

Court, halted the strike and today the lettuce boycott continues to bring pressure on the rest of the vegetable growers to negotiate with us.

Looking to the future we see that our work has just begun as most of the Nation's 3,000,000 farm workers remain unorganized and exploited. In this land of plenty, too many farm workers still live in a system of starvation wages, stoop labor, labor contractors, forced migration, sickness, illiteracy, filthy labor camps and sub-human living conditions. Too many farm worker children still go to bed hungry night after night.

The vast majority of farm workers remain abandoned to their own fate -- without representation, without power -- subject to the mercy and caprice of greedy, short-sighted growers. Through our strong will, our Union must continue to change these conditions. They are all obstacles which have been placed in our path by those who oppose our liberation -- by those who have gotten wealthier at our expense -- by those who have used empty promises and lies to fool us.

Now that we have begun to create real change, our adversaries have burdened us with even greater obstacles. As our Union grows stronger, the growers' callousness and greed grow greater. Those who oppose us the most vigorously and viciously are not the few small family farmers who still exist, but the large corporate farms which are part of the agribusiness complex. They are subsidiaries of big business with absentee land-owners who run their operations from Montgomery Street, Madison Avenue and Wall Street.

The invasion of agriculture by giant business conglomerates has meant speed-ups in work and the threat that mechanical harvesting will eliminate our jobs. It has also meant landowners with more money, more power and more influence in the efforts to destroy our Union.

The Government too has become a partner in exploitation of farm workers and in resisting our efforts to organize. On the federal level, the Government has sought court orders against our boycott weapon which is so essential to organizing. The Pentagon has used its purchasing power to reduce the effectiveness of our boycotts. The Justice Department has squashed investigations by Grand Juries to expose and indict growers who engage in illegal practices to destroy us. The Immigration Department allows the growers to use illegal aliens to break our strikes.

Vicious legislation designed to destroy us, too, is a weapon of our adversaries. On the federal level and on the state level, from California to New York, legislation that would prohibit our boycotts and strikes, is being promoted. This legislation would make it impossible for farm workers to organize at a time when it is so obvious that what we need is legislation that would make farm worker justice come more easily and speedily.

Violation of our Civil Rights is yet another injustice we encounter. Infringement on the rights of poor farm workers by the police and courts is nothing new, but it has never been so great as now that we try to unite. Everywhere we begin organizing and striking, we are met with a barrage of unconstitutional court orders, severe limitations on our right to picket, mass arrests, beatings and jailings.

Growers exploit for their own profits the growing traffic of illegal aliens. These aliens are used not only to depress labor conditions, but also to break our strikes.

Today, the most vicious partner with agribusiness in the campaign to destroy us is the Teamsters' Union. In what religious leaders have termed "the darkest and most shameful day of labor history" and what labor leaders have condemned as "disgraceful union busting", the Teamsters have signed "sweetheart contracts" with lettuce and grape growers. Farm workers know that the Teamsters have never shown any real concern for our problems, and we will never accept that Union which has worn a path to the growers' back door to sign agreements behind our backs.

All of these burdens beset us as we meet for this Convention, but they will not deter us. The greater the opposition to our struggle for self-determination, the greater our determination to win becomes.

The American Labor Movement gives us the courage to move forward. With its generous financial and moral support, labor has taught us the meaning of solidarity. The AFL-CIO, the United Auto Workers, and the International Longshoremen and Warehousemen's Union have all been unrelenting with their support. They have all made it clear that we will not be alone in our difficult years ahead.

Churches of all faiths have stood with us against the injustices suffered by farm workers and have made the commitment to fight side-by-side with us against human exploitation.

The American public with its massive support of our boycott has shown that it has a great social conscience and that it will continue to support our cause.

At this Convention we shall renew our commitment to organize the rural poor and, when necessary, we shall strike, boycott,