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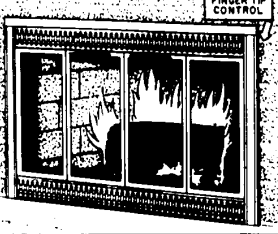
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UFW crusader pleads for aid in Farmington

By JACKIE KLEIN

Do you ever stop to think the grapes you nibble and the lettuce you cut up in your salad are controversial targets of a national boycott?

Debi Duke, 20-year-old coordinator for the United Farm Workers (UFW) is appearing in Southfield and other communities with her staff to spread the word about the boycott and the plight of the workers in California.

Farmworkers used the boycott to force recognition from growers and have found themselves entrenched in a struggle against the Teamsters. Ms. Duke and others have taken on the cudgel.

It's been a long, slow, often frustrating battle. Ms. Duke acknowledges, but there have been major successes. According to a recent Harris poll, she noted, 17 million persons across the nation have responded to the boycott of grapes, iceberg lettuce and Gallo wine.

We believe by exerting economic pressures on growers and obtaining support from consumers and food stores, we will encourage union recognition and help the UFW cause," she said.

"AS THE result of pressure and striking, the California legislature in June passed the first farm labor bill in the United States. It became law in August and sets up a procedure for elections so workers can vote on the union they wish to represent them."

"During elections in September workers in 63 per cent of the ranches voted to be affiliated with the UFW, 32 per cent opted for the Teamsters and five per cent chose not to be unionized. In 33 per cent, where Gallo wine is produced, elections are still undecided."

Ms. Duke, Mark Gold, Jewish community organizer, and other members of the Oakland County staff meet with civic, church and social groups to tell the story of the farm workers' struggle and sacrifices to organize their union. The staff also appeals for financial support as well as supporters on picket lines.

"Our objectives are to convince consumers not to buy Gallo wine or non-UFW grapes and iceberg lettuce. Ms. Duke explained, "Our attempts to exert pressure on chain food stores to stock UFW products has been less successful because of Teamsters' intervention."

"We've reached a satisfactory agreement with Chatham's and Great Scott markets. Now we're concentrating on Farmer Jack's which has more stores than any chain in the Detroit Metropolitan area."

THE NATIONAL and state UFW union have been charged with contempt of court by Farmer Jack's because of a massive picket line at one of the stores in November, Ms. Duke said.

"We've been accused of violating a court injunction prohibiting more than four marchers in any picket line at Farmer Jack's," she said. "We believe that injunction abridges our constitutional rights."

Oakland County Circuit Court Judge William Hampton has arranged a Dec. 8 meeting with attorneys for Farmer Jack's, UFW, Teamsters and AFL-CIO in an attempt to reach an out-of-court settlement.

Farmer Jack's has subpoenaed television films taken Nov. 21 in the office of the stores' attorney, which covered the UFW picket. The food chain has also subpoenaed names and addresses of picketers, UFW supporters, as well as leaflets, signs and balloons, Ms. Duke said.

The young woman feels a strong responsibility to carry the farmworkers' message to whoever will listen and



DEBI DUKE

hopefully help support the cause. How did she become involved in a major battle that has been raging in California's vineyards and ranch lands for years.

"My dad was in management, so I never had any real contact with union activities," she recalled. "I was always concerned about social problems and I planned to attend college to pursue courses related to that field."

"MY FRIENDS thought I was a bitish because I knew nothing about being poor or about community organizing and I couldn't learn that in books. It would have been easier to go into the shelter of a university where you're not threatened and people think pretty much as you do."

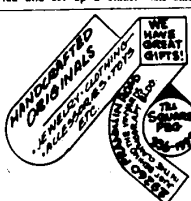
"But I decided to face the big world out there and gain some practical experience. I applied to the UFW so I could work with a great many people and approach them at their level. I didn't want to force anything on anyone and freak them out."

"I feel as though I have a real responsibility to the people who have fed me all my life. Sometimes the job is tiring and discouraging and I wonder why I do it for roller and board and \$5 a week. But when I think of the sacrifices of 17 million people, I realize I'm part of something wonderful. It's been a long battle, but when I think of what we're fighting it really hasn't been long enough."

Fob years, said Ms. Duke, companies like ITT, Gulf and Western, Tenneco, Coca Cola and E. and J. Gallo have been buying up thousands of farms, controlling the food business and running their fields like giant sweatshops.

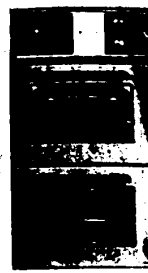
THE NEW labor law hasn't insured free and democratic elections and there is a climate of fear in California described as "hell in the fields."

"When I get frustrated, I think of couples like Dr. and Mrs. Isadore Coleman who sold their Oakland County home to move to Salinas, California and set up a clinic," she said.



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