Farm Workers

Teamsters Take a Hal
Step Back

DELANO, Calif.—The fierce ju-
ditional battle between Cés-
Chavez’s United Farm Workers a
the International Brotherhood
Teamsters seemed to cool off 1
week. But like the bull in me-
battles, this one wasn’t the result
a victory in the fields. It was no
tiasted behind the scenes. And 1
many negotiations, these seem
to be linked not only to the im-
diate question—which union b
Can represent the farm worker.
but to a broader issue, the rela-
between the American Federal
of Labor and Congress of Indus-
Organizations and the Team-
expelled by the A.F.L.-C.I.O.;
1987.

On Tuesday, Teamster Inte-
tional President Frank E. Fitzsim-
mons formally repudiated contracts
experienced Teamster organizer
James W. Smith had signed on Aug.
9 with 30 table grape growers here.
Mr. Smith was not “authorized” to
ink those contracts. Mr. Fitzsim-
mon’s letter to the growers said:
the Teamsters “have no interest in
organizing your employees in the
vineyards in and around Delano,
Calif.” And on Thursday, Mr.
Chavez said in Washington that he
had information which led him to
believe Mr. Fitzsimmons was acting
in good faith.

Last week’s restrained tone was
in marked contrast to that of the
past months. As the U.F.W.’s hard-
won contracts with the California
grape growers have been expiring
this year, the growers have been
signing not with the U.F.W., but
with the Teamsters. Mr. Chavez
has accused the Teamsters of nego-
tiating “sweetheart contracts.” Mr.
Fitzsimmons has asserted in turn
that the U.F.W. was seeking to
“represent farmworkers with prop-
aganda.” And George Meany, presi-
dent of the A.F.L.-C.I.O., which has
contributed $1.8-million to the
U.F.W. for strikers’ benefits this
year, has called the Teamsters’ ac-
tions in California “despicable.”

But Mr. Fitzsimmons’s statement
on Tuesday came only a day after
his fourth meeting with Mr. Meany
since June 26 on the Teamsters’ jur-
sidictional dispute with the U.F.W.
There is speculation that Mr. Fitz-
simmons is attempting to appease
Mr. Meany with some concessions
in California as part of a Teamster
campaign to regain admission to
the A.F.L.-C.I.O.

The Teamsters, however, have
not repudiated any of the other
contracts signed with growers this
year. And on Wednesday, they an-
nounced they were going to start
organizing the 5,000 tomato pick-
ers in the San Diego area.

While declaring himself “encour-
aged” by last week’s contract re-
pudiation in Delano, Mr. Chavez
said the U.F.W.’s conflict with the
Teamsters was “not over by a long
shot.” The United Farm Workers is
continuing and expanding its or-
ganization of nationwide boycotts
of lettuce and grapes not carrying
the U.F.W. Black Eagle symbol.

The growers have contended that
their contracts with the U.F.W.
have been badly administered. Re-
cently, John Giumarra Sr., execu-
tive vice president of Giumarra
Vineyards, California’s largest ta-
ble grape grower and one of the 30
who signed Teamster contracts Aug.
9, when their U.F.W. contracts ex-
pired, said: “I don’t think the grow-
ers will ever sign with the (Chavez)
again.”

Now the Delano growers are furi-
ous with the Teamsters as well, call-
ing them “hypocrites” and charg-
ing that they have “double-
crossed the workers.”

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