Farm workers need your help. They pick grapes in the U.S., but a large share of the market is in Canada. Toronto alone is the third largest grape market city in North America, Montreal, the fifth. Farm worker family income averages $2,700 a year. 800,000 of American farm workers are children under 16. Life expectancy is only 49 years. These people have been struggling for a decade against near-slave labour conditions. With the help of Canadians who refused to buy table grapes, Cesar Chavez' United Farm Workers Union won contracts with grape growers in 1970. Contracts brought drinking water to the fields, rest periods, portable toilets, bans on child labour, and stopped spraying of pesticides while workers were in the fields. The contracts expired in April, 1973. The growers refused to renew them. The grape growers joined with lettuce growers in trying to destroy the United Farm Workers Union. The growers invited the Teamsters Union in to sign contracts. The Teamsters did not represent the workers, and would not let the workers vote.

The farm workers were forced to strike. They were beaten by hired guards and sheriff's deputies but remained non-violent. In August, two striking farm workers were murdered. Faced with violent attacks and the jailing of over 5,000 strikers the United Farm Workers have turned to us for support. The non-violent but effective power of a consumer boycott will bring the growers to bargain with the United Farm Workers. Our refusal to buy non-UFW grapes and lettuce can help bring some measure of justice to the lives of thousands of workers. The workers invite our response; Become aware of the long history of farm worker exploitation and the attempt made by the workers through their union to change the situation. Observe the boycott by not buying or eating U.S. grapes and lettuce. Respect farm worker picket lines when you see them at stores and supermarkets. Urge your friends and your supermarket manager to join in the boycott until the Black Aztec Eagle Farm Workers Union Label reappears on the grocer's shelf.

THE UNITED FARM WORKERS NEED US NOW!

BOYCOTT U.S. GRAPES AND LETTUCE
(unless you see the UFW label)
“Behold, the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, cry out; and the cry of the harvesters has reached the ears of the Lord of hosts.” (Malachi 3:5)

Q: How is boycotting going to help the individual farm worker and his family?

If a boycott is successful, the consumer stops buying the product. The fall in demand if the producer will be forced to lower his prices. This will cause a fall in prices. If the price falls far enough the producer’s profit disappears. He begins losing money. The grower’s refusal to understand their plight will bring about more dangerous social conditions, possibly of the intensity of the cause. When they start losing money, the growers understand. They begin to negotiate.

Q: Wasn’t there a boycott on grapes just a few years ago?

Yes, there was. In fact it lasted from 1968-1970. It was slow starting last time, because it was a tried and true cause and a lot of public education was necessary before people began to support it. Now it’s effective, and farm workers won on their contracts in 1974. It’s because the government understands that it was a boycott.

Q: Isn’t this an American problem? Why are Canadians being involved?

The growers don’t care if the grapes are as long as they can sell them, and they sell a good profit. But the growers and the government are only interested in the production of the grapes and prices in the U.S. In Canada, with the boycotting being effective in the U.S., the growers are very interested in a “dumping ground” to get rid of their surplus and make up for losses suffered at home.

Q: Why have church bodies and other groups given support to the United Farm Workers’ cause?

The Executive of the National Council of Churches of Canada spotted out as a good order of reasons for any it declaration of support for the United Farm Workers Union in June, 1973. It is the firm belief of the Council that the non-violent protest of the pickets and growers in the U.S. In addition, with the boycotting being effective in the U.S., the church in Canada and other churches in Canada have similar problems to those in the U.S., and the struggle of the United Farm Workers in Canada is a pioneering effort for the rights of agricultural workers in the nation.

The United Farm Workers called on the Justice Department for enforcement of the injunctions of the strike, as demonstrated in the local court. When no progress was being made, Council, maintained with its support of the boycott, put immense pressure on the government to support the boycott. Thirty-one workers have been on strike for over 24 hours, and a few successful and the growers are still on strike and negotiate because they know they’re not going to get anything. They want to do it with dignity.

The United Farm Workers and the AFL-CIO are attempting to negotiate with the United Farm Workers in order to get a resolution of the strike. When no progress was being made, Council, maintained with its support of the boycott, put immense pressure on the government to support the boycott. Thirty-one workers have been on strike for over 24 hours, and a few successful and the growers are still on strike and negotiate because they know they’re not going to get anything. They want to do it with dignity.

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