

CITRUS STRIKE  
CONTINUES IN  
RIO GRANDE  
VALLEY



Rio Grande Valley, Tex.--For the last three weeks the Texas Farm Workers' Union has been engaged in a strike against the local citrus industry. Since the beginning of the strike more than 2000 farm workers have shown their support for the union.

The strike started off on January 12, 1976, when 5 TFW organizers went to the Hidalgo-Reynosa international bridge and convinced 25 workers to go out on strike. They then went to 3 orchards in the Monte Alto area and were able to get 75 workers to leave the fields and join the strike.

Since then organizers have been to the bridge almost everyday and pick up an average of about 75 workers and visit 3 to 6 orchards. To date the union has been able to get all the workers they talk to out of the fields.

TFW organizers also report that since the strike started they have gathered more than 2000 signed authorization cards from the workers who leave the orchards.

Aside from the Hidalgo-Reynosa bridge, small groups of strikers and organizers have been going to the Brownsville-Matamoros bridge to talk to the workers there. They report that each day they visit the bridge 70% to 80% of the workers coming across, refuse to go to work and instead return to their homes.

The workers are not the only ones supporting the strike many contractors and truckers are also behind the union and its activities. In many orchards that the union visits the truckers themselves ask the workers to leave their work and join the strike.

Seeing this kind support the union intends to continue its activities until its demands are met, which includes better working conditions and a



state law allowing farm workers the right to vote for the union of their choice.

At present, citrus pickers are earning \$2.50 for half a ton of grapefruit and \$3.00 for half a ton of oranges. It takes a worker approximately 3 to 4 hours to pick a half ton of fruit.

These wages are found only in Texas since other citrus producing states, like California, Arizona and Florida are paying their workers anywhere between \$8 to \$12 an half ton of fruit.

Aside from wages, working conditions also need improvement in Texas. Toilet facilities are absent in all the fields and drinking water facilities are still unsanitary, with people usually drinking out of the same used soda can.

Step ladders used in picking fruit, are shaky and it is not uncommon for at least one person at each orchard to suffer a fall each day. And of course, farm workers don not have any kind of hospitalization or accident insurance.

Nor are there any stringent regulations on the uses of pesticides and it is not uncommon for Texas farm workers to get sprayed while working.

HISTORY OF THE  
TEXAS FARMWORKER  
CENTER

Many persons already know what "El Cuhamil" is and what it represents, others perhaps don't and so we would like to inform these persons who still don't know.

El Cuhamil, in the Nahuatl, dialect, means a piece of land where a campesino family works together. It is their hope; a base where they can construct for a better future for their children. It is also a place where farm workers can meet and find solutions for the problems that face the farm worker each day; it is a place where they can receive medical attention for themselves and their children it is a place where their children can play and learn about brotherhood, justice, and love for their brothers and all the benefits that come through unity.

El Cuhamil is a small plot of land (10 acres) that the Catholic Church, a few years ago, donated to the Texas Rio Grande Valley farm workers, so that they could construct their offices and service center. The Valley farm workers, worked for more than two years building what they have. All the physical work was done by them and all the material was donated by many individuals and organizations, also many volunteers from different cities came to help.

All the work that has been done up to this day has been done on week-ends-- it is for these reasons that the Valley farmworkers want this place because it is here, in El Cuhamil one finds their hopes, joys, tragedies, work and, yes, even their blood.

It is where the farm workers of the Texas Farm Workers' Union have their offices and it is they that fight for a better future for themselves and their families, who are being unjustly exploited and rights under the Constitution of the United States are denied.

The Valley farm worker say that they will protect, El Cuhamil, and defend it against any obstacle that might present itself, because El Cuhamil is the base from which Texas farm workers will form their own union.

For the farm workers, of the farm workers, and by the farm workers.

This is "El Cuhamil"--a farm worker community.

If you would like to visit us, write to us or call us by phone, you are welcome.

El Cuhamil is located between Alamo and San Juan, Tex., on the corner of old Hwy 83 and Morning side Rd. Our address is P.O. Box 876, San Juan, Tex. and our phone number is 787-5984

news and photos  
courtesy of  
La Voz del Campesino,  
newspaper  
of the Texas Farm-  
worker Union

"The Hissing of Summer Lawns" is the least introspective album Joni Mitchell has ever produced. It is also her most perceptive and sophisticated album yet. It is a complex album with overlapping and interrelated themes that echo the strongest ideas expressed on her earlier songs.

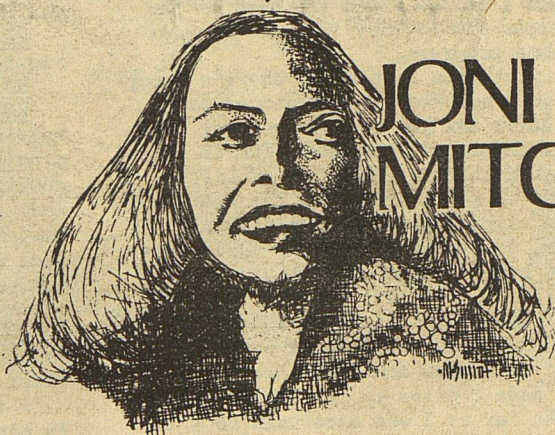
"In France They Kiss on Mainstreet", the album's first cut, is an almost flip-pant comment on the specious independence of middle class adolescence. The tune is quite reminiscent in theme to the earlier "Let the Wind Carry Me":

"Under neon signs/ a girl was in bloom  
And a woman was fading in a suburban room"

"Shadows and Light" is as serious a song as "In France They Kiss on Mainstreet" is light hearted. Done in the



ice cream descriptions • MORNING STRIKES BACK • A ON THE DRUGS \*



JONI  
MITCHELL

style of a hymn, "Shadows and Light" is a direct assault on convention and establishment. Mitchell attacks the conventionality of art, the hypocrisy of important politicians, the emptiness of American freedom, the perverted value system of the upper middle class and, by the song's very nature, the rigidity of religion. "Shadows and Light" is a compilation of Mitchell's most strident commentaries from previous albums.

"Don't Interrupt the Sorrow" deals with a woman caught in a paradox between the desire to be free and the longing to stay and help her weak man. Mitchell's writing style is at its symbolic best here; she writes:

"Anima rising  
Queen of Queens  
Wash my guilt of Eden  
Wash and balance me  
Anima rising  
Uprising in me tonight  
She's a vengeful little goddess  
With an ancient crown to fight."

This quandary between personal need and compassion is one of Mitchell's favorite themes and was the basis for almost every song on "Court and Spark", but with "Don't Interrupt the Sorrow", there is an added and interesting switch in that the great complicator--the man--is directly mentioned in the song.

"The Jungle Line" is the album's best cut. The song is an almost incredible journey through modern civilization using the images of savagery and destruction to characterize 20th century humanity. Mitchell interlaces references to Henri Rousseau, the French primitive

painter whose paintings depicted a pleasantly unrealistic jungle life, with shadowy scenes of urban drug culture. In Mitchell's interpretation, all of modern society is still a primitive culture:

"Thru huts thru Harlem thru jails  
and gospel pews  
Thru the class of Park and the  
trash on Vine  
Thru Europe and the deep deep heart  
of Dixie blue  
Thru savage progress cuts the  
jungle line"

Clearly this is Mitchell's most powerful accomplishment since "Cold Blue Steel and Sweet Fire" on "For the Roses."

"The Hissing of Summer Lawns" is satisfying lyrically, but musically it is a disappointment. Though surrounded by excellent jazz-pop musicians such as Larry Carlton and Joe Sample, Mitchell can't seem to get her arrangements off the ground. They sag and they even lack the energy and simplicity found on "Court and Spark" and "For the Roses." Mitchell seems to be appeasing her desire to compose jazz at the expense of her highly effective folk style heard on her earlier albums, especially "Blue".

Musically, "The Hissing of Summer Lawns" is mediocre, but lyrically it is probably the best pop album of 1975.

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