

President's Newsletter



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Office of the President
United Farm Workers of America, AFL-CIO
La Paz, Keene, California 93531



our political strength, but they will also reduce the unity we need to bargain effectively for a good contract for our members in the vegetable industry.

Our opponents claim the CPD Fund is illegal. There are roughly two million organized workers in California in about two thousand local unions affiliated with one hundred international unions. We have had contact with most of these unions and found that virtually every single one of them has a political action fund similar to our own, with the same goals and objectives of insuring that workers have a voice in the political process and the ability to defend and further their legislative and political interests. In this way, our union is doing what other unions have been doing for years.

Also, Citizenship Participation Day is included as an article in all of our contracts. These contracts are legal agreements that have been signed by the union and the growers and approved by our membership at each ranch.

Federal law is very clear on the restrictions on political contributions by unions. The money we now collect from the CPD Fund cannot be used for candidates in federal elections. But it is perfectly legal to use CPD contributions for candidates running for state office, such as governor, state attorney general and members of the state legislature. At our Second Biennial Political Endorsement Conference held in San Jose on July 30, the farm worker delegates endorsed dozens of candidates for state offices. These candidates pledged their support to the farm workers' legislative program and their struggle for dignity and justice.

Benefits of CPD Fund

Unlike other unions, the farm workers have never contributed money directly to candidates for office. We would like to. It is important and necessary that we do so. But so far, money that has come from the CPD Fund has been spent on enacting the Agricultural Labor Relations Act and fighting to keep the law alive and functioning, which is no easy task. CPD money has also gone to secure unemployment benefits for farm workers in California for the first time in history. In this past year, close to 75 million dollars was paid to workers in unemployment benefits from growers' contributions. CPD funds have gone toward improving benefits for farm workers under Workmen's Compensation laws which, as they stand now, are pitifully inadequate. CPD funds have been used in our attempts to find solutions to deal with that terrible monster called mechanization. We have seen the devastation this monster has brought to the fields and how it has destroyed thousands of farm worker jobs. We must find ways to control mechanization and use it to work for the people and not against them. CPD funds have been used to outlaw the short handled hoe, *el cortito*, a cruel

PRESIDENT'S OFFICE

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE FARM WORKER MEMBERSHIP

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

In recent months our Citizenship Participation Day Fund—separate and segregated from the Union—has come under increasing attack by the radical right wing National Right to Work Committee which has attempted to sabotage CPD both in the fields and in the courts.

We are now aware that UFW members are suing the union, protesting the payment of mandatory contributions to the CPD fund. These workers are being represented by Right to Work Attorney *Jordan Bloom*, a lawyer who also represents growers. How can this lawyer claim to represent workers when he also represents the growers?.

Contributions to the CPD fund was made mandatory by a unanimous vote of our Union membership at the UFW's Third Constitutional Convention in August, 1977, in Fresno. We wonder, in the years before CPD contributions were mandatory, why the Right to Work Committee and the courts never moved to attack CPD. As soon as CPD contributions became mandatory, those radical right wing interests who oppose our cause realized that mandatory contributions would make the farm workers an even more potent force for change in California politics.

The workers who the Right to Work Committee is using to sue the Union are *David Gomez, Harold Benich, Luis Gilberto Garcia, Jose L. Espinoza, Leonides Quintero, Juan Espinoza, Javier Guerrero Villalobos, Fred Benich and Arturo Cortez* from the J.J. Crosetti Company and *Cervando Perez, Giles Breaux and Richard Krenicki* from West Coast Farms.

Right To Work Committee Pulls Strings

We wonder about the motives of the groups who are behind this most recent attack on our CPD Fund. The Right to Work Committee is a leading force among reactionary anti-worker organizations and is supported by many racist and oppressive organizations and individuals.

One of the Right to Work Committee's main activities is pushing for so

called "right to work" laws in all the states. In contrast to what the name suggests, these laws do not give workers the right to a job or the right to enjoy fair wages, reasonable hours and decent living and working conditions. Instead, the right to work laws create the open shop, which severely weakens the institution of collective bargaining and the whole concept of labor union democracy and labor-management relations which are fair to workers.

Open shop laws mean that workers are not required to join the union when they work at a company where there is a union contract. Those workers who refuse to be union members enjoy all the many benefits of the contract and union membership, but do not contribute their fair share to supporting the union and guaranteeing that their benefits continue and improve. Employers use the open shop to destroy worker unity and the workers' ability to deal collectively with their employers. Right to work really means the right to substandard wages, hours, and conditions and the right to be exploited by the company.

In such right to work states as Florida, Texas, Arizona, Mississippi and the South, workers' wages, benefits and standards of living are much inferior to those in states that do not have right to work statutes. For years, the Right to Work Committee, which is now so concerned with the legality of our CPD fund, has spent its time, energy and money trying to crush democracy in agriculture by attempting to abolish the benefits that collective bargaining brings to both the farm workers and the agricultural industry.

Critical Year For UFW

The Right to Work Committee is well aware that this election year is a good opportunity for them to elect their own candidates to office—candidates who will work to destroy all the political gains we have made. The Right to Work Committee also realizes full well that our union will be involved in crucial negotiations with the vegetable industry as many of our contracts expire at the end of 1978 and the beginning of 1979. As far as it is concerned, attacking our CPD Fund now will help them kill two birds with one stone; if the Right to Workers can successfully impair our CPD Fund, they will not only harm

instrument which crippled generations of farm workers.

In addition, CPD funds have been used in our struggle for state legislation to secure reforms in health and safety regulations, housing and other issues that are so important to us and our families.

What is the real truth behind this attack on CPD?

Farm Workers' Right To Participate

If grower groups can dump more than \$1 million into the campaigns of their candidates in the June primary election as well as contribute another \$1 million to their candidate for governor in the November general election, why can't the farm workers use their CPD Fund to work for candidates who support them? We agree that the employer groups have the right to contribute to any candidate they want to support. Why don't they understand that we have the same right? We don't interfere in their brand of politics. Why do they feel they have the freedom to interfere with ours?

Brothers and Sisters, don't let the sinister outside forces of the Right to Work committee and their friends in the courts confuse and weaken you. You know better than anyone the burdens and sacrifices that have gone into building our union. And our union has made some astonishing advances in protecting farm workers.

Remember that the only way to protect the gains we make at the bargaining table is by maintaining a strong political action effort. The progress we have made in collective bargaining can all too easily become meaningless if we cannot defend our victories through political action. Our union has paid dearly for the progress we have made. We have paid for our gains in the blood, sweat, jailings and sufferings of our people. But these sacrifices and hard work have produced contracts with better wages, working and living conditions and other benefits. With these contracts have come happiness and security for us and our families. But more importantly, it has brought to us a sense of pride and dignity; a sense that we are human beings, not

agricultural implements, and entitled to the rights and dignity that all people deserve. We will not have these rights denied us by Right to Work lawyers who pretend to represent workers or by outside groups who are bent on destroying our union.

Think about these issues when you hear more of the Right to Work propaganda against CPD. Are they your friends? That is a question you must answer for yourself.

For the emancipation of the Farm Worker,
Viva la Causa!



Cesar E. Chavez
President

OFFICIAL NOTICES

Florida Worker Dies in Auto Accident

On Monday September 4th, several United Farm Workers union members from Fort Pierce, Florida were involved in an automobile accident in the northern part of the state. Brother *Larry G. Warren*, a Union steward at the Minute Maid groves in Fort Pierce, died instantly. Brothers *James W. Warren*, member of the Coca-Cola ranch committee in Fort Pierce, and *Lander C. Warren*, member of the first negotiating committee are both in the hospital in serious condition. *James'* three year old daughter *Theresa Warren* also died in the accident. The *Warrens* were returning from a visit to the family home in Alabama.

Brother *Larry Gene Warren* was 25 years old. Three years ago he was the youngest member of the team that negotiated the present UFW contract with Minute Maid. This contract covers approximately 1200 citrus workers in Minute Maid's Florida groves. We have had a contract with Minute Maid, which is owned by the Coca-Cola Company, since 1972.

For the past 18 months, Brother *Larry* had been steward of his unit of 40 hourly workers. He was a member of the Grievance Committee in Fort Pierce and was also a part of the com-

mittee that is currently negotiating with Minute Maid for a new contract. He leaves a wife, *Alice*, and four preschool children.

Brother *Larry* was one of a large family who have all been enthusiastic UFW members since the first organizing efforts in Florida. He became active in the UFW while still in his teens, following the example of his mother and older brothers. As a steward, negotiator, and Grievance Committee member, he was always looking for a way to serve his fellow workers. His spirit of service and sacrifice, and his commitment to the farm workers' struggle for justice touched and moved all who knew him.

We grieve for the loss of our brother *Larry* and his niece *Theresa*. Our prayers and thoughts are with the *Warren* family. We ask that all who wish to send a note or card of condolence to the *Warrens* address it to: The Warren Family, 110 Essex Drive, Fort Pierce, Fla. 33450.

Latest Elections

Sakata Farms/ Watsonville/ UFW-73, no union-50, challenged-13/ August 22, 1978.

Garin/ Salinas/ lettuce/ UFW-154, no union-156, challenged-24, void-1/ August 24, 1978.

Merrill/ Salinas/ lettuce, asparagus, cauliflower/ UFW-143, no union-148, challenged-35, void-1/ August 25, 1978.

Phelan and Taylor/ Santa Maria/ UFW-50, Internationals-55, challenged-1, void-3/ Sept. 1, 1978.

Personnel

We wish to welcome to our staff Dr. *Robert Gilbert*, his wife *Lynn* and three year old daughter *Sancha*. They will be working in our clinic in Salinas.

We also wish to welcome *Gordon* and *Felicia Williamson* and their family to La Paz. The *Williamsons* were on our boycott staff in Philadelphia before the boycott ended.

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