

In Documentary Film

Farah Strikers Cry 'Basta!'

By PAT PETRASKE

"Basta!" The people have had "enough."

The cry reverberates its message throughout the 21-minute documentary film as the Mexican-American workers tell the story of their quest at the Farah Manufacturing Company for job security, social justice and, as one young striker put it, "above all, treatment as human beings."

Rochester was given its first view of "The People vs. Willie Farah" presented by the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America (ACW) at local headquarters on East Avenue. The underlying plot is complex but the choreography is simple as the camera zooms in on strikers picket lines, at home with their families and outside the El Paso plant with its barbed wire capped fences and surveilling cameras.

Farah leading manufacturer of men's and boys' slacks employs nearly 10,000 people, 80 per cent of whom are female Mexican-Americans. It has been charged with unfair labor practices after refusing to yield to strikers' demands to be represented by the ACW union. "I was aware of the injustices (inside the Farah plant) but I didn't know what to do," began Adan Gonzalez, a striker who gave a prologue to the showing Oct. 24.

Gonzalez, who worked in Farah's shipping department, has eight children and supports them on the \$30 a week he receives from the Farah Relief Fund financed by the ACW. His attempts to create interest in unionization prompted "Papa Farah" as the corporation head is called, to fire him. Although a ruling by the National Labor Relations Board forced Farah to reinstate him, Gonzalez joined



ADAN GONZALEZ

about 3,000 other workers who walked out "in support of our brothers" May 7, 1972.

Complaints against Farah range from denouncement of "Mexican promotions", to anxiety over "outrageous production demands." On the screen was seen one bitter young worker who explained that a "Mexican promotion was more responsibility, but not more pay." Workers are expected to produce a quota of six belts per minute when they claim it is physically possible to do only five. And the average weekly take home wage is \$69.

A Pulitzer prize winner wrote in his description of the Farah plant, "It was as clean as a hospital... with an ant-like industry... the women never seemed to relax." Farah tries to maintain a policy of never firing

anyone. It uses "pressure" to force workers to sign papers that they had to leave because they couldn't do the work," according to the movie.

Bishop Sidney Metzger of El Paso has been called one of the stars in this unfolding drama because of his support of the strike and the boycott of Farah products. "I feel sorry for Willie Farah. If he had vision and goodwill he would introduce social justice," Bishop Metzger said shaking his head sadly.

The issue of justice has prompted the support of the diocesan Office of Human Development. Father Charles Mulligan, director, who also spoke at the premiere, stated that if "the pants are to be made nationwide then we have to make justice nationwide."

Bishop Joseph Hogan personally endorsed the boycott in February after investigating the Farah vs. ACW issue. He urged retailers and consumers to examine their roles in the dispute as a "moral issue." The Rochester City Council went on record last week in support of the "Don't Buy Farah" campaign. It asked residents to support the campaign and refuse to buy Farah products.

Rochester has been slated as one of the focal points for the boycott along with Philadelphia and Chicago, said Tony DuCharme, regional representative of the Farah boycott for the ACW. He explained that Rochester is a target city because "there are a lot of ACW members, a lot of Sibley stores and we have the support of the bishop."

Sibley's is presently selling Farah slacks. DuCharme said that he was recently informed that Edward's Department Store is also carrying Farah products.

The Center for Labor Action, a support group for social issues and initiator of labor unions, is being sued by Sibley's for \$1.5 million because its picket lines urge boycott not only of Farah slacks but of the whole store.

Farah workers still inside the plant are urged not to go on strike but to help with the new organizing committee which is signing up workers for the union. Gonzalez explained that the ACW can not afford to pay the workers if they go on strike.

Teacher Plan 'Unconstitutional'

Keene, N.H. [RNS] — U.S. District Court Judge Hugh Bownes has ruled a program in Keene which assigned public school teachers to a parochial school is unconstitutional.

struck down last year in New Hampshire.

Under the earlier plan, public schools paid a rental fee for the use of the Catholic school classroom in which the public school teacher taught secular classes to Catholic school students. In the Keene program, the Catholic school classrooms were leased to the public schools without fees.

He ordered the plan terminated by Dec. 25. Father Joseph Duffy, SJ, superintendent of schools for the Manchester diocese, said the Keene program was similar to a dual enrollment plan which was

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To counter these attitudes we must create stability in the schools by emphasizing the neighborhood schools with parental involvement. We must get away from the concept of forced busing as a solution for racial imbalance and work toward open housing and job opportunities. The school board, principals and teachers must take a strong stand on the matter of vandalism. The perpetrators must be punished and held responsible for their actions.

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Inner City Parishes To Expand Services

By PAT PETRASKE

The Council of Inner City Parishes (CICP) has been allotted \$20,000 by the diocese in addition to the \$200,000 subsidy that is to be used for Catholic elementary schools. The new money will be used to answer a challenge by Bishop Joseph Hogan to explore alternate inner city ministries for the first time.

Approval was obtained for \$200,000 of the \$250,000 requested by the council. The subsidy is down \$50,000 from last year, but the bishop indicated that the budget contained a contingency fund of \$30,000 to be used for the inner city schools if necessary.

In the original proposal, the council had indicated that it

intended to set aside 10 per cent of the requested \$250,000 for funds for alternate ministries, according to Father Raymond H. Booth, spokesman for the CICP.

"The Bishop had asked that we look into means of helping the inner city outside the schools," he said. Father Booth believes the compromise is "good" since it will allow the council to handle other concerns.

An ad hoc social action committee of the CICP was established last April to explore other ministries and has formed a funding subcommittee to draw up guidelines for groups requesting funds. Father Booth suggested that the other ministries might include the elderly, youth ministry and religious programs.

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