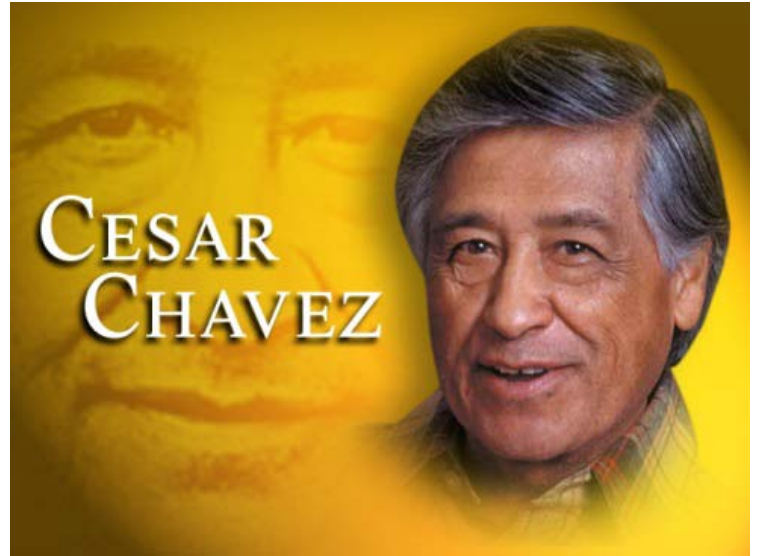


Document 3

Latin American Rights Movement

Directions: Read the following documents and record the information in your chart.

Latinos. Other Americans also struggled for equal rights and equal treatment during the 1960s and later. Many Mexican Americans lived in the U.S. Southwest. They had long suffered from discrimination. Now American Latinos began to organize. Like African Americans, they demanded change. They wanted equal treatment in jobs, housing, and schools. They stressed pride in their culture. César Chávez became a leader of Latino migrant farm workers. He organized them into the United Farm Workers union. He then led a national boycott of table grapes. The boycott at last forced growers to respond to the workers' demands.



César Chávez (1927-1993) was a Mexican-American labor advocate who campaigned for better working conditions and wages for migrant farm workers – many of whom were Latino or Philipino. In 1962, he helped found the **United Farm Workers** (UFW) as a labor union for migrant farm workers. This organization used non-violent tactics in an attempt to bargain with fruit and vegetable companies. In 1966 Chávez organized a massive labor movement that would include a 250 mile march from Delano, CA to the state capital in Sacramento. Below, Chávez explains why this march was important for the latino farm workers. **What reasons does Chávez cite for completing this march?**

Answer in your notebook.

Statement from the United Farm Workers

(by César Chávez, "God is Beside You on the Picket Line," March, 1966.)

In the [250 mile] "March from Delano [California] to Sacramento [the state capital]" there is a meeting of cultures and traditions; the centuries-old religious tradition of Spanish culture conjoins with the very contemporary cultural syndrome of "demonstration" springing from the spontaneity of the poor, the downtrodden, the rejected, the discriminated against bearing visibly their need and demand for equality and freedom.

In every religion-oriented culture "the pilgrimage" has had a place: a trip made with sacrifice and hardship as an expression of penance and of commitment—and often involving a petition to the patron of the pilgrimage for some sincerely sought benefit of body or soul. Pilgrimage has not passed from Mexican culture. . . .

But throughout the Spanish-speaking world there is another tradition that touched the present march, that of the Lenten penitential processions. . . . The penitential procession is also in the blood of the Mexican-American, and the Delano march will therefore be one of penance—public penance for the sins of the strikers, their own personal sins as well as their yielding perhaps to feelings of hatred and revenge in the strike itself. They hope by the march to set themselves at peace with the Lord, so that the justice of their cause will be purified of all lesser motivation.

These two great traditions of a great people meet in the Mexican-American with the belief that Delano [is] his "cause," his great demand for justice, freedom, and respect from a predominantly foreign cultural community in a land where he was first. The revolutions of Mexico were primarily uprisings of the poor, fighting for bread and for dignity. The Mexican-American is also a child of the revolution.

Pilgrimage, penance, and revolution. The pilgrimage from Delano to Sacramento has strong religio-cultural overtones. But it is also the pilgrimage of a cultural minority which has suffered from a hostile environment, and a minority which means business.

César Chávez was arrested for his leadership of several strikes in California. In most instances, Chávez attempted to communicate with migrant farm workers by using a loudspeaker that was attached to his car. In his messages he urged the workers to strike and protest for better wages and benefits.

Below is an appeal for the release of Chávez.

What arguments were made against the Tulare County ordinance (law) that said using speakers mounted to a vehicle was illegal? In your opinion was this ordinance unconstitutional? Explain.

Answer in your notebook.

Appeal of César Chávez's Conviction

(Court of Appeals of California, Fifth Appellate District, November 20, 1967; appeal of the decision by a Municipal Court in Tulare County.)

A criminal complaint was filed in the Justice Court of the Porterville Judicial District charging appellant [César Chávez] with the illegal use of a speaker mounted on a vehicle in violation of Tulare County's Loud Speaker Control Ordinance. Appellant demurred to the complaint and when the court overruled his demurrer he petitioned the Superior Court of Tulare County for a writ of prohibition. Appellant's petition was denied and this appeal followed. . . .

We have carefully reviewed the Tulare County ordinance with these salutary principles in mind and conclude that the ordinance is unconstitutional. . . .

The Tulare ordinance presents great opportunity for discrimination, political preference and the type of censorship that is repugnant to the very concept upon which our free form of government is founded. . . .

[T]he ordinance makes it possible for the board to purposely engage in delaying tactics which could be extremely detrimental, if not fatal, to the presentation of vital issues in labor disputes, political campaigns and similar national, state or local matters which are by nature transitory. . . .

In its greatest moment of success, the UFW was able to organize a boycott of California grapes that took place all across the United States. Members of the UFW travelled around the country to convince supermarkets and shoppers to boycott non-union California grapes in an effort to give the union more power at the bargaining table. In 1970 the union workers would finally be able to negotiate guaranteed higher wages and other benefits long denied them.

