

EL MALCRIADITO



The Voice of the Los Angeles Boycott

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Historic Breakthrough in Farm Labor

Farm labor legislation of momentous significance overcame its first hurdle Wednesday, May 7, when a compromise bill pushed hard by the governor passed the Senate Industrial Relations Committee. If objections from the building trades can be overcome, passage of this historic bill seems assured at the time of this writing.

Further developments will no doubt have occurred by the time this newsletter reaches its readers. If it appears necessary, we will include a mimeographed insert with last-minute news and further suggested action to insure passage of legislation farm workers must have.

The major issue at stake is the craft unit bargaining provision sought by the building trades. The UFW union has long held that all farm workers at a given ranch should vote as one bargaining unit to insure upward mobility of field laborers who are predominately of minority background. Historically, the better paying, non-field jobs have been held by Anglos. It is this industrial unit approach to bargaining that is under attack by the building trades who are a powerful bloc within the State AFL-CIO.

While noting that progress in the legislative field seemed imminent, Jim Drake, Los Angeles Boycott director warned that farm workers are still a long way off from winning back their contracts. "It would be a serious mistake," he observed, "to rest on our oars at this time. Even greater boycott efforts than before are necessary," he said, "to keep the pressure on the growers until justice is won in the fields."

The murals shown above, scenes of *La Causa* by Rick Tejada-Flores, have been placed above the entrance of the Los Angeles boycott headquarters. The photograph is by Stephen McBrady.

"If the growers want peace as they say they do," said Drake, "they should follow the guidelines of the new legislation they have endorsed and call on the State Conciliation Service to hold elections *now* so that strikers can get back to work."

The Grapes Are Coming!

Harvest of the first table grapes of the season will begin around June 6-15, reported Nancy Elliott, formerly with the L.A. Boycott staff and presently working at the UFW's field office in Coachella. In a telephone interview with *El Malcriadito*, Elliott pointed out that the harvest is late this spring due to inclement weather, but an unusually heavy crop is forecast throughout the entire state.

Growers in the Fresno area are "girdling" their vines so that fruit normally produced for wineries can be directed into the table grape market. This action is taken because growers in the central San Joaquin Valley anticipate a glut of wine grapes this season, but their action, in turn, is expected to create an oversupply of table grapes.

In response to this news, Jim Drake, head of the L.A. Boycott, called for supporters of the UFW in southern California to begin gearing up now for renewed activity in the boycott of non-UFW grapes. 100,000 new bumper stickers have been ordered. With a message to boycott non-UFW Grapes and Gallo wines, these banners will be sent to anyone so requesting and who sends postage to cover cost of mailing.

Drake proposed a three-step boycott action program
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Chavez Sparks Cinco de Mayo

Large crowds of students cheered Cesar Chavez as he told of boycott gains across the nation and called for full-time volunteers from his listeners in a whirlwind tour of four college campuses Monday, May 5. The UFW president's visit coincided with student celebrations of Cinco de Mayo and also marked the second day of Farm Worker Week set for May 4-10.

As a result of these appearances at UCLA, Loyola, Occidental and U.C. Irvine, an estimated \$9,500 was gained for the farm workers' strike fund this summer and around 30 students applied to work full time with the Union when their spring semesters are over.

However, at Cal State Northridge (CSUN) a spontaneous demonstration occurred when 300 UFW supporters marched on the campus administration building to protest the unexpected cancellation of Chavez' speech on that campus.

According to Victor Gonzalez, coordinator of the Northridge UFW chapter, the anticipated speaking fee of \$2500 for Chavez' appearance was cut to \$1000 five days before he was scheduled to speak.

The protest, which included Chicano, Black, Asian and Anglo UFW supporters, lasted for two and a half hours on Cinco de Mayo. Later in the week UFW supporters persuaded the CSUN Cultural Affairs committee to allocate \$1000 to show the new UFW film "Fighting for Our Lives."

Farm Worker Week was also observed in various ways in hundreds of churches and synagogues of the area, with at least four churches of East Los Angeles erecting large signs on their lawns testifying to their support of farm worker boycotts of Gallo wines, non-UFW grapes and head lettuce.



Sign of support, put up by the Rev. John Fessler, C.M.F., of Our Lady of Solitude parish in East L.A.

Assemblyman Richard Alatorre appeared at two special programs on Sunday, May 4 that had legislation as their major purpose. Over 75 sisters, brothers and priests gathered for a "Sopa Por La Causa" at Stella Maris Residence, and a second such gathering was scheduled at All Saints Church in Pasadena on Sunday, May 10.



Boycott supporters from San Fernando picket Majers liquor store at Meyer St. and San Fernando Rd.

Photo by Linda Rifkin

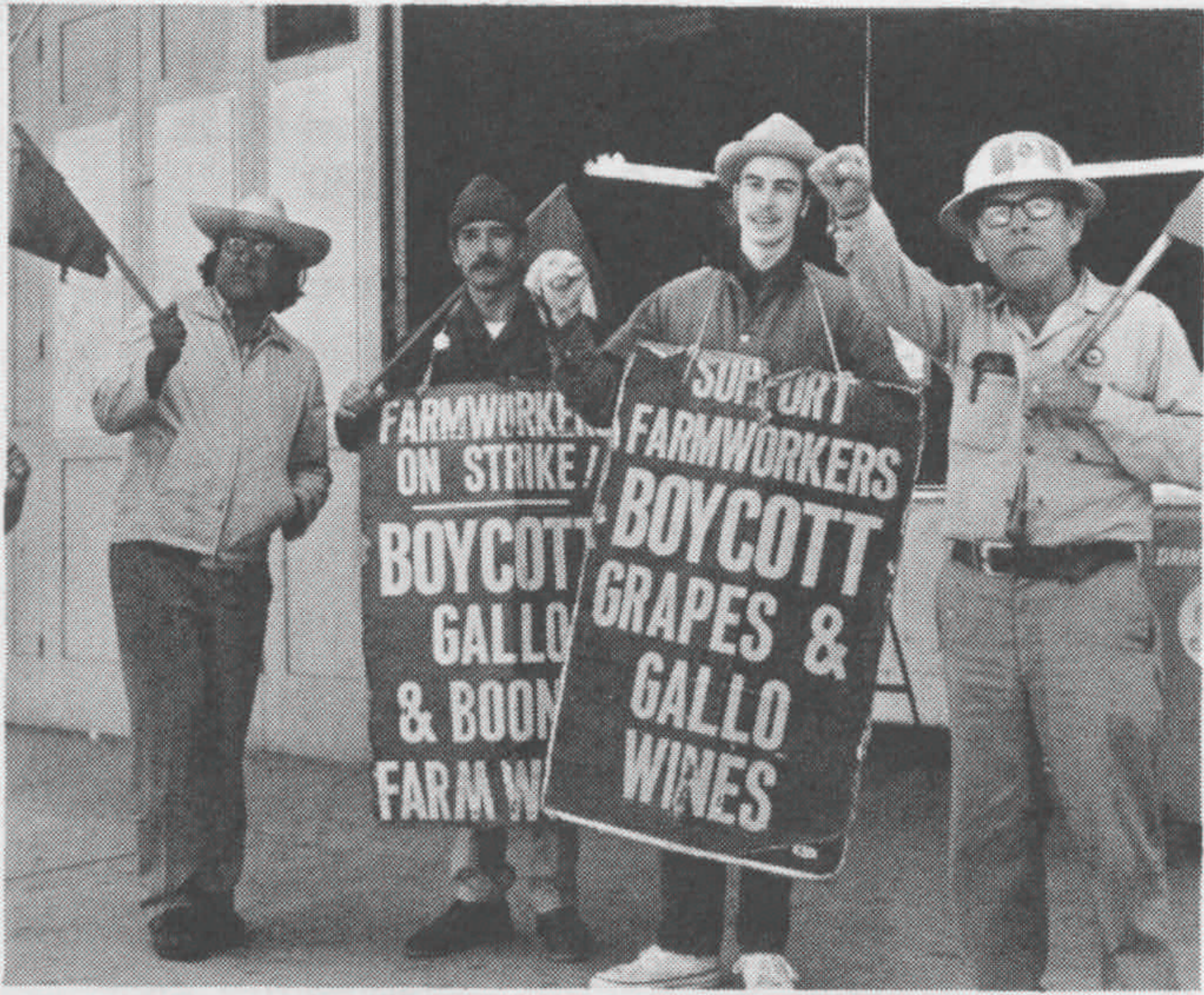
Priest Unmasks Gallo "Bad Faith" Operators

Father Frank Wagner of St. Ferdinand's Church is not one who jumps too quickly on band wagons, nor does he allow nagging questions to go unanswered. Perhaps it was for these reasons he took a dilemma by the horns recently and determined to clear up discrepancies between statements by the Gallo Winery on the one hand and the United Farm Workers Union on the other.

In a unique "do-it-yourself" research project, Father Wagner, a priest of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, invited representatives from the Gallo company, two major liquor store owners of San Fernando, and the Reverend Wayne (Chris) Hartmire, director of the National Farm Worker Ministry, to meet in his office Monday, April 28 for a frank look at the issues surrounding the Gallo strike and boycott.

During the three-hour session, conflicting statements were laid out on the table one by one, thoroughly discussed and, where possible, investigated by conference calls to the Gallo headquarters in Modesto, the

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Juan de la Cruz Brigade members Ray Ortiz, Antonio Valdez, John Brown and Victorio Jasso.

Photo by Linda Rifkin

Brigade Sets Pace

If the Los Angeles Boycott could be said to have a "secret weapon" in its non-violent campaign against the nation's largest winery, it would have to be the Juan De La Cruz Brigade. Named after the 60-year-old striker who was murdered on the picket line near Arvin, California, in August 1973, this elite corps of picketers is already credited with over 200 stores cleaned of Gallo products during its brief one-year history.

Reasons for this phenomenal record are not hard to come by. For one thing, the Brigade is comprised largely of farm workers, and of these, more than half have been Gallo strikers. As one observer noted, "When those guys see a bottle of Gallo on a liquor store shelf, they see red, and I don't mean 'Hearty Red' Burgundy' (a Gallo label). They see all the misery they've been through since Gallo knifed them in the back two years ago by signing with the Teamsters, and they just can't rest easy until that bottle comes off the shelves."

As a predominantly farm-worker contingent, the Brigade also has more than the usual impact on would-be shoppers. Most people find it difficult to ignore such a picket line, or dismiss it contemptuously as a "bunch of long-haired agitators" or "do-gooders who ought to get a job and earn an honest living"—epithets often hurled at a picket line made up of regular volunteers. Even the police seem to accord the Brigade, with its farm worker composition, a little less disrespect than they give the usual boycott line.

Ray Ortiz, 40-year-old Brigade coordinator, attributes its effectiveness in part to a combination of just plain hard work and careful selection of target communities. The Brigade puts in a grueling 8 hours a day, six days per week just on picketing, zeroes exclusively on liquor

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Farm Worker Feature

As a skilled operator of farm machinery, Antonio Meza was offered attractive inducements to remain at Gallo's Snelling Ranch in June 1973. But Tony and his wife Amada valued their UFW membership and their personal dignity far more than the questionable security of a job as a Gallo/Teamster scab.

Tony had worked under the Teamsters before, first in Arizona as a lettuce picker in 1968 and later in Newhall, California in the carrot packing sheds, so he was not about to submit again to unwilling membership in a "company" union.

Tony and Amada chose the UFW picket line instead, and after the strike was over came directly to Los Angeles with their two children, Christina, seven, and Maria de Lourdes ("Lulu"), age 2, to serve on the boycott—first in San Fernando, then on the Juan De La Cruz Brigade.

This is the Meza family's first time to live in a really big city and, they are quite sure, their last. Tony was born in Cuchillo Prado, in the State of Chichuahua, Mexico 33 years ago. At the age of 13 he and his family moved to Pecos, Texas in search of a better living as farm workers. It was there he met Amada while both were students at the high school.

After marriage, it was work in the fields for both of them in farming communities of Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and California.

When the babies were little and Amada could not work, Tony often put in seven days of work each week, usually 13-14 hours a day for long stretches of time, but even in the best of circumstances earned just barely enough to survive.

Perhaps it was this kind of conditioning that enables Tony Meza to complete a hard day picketing with the Brigade then go to night school to learn more about mechanics. Under a good UFW contract, Tony and Amada believe they can not only earn a decent living, but find a life of dignity for which they are now working so hard.



Police at Majers liquor store in San Fernando allowed counter-pickets to pour Gallo on UFW supporters and to violate the law by drinking in public.

Photo by Linda Rifkin

Film Aids Strike Fund

Four showings of The UFW's new film, "Fighting For Our Lives," have resulted in over \$60,000 gain for the farmworker's strike fund this spring and summer.

The Los Angeles boycott office has two copies of "Fighting For Our Lives" available for fund raising purposes. Groups interested in using a film as a means not only to aid the farm workers but also to inform viewers about the incredible summer of 1973, should contact Mack Warner at the UFW office, 381-1136.

Grapes...

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for each UFW supporter: (1) Put a bumper sticker on your car. (2) Tell your produce manager at the market where you shop that you want him to carry *only* grapes with the Black Eagle label. (3) Contact at least one institution (e.g. school, church, hospital, or cafeteria where you work) and ask the buyer to cooperate in the boycott of non-UFW table grapes.

Priest...

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Conciliation Service of the State Department of Industrial Relations in Sacramento, and later, to the headquarters of the Western Conference of Teamsters.

The major result of this inquiry was a resounding confirmation of the Union's position that a majority of Gallo's workers did go out on strike in June 1973—in spite of all claims to the contrary by the wine company. This was born out by the refusal of both the Gallo company and the Teamsters union to join the UFW in seeking a resolution of this issue by the state's Conciliation Service which stated unequivocally that it would not enter the labor dispute unless all parties involved agreed to conciliation.

All present in the meeting, including the Gallo representatives, agreed that if the Gallo Company would not respond affirmatively to this request, the winery was operating in bad faith. This finding decisively refutes what Gallo counterpickets have recently been contending—that the UFW alone can bring in the Conciliation Service to resolve the election issue at Gallo.

El Malcriadito
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GALLO BOX SCORE

Stores clean of scab wines
As of May 6, 1975.....760

(Includes Los Angeles, Orange, Ventura, Santa Barbara and Riverside Counties, as well as San Diego.)

Brigade...

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stores, and concentrates on communities where Chicanos predominate or in blue-collar areas of working class Anglos and Chicanos.

Other observers would say that Ortiz himself is a key factor in the Brigade's outstanding record. Growing up in a small town near Houston, Texas, he spent summers as a youth working the figs and strawberries near his home. Then, after ten years in the Air Force, he entered Cal State University in Sacramento, earning his Masters degree in Social Work in 1969. From then on it was the farm workers union all the way for Ray, his wife Barbara—herself a full-time member of the Brigade—and their six children.

In addition to Ray, Barbara and 16-year-old son Patrick, members of the Brigade currently include Jesse Constancio, Rafael Cortez, John Demo, Manuel Hernandez, Victorio Jasso, Carol Law, Antonio Meza, Francisco Nava, Roberto Rios and his 16-year-old son Ramiro, Rogelio Terronez, Antonio Valdez and Elizar Vazquez.

Los Angeles boycott director, Jim Drake, has just announced plans for the formation of at least one, and possibly two new brigades. The first to be formed will be named after Nagi Daifullah, a Yemenite farm worker who was murdered by a Kern County deputy sheriff in August 1973. THE BOYCOTT OFFICE IS NOW TAKING APPLICATIONS FOR THIS NEW BRIGADE. Please contact Sr. Anne Russell at 386-8130 for more information.

HOUSING NEEDED

Warmest thanks to all who have responded so far! But we still need more housing for the summer. If you can provide room and board for a full time volunteer from June through August, please call Sr. Anne Russell at (213) 386-8130.

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