

THE GRAPE BOYCOTT: CONSUMER POWER STRIKES A BLOW FOR JUSTICE

The grape boycott is a consumer boycott. Striking farm workers are asking consumers not to buy grapes and not to shop at stores that sell grapes.

Since the days of the Boston Tea Party, Americans have used their legal rights to boycott as a legitimate, non-violent means of achieving social justice. Today, housewives boycott supermarkets to protest skyrocketing food prices and black Americans boycott bigoted merchants who refuse to employ minorities.

The boycott is supported by civic and religious groups, trade unions, political leaders, students and consumers all over the world. The World Council of Churches, the National Council of Churches, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations and numerous Catholic bishops endorse the boycott. The entire AFL-CIO, the United Automobile Workers, the Canadian Labour Congress, and the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions are all standing behind their brothers in the fields.

Political leaders and legitimate consumers groups, including the Consumer Federation of America and the National Consumers League, have reaffirmed the consumer's right "not to buy" by endorsing the grape boycott. Small farmers, like those within the National Farmers Union, also support it. America's family farmers share a common interest with field workers in fighting agrusiness control of the nation's food supply.

The moral decision by millions of concerned Americans NOT TO EAT GRAPES has made the boycott increasingly successful. U.S. Department of Agriculture reports show that grape shipments to major markets, including New York, Chicago and Toronto, have dropped 30 to 50% since the boycott began.



ABOVE: Consumers picket Safeway stores in Washington, D.C., for buying and selling scab grapes.

However, the Defense Department is helping growers counteract consumer support for farm workers by providing a scab grape market of last resort. The military, acting as strikebreaker, has doubled its table grape purchases and is increasing grape shipments to Vietnam by 800%.

Drawing financial support from the right-wing, the grape industry has hired the arch-conservative public relations firm of Whitaker & Baxter, which stopped Goldwater's

1964 presidential campaign. W&B, in turn, has set up the phony Consumers' Rights Committee to break the boycott with a multi-million dollar publicity campaign. Under the guise of Senator George Murphy's so-called "Consumers' Food Production Act"—drafted by Whitaker & Baxter—agribusiness is seeking to take away the farm workers' non-violent weapons through repressive, anti-consumer legislation which would outlaw farm labor strikes, peaceful picketing and boycott BY

ANY CONSUMER GROUP IN THE NATION!

Murphy's bill ethos the growers claim that the "special problems" of agriculture require outlawing harvest time strikes in perishable crops. Most farm workers work only during the harvest. Furthermore, the rest of the food packing-processing industry has been organized for decades with decent contracts and healthy working conditions insuring an orderly flow of food to the consumer. In their concern for products over people, the growers fail to mention that farm workers and their children are also perishable.

RIGHT: Mayor John Lindsay of New York presents UFWOC Director Cesar Chavez with the keys to the city.

BELOW: Young French Canadians picket stores in Montreal asking customers to shun grapes.

