

MEANY CRITICIZES TEAMSTERS' DRIVE

Grape Worker Campaign on Coast Termed 'Vicious'

By PHILIP SHABECOFF

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WASHINGTON, April 18 — George Meany, president of the A.F.L.-C.I.O., accused the Teamsters today of a "vicious" and "disgraceful" campaign to wipe out the United Farm Workers Union and pledged an all-out battle by his federation to help "this small, struggling union."

Mr. Meany said in a statement that he had instructed the federation's director of organization, William Kircher, to provide all possible assistance to the farm workers in their struggle with the teamsters for control of grape workers in California.

He charged that the agreement reached between the teamsters and grape growers in the Coachella Valley of California last week was a "sweet-heart contract" signed after "collusive secret meetings" between teamster officials and some of the growers.

The statement was issued after Cesar Chavez, director of the farm workers union, met today with officers and staff of the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations at its headquarters here.

'Conspiracy' Charged

Yesterday, Mr. Chavez charged publicly that the teamsters were engaged in a "conspiracy" with the growers in California, including illegal payoffs to union officials to keep his union from representing farm workers there. Mr. Chavez also said that the teamsters and the growers were using violence and intimidation to force the workers to accept representation by the teamsters in the grape vineyards.

Mr. Meany noted today that Mr. Chavez had asked for a full-scale Congressional investigation of "this cynical deal."

"The A.F.L.-C.I.O. fully supports this request and urges the appropriate committees of the Congress to conduct prompt and public investigations."

Mr. Meany also said that he would bring the issue up before the federation's next executive council meeting early in May to discuss additional action to help the farm workers in their struggle.

An A.F.L.-C.I.O. spokesman said one possibility was nationwide support for the boycott of lettuce and a renewed boycott of table grapes being conducted by the farm workers.

Contracts Expiring

A grape boycott forced the grape growers in California to sign contracts with the United Farm Workers three years ago. Now these contracts are expiring and the growers are signing new labor contracts with the International Brotherhood of Teamsters.

Officials of the farm union concede that their organization could be destroyed if they lost California's 60,000 grape workers to the teamsters.

In his statement, Mr. Meany said that the teamsters were engaged in "a concerted campaign to wipe out the United Farm Workers."

"The teamsters' union-busting drive would be absolutely disgraceful under any circumstances," Mr. Meany said. "But for the nation's largest union to seek to destroy this small struggling union, representing some of the most exploited workers in the nation, is intolerable."

The most "reprehensible" part of the teamsters' "sweet-heart" contract with the grape growers, Mr. Meany said, is its "revival of the most vicious employer hiring practice — the use of labor contractors."

"The revival of this hated device must not be allowed," Mr. Meany said.

The farm union is an affiliate of the A.F.L.-C.I.O. The federation expelled the teamsters in 1957 after some teamsters officials were found guilty of corrupt labor practices.

The president of the teamsters, Frank E. Fitzsimmons, issued a statement this evening branding the charges against his union as "another effort by Cesar Chavez to represent farm workers with progaganda, libel and slander, instead of collective bargaining know-how."

"This is not the first time he has given farm workers a side show instead of union representation," Mr. Fitzsimmons said.

Mr. Fitzsimmons insisted that the contract that the teamsters have signed with the grape growers "is superior to anything Chavez has brought back to the people he claims to represent."

100 Strikers Arrested

COACHELLA, Calif., April 18 (AP)—More than 100 striking farm workers were arrested today at two table-grape ranches, all but two for violating court orders restricting picketing activities, a sheriff's spokesman said.

All deputies in the county were put on emergency 12-hour shifts with no days off for an indefinite time.

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