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CESAR CHAVEZ



Read the biography of Cesar Chavez and answer the comprehension questions using the passage for reference.

Cesar Chavez (1927 - 1993) was a prominent labor leader and civil rights activist born in Yuma, Arizona, to a family of Mexican-American farm workers. His early life was shaped by the difficult conditions of migrant farm labor. Chavez experienced firsthand the exploitation and poor working conditions that farm workers faced, which deeply influenced his later activism.

In 1962, Chavez co-founded the National Farm Workers Association (NFWA), which later became the United Farm Workers (UFW). His mission was to unionize farm workers to fight for better wages, safer working conditions, and overall labor rights. Chavez believed in using nonviolent methods to achieve social change, inspired by leaders like Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr.

One of Chavez's most significant campaigns was the Delano Grape Strike, which began in 1965. Alongside Filipino farm workers, Chavez led a nationwide boycott of grapes to demand better pay and working conditions from grape growers in California. The strike lasted for five years and resulted in a major victory for the farm workers, securing union contracts that improved their wages and working conditions.

Chavez was also known for his fasting as a form of protest. In 1968, he undertook a 25-day fast to reaffirm the movement's commitment to nonviolence. He fasted again in 1988 for 36 days to draw attention to the dangers of pesticides on farm workers and their families.

Cesar Chavez's efforts brought national attention to the plight of farm workers and significantly advanced their rights. His legacy lives on through the continued work of the UFW and the many labor and civil rights activists he inspired. Chavez is remembered as a tireless advocate for social justice, whose work helped transform the labor movement in the United States.

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1 What were some of the early experiences that influenced Cesar Chavez's activism?

2 What were some of the nonviolent methods Chavez was inspired by, and who were the leaders that influenced his approach?

3 How did Cesar Chavez's efforts transform the labor movement in the United States, and what is his legacy today?

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