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# Research Essay: Cesar Chavez

## **Introduction**

Cesar Chavez was a Mexican American labor organizer and a Latino-American civil rights activist from 1927-1993. In 1962, with former experience as a migrant worker, Chavez headed The National Farm Worker Association. His labor union merged with the "Agricultural Worker organizing committee" after the first strike in California against the grape's growers. The two organizations later formed a larger union as 'United farm Workers'. Despite the legal barriers and conflicts with the other unions, he struggled to improve the conditions for farmworkers and labors in California, Arizona, Texas, and Florida. The absurd support of Farm Workers Association with the strike of Filipino Farm-workers in the grapes field of Delano was a turning point in Chavez's life. Cesar Chavez was born in 1927 to a Mexican American family in Yuma, Arizona. Chavez was a believer in the narrative of Martin Luther King and Mahatma Gandhi that "Violence can only hurt us and our cause" (Cesar Chavez). Cesar Chaves served as director "Community Service Organization" in 1958, but soon, he resigned from the post to devote his struggle in organizing a union for the rights of farmworkers. Cesar was brought in a poor family. He learned a lesson of injustice or rather justice when the dishonest Anglos breached the land agreement with his father and grabbed his land for not paying the heavy interest on a loan. Cesar said that "the love for justice that is in us is not only the best part of our being, but it is also the truest to our nature". In subsequent paragraphs, the essay will describe Chavez's life and way of leadership, his beliefs regarding justice and Nonviolent resistance, and the great impact of Cesar Chaves on the life of American farmworkers.

**The Leadership of Cesar Chavez**

Chavez was recruited in Navy in the year 1946 and sent to San Diego for training purpose. He stationed in Saipan then moved to Guam as a Seaman. He was promoted to this rank and moved to San Francisco. Chavez certainly decided to leave the Navy and moved to Delano, California, and started working as an agricultural worker. "The boycott is one of the most powerful weapons that poor people and people who struggle for justice have in this world (Wolfteich and Claire, 2005) It's so powerful because it's nothing more than the extension of love from one human being to the other. It makes it possible for people on the east coast and in California and in other places, in Texas, in Austin, and all over the world to help one another in a very direct way" (Zompetti, 2006). Mexican American Cesar Chavez (1927-1993) was a projecting union frontrunner and labor manager.

Toughened by his initial knowledge as a refugee employee, Chavez initiated the National Farm Workers Association in 1962. His union combined with the Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee in its first strike contrary to grape cultivators in California, and the two establishments later fused to develop the United Farm Workers. Emphasizing peaceful approaches, Chavez drew courtesy for his reasons via boycotts, hikes, and hunger strikes (Jenson et al., 2003). He always remained peaceful and nonviolent (Zompetti, 2006). His determinations and purposes were destined to get privileges for workers and labors. He united workers and labors through his National Farm Workers Association. There were many fights that he fought for the workers and labors. The fight with the strong legislative and the other unions was not easy. Although struggles with the Teamsters union and legitimate obstructions, he was intelligent enough to protect workers and recover environments for farmhouse labors in California, Texas, Arizona, and Florida.

During this age, Chavez met the environments that he would commit his life to alter: worthless refugee camps, dishonest work suppliers, insufficient wages for exhausting labor, unpleasant discrimination. His overview to work organizing started in 1952 when he chanced Father Donald McDonnell, an innovative Catholic cleric, and Fred Ross, a manager with the Community Service Organization, who employed Chavez to link his assembly. In a few years, Chavez had emerged as a national manager, but in 1962 resigned to dedicate his drives to establishing a union for farm labors. The purpose of the strikes and boycotts were to acknowledge and recognize the dignified status of workers and labors (Zompetti, 2006). It was necessary to create awareness among labors and workers to stand and fight for the rights. He devoted his life to workers and labors passionately. Cesar fasted for many days just for the rights of workers and labors. He fasted for more than 10 days and even for 25 days. He repeated fast in the years 1968, 1972, and 1988. He declared that the fasting is nor propaganda; it is the utmost form of discipline and correction.

**Major Achievements and Setbacks**

A foremost turning fact originated in September 1965 after the unexperienced Farm Labors Association chosen to link a strike that had been introduced by Filipino farm labors in Delano’s grape grounds (Shaw, 2010). In months, Chavez and his union developed a well-known recognition. Chavez's representation on the descriptions of the civil human rights society, his persistence on peacefulness, his dependence on helpers from urban colleges and spiritual societies, his association with structured labor, and his practice of mass rallying performances such as a well-known walk on Sacramento in 1966 fetched the grape strike and customer reject into the nationwide awareness. The strike in specific was liable for compelling the cultivators to know the United Farm Labors. The initial agreements were contracted in 1966 but were trailed by additional years of conflict. As Shaw (1983) claims, the fight "was even more than a battle for politico-economic power, it was a socio-cultural revolution because it placed emphasis upon social services, land reform, and community development projects" (Zompetti, 2006). In 1968 Chavez lived on a fast for twenty-five days to object the snowballing support of ferocity in the union. Triumph came lastly on July 29, 1970, when 26 Delano cultivators officially contracted agreements recognizing the workers and getting peace to the wineries.

The same year, Teamsters' movement confronted him in the Salinas valley by authorizing sweetheart agreements with the cultivators there. Therefore, started a four-year fight. Lastly, in 1973, the Teamsters contracted a jurisdictional contract that provisionally terminated the conflict (Zompetti, 2006). To improve the efficiency, later 1976 Chavez led through the main reform the union to public outreach. Chavez Initiated a worldwide boycott, in 1984 when the grape industry refuses to use the pesticides on the crops. He initiated the national level strike of table grapes. The purpose of the strike was to get attention towards workers suffering from discrimination. He obstinately devoted himself and his services to the poor and workers. The labors and workers are often neglected in the countries. He was a social worker and devoted his life to worker's rights and dignity in the country. To resolve the problems of American's poorest workers, Chavez insistently devoted his thirty years. His efforts succeeded in raising wages and farmworkers in California, Arizona, Florida, and Texas got improved working conditions. He always chooses struggle, righteousness, and sacrifice.

In 1976, the budget allocated for the labors and workers' elections were run out, and the legislation of California refused to expend more money (León, 2014). The money spent on the elections for workers' framework was more than the expected amount. Chavez organized the union for recruiting framework and went for legal permission before California voters but was defeated (Zompetti, 2006). Cesar prepared people aware of the efforts of farm labors for restored pay and harmless employed circumstances. He prospered via peaceable strategies (rejects, strikes, and raids). Cesar Chavez and the union wanted acknowledgment of the position and self-esteem of all farm labors and workers. The purpose of the labors and workers was to get recognition and honor for their work and struggles.

He initiated the beginning of the movement for labors and workers (Zompetti, 2006). He organized the movement by religious groups, students, and workers, but the strategies were nonviolent and peaceful. He trained his union workers and labors for strikes and boycotts. The strikes and the boycotts were the weapons used to generate peaceful march and walk around the cities. Farmworkers and labors were worried and were spending life in misery and depression, which motivated him to stand with them. His hard work, dedication, efforts, and willingness proved that he was a respectable worker. The workers were worried and distressed because of the employer's strict and rigid laws and policies. The low wages and pays also made them suffer by the local employers and their viciousness (Zompetti, 2006). Considering that the solitary enduring answer to the complications of farm labors lay in legislature, Chavez maintained the route of California’s Farming Labor Relations Act (the one of its type in the state), which assured to finish the series of desolation and mistreatment and guarantee fairness for the labors (Ganz and Louis, 2001). These capacities, though, demonstrated to be short-term as cultivator obstruction and a sequence of hostile committees weaken the efficiency of the rule (Zompetti, 2006). He served his life as a role model for labors and workers by providing them a mission to organize the workers and labors to improve their lives.

**Conclusion**

Cesar's efforts for empowering and inaugurating the United Farm Workers Union brought a revolution to the lives of millions of farmers and workers. He dedicated his life for workers and labors by motivating them to stand for their peace, work, and self-respect. He told the people that only peaceful strikes and march could resolve issues and problems of labors and also can get approval from the government and states for new policies and laws for workers (Wells, 2009). He told people that we could triumph and save our self-esteem and form a prodigious union that will protect the essence of all individuals if they do it over a rededication and recommitment to the fight for impartiality via peacefulness. Cesar Chavez was a great leader of his times. He was the first person who fought for the rights of vulnerable and underpaid farmworkers in America. He followed a Nonviolent way of boycotts and strikes (Zompetti, 2006). He supported the people in standing up for their rights, but in a nonviolent way. Caser had many followers, including Robert Kennedy and Dolores Huerta, who helped him a lot to become a frontrunner. Their struggle was not stress-free, those who oppose their reason were rich and influential, and they consumed many associates in great seats. The associates of Cesar were poor, and their partners were few. However, they had something the influential people do not own. They had their own bodies, souls, and feelings and the honesty of their cause as their armaments. He was awarded by various awards and honors, including Jefferson Award, Pacem in Terris Awards (achievements in peace and justice), and several other recognitions.

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