

An Editorial

Secondary Boycotts Unfair to Others

Judging from George Meany's comments on secondary boycotts last week, the current mass picketing at Monte Mart, and the huge crowd during a Superior Court hearing, isn't going to get much national support and funding.

Meany, speaking in Miami Beach last week, firmly rejected an appeal from Cesar Chavez for AFL-CIO help in boycotting Gallo wines on the retail level.

He said the AFL-CIO is willing to approve a product boycott of California grapes and lettuce, "but not a secondary boycott which would work to the detriment of the winery workers, or the meat cutters, or the retail clerks."

This shows the national union thinking on secondary boycotts and Meany was termed far less enthusiastic in his support for the UFW than he has been in the past.

This, confirms our own beliefs and that of the union employes at Monte Mart. It doesn't gain the United Farm Workers supporters—it turns people

against them. And, in the case of Monte Mart, it turns individual union members of other unions against them, which does irreparable damage to the labor movement, generally.

What has happened is that Monte Mart has been singled out by UFW for a concentrated effort. The result: 206 union employes at four Monte Mart stores have signed a petition objecting to picketing of the stores by UFW and sympathizers.

The petition asks Meany to exercise his influence to stop the UFW picketing which Monte Mart employes say is unfair and is jeopardizing their jobs.

The petition, signed by members of the Retail Clerks Local 839, or the Meat Cutters Union, asserts, "The UFW pickets are forcing many of our customers to trade at non-union stores and some of our fellow employes have been laid off as a result".

A copy of the petition has been forwarded to James Housewright, president of the Retail Clerks Inter-

national Assn. in Washington, D.C., according to James Dobbs, Local 839 president. He said, however, that he is taking no stand on the matter at present because he felt it would be premature.

The Californian feels, and agrees with Meany on the secondary boycott point, that Monte Mart employes have hit the nail on the head when they state, "What seems most unfair is that the UFW is picketing on us rather than the producer of the product (Gallo wine) that they claim to have a dispute with."

The president of the employes' association noted that a table and limited informational picketing had been offered the UFW at the store's main entrance, but the UFW would rather continue mass picketing.

The most incongruous of all facts is, however, that the employes state, "We are the only union department store in Monterey County affiliated with the AFL-CIO and the AFL-CIO has supported the UFW."

This vividly supports the contention in

every other industry but agriculture that secondary boycotts are wrong and should be banned. They ARE banned under the Taft-Hartley Act of 1947 in labor areas other than agriculture. That act's passage was based on the tenet that such a tactic as boycotting was an unfair labor practice and that the consumer is the principal loser.

In Monte Mart's case, union employes of different groups are fast becoming the losers, as well.

There is no basis for what is currently going on. The grievance is with Gallo, not Monte Mart, other grocery or liquor stores.

And, we repeat again, state and national legislation should be adopted to make this matter as clear for agricultural products, as it is for industrial products.

Secondary boycott intimidation has no place in a free society where collective bargaining is accepted and the primary sources are, and should be, the parties concerned.