to 237 communities (Chavez, 1969). There were no salaries for union workers, and everyone from Chavez on down was paid only \$5.00 per week plus expenses. The boycotters found room and board wherever they could and also sought out financial support to assist them in their efforts.

The Schenley boycott quickly took hold, and boycott activities increased. In Los Angeles, sympathetic students placed leaflets in area liquor stores; in New York, 5,000 government workers pledged to boycott Schenley liquor; in San Francisco the Teamsters demanded that management pull Schenley products off the shelves; in Oklahoma City, local priests picketed liquor stores and demanded that Schenley be removed; in Boston civil rights activists held a "Boston Grape Party," etc. (Jenkins, 1985).

The boycott continued to gain broader support. Liberal entertainers such as Peter, Paul and Mary, Pete Seeger and Steve Allen held benefits to raise money for the strikers and boycotters. On December 15, 1965, Walter Reuther, President of the United Auto Workers (UAW) flew to Delano and pledged \$5,000 a month support to be split equally between the NFWA and the AWOC. After the UAW's donation, President Meany of the AFL-CIO ordered closer support for the as yet unaffiliated NFWA, and over the winter the California AFL-CIO organized monthly food caravans.

The boycott against Schenley products stopped on April 6, 1966, when Schenley made known its willingness to recognize the NFWA as the sole bargaining agent for all of its farm workers in Kern and Tulare Counties. Schenley admitted that the boycott had a negative impact not only on its sales but also on its public image (Brown, 1972, Taylor, 1975). In a statement to the California State Senate Committee on Agriculture, Schenley Vice President, James G. Woolsey, noted the negative effect in his statement to the California State Senate Committee on Agriculture:

These reprisals [by the NFWA] and the publicity presented a threat of serious damage to our business on a nationwide scale....Our sales department felt that even more damaging than any decline in our sales was the adverse publicity that accompanied the boycott.... These were key factors in our later decision to

recognize NFWA. (cited in Brown, 1972, p. 130)

The NFWA broke the barrier. It had won the first field contract in the history of farm labor organizing in California. Speaking of the success of the Schenley boycott, Chavez commented,

This [boycott] is what got us our first contract at the time that we got it. If we had not launched the boycott, our strike would never have been successful.

Boycotting is a strong-arm that we know will bring results. (Chavez, 1969, p. 31)

DiGiorgio Boycott and Election

As the "strong arm" that brought results, Chavez made an immediate announcement after the Schenley recognition of his union that the NFWA and the AWOC would now begin a consumer boycott against S & W Foods and Treesweet Orange Juice, the major products of the DiGiorgio Fruit Corporation. Surprisingly, after many years of vigorous and unwavering opposition to farm labor unionization, DiGiorgio Corporation announced the next day on April 7, 1965, that they were prepared to participate in a union representation election. However, after several meetings, the NFWA became convinced that they were being led into a trap that would cause NFWA sure defeat. (Brown, 1972; London and Anderson, 1970; Jenkins, 1985; Taylor, 1975).

DiGiorgio had proposed that only currently working strikebreakers would be able to vote, not strikers. Chavez also found out that DiGiorgio was inviting the Teamsters into the ranch and encouraging them to organize workers. As the DiGiorgio Corporation saw unionization as probably inevitable (Brown, 1972; Jenkins, 1985), they decided that they were more willing to work with the Teamsters, whom the DiGiorgio Corporation referred to as a more "responsible, business-like union," (Brown, 1972, p. 131). Claiming bad faith, DiGiorgio broke off negotiations with the NFWA and AWOC. Chavez continued the consumer boycott against DiGiorgio, and on June 22, 1966, DiGiorgio announced that the election for union representation would be held, under DiGorgio's own ground rules, within forty-eight hours (Brown, 1972).

Quickly, the NFWA and AWOC obtained a court order prohibiting the unauthorized use of their names on the ballot. Only two names remained on the ballot, teamsters and "no union," and, predictably, the Teamsters won. Chavez then pressured Governor Pat Brown to investigate the fairness of the election. Governor Brown, who realized that he could not afford to lose the Mexican American vote in the upcoming campaign against Ronald Reagan, (Jenkins, 1985; London and Anderson, 1970) appointed Ronald Haughton, a nationally respected arbitrator to investigate the election. Haughton recommended a new election, and Governor Brown personally asked his long-time friend Robert DiGiorgio to cooperate with Haughton's request. DiGiorgio relented and said that new elections would be held.

Both the teamsters and the AWOC and NFWA campaigned vigorously. Chavez did not want to split votes between the AWOC and NFWA. Therefore, during the campaign, Chavez worked out an agreement with the AFL-CIO to merge the AWOC and NFWA. This merger became official on August 22, 1966, and the new unit became the United Farm Workers Organizing Committee (UFWOC). Under the terms of this official merger, the AFL-CIO increased its financial assistance to \$150,000 per year and offered its staff to assist the UFWOC. Very importantly, under the terms of the agreement, Chavez was able to retain complete autonomy in everything that he felt was important, particularly his strategic and tactical decision-making and his right to use volunteers (London and Anderson, 1970). Chavez became first in command, and Larry Itliong, from the AWOC, became second.

The election battle between the Teamsters and the UFWOC was intense. However, while the Teamsters sought to undermine the UFWOC through "red-baiting" (Ferriss and Sandoval, 1997), ¹¹ the UFWOC worked day and night to find DiGiorgio strikers, now scattered throughout the Western United States and Mexico. They brought many of these farm workers to Delano on election day. The election occurred, and on September 3, 1966, the American Arbitration Association announced that the

¹¹Throughout the 1960s, Chavez and the UFW were targets of "red-baiting," or accusations of communist sympathy or affiliation.

UFWOC had received 530 votes, the Teamsters, 331 votes; and 12 workers preferred no union (Brown, 1972).

For a fledgling, largely Mexican American union to win the first union representation in agriculture against the rich and powerful Teamsters and gain union representation from one of the largest, richest agribusiness corporations in the nation was an incredible feat. An article in El Malcriado, which outlined all the terms of the DiGiorgio contract, referred to this achievement as follows:

The DiGiorgio Contract which is explained in these pages stands at the end of a century of suffering by five generations of farm workers. DiGiorgio and his brothers -- many years ago -- brought the Chinese into the fields and used them up, then he brought Anglos, Negroes, Filipinos and Mexicans, and for 40 years he has used them to turn grapes into dollars. And now because of a piece of paper called the DIGIORGIO CONTRACT, it is all over: the suffering, the cheating, the disgraceful wages and the injustice which have been endured by people without power. Now it is all over. (The contract, p. 6)

Perelli-Minelli Boycott

After the DiGiorgio election Chavez mistakenly thought that the rivalry with the Teamsters had been settled. On September 9, 1966, most of the farm workers at Perelli-Minetti & Sons, one of the major Delano grape growers and processors, walked out of the fields and asked the UFWOC to represent them (Brown, 1972; Jenkins, 1985; Levy, 1965; London and Anderson, 1970). Within a few days, Perelli-Minetti announced that it had signed a contract with the Teamsters. Because it hardly raised wages and continued the use of labor contractors, the contract was a "sweetheart contract" for Perelli-Minetti.

The UFWOC immediately launched a boycott in San Francisco, Los Angeles and New York against Perelli-Minetti's major brands. Chavez knew that the key to applying economic pressure against Perelli-Minetti would be through its liquor Tribuno Vermouth (Brown, 1972; Jenkins, 1985). Perelli-Minetti bottled liquor for Tribuno Vermouth, owned by Vermouth Industries of America, and this bottling accounted for the major portion of its sales. The boycott proved extremely effective, particularly in

Los Angeles, which was the firm's major market. The owner of Vermouth Industries insisted that Perelli-Minetti resolve the situation.

In February 1967, Perelli-Minetti notified the UFWOC that the only barrier to a contract was the Teamster agreement. The UFWOC asked the California Catholic Bishop Hugh Donohoe, a supporter of Chavez and the farm workers, to intervene. Bishop Donohoe formed a committee of concerned bishops to oversee the negotiations. After four months of meetings between the UFWOC and the Teamsters, a general agreement was reached whereby the UFWOC would have jurisdiction over all field workers in California, and the unionization of truckers and cannery workers would be left solely to the teamsters (Brown 1972; Jenkins, 1985). Shortly thereafter, with the approval of Perelli-Minetti, the UFWOC replaced the Teamsters as the recognized bargaining agent for the Perelli-Minetti field workers.

The boycott had proven to become the technique that forced labor negotiations. After the Perelli-Minetti concession, six other major wineries, who saw what damage could be caused through nationwide boycotts, gave recognition to the UFWOC through "card check elections" (Brown, 1972; Jenkins, 1985).¹² In this manner, major wineries such as Gallo, Almaden, Beringer, Franzia, Paul Masson and the Goldberg wineries gave union contracts to the UFWOC. By August, 1967, the UFWOC had obtained eleven contracts covering about 5,000 farm workers, or about 2 percent of the state's farm labor force (Taylor, 1975).

Nationwide Table Grape Boycott

At this point, it was very clear to Chavez that the consumer boycott was the union's best method to communicate to the nation the farm workers' situation and to exert the necessary economic pressure to force the growers to negotiate with the UFWOC. Chavez's next target was table grapes, and the UFWOC selected Giumarra Vineyards Corporation, the largest table grape producer in the nation. Not affected by the original 1965 grape strike since it was based in Arvin, California, and not Delano,

¹²Card check elections occur when pledge cards are signed by a majority of a company's field workers.

Guimarra owned 12,710 acres (19 square miles) of farm land, including 6,340 acres of grapes. In 1967 Guimarra had an annual sales volume of \$12,000,000 (Brown, 1972). In August, 1967, when Guimarra did not respond to the UFWOC's request to discuss union representation, approximately 950 of the company's 1,000 farm workers went out on strike. Within two weeks Guimarra had recruited a new workforce of farm workers, and in late August the UFWOC began its boycott against Guimarra's table grapes.

Chavez dispatched UFWOC boycotters to fifteen major U.S. cities. The boycotters and their supporters picketed major wholesale brokers and retailers to stop handling grapes with Guimarra labels. However, by the end of 1967, Chavez learned that in order to circumvent the boycott, Guimarra was marketing grapes under more than 150 different labels borrowed from other grape growers (Brown, 1972; Jenkins, 1985; Levy, 1975; London and Anderson, 1970). With this knowledge, Chavez realized that in order to win this time, the UFWOC would have to launch a boycott against all table grapes. The union had "to make grapes a label" (Brown, 1972, p. 198).

In early 1968, Chavez sent telegrams to all California grape growers to notify them of organizing efforts and to urge them to discuss union recognition procedures. Without exception, the growers rejected Chavez's requests, as well as mediation offers from the State Conciliation Service, the Bishop of Fresno and Mayor Alioto of San Francisco. The UFWOC immediately took action and dispatched their best organizers to fifteen major urban centers in the United States and Canada. Additionally, the union began the necessary training to send new boycotters to cities untouched in previous boycotts. Assisted by his old friend and mentor, Fred Ross, Chavez took personal charge of the boycott. Hundreds of farm workers were trained to staff the boycott centers. The staff, who worked 80-100 hours per week for the standard subsistence plus \$5.00 per week, were assisted by a large cadre of volunteers.

It was the use of numerous part-time volunteers that was critical to the success of the boycott. In describing the effective use of volunteers, Jenkins (1985) wrote,

In many ways, the brilliance of the boycott was its integration of thousands of

part-time volunteers who no longer had to take a vow of poverty and leave school, their jobs, and families to support *la causa*. All they had to do was spend an evening a week checking grocery stores, phoning donors, or joining a weekend picket parade. (p. 167)

Chavez was correct in his original assessment that many Americans would rally around what they saw as a just and moral cause. Brown (1972) commented, "The basic issue in the grape boycott was a moral one. The public was asked to judge who was right and who was wrong: the farm workers or the grape growers" (p. 241). In addition to wide support from the public, the boycott also gained the support of many local unions in boycott cities and the support of political figures.

Indeed, the grape boycott was astonishingly effective not only in terms of public education but also in its impact on grape sales. By the end of the 1968 season, retail grape sales were down by twelve percent nationally and over fifty percent in major cities like New York, Boston, Chicago and Detroit. According to U.S. Department of Agriculture figures, an estimated \$3-4 million of grapes rotted on vines because of no market outlets, and the price of grapes plummeted when wholesalers were forced to dump shipments in new markets (Brown, 1972; Jenkins, 1985).

Despite these losses, the California grape growers were reluctant to relent and organized a counter-campaign. The California Farm Bureau and Safeway Stores hired the conservative public relations firm of Whitaker and Baxter and spent more than \$2 million on advertising campaigns. Bumper stickers urged people to "Eat California Grapes, the Forbidden Fruit," and newspaper ads said they could "feel better in all respects" by "buying and enjoying fresh California grapes" (cited in Meister and Loftis, 1977, p. 155). The Delano growers created an Agricultural Workers Freedom to Work Association and sent out on speaking tour Jose Mendoz, a Mexican American former shoe salesman, who proclaimed, "What Chavez espouses is as Un-American as Karl Marx....The Chavez movement is a fraud" (cited in Jenkins, 1985, p. 170).

Hints of communist or leftist leanings were ever-present in the campaign against Chavez. The John Birch Society and National Right to work Committee spread the message that the UFWOC sought "control of America's food supply" (cited in Meister

and Loftis, 1977, p. 155). Continuing the theme of "conspiracy," the growers filed a "conspiracy suit" in the summer of 1969, claiming that the California table grape industry had already been damaged to the extent of \$25 million.

Growers got support from Ronald Reagan, California's new Governor, who called for legislation to block the boycott. At the height of the boycott Reagan announced that he had "probably eaten more grapes during the past year than ever" (cited in Meister and Loftis, 1977, p. 156). Presidential candidate Richard Nixon blasted Hubert Humphrey, his democratic opponent, for supporting the boycott. Once installed in the White House, Nixon had the Department of Defense multiply its purchase of grapes fivefold. (Jenkins, 1985).

Counter-attacks stepped up the work of the UFWOC. By 1970, the UFWOC had boycott staff in 31 major cities in the the U.S. and Canada and had also set up volunteer boycott committees in over 200 small cities throughout North America. Mayors in three dozen industrial cities, including New York, proclaimed support of the boycott. The boycott became international when the Transport Worker's Federation urged members in Sweden, England and elsewhere not to unload California grapes (London and Anderson, 1970). Backed by the World Council of Churches and major European Unions, numerous boycott committees were established abroad. Entire supermarket chains quit stocking grapes. Student supporters had grapes removed from college dining rooms, and church leaders kept grapes from their schools and hospitals and urged their followers not to purchase grapes (Meister and Loftis, 1977).

The Growers Relent

Throughout the 1969-1970 season, the boycott increased its effectiveness. By the end of the 1969 season, shipments of table grapes were down by over a third (Jenkins, 1985). In February 1970, Lionel Steinberg, a grower himself and representing three Coachella Valley growers, sought to negotiate with Chavez. With the help of mediating efforts of a committee of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, Steinberg and Chavez signed a contract on March 31, 1970. Other Coachella Valley grape growers followed suit. When the 1970 season opened, Coachella Valley grapes were stamped with the UFWOC union label -- the black eagle (Brown, 1972).

The Coachella Valley's concession put pressure on the Delano growers. Even Safeway and the Bank of America, who had strong ties to the industry, advised the growers to settle.

Finally, on July 20, 1970, twenty-six Delano growers, who represented half of the state's table grape crops and over 8,000 jobs, signed contracts with the UFWOC -- thus ending the five year grape strike and boycott. The three year agreement provided for an hourly wage of \$1.80 an hour and 20 cents a box. This would be increased to \$1.95 in 1972 and to \$2.05 an hour in 1972. Ten cents an hour would be contributed to the health and welfare fund and two cents a box would be contributed to a special economic development fund which would help workers face mechanization and other problems in the future. The three year agreement also included protective clauses on the uses of pesticides. With the signing of this contract, eighty-five percent of all grapes sold would appear with the UFWOC union label (*Huelga Ends*, 1970, August 1). During this historic event, Chavez commented that the signing of the contract showed that social justice can be gained through nonviolence. He continued to say that during the long strike and boycott, ninety-five percent of the strikers lost their homes and cars. "But I think that in losing their worldly possessions they found themselves, and they found that through serving the poor and through complete dedication they could find themselves" (cited in *Huelga Ends*, 1970, August 1, p. 3).

Senate Subcommittee Hearings

Just as the media coverage and the nationwide boycotts were extremely effective in educating the general public about the mission and moral rightness of the UFWOC, the Senate Subcommittee Hearings on Migratory Labor of the 89th Congress (U.S. Congress, Senate, 1969) were also an extremely important avenue for Chavez to obtain further public attention and, most importantly, to gain the support of important political leaders. In March, 1966, a Subcommittee headed by Senator Harrison Williams Jr., who had been a long proponent of the welfare of migrant workers, came to California to conduct hearings on farm labor and to conduct an investigation of the Delano strike. Included on the committee were Senators Robert F. Kennedy of Massachusetts, who was to become an ardent supporter of Chavez; Harrison Williams, Democrat of New

Jersey; and George Murphy, Republican of California.

Chavez began the testimony. He was followed by Wayne Hartmire, of the California Migrant Ministries; Bishop Hugh Donohoe, who represented the Catholic Bishops of California; Al Green, Director of the AWOC; William Kircher, Director of Organization of the AFL-CIO; Larry Itliong, Business Representative of the AWOC; Steve Allen, entertainer; Delores Huerta, of the NFWA; and farm laborers, who also gave statements.

Chavez's Testimony

Referring to the La Follette Hearings of nearly thirty years ago,¹³ Chavez began the testimony by stating that these were not the first hearings to address old problems and solutions:

The same labor camps which were used 30 years ago at the time of the La Follette committee hearings are still housing our workers. The same exploitation of child labor, the same idea that farm workers are a different breed of people --humble, happy, built close to the ground still prevails. (cited in U.S. Congress, Senate, 1969, p. 362)

Chavez continued his testimony by emphasizing that what the farm worker wants is "equality." Always taking every public opportunity to stress that the farm workers wanted "opportunity" and not "charity," Chavez asserted, "What the farm workers in our country are asking for is equality. I believe that all Americans should want this for every American -- equality, the opportunity to earn a living wage, and not charity" (p. 362).

Comparing the struggle of farm workers to that of Blacks, Chavez continued, "the whole system of occupational discrimination must be killed just like the discrimination against people of color is being challenged in Washington (p. 362)." Just as the Southern plantation owners said that Blacks were happy living the way they were, Chavez said that the growers believe that the farm workers are happy to be living

¹³The La Follette Hearings are examined in Chapter II, An Historical Background of Farming, Farm Labor and Farm Labor Organizing in California Before 1962.

in their current conditions. However, he continued his testimony by stating that since farm workers are not covered by the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) that they are denied the right to vote for representation on their job, and "I do not believe that any people should be denied the right to vote on who will represent them -- on their job, in the state house or in the Nation's Capitol" (p. 363).

Clergy's Testimony

Chavez's message to the public always emphasized the morality and justice of the farm workers' movement and unionizing attempts, and both Bishop Hugh Donohoe and Reverend Chris Hartmire, in their testimonies, continued the theme of religious "rightness" of the farm worker's cause. Speaking on behalf of the California Bishops of California, Bishop Donohoe made considerable reference to the Vatican Council II, where the "Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World" was adopted on December 8, 1965, to justify the farm workers right to unionization.

In his testimony, Bishop Donohoe said that the second section of the "Pastoral Constitution in the Modern World" is concerned with economic and social life and updates important principles of Christian social ethics, including the right to organize. In quoting the "Pastoral Constitution in the Modern World," Bishop Donohoe stated, "Among the basic rights of the human person is to be numbered the right of freely founding unions for working people" (p. 634).

Reverend Wayne Hartmire, Presbyterian clergyman and Director of the Migrant Ministries, continued the theme of the religious "rightness" of the farm workers' movement. Referring to the need to correct social injustice, Hartmire stated, "As Christians we can not assume a position of non-involvement or neutrality in the presence of social injustice which reduces the dignity and well-being of any of God's children" (p. 675). Hartmire concluded by quoting from the California Church Council's statement:

Therefore, we support the right of growers and workers to organize themselves for the realization of their collective objectives. We recognize the distress a labor dispute places upon both workers and growers. We feel that the economic structure and the entire statewide community is responsible for the poverty of

seasonal workers in an otherwise affluent society. (p. 678)

Testimony of the AFL-CIO

The themes of "justice" and "rightness" continued throughout the other testimonies. It was a declaration for farm workers to have the same rights as other workers in a democratic society. William Kircher, Director of Organization of the AFL-CIO, who became a great supporter of Chavez, summarized the feeling of all supporters of the farm workers in his testimony that farm workers should have the basic right to organize and to receive the federal and state protections guaranteed other workers. Kircher stated farm workers are denied the benefit of federal and state legislation that other workers in America have; consequently, "they [farm workers] remain the most under-paid, under-employed and poverty-stricken segment of the labor force. (p. 290)

Farm Workers' Testimony

Although most of the people who gave testimony or answered questions from the committee were speaking from some "official" capacity, farm workers also spoke of their experiences. One farm worker, Tony Mendez, expressed the feelings of farm workers who joined the union and went out on strike to seek their rights as Americans. Mendez said that he was from a poor farm working family and that he went out on strike because he and other farm workers had suffered a lot and it was time to do something about it. He stated that in school in America we are taught that everyone is equal and that everyone is free, but he wanted to know: Where do our rights come in when we [farm workers] are taken in for unlawful assembly... when we're just men on strike? When do we get out of poverty? The union can help us and keep us together so that the ranchers will not exploit us. (p. 693)

Robert Kennedy and the Hearings

Perhaps the most important person to attend the hearings was Senator Robert Kennedy. Although Kennedy initially was reluctant to become involved with Chavez

because of his concern for political damage,¹⁴ on the final day of the hearings, he gave his full support to the farm workers. Kennedy continued the theme of justice and equal rights in an exchange that he had with the Kern County Sheriff, who told Kennedy that he had arrested strikers because he had "reason to believe that there's going to be a riot...and it's my duty to stop them" (cited in Levy, p. 205).

In response to the Sheriff's statement, Kennedy, contesting that the sheriff could arrest people before they had violated the law, replied before the committee recessed for lunch, "Can I suggest that in the interim period of time, that the sheriff and the district attorney read the Constitution of the United States?" (cited in Levy, p. 205). In addition, during the hearings Senator Kennedy responded to the grower Martin Zanioich, who claimed that the farm workers in Delano did not want union representation and that the growers might accept elections if the proper machinery were worked out. Senator Kennedy replied, "If we can get a man on the moon by the end of the 1960's, it seems we should be able to work out collective bargaining for farm workers after talking about it for thirty years" (cited in London and Anderson, 1970 p. 153).

Kennedy's comments at the hearings received great media attention, and Kennedy's support was pivotal for Chavez in gaining the support of other political leaders. Dunne (1976) said, "It was Robert Kennedy who legitimized Chavez" (p. 198). Several writers (Dunne, 1976; Jenkins, 1985; Kushner, 1975; Taylor, 1975) contend that prior to 1966 and the U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Migrant Hearings, no Democrat would touch the Chavez movement. However, after attending the hearings, Kennedy was persuaded to support *la causa*. Dunne (1975) commented that Kennedy's support,

plugged Chavez into the power outlets of Washington and New York. For the first time Chavez became fashionable, a national figure registering on the

¹⁴In order to attract Southern votes, Kennedy originally thought it best to distance himself from Chavez since many Southerners insisted that farm labor be excluded from any labor bills. However, at the last minute, he was persuaded by his aid Peter Edelman to at least attend the hearings (Dunne, 1967; Meister and Loftis, 1977).

nation's moral thermometer. Robert Kennedy and Cesar Chavez -- the names seemed wired into the same circuitry, the one a spokesman, the other a symbol for the constituency of the dispossessed. (p. 182)

The hearings were successful in allowing Chavez to communicate his message to the Washington power figures and to the public at large. Powerful political figures like Willard Wirtz, Secretary of Labor, publicly supported Chavez during the hearings. Secretary Wirtz was cited in the Hearings as stating that "the whole country has been degraded by the degradation of farm laborers. And the whole country will be enriched by giving them a fair share in its economic democracy" (cited in U.S. Congress, Senate, 1969, p. 4).

Pilgrimage

As soon as the hearings were completed and six months into the Delano strike during the Lenten season in 1964, Chavez sought to renew the spirit of the farm workers and to further publicize *la causa* by engaging in a *preginacion* (pilgrimage). Chavez wanted to prepare workers for the long struggle ahead. Referring to the purpose of the pilgrimage, Chavez said, "We wanted to be fit not only physically but also spiritually, and we wanted to stress nonviolence even more, build confidence, and have more visible nonviolent tactics" (cited, in Ferris and Sandoval, p. 177).

Themes

The theme of the march was *Pregrinacion, Penitencia, and Revolucion* (Pilgrimage, Penitence, and Revolution). The first theme, pilgrimage, is a time-honored Mexican religious tradition with particular significance during the Lenten season. In the article "Pilgrimage, Penitence, Revolution" (El Malcriado, 1966, March 17) Chavez further explained that the theme of Pilgrimage was not only symbolic in a religious sense but that it also symbolized the Day of Liberation for all mankind. "The Pilgrimage is dedicated to those great movements of men which have tried to improve the world and bring to God's children the justice that He promised them" (cited in *Pilgrimage, Penitence and Revolution*, p. 4).

The second theme, Penance, was important because Lent traditionally is the time for Christians to ask for forgiveness of their sins. In stressing its significance as a

march for penance, "Chavez said that the march symbolized "public penance for the sins of the strikers, their own personal sins as well as their yielding perhaps to feelings of hatred and revenge in the strike itself" (cited in Pilgrimage, Penitence and Revolution, 1966, March 17, p. 4). Chavez saw this penance as a necessary recommitment to nonviolence (Chavez, 1969).

The third theme of the march was *revolucion*. Chavez explained that the farm workers are "true revolutionaries, as are all true Christians, because they are trying to change the world" (cited in Pilgrimage, Penitence and Revolution, p. 4). The theme of "revolution" created a stir in the media. Reflecting on the media sensation that it created, Chavez reiterated that what he meant by a revolution was a change of things. He said, "We do not want to destroy the order, but we want to change the social order to make things better for those who suffer because the order happens to be what it is" (Chavez, 1969, p. 30).

Starting with approximately 75 workers, the pilgrimage began on March 17, 1965, in Delano and was timed to end approximately 300 miles later in Sacramento, the state capitol, on Easter Sunday, April 10th. On that day, the marchers planned to present their grievances to Governor Brown with the hope that his pressure would influence Schenley and DiGiorgio to negotiate.

300 Mile March and Plan of Delano

The marchers wearing Zapata buttons and carrying a statue of the Virgin of Guadalupe, the eagle flag of the union and the flags of the United States and Mexico, set out from Delano. Stopping in towns along the way each night for food and shelter, the marchers and their gaining network of supporters and followers held rallies for farm workers, sang union songs and celebrated mass in the morning. *El Teatro Campesino* (The Farm Workers Theater) gave nightly performances, and each night Luis Valdez, the Director of *El Teatro Campesino*, read the "Plan of Delano."

Based on a Mexican tradition of reformers issuing a *pronunciamento* -- a plan for setting things right, the Plan of Delano proclaimed to the American people the farm worker's plan to seek the justice and equality that is owed to them in a democratic society. Written largely by Luis Valdez, the Delano Plan was similar to the Mexican

revolutionary Emilio Zapata's Plan of *Ayala* of 1911. The Delano Plan proclaimed that *la causa* was a "social movement in fact and not pronouncement" and that the farm workers were gathered in a pilgrimage to Sacramento to:

seek our basic, God-given rights as human beings.... To the politicians we say that the years are gone when the farm worker said nothing and did nothing to help himself. From this movement shall spring leaders who shall understand us, lead us, be faithful to us, and we shall elect them to represent us. WE SHALL BE HEARD. (History of the Pilgrimage, 1966, April 10, p. 1)

As planned, the marchers arrived in Sacramento on Easter Weekend. Although Governor Pat Brown was out of town on vacation over the Easter weekend, on Easter Sunday on April 6, 1966, more than 10,000 farm workers and supporters gathered on the steps and adjacent lawns of the state capitol. The Plan of Delano was read, and "Prayers, speeches, songs, pledges of support, and cries of Viva! filled a three hour rally" (London and Anderson, p. 155).

The pilgrimage accomplished Chavez's intention of publicizing "la causa" and bringing further support to the movement. From the time they left Delano the marchers made national headlines, and throughout the 26 day march civil rights leaders, politicians, labor leaders, students, clergy, and many ordinary citizens gave their support to Chavez and *la causa*. Marjorie Fallows (1972), a writer on Mexican-American issues, commented on the pilgrimage with these words, "The image that triggered public sympathy was of a stragglng band of Mexican-American grape pickers making the dogged two-hundred-and-fifty-mile [300 mile] march on foot from Delano, California, to the state capitol in Sacramento" (p. 313).

This "stragglng band of Mexican-Americans" succeeded in gaining enough support to get their first contract with a grower. In combination the Delano strike, the grape boycott, the extensive media coverage, the Senate Migratory Hearings and the Pilgrimage worked. Just four days before Easter, Chavez received word that Schenley had agreed to recognize the NFWA and negotiate a contract covering all Schenley field workers in the Delano area.

Fast

Just as the pilgrimage was a nonviolent action that brought attention to the need for social change for farm workers, the fast that Chavez undertook in the Lenten season of 1968 was a statement of penance to rededicate himself to the principle of active but peaceable resistance. Chavez was concerned deeply about the potential for imminent violence in the movement. Union picketers were being harassed daily, and Chavez became concerned about the potential of union members retaliating. The strike and boycotts continued, and the winter had been long and difficult. Some union members were tired, frustrated and demoralized. In addition, in early 1968, Chavez made a fund-raising journey across the country and was disturbed about the militant *chicano* and other minority groups that supported him and who also sought his support. There were the urban riots of 1967, as well as the pall of Vietnam (Matthiessen, 1969).

All of this disturbed Chavez, and in the tradition of Gandhi, he decided on a fast as a penitence and a commitment to nonviolence everywhere. Ron Taylor, a reporter who wrote extensively on Chavez, called the fast "Chavez's way of addressing the growing unrest among his own followers and the nation's minorities" (cited in Yinger, 1975, p. 40). El Malcriado reported that Chavez's fast "symbolized a recommitment and rededication to the principles of non-violence and brotherhood on which the Union was founded" (The Fast, 1968, March 15 p. 8).

Media Coverage and Broad Support

Chavez began his fast on February 14, 1968. As soon as the fast became public knowledge, striking farm workers and their families came from all over California to Forty Acres, the Union headquarters, to share in the event. They waited in line for hours to meet and talk with Chavez, who, by the act of his fasting, became a symbol of their suffering (Taylor, 1975). Supporters of the *la causa* also came. By the end of February, more than one thousand people attended the daily masses at Forty Acres.

Shortly after Chavez began his fast, it became a nightly national news event. Chavez received even more support and sympathy when on the twelfth day of his fast, at the request of the Kern County judge, he appeared in court for refusing to obey court-imposed restrictions against the mass-picketing of Giumarra. Chavez's court appearance turned out to be a major media event. Weak and disheveled from fasting,

Chavez was assisted to the courthouse between lines of an estimated 1,000 kneeling farm workers, who Taylor (1975) reported were "absolutely silent, extended from the courthouse steps, through the main doors, into the hallways, up the stairs to the courtroom itself" (p. 224). It was obvious that Chavez was in no physical shape to proceed with the court hearing, and the judge postponed it. A few weeks later, due to adverse publicity, Guimarra attorneys quietly had the case dismissed.

The sight of a weakened Chavez and the kneeling, quiet farm workers brought nationwide sympathy and support for *la causa*. Gifts of money, food and clothing began to pour into the union headquarters. From all over the country people sent letters and telegrams of support and concern over Chavez's health. On the twenty-first day of his fast, seven members of the House of Representatives sent him a telegram expressing their support and concern. They said that Chavez's personal penance "has been an inspiration and a source of strength to all who look to you for leadership" (cited in Yinger, 1975, p. 41).

Breaking of the Fast

On the twenty-fifth day, on March 11, 1968, Chavez ended his fast in the public park in Delano. Senator Robert Kennedy came to Delano to break bread with Chavez and telegrams arrived from many, including Martin Luther King. In his telegram Martin Luther King said that he was deeply moved by Chavez's courage and personal sacrifice in fasting to seek justice through nonviolence. King said,

You [Chavez] stand today as a living example of the Gandhian tradition with its great force for social progress and its healing spiritual powers....The plight of your people and ours is so grave that we all desperately need the inspiring example and effective leadership you have given. (King, 1968)

Thousands of farm workers and supporters celebrated an ecumenical mass where Jews, Protestants and Catholics spoke and 300 pounds of "bread of social justice were shared" (Day, 1971, p. 47).

As a result of the fast, Chavez had lost 40 pounds, damaged his kidneys, and caused damage to the bone and muscle structure of his back. However, he felt that his personal sacrifice was worth the victory for *la causa* (Chavez, 1969). Victory came in

the form of revitalization of union morale and a renewed commitment to non-violent means of achieving social justice. Victory also meant the acknowledgement of support from a wider audience.

Speeches

Just as the boycotts, pilgrimage and fast delivered the message of the *la causa* to the public, Chavez took every opportunity to give speeches across the country. In an attempt to educate the public and gain support, Chavez travelled some 50 to 60 thousand miles a year to speak before all kinds of groups - labor, church, student, political, civil rights groups, etc. (Shaw, 1983). He spoke of the mission of *la causa* to anyone who would listen. In addition, Chavez frequently granted interviews to the media, and his message came across in major newspapers, periodicals, television and in the union's own newspaper, El Malcriado.

Many who heard him speak (Brown, 1972; Matthiessen, 1969; Taylor, 1975; Yinger, 1975) reported that Chavez came across as a humble, sincere and religious man, who was willing to sacrifice his life for *la causa*. Although not known to be a great speaker, Chavez was described often as a "man of charisma" (Brown, 1972; Shaw, 1983; Taylor, 1975) His charisma came from the sincerity he projected -- his complete commitment to *la causa*. Paul Schrade, from the United Auto Workers (UAW), who worked closely with Chavez, described him as a man of "great charisma" who, "communicates a great deal of sincerity....He gets across to people more than anyone else in the trade union movement" (cited in Kushner, 1975, p. 183).

Through his speeches, Chavez was able to inspire many to volunteer for and to support *la causa*. In addition, Mexican Americans, farm workers as well as other Mexican Americans throughout the United States, responded to his sincere interest in helping fellow Mexican Americans. He was one of them -- not an outsider; he listened and understood their problems. In describing Chavez's appeal to Mexican Americans, Luis Valdez, creator of *El Teatro Campesino*, wrote:

Chavez was not a traditional bombastic Mexican revolutionary; nor was he a *gavacho*, a *gringo*, a white social worker type. Both types had tried to organize the *raza* in America and failed. Here was Cesar, burning with a patient fire,

poor like us, dark like us, talking quietly... We didn't know it until we met him, but he was the leader we had been waiting for. (Valdez, 1966, p. 40)

The message in all of Chavez's speeches was simple and consistent -- to restore the morally and religiously grounded rights and dignity of the farm workers in a democratic society. Chavez wanted the American public to understand that his community union affirmed the American ideals of equality and democracy. The farm workers were not looking for hand-outs; they only wanted the same rights as other American laborers -- the right to organize and the right of social and economic justice, the right to be full participants in a democratic society. Chavez's statement in a speech in Lansing, Michigan (Chavez, 1967a) spoke to this overriding sentiment. In this speech, Chavez stated, "Farm laborers produce the food of this country and should be able to have the dignity and stability which should accompany first-class citizenship in this nation" (p.).

Typical of his straightforward and religiously based speeches where Chavez expressed a willingness to give his life for *la causa* was his speech on March 10, 1968, when he broke his well-publicized fast. Yinger (1975) described this speech as a "crystallization of his political, economic and theologic ethic - a kind of 'credo' of the farm worker movement" (Yinger, 1975, p 37).

This speech simply and directly reaffirmed the union's desire to bring about social change nonviolently. As Chavez was weakened by his 25-day fast, his speech was read in English and Spanish by Reverend James Drake, his assistant from the California Migrant Ministry.

In this speech Chavez said that he was a poor man, who did not set himself apart from the farm workers he represented. He said that even though they are poor, they have something which the rich and powerful can't own -- their bodies and spirits and the justice of their cause. Emphasizing the need for personal sacrifice in the struggle for social justice, Chavez said,

I am convinced that the truest act of courage, the strongest act of manliness is to sacrifice ourselves for others in a totally nonviolent struggle for justice. To be a man is to suffer for others. God help us to be men. (cited in Yinger, 1975, p.

46-47)

Support from a Broad Segment of American Society

Chavez received support from a broad segment of American society. Students, clergy, civil rights leaders, labor leader, politicians, and ordinary middle-class citizens supported him. From the time of the Delano strike in 1965, Chavez and his movement became national news. Through the pilgrimage, Chavez's fast, his numerous speaking engagements, and the extensive boycotts, more and more people learned about the farm workers struggle and gave their support to Chavez.

Students, Clergy and Civil Rights Leaders

Students, clergy and parishioners, and civil rights leaders and activists were among the first to give their support to Chavez. Once the Delano strike began, Chavez immediately began speaking at college campuses and churches to seek volunteer help and donations of food, clothing and money for the strikers. Students and civil rights activist were quick to respond to Chavez's call. Although Chavez would be criticized for support from what some called "leftists" or "communists,"¹⁵ Chavez welcomed their assistance. Commenting on his belief that the union benefited from the variety of ideas from volunteers, Chavez stated,

If it were nothing but farm workers in the union now, just Mexican farm workers, we'd only have about 30 percent of all the ideas that we have. There would be no cross-fertilization, no growing. It's beautiful to work with other groups, other ideas, and other customs. It's like the wood is laminated. (cited in Ferriss and Sandoval, 1997, p. 103)

From the beginning, once the Delano strike began, the California Migrant Ministry and many protestant ministers quickly gave their support to *la causa*. However, many local Catholic priests, whose churches received most of their financial support from the Catholic growers, hesitated to openly support the farm workers. The Catholic hierarchy was also silent on the issue of farm workers until after Vatican II in

¹⁵The FBI had watched Chavez's activities for possible communist affiliation since his CSO days and association with Saul Alinsky. The FBI continued this monitoring throughout the 1960s (Ferriss and Sandoval, 1997; Kushner, 1975; Meister and Loftis, 1977).

December 1965 which later resulted in the U.S. Bishops forming a Farm Labor Committee and giving their support to the UFW.¹⁶

There were exceptions, however, to the early reluctance of Catholic priests and bishops in giving their support to Chavez. As early as December 1965, Father James Vizzard, Director of the National Catholic Rural Life Conference and Monsignor William J. Quinn of the Bishop's Committee for Spanish-Speaking Chicago, joined Protestant and Jewish leaders and signed a statement of support. This statement declared that it is the right of churches and synagogues to be concerned about the rights of farm workers and that "it is apparent to us that this basic right to collective bargaining is being denied to farm workers in this Valley" (Statement of Support from Church Leaders, 1965, December 14, p. 1).

With the formation of the U.S. Bishops Committee on Farm Labor in 1966, more and more Catholic priests and bishops spoke out in favor of the farm workers. Bishop Donohoe of California gave a testimony in support of the farm workers at the Senate Migratory Hearings in March 1966,¹⁷ and from 1965 to 1970, publicized support from the Catholic clergy as well as support from protestant ministers and rabbis continued to grow. For example, in March 1969, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops issued a statement supporting farm labor legislation (Bishops Vow Support of Chavez Crusade, 1969, July 24). Additionally, in August, 1969, at a meeting in Canterbury England, the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches, called on national and regional Councils of Churches to take whatever action seems appropriate to support California's exploited grape pickers" (World Council of Churches Support Chavez and the Farm Workers, 1969, August 29). The wide support from religious institutions was important to *la causa* whose mission was grounded in the religious principles of equality and justice for all men.

¹⁶For further examination of the Catholic Church and its position on farm workers, refer to Chapter 4, The Learning Processes that Inspired Chavez to Form the UFW.

¹⁷Bishop Donohoe's testimony at the Senate Migratory Hearings is examined earlier in this Chapter.

Just as students and many clergy rallied around Chavez, civil rights leaders became outspoken supporters of Chavez. Most notable of these supporters was Martin Luther King. In addition to Gandhi, King was Chavez's hero of nonviolent protest.

Although they never met in person, King became an outspoken supporter of Chavez. When Chavez broke his 25-day fast in March 1968, he received a telegram from King on behalf of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, commending him on his bravery and dedication. In this telegram King stated: "My colleagues and I commend you...for your indefatigable work against poverty and injustice, and pray for your health and your continuing service as one of the outstanding men of America" (King, 1968, March 5).

King and other civil rights leaders saw a great parallel between the struggle of the Mexican American farm workers and Blacks in the United States. In 1969, the Black civil rights Leader Ralph Abernathy, led a grape strikers' march in El Centro, California and then met with Chavez to seal symbolically a "black and brown" coalition. Speaking to the crowd of marchers, Abernathy told them, "*su lucha es mi lucha* (your battle is my battle)" (cited in Salazar, 1969, May 21, p. 32).

Labor Leaders and Politicians

Although labor leaders previously had neglected the problems of farm workers, once the Delano strike was underway, the AFL-CIO threw its support to the largely Filipino AWOC, chartered by the AFL-CIO, and Chavez's independent and predominately Mexican American FWA. At the AFL-CIO convention in San Francisco in December 1965, Paul Schrade, representative of the West Coast United Auto Workers and a great friend and supporter of Chavez, asked for increased support for the striking farm workers. Convention delegates voted \$5,000 a month, half from the United Auto Workers and half from the AFL-CIO's Industrial Union Department (Day, 1971; Kushner; Taylor, 1975).

On December, 16, 1965, marking the one hundredth day of the farm workers's strike, Walter Reuther, head of the United Auto Workers, came to Delano to recognize officially the strike and to state his financial support for both unions. Not only did he pledge \$5,000 per month, but Reuther announced that the AFL-CIO would give

another \$5,000 to each union, the AWOC and the FWA. In speaking to a large crowd, Reuther announced to the farm workers, "This is not your strike, this is our strike" (cited in Taylor, 1975, p. 154). Reuther's support received great media coverage.

AFL-CIO's financial support was critical for Chavez's striking farm workers, and the backing of the AFL-CIO brought further national awareness to *la causa*. During the Senate Migratory Hearings in March 1966, William Kircher, Director of Organization of the AFL-CIO, testified on behalf of the AFL-CIO and gave the organization's support to Chavez. When the Delano strike and boycotts began, other unions assisted Chavez. For example, the International Longshoremen and the Warehousemen's Union refused to load Delano grapes for export (Cohen, 1968).

In addition to support from labor leaders, important political leaders gradually gave their support to Chavez. Robert Kennedy was the first major political figure to support Chavez.¹⁸ Kennedy's support meant a lot to Chavez; and, in turn, Chavez became a very active supporter of Kennedy's bid for the presidency. Reminiscing about his appreciation of Kennedy, Chavez said, "This was a time when everybody was against us; the only people for us were ourselves. Then Bob Kennedy came and did something heroic: he endorsed us" (Chavez's impressions of Robert Kennedy, n.d.). Chavez became a delegate to the democratic convention and was at the Ambassador hotel in Los Angeles when Kennedy was shot.

Once Kennedy gave his support, other political leaders gradually endorsed Chavez's movement. An endorsement list (Partial List of Support for Farm Worker's Struggle and UFWOC Table Grape Boycott, n.d.) shows support from Alan Cranston (Dem-California), Jacob Javits (Dem-New York), Eugene McCarthy (Dem-Minnesota), Walter Mondale (Dem-Minnesota), Edward Kennedy (Dem-Massachusetts), Ralph Yarborough (Dem-Texas), Governor Marvin Mandel of Maryland and many others.

After Robert Kennedy's assassination, Vice President Hubert Humphrey became a great supporter of Chavez. In a 1968 letter to Chavez, Vice President Humphrey

¹⁸Robert Kennedy's support for Chavez is examined in more depth in this Chapter in the section on Senate Subcommittee Hearings.

wished him success in his national boycott efforts and stated that he would continued to push for legislation to support the rights of farm laborers to organize. Vice President Humphrey wrote to Chavez, "I want to make it clear that I do endorse your efforts and I hope you will feel free to use that endorsement and the contents of this letter in any way you feel will serve *La Causa*" (Humphrey, 1968, August 1).

Ordinary Middle-Class Citizens

Although support from civil rights, religious and political leaders was critical to Chavez, the support of ordinary, middle-class Americans across the United States became crucial to Chavez's ultimate success. Many Americans across the nation supported Chavez's movement by refusing to buy grapes and by volunteering their time and money to support *la causa*. Indicating the importance of middle class support for Chavez, Brown (1972) wrote, the "UFWOC was much more dependent than other trade unions on the active involvement of middle class supporters for the success of its organizing efforts" (p. 179).

Given the large involvement of middle class supporters throughout the United States, it was evident that many Americans thought that *la causa* was worthy of support. Chavez was able to convince many Americans of the moral rightness of the movement. Brown (1972) asserted that *la causa* had an impact on the American conscience. Everyone in the United States eats fruits and vegetables, and *la causa* stirred many middle class Americans to examine where their food is grown and the situation of the farm workers. Similar to the civil rights movement, *la causa* represented a struggle for social justice and human dignity where no person should be discriminated against because of his/her race or social position.

In addition to appealing to a sense of moral justice, Chavez's emphasis on self-help programs for the farm workers fit in with the middle class American virtue of hard work (Brown, 1972). Middle class Americans could identify with Chavez's accentuation on providing the opportunity for people to "help themselves." Additionally, by example, Chavez and other union staff displayed the virtue of hard work and personal sacrifice. Chavez, himself, was an example of a man who was indefatigable, working 16-18 hours per day. Also, unlike other union leaders, his

remuneration was the same as other full-time employees of the union -- room and board and \$5.00 per week for personal expenses (Brown, 1972; Ferris and Sandoval, 1997; London and Anderson, 1970).

Besides presenting *la causa* as a moral issue where farm workers sought the opportunity to gain economic and social justice through hard work, Chavez's and other union members rectitude of behavior was acceptable to middle class Americans (Brown, 1972). Even when provoked, Chavez insisted that strikers and boycotters maintain a nonviolent stance at all times. He avoided strictly ethnic alliances "with militant *chicano* groups which were organizing solely around the idea of brown power" (Brown, 1972, p. 177). Additionally, Chavez constantly reminded boycotters to avoid any tactics which violated the property rights of stores. Thus, the norm of virtuous behavior, expected of all participants in *la causa* permitted middle class Americans to become active participants in the movement without compromising a sense of proper, acceptable behavior.

Summary

From 1962 to 1965, Chavez quietly built his community union that focused on self-help programs for the farm workers. The community union was totally self-supporting and deliberately wanted to maintain its independence; therefore it refused any outside financial help. However, the Delano strike in 1965 forced Chavez to seek support from from the broader society.

Once the strike began Chavez knew that to survive financially and to achieve his goal of winning contracts with the growers he would need the support of many. To gain the necessary support, it was time for Chavez to reach out and educate the larger society about the plight of the farm workers and the need for social change.

Chavez communicated the message of *la causa* in many ways. He communicated to the public through the national media, speeches, writings and congressional testimonies. He also communicated with and got the support of church leaders, political figures, labor leaders, civil rights activists, students, and ordinary middle class Americans. In addition, Chavez's fasts and the UFW's pilgrimage and nation-wide grape boycotts publicized to the country the message of *la causa*.

Through this educative process, a broad spectrum of the larger society learned about the unjust plight of the farm workers and gave Chavez their support. This support was instrumental in Chavez winning success at the bargaining table. Hence, from its inception in 1962 to its recognition as a legitimate labor union, the UFW had moved from being a disputed social movement to becoming an accepted organization that succeeded in gaining union contracts that improved the social and economic conditions of farm workers. Social change occurred.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE UFW: 1962 to 1970

"We want a social revolution. We want to change the conditions of human life. Our union is not just another union. And our strike is not just another strike." Cesar Chavez

From 1962 to 1970, Chavez built a powerful community union that succeeded in its goal of social and economic change for farm workers. During this period, participation in the community union provided a rich array of empowering educational activities which prompted its members to examine their lives and to realize that collectively they could bring about social change to improve the quality of their lives. In addition to being an empowering educational experience that prompted its members to take risks in their quest for social change, the United Farm Workers (UFW) provided a multitude of opportunities where members gained specific skills and were able to express themselves creatively and artistically. In examining how members became empowered to make changes in their lives, learn new skills and express themselves, this chapter will address the following educational activities of the union: housemeetings; the National Farm Workers Service Center; *El Teatro Campesino* (The Farm Workers' Theater); *El Malcriado* (The Farm Workers' Newspaper); *corridos* (Songs), and other union activities, including strikes, boycotts, Hiring Halls and Ranch Committees.

Housemeetings

Not only were housemeetings Chavez's main organizing technique, but they also were a primary educational component of the union. While working with the Community Service Organization (CSO), Chavez learned the organizing technique of housemeetings from his friend and mentor Fred Ross and then applied this technique in establishing the UFW.¹⁹ Chavez clearly viewed these housemeetings as an educational process and expressed this belief in such comments: "As they [farm workers] come to

¹⁹For an account of Chavez's involvement with the CSO and his use of the organizing technique of housemeetings, refer to Chapter Four, The Learning Processes That Influenced Chavez to Form the UFW, beginning on page 148 and to Chapter Five, Chavez Builds a Community Union and Social Movement.

a meeting, [housemeeting], we were trying to educate them, building the brotherhood and solidarity necessary for understanding the need to bring about a strong union" (Chavez, 1969, p. 14)

Meeting the Farm Worker on Familiar Ground

Based on his experiences as a very successful organizer with the CSO, Chavez knew that the notion of housemeetings was amenable to the life-style of the Mexican American farm worker. For the most part, Mexican American farm workers placed great value on the family unit and tended to distrust people outside of their circle of family and friends (Brown, 1972). Believing that a committed community union membership could be built only on the basis of personal contacts between the organizer and the farm worker, Chavez saw the housemeeting as an opportunity to bring himself together with the farm worker. Chavez believed that it could only be in a familiar and comfortable home setting that farm workers and their families would feel free to express their thoughts, reservations and questions (Chavez, 1969).

By going into their homes, Chavez met the farm workers in their own familiar environment. This was critical to gaining their trust; no other farm labor organizer had taken this approach. Furthermore, because Chavez's ethnic heritage was Mexican American and he had also been a poor, farm worker, he was able to relate easily to the farm workers and their life situation. Although the farm workers may have been apprehensive, they were at least willing to talk with him, and Chavez was able to make the farm workers feel comfortable enough to open up and talk with him about their problems. Commenting on Chavez's ability to understand the farm workers because he was one of them, Brown (1972) wrote, "The many personal humiliations he [Chavez] had suffered working in the fields had made Chavez acutely aware of every individual's -- and particularly the farm worker's need to be respected by others" (p. 154).

After a housemeeting, Chavez or another organizer urged the family to call additional friends and relatives together for another meeting. It was this chain meeting technique that allowed Chavez to organize as rapidly as he did. Indicative of how these housemeetings flourished among the Mexican American farm workers, one worker reported, "Slowly but surely I am explaining family by family in all of the small towns

around Heraldsbur and people are asking me to have meetings. They are very excited about this union called *Viva la Causa*" (cited in Brown, p. 166).

Consciousness-raising and Collective Action

Chavez's goal during a housemeeting was to encourage the farm workers to articulate their concerns and to realize that collectively they could make changes in their lives by forming a community union. To accomplish this goal, Chavez's role was to act as a "facilitator" during the housemeetings. Many have said that Chavez was an excellent teacher and was at his best during the "give and take dialogues of the housemeeting" (Shaw, 1983, p. 187). When he conducted a housemeeting, Chavez said that he made it a point not to talk very much, but to listen. Noting how important it was for him to listen to the farm workers, Chavez said, "It was important for me to learn what the workers wanted. They had to teach me what they needed. I spoke very little in those first meetings, and I listened to what they had to say" (cited in Taylor p. 114).

Chavez's keen desire to listen and to help was readily noticed by the farm workers themselves. One farm worker expressed this feeling in his statement, "Our first impression of him [Chavez] was that he was interested in us. He wanted to help us, and he listened" (cited in Taylor, p. 114).

Chavez "listened" to the farm workers because he believed that only the farm workers themselves could identify their own problems and make their own life-affecting decisions. Chavez's goal was to listen to the farm workers and to build a union based on their expressed needs.²⁰ Chavez always said that the farm worker knew what he/she wanted; his task was just to "listen." Commenting on the need to build a union on the expressed desires of the farm workers, Chavez said, "People know what they want. And what they don't want. It's a case of staying with them and keeping your ears open" (cited in Steiner 1969, p. 311). Chavez said that every important decision and program in the union came from the farm workers themselves. He said

²⁰For further discussion on Chavez's desire to build a union based on the expressed needs of the farm workers, refer to Chapter Five, Chavez Builds a Community Union and Social Movement.

that decisions do not come from a well-documented report, "But it comes [from] the way the people express themselves. Our function is to put it all together. We get our decisions from the people (cited in Steiner, 1969, p. 312)

By expressing their problems and their desire to change their lives, the housemeetings resulted in the farm worker's willingness to take risks to challenge the reigning way of looking at the world. Feeling empowered to challenge the status quo, the farm workers joined Chavez's community union, which was based on self-help and collective action. Taking the first step to join a union was no small feat for Mexican American farm workers, who had traditionally resisted previous attempts at farm union organizing.²¹

National Farm Workers Service Center, Inc.

During the housemeetings, Chavez made it very clear that his community union, financed through members' dues, would be a self-help organization.²² The backbone of this promise of self-help was the National Farm Workers Services Center, established in 1962. The stated purpose of the Farm Workers Service Center was to engage in "charitable and educational activities with farm workers and agricultural laborers. Its activities were to include the providing of medical, educational, and welfare services" (Drake, 1968, March 31, p. 6). In 1967, the National Farm Workers Service Center would eventually become incorporated and receive Federal tax-exempt status as a non-profit corporation.

Chavez often said that the establishment of the Farm Workers Service Center distinguished his movement from other previous attempts at farm labor organizing. (Chavez, 1967a; 1967, May 17; 1969b). Chavez did not want to organize hastily for the sole purpose of striking for higher wages. Rather, he was interested in the long-term development of farm workers and envisioned the National Farm Workers Service

²¹For an account of failed attempts at organizing farm workers and the reluctance of Mexican Americans to participate in labor unions, refer to Chapter 4, Chavez Builds a Community Union and Social Movement.

²²For an examination of the importance that the concept of self-help played in the union, refer to Chapter 5, Chavez Establishes a Community Union and Social Movement.

Center at the heart of this development. The Farm Workers Service Center was part of Chavez's concept of a community union that helped farm workers "to help themselves" in all aspects of their lives, including educationally.

Because a primary objective of the community union was to have workers participate in making decisions that affected their lives (Chavez n.d.c; 1967a; 1969b), Chavez felt the farm workers needed to decide on the specific services they wanted from the National Farm Workers Service Center. Consequently, after the members voted to establish the Farm Workers Service Center at its first convention on September 30, 1962, they then voted on the services that the center would provide.²³

The Training Center

The members of the union voted to establish training programs which would be offered through the Training Center of the National Farm Workers Service Center. An important program of the Training Center was called the Training Project, headed by Le Roy Chatfield. One of the major programs of The Training Project was an office skills program available to farm workers and their families (Drake, 1968, March 31). The office skills program provided training in basic office skills, including typing, filing, and record keeping. A report in 1968 indicated that 40 farm workers had been successfully trained in office skills (McGrath, 1968). In addition, this same report indicated that the Training Project had coordinated training for one farm worker to become an x-ray technician and another to become a dental assistant, enabling both to work in the Farm Workers' Health Clinic.

Another important program of the Training Center was a program to train about twenty farm workers each year in community organizing skills. This part of the program was run by Fred Ross, Chavez's old friend and mentor from his CSO days (McGrath, 1968). Farm workers trained in community organizing skills became valuable in organizing and running housemeetings or in organizing the national grape boycott across the country that began in 1968.

²³For a description of the many services that the Farm Workers Service Center offered, refer to Chapter 5, Chavez Begins A Community Union and Social Movement.

Once the union began to receive contracts with grape growers, the Training Center coordinated other on-the-job training programs for skilled farm jobs. For example, in March, 1969, about 56 union members participated in training for shop mechanics, irrigators, mechanical pruning machine operators, and tractor drivers at the Almaden and Schenley Ranches. The union received financial assistance for this program through the Social Development Corporation, (SDC) a government-financed organization (Training Brings New Job Skills to UFWOC Workers, March 15, 1969). The SDC paid for the cost of the instructors' time, while the employer continued to pay the farm workers their regular wages while they received training. The training lasted for about 20 weeks.

Other Educational Services

In addition to specific training programs, the National Farm Workers Service Center offered a variety of services that were educational in nature and available to all union farm workers and their families. According to Drake's report, (1968, March 31), trained staff members at the Center educated and helped individuals who needed assistance in using services that were available from county, state and federal agencies. Farm workers could also seek legal assistance, help with immigration papers, income tax forms, etc. The Center also "provides consumer education and instruction on the utilization of the credit union and co-op facilities. Service personnel are available who are fluent in both Spanish and Tagalo (a Filipino dialect) as well as English" (Drake, 1968, March 31, p. 8)

As a community union that sought to assist farm workers' individual needs, Chavez encouraged all union members to avail themselves of the Center's services. Chavez wanted to be sure that all members knew of the availability of the services and had them frequently advertised in El Malcriado. For example, the December, 1966 issue of El Malcriado (Farm Worker Service Center, p. 2) devotes an entire page to advertising the services of the Farm Worker Service Center, citing such services as notary public, credit union, interpreters, income tax service, help with problems with welfare and immigration problems, help with filling out forms, help with insurance claims, help with social security, and any other needed assistance.

Chavez was very proud of the services that the National Farm Workers Service Center was able to offer farm workers (Chavez, 1967a; 1969b), and the farm workers themselves frequently accessed these services. Drake's report (1968, March 31) indicated that about 2,000 farm workers a year used the services.

El Teatro Campesino

In addition to the "practical" educational services offered by the National Farm Workers Service Center, *El Teatro Campesino* (The Farm Workers's Theater) was an educational as well as an entertaining activity of the UFW. Started in October 1965 by Luis Valdez, with the encouragement of Chavez, *El Teatro Campesino* was popular theater performed by farm workers.

Valdez, born to a Delano farm worker family, worked in the fields until he was fourteen. The family subsequently moved to San Jose; there Valdez discovered he had a talent for comedy and theatrics and studied drama at San Jose State. In 1964, Valdez moved to San Francisco, began writing plays, and became a part of the San Francisco Mime Troupe. Once he heard about Chavez and *la causa*, Valdez approached Chavez about putting together a street theater of farm workers. Remembering this initial encounter with Chavez, Valdez recalled, "He [Chavez] said, 'Sure come along. The only thing is that you got to know, there's no money, there's no actors, there's no time for you to rehearse even. Do you still want to do it?'" (cited in Ferriss and Sandoval, p. 111). Valdez said that he jumped at the opportunity to go back to his roots in Delano and to become part of *la causa*.

In describing how *El Teatro Campesino* grew out of *la causa*, Valdez said that anyone who had gone to Delano and witnessed the depression of the strikers easily could have seen the need to make the farm workers laugh. Because of this need, Valdez said, "We developed a broad, fast-paced, almost slapstick style of comedy using the stock of farm labor: the *patron* [grower], the contractor, the scab, etc." (Valdez, 1970, Summer, p. 1) Through the comedy of *El Teatro Campesino* Valdez wanted to lift the spirits of the farm workers. However, at the same time, Valdez believed that social points could be made "not in spite of the comedy but through it" (cited in Royles-Gonzales, p. 27).

Valdez (1970, Summer) believed that reality was the theater of the farm workers and that reality became comedy. Explaining the use of comedy in *El Teatro Campesino*, Valdez said that anyone who had been on the picket line could see that it was natural for the strikers to mimic themselves, the growers, the scabs, the labor contractors, the sheriffs, etc. Valdez described the acting as improvisation which borrows from Mexican folk humor to such an extent that "its propaganda is salted with a wariness for human caprice" (Valdez, 1971, p. 115). According to Valdez (1971), "*El Teatro Campesino* is somewhere between Brecht and Cantinflas" (p. 115).²⁴

Most critics believe that *El Teatro Campesino* was more closely related to Mexican popular theater, or the *carpa* (a tent show) than to the European influence of Brecht (Broyles-Gonzalez, 1994). For two hundred years the *carpa*, which contains satirical and slap-stick humor, has been the theater of the lower classes in Mexico. Cantinflas, who was described by Charlie Chaplin as "the world's greatest comedian" (cited in Broyles-Gonzalez, 1994, p. 6) was the most famous comic of the *carpa*. Broyles-Gonzalez (1994) writes that the *carpa* has served as a counterhegemonic tool of the oppressed and is associated with the "blood, sweat, and the tears of the disenfranchised masses of Mexicans" (p. 6).

In the tradition of the Mexican Carpa, *El Teatro Campesino* allowed the farm workers to laugh at themselves and the social system around them. *El Teatro Campesino* also became an important means of educating the many farm workers who had little formal education, or who could not read or write. Describing the educational impact of *El Teatro Campesino* Valdez (1971) contends, "It explores the meaning of a social movement without asking its participants to read or write. It is a learning experience with no formal prerequisites" (p 116). Valdez said that approach is important to farm workers who have never had a chance to go to school and are "alienated by classroom, blackboards, and the formal teacher-student approach" (p. 116).

Since the farm workers had little formal education, Valdez believed that *El*

²⁴Brecht was a German satirical playwright and Cantinflas was a well-known Mexican comic.

Teatro Campesino became a means of giving them a "voice" to express deep-seeded frustrations, angers and hopes for the future. He believed this voice changed the farm workers' outlook. In an interview (Wasserman, 1966, May 2) Valdez described this change: "Where they were shy and retiring and frightened about American society, now they're expressive, courageous and determined. The farm worker who has never said anything is now speaking (p. 26). According to Shaw (1983), *El Teatro Campesino* allowed the farm workers "to see themselves as agents of social change and in the process absorb the revolutionary ideology embodied in the march and strike" (p. 199). By finding a voice, *El Teatro Campesino* could accomplish its larger purpose to "inspire the audience to social action" (Valdez, 1990, p. 12)

Los Actos

El Campesino's productions were based on 10 to 15 minute *actos* (skits). Preferring to use the word *actos* instead of skit, Valdez asserted that *actos* was more appropriate because they mostly talked in Spanish and because "skit seems too light a word for the work we are trying to do" (Valdez, 1971, p. 115).

The farm worker actors in these *actos* were women and men, varying in age from 18 to 44. Much of the way the actors communicated was based not on language but on body movement and expression, often accompanied by music. The acting style was exaggerated and mimetic. In explaining that *El Teatro Campesino* was more visual art than based on language, Valdez said, "It's theater of rhythms, beats of rituals, of visual imagery....It's theater of action. It's either social action or we're doing sacred theater, but it's action" (cited in Broyles-Gonzales, 1994, p. 18).

Based on the oral tradition of the *carpa*, the actors did not memorize scripts. The *actos* were not written; through improvisation of the group they were created collectively. Explaining how the *actos* were created, Valdez explained, "Starting from scratch with a real-life incident, character or idea, everybody in the *Teatro* contributes to the development of an *acto*" (Valdez, 1971, p. 115). The actors talked about their ideas and parts in the *actos*, but improvisations during each performance sharpened, altered or embellished the original idea.

The *actos* contained no scenery and no curtain. The barest of costumes and

props were used, such as an old pair of pants, a wine bottle, sunglasses, or a mask. To indicate the characters they portrayed, the actors hung signs around their necks.

In boldly satirical words and actions, the themes of the *actos* revolved around expressing the exploitive living and working conditions of the farm workers and their need to unionize to protect themselves from the abuses of agribusiness (Broyles-Gonzales, 1994). The characters revolved around four main types - *Esquirols*, (scabs, or strike breakers), *Contratistas* (labor contractors), *Patroncitos* (growers), and *Heulgistas* (strikers). *El Teatro Campesino* experimented with these four archetypal stock characters in dozens of combinations (Valdez, 1971).

Las Dos Caras del Patroncito

One of the first *Actos* that *El Teatro Campesino* performed was *Las Dos Caras del Patroncito* (The Two Faces of the Little Boss). The first performance of this *acto* was performed on the back of a flatbed truck on the picket line during the Delano strike in 1965.²⁵

There are only three characters in this *Acto*: *esquirol* (a scab farm worker or strikebreaker); *patroncito* (the grower who is the boss) and Charlie (an armed guard). The boss is portrayed as "two-faced" because he is a hypocrite, not to be trusted. In this *Acto*, the boss wears a mask of a pig, symbolizing his greed. Toward the middle of the *Acto*, the boss removes his mask, and with the removal of the mask the boss becomes vulnerable and conquerable. In describing this series of images, Diamond (1977) states that the message is clear: "*Campesinos*, don't be frightened of the Man [Boss] because his appearance of invulnerability is a false face" (p. 72).

In this same *Acto*, the character of *esquirol* (scab) is portrayed as a frightened, subservient scab farm worker who was brought to the United States from Mexico to work for the grower and is willing to accept low wages. Wearing a sign entitled *esquirol* and holding pruning shears, *esquirol* opens the *Acto* with the following:

²⁵Since the *actos* were based heavily on improvisation, many of the earliest works of *El Teatro Campesino* are no longer extant. However, this *acto* was later written down and first published by Luis Valdez in 1971.

Good Day. This is the ranch of my *patroncito*, and I come here to prune grape vines. My *patron* bring me all the way from Mexico here to California, the land of sun and money! More sun than money. But I better get to *jailar* [to work] because my *patroncito* he don't like to see me talking to strangers. Ay, here he comes in his big car! I better get to work. (Valdez, 1992, p. 18).

The message in this opening statement is clear: the boss does not want the scab farm worker to talk to strangers because they may be union organizers, who are a threat to the growers. Frightened, the scab farm worker stops talking to the audience when he hears the boss enter.

When the boss, wearing the mask of a pig -- chomping on a cigar, carrying a whip, and making the roaring sound of the motor in an imaginary car -- enters, he addresses the farm worker as "Boy." It is evident that the boss wants to keep the scab farm worker frightened and says,

You scared of me, boy? (Farm worker nods). Huh, boy? (Farm worker nods and makes a grunt signifying yes.)

What, boy? You don't have to be scared of me! I love my Mexicans. You're one of the new ones, huh? (Valez, 1992, p. 19)

Later, when the boss tells the scab farm worker how good he has it in the farm labor camp housing, the farm worker replies:

Yesterday, the door fell off, sir. And there's rats also. And also, the restrooms, ay sir, the smell (Holds fingers to his nose). (Valdez, 1992, p. 20)

The grower answers the farm worker with the following:

Alright. So you gotta rough it a little. I do that every time I go hunting in the mountains. Why, it's almost like camping out boy, a free vacation (Valdez, 1992, p. 20).

The sarcastic humor in these lines is clear and continues throughout the *Acto*. The grower asks the farm worker if he knows about Chavez, and the farm worker obligingly calls Chavez a "communist" and "trouble maker" (Valdez, 1992, p. 20). Displaying extreme deference, the farm worker falls to his knees, waiting like a dog to be patted by the boss.

Later in the *Acto*, the grower romanticizes how good it must be to be free like the Mexican farm workers who don't have the worries of paying for a \$12,000 Lincoln Continental, a \$350,000 house or a wife who likes to shop. In the last part of the *Acto*, the Grower and the farm worker trade roles. The grower takes off his mask, gives it to the farm worker and tells the farm worker to "act like you're the boss" (Valdez, 1992, p. 21).

The farm worker is uncomfortable at first with his power, but with the unmasking of the grower, he realizes that the grower looks human just like him. Describing this transformation of the farm worker, Diamond (1977) says, "He [the farm worker] laughs at the enemy, and his fear is lessened. The farm worker perceives that he is equal to the boss, that underneath the mask is only a human being" (p. 79).

A comical reversal of roles occurs with the farm worker behaving in the same greedy manner as the grower. Charlie, the guard, now believing the unmasked grower is just a lowly farm worker, drags the grower off-stage. At the end of the *Acto*, the farm worker takes off the "pig mask" of the grower and says to the audience:

Good, so much for the grower. I got his house, his land, his car. Only, I'm not going to keep'em. He can have them. But I'm taking the cigar. (Valdez, 1992, p. 27)

Although the *Acto* makes the point that the farm worker should not be afraid of the grower, it also makes the point that the farm worker should not behave in the same oppressive manner as the grower. By giving up the mask, the farm worker chooses not to be part of an oppressive system.

Farm Workers Perform Across the United States

As well as performing for farm workers, El Teatro Campesino entertained audiences across the United States, carrying the "message" of the farm workers and raising funds for *la causa*. Like other union staff who travelled as boycotters, the actors found accommodations from sympathetic supporters and received the normal \$5.00 per week from the Union for personal expenses.

In addition to performing for community, church, civil rights and cultural groups, *El Teatro Campesino* was so well-received that it performed for wider

audiences. In 1967, *El Teatro Campesino* performed at the well-known Newport Folk Festival. In the same year, it performed to rave reviews for an audience of 2,000 at the Off-Broadway Village Theater in New York City. A review of this performance, said that *El Teatro Campesino* was a revival of a dormant type of theater which raises social consciousness. It compared *El Teatro Campesino* to the Federal Theater's "Living Newspaper," Clifford Odet's "Waiting for Lefty", and "Pins and Needles" by the International Garment Worker's Union (New Grapes, 1967, July 22, 1967). For this production, *El Teatro Capesino* won a Special Citation in the Off-Broadway Awards (Obie Award) "for creating a workers' theater to demonstrate the politics of survival" (Bolwell, 1968, May 28, p. 32).

El Teatro Campesino was able to convey to the public in a simple and humorous way the exploitation of farm workers and their desire to organize and change. It was the theme of the small guy against the big guy -- a theme that the Wall Street Journal (1967, July 24) called "irresistible" (p. 25) to the American public. The article also pointed out that there was no mistaking the bottom-line message of the *actos* to secure rights for the farm workers. Throughout the lively and humorous performances, no audience could miss the farm workers demands for union contracts, decent wages, unemployment insurance, etc. *El Teatro Campesino* presented the cause of a "heretofore rather quiet minority group, the Mexican Americans" (Wall Street Journal, p. 35).

Although the original focus of *El Teatro Campesino* was the farm workers, in 1967, Luis Valdez went his own way and moved *El Teatro Campesino* from Delano to Del Rey, where Valdez established an arts center. Besides farm workers, Valdez turned to other themes such as Mexican American identity, racism in education, the Vietnam war and police brutality. His troupe would tour the United States and Europe, enacting the struggles of Mexican Americans within the Euro-American society and offering an alternative interpretive system of Mexican American identity. Additionally, Valdez would go on to become a well-known independent director and producer of films as *Zoot Suit* and *LaBamba*. "But always," as Valdez later pointed out, "the cultural root is the *campesino*, the farm worker. I don't care how sophisticated we get

in the city, we share the communal remembrance of the earth" (cited in Ferriss and Sandoval, p. 110).

Chavez was always appreciative of the efforts of *El Teatro Campesino* in entertaining and educating the farm worker and wider public. Even before Valdez had approached him about forming *El Teatro Campesino*, Chavez said that he had seen *carpas* in Mexico and was interested in using them for purposes of communication and education (Broyles-Gonzales, 1994). Explaining the importance of *El Teatro Campesino* as educational medium to an appreciative fan, Chavez wrote,

Thank you for your note of praise about *El Teatro Campesino*. The members of the original *Teatro*, led by Luis Valdez, worked with us in the early years of the grape strike. Their talents were extremely helpful in educating the public about the inner feelings of the people on strike as well as presenting the facts as they were. (Chavez, 1972, December 18.)

El Malcriado

Just as *El Teatro Campesino* enlightened the farm workers about critical issues, the Union's newspaper El Malcriado was another important educational activity. Chavez started El Malcriado in December, 1964, to disseminate news of the union as well as other information to farm workers. The literal English translation of El Malcriado is "ill-bred" or "children who speak back to their parents." In a letter to his mentor and friend Fred Ross, Chavez explained that the name of the newspaper had special meaning for Mexicans: "During the *Revolucion* [Mexican Revolution] one of the people's papers was called El Malcriado. The name is really the best we could find for the paper. It means many more things for the people" (cited in Ferriss and Sandoval, 1997, p. 80).

Chavez wanted El Malcriado to be an alternative newspaper that would speak to the farm workers about their lives, the activities of the union and what the UFW hoped to accomplish. El Malcriado was obviously slanted; it presented the side of the farm workers. However, Chavez was very clear that he wanted a newspaper to speak of the "revolution" that he hoped the movement would bring about in order to improve the farm workers' lives (Ferriss and Sandoval, 1997). El Malcriado has been described as

Cesar's "labor of love" (Ferriss and Sandoval, 1997, p. 80). Published about every other week in both Spanish and English, El Malcriado was read widely by farm workers and sympathizers to *la causa*.

El Malcriado was so popular that illiterate farm workers would have friends or family read it to them (Day, 1971). It not only kept farm workers abreast of what the movement was trying to accomplish and its current activities, but it also provided the farm workers with a broader education by informing them, from an historical perspective, of the "realities" of farm labor and agribusiness and of the justification for unionization and a sense of labor history. In addition, El Malcriado informed members of educational opportunities, provided education and comic relief through cartoons, discussed national politics and political leaders, looked at the cultural identity of Mexican Americans, and gave an opportunity for farm workers to seek advice through an advice column or express their opinions through letters to the editors.

Themes in El Malcriado

Meaning of the Movement

Chavez and others wrote inspiring articles about the meaning of the Union and the movement. In educating the farm workers to what the Union meant, Chavez always stressed that the UFW was more than a typical labor union in which the focus was mainly on the economic well-being of the worker. Chavez emphasized how the UFW would not only improve the farm workers economically but also how it would be a movement that would promote the respect and dignity of the farm worker. Stressing the importance of the farm worker's dignity as well as economic well-being, in an early issue of El Malcriado, Chavez (1964, December 15) wrote:

The Farm Workers Association is a collective undertaking, which, by collective means, provides the economic basis that the farm workers need to assure a better life, socially, morally and economically. At the same time the Association works to restore to man that independence and liberty which will assure him his dignity and his solidarity with other men. (p. 29).

In another issue of El Malcriado, in response to the wife of a Delano grape grower who expressed shock and disgust with workers who had turned against their

"benevolent employer," Chavez (1965b) again asserted the inherent worth and equality of the farm worker with the following: "Contrary to the opinion of some, the farm worker is not a beggar, nor is he less than any other man. Each man is of equal worth, whether he is a grower or a worker" (p. 3).

Chavez also wrote frequently about the important principle of nonviolence in the movement and presented features on Martin Luther King and Mahatma Gandhi. Always concerned about the possibility of violence, Chavez took every opportunity to educate farm workers about the power of the nonviolent "weapons" of strikes and boycotts. Stressing the importance of nonviolence to *la causa* and cautioning farm workers not to fight back with violence, Chavez (1968, February 21) wrote,

In the very depth of our beings we understand the futility of violence. Even when we are brutally attacked, we do not reply in kind. We attempt always to remember the words of the great Mexican liberator Benito Juarez, who said, "Respect for the rights of others is the essence of peace." To resort to violence for resolving our difficulties would be to admit that we have no confidence in the inherent justice of our cause. We will fight in court, on the picket line, in the press and on the boycott, until the exploitation of farm workers in the United States comes to an end. (p 2)

Updates on Activities and Services

In addition to informing members about the movement's purpose and philosophy, El Malcriado provided the farm workers with up-to-date information on all important movement activities, particularly the status of the strikes and boycotts, the pilgrimage, Chavez's fast and union services. All of these activities received extensive coverage in *El Malcriado*. For example, the August 1, 1968 issue ran a feature article entitled "Grape Boycott Spreads Coast to Coast." The article included a two page map of the United States, indicating all the different boycott cities and providing an update of what was happening in each city.

In addition to the strike and boycott activities, the 1966 Pilgrimage was an important event and received a lot of exposure in El Malcriado. The March 17, 1966 issue was devoted almost exclusively to the pilgrimage. The article entitled "Farm

Workers Pilgrimage" included a map which traced the route of the marchers' 300 mile journey from Delano to Sacramento. The article's message of the meaning of the pilgrimage was very clear in such statements as: Farm workers are revolutionaries, as are all true Christians, because they are trying to change the world, to end the evil, the injustice, the bitterness that lie at the root of so much of the sin of this world (p.4).

Of great significance to Chavez was his 25-day fast in 1968. Just as the pilgrimage, the fast received a lot of national media attention, and its importance to the movement was very evident in its extensive coverage in El Malcriado. The entire issue of March 15, 1968 edition of El Malcriado (10,000 Mass in *Gran Fiesta*) is devoted to Chavez's fast which culminated in an ecumenical mass. The first page shows a picture of Robert Kennedy breaking bread with Chavez. The symbolization of the meaning of the fast is clear in Chavez's statement in the article, "It was a personal fast of penance, and hope. It symbolized a recommitment and rededication to the principles of non-violence and brotherhood on which the Union was founded" (cited in 10,000 Mass in *Gran Fiesta*, p. 8).

In addition to keeping union members informed about union activities, El Malcriado frequently presented information on union services. Many issues contained information on the multitude of services offered by the National Farm Worker's Service Center -- notary public, credit union, the Farm Worker's Health Clinic, interpreters, income tax service, and help with problems about welfare, immigration, social security, etc.

With the addition of each new union service, El Malcriado publicized and explained these services. For example, almost the entire October 1, 1969 edition featured the new Robert F. Kennedy Farm Workers Medical Plan. This issue explained how the Plan is a part of a union contract which obligates the employer to contribute \$10 for every hour worked by every worker to the Plan. In an article entitled "What are the Medical Benefits" (1969, October 1), El Malcriado detailed all the benefits of the plan including hospitalization, laboratory tests, x-rays, maternity benefits and medicine and drugs. There is also an explanation of the proper procedures on accessing these services. Additionally, there is an explanation of how all the money

deducted from the employer goes to the plan and how there would be no insurance profits to pay because the Union is in charge of administering the plan. The article emphasizes, "The only purpose of the plan is to use the money to provide medical benefits for the workers and their families" (p. 6).

Chavez was very proud of the new medical plan. In an introduction to the feature article he wrote, "You must understand that the Plan is your plan; it belongs to the farm workers -- and every member has the moral responsibility to protect it against doctors or hospitals or anyone who might try to destroy it" (cited in *What are the Medical Benefits?*, p. 2). The article includes a copy of a telegram to Chavez from Senator Walter Mondale stating his congratulations on the Plan and affirming Chavez's fight for dignity and social justice for the farm workers. In the telegram, Senator Mondale wrote,

Congratulations to the United Farm Workers Organizing Committee for the historic payment of the first benefits earned by farm workers under the Health and Welfare Plan, the first such plan negotiated through collective bargaining. These important medical benefits...represent both symbols and realities of the success in the farm workers struggle for social justice and human dignity (cited in *What are the Medical Benefits?*, p. 14).

Education on Labor and History

Informing farm workers about present union activities and services was important, but Chavez also felt it was critical to educate farm workers on previous labor unionization efforts in the United States and to inform them about their own Mexican history. Hence, El Malcriado often presented articles on labor unionization and Mexican history.

One of El Malcriado's articles on labor history was entitled "Clothing Workers Won," (1967, May 24). The article chronicled the history of the garment workers and how they successfully organized themselves and the story of how "they stood together against their unfair employers and won" (p. 28).

There were many other articles telling the stories and struggles of labor organizing, including the story of the AFL-CIO, with whom the UFW became

affiliated. The article "The Hands That Have Built America," (1966, December 29) details the historical struggles that workers had in seeking union recognition. The article also talks about the relationship that the AFL-CIO has with the UFW and other unions, stating, "Without the AFL-CIO, the individual unions would be small and weak and would be fighting each other instead of the employer" (p. 24).

Very importantly, this and other articles about union history gave farm workers a sense that they were not alone in their struggles. The writings stressed an identity with all other workers who have sought their "just" right to unionize. In emphasizing this common struggle, the same article on the history of the AFL-CIO says that the farm workers can learn something about the heroic history of labor and know that they are not alone in their suffering. Emphasizing this point, the article states,

Heulguistas [strikers] may suffer harassment, brutality, torture and imprisonment. But if they know -- as they do --that there have been others who have had to walk this difficult path before, the suffering is easier, and the goal comes closer. (p. 25)

In addition to articles on labor history, there were articles on Mexican history. Instilling a sense of historical and cultural pride in farm workers was important to Chavez, and El Malcriado provided a means of conveying it. As it was particularly important to stress those historical figures who worked to help the poor, the Mexican Revolution was a popular subject. One of the Mexican Revolutionary figures featured was Pancho Villa in a series entitled "Exploits of Pancho Villa: The cause of the Poor" (1966, December 29). The article chronicles Pancho Villa's life and his fight to help the poor. El Malcriado opened the article by stating, "The cause for which he [Pancho Villa] fought, like Zapata, was the cause of the poor" (p. 20). Articles such as these were important to Chavez's broader goal of restoring dignity and pride to the farm workers.

Cartoons in El Malcriado

Early on in its publication, *El Malcriado* used cartoons not only to entertain but also to educate farm workers about their current condition, their rights and their ability to change. In describing the importance of cartoons in educating the farm workers,

Andy Zermeno, the artist who drew most of the cartoons, explained, "The cartoons were very important because a lot of the farm workers couldn't read. Cesar and I talked and decided we had to establish a way to use graphics to communicate with them about their rights" (cited in Ferriss and Sandoval, p. 81). Luis Valdez, originator of *El Teatro Campesino*, wrote many of the scripts for the cartoons.

Chavez came up with the idea of the cartoon character of Don Sotaco for the cartoon strip. Don Sotaco (a character also used in *El Teatro Campesino* was a hapless farmer. Emphasizing that Don Sotaco was someone with whom many farm workers could identify, and learn from, Zermeno stated, "...he [Chavez] came up with Don Sotaco, a farm worker who didn't know anything. We wanted farm workers to identify with this character and show that if you didn't know your rights, you would get into a lot of trouble" (cited in Ferriss and Sandoval, p. 81).

One of the popular cartoon series in El Malcriado was called "*La Dulce Vida* (The Sweet Life) in The North." Obviously, the irony of the title was clear; for farm worker's life was not very sweet North of Mexico. Typical of the topics covered, one of the "*La Dulce Vida*" cartoon strips (1967, March 15) tells the story of Mexicans who have payed \$40.00 to a contractor to illegally take them across the border to work in the fields. It shows about twenty Mexicans being rounded up and put in a truck in Mexico and then crossing the Mexican American border by wading across a river. After crossing the border the Mexicans are hidden in a meat truck and transported in the truck to work for a grower.

One of the captions shows a Mexican policeman, who has obviously been paid off to look the other way while the Mexicans are entering the truck, saying to a woman glamorously dressed-up, "As soon as I process this cargo, I will take you to Acapulco" (p. 8). Another strip shows the contractor replying to a Mexican's concern about being caught while crossing the border with the caption,

Don't worry, at this time of night the inspectors look the other way. They know that the ranchers need farm hands for their crops. And the inspector don't want to interfere. Really, we do the crossings at night and out of the way just so we don't embarrass them. (p.10)

Another strip shows two U.S. immigration inspectors chatting outside an official car, and one says to the other, while watching the meat truck pass, "Hey! This makes three Meat Products Inc. trucks this week. There certainly is a great demand for beef in the valley." The other inspector answers, "Yeah, They sure need a lot of beef during the harvests!" (p. 11).

Like *El Teatro Campesino*, these cartoon strips were immensely popular with the farm workers. They provided an opportunity for the farm workers to laugh at themselves. However, just like *El Teatro Campesino*, the cartoons clearly displayed the harsh reality of the farm workers' lives.

Corridos

Just as *El Teatro Campesino* and the cartoons in El Malcriado educated the farm worker about his life situation and the events of the union in an entertaining manner, the many *corridos* (ballads) that farm workers wrote and sang in Spanish to the tune of Mexican folk music were another enjoyable and creative educational activity of *la causa*. Sung at union meetings and events, and, while picketing and boycotting, *corridos* are part of a long Mexican tradition of communicating events, views, and feelings through song. In explaining how *corridos* allowed them to recount and remember events, Pablo Saludo, a farm worker, guitarist and singer, said that *corridos* were sung so that, "we won't forget things that we should do or shouldn't do on a lot of things that already happened, you know. Sort of a story that is told in a *corrido*, a little piece of a story that we went through" (cited in Heisley, 1983, p. 75).

Although they had grown up in the tradition of singing *corridos*, most of the farm workers who composed *corridos* for the union had no previous experience in writing lyrics and no formal musical training. Stating how the composition of *corridos* began with involvement with *la causa*, Francisco Garcia, a farm worker and composer of *corridos* explained, "Our ballads are born here of the movement; here at the foot of the Cause, there is where they were made" (cited in Heisley, 1983, p. 75).

Francisco Garcia did not feel that the farm workers' lack of experience in composition took away from the beauty of the ballads. Instead, he suggested that the

farm worker's "nearness" to the events treated in his/her composition enhanced the meaningfulness of the *corridos*.

Because of their closeness to the subject matter, the deep-held feelings of the farm workers who composed *corridos* came through very clearly. The *corridos* became not only an avenue for farm workers to recount creatively the events of the union but they also were a means for the farm workers to express strong feelings about these events, their lives and dreams for the future. The *corridos*, said composer Francisco Garcia, are "very simple, but true" (cited in Heisley, 1983, 145).

Education and Empowerment Through Song

One could educate farm workers through a litany of facts about the issues surrounding farm labor and the need for change, or, one could get one's message across in a more entertaining and simple way. Certainly, the *corridos*, like *El Teatro Campesino* and the cartoons communicated the message of the union to the farm workers in a very effective manner. Heisley (1983) emphasizes that the *corridos* allowed the union to inform its audience about the current events of the union and its views surrounding these events.

Heisley (1983) also addresses the sense of empowerment that the *corridos* evoked in the farm workers. Heisley (1983) writes that the "songs address the situation of farm workers who have organized to change many of the conditions which victimized earlier immigrants" (p. 287). There is a mood of hope in the *corridos* that accentuates the ability of Chavez and the union to bring about positive changes in their lives. Often drawing upon cultural and historical Mexican images of empowerment, the *corridos* evoke an optimistic feeling of the farm workers' ability collectively to bring about social change.

Setting the tone for the union *corridos* to follow, the first corrido, written by Rosa Gloria in 1962, both relays the events of *la causa* and evokes a sense of empowerment. It tells the story of Chavez's effort to make the farm workers' lives different by starting the union. Chavez said that he liked this ballad so much that, "I asked her [Rosa Gloria] to sing it at our first Union convention" (cited in Levy, 1975, p. 170). Two verses of this first corrido are:

In the year '62
With effort and uncertainty
There began a campaign
For the *campesino*

Cesar Chavez started it.
He became a volunteer
And went forth as a pilgrim
To fulfill his destiny (cited in Levy, 1975, p. 170).

Thus, began the tradition of singing *corridos* to tell the union story.

One well-known example of a *corrido* of over twenty verses was called "Strike and Violences," written shortly after the Delano grape strike started in 1965. It tells the story of the early weeks of the strike. During this period, strikebreakers were harvesting grapes, and the local police were enforcing a court-ordered ban on the use of loudspeakers and shouting *huelga* (strike) on the picket line.²⁶ Chavez viewed the banning of loudspeakers and shouting *huelga* as violations of the basic right of free speech, and this violation became an important theme in the *corrido* "Strike and Violences." Expressing this theme, two verses of the *corrido* are:

Forty-four were arrested
Without committing a crime;
Their only offense was to yell
Strike! to a boss.

Among them were women
And also nine ministers.
They spent long hours

²⁶For an historical account of the court-order ban of the strikers shouting *huelga* on the picket line, refer to Chapter 6, Chavez Reaches Out to the Larger Society: 1965 to 1970.

Imprisoned without having
committed a crime. (cited in Heisley, 1983 p. 99).

Although one could lecture about basic civil rights, these two verses communicated to its audience the denial of civil rights suffered by the strikers. In another verse of "Strikes and Violences," Chavez's emphasis on nonviolence comes across very clearly:

The director [Chavez] advises
Not to provoke violence,
"I know that we have more than enough courage
But we must be patient" (cited in Heisley, 1983, p. 74)

Evoking the image of the Virgin of Gaudalupe, who is an important religious symbol to Mexicans²⁷, another *corrido* entitled "El *Corrido* of Cesar Chavez," tells the story of the union's Lenten 300 mile pilgrimage from Delano to Sacramento in 1966.²⁸ Expressing an important event for Chavez and the union, the first two and last two of the verses are as follows:

One day, the seventh of March,
On the morning of Holy Thursday
Cesar left Delano
Gathering a campaign.

Fellow farm workers,
this is going to be a lesson.
We will take this march

²⁷For a discussion on the importance of the Virgin of Guadalupe as a Saint of the poor and a symbol of liberation, refer to Chapter 4, The Learning Processes That Inspired Chavez to Form the UFW.

²⁸For an account of the union's pilgrimage to Sacramento, refer to Chapter 6, Chavez Reaches Out to the Larger Society: 1965-1970.

Right to Sacramento.

This gentleman Cesar Chavez,
He is a very whole man;
He wished to see himself
Face to face with Governor Brown.

Listen, Cesar Chavez,
Your name that is pronounced,
On your chest you merit
The Virgin of Guadalupe.
(cited in Heisley, 1983, p. 100-101).

This *corrido* depicts the important event of the pilgrimage of farm workers to Sacramento as well as evoking a sense of empowerment. Chavez and the farm workers wanted to meet face to face with Governor Brown to talk about their rights as outlined in the "Plan of Delano."²⁹ Chavez and the farm workers marched with a banner of the Virgin of Gaudalupe at the head of the procession, and Chavez, like the Virgin of Gaudalupe, is depicted as a symbol of liberation. This *corrido*, as many others, revealed the farm workers' hope to bring about changes in their lives.

Nowhere is the farm workers' desire for social change so vividly stated as it is in the following verse from another *corrido* entitled "March of Delano":

Delano, your march continues on
Carrying in its soul a new ideal
Of light and hope for the farm worker
Who continues to fight for a new social

²⁹For an examination of the demands of the farm workers in the "Plan of Delano," refer to pages Chapter 6, Chavez Reaches Out to the Larger Society: 1965 to 1970.

order. (cited in Heisley, 1983, p. 140)

In summary, the *corridos*, like *El Teatro Campesino* and the cartoons were powerful and entertaining methods of educating farm workers, many of them illiterate, to union views and activities. At the same time, they evoked a sense of pride and empowerment to believe that change was possible.

Union Activities

Before joining the union, most of the farm workers, who are portrayed in the *corridos* as fighting for a "new social order," had never participated in any other formal organization. However, once becoming involved in the union and participating in union activities, such as strikes, boycotts, hiring halls, and ranch committees, farm workers gained valuable leadership, organizational and decision-making skills. In general terms, union members also gained a new sense of confidence and learned that by working together they could bring about desired changes.

Education and Empowerment through Strikes

Chavez often talked about the union as an educational experience that forced its members to learn quickly. He believed that even though it was a forced kind of learning, it was lasting (Moyer, 1970). As Chavez joined the Delano grape strike much sooner than he originally intended, union members quickly had to learn to adjust to life on the picket line.³⁰ Chavez claimed that union members on the picket line learned "quicker and faster than you would any other place because you're totally and completely immersed in what's happening" (cited in Moyer, 1970, November p. 7). People became totally involved and quickly learned anything that needed to be done. According to Chavez, the picket line was "the best school for organizers" and the "best possible education," better than what they could learn in a classroom (cited in Matthiesen, 1969, p. 83).

³⁰For an examination of the events leading up to the Delano Strike, refer to Chapter 5, Chavez Creates a Community Union and Social Movement.

More than anything else, what the striker gained was the sense of empowerment that came with taking a stand in the attainment of what one feels is right and just. Chavez expressed his strong belief in the power of the picket line in his statement, "When a man gets up there and yells *Huelga* [Strike] for the first time, something happens to him. He will never be the same. We get rid of the fear" (cited in Steiner, 1969, p. 292). Once the fear is gone, Chavez believed "the picket line is a beautiful thing, because it does something to a human being" (cited in Matthiessen, 1969, p. 84).

By joining the community union and taking their place on the picket line, farm workers, for the first time, felt empowered to change their lives. Most of the union members had never joined an organization before, let alone a labor union. Brown (1972) writes of the weak self-image and the feeling of powerlessness, dependency, inferiority and fatalism of many farm workers before joining the union. However, a new feeling of empowerment was expressed by farm workers after becoming active in the union.

In stating what *la causa* had done for him, Jose Urie, an older farm worker, with seven children who were also farm workers, stated,

Before, the workers always held their heads down. They were afraid of everyone. Now they hold their heads high. Chavez has taught our people not to be afraid. He taught us that there is hope, and he showed us how to reach out for it. (cited in Day, 1971)

In explaining how he now felt empowered by joining the union, another farm worker said,

Before, I felt below the anglo and was afraid to say anything because people would see how uneducated I was...but now that I am in *la causa* I feel equal to anyone and will go anywhere to defend my rights. (cited in Brown, 1972, p. 270)

These sentiments were typical of farm workers, who realized that by banding together and taking a stand they could overcome their sense of powerlessness and work together for social change.

Leadership and Organizational Skills of Boycotts

Chavez believed that the union quickly developed leadership and organizational skills. In an interview, Chavez commented, "We have developed more leadership in this movement in four years than I did in 16 or 18 years earlier" (cited in Moyer, 1970, p. 7). The development of leadership and organizational skills was particularly evident in farm workers who were sent across the country to organize boycotts.³¹

Boycott organizers, men and women who had previously only done farm work before joining the union, had one of the most complex and difficult tasks in the union. They were sent to a city with no more than \$100 in cash with which to get settled, instructions on how to set up an effective boycott campaign, and the names of people sympathetic to *la causa*. As Brown (1972) indicates, the organizer had to raise financial support, recruit volunteer help, plan and carry-out a boycott strategy, publicize the boycott, form a coalition of sympathetic citizens, deal with heads of local unions and churches, negotiate with stores, and generally stop the sale of grapes by any nonviolent method possible.

When the grape strike first started in 1965, the union only had four skilled organizers, all of whom were trained by Fred Ross in the Community Service Organization.³² During the DiGiorgio and Guimarra boycotts, Ross and Chavez trained additional boycotters. Once a boycott organizer was placed in charge of a city, Brown (1972) states that the organizer had a lot of authority to run it as he/she saw fit. Most of the boycott organizers became very successful and were held in high regard by the union. Chavez described the boycott organizers as "men who will go down in history as heroes of the farm workers' struggle for liberty" (cited in Brown, 1972).

Great praise for the boycott organizers' abilities also came from the union's urban supporters. For example, local civil rights organizations in Chicago, Boston and Detroit presented their "Man of the Year" awards to local grape boycott leaders.

³¹For information on boycotts across the country, refer to Chapter 6, Chavez Reaches Out to the Larger Society.

³²In addition to Chavez, the other three organizers trained by Fred Ross in the Community Service Organization and who followed Chavez to help him set up the union were Dolores Huerta, Roy Orendain and Gilbert Padilla.

Newspapers and television asked grape boycott leaders for interviews and for their life stories. And as Brown (1972) pointed out, "Churchmen lauded them as modern day saints and apostles of non-violence" (p. 186).

In effect, the grape boycott organizers demonstrated leadership, speaking and organizational skills that gained them great respect in cities throughout the nation.

Hiring Halls and Ranch Committees

In addition to skills learned through the strikes and boycotts, farm workers also gained valuable leadership and organizational skills and a sense of control over their work lives through the establishment of the Hiring Halls and Ranch Committees. From the time the union started winning contracts, Chavez perceived the establishment of Hiring Halls and Ranch Committees as an important means of taking power away from the growers and giving the farm workers more control over decisions that profoundly affect their lives.

The purpose of the Hiring Halls was to eliminate the dreaded, often exploitive contract system, where a middle-person supplied farm labor to the growers. Under the terms of the union's contracts, the Hiring Halls, which were run by farm workers themselves, supplied farm labor to the growers. Growers under contract were required to give a two week notice to the Hiring Hall, indicating approximately how many farm workers would be needed. Forty-eight hours before the actual work was to begin, the grower had to provide, in writing, the hiring hall with a specific crew order. Using a seniority system, the Hiring Hall notified farm workers of the jobs. If some of the farm workers did not show up, dispatchers in the Hiring Hall worked their way down the list (Taylor, 1975).

Gaining control over their own lives was a constant theme in *la causa*, and the Hiring Hall allowed farm workers to learn to make their own decisions. This aspect was stressed in an article in El Malcriado (1967, May 10) entitled "It's Your Own Hiring Hall" which stated, "Now they [farm workers] have the new security of knowing that it is THEIR very own union that is giving them the job, THEIR very own people that are writing out the dispatch slips" (p. 14).

Equally important as the Hiring Hall in allowing farm workers to make

decisions that affected their lives, were the Ranch Committees. At each ranch under union contract, the farm workers elected five members to the Ranch Committee to represent them in their dealings with both the employer and the union staff. The Ranch Committees set and administered policies on each ranch. During the union convention, held every other year, all of the Committees met and created broader union policies. The Ranch Committees also elected union officers and the Board of Directors (Taylor, 1975). Participation in these Ranch Committees allowed farm workers at each ranch to have a say over their affairs and to develop important leadership skills.

Summary

From 1962 to 1970, Chavez built a powerful community union and social movement that provided a rich array of educational opportunities for its members. Many of the farm workers had little or no education; however as adults they were able to partake in many educational activities that gave them specific skills including organizing, speaking, leadership and trade skills. Very importantly, by joining the union and becoming active participants in the strikes, boycotts and other educational activities, the members learned a new sense of empowerment and dignity. They found the courage to examine their lives and collectively to take a stand to improve their situation.

Housemeetings were a primary educational activity of the union. Chavez went into the homes of farm workers and acted as a facilitator to encourage the farm workers to identify their problems and to come up with solutions. These housemeeting resulted in the farm workers' willingness to take the risk to articulate a different view of the world and to join a self-help community union.

The backbone of the community union's self-help program was the National Farm Workers Service Center. In addition to providing health and welfare services, it offered educational services for farm workers. An important educational program of the Service Center was the Training Center. The Training Project provided several training programs including office skills, community organizing, and training for skilled farm jobs, such as shop mechanics, irrigators, mechanical pruning machine operators and tractor drivers.

In addition to the practical educational aspects of the Training Project, *El Teatro Campesino* (The Farm Workers' Theater) was a highly original educational activity of the union. Started by Luis Valdez in October 1965, with the encouragement and support of Chavez, *El Teatro Campesino* was popular theater performed by farm workers. The themes of *El Teatro Campesino* revolved around expressing the exploitive living and working conditions of the farm workers and their need to unionize to protect themselves from the abuses of agribusiness.

Just as *El Teatro Campesino* informed farm workers about critical issues, El Malcriado (The Farm Workers' Newspaper) was another educational activity which disseminated union as well as other information. Widely read by farm workers, El Malcriado was published in both Spanish and English. Besides articles it also ran a very popular cartoon series which not only entertained farm workers but also educated them about their current condition, their rights and their ability to change.

Corridos (folk songs) were another entertaining educational activity of the Union. Written by farm workers and sung to traditional Mexican folk music, *corridos* told stories about the movement and were a creative avenue for farm workers to express their feelings about *la causa*, their Mexican heritage, their hopes for the future, etc.

Other union activities that provided educational opportunity included strikes, boycotts, hiring halls and ranch committees. From these activities farm workers gained valuable leadership, organizational and decision-making skills. They were also able to gain a sense of control over their work lives through the hiring halls and ranch committees.

The educational activities of the union involved learning outside of traditional, formal education; however for Mexican Americans and other minority groups, this has often been the most powerful type of education (Baba and Aboyni, 1979; Briscoe and Ross, 1989; Cunningham, 1988; Stubblefield and Keane; 1994). The union strongly encouraged the learning of new skills to become more active participants in our democratic society. However, in contrast to mainstream education, the adult education in the union reinforced the farm workers' cultural legacy and encouraged them to

challenge the dominant culture.

CHAPTER 8

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND FUTURE RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

"What you do for the least of my brothers,
you do for me." Cesar Chavez

This chapter presents a summary of the study and draws conclusions about the role of adult education in the formation, growth and success of the UFW and in the empowerment that allowed Cesar Chavez and union members to struggle against the establishment. This chapter also summarizes how the UFW educated the public and brought about the creation of knowledge and social change in society. Implications for the discipline of adult education and research themes for future research are also included.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to identify and analyze the critical events, educative processes and generation of knowledge to the larger society in the UFW from 1962 to 1970. There has not been a previous study which explores and documents the role that adult education played in the formation, growth and successes of the UFW.

The questions which provided the research framework on which the study was built revolved around: (1) the learning processes that led Chavez to form the UFW; (2) Chavez's role in defining the UFW to movement members and to society at large; (3) the critical educative processes and activities in the movement; (4) how the educational activities and processes affected the empowerment of the farm workers and contributed to the successes of the UFW; (5) how Chavez and the UFW contributed to the construction of knowledge within the greater society about the economic and social conditions of the farm workers and the resulting social changes that occurred because of this knowledge.

A review of the literature provided invaluable background on the conceptual framework for this study which was drawn from the theories and positions of adult educators and others. This conceptual framework provided a focus and, in combination with the research questions, directed the emergence of themes throughout the study. The most valuable components of the conceptual framework for this study were:

(1) The examination of the educational processes in a social movement is derived largely from a sociological perspective of adult education based on critical theory. The growth of social movements occurs in free spaces outside of accepted institutions. As such, they challenge the status quo, and much of the education that occurs in social movements follows the critical theorists' concept of emancipatory education for collective as well as individual change.

(2) Adult education can be an agent of social change within democratic societies. The writings of theorists and practitioners, such as Dewey, Lindeman, and Freire, indicate a strong legacy within the field which envisions adult education as an agent of social change in the creation of a better society. These theorists were not satisfied with the status quo and inequities within society and believed in man's potential to create a better society through adult education.

(3) Social movements are important learning sites and sources for skill-building and empowerment for their participants. Linking adult learning to social movements, the works of such adult education theorists as Dykstra and Law, Finger, Holford, Stubblefield, and Welton indicate that social movements are inherently educative forces where specific skill building and emancipatory praxis take place.

(4) Social movements are sources of new knowledge to society. The works of Eyerman and Jamison and Holford stress the importance of social movements as creative forces within society that can bring about new ways of thinking and changes within society.

(5) Movement intellectuals are the ones who articulate the meaning of the movement within the movement itself and to the larger society. The works of Gramsci, Holford, and Eyerman and Jamison emphasize that the role of the movement intellectual is an inherently educative one.

(6) Mexican Americans have a rich adult educational history outside of traditional education. As other minorities who have often been subject to discrimination and inferior education, documented histories show that adult education outside of mainstream education has been enriching and empowering for Mexican Americans.

The historical investigation of farming, farm labor, and union organizing attempts in California before the formation of the UFW also provided important background for this study. First, an investigation of this history was necessary for understanding the resistance that Chavez would face from the powerful growers and their supporting social, political, and economic institutions. Farming, with its vertical and horizontal integration, had become agribusiness. Since the beginning of the century, the growers had come to rely mainly on various waves of cheap, ethnic labor to work on these farms and had resisted all farm worker' attempts at unionization, often violently. For the most part, Mexican American farm workers were reticent to even participate in attempts at farm labor unionization. The political climate in the 1960s may have been more receptive to farm labor organizing than previous decades; however, given the strong resistance that he faced, Chavez's success at the bargaining table with the growers in 1970 was a remarkable accomplishment. Second, examining the role that adult education played in overcoming the reluctance of Mexican American farm workers to join a union as well as its role in influencing the growers to relent provided a unique opportunity to merge historical and educational research.

The research design for the study was historical research. The principal source of information for this study included extensive archival materials from the Archives of Labor History and Urban Affairs at Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan. In addition, valuable information came from government proceedings, doctoral dissertations and numerous secondary sources including relevant books, newspapers and journal articles.

This study's research provided facts and interpretations from these sources. A synthesis was made of the research and the major findings follow.

Adult Learning Outside of Formal Education

This study demonstrated that learning which occurs outside of formal education can be both empowering and life changing. It can also be in conflict with institutionalized learning and society's traditional way of knowing. The learning that occurred in Chavez's adult life influenced him to leave a life of migrant farm work and start a community union and social movement. His union dared to challenge the status

quo and to seek a better way of life for a largely minority population of poor, uneducated Mexican American farm workers.

After attending thirty different schools before dropping out in the eighth grade, Chavez's life would appear to have been set in the same direction as most other farm workers -- a life of poor wages and living conditions and little hope for a better future. However, in his adult life, significant learning helped to change this direction. Chavez learned about the teachings of social justice and nonviolence from Father Donald McDonnell and the techniques of community organizing from Fred Ross. Chavez read widely and learned that there were religious and moral justifications in the writings of Catholic popes to justify organizing labor when workers are exploited. He read the writings of Gandhi and learned that nonviolent acts would be his most powerful weapons in the struggle for social change. Largely based on these influences, Chavez left the migrant stream. First, he became a successful community organizer with the Community Services Organization. Second, he established a community union and social movement that succeeded for the first time in history to win labor contracts with the powerful growers. During his ten years with the CSO, Chavez learned that through the educative process of the housemeetings he could successfully organize Mexican Americans to work together to affect social change. When he left the CSO, these housemeetings as well as other educational activities were critical to the growth and successes of the UFW.

Educational Activities of the Farm Workers

Chavez's purpose in starting the Farm Workers Association (FWA) was to establish a self-help, self-supporting community union that would benefit and empower farm workers in all aspects of their lives. Chavez's interest was not just economic justice for farm workers. He established programs that would enable the farm workers to participate more fully in a democratic society. His vision was to restore their "dignity." This was not just a labor union, but *la causa para la raza*, a social movement of the poor and disenfranchised.

Educational activities for the farm workers were an important part of Chavez's community union. This study demonstrated that, just as the learning processes in

Chavez's adult life had a major influence on his life, the many educational activities in the union had a profound impact on the lives of the farm workers. These educational activities were empowering and prompted farm workers to take risks to challenge the status quo in their quest for social change. The farm workers also learned work, leadership, and organizational skills as well as invaluable skills such as speaking, writing. In addition, they learned the ability to function more effectively in dealing with important matters as immigration, social security, health, consumer credit, etc. These skills enabled them to participate more fully in a democratic society. Examples of specific educational activities in the union included: housemeetings; skills and other educational training in the National Farm Workers Center; *El Teatro Campesino* (Farm Workers' Theater); *corridos* (ballads); and other union activities such as strikes, boycotts, Hiring Halls and Ranch Committees.

Chavez Defines the Movement

Chavez functioned as the "movement intellectual" who articulated the identity and interests of the movement to union members and to the larger society. His role as a movement intellectual was inherently educative in his communication of the movement's vision and demands.

Chavez's vision was clear. He wanted the farm workers to take their rightful, equal place in society. His demands were clear. He wanted economic and social justice for the farm workers so that they could have more control over their lives. At every opportunity, Chavez sought to communicate the message of *la causa* to the larger society. Chavez relentlessly sought out the national media and would speak to any group who would listen. Congressional hearings, fasts, strikes and boycotts, and a pilgrimage also educated many across the nation about the vision and demands of the farm workers.

Development of Knowledge and Social Change

Society goes through a constant process of creating and recreating knowledge, and social movements are important sources of knowledge development for society. As bearers of new or recreated knowledge, social movements "have often been the sources of...new political and social identities" (Eyerman and Jamison, 1991, p. 3). Although

the historical background on farm labor of this study demonstrated that at certain times in this century society had some knowledge of the unjust plight of farm workers, it was not until Chavez's efforts that the situation of farm workers gained significant attention and support from a broad spectrum of society.

As an educative force in society, the UFW influenced the hearts and minds of the American public so significantly that social change occurred. Between the period of 1962 to 1970 the UFW moved from being a disputed social movement to gaining acceptance as a legitimate union of farm workers. Social change for the farm workers occurred in the first-time signing of labor contracts that protected their economic and social well-being. Just as significantly, these contracts gave the farm workers greater control over many decisions that affected their work and personal lives.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings of this study, certain conclusions can be drawn. Significant conclusions follow.

Social Movements as Sites of Adult Learning

Although some adult educational theorists (Dykstra and Law, 1994; Finger, 1989; Holford, 1995; Welton, 1993) contend that social movements are sites of learning that provide significant educational opportunities for adults, there have been few attempts to link theory to practice. Through historical research, this study provided a unique opportunity to apply this theory to a specific social movement. This was a case study that demonstrated that the UFW from 1962 to 1970 was a social movement that served as a site of adult learning for farm workers. Among the many educational activities that occurred in the UFW were housemeetings, *El Teatro Campesino*, *El Malcriado*, *corridos*, training programs and other activities such as strikes, boycotts, hiring halls and ranch committees.

Housemeetings were a fundamental educational activity of the union. During the housemeetings farm workers were encouraged to think critically about their lives and to discuss how collectively they could seek economic and social justice. Housemeetings became a voice where farm workers could express their current social reality and envision the possibility for change.

Further emphasis on examining their lives and realizing the possibility for change was achieved through the following educational activities: *El Malcriado*, *El Teatro Campesino*, and the *corridos*. *El Malcriado* was the farm workers' newspaper that disseminated information about the union as well as running inspiring articles about Mexican and labor history and a popular cartoon series humorously depicting the exploitation of farm workers. *El Teatro Campesino* was satirical theater which allowed the farm workers to laugh at themselves and the social system around them and to envision the possibility of change. Through song, the *corridos* also became an important avenue for farm workers to express their feelings about *la causa*, their Mexican heritage and their hopes for the future. Like the housemeetings, *El Malcriado*, *El Teatro Campesino*, and the *corridos* were empowering educational activities that educated farm workers about their current condition, their rights, and their ability to change.

The emphasis on improving their lives became praxis for farm workers in the many opportunities for skill enhancement provided at the National Farm Workers Service Center. In addition to assisting farm workers in wading through the bureaucratic maze of welfare, immigration and other services, the National Farm Workers Service Center offered training in office skills and community organizing and training for skilled farm jobs. Many farm workers used the Center, and the programs that it offered were at the heart of Chavez's self-help community union and social movement.

Farm workers also learned valuable leadership, organizational and decision-making skills through other union activities such as strikes, boycotts, hiring halls and ranch committees. For example, farm workers who never before had the opportunity to be in a position of authority or leadership went to cities and raised financial support, recruited volunteer help, interacted with a broad spectrum of people, and planned and carried-out a boycott strategy. Also, through activities such as the Ranch Committees and Hiring Halls, farm workers, who before had no control over decisions affecting their work-life, now were given the opportunity to exercise decision-making and organizational skills.

All of the learning activities offered in the UFW from 1962 to 1970 demonstrate that as a social movement, the UFW was a significant site of learning for farm workers. Not only did the educational activities provide opportunities for acquiring valuable specific skills but they also empowered farm workers to dare to make changes in their lives.

Education for Empowerment Outside of Traditional Education

Given a broad conceptualization of education, in the tradition of Bailyn (1960) and Cremin (1970; 1976), significant learning can occur outside of formal education. As documented by Briscoe and Ross (1989); Cunningham (1988); Heaney (1984); Horton (1990); Mitchell (1987); Montero-Sieburth (1990); Neufeld and McGee (1990); Stubblefield and Keane (1994) and others, learning outside of formal education can be particularly empowering for minorities and other oppressed groups. The findings of this study demonstrated that the adult educational activities of the UFW were an empowering educational experience for a largely uneducated group of farm workers.

As a social movement, the UFW from 1962 to 1970, was a "free space" (Evans and Boyte, 1986) in American society where, apart from the dominant culture, farm workers were able to learn about themselves and gain the self-confidence and courage to challenge societal institutions. The UFW offered unique educational opportunities and experiences for Mexican American farm workers that would not have been possible in formal, institutional education. The housemeetings, *El Teatro Campesino*, *El Malcriado*, boycotts, and many other educational activities affirmed the farm workers' worth and dignity and allowed them to think critically about their oppressed situation and their ability to change it. The UFW demonstrated the power and diversity of educative processes for those alienated from formal education.

Social Movements as Sources of Societal Knowledge

Drawing largely upon the work of sociologists Eyerman and Jamison (1991), Holford (1995), an adult education theorist, contends that social movements contribute to the development and shaping of knowledge construction for entire societies. As sources of new knowledge, social movements are creative forces within society which have been the source of new political and social identities.

This study linked theory to practice and demonstrated that as a social movement the UFW brought about new knowledge construction in society. Between 1962 and 1970 the UFW informed a large portion of society about the unjust situation of farm workers. As the movement intellectual, Chavez took every opportunity to communicate the knowledge interests of the movement to the American people. Through constant media exposure, strikes, boycotts, fasts, and pilgrimages, the UFW gained support from a broad segment of society. In 1970, the UFW succeeded in winning contracts and became the nation's first recognized farm union. Although at various times in this century attention had been drawn to the situation of farm workers, at no other time in farm labor history had such a large segment of the population learned about the farm workers struggle and given their support to their cause.

Adult Education as an Agent of Social Change

The purpose of adult education as an agent for social change has been a theme in adult education theory since its organization as a distinct body of knowledge. Dewey (1916), Lindeman (1961; 1945), Freire (1970) and others have emphasized the power of adult education for social action to improve people's lives and to create a more just society. Although the concept of adult education for social change is not embraced by all educational circles, it remains a strong theoretical legacy in the field.

This study demonstrated that adult education can be an agent of social change. The many educational opportunities in the UFW helped empower farm workers to challenge the status quo and seek social and economic changes. Through the collective efforts of the farm workers, the UFW from 1962 to 1970 was an educative force in society that affected social change. Within a short period society learned about the plight of farm workers and gave the necessary support to help the UFW change the status quo. The UFW demonstrated the collective power of individuals to make "impossible" social changes.

Recommendations for Further Research

This particular study stimulated observations, comments and questions that warrant further research. This study examined the UFW in its formative stages as a social movement from 1962 to 1970 before it became an accepted labor organization.

Once it moved from being a social movement to a recognized organization, the UFW ceased being a social movement that operated within a "free space." Further research could look at the educative processes in the UFW after 1970 when it gained recognition as a legitimate organization and compare them to the educational aspects of the UFW in its beginning stages as a social movement.

This study looked at the educative processes in the UFW and examined in a general manner how they impacted the farm workers' lives. However, further research could provide an in-depth analysis of the learning experiences of specific individuals within the movement and how this learning impacted him/her over a period of time. It would be of great interest to compare the learning experiences of various individuals over time.

This study concentrated on the Mexican American experience within the UFW, and most of the information about the movement focuses on Mexican Americans. However, there were a significant number of Filipinos who were a part of the movement, and the Vice President of the union was a Filipino. Further research could look at the Filipino adult educational experiences within the movement.

Cesar Chavez is closely identified with the UFW. Until his death, his name was almost synonymous with the movement. With a change in leadership, further research could examine the impact of this change on adult education efforts within the UFW.

Apart from recommendations for further research specific to this study, *La Causa Para La Raza* is one of the few case studies that has explored the educative processes and development of knowledge of a specific social movement. Further research needs to be done in this area to add to the understanding of adult education theory as it relates to practice.

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Archival Materials From Wayne State University

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