

Jerome Cohen  
95 Via Ventura  
Monterey, California 93940

February 10, 1978

Mr. Jordan Rossen  
Solidarity House  
8000 East Jefferson Avenue  
Detroit, Michigan 48214

Dear Jordan:

Your letter of February 6, 1978, gives me an opportunity to thank the U.A.W. for its generosity which has made it possible for me to continue to serve as general counsel to the United Farm Workers. Mr. Whipple and I worked out an arrangement whereby I would submit a bill to him at a uniform rate. This arrangement began in February of 1976. During the first twelve months the monthly rate was \$1,000. Thereafter it was \$1,250. My wife was to submit a monthly bill. I apologize for the fact that the bills piled up since August.

I do not have one central log of hours, so perhaps the following description of my work and hours would be helpful:

I usually work Monday through Saturday, spending eight to nine hours in the office on five of those days. I have a business phone and work area at home and spend Saturday and weekday evenings working as well. My average week varies from 54 to 60 hours. I supervise eighteen lawyers and fifteen legal workers. The legal workers operate on a volunteer basis, and most of the eighteen lawyers have relatively little experience. I must review their briefs and give daily advice as to legal positions the Union is to take in the various hearings which are always going on throughout the state.

I am the Union's contact with the Teamsters for problems that arise pursuant to the Jurisdictional Pact which I negotiated last year. (Lately these problems arise on a daily basis, as various Teamster locals discover they are bound by the Pact.)

We are, to say the least, overwhelmed with legal work. We have litigated with 567 growers since the Agricultural Labor Relations Act was passed. In addition, the green thumb of the growers has brought forth four company unions with whom we litigate as well. We currently have 95 contracts, so on-going legal work continues as to the growers with whom we are certified but do not yet have agreements. Legal work is also necessary to fight employer objections in representation cases where we have won elections. We are also objecting to employer conduct relating to some elections which we lost.

The battle has shifted from the strike and boycott picket lines to the hearing rooms and courtrooms of this state. Growers are using lawyers to delay bargaining for as long as possible. We are attempting to mold the new Act and to use the Law to consolidate our bargaining position. We have the "pleasure" of dealing with 51 separate management law firms and literally hundreds of lawyers -- a veritable gaggle. Once in 1970 I negotiated with a grower named Henry Ryder, who, when I was explaining the recognition clause, said, "Hell, Cohen, I ain't no legal asshole. If it's fair, I'll sign it." It was fair, and he signed, but we haven't met a grower since with that attitude.

Developing and molding the Law requires constant coordination and setting of legal priorities, since we do not have enough people to do all that should be done. This is my responsibility. In addition to A.L.R.B. work, I supervise non-A.L.R.B. legal work, such as injunctions, libel suits, and other actions for damages against the Union. We also have to keep an eye on our rural legislative friends who would love to gut the labor law.

Finally, while this legal battle is going on, peace is progressing with those growers with whom we have collective bargaining agreements. For three months I have coordinated and participated in meetings with the vegetable industry which led in December to the resolution of ninety-one pending grievances and which hopefully will lead to our first multi-employer bargaining unit when our present contracts open for renegotiation on October first of this year.

I hope this is sufficient. While it would be possible to reconstruct

my activities on a day to day basis for the past six months by going through all the files on which I have worked, it would be difficult. Please let me know if you need more.

Viva la Causa!

Jerome Cohen

JC:mde

Enclosures

cc: Jerry Whipple