WHY WE BOYCOTT

I'M A FARMWORKER AND I DON'T KNOW ENGLISH, AND WE'RE FIGHTING A STRUGGLE AND WE ASK PLEASE DON'T BUY GRAPE OR LETTUCE CAUSE WE THE FARMWORKERS ARE THE ONES THAT GET PAID LESS IN FARMERS WHAT FOR THE FARMWORKERS DON'T HAVE FOOD TO EAT. WHY THEY TREAT THE FARMWORKERS AWFUL SAY YES IN THE FIELDS THEY HAVE KILLED TWO OF OUR PEOPLE AND THEY BEAT UP OTHERS SOMEONE BROKEN LEG AND ARM. WHY DON'T WE THE SCABS AND WE CAN'T GO TO DEFEND OURSELVES

50¢
September 6, 1973

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

When we first went on strike in 1965, we thought that we had just one force opposing us - that of the grape growers we were striking. We soon realized that we were facing the entire power structures of rural counties dominated by agricultural interests. It was very clear that the courts and police were manipulated by the same forces that sought to oppose unionization for farm workers.

And so we turned to a consumer boycott of California table grapes. After three years millions of people had heard of our cause and had stopped eating grapes. As much as the growers hated treating their workers as humans and signing contracts with our Union, they faced bankruptcy if the grape boycott continued, and by August of 1970 more than 90% of the table grape industry had signed contracts with us. The contracts raised the minimum wage for grape workers by forty cents, eliminated the despised labor contractor system, established a grievance procedure, protected the workers from unsafe pesticide practices, and provided medical plans and paid vacations for the workers.

In April of 1973 the first of these contracts expired. Rather than sign new contracts with us, the growers brought in the Teamsters Union, a long time enemy of farm workers and minority peoples, and signed contracts with them. These contracts reinstated the old labor contractor system, provided no protection from pesticides, no grievance procedure, and undercut our wage proposal by forty cents an hour. They were nothing less than sweetheart contracts.

In response, more than a thousand farm workers went out on strike in the Coachella Valley th day after the Teamster contracts were signed there. As each set of contracts expired, the growers would sign with the Teamsters and thousands more farm workers would join the strike. By August the Teamsters had stolen all but a handful of our contracts, and seven thousand workers were on strike, demanding our Union.

This year we saw that nothing had changed in Kern County or in any other county where we struck. Throughout rural California the pattern was the same - as soon as we set up our picket lines, the growers would rush to the local courts and obtain restraining orders to curtail our picketing.

From April to August 63 injunctions were handed against our Union in the five California counties in which we struck. These injunctions were not all the same, but many limited our pickets to ten per ranch, spaced one hundred feet apart, and we were limited to one hour per day on the bull horns. Although these orders clearly violated the strikers' constitutional rights and freedom of speech, they were granted immediately to any grower who petitioned for them.

But this year it was not the courts alone that curtailed the strike. As the judges were handing down orders keeping pickets one hundred feet apart, the Teamsters were planning their reign of terror against the farm workers. Squads of Teamsters would position themselves at the entrances to the ranches armed with clubs, knives, leather straps, grape staves, guns, chains, and tire irons. Workers that tried to walk off their jobs and join the strike were pushed back into the fields. Strikers who were beaten on the picket line, cars were damaged, one trailer home was burned to the ground, and hundreds of strikers were physically attacked.

Realizing that there is safety in numbers, the strikers stayed on the picket line, violating the injunctions and facing arrest. In Riverside, Kern, Tulare and Fresno counties the total number of arrests climbed to 3,538. Despite the daily jailing, the strikers maintained their position and refused to retreat from the picket line.

When it was clear that the strikers would not be intimidated by the Teamsters or by mass arrests, the sheriffs embarked on a new strategy. They began to attack the picket line. Women and men alike were clubbed and maced for violating the injunctions. Heads were cracked and faces were blooded as the nightsticks flew.

On Thursday, August 16, 1973, while picketing, Juan de la Cruz was shot through the heart and killed by a sniper. His murder was witnessed by his wife Maximina, who was picketing at the side of her husband. Two days before, striker Nagi Daifusilah was beaten by a deputy from the Kern County Sheriff's Department and he died from a massive brain hemorrhage shortly thereafter.

The Executive Board of the Union met and immediately suspended all picketing. The lives of the strikers were no longer safe on the picket lines.

Last Friday 500 of the strikers left Delano to travel across the country to tell their story to the American and Canadian peoples. Another group will be leaving later this month. They are determined to add to the economic impact of their strike by mounting a powerful boycott campaign.

The boycott is the way we take our cause to the public. For surely if we cannot find justice in the courts of rural California, we will find support with our brothers and sisters throughout the nation.

To make this boycott as effective as the first one, we need one thing - your help. We are asking people to help the farm workers win back their contracts, by boycotting California table grapes and iceberg lettuce not bearing the farm workers Union label, by honoring farm worker picket lines at supermarkets, and by looking up and helping out the local boycott staff. Of course, money is always helpful, as we depend upon the generosity of others to live.

Viva la Causal!

Cesar Chavez
Why We Boycott

The United Farm Workers of America, AFL-CIO
Post Office Box 62,
Keene, California 93531
Far from the fields whose dust
is forever stained with the blood
of our sisters and brothers, far from
the police and courts controlled by
those who seek to destroy our union—
we seek justice. The boycott is the
one non-violent response left
us. And therein lies our hope.

Arrests of Farm Worker Pickets
April 17 - August 29, 1973
Riverside County 357
Kern County 638
Tulare County 401
Fresno County 1993

3389
YOU ASK:
WHY ANOTHER BOYCOTT?
FOR AS MANY YEARS AS WE REMEMBER...
WE HAVE SUFFERED.
TO END THE SUFFERING, WE BUILT THE UNION.
In 1970, after 5 years of strike and boycott, we won contracts with the growers.

July 29, 1973:
Delano grape grower John Giumarra Sr. signs UFW contract.
But in 1973, the growers signed contracts with the Teamsters, not the farmworkers' union.

December 12, 1972: Teamster President Frank Fitzsimmons addressing annual convention of American Farm Bureau, pledging to destroy UFW.
"A Union is not built on a love affair with the company, but by love, understanding, and compassion for the people it serves and is a part of. The Teamster officials and hired goons will never be a part of farm labor. They cannot identify with it."

-Walter Williams
UFW Field Office Director
Haines City, Florida
ALTHOUGH WE WERE JAILED....

April 18, 1973: Jose Perez and family arrested while praying at Tenneco Ranch.
THE STRIKE CONTINUED...
THE GROWERS THEN BOUGHT TEAMSTERS FOR $67.50 A DAY.
AS MUCH AS WE SEE IN A WEEK.
"I didn't see how he caught my husband, but I heard blows. I was just recovering from being hit myself. When I got up I saw the Teamster standing over my husband, who was curled up on the ground in pain. The Teamster was kicking my husband, again and again, trying to step on his head. I ran over to where they were and tried to push the goon away from Luis. The Teamster pushed me, and I fell to my knees. When I was down, the Teamster hit me twice in the back of my head."

-Guadalupe Rangel
"I was running with my family, and my mother was lagging behind. We all slowed down to help her, and the Teamsters got my father. Two of them grabbed him from behind and one of them punched him in the head. My father fell to the ground and a second Teamster started to hit him with a pole. I ran over to help him. The Teamster hit me across the back with the stick. I stayed with my father and the Teamsters went down the road to beat up other people. I am 15 years old."

-Salvador Monarrez, Jr.
After the attack was over and the Teamsters were being arrested, I spoke to Salas, the Mexican cop. I said to him, "Why don’t you give us protection? Where is your gun?" He said, "You think I want to get killed for one of you guys?"

-Arnulfo Mancha

June 28, 1973: Juan Hernandez transported to Kern General Hospital with skull fracture after Teamster attack on picket line at Kovacevich Ranch.
BUT STILL WE STRUCK.
"I was still screaming when the first sheriff nabbed me. The first one pulled my hands behind my back and handcuffed them together very tight. He pulled my arms back until I thought they would break. I was screaming and then the same sheriff hit me in the knees, causing me to fall. Then there were two more sheriffs hitting me. One of them hit me in the side with his stick. I could barely breath. They were pulling at me so hard."

-Marta Rodriguez

July 31, 1973: Giumarra Vineyards. Marta Rodriguez, 18 years, 85 pounds.
"I saw the police had a young girl face down on the ground. One cop had his foot on the girl's back and was pulling her arms up. She was crying and begging to be let up. Frank Valenzuela and I asked to talk to the girl and told the cops not to treat her that way.

"The only response we got was that we were sprayed with mace. I saw them swinging at Frank. They were holding him face down on the hood of a car and kept hitting him again and again with a nightstick on his legs and head."

-Frank Quintanilla
"I saw 3 Sheriffs hit another lady who was sitting down on the ground and already handcuffed. They then dragged her across the ground to where the vines were and left her there."
- Javier Carrillo

August 7, 1973: Gilmarra Vineyards. Marcelina Mendez, 57 years, 6 stitches.
"Before I knew it, one of the Sheriffs knocked me on the back of the head. I went down and felt faint. I actually passed out for a while and when I came around again I was still on the ground. The Sheriff kicked me twice while I was down. He told me to stay there while I was lying face down, handcuffed. I was still groggy when they took me to jail."

-Dora Mendez
BUT THAT COULD NOT STOP US.
IN AUGUST, TWO OF OUR BROTHER STRIKERS WERE MURDERED. TEN THOUSAND STRONG, WE HONORED OUR DEAD.

August 21, 1973: Maximina de la Cruz at funeral of her slain husband.
The strike grew every day - table grapes in Delano, wine grapes in Livingston, melons in Firebaugh, tree fruit in Fresno - like a fire across a dry prairie. Our friends responded and hundreds of religious and labor leaders joined the strike on the picket line and in jail.

Dorthy Day, founder of the Catholic Worker, arrested in Fresno for picketing in violation of court order. Photo: John Bank.
Armed Fresno growers comb nectarine orchard for isolated farm worker pickets.

As we were arrested for peaceful picketing, groups of armed growers and vigilantes prowled rural California. Tragedy was inevitable.
A policeman's flashlight and a sniper's bullet changed the course of our struggle.

Juanita and Alfredo Herrera of Lucas Ranch prepare to leave for boycott.

To strike any longer was to invite death.
Instead, we left our homes and friends.
To gy cities we have come, to boycott.
WE MUST ENDURE.
WE SHALL WIN!
WE ARE FIGHTING
FOR OUR UNION,
FOR OUR LIVES,
FOR OUR CHILDREN.
CHRONOLOGY OF VIOLENCE

April 16  More than 1000 Coachella Valley grape workers go on strike to protest the signing of Teamster contracts the day before. Alicia Uribe, 21-year-old striker, receives permanent eye damage after being struck with a brass knuckle by an unidentified Teamster organizer.

April 18  The first contingent of $67.50 a day Teamster goons arrive in Coachella, armed with pipes, clubs, stakes, knives and guns. More than one hundred farm worker pickets are arrested while praying near a Tenneco ranch.

April 23  Al Johnson, supervisor of Pozo Ranch in Wasco, points a shotgun and fires shot at strikers passing by the ranch.

April 24  Al Drouble, rancher-turned-Teamster, together with Coachella Imperial Distributors vice president Henry Reider, leads attack on UFW pickets at CID camp near Indio. Many injured, several cars damaged, no arrests.

April 26  Gregorio Ibarra, contractor and foreman for Kovacevich ranch, leads crew of strikebreakers armed with clubs, chains, grape stakes, jacks and leather straps in threatening strikers.

April 28  Three private police employed by Mirage Ranch in Thermal arrested after drawing guns on a UFW picket line.

May 2  Two more rent-a-cops arrested at Mirage, these for carrying illegal billy clubs.

May 21  Lamont strikebreakers threaten John Osborne, UFW legal staff member, with knives. Sheriffs refuse to take action.
May 25
Supervisor at El Rancho Farms tries to run Everado Saldana off the road at a picket line. Sheriffs refuse to arrest the driver or take any action.

May 31
Father John Bank of Cincinnati, Ohio, press liaison for the strikers in Coachella, attacked by Teamster goon Mike Falco while eating breakfast in an Indio cafe. Bank received a broken nose and Falco was arrested.

June 13
Ralph Cotner, head of the Teamster Coachella Valley operations, arrested for battery after attacking UFW picket.

June 18
Murray Westgate, sent by International Brotherhood of Teamster president Frank Fitzsimmons to investigate Teamster violence in the Coachella Valley, beaten by Teamster goon in lounge of Indio motel, then threatened by Cotner.

June 21
Teamster goons Lupe Tamez and Lupe Saucedo arrested for kidnap and attempted murder after abducting and attacking a Coachella farm worker with ice picks.

June 22
Six Teamsters arrested on felony charges after attacking Cesar Chavez car caravan near Mecca, California.

June 23
Teamster Johnny Macias (known as Yellow Gloves) leads lead pipe attack on UFW picket line at Henry Moreno ranch in Coachella. Five UFW pickets hospitalized, five Teamster goons jailed.

June 24
Striker Francisco Campos, his wife and child barely escape from their trailer, burned to the ground while they slept. Teamster Mike Falco later brags about the fire and threatens to burn the Campos car next.
June 25

Teamster violence in Coachella escalates with attacks on UFW pickets Marshall Ganz, Joe Lopez, John Osborne, Ray Huerta and others.

June 25

Coachella strikers Salvador Ochoa and Felix Rodriguez pulled from their car by Teamsters who beat them and break car windshield with baseball bats.

June 25

Gregorio Ibarra curses out female strikers and pulls a gun on them at Meridan Market in Weedpatch.

June 26

Five shots fired at the home where Cesar Chavez was staying in Coachella.

June 28

Ray Griego, former Teamster guard, tells Riverside Press Enterprise that Ralph Colner, Teamster chief in the Coachella Valley, is "the man who is responsible for all the violence that is going on out there."

June 28

Teamsters attack picket line at Kovacevich Ranch in Lamont. Four strikers hospitalized. Juan Hernandez, age 62, suffers skull fracture; other strikers beaten with clubs, pipes and sticks. Two Kern County sheriffs present during attack but take no action. At end of attack, more sheriffs arrive and arrest 29 Teamsters on assault and conspiracy charges. Chief Fote of the Sheriffs Department says the Teamsters were apparently imported from the Coachella Valley for the specific purpose of attacking the UFW Pickets.

July 2

Sheriffs arrest a number of pickets who go to labor camp on Copus Road to meet workers who have gone to pick up their checks after walking out on strike. Arrested pickets are maced, dragged from paddy wagon, generally mistreated.

July 13

Merel Pace, a 17 year old pesticide spray rig operator, sprays entire picket line at the Sabovich ranch with Aldrin, a deadly chlorinated hydrocarbon. Strikers become sick; sheriffs take no action.
July 31  
Rancher George Aronian tries to run over entire picket line at El Rancho Farms. Sheriffs do not arrest Aronian, but instead arrest Cornelio Salinas, co-captain of the picket line. Picket line then sprayed with mace by sheriffs.

July 31  
Kovacevich supervisor Marty Bozina points gun at pickets and threatens to kill them. Sheriffs do nothing.

July 31  

July 31  
Sheriffs arrest and brutally beat strikers picketing Giumarra Ranch at Edison Road near Highway 58. They use mace indiscriminately and club strikers who are in their way. Also use a helicopter, coming within six feet of the heads of the strikers.

July 31  
Teamsters attack picket line at Nalbandian Ranch in Lamont. Sheriffs assist them, arresting and holding strikers so that Teamsters can beat them. Although a number of UFW pickets are arrested, only one Teamster is arrested, and this for kicking a sheriff after aiming for striker and missing.

August 1  
Striker shot on the picket line in Delano but no arrests made.

August 1  
Don Galindo, UFW striker, drives into Giumarra ranch to talk with workers, is arrested and beaten by sheriffs. His car is impounded, and when returned to his wife a pair of binoculars, a tool chest, and two cameras are missing.

August 7  
Sheriffs again beat and mace strikers at Giumarra Ranch. Pickets again arrested, including Marcelina Mendez, who receives six stitches in her skull after being beaten by Kern County sheriffs.
August 9  Sheriffs hit young striker picketing labor camp. He falls to the ground and is run over by a truck. He is taken to the hospital, and as he leaves the building after treatment, he is arrested by the sheriffs. Sonya Morales, 14, also beaten.

August 10  Delano Private Patrol runs over 3 strikers at picket line.

August 10  UFW picket line at Missakian Ranch, on Road 136 near Avenue 12, in Tulare County just north of Delano, shot at for a period of 15 minutes. Two strikers wounded from the shooting. No arrests made of the strikebreakers who were shooting at the pickets.

August 14  UFW organizer Lupe Murguía beaten by scab labor contractor Tony Villalobos and foreman Claudio Carranza and has shotgun held on him by third attacker, outside of a market in Weedpatch. Sheriffs refuse to make arrest, DA will not investigate.

August 14  Nagi Daifullah, UFW striker from Yemen, beaten by Kern County Sheriffs Deputy Gilbert Cooper, and dies 24 hours later, having suffered two skull fractures. Autopsy and District Attorney reports show death resulted from blows received on head.

August 15  In two separate incidents, Fernando and Federico Chavez, son and nephew of Cesar Chavez, shot at while in area around Delano.

August 16  Juan de la Cruz, 66 year old striker and long standing UFW member, shot to death by sniper on picket line in Weedpatch.

August 17  UFW organizer Ray Olivas shot at while driving near Earlham.
"The boycott is the way we take our cause to the public. For surely if we cannot find justice in the courts of rural California, we will find support with our brothers and sisters throughout the nation."

-Cesar Chavez