

DETROIT REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT RECORDS

BOX 16 OF 16

FOLDER 23

TEXAS FARMWORKERS

March 1, 1977

To:

From: Juan Torres
Midwest Coordinator / *metl E.R.C.*
Texas Farmworkers March

Subject: Texas Farmworkers March

This is to inform you of the present campaign being waged by the Texas Farm Workers Union in the state of Texas. The TFWU is presently involved in a 40 day "March for Unity" from the Rio Grande Valley in south Texas to Austin, the state capitol. It commenced on February 26, and will terminate on Easter Sunday. The march will address itself to the following issues:

First, the march will impress upon the nation the need for farm labor legislation which will allow as a minimum, farmworkers the right to secret ballot elections to determine if they want to be represented by a union.

Secondly, the march will call for united action to repeal section 14b. of the Taft-Hartly Act, the so-called "right to work" laws. This section is basically an anti-labor, union busting clause which needs eradication.

These are the only issues that the march will address itself to. What is needed immediately is all out support for the march in the form of money, food, sleeping bags, printing materials, people to march, etc. We are therefore making a formal request for donations of any form from your organization. If you desire someone to address your group, we will be more than happy to send a speaker from our staff.

The march will be filmed. You are welcome to send a representative of your organization to Texas with your emblem or banner. In the event that you cannot send anyone, we will provide someone as a proxy for you. Above all we want your organization to receive proper recognition for your support.

In conclusion if I may say that the cause of all farmworkers will triumph only when other people, especially other workers, view this as their struggle. We must function in solidarity if we expect to achieve these goals.

Once again thank you for your time and hope to hear from you soon.

For further information you may direct yourself to Juan Torres Midwest Coordinator for Texas farmworkers march, P.O. Box 712, C/O Unemployed Council, Saginaw, Mi. 754-0204.

United in Struggle!!

Juan Torres

the HAMMER

PUBLISHED BY THE COMMUNIST LABOR PARTY AT DETROIT FORGE

Vol. 2 No. 3

August 5, 1977



SUPPORT THE TEXAS FARM WORKERS MARCH

"For Human Rights"

The Texas Farmworkers are reaching the mid-point in their historic March for Human Rights. Some 50 Texas Farmworkers are marching 1500 miles from Austin, Texas to Washington D.C. to get justice and equality, for all Farmworkers. For the right to live a decent and productive life at a livable wage, with job security.

They are marching to Washington to call for passage of a National Agricultural Labor Relations Act which will give collective bargaining rights to all farm workers in the United States who were specifically excluded from these rights given to auto and other industrial workers, in 1935 with the passage of the Wagner Act, and for Repeal of Section 14b of the Taft-Hartley Act, the so-called "right-to-work" provision.

They are marching to call attention to the inhuman working conditions Texas Farmworkers are forced to work under. Conditions where 42% of migrant farm labor is children under 16, where workers sometimes get 2 or 3 dollars a day, and therefore whole families must work to avoid starvation. Work in hot, dusty fields with no toilets and a high death rate from kidney disease for women farm workers. Health care is non-existent, in Hidalgo county infant mortality is 125% higher than the national average, life expectancy for a farm worker in Texas is 49 years the lowest in the country. There is no job security, and workers can be thrown out of work and forced to move off the land no matter how long he has worked or how big the family. Wages go up and down depending on who you work for. The minimum wage in Texas is \$1.40.

VALLEY OF TEARS

Overall Farm workers in Texas are among the poorest in the country. Housing consists mostly of overcrowded company shacks without adequate plumbing or electricity. The McAllen metropolitan area was named by the Dept. of Commerce as the "poorest in America", personal income is \$2,343 compared to a U.S. ave. \$4,492. Laredo, Texas is the second poorest with \$2,516 and the percentage of poor families in Starr County, Texas is 71%.

While the plight of the farm worker can be described as desparate, that of his employers is looking real good. Agricultural production in Texas is BIG business, 5 billion dollars worth, and the sweat and blood of the Texas Farmworkers produce millions in profits for companies like Delmonte, and huge diversified multinationals like Tenneco. These capitalists reap windfall profits due to the low wages, caused by the

"Right-to-work" laws and oppression of the Negro and Mexican National Minorities, who together make up 1/3 of Texas population and 1/4 of its workforce of 4 million.

This rich land irrigated by the Rio Grande in southeast Texas is called by the growers the "Magic Valley" because of their profits. It is called the "Valley of Tears" by the Farmworkers because of the conditions. Because of these conditions some 350,000 farm workers leave Texas and follow the migrant trail north in search of better wages and conditions, each year, until the picking season ends.

These are some of the inhuman conditions which the Texas Farmworkers are forced to exist under, and why the march is called a "March for Human Rights". Because every human, woman, man and child should be entitled to live and work under conditions which permit a livable wage with dignity and ability to enjoy the fruits of your labor. Instead of this all the farm worker can expect is a short, nasty, hard life, without much hope for future generations of things getting better.

"RIGHT-TO-WORK" LAW

In 1947 Congress passed the Taft-Hartley Act over the veto of Pres. Truman and opposition from the labor movement. It included Section 14b which grants to individual states the right to outlaw union or closed shops and to ban union security agreements in their states. In states where union shops are outlawed, unions may not represent all the workers in a plant even though the majority of workers have voted for union representation. A union can bargain only for those workers in the union and a collective bargaining agreement can cover only those in the union and a strike vote extends only to union members. Employers can hire non-union labor at any wage and may hire non-union workers during a strike. As a result, in those states where closed shops are outlawed, unionization and protection of workers is nearly impossible. The Farah plant in El Paso, Texas is sad proof this is true. A few years back they had a large majority of workers unionized, now they are down to 30%, because employers have successfully either fired or "laid-off", union workers and replaced them with non-union people.

Over the years Section 14b has been called the "right-to-work law by the corporations, and as the "right-to-work-for-less" and "union-busting" law by the labor movement. States with such laws are called "right-to-work" states, (see charts below).

A.

Statistics on Wages

State	Wages					Right to Work Law Passed
	Year	Amt. Below Nat'l Average	Year	Amt. Below Nat'l Average	Loss	
Texas	1948	\$231	1974	\$496	\$265	1947
Miss.	1954	\$877	1974	\$1645	\$768	1954
Alabama	1953	\$680	1974	\$1233	\$553	1955
Arkansas	1948	\$555	1974	\$1248	\$693	1947
S. Carolina	1954	\$660	1974	\$1157	\$471	1954

B.

Ranking of States-Lowest to Highest Hourly Wage (*right to work states)

State	1974 Wage	% Workers Unionized 1972
1. Miss.	\$3.18	12.6
2. N. Carolina*	\$3.28	7.5
3. Ark.*	\$3.30	16.4
4. New Mexico	\$3.33	13.2
5. S. Carolina*	\$3.33	9.0
11. Florida*	\$3.74	13.9
15. N. Dakota*	\$3.83	16.1
16. Texas*	\$4.08	13.5
42. Ill.	\$4.91	35.6
46. Ohio	\$5.12	34.8
49. Michigan	\$5.62	38.4

Note: Of all right to work states, only Kansas and North Dakota show any wage gains. These were only in the last few years, due to a sharp rise in agricultural prices in 1974.

Source: 1976 Statistical Abstract of the United States

Repeal of Section 14b and a National Agricultural Labor Relations Act, which among other things will allow the TFW to go into the fields and organize prior to union certification. Eleven Texas Farmworkers

ROLE OF UAW

What has been the role of the UAW and other major unions to the fight of the TFW, and what does this struggle mean to us workers in northern plants? Leonard Woodcock in his report to the 25th convention of the UAW, said. "Wherever farm workers have organized or are struggling to sign up members for their union, they know UAW as their close and effective friend and ally... Today, farm workers across the nation see the valiant example of the UFW and its members and are also organizing and insisting on bettering their condition. The understanding and sympathetic national administration of President Jimmy Carter and state administrations such as that of California Gov. Jerry Brown emphasize the right of farm workers to the full protection of the law in organizing, representing their members, and bargaining collectively."

"As we look back over these years of struggle for Cesar Chavez and the UFW, we take justifiable pride in having fulfilled the substance and spirit of the resolution adopted by previous UAW conventions:

"... to provide both financial and moral assistance to the United Farm Workers Union in their courageous efforts to organize and bring the advantages of collective bargaining to the farm workers".

"I am sure we will continue to do so, for farm workers and any other groups of workers struggling for recognition and for decent wages and working conditions. For it was out of such solidarity of labor that our union in its early years, too, was able to grow." (p.117-119)

CARTER TELLS LABOR TO STUFF IT

These are great words but where are the deeds to back them up? The International UAW has not taken an official position on the TFW and the recent deal of the UAW and AFL-CIO to drop the fight for repeal of Section 14b in exchange for less "red tape" in NLRB procedure will do nothing to stop the growing attack on Labor, Where for the First time in US history more workers are voting not to join unions than become unionized. Organized labor represents only 21.8% of the workforce the lowest percent of union workers since 1944. If Trade Unions are to survive, they must expand and organize the South and Southwest. But to do this, the Rank and File must be mobilized, and so far this is what the Union leadership has refused to do.

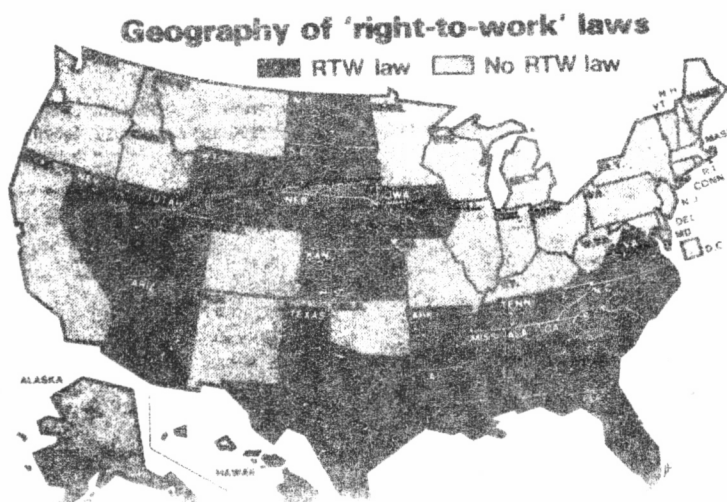
The working class cannot depend on the "sympathy and understanding" of the capitalists like Jimmy Carter who have done nothing for labor in return for the Millions of votes and dollars from labor that put him in office. What is needed is independent action from below to protect our declining standard of living. Many local unions and grassroot organizations have begun to come forward and support the struggle of the TFW, realizing it is in our own common interest. Local 47 was one of the first locals to pledge money and send two delegates to Washington when the March ends around Labor Day. This is being blocked by Evans Ray and the International. Honest and courageous local leaders at Cadillac Local 22 and Sterling Stamping Local 1264 have sent money and telegrams of solidarity to the TFW.

importance of grassroots support and that is why the TFW is marching Through the Heart of the South, through the Heart of the Right-to-work states, through the Black Belt to Washington. Everyday of the March ordinary workers and local leaders have welcomed and supported the just stand of the TFW. In Lake Charles, La. members of the Catholic Youth Organization, the president of the local AFL-CIO council and local citizens marched through town with the TFW. In Lafayette, La. the central labor council and the Lafayette Sugar workers endorsed the March and held a rally and raised money. In New Orleans, a United Steelworkers local raised \$500. and the Amalgamated Meat Cutters another \$100. In Hattiesburg, Miss. 150 people rallied to the cause.

While honest workers support and understand the importance of the TFW struggle, so too does the reactionaries and enemies of the working class. In Pauperville, Miss. Antonio Oredain and 47 Texas Farmworkers were arrested for supposedly "obstructing highway traffic and masquerading a yellow bus as a school bus". Due to the consistent work of the Hattiesburg Equal Rights Council who immediately responded with legal aid and support they were quickly released. But the marchers are sure to face more difficulties as they march through parts of Klan country. This is another reason why it is important for northern workers to stand together in defense of the TFW. Unless the trade unions in this country strike an independent path and fight against the capitalists instead of with them, the organized worker will be reduced to a powerless voice in a roar of reaction.

It is now time for the workers to step forward and recapture the militancy which once characterized the labor movement in this country. To repeal Taft-Hartley is to take a giant step in organizing the South and Southwest where workers face not only ruthless exploitation but national oppression in all its vulgar forms. The struggle against the Taft-Hartley is not only an economic struggle, it is a struggle for Equality. Equality for the Negro and Mexican who have for so long been excluded from the mainstream of the trade union movement.

It is around this issue that the organized and unorganized workers can come together on common ground and use their strength as a class, united in the interests of all. Support for the TFW is the concrete expression of this struggle against anti-labor legislation and for Unionization. Send money and support to: TFWU, P.O. Box 876, San Juan Texas 78589. Write the International UAW and demand that the money voted by the membership of Local 47 be sent to the TFW and that the UAW recognize and support the TFW.



Route of the March
 July 14— New Orleans
 July 19— Hattiesburg, Miss.
 July 31— Birmingham, Ala.
 Aug. 6— Atlanta, Ga.
 Aug. 16— Greenville, S.C.
 Aug. 19— Charlotte, N.C.
 Aug. 29— Richmond, Va.
 Sept. 4— Washington, D.C.

THE HEAT IS ON

The recent heat wave that sent temperatures up into the 90's, and 100's, revealed again the contradiction that capitalist exploitation puts production for maximum profit First and Foremost, and a workers Health and Safety-- Dead last.

While workers in the factories reacted to the heat by either not coming to work in the first place or by walking out once they got to work and the heat became unbearable. Walkouts occurred at Jefferson, Dodge Main, Lynch Road and other plants. At Detroit Forge workers either didn't come in or left at lunch time.

The capitalists reacted to this natural action by the workers, by using every trick in the book and even added a few new ones to keep the production rolling. At Dodge Main the company bought plastic kiddie swimming pools from K-Marts and filled them with blocks of ice and white towels, placed conveniently through the metal shop. So all a hot worker had to do was reach out and get a nice cold towel instead of walking out of the 120 degree heat. At Jefferson the company had big coolers full of Lemonade along the line.

Our own Detroit Forge management however, topped these ambitious efforts, when at the height of the heat wave they installed new ice machines and then brought in Free Watermelon and Red Pop! To keep everyone in the Plantation. Trade your Health and Safety for a slice of watermelon.

Not every plant played "Mr. Nice Guy", however. At Mound Road Engine a truer picture of the real face of capitalist exploitation was exposed when the company Locked the doors when workers tried to walk out. Mound Road produces the 318 engine which goes inside of the new LeBarons and Diplomats, produced at Chryslers St. Louis plant. This is Chryslers new "Hot" car and Mound Road is only two days ahead of St. Louis so any cut in production would really hurt. At Lynch Road after 3 days of walkouts the company Fired 3 workers for "Leading a Walkout". This led to more walkouts this time in support of the fired workers and picketing in front of the plant which cost the company 3 more shifts of lost production. Finally the union told everyone to go back to work because the company refused to bargain while the workers were "Wildcatting". So once again, workers Health and Safety due to the heat takes second place to the capitalists need to get out production.

One worker paid the ultimate price for this. A worker at the Ford Foundry at the Rouge Complex died of Heat Stroke on the way home after working in 130 degree heat. This is the threat to all workers that we must face under capitalism where Property Rights come before Human Rights. Where our worth is determined by how much value we produce for the capitalist. He sits in Air conditioned comfort, while we work and sweat our lives away.

There will be more hot days ahead, we need more fans in working order, better ventilation, Heat breaks in addition to our regular breaks Heat Passes on request and no penalties for anyone absent on days when the temperature is over 90.

Only when we workers own and run the factories in our own interest under Socialism, will the capitalist heat be off our backs. Then we will have better working conditions as a rule, and we can eat our own

... OF THE HAMMER...
 ...-WORK LAWS EFFECT ON MICHIGAN
 ... - OUTLAW COMPANY
 ... OUT - WHAT HAPPENED TO IT?
 ... MARCH UPDATE

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 by
Nelson Peery
 General Secretary,
 Communist Labor Party



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DETROIT SUPPORT GROUP OF:

TEXAS FARM WORKERS UNION

P.O. Box 876, San Juan, Texas 78589

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

We salute the All Unions' Committee to Shorten the Work Week in their efforts to bring together organized labor to deal with one of the most pressing problems facing all of us--the loss of jobs.

The loss of jobs has been particularly intense in the northern states as industry and jobs move to the "right to work" states of the South and Southwest. As our brothers and sisters in these states can testify, organizing the unorganized is made much more difficult by the existence of the Taft-Hartley Act, especially section 14(b).

The Texas Farmworkers Union (TFWU) has led numerous strikes in the melon and onion fields of Texas in the last few years and has faced the Taft-Hartley Act time and again as a key block to their organizing efforts.

Other sections of the Taft-Hartley Act have also come into the national limelight recently. UAW Local 372 members at Chrysler's Trenton Engine Plant were faced with Section 301 of Taft-Hartley last summer in a heat walk-out.

More recently, the UMWA was ordered back to work under Taft-Hartley. UMWA members were able to defy Taft-Hartley because they are organized; they have behind them a history of militant struggle in support of their right to strike. On the other hand, most of the unorganized workers in southern and western coalfields have no such history and to them, the Taft-Hartley Act is a weapon to be feared. Every southern state (to which northern jobs are being lost) has a "right to work" law. Repealing these laws is a necessary step in developing unions in the south and protecting jobs in the north. This cannot effectively be done unless Taft-Hartley is repealed.

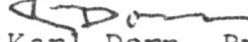
The All Unions' Committee to Shorten the Work Week has called upon all of us to transform "into legislative and collective bargaining campaigns to reduce the hours of labor. New ways must be found and new movements must be built to fire the imagination and unleash the strength of the entire labor movement."


Brothers and sisters, the labor movement is at a crossroads. We must work together to increase jobs and to build organized labor. We have all recognized the importance of labor law reform and our unions are actively working toward this goal. However, some laws can't be reformed, they must be repealed. Taft-Hartley is just such a law. Without the repeal of Taft-Hartley, our efforts will continue to be undercut. We need a shorter work week to insure more jobs and we need to repeal Taft-Hartley to make sure these become union jobs. The upcoming conference is a perfect time to launch this endeavor.

Friends of the TFWU will be having a cocktail party, April 11, 6-10 p.m. Trade Union Leadership Conference-Nelson Jack Edwards Educational Center, (TULC) 8670 Grand River, near Joy Road, Detroit.

We enthusiastically look forward to seeing you there.

In Solidarity,
For the Detroit Support Committee


Karl Dorn, Pres. Loc. 8521
USWA


John Sollenberger, chief steward
executive board member UAW local


Daymon Hartley
Detroit Equal Rights Council


Lolita Hernandez

*cash bar

For further information contact Lolita Hernandez 571-4439 5-8 p.m.

labor donated

Testimonial Resolution

Antonio Orendain

- WHEREAS Antonio Orendain, a Mexican-born American citizen, was once an organizer and then a national executive of the United Farmworkers Union, and the founder of the Texas Farmworkers Union in 1975, and
 - WHEREAS Antonio Orendain led a 400-mile march from the lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas to Austin, the Texas capital, in April, 1977 to publicize the struggle to obtain repeal of Article 14-B of the Taft-Hartley Act and for enactment of a Texas Agricultural Relations bill, and
 - WHEREAS Antonio Orendain this summer led a 1,500-mile March for Human Rights through five Southern "right-to-work" states, and
 - WHEREAS Antonio Orendain led a hunger strike at the gates of the White House in September until Vice President Walter Mondale finally recognized the group, and Antonio Orendain now will receive the first Equal Rights Award from the Detroit Equal Rights Council.
- NOW THEREFORE, BE IT
- RESOLVED That the Detroit City Council issues this Testimonial Resolution in recognition of Antonio Orendain as a tireless and dedicated fighter for the rights of all working people.

Carl Lewis
COUNCIL PRESIDENT

Nicholas Booc
COUNCIL MEMBER PRO TEM

Ernest C. Browne, Jr.
COUNCIL MEMBER

John O'Hara
COUNCIL MEMBER

David Eberhard
COUNCIL MEMBER

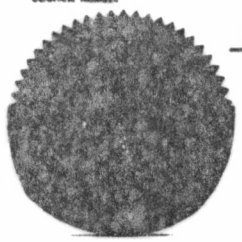
Ernie Henderson
COUNCIL MEMBER

Jack Kelley
COUNCIL MEMBER

Murray McShoffey
COUNCIL MEMBER

Howe Fogell
COUNCIL MEMBER

October 29, 1977
DATE



This resolution is in recognition of the work Antonio Orendain, President of the Texas Farm Worker' Union, has done and is doing. It was passed by the Detroit City Council October 29, 1977. The Council members passed the resolution with a unanimous vote and personally gave it to Orendain.

The Detroit News

HIDALGO COUNTY, Tex. — Except in California, farmworkers do not have the right to organize themselves into a collective bargaining unit. Their lives are left to the whims of the growers.

Here is how the growers feel about that: Last year, a freeze killed off much of Florida's cabbage crop, and all of a sudden, the cabbages from the rich Magic Valley, which runs parallel to the Mexican border in south Texas, were extremely valuable.

So valuable that a 50-pound bag sold in San Antonio for \$8, more than double the usual price. So valuable that one man cleared \$20,000 from only five acres. So valuable that the Hidalgo County growers, guffawing over their good fortune, chartered helicopters at \$150 an hour to more quickly move the cabbages from field to depot.

So the stoop-labor workers who were frantically keeping up with the growers' demands for hurry-up picking asked for a few cents more an hour. Good Lord, replied the growers, we can't do that. And they didn't.

The Texas Farmworkers Union (TFU) is seeking passage of a national law similar to the California statute permitting union elections; and repeal of Section 14(b) of the Taft-Hartley Act, which allows states to pass "right-to-work" laws that deny workers the right to organize a union shop.

The president of TFU, Antonio Orendain, is in Detroit this week seeking support — financial and otherwise. There are ties between our area and his. The migrant laborers I talked to in Hidalgo County earlier this week come to Michigan every year to pick cherries, strawberries, cucumber pickles and tomatoes. Some "drop out" here — leave the migrant life and settle in Detroit's large Mexican-American community, earning their living any way they can.

What does it mean, the farmworkers' inability to organize?

It means farmworker women have an abnormally high death rate from kidney infection because there are no toilets in the field. Men, less modest, void themselves wherever they happen to be in the field. ("Many people say they do not like the Mexican culture," one TFU worker, Jorge Zaragoza, told me, "but they have been injected with more of the Mexican culture than they know!")

Fred Girard

SUPPORT

THE

TFW!



JOIN THE ERC!

The Texas Farmworkers Union, a member of the National Equal Rights Congress, is fighting for the right of all farmworkers to organize into unions, for the repeal of anti-union "Right-to-Work" laws, and an end to the harassment of undocumented workers by the Immigration and Naturalization Service.

The TFWU is now on a 40-day march from San Juan, Texas to Austin, Texas, the State Capitol. The aims of the march are to push for the enactment of farm labor legislation and the repeal of the Taft-Hartley 14b ("Right-to-Work") law. These aims are in the interest of all working people and must be supported by all.

The Detroit Equal Rights Council is calling for a rally in support of the Texas farmworkers struggle. We need to publicize and support this struggle. Every step forward in their struggle is a step forward for all of us, and every step backwards is a step backwards for us. Our struggle is united. Come out and give your support.

W H E R E - HISPANOS UNIDOS HALL, 3564 West Vernor
(Corner of 25th St.)

W H E N - SUNDAY, APRIL 3, 1977 at 2:00 P. M.

SPEAKERS FROM:

The Texas Farmworkers Union
The Detroit Equal Rights Council
The Pbb Action Committee

The National Equal Rights Congress is a national umbrella organization formed to bring together the numerous struggles for equal rights, justice and a decent life into a national united front of action. The NERC supports the TFWU struggle and calls upon all working people to give direct assistance to the march.

Send contributions and support letters from your union locals, community organizations, churches, etc. to:

Jesus Luna
Houston TFW Support Committee
P. O. Box 18664
Houston, Texas 77023
Telephone (713) 928-6706

National Equal Rights Congress
P. O. Box 615
Flint, Michigan 48503

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TFW!

ERC!



La Unión de Campesinos de Tejas, miembro del Congreso Nacional de Derechos Equitativos está luchando por el derecho de todo campesino a organizarse, por la revocación de las leyes anti-únión, "derecho de trabajar" y para poner fin a los ataques y deportaciones de trabajadores no-documentados por parte de la agencia de inmigración.

La Unión de Campesinos de Tejas está lanzando una marcha por 40 días desde San Juan, Tejas hasta Austin, Tejas. El propósito de la marcha es para demostrar apoyo por la reedición de la legislación para trabajadores agrícolas y la revocación del acto federal Taft-Hartley, sección 14(b).

El Concilio de Derechos Equitativos de Detroit está llamando por una reunión en apoyo de la Unión de Campesinos de Tejas. Necesitamos publicar y apoyar esta lucha. Un paso adelante para su lucha es un paso adelante para todos nosotros, y cada paso hacia atrás es un paso atrás para todos. Nuestra lucha está unida. Venigan a darnos su apoyo.

DONDE HISPANOS UNIDOS, 3564 W. Vernor (esquina de la calle 25).

CUANDO DOMINGO, 3 DE ABRIL, 1977 a las 2:00 de la tarde.

ORADORES de: LA UNIÓN DE CAMPESINOS DE TEJAS
EL CONCILIO DE DERECHOS EQUITATIVOS DE DETROIT
EL COMITÉ DE ACCIÓN CONTRA EL PBB (PBB ACTION COMMITTEE).

El Congreso Nacional de Derechos Equitativos es una alianza de organizaciones que se han unido para luchar en un frente único por la igualdad, justicia y por una vida mejor.

El Congreso Nacional de Derechos Equitativos apoya a la Unión de Campesinos de Tejas. Les suplicamos a todos que apoyen a la Unión en su lucha. Mande sus donaciones de dineros, resoluciones de apoyo de uniones, organizaciones cívicas y iglesias a:

Jesus Luna
Houston TFW Support Committee
P.O. Box 18664
Houston, Texas 77023
(713) 928-6706

National Equal Rights Congress
P.O. Box 615
Flint, Michigan 48503

Suscribase a: El Cuhamil
La Union de Campesinos de Tejas
La Voz del Campesino de Tejas
P.O. Box 876
San Juan, Texas 78589

Un año \$5.00
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Suscribase a: El Defensor
Vocero del Congreso de Derechos Equitativos
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Testimony to be given by:

- workers
- community members
- local Chicano leaders

Statements by panel participants (partial list):

- Bert Corona, Nat'l Trade Union of Immigrant Workers
- Rodolfo Lozano, Centro de Acción Social Autónoma (CASA)
- Jerry Ceille, Toledo Metropolitan Mission
- counsel representing labor attorney, Jack Gallon
- Lucius Walker, Nat'l Council of Churches

Resolution of a working plan in defense of
persons who are the targets of this abuse.



F.L.O.C., 408 Segur Avenue, Toledo, (419) 243-3456

NEWSLETTER

OF THE

HATTIESBURG

EQUAL RIGHTS COUNCIL

VOL. I, NO. 3

APRIL, 1977

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Come to the next
ERC meeting - 7:30
p.m.; Monday, April
4, Priest Creek
Baptist Church,
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VOTE FOR PERCY WATSON ON APRIL 5th

Vote for Percy Watson on April 5, 1977, for justice of the peace in Beat One, Forrest County. An investigation of the candidates by the Equal Rights Council led to its endorsement of Percy Watson as the most qualified candidate.

Mr. Watson, a native of Hattiesburg, is the only candidate who is a practicing attorney. He gives residents of Beat One at least three advantages: (1) He will be familiar with the law and the court system; (2) He will have full-time availability through his law office; and (3) He will not abuse his power as judge to collect fines to increase his personal income.

The ERC believes that Mr. Watson would win hands down if he were white. But Mr. Watson is black and as far as we can determine a black person has never held elective office in Forrest County. We say it is time that the people of Forrest County cast their votes on the basis of qualifications, not color.

IF YOU DON'T VOTE, THEN YOU DON'T COUNT.

ERC COMMEMORATES CIVIL RIGHTS HEROES AND GREAT MISSISSIPPIANS

With the program to commemorate the life of Vernon F. Dahmer on March 13 and the passing of Fannie Lou Hamer on March 14, we see the struggle for equal rights in the light of the past 15 years. For it was in 1962 that Mrs. Hamer was refused the right to register to vote at the Sunflower County Courthouse. It was on January 10 of 1966 that Vernon Dahmer sacrificed his life for the liberation of the Negro people.

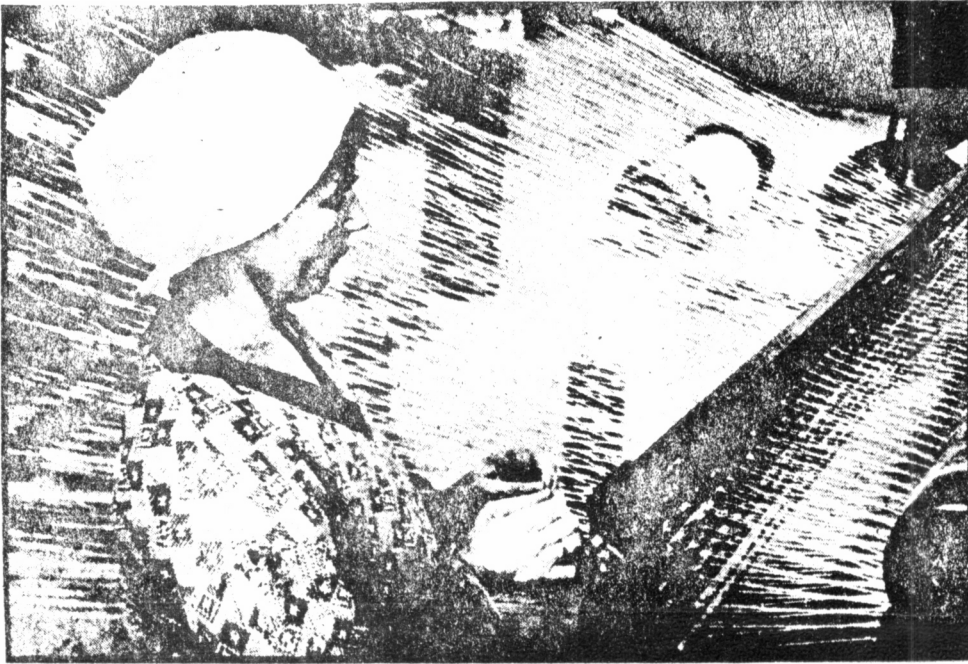
Both of them were leaders in their communities. Both of them inspired and motivated all of us here and around this country. They questioned then as we question now - what does democracy mean? What is freedom? Does it all have any meaning without the everyday struggle and sacrifice that each of us must make?

Some things have changed. We hear of a "New South". It is true that at the Memorial Services for Vernon Dahmer, Mayor A.L. Gerrard of the City of Hattiesburg gave a presentation. Pineview Park was renamed Vernon F. Dahmer Memorial Park. And in the Mississippi House a resolution was unanimously adopted commending the life and dedication of Fannie Lou Hamer.

But as Dr. Emmett Burns, State Field Director for the Ms NAACP pointed out in his "If He Were Here Today" speech, the robes of terror and injustice have gone from "Klan White" to "Judge Black". The current legal suit stemming from the Port Gibson, Miss. boycott threatens to destroy the NAACP. Police brutality continues across the state.

It is true that almost as many blacks as whites are registered to vote. But as Dr. Burns pointed out, only 8 out of 410 county supervisors in the whole state are black. And why is this? There are 2 reasons. One is gerrymandering, i.e. the redistricting of voting districts to give the advantage to the white power structure. The other is the disinterest among voters in actually going to the polls.

So the struggle continues for wage parity, for the repeal of "Right to Work" laws, for the right to vote for real representation of working people. The struggle continues for a decent education for all children in a state where there is no public kindergarten and no compulsory education. Let us use the lives and dedication of Fannie Lou Hamer and Vernon F. Dahmer to inspire us all to fight for a better way of life.



PORT GIBSON PANEL/INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

The informational panel on the NAACP-Port Gibson case, originally scheduled for January 18, 1977, but cancelled because of bad weather, was held on March 8, 1977, at the Holy Rosary Church in Hattiesburg. Frank Parker, an attorney working on the case from the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, and Neil McMillen, a professor of history at the University of Southern Mississippi, spoke. Parker described the development of the case and the critical legal and political issues which are at stake. Once again, it became clear that the Port Gibson case is an attempt by reactionary forces within the State of Mississippi to destroy the NAACP.

McMillen tied the case into history of the oppression of black people in the State of Mississippi. He gave historical accounts of the violence and harassment which the NAACP and its individual members have received in Mississippi. The present legal attack on the NAACP is an institutionalized version of the beatings and tar and featherings which have been administered to NAACP organizers in the past.

Since March 8th is also International Women's Day, Ollie Wilson, a member of the Hattiesburg ERC, gave the following presentation:

"Today is International Women's Day and before our gram begins on the Port Gibson's case, we need to think about this day and what it means to all women and to national minority women.

Women today make up only 39 percent of the work force, but their position is getting worse every day. They have been hit hard by unemployment. Women who are heads of households are very poor and have no chance of finding jobs. Women who are lucky enough to find a job are in the lowest paying and less organized jobs. Women who have jobs where the pay is higher have always been the last hired and first fired. Women are not only oppressed as women and workers. They are mistreated on jobs and made into servants in the home. The Negro and Mexican

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workers are further oppressed as national minority and as second class citizens. Women must not see men workers as their enemies. International Women's Day must be a time to see not only the oppression of women to take up the struggle to free women by fighting for a united working class. Only when men and women workers understand the cause of women's oppression and fight against it will equality for women be possible."

BOYCOTT J. P. STEVENS

The Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union (ACTWU) has called for a boycott of all products manufactured by J.P. Stevens Textile Corporation, by all workers and all people of the United States who support the right of workers to a decent wage and safe working conditions.

J. P. Stevens is the second largest textile manufacturer in the world with an empire of eighty-nine plants employing Forty-Four Thousand workers.

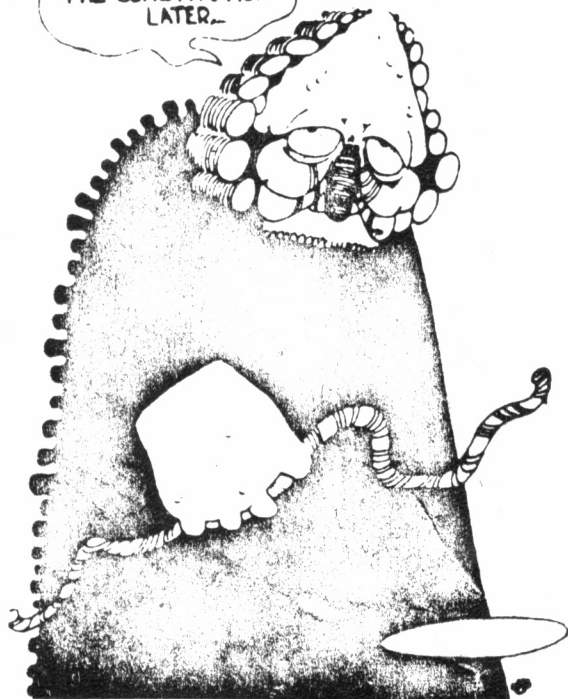
Once located primarily in Massachusetts, Stevens has moved south to take advantage of unorganized labor and the anti-union laws of the southern states, primarily state laws (right to work laws) passed under the authority of Section 14 (b) prohibiting union shops and closed shops.

The Stevens company has been guilty of numerous illegal activities including wire-tapping, price-fixing, tax-evasion, violation of the civil rights laws, violations of the occupational health and safety act, and violations of the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA). Illegal firing of workers who support unionization is common at the Stevens' mills. Federal courts have found the company in violation of the NLRA more times than any other company in United States history.

The conditions in the plant are "not too much different than slavery," according to Addie Jackson, a worker in one of Stevens' Georgia plants. Work at the Stevens' plant is marked by cotton dust that chokes the air, no lunch hours, noise levels that are twenty times the legal limit, and wages almost half of what workers in the north are paid.

A boycott of Stevens manufactured clothing is not easy. Stevens manufactures clothes under a variety of names. The major names to look for are Fruit of the Loom, Utica sheets and Tastemaker towels. The ERC urges its members and supporters to help the workers at J. P. Stevens' plants by boycotting these products.

WE'LL WORRY
ABOUT
THE CONSTITUTION
LATER.



PALMERS CROSSING CITIZENS CONTINUE TO FIGHT

For more than 40 years Palmers Crossing has been the most oppressed area of Forrest County. Inadequate sewers, poor drainage, flash floods, bad roads, and inadequate housing are the trademarks of Palmers. The citizens of Palmers have received less services from every branch of government -- state, county, and federal -- than any other citizens of Forrest County.

On February 23, 1977, the Concerned Citizens of Palmers Crossing joined with the Hattiesburg ERC in a lawsuit filed in federal court against each of the Forrest County Board of Supervisors. The suit alleges that out of \$1,650,000.00 which Forrest County has received in revenue sharing funds since July 1, 1974, less than 3% has been spent in Palmers Crossing. The suit maintains that the citizens of Palmers Crossing should receive their proportionate share of county revenue sharing funds in order to improve roads, sewers, drainage, housing and other problems in Palmers Crossing.

The lawsuit also asks that the Board of Supervisors submit a plan to the federal court for the Southern District of Mississippi which would outline the allocation of federal revenue sharing funds for Palmers Crossing in the future. The Board of Supervisors has not answered the lawsuit as yet.

On March 14, 1977, more than 20 citizens from Palmers Crossing appeared at a meeting called by the Board of Supervisors to discuss the Board's proposed budget for the revenue sharing funds which it will receive for the balance of 1977. These funds amount to a total of \$351,277.32. The Concerned Citizens of Palmers Crossing submitted a proposal which called for \$81,076.64 of this money to be spent in Palmers Crossing during 1977. The proposal called for \$23,000.00 to be spent on a recreational center and the balance on road improvement.

At one point during the March 14th meeting, Beat One Supervisor David Allen, reneged on a statement attributed to him by reporters from television station WDAM (Channel 7). According to the television report, Allen said that \$60,000.00 was committed to Palmers Crossing improvements out of revenue sharing funds already available. However, at the March 14th meeting Allen said this money was not already available, but would come out of the 1977 revenue sharing funds. Clearly, this alleged money is being used to coerce the citizens of Palmers Crossing to drop their federal lawsuit.

The Hattiesburg ERC and the Concerned Citizens of Palmers Crossing have invited Supervisor Allen and Supervisor J.A.P. Carter (Beat 4) to the next ERC meeting on April 4, 1977 at Priest Creek Baptist Church in Palmers Crossing to discuss the problems of Palmers Crossing and revenue sharing. It is important that all citizens of Forrest County who are concerned about democracy and justice attend this meeting so that these issues can be properly addressed.

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The oppression of these workers is tied directly to the oppression of black people in the South and particularly in the State of Mississippi. As long as oppressed people, such as Mexican farm workers and black workers in Mississippi, can be kept separate, they are denied the strength which is found in unity. The very purpose of the Equal Rights Congress is to bring together the numerous struggles for equal rights, justice and a better life into a united front of action. That is why it is particularly important that citizens of Hattiesburg who care about these struggles come out to greet and hear Antonio Orandein on April 2. In togetherness, there is strength.

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Puckett at 583-1087*

BE SURE TO ATTEND THE APRIL, 22nd MEETING OF THE
ERC TO HEAR ANTONIO ORANDEIN OF THE TEXAS FARM
WORKERS' UNION -
APRIL 22, HOLY ROSARY CATHOLIC CHURCH, DABBS ST.
HATTIESBURG 7:30 P.M.

SUPPORT THE TEXAS FARM WORKERS

On Friday, April 22, 1977, Antonio Orandein, President of the Texas Farm Workers' Union, will speak at a Hattiesburg ERC meeting. Orandein and the Texas Farm Workers are fighting for their lives in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas. Because of the poverty of these migrant farm workers and the violence they suffer at the hands of the Texas Rangers, the Rio Grande Valley is called the "Valley of Tears."

The Texas Farm Workers' Union was formed on August 14, 1975, to organize migrant workers on both sides of the U.S. - Mexican border. The TFWU is a member of the National Equal Rights Congress and is committed to the right of all farm workers to organize into unions, to the repeal of anti-union "Right to Work" laws, and an end to the harassment of undocumented workers by the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service.

Antonio Orandein will speak in Hattiesburg at the ERC meeting after the conclusion of the present 40-day march of the TFWU from San Juan, Texas, to Austin, Texas, the State capitol. The aims of this march are to push for the enactment of farm labor legislation and the repeal of Section 14(b) of the Taft-Hartley Act, which authorizes states to enact vicious anti-union "Right to Work" laws.

Mexican farm workers in Texas live in the midst of severe poverty with little legal protection. Health and safety laws as well as child labor laws do not cover these workers. Men, women and children are herded into trucks and crammed into vans for transport to the fields. They are often sprayed with poisonous pesticides while they work. Housing is subhuman and job security is non-existent.

¡VIVA LA INDEPENDENCIA DE MEXICO!

Este día conmemoramos la Independencia de Mexico. Nosotros recordamos la valiente lucha del pueblo Mexicano contra los opresores españoles. Hay una lucha contra opresores, pero este día contra la clase dominante de los Estados Unidos de Norteamérica que roban la riqueza de la nación Mexicana, forzando millones en la pobreza y desesperación en una lucha para sobrevivir. Forzando miles de trabajadores Mexicanos a cruzar la frontera en jornadas peligrosas buscando por mejor vida.

Ahora cuando desempleo esta muy elevado, el gobierno esta haciendo llamado para culpar los trabajadores indocumentados de Mexico. Nosotros no aceptamos esta mentira! Desempleo es el resultado del sistema de explotación de capitalismo. La clase capitalista (la gente rica) de este país y de Mexico tienen que cargar con la culpa por cerrar las fabricas y dejandonos en las calles. En vez de eso, estan protejiendo grupos tales como el Ku Klux Klan y el Partido Nazi para atacar a los minorias nacionales como Mexicanos y Negros.

Vamos a pelear estas tentativas para dividirnos mas. No permitiramos fascismo en este país! Nosotros tenemos que luchar por los derechos de cada uno de los trabajadores para que tengan trabajo productivo y una vida decente! Tenemos que luchar para los derechos democraticos de los obreros indocumentados y todas las minorias nacionales!

QUEREMOS TRABAJOS CON PAZ!

ALTO AL KU KLUX KLAN Y EL PARTIDO NAZI!

ALTO LOS DEPORTACIONES DE TRABAJADORES INDOCUMENTADOS!

ÚNENSE CON EL CONCILIO DE OBREROS DESEMPLEADOS DE CHICAGO JOIN THE CHICAGO UNEMPLOYED WORKERS COUNCIL

Mexican Independence Day is a day to remember the valient struggle of the Mexican people against the Spanish oppressors. Today there is also struggle against oppressors, but today it is the ruling class of this country, the United States of North America, that saps the wealth of the Mexican Nation, forcing millions into poverty and a desperate struggle for survival. It is no wonder that thousands brave the dangerous journey across the border in search for a better life.

Now, when massive unemployment is hitting the workers of this country, the government is making a call to blame the undocumented Mexican workers. We do not accept this lie! Unemployment is the result of the exploitive system of capitalism and the wealthy capitalist class of this country and Mexico must take the blame, for closing their factories and leaving us in the streets. Instead, they are protecting such groups as the Ku Klux Klan and the Nazi Party to attack the Mexican and Negro workers.

Let's fight these attempts to further divide us. We won't let fascism come here! We must fight for the right of every worker to have a productive job and a decent life! We must fight for the democratic rights of the undocumented workers and all national minorities!

WE WANT JOBS WITH PEACE!

STOP THE KU KLUX KLAN AND THE NAZI PARTY!

STOP DEPORTATIONS OF UNDOCUMENTED WORKERS!

Chicago Unemployed Workers Council
El Concilio de Obreros Desempleados

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