



Office of the Bishop - 1070 Waterloo Street - London, Canada

STATEMENT CONCERNING THE GRAPE AND LETTUCE BOYCOTT

Having examined most carefully all the available documentation on the situation of the workers in the California vineyards, I have come to the conclusion that we are in the presence of flagrant oppression, violence and a total disregard of all trade union ethics on the part of the Teamsters Union of the United States.

A Grape Boycott three years ago was successful in forcing the growers to negotiate an honest contract with the United Farm Workers, one of the least powerful of the Trade Unions in the United States. For their own purposes, the Teamsters Union has now intervened and has tried to displace the Farm Workers' Union by ruthless tactics of goon squads and all the tactics unfortunately all too familiar to us in situations of this kind.

I am convinced that the United Farm Workers represent the poor laborers in the area and that the Teamsters do not. The only thing which is being requested is that the laborers in the vineyards be permitted to chose their own union and to negotiate their own contract. This is being denied to them in a clear abuse of human rights.

The revival of the boycott seems to be the only possible weapon which can assist and I must suggest to all men and women of good will that the boycott be supported. In the first place, I would hope that the large chain stores would not be forced to act in this matter but would voluntarily join the boycott themselves. Not only would this be a sign that their size does not prevent them from having human feelings but it might also be a good example of powerful organizations respecting human rights. It would be hoped that in this fashion we would take up our position in favor of the oppressed. If a public boycott becomes necessary, I would hope that all those who are interested in social justice will not hesitate to exclude California table grapes and California iceberg lettuce from their tables. We are our brothers' keepers.

/ G. Emmett Carter, D. D.,  
Bishop of London.

London, January 14, 1974.