

CESAR *and the Delano Grape Strike* CHAVEZ

CESAR CHAVEZ WAS BORN IN ARIZONA IN 1927, WHERE HIS FAMILY OWNED A SMALL FARM. TEN YEARS LATER, THE FAMILY LOST THE FARM AND WERE FORCED TO JOIN THOUSANDS OF OTHER PEOPLE WHO TRAVELED WEST IN SEARCH OF WORK DURING THE GREAT DEPRESSION. THE TERRIBLE WORKING CONDITIONS OF MIGRANT FARM WORKERS INFLUENCED CESAR, AND WHEN HE GREW UP, HE BEGAN A LABOR UNION THAT WOULD CHANGE FARMING IN THE UNITED STATES FOREVER.

Use this Graphic Book with Cesar Chavez: Migrant Hero at Level Q or The Life of Cesar Chavez at Level Y.

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Illustrated by
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A READING A-Z
GRAPHIC
BOOK

THE N.F.W.A. AND A.W.O.C. MERGED TO FORM THE UNITED FARM WORKERS AND STAYED ON STRIKE AGAINST CALIFORNIA GRAPE GROWERS FOR MORE THAN FIVE YEARS. THROUGH THEIR EFFORTS, THE UFW SUCCEEDED IN IMPROVING THE WORKING CONDITIONS AND INCREASING THE WAGES OF THOUSANDS OF FARMERS BY REACHING A COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENT WITH THE FARM COMPANIES. THE DELANO GRAPE STRIKE WAS A LANDMARK VICTORY FOR ORGANIZED FARM LABOR.

STRIKE!
STRIKE!

STRIKE!
STRIKE!

STRIKE!
STRIKE!

NO

CESAR CHAVEZ DEVOTED HIS LIFE TO CIVIL RIGHTS ACTIVISM AND WAS FAMOUS FOR HIS DEVOTION TO THE LABOR MOVEMENT AND NONVIOLENT RESISTANCE. THROUGH STRIKES, MARCHES, AND FASTS, CESAR CHAVEZ GREATLY INCREASED THE RIGHTS OF FARM WORKERS IN AMERICA AND WAS POSTHUMOUSLY AWARDED THE MEDAL OF FREEDOM, AMERICA'S HIGHEST CIVILIAN HONOR. SOME STATES EVEN CELEBRATE HIS BIRTHDAY, MARCH 31, AS A HOLIDAY.

CESAR and the Delano Grape Strike

CHAVEZ



THANK YOU,
SEÑORA SORIA.

Written by Gary Thompson
Illustrated by Robert Rath

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SEPTEMBER 13, 1965 - SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA



I JUST DON'T KNOW, SEÑOR CHAVEZ. A UNION... I HAVE HEARD STORIES.

AND WHAT STORIES HAVE YOU HEARD?



WELL, THE FARM COMPANIES SAY...

THEY SAY THEY'LL BLACKBALL US, SEÑOR CHAVEZ. THEY SAY IF THEY EVEN THINK WE ARE TALKING ABOUT A UNION THEY WILL MAKE SURE NO OTHER FARMS HIRE US. THEY SAY WE WILL NEVER WORK AGAIN!

WHERE WILL WE BE THEN, SEÑOR CHAVEZ? OUT ON THE STREET? HUNGRY WITH LITTLE MOUTHS TO FEED?



I KNOW THAT IS A SCARY THOUGHT, SEÑORA SORIA. I HAVE SEEN THAT SAME FEAR IN FARMERS ALL AROUND THE AREA.

BUT THE SCARIEST THING ABOUT WHAT YOU ARE SAYING IS THAT IT IS ABSOLUTELY TRUE.

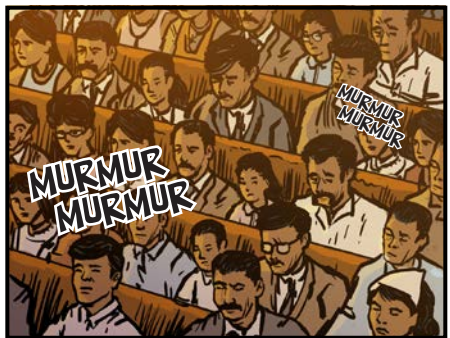


THE FARM COMPANIES CAN KEEP YOU FROM WORKING AND THROW YOU AWAY LIKE A PIECE OF TRASH. TO THEM, THERE IS ALWAYS ANOTHER WORKER TO REPLACE YOU.

BUT WHAT IF THERE WERE NO OTHER WORKERS TO REPLACE YOU?



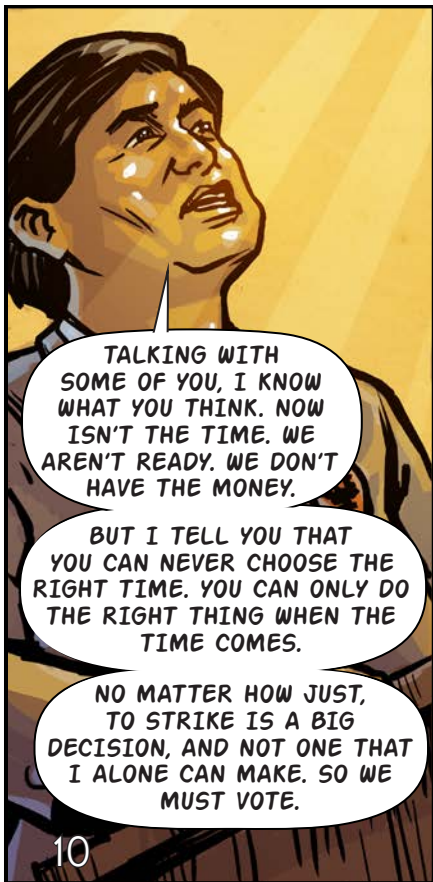
SO, ALL THOSE WHO VOTE IN FAVOR OF GOING ON STRIKE, RAISE YOUR HAND.





I KNOW WE ARE A SMALL ORGANIZATION, BUT THEY ARE SMALLER. I KNOW WE ARE A POOR ORGANIZATION, BUT THEY ARE POORER.

STILL, THEY HAD THE COURAGE TO STAND UP TO POWER AND SAY NO! THEY HAD THE COURAGE TO DEMAND WHAT WAS RIGHT FOR THEIR WORKERS.



TALKING WITH SOME OF YOU, I KNOW WHAT YOU THINK. NOW ISN'T THE TIME. WE AREN'T READY. WE DON'T HAVE THE MONEY.

BUT I TELL YOU THAT YOU CAN NEVER CHOOSE THE RIGHT TIME. YOU CAN ONLY DO THE RIGHT THING WHEN THE TIME COMES.

NO MATTER HOW JUST, TO STRIKE IS A BIG DECISION, AND NOT ONE THAT I ALONE CAN MAKE. SO WE MUST VOTE.

I WILL CLOSE BY SAYING THIS, THOUGH. WHEN I SPOKE WITH EACH AND EVERY ONE OF YOU ABOUT THE BENEFITS OF JOINING THIS UNION, I TOLD YOU ONE THING THAT I WILL REMIND YOU OF NOW.



WE ARE STRONGER WHEN WE STAND TOGETHER.



WHEN I WAS A BOY MY FAMILY OWNED THE LAND WE WORKED. WE DIDN'T HAVE MUCH, BUT WHAT WE HAD WAS OURS. THEN, WE LOST THE FARM, AND MY FAMILY BECAME MIGRANT WORKERS LIKE SO MANY FAMILIES DURING THE GREAT DEPRESSION.



CORPORATIONS STILL OWN THE FARMS. THEY MAKE YOU WORK ALL DAY DOING BACKBREAKING LABOR IN THE SUN. THE COMPANIES MAKE PLENTY OF MONEY, BUT THEY ONLY PAY THEIR WORKERS PENNIES.

SOMETIMES THEY DON'T PAY THEM AT ALL.



WHEN YOU ASK THOSE COMPANIES TO TREAT YOU FAIRLY AND PAY HONEST MONEY FOR HONEST WORK, THEY SAY NO.

YOU ASK FOR WATER WHILE YOU SWEAT ALL DAY, AND THEY SAY NO.

YOU ASK FOR A SAFE PLACE TO LIVE, AND THEY SAY NO.



AND YOU ARE RIGHT, SEÑORA. WHEN THEY HAVE TIRED OF YOUR REQUESTS, THEY WILL GET RID OF YOU.

BUT NOT WITH A UNION.



COMPANIES ASSUME THEY CAN REPLACE YOU CHEAPLY AND EASILY. WITH A UNION, WE EITHER GET TREATED FAIRLY OR NONE OF US WORKS.

THEY CAN'T REPLACE YOU IF THERE'S NO ONE TO REPLACE YOU WITH.



I DON'T KNOW. CAN WE REALLY STAND UP AGAINST COMPANIES THAT ARE SO POWERFUL?



MAYBE NOT ALONE, BUT WE ARE STRONGER WHEN WE ALL STAND TOGETHER. THEY KNOW THAT.

THIS IS WHY THEY ARE SO AFRAID OF US.



SEPTEMBER 16, 1965 - OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE CATHOLIC CHURCH



I WANT TO THANK YOU ALL FOR COMING TODAY-A DAY THAT MAY BE THE MOST IMPORTANT IN THE SHORT HISTORY OF THE N.F.W.A.

I'M HAPPY TO SEE SO MANY OF OUR MEMBERS COULD MAKE IT TONIGHT. SOME OF YOU HAVE BEEN WITH US FROM THE VERY BEGINNING.

OTHERS ARE ATTENDING FOR THE VERY FIRST TIME.



I REQUESTED WE ALL COME TOGETHER TONIGHT SO WE COULD CAST A VOTE.

A VOTE ON WHETHER WE SHOULD JOIN THE A.W.O.C. IN THEIR STRIKE AGAINST THE GRAPE FARMS OF DELANO.



THE A.W.O.C. IS ON STRIKE? BUT YOU ARE SUCH A SMALL ORGANIZATION!

YES, AND THAT IS ALREADY CAUSING PROBLEMS.



ONLY ABOUT TWO HUNDRED OF OUR TWELVE HUNDRED MEMBERS CAN PAY DUES. WE DON'T HAVE MANY RESERVES. HOW CAN WE HELP?

IT'S NOT MONEY. THE FARM COMPANIES ARE ALREADY BRINGING IN LATINO FARMERS TO BREAK OUR STRIKE, TRYING TO PLAY OUR TWO GROUPS AGAINST EACH OTHER.



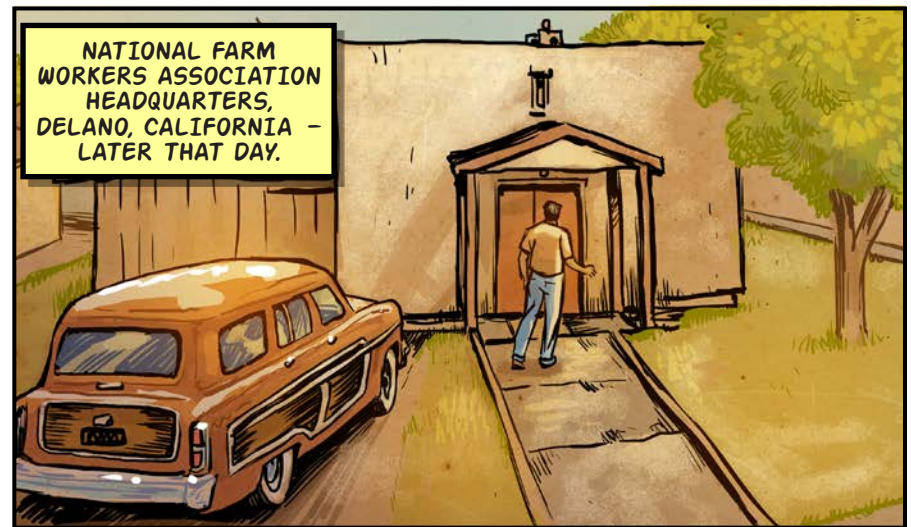
ONLY FIVE DAYS IN AND THEY ARE ALREADY TRYING TO BREAK YOUR STRIKE BY ENCOURAGING RACIAL CONFLICT...

IT WOULD BE MORE SURPRISING IF IT WEREN'T SO PREDICTABLE.



I THINK I KNOW WHAT TO DO. COME, LET'S TALK.

SO DO YOU THINK YOU CAN HELP US, MR. CHAVEZ?



NATIONAL FARM WORKERS ASSOCIATION HEADQUARTERS, DELANO, CALIFORNIA - LATER THAT DAY.



HOW DID IT GO?

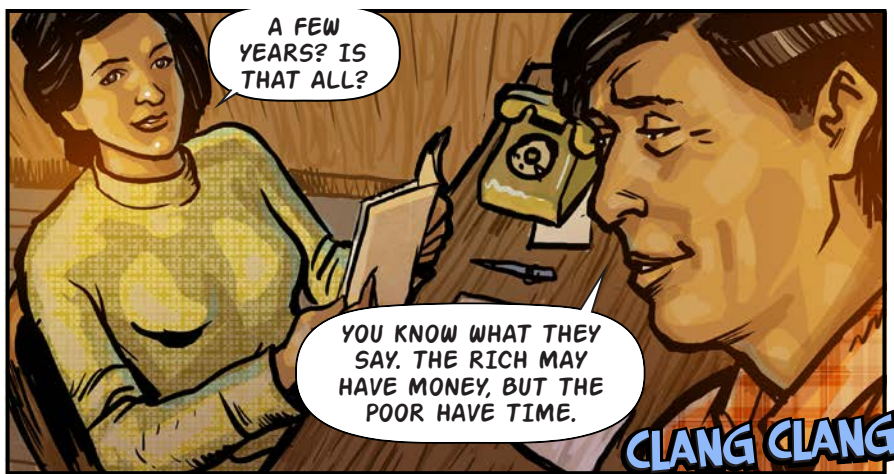
TWO MORE HAVE JOINED. STEVE AND ROSALIA SORIA.

THAT'S GREAT! I'LL ADD THEM TO THE LIST.



LOOKS LIKE WE ARE UP TO ABOUT TWELVE HUNDRED NOW.

JUST A FEW MORE YEARS, DOLORES. IF WE KEEP SIGNING UP WORKERS, EVEN TWO AT A TIME, WE SHOULD HAVE ENOUGH PEOPLE AND RESOURCES TO STRIKE.



A FEW YEARS? IS THAT ALL?

YOU KNOW WHAT THEY SAY. THE RICH MAY HAVE MONEY, BUT THE POOR HAVE TIME.

CLANG CLANG



HELLO? MR. CHAVEZ?

LARRY! PHILIP!



I HOPED YOU WOULD BE HERE, DOLORES.

WHERE ELSE WOULD I BE?

CESAR, LET ME INTRODUCE LARRY ITLIONG AND PHILIP VERA CRUZ, FOUNDERS OF THE AGRICULTURAL WORKERS ORGANIZING COMMITTEE. WE USED TO WORK TOGETHER.



OH YES! YOU ARE THE UNION OF FILIPINO FARMERS, RIGHT? I'VE HEARD SO MUCH ABOUT YOUR ORGANIZATION.

WHAT BRINGS YOU TO OUR HEADQUARTERS?



WE CAME BECAUSE THE A.W.O.C. IS IN A TOUGH SPOT RIGHT NOW.

FIVE DAYS AGO OUR GRAPE WORKERS VOTED TO GO ON STRIKE, AND NOW WE NEED YOUR HELP.