

What was the condition of farm workers before Cesar Chavez stepped in to help them gain rights through many different solutions from fasting and protest to making an entire union for their rights that is what I will be discussing.

Cesar Chavez was born on March 31, 1927 near Yuma, Arizona and died on April 23, 1993 in San Luis. He learned of injustice early in his life when his father was swindled out of land that he was to own if he had cleared it, but even after his father had cleared the land it was instead sold to another person. During his young life Cesar had a rough time in both at home and at school. The reason for his tough time and school was because for him he only spoke spanish at home and in his school it was forbidden to speak spanish, which along with the way he lived his young life with his family lead him to dislike school for thinking that education had nothing to do with his farm worker/migrant way of life. However this was only for his young life as when he became older education became his passion. His work to help farm workers obtain better rights began in 1962 when he founded the National Farm Workers Association now known as the United Farm Workers with help from Dolores Huerta. The same year that the the association was founded Cesar's younger brother Richard Chavez had designed the UFW eagle while Cesar chose the black and red colors and Cesar felt great having a symbol to represent by saying, "A symbol is an important thing. That is why we chose the Aztec eagle. It gives pride . . . when people see it they know it means dignity."

Cesar Chavez fought for the rights of farm workers and instead of violent protesting encouraged nonviolent protesting and many had before him. Some of the problems that Cesar fought to have changed included rest periods for the workers, along with toilets in the fields and many more. He began with grabbing national attention on the problems that farm workers faced. One of the ways he did this was with the Delano grape strike in 1965 when Filipino American grape workers asked Cesar and his association to join them on their strike. Cesar agreed to join on that they take a solemn vow to remain non-violent in their strike. This five year strike included a three-hundred mile march from Delano to Sacramento in order to show Americans in front of them what the workers were facing. During the strike he announced in February 1968 that following the example of Gandhi he was going to fast in order to rededicate the movement of non-violence and went without food for twenty-five days, only drinking water. Another right that Cesar helped farmers gain was by abolishing the infamous short-handled hoe also known as El Cortito which crippled generations of farm workers. He also repeated his fast twice once in 1972 for twenty-four days and again in 1988 for 36 days in order to show to his fellow farm workers that they could win without violence. He also fought the Bracero Program that existed from 1942 to 1964 which undermined U.S workers and exploited the migrant workers since the program ensured that there was always a constant supply of immigrant labor for growers and because of this the workers could not argue for better conditions lest they be fired and replaced.

Cesar Chavez was a hero for farm workers even to this day and the way he did so was so important since most of his fellow farm workers wanted to resort to violence

that the only way to summarize his way of protest would be this quote, "There is no such thing as defeat in non-violence."