

Grower's Response To Open Letter From Cesar Chavez 1969

Text of Open Letter

The grower's "Response to an Open Letter on the Grape Boycott" is precious. If you read nothing else, you must read that. It contains all the elements of the grower's public relations theme-strategy to defeat the farmworker movement:

- * Cesar is a hypocrite because he can read and write. His union receives big money from big labor.
- * Dolores Huerta knows how to dress up for fundraising parties.
- * Cesar only wants to build a union to collect the dues. Cesar is a hypocrite!
- * Cesar is destroying the family farmer.
- * Cesar is supported by the ACLU, SNCC, CRLA and many other "new left" groups. (You know what that means.)
- * Table grape workers are the highest paid farmworkers in California. Farmworkers in California are the highest paid in the nation. Go pick on some other state and help some really poor farmworkers.
- * The secondary boycott of grapes intimidates housewives and store clerks.
- * Cesar Chavez does not have the support of my workers.
- * The growers support national collective bargaining legislation for farmworkers, as long as there are no strikes at harvest time or boycotts later on. Cesar does not.
- * Cesar does not want a union, he wants social revolution.
- * Saul Alinsky was a mentor of Cesar's. (You know what that means.)

These snide, condescending, and flag-waving smears were always the same. I heard them first in Berkeley in 1965 when I debated a public relations agent representing a growers' association and then like a drumbeat that carried on incessantly until the grape strike was won in 1970. I have always been surprised that California agribusiness could not have purchased better propaganda. Sometimes it seemed to me like an unfair fight.