

Livonians Aid In Grape Boycott

Jim and Audrey Gomom, with three or four other Livonian residents, last weekend were picketing a grocery store hoping California grape pickers would get a break.

The small group was urging persons entering the market to buy food somewhere else because the store sold California table grapes.

The couple said they were a group of "concerned Livonian citizens" who are in sympathy with the plight and generally bad working conditions of grape pickers on the west coast.

"We are asking people not to buy California table grapes and not to patronize the store," they said.

"We hope this pressure will affect the stores and they won't purchase from or make contracts with anymore table grape growers in California."

Their strategy is to work through the smaller food store chains and then carry the results—if there are any—to the bigger chains and exert stronger pressure there.

Eventually they think they will gain support throughout the state and hope this will spill over into nearby states.

MRS. GOMOM, who has been active with the Interfaith Council of Detroit and worked on the "Poor People's Campaign" when it came through the area,

said she was called by representatives of the United Farm Workers of California to lend a hand in the Detroit boycott of the stores.

Organizations already involved in the Detroit boycott range from the City of Detroit, Jewish Community Council, Catholic Archdiocese of Detroit to the Hotel and Restaurant Workers Union, Amalgamated Clothing Workers and United Steel Workers.

A flyer, with these and other organizations names on it, claims, "The farm workers of America do not ask for pity or charity. We ask for our rights. Rights you accept as your due."

Another flyer issued by the United Farm Workers urges shoppers to "not buy California grapes during our life-or-death boycott, to consider not shopping at stores...until they show sympathy for the cause of hungry American families in their third year of strike for decency and justice."

An information sheet printed by the United Farm Workers Organizing Committee—AFL-CIO (UFWOC) explained what the grape boycott is all about.

The National Farm Workers Association (NFWA) was established in 1902 and three years later in September the Delano grape strike began against 34 grape growers in the Delano, Calif. area.

peated attempts by the union to communicate with Giumarra, 950 of his 1,000 workers walked out on strike. An international boycott against Giumarra was started the same year in 15 major cities in the United States and Canada.

It goes on to tell how the company imported cheap, "wet back, green carders" to do the picking and also began using labels of other growers to foil the effectiveness of the boycott.

THE UNION SAID the "phony labels" are Arpa, Grape King, Big G, GVC, Honeybunch and Upton. It said Claudio Carranza, an agent of Giumarra, has been convicted in Federal Court of illegally recruiting Mexican nationals.

"Because of the mislabeling the decision was made in January, 1968 to boycott all California table grapes, with the exception of those of the Di-Giorgio Corp. which is under union contract."

average farm worker does—134 days—assuming an eight hour day, he would earn \$1,238 a year.

THE UFWOC claimed, "Workers are at the mercy of contractors who can cheat them out of their just wages. There are no laws protecting the agricultural worker. Wages for women and minors are set by the California Industrial Welfare Commission, but enforcement is inadequate."



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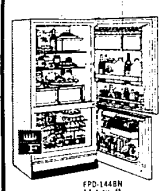
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