

# Chavez Charges Growers Conspire With Teamsters

By PHILIP SHABECOFF

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WASHINGTON, April 17 — Cesar Chavez, president of the United Farm Workers Union, charged today that growers in California were engaged in a "conspiracy" with teamsters officials, involving large illegal cash payments, to crush his union.

At a news conference in the Rayburn House Office Building, Mr. Chavez also said that he was again calling on consumers to boycott table grapes produced by growers who do not sign a contract with his union.

Last week more than 40 grape growers in the Coachella Valley of California signed a contract with the International Brotherhood of Teamsters after the growers' three-year contract with the United Farm Workers had expired.

This is only a small percentage of the grape growers in the state, but most of the rest—who also have contracts with Mr. Chavez's union that are expiring—are negotiating with the teamsters.

Labor experts here commented that the loss of the grape contracts could threaten the survival of the Farm Workers Union, and officials of the union conceded that the loss of

60,000 grape workers—only a minority of whom have been lost in the teamster contracts just signed—could destroy the union.

Mr. Chavez called today for a Congressional investigation of what he said was evidence that many lettuce, grape and other growers in California had been passing money to teamsters officials in cash packets of \$5,000 each.

Mr. Chavez also said that

Continued on Page 61, Column 1

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# Chavez Charges Growers Pay Teamsters to Thwart His Union

Continued From Page 1, Col. 4

the Government had had evidence of these payments for some time but had failed to take action.

Jerry Cohen, general counsel of the United Farm Workers, said that testimony was given at a Federal grand jury in San Francisco last June by a teamster who said he had witnessed the transfer of money from a grower representative.

The teamster, Frank Carolla of San Bruno, Calif., said that he had witnessed the grower handing over a suitcase of money to a teamster organizer at the Townhouse Motel in Salinas Calif., late in 1971 during the farm worker strike against lettuce growers, according to Mr. Cohen.

Mr. Carolla also testified that he had seen receipts signed by the teamster organizer for several cash payments of \$5,000 each, Mr. Cohen said.

## Jury Appearance Confirmed

Neither Mr. Carolla nor the teamster organizer could immediately be reached for comment. However, Mr. Carolla's wife, who said that her husband was driving a truck today, confirmed in a telephone conversation that he had testified before a Federal grand jury in June, 1972, on payments by growers to teamsters officials.

Mr. Cohen charged that cash from growers had been given to teamster "goons" in \$50-a-day payments to intimidate members of The United Farm Workers into agreeing to work under a teamsters contract.

He said that the Federal Bureau of Investigation granted the teamster organizer immunity from prosecution and probably had the receipts for the alleged grower payments in its possession. He added that such cash payments to union officials were illegal under the Taft-Hartley Act.

Asked today why the Government had not acted against the alleged conspirators, Mr. Chavez replied, "That is what we would like to know."

Mr. Chavez and Mr. Cohen said that the cash payments reported by Mr. Carolla were made by lettuce growers during 1971. They added that the teamsters were now spending large sums among grape workers and that they believed that many grape growers were also paying money to teamsters officials.

## Official Declines Comment

An Assistant United States Attorney in San Francisco, David Bancroft, said that the Government could not comment on whether there had been any grand jury investigation of alleged payoffs to teamsters officials. He said, however, that as far as he knew, no United Farm Worker officer had ever asked the United States Attorney's office for any kind of action because of the alleged illegalities.

Representative Edward R. Roybal, the Los Angeles Democrat who had called the news conference, said that he would ask the House Labor Committee to begin an investigation of the charges by The United Farm Workers.

Mr. Roybal said that he had been part of a team of Government officials, and civic and church leaders who had recently polled grape workers in the Coachella Valley of California, where the grape growers have just signed a contract with the teamsters.

He said that approximately 85 per cent of the nearly 953 workers interviewed wanted to belong to the United Farm Workers and only 8 per cent wanted to be members of the teamsters' union. The rest did not want to join any union.

The Congressman said that many of the workers to whom he had spoken said that they were being "pressured into accepting a union they did not want."

Msgr. George Higgins, a consultant to the United States Bishops Committee and a long-time labor and mediation expert who had also been on the team, said that the "crucial issue" in the struggle between the teamsters and the farm workers was the hiring hall.

Before the farm workers organized the grape workers, labor was supplied to the growers by labor contractors, "the worst and crummiest group in all industry, who have abused workers for generations," the priest said.

The farm workers instituted hiring halls whereby the union sent workers to the growers. Now, the growers are signing new contracts with the teamsters so that they will be able to go back to the old labor contractor system, Msgr. Higgins said.

## 'Backdoor' Pact Charged

William Kircher, head of the organizing department of the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations, charged at the news conference that the teamsters had signed a "backdoor" contract with the growers and that their contract offered workers a basic wage 10 per cent lower than the farm workers' contract.

A spokesman for the Western Conference of Teamsters in San Francisco said by telephone that the charges made today by Mr. Chavez and his associates were "absolutely ridiculous and unfounded."

The spokesman asserted that the teamsters' contract with the grape growers was better than the farm workers' because it provided fringe benefits such as pensions, unemployment compensation and medical care. He also said that while the labor contractor was being restored, the contractors would have to conform to the teamsters' contract.



United Press International  
**Cesar Chavez speaking  
yesterday in Washington.**

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