

Chavez Supports Philippine Dictatorship

Fifth Estate Collective

1977

Cesar Chavez, president of the United Farm Workers union, and perennial darling of the liberal-Catholic-Stalinist milieu, has recently been making his followers uncomfortable by behaving like a George Meany-style labor hack. At the end of July, Chavez, touring the Philippines at the request of the Philippine farmworkers in California to see how their families were faring under martial law imposed by dictator Ferdinand Marcos, ended up being given the royal treatment by the regime and presented an award by Marcos himself! Chavez, who admitted having no knowledge of Marcos' ban on strikes or the arrests of thousands of striking workers, defended the Marcos regime, claiming that life under martial law was "a hell of a lot better" for the Philippine workers than before. Chavez had never been in the Philippines previous to his July trip.

His supporters were even more dismayed, however, by his behavior at the UFW convention in Fresno, California, in late August. Any illusions that the farm workers movement was ultimately going to result in anything but the same old same old, i.e. business unionism, were dashed by the preparations for a "purge" against the volunteer organizers and the "streamlining" of the UFW into a privileged, bureaucratic business operation.

Marc Grossman, Chavez' assistant and union press representative, announced, "Many people joined in support of the UFW for their own purposes. We now say if any S.O.B. comes in with his own political or social agenda and tries to impose that agenda on the union, we will kick him out."

One staff member was quoted as saying, "I have never seen as much red-baiting as we now have in the union. It really scares me."

Chavez' two invited speakers also caused a stir. Both were representatives of the Marcos regime. Admitting later that "martial law and trade unionism are not compatible" (a questionable statement considering the role of trade unions in S.U. and other "socialist" countries), he squashed all efforts to criticize the reactionary Marcos dictatorship from his staff and from the ranks.

To those who seriously analyze unionism, the Chavez actions can come as no surprise. No matter what the original motivations of the people involved, the inevitable outcome of unionism is business unionism, corruption, and the suppression of independent activity on the part of the workers. Hence there was no irony meant when Jacinto Mendoza, a Teamster goon now involved in the transfer of Teamster members into the UFW under the terms of the agreement between the two operations, said from the rostrum, "My god, how times have changed." Times have changed. They changed long ago. But myths take a long time in dying.

(Information from Zodiac News Service and *In These Times*, a Chicago newspaper.)



Fifth Estate Collective
Chavez Supports Philippine Dictatorship
1977

<https://www.fifthestate.org/archive/286-september-1977/chavez-supports-philippine-dictatorship>
Fifth Estate #286, September, 1977

fifthestate.anarchistlibraries.net