

writings promulgate detailed guidelines specifying the rights and obligations of both the employer and the employee and stressing their interdependence and the necessity for mutual trust.

In our own times the relations between employers and employees have been guided by legislation, in recognition that a democratic society must have orderly procedures for achieving justice without resort to violence.

As early as 1918 the Central Conference of American Rabbis urged recognition of the right of labor to organize and bargain collectively. And in 1928 they asserted these rights in a 17-point social platform ranging from the general duty of socialmindedness and the sacredness of the individual personality to the specific moral right to a living wage for every worker and his family. In part, the platform says:

The same rights of organization which rest with employers rest also with those whom he employs. Modern life has permitted wealth to consolidate itself through organization into corporations. Workers have the same inalienable right to organize according to their own plan for their common good and to bargain collectively with their employers through such honorable means as they may choose.

Some of these fundamental principles were subsequently incorporated in the passage of the National Labor Relations Act and other related legislation. However, in recent years we have become acutely aware of the tragic exclusion of some workers from the rights and benefits bestowed on others. The omission of farmworkers from the protection of the National Labor Relations Act has deprived them of the means to join with those whose lot they share to pursue shared objectives. This has resulted in discrimination against farmworkers in comparison to other workers.

The discrimination is compounded by the fact that the incomes, working conditions, and living standards of farmworkers are, to begin with, much lower than any other segment of the labor force. The inequity, it appears to us, should be manifest to all—those least able to protect themselves have been afforded the least protection by society.

That is why, in recent years, through resolutions, testimony before committees of Congress, and involvement in local disputes such as that which has already been mentioned in the hearing this morning, most recently in California, our national and regional leadership have addressed themselves to the plight of farmworkers and supported their objectives.

In an enlightened and progressive society, each generation must refine and redefine the formulations of its predecessors. Now that our Nation has become sensitized to racial, social, and economic injustices in our midst, now that we have declared "war on poverty" and committed ourselves anew to the fulfillment of our democratic vision, we must zealously seek to assure equality of treatment to the least privileged members of our society.

We are cognizant of the reasons given in the past for the failure to include farmworkers in the National Labor Relations Act. And we are cognizant of special factors, such as the vagaries of nature and the perishability of crops, which come into consideration in the present. But we believe that past reasons, whether justified or not, and present fears, whether real or exaggerated, do not outweigh the dictates of morality.