EDITOR'S NOTE: The following is an interview with Cesar E. Chavez, President of the United Farm Workers of America, AFL-CIO, conducted by EL MALCRIADO Editor Carlos R. Calderon and photographer Jose Salazar,

E.M.: Cesar, what is the status of the boycott? In particular, the Gallo boycott?

C.C.: I think that we have a very successful consumer boycott on grapes and lettuce and Gallo wine. I would have to first give you an explanation of what happened in the last boycott and then to give you a comparison,

In 1970 when we won the grape boycott, we won by cutting the sales 13% in nine Eastern Cities.

Then on the West Coast, sales went up 10%.

In the South, I think they went up 44% and then overseas like 900% -- that was when the Pentagon was buying the grapes for Vietnam,

So with that kind - just with that kind of a cutback. 18% in the nine Eastern states we're able to win the boycott. It put tremendous pressure on the growers.

Now, during the first boycott Los Angeles, San Francisco, Chicago, Detroit, St. Louis and Kansas City and all those Midwestern and Western cities, the sales went up. Now this year the sales are down already.

For instance, in the last grape report, the sales in unloads in grapes alone in New York City are down 25% which is very considerable.

It's down about 48% in al! of Canada,



In Los Angeles it's even which is a good thing for us. If it holds there's it means that we are doing good because it's dump market.

San Francisco is down by about 20%. And Boston is down maybe like 40%-30%. And so even the South is down in some of it's cities.

So it means that we have a broader boycott. There's more involvement and it's a better-based boycott.

On lettuce: in 1970 when we were negotiating with the growers, the big issue, one of the issues was that they were making people work 60 and 70 hours a week.

The workers would complain because they had to work long hours. So we fought to get a 48-hour week in the contracts.

Now the issue right now is that they re only working something like 18 to 25 hours a week because the market is so depressed it can't sell the grapes and the

It is not so much that we have that many stores cooperating with us. The strength of the boycott is that we have the consumer and we're getting them more and more-that's where the strength is.

Now on the Gallo boycott, we estimate these sales are down by 25%. There's a normal drop in sales because the wine industry is just glutted you know.

That's just natural but on top of that we're hitting it. We think we've got Gallo by 25% and which is probably the most effective boycott of all three.

And so the boycott is doing well. It's based on the people and that kind of boycott con't be turned offyou can't lose that kind of boycott, See what I mean?

If you have the stores take off the stuff, you can lose the boycott because they can get together and say, "We'll put the stuff on again and we'll fight with the farm workers union,"

So here we've got to go back again and fight them and that's what we did in 1970.

"This time the stores knew how to fight us better."

The first time around they didn't know how to fight our secondary boycott. This time they did, they just used the injunction and they kept us tied up in the

In April when we gave up- the first week in April we gave up the secondary boycott, we had probably 40 or 50 places in the states where we were in courts over injunctions on the secondary boycott.

So they can't take us to court anymore.

We're in court on the picketing but not on the secon-

able to get the consumer which is much different than Farah boycott which didn't get the consumer, you

because, you know, dry goods are different. There's a big difference when you're talking about grapes and lettuce. Gallo's different. It's easier you see, the label it's there. But, when your dealing with

produce, hijo! It's a difficult one.

They got the stores and we have to get the consumer

E.M.: OK, a lot of people around the country are wondering about the significance of the AFL-CIO endorsement of the boycott. How helpful has the endorsement been from the AFL-CIO?

C.C.: See, you have to look at the endorsement not only how effective it is in terms of the boycott.

But you have to realize that in order to win we need to have labor on our side. Right! And so just the fact,



just the endorsement itself means then that the Teamsters are literally isolated.

They're the only labor union out there and all the other labor unions, the AFL-CIO and other independents are supporting what we're doing.

So this by itself gives a lot of a. . gives the whole appeal that we give the people, gives it a boost,

But then it varies from international to international and it varies from labor council to labor council, it varies from state to state you know.

The endorsement opens the doors and it's up to us then to get the individual support.

So the support varies, like very good in the Los Angeles County area; like, oh, just fantastic in the New

Then in New Jersey it is so good that last week on Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday they had something like 20 picketlines that were made up of labor people. Besides the ones made up of students and all that.

The labor endorsement is good because it opens the door, verdad? It's there! And psychologically it puts pressure on the Teamster, because you know it's the biggest organization in the U.S.



E.M.: The AFL-CIO endorsement of the Farah Boycott was instrumental in winning that strike. Don't

C.C.: Yea, sure it was. See on that strike there were no Teamsters and there were no other unions that were being stepped on their corns, see we have a complicated mess.

We have unions with contracts like lettuce being precooled by an AFL-CIO union.

See what I mean? Handled at the stores by AFL-CIO unions, and then we have two unions with a contract with Gallo, And then the Teamsters.

E.M.: So what was the significance of giving up the secondary Boycott? A lot of people around the country are very much concerned with that particular issue because they felt that in giving up the secondary boycott the union was giving up one of its more powerful

C.C.: Because they don't know, see? They don't know we had, . . during the secondary boycott we were getting labor against us like the retail clerks union, the butchers union and because they were getting, ... they were influencing whole areas, not only central labor council, but whole regions,

Labor wasn't endorsing us because they were saying "We can't endorse you if you boycott our stores, You boycott where our guys are working and your cutting down their jobs and they re laying off our

"How can we endorse what your doing? We can't, Our numbers won't let us do that and members are mad at us.

Their endorsement would be an illegal act not only

UFW LEADER TALKI WITH



they'd then be subject to sanctions by the board (NLRB) immediately, which runs into money, court

So the choice was very simple, do we fight by ourselles or with all our friends?

And it was a good decision.

And we have also noticed since the AFL-CIO endorsement came. . . you recall; that in Ohio, Michigan, in New York, even in Boston and a few other places they were running ads. Ads against us, AFL-CIO unions you know, , that was devastating,

How do you go to the public if people are saying. "Well how come the AFL-CIO unions are against you?" How do you explain it to the public? You can't explain it, you know.

If you're right, how come the AFL-CIO and the Teamsters are against you? How come? So what we did we negotiated long and hard from October of 1973 to April of 1974.

> "We negotiated for what we needed- what we wanted. "

So anyway I think it was a good decision. It was hard for us because we've always done a secondary boy-

And we told the federation, "So we give up the secondary boycott and then we're giving up one of our weapons, now if you guys don't come help us how are. we going to win? We can't win unless you do that."

And so they said, "No! If you give up the secondary boycott, of course we will help you, And we'll stay with you until you win.

"Okay, you stay with us until we win," And see, they haven't abandoned us, , they'll do more yet,

E.M.: Why didnot the AFL-CIO help in 1974. . .

didn't provide financial support as they did in 1973? C.C.: You see, the AFL-CIO doesn't have money. The AFL-CIO lives off the chapters, So they don't

Now we're still getting money.

have, like, a lot of money.

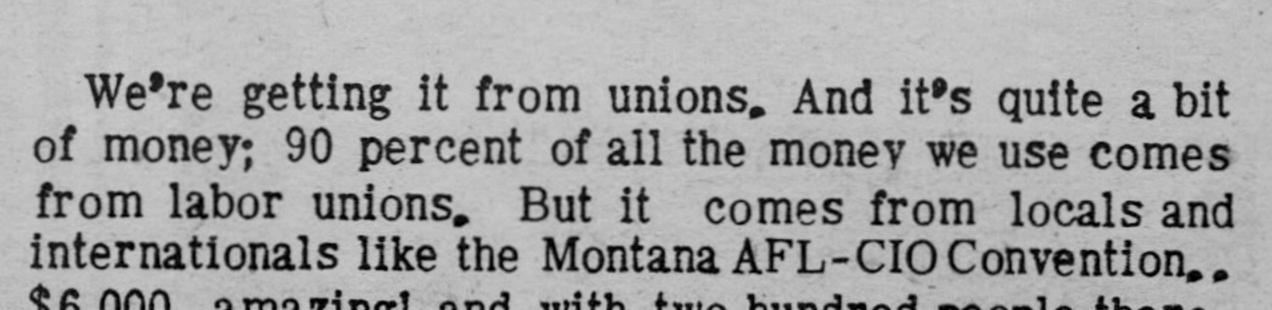
\$6,000, amazing! and with two hundred people there.

boycott in the key areas of the country?

C.C.: Excellent in the New England area, In the Washington, Philadelphia, New Jersey area, very very good, In Los Angeles, in California, . In the West Coast, good,

We're getting it from unions. And it's quite a bit

E.M.: How strong has the union support been for the



and they're getting a lot of discrimination there.

And then he got raided by the Teamsters and well, he turned around and published an article in his newspaper condemning the Teamsters, saying that he was going to support the farm workers.

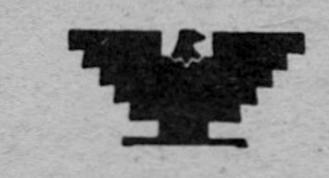
The moment he did that the international of the meat cutters gave us the endorsement that they were holding back, See?

If the Teamsters weren't involved we'd get more help. No question about that.

E.M.: The Teamsters have had a history of doing this, of signing "Sweetheart" contracts and raiding unions. Don't you think that even after they get run out of the fields that they'll still be doing a lot of

C.C.: Oh yea, sure they will, that's how they grow. See, they're growing by taking members from AFL-CIO unions, And sooner or later the AFL-CIO is going to have to do something about it.

The Teamsters could not stand a raid by the AFL-CIO.



I always feel badly about raiding another union, You know it's just... like that's anti-labor.

And so a lot of guys in the AFL-CIO are very... what's the word, very moral about these things, they don't want to break, they don't want to break the Team-

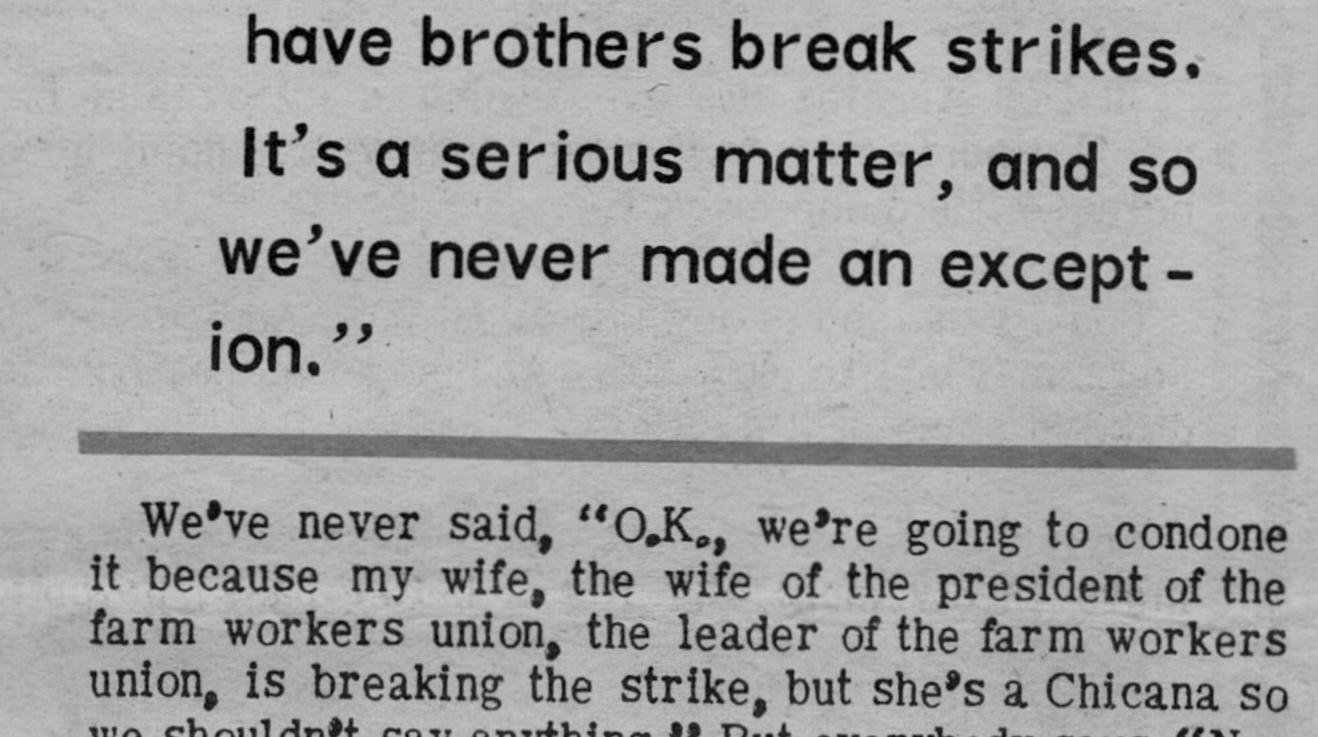
If there was an all-out raid the Teamsters would crawl on their knees in 48 hours to go ask for peace, because they just couldn't stand it.

But they keep doing it and they keep getting away with it. It's amazing, I don't know how they get away

E.M.: They're currently having a lot of problems in the canneries. Particulary on the West Coast.

Their own workers are fighting them. They want equal protection, they want equal rights, and they want

C.C.: Well, there's a big Black-Chicano membership



We tell the people go to the fields and talk to the illegals "look there's a strike there, you may not know that because they brought you. We want you to know that you're breaking a strike and we're going to give

leave, right?

The illegals who say, "No we don't want to break the strike," leave and the others become professional strikebreakers. Then we go to the picketlines and the strikebreakers come to the picket lines and take us on.

They tell us exactly the same line that the growers

They're coming here because they're being recruited specifically to come to break the strike. It's not their idea. They are contracted by well-paid recruiters getting them to come specifically to break the strike.

And so they're being brought out, but for every one that comes there's ten who say "no, we don't want to break any strikes.

Cesar's strike," Hell, he is a damn scab before he crosses the border. He's the same guy that would break a strike on the other side of the border.

drugs. Can you imagine?



for them but for us. It's an illegal act which means dary boycott, but see what did happen, we've seen Page 10 - October 18, 1974 - El Malcriado

Very good in Chicago, No not in Chicago, Chicago hasn't been that good at all. In Ohio where they were attacking us, now, very, very good. We turned them around you know.

They keep telling their members and they keep preaching and they keep printing in the papers. That's where the help comes.

That's what makes the primary boycott a success. So you can't measure that kind of help, there's no way of measuring it,

E.M.: So -what about the Teamsters union? I understand that the Teamsters have been pulling these raids with other affiliated unions within the AFL-CIO. What effect is this having on the current

C.C.: Well many unions are pissed off at the Teamsters because they raid them. Many of the unions are worried because they depend on the Teamsters.

Some unions depend entirely on the Teamsters, they

have their contract. If a Teamster doesn't respect their picketline they re in trouble. You have that to consider. Well we have one ex-

The vice-president of their region was very uptight about taking the Teamsters on.

ample in the New England area with the meat cutters.

senority. They're not getting them. The Teamsters are being racist.

My sister works in the cannery in San Jose and she was saying "do you know what they do? They re bringing young women, daughters and sons of the white people to work there, and they work in there for two or three days and they make them a foreman,"

They give them a position, you know. And they don't know nothing. They don't know anything and, but it means more pay, it means more you know,

E.M.: Going back to a subject that has caused quite

a bit of controversy especially in the cities. That's the

question of the "illegals." Would you like to elaborate C.C.: No. I'll do it but. I don't like to do it. Because

it's, well, there's no problem with labor, right, and no problem with the church, and no problem with the vast majority of the American public.

The problem is reduced to a small group of people who mean well, but they don't know. It comes because they don't have any experience in labor matters. See. what I mean?

Most of the left attacking us has no experience in labor matters. They don't know what a strike is. They've never been to a picketline and they have no concept of what it is to have a strike broken.

that the leadership of the union, a decision - that we said; O.K. we're against the illegals, we're against

Chicanos, we're against Mexicanos," It's the leadership of the farm workers union who sold out, you know, all that stuff.

your union we don't want the illegals hurt."

And because of that they're in trouble. They don't

And they say "even though it may cost you to lose

These people don't know, they think that we made,

understand what we're doing.

They don't really know because they re not workers. They don't really know because they ve never felt the insecurity of being on strike.

And they don't know because really they haven't talked to the workers, see,

Now, if they came - if they were to come down and talk to the workers then I'm sure that half of them would change their mind immediately.

It has to be explained that the position came at the UFW convention from our membership.

The first problem that came to us was that the illegals were taking the jobs away from the people in the places where we don't have a union, like in

The local people were coming to me for at least two years ago saying "Look, we got to do something about illegals because they're taking our jobs and knocking the wages down and we're down and we're having a heck of a time.

Now once we got into a strike we saw how the growers were using the illegals as strikebreakers. Our position in the union has always been that anyone who breaks the strike is a scab, even, if my mother breaks the strike, she's a scab, a strike-

"Well, hell in the union we

it because my wife, the wife of the president of the farm workers union, the leader of the farm workers union, is breaking the strike, but she's a Chicana so we shouldn't say anything," But everybody says, "No, she's a strikebreaker and we're going to deal with that issue."

Now many of the illegals really, are strikebreakers.

you three days, to get out."

Well, a lot of people leave in those three days, 50%

use, "The reason you're not working is because you're a bunch of dumb lazy heads. You don't want to work. How come we work, and we just got here from Mexico yesterday and we're already working."?

One out of every ten will say "sure I'll go break

Amazing, it's a big racket, I mean it's bigger than