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Salinas Firebombing

New Reagan CRLA Charges

By George Murphy

Governor Ronald Reagan's office yesterday charged California Rural Legal Assistance attorneys with "making grossly misleading, if not altogether untruthful statements," with regard to the firebombing of an anti-CRLA's office in Salinas.

A spokesman for Reagan said CRLA attorneys did in fact represent Henry Lucero, 26, a fire company employee arrested earlier this week on charges of having thrown a Molotov cocktail into the office of attorney William Moreno.

CLAIM

Moreno last week had attempted to testify against CRLA before a federal commission investigating charges against the program, but was blocked by commission rules.

CRLA Executive Director Cruz Reynoso yesterday reiterated the program's claim that CRLA had not represented Lucero in a consumer

credit case in which Moreno acted for the plaintiff, a finance company.

"Lucero came to our office in Salinas and asked us to represent him, and one attorney did make a phone call to Moreno, and there was some correspondence with Moreno, but at no time did we represent him," Reynoso maintained.

Reynoso cited a letter sent Moreno June 1, 1970, by CRLA Attorney Richard Gonzalez, saying we "will not represent Lucero" as proof that the program did not handle the case.

LETTER

But Reagan's assistant press secretary, Ed Gray, cited the same letter as proof that "they did represent his man in the only way an attorney could in this type of matter.

"CRLA," Gray said, "has gone to great lengths to try

to disassociate itself from Mr. Lucero, even to the point of making grossly misleading, if not altogether untruthful, statements."

Lucero is being held in Monterey county Jail in lieu of \$12,500 bail and will appear at a preliminary hearing tomorrow on the arson charge.

Moreno had complained last year that CRLA violated its regulations in representing Lucero in that Lucero, because of his income, did not qualify for CRLA representation, in that he was earning more than the minimum annual wage.

OEO Denies Promise To 'Phase Out' CRLA

By Leo Rennert
McClatchy Newspapers Staff Writer

WASHINGTON — The Nixon administration flatly denied allegations by the Reagan administration today that federal antipoverty officials made a commitment to phase out the California Rural Legal Assistance program.

In a widely circulated document, Lewis K. Uhler, who heads the state's Office of Economic Opportunity, said federal OEO Chief Frank Carlucci "sustained" Reagan's veto of a \$1.8 million CRLA grant last January and ordered a "six-month phaseout."

Uhler said "signals were changed" later when an investigating commission set up by Carlucci to review

CRLA activities "apparently was advised" to tone down its probe.

The explanatory statement, he said, was prompted "because of the confusion fomented by a nonobjective press and media" in their reports about Reagan's battle with the commission.

Claims Misreading

OEO, however, made it clear today that it considers Uhler's statement a misreading of official events which led to the creation of the commission.

On Jan. 30, the agency recalled, Carlucci issued a statement in which he said the following about his decision to give CRLA six months funding pending completion of the commission's investigation:

"This is not a phaseout or transition grant. If the commission finds that CRLA is conducting its activities in compliance with OEO status and guidelines, I will, of course, refund it in full."

Federal officials said it would have been inconsistent for Carlucci to order a "phaseout" of CRLA, as claimed by Uhler, at the very time when he was appointing a panel of distinguished jurists to determine whether or not it should be kept alive by OEO.

The agency also noted that Carlucci did not say last January that he had decided to "sustain" Reagan's veto of a 12-month refunding grant — as alleged by Uhler.

Instead, he declared in a public

statement, "I will not override at this time" Reagan's veto.

By using the phrase "at this time," it was pointed out, Carlucci clearly left himself the option of overriding the veto later this year should the commission turn in a favorable CRLA report.

Attacks Uhler

Uhler's statement also came under attack from California Rep. Jerome R. Waldie, D-Contra Costa County, who took issue with a Uhler complaint that the commission's procedures gave the Reagan administration a choice of accepting "the incredible posture of placing the State of California on an equal basis with CRLA."

Said Waldie:

Sacto. Bee
5. 25. 71

"In that plaintive plea, Mr. Uhler tips his hand. It was his hope that the State of California, represented by his report condemning CRLA, would be in a 'superior' position before the tribunal of jurists to CRLA and that, therefore, the State of California, in the person of Mr. Uhler, would not be required to prove his unfounded charges against CRLA.

"That CRLA would be considered an 'equal' to Mr. Uhler before a legal tribunal examining the facts is an incomprehensible situation to Mr. Uhler.

"It is that failure to comprehend that led him to attack CRLA in the first instance; namely, CRLA's insistence that the poor of California, their

clients, were 'on an equal basis' before the courts with those wealthy growers, those political powers, and those entrenched special interests that they were litigating against.

"Mr. Uhler believes the poor 'have a place' in society, but that 'place' is inferior to the large growers, the political powers and the special interests who have long been abusing them.

"Mr. Uhler again demonstrates his incapacity to head a state agency whose mission is to be supportive of efforts to assist California poor. His philosophy of life does not permit an understanding of or compassion with the poor. Unfortunately, his philosophy is shared by his superior, Gov. Reagan, who appointed him in the first place."

Suspect Is Arrested In Salinas Firebombing

From McClatchy Newspapers
Service and AP Reports

SALINAS — A 26-year-old man was arrested in connection with the firebombing of a Salinas lawyer's office, hours after Gov. Ronald Reagan called for an FBI investigation of the incident, Salinas police said today.

Police said Henry R. Lucero of Salinas was arrested late Monday afternoon at work in a tire company here and booked for investigation of arson in the firebomb-

ing last Friday of the offices of attorney William Moreno.

Police said Moreno's firm had taken action against Lucero in a financial default proceeding. They emphasized the fire apparently had no connection with the attorney's testimony early last week in hearings investigating the activities of California Rural Legal Assistance.

A firebomb thrown through the front window of Moreno's office did an esti-

mated \$90,000 damage.

Reagan sent a telegram Monday to US Atty. Gen. John Mitchell asking that he "direct the FBI to immediately begin a full investigation" into the incident. Moreno had testified against CRLA.

Dennis Powell, directing attorney for CRLA's Salinas office, said the arrest "clears us. The police have indicated there is no connection between the firebombing and (Moreno's) stand against

CRLA."

Reagan told his press conference today he wants the FBI investigation despite the arrest of a suspect.

If the bombing was not connected to the attorney's testimony against CRLA, Reagan said, "there has been a big stretch of the imagination."

Reagan said other witnesses who "took the same tone have been receiving telephone threats and harassment of that kind."

Salts. Bee

5-25-71

San Francisco, Calif.
Examiner
(Cir. D 203,026 - Sat. 159,037)

2 2 1971
Allen's P.C.B. Est. 1888

CRLA Probe May Cost Half Million

By Joel Tlumak
Examiner News Staff

EL CENTRO — The current inquiry into the activities of California Rural Legal Assistance probably will have cost somewhere in six figures — perhaps even \$500,000 when the controversial hearings end next month.

No one involved in this problem, which just completed two days of hearings near the Mexican border, is really prepared to pin down the cost.

"It's too sensitive at this point," said one federal official.

Educated guesses by some participants, however, don't discount the half-million figure, although most horseback estimates are about half that.

Reagan Veto

At stake is the \$1.8 million federal grant for CRLA that Governor Reagan vetoed last December.

The cost of this probe is borne by the Office of Economic Opportunity in Washington — not out of any special funds, but out of regular anti-poverty money.

OEO Director Frank Carnecci, faced with the political heat of upholding or overruling Reagan, appointed the three-member commission to investigate the Governor's charges against CRLA.

Just consider the expense of the inquiry.

The commission was appointed March 29.

Justices' Staff

In addition to the three justices from the Supreme Courts of Maine, Colorado and Wisconsin, the commission has a staff of four attorneys, two secretaries and several court reporters.

The hearings themselves will consume three weeks when all is over. But there also were procedural hearings before the probe began as well as long staff work on the Governor's charges contained in a 283-page indictment.

The bill will include plane fare for the commission, hotels, meals, rented cars and other expenses of traveling to and from California and also within the state.

Last week hearings were held at Salinas, Soledad and here. In June, six more cities are on the itinerary.

Now add to this the cost of both CRLA and the State Office of Economic Opportuni-

Opinion

ty. OEO pays the salaries and expenses of both.

CRLA is being defended by torneys from two law firms on the case since February, when CRLA started compiling a three-volume reply to the Governor's charges.

Then there is the work of CRLA's staff of 40 poverty attorneys throughout the state — doing research and testifying at the hearings.

The state OEO, which compiled the 283-page report because its chief, Lewis Uhler, said his staff was too small and couldn't spare the time.

Pay Witnesses

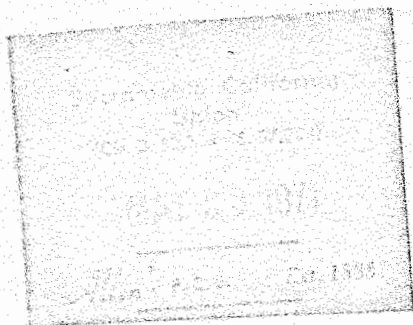
Yet, Uhler has investigators in the field to feed the commission leads on what it believes are objectionable activities of CRLA.

He also has several staff members attending the hearings as observers, and all this at the expense of OEO.

OEO is also paying for witnesses to travel to and from the hearings.

Everyone dislikes using poverty funds for such hearings — especially such a large amount.

But the inquiry itself is a political compromise worked out in Washington — and such compromises are expensive.



Reagan Raps Health Plan

LOS ANGELES (UPI) — Governor Reagan, whose cutbacks in the Medi-Cal program are under attack in court by doctors, said Saturday night he and physicians "are going to need each other in the days ahead."

He also assailed Sen. Edward M. Kennedy's proposed cradle-to-grave federally subsidized national health insurance plan as an underfinanced scheme that would make doctors "government employees."

The Republican governor criticized the Kennedy program and campaigned for ap-

proval of his own welfare and Medi-Cal "reform" plans in a speech prepared for the 100th anniversary of the Los Angeles County Medical Association.

HE NOTED it was "no secret" that his squeeze, cut and trim policies in welfare and Medi-Cal "have not always received a 100-gun salute from all segments of the health care industry."

But, Reagan said, "we are a little puzzled when we discover your state association is announcing some pro-rata reduction in fees while they are suing

us for our cutbacks, even though the law required us to do it."

"We hope this action by your spokesmen in Sacramento does not express your feeling about our administration," he added. "We are going to need each other in the days ahead."

Reagan's cutbacks in the Medi-Cal program, including a 10 per cent reduction in doctors fees, is being challenged in Sacramento Superior Court by the California Medical Association, the California Rural Legal Assistance and others. Reagan insists the cuts were needed to

avert a threatened \$140-million budget deficit.

THE GOVERNOR called the Kennedy proposal the culmination of "foot in the door encroachment by those who have been determined from the first to substitute government control for individual freedom."

"Make no mistake about it," Reagan said, "this measure will make you government employees, not independent professionals."

The Los Angeles County Medical Association last week refused to testify at one-man subcommittee hearing Kennedy held on his plan.

Firebomb Hurled In CRLA Case

SALINAS (UPI) --A crude firebomb was hurled Friday into the offices of an attorney who testified this week against the California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation.

The Molotov cocktail caused damage estimated at \$20,000 to the offices of William Moreno, who accused CRLA with harassing lettuce growers.

He testified before a special panel investigating charges brought by Gov. Ronald Reagan's administration against the federally funded legal organization.

The governor sent Moreno a telegram late Friday in which he called the bombing "an act of cowardice which typifies the efforts of those bent on using intimidation and fear to achieve their own selfish ends.

"Our nation will continue to be strong only if men like yourself continue to speak out with the truth in face of threats and terrorism," Reagan's message said.

May 23-71 S.R.L.

San Francisco, Calif.
Examiner
(Cir. D 203,026 - Est. 189,037)

MAY 23 1971

Allen's P.C.B. Est. 1883

Ex-Aide Says CRLA Records Falsified

272

Special to The Examiner

EL CENTRO — A former California Rural Legal Assistance employe has been the most damaging witness yet against CRLA in the two week old special investigation by a three-member commission.

Mrs. Ollie Rodgers, who worked for the agency until 11 days ago, testified the El Centro CRLA office altered and falsified records to cover up staff connections with the United Farm Workers Union of Cesar Chavez.

She also told of an agreement between Chavez and former CRLA Executive Director James Lorenz to put community worker Hector Rayes on the CRLA payroll "to work fulltime for the union."

Federal guidelines make it

illegal for CRLA to serve the interests of a labor union.

The witness, a black woman, also revealed that she gave a secret CRLA document to one of Governor Reagan's investigators.

The memo from Robert Johnstone, a CRLA attorney in El Centro, to Martin Click, CRLA's chief of litigation in San Francisco, said:

"For the past four years Mr. Rayes has basically worked full time out of the United Farm Workers office in Calexico.

Mrs. Rodgers refused to tell the commission the name of the investigator she gave the memo to.

The commission asked Mrs. Rodgers to come to San Francisco June 3 to continue her testimony.

Farm Union Used CRLA Offices, Witness Says

Ex-Agency Worker Claims Men Were in Facility Two Weeks

BY PHILIP HAGER

Times Staff Writer

EL CENTRO—A former community worker for California Rural Legal Assistance said Friday the farm workers union had "moved in" to CRLA offices for more than two weeks during a labor dispute here last summer.

Mrs. Ollie Rodgers made the allegation among several charges indicating a close relationship between CRLA and Cesar Chavez' United Farm Workers Organizing Committee.

Mrs. Rodgers appeared before the federal commission appointed to investigate CRLA after Gov. Reagan vetoed its \$1.8 million budget, which is supported by federal antipoverty funds. The commission is conducting hearings throughout the state.

Federal regulations prohibit CRLA attorneys from representing a union or its members in matters where the union is a real party in interest. Gov. Reagan has asserted CRLA has violated these and other federal rules.

Brought Sleeping Bags

Mrs. Rodgers, who resigned from CRLA's El Centro office May 10, said "10 to 15" farm workers union members had "moved in" to the facility, complete with sleeping bags, suitcases and typewriters, during a strike against melon growers.

She said that Hector Reyes, another CRLA community worker, had told her last year "he would be on the CRLA payroll but would be working for the union."

Mrs. Rodgers said further that when she was with CRLA, "We accepted union telephone calls collect ... three or four times a week."

OEO LEADER HITS FEDERAL PANEL ON 5 CRLA DECISIONS

BY PAUL HOUSTON

Times Staff Writer

The Reagan Administration Friday lambasted a three-judge federal commission for absolving California Rural Legal Assistance of five of the charges leveled against it by the state.

It was the third time in a week the Administration had used the media to discharge blasts at the commission, whose hearings it is boycotting.

Lewis K. Uhler, director of the California Office of Economic Opportunity, accused the judges of holding preconceived opinions and basing their decisions on insufficient testimony.

However, he strongly defended the state's refusal to participate in hearings being held across the state, despite the commission's repeated requests for more evidence from the Administration.

Please Turn to Back Page, Col. 1

She also said that she had witnessed the alteration of employee attendance records for two community workers "who had been unable to come into the office because of the union."

On cross-examination, Stuart Pollak, an attorney representing CRLA, noted as he began questioning Mrs. Rodgers on that charge that she "had two completely different situations completely confused." Pollak did not elaborate on this point.

Mrs. Rodgers also was asked about a confidential memorandum between CRLA attorneys asserting there were witnesses in forthcoming hearings who would "testify to any-

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*Los Angeles
Times*

5-22-71

Union Use of CRLA Office Space Charged

Continued from First Page
thing we want them." The memorandum was obtained and released last week by Gov. Reagan in Sacramento.

She testified that a copy she had of the memorandum had been given to "an investigator." She refused to identify the investigator when asked if he was a representative of the State Office of Economic Opportunity.

Questioning to Resume

The questioning of Mrs. Rodgers is scheduled to resume June 3, when the commission reconvenes in San Francisco.

Several other witnesses gave testimony they had seen CRLA attorneys acting in behalf of UFWOC. One witness, Angel Avila, an employe of a melon grower here, said he had observed CRLA attorney Robert Johnstone with members of the union at a labor pickup area near the Mexican border.

Avila, speaking in Spanish through an interpreter, told the commission that Johnstone was there telling Mexican workers "not to go to work because there was a strike . . . and that he was working for the government and was an attorney."

Johnstone, testifying in rebuttal, said he had taken

vacation time to work for the union, "as is permissible under federal regulations. He denied he had told the workers he was "working for the government" and added, "... that would be impersonating a federal officer and would be a very serious charge . . . that's not my style."

CRLA Director Cruz Reynoso testified he was confident the attorneys did not violate federal regulations in acting on their vacation time for the union, but expressed concern that the public might not understand that distinction.

Decline to Appear

Justice George Currie of Wisconsin, one of three out-of-state Supreme Court justices on the commission, noted in questioning Reynoso, "it would seem to me that is where the main danger of public concern might occur."

The state Office of Economic Opportunity, which made a series of charges that led to Gov. Reagan's veto of the CRLA budget, has declined to appear before the commission to support its allegations. The state had asked that at least some of the proceedings be held in private and has protested the com-

mission's decision to hold public hearings.

F. Douglas McDaniel, an El Centro attorney and former member of CRLA's board of directors, testified he had seen a CRLA attorney, John Denver, present at a UFWOC picket line during the farm workers strike last summer. McDaniel said Denver had told him at the time that he (Denver) had been giving legal advice to the pickets.

Denver denied he was there to offer legal advice, but acknowledged that, personally, he "... very sincerely wanted to see the union win." He said he had gone to the melon field to witness the strike because it appeared to be a "historic moment . . . that might lead to the final resolution of labor strife in Imperial County and all of California."

CRLA RULINGS

Continued from First Page

Appearing at a press conference here, Uhler was sharply critical of the commission for clearing CRLA attorneys Thursday of charges they were "improperly involved" with Angela Davis and three prison inmates known as the Soledad Brothers.

Hits Hearings

Uhler complained that the judges acted without hearing testimony from officers at Soledad Prison. A closed hearing at the prison was suspended Wednesday after a prison official was stabbed to death in another part of the facility.

Uhler implied the officers had important testimony to give.

The judges were not available for comment as they continued hearings in El Centro Friday. Observers noted, however, that under commission procedure the judges are given an advance written summary of what witnesses plan to say.

Uhler also criticized the commission for clearing CRLA of four other charges

before all the hearings were concluded.

He said he wasn't calling the judges — the retired chief justices of Wisconsin and Maine, and a Colorado Supreme Court justice — dishonest or politically motivated. But it was "abundantly evident," he said, they had been "primed" by federal antipoverty officials in Washington to form a biased view of the CRLA charges before they began the hearings.

Hearing Rapped

Uhler complained that witnesses testifying against CRLA were not permitted to range beyond the Uhler-prepared charges, and that private attorneys representing these witnesses were not permitted to cross-examine pro-CRLA witnesses.

He said that since the state was the review agency for CRLA, it was "inappropriate" for the state to join the commission's adversary proceedings.

"It's like a teacher who graded the student being called upon to engage in a hearing as to how the process of grading is conducted," Uhler commented.

STATE SAYS CRLA WAS 'IMPROPERLY CLEARED'

California Rural Legal Assistance Corp. was cleared improperly of involvement with Angela Davis and three Soledad Prison inmates, State Office of Economic Opportunity Chief Lewis K. Uhler charged here.

At a press conference yesterday, Uhler blasted the federal investigative commission announcement that Reagan Administration allegations accusing CRLA attorneys of "improper involvement" with Miss Davis and three inmates known as the Soledad Brothers, were totally unfounded and without merit.

Uhler said the announcement was made without the benefit of testimony the commission refused to hear.

Uhler said the commission, headed by retired Maine Supreme Court Justice Robert B. Williamson, abruptly terminated its Wednesday hearing at So-

ledad Prison after taking testimony from a few inmates.

Reason given for terminating the hearing, according to Uhler, was the execution style slaying of prison administrator Kenneth E. Conant, 49, shortly after the three-member commission entered the northern California prison.

Uhler charged the commission is "without any information to make the decision which was released yesterday during a hearing in El Centro."

He said the Reagan Administration has become "deeply disturbed" with the commission's review techniques and its "piecemeal decisions" released on the basis of "inadequate and insufficient information."

He said the commission appointed by the federal OEO came to California with a "preconceived notion of the action it was supposed to take," and has

adopted procedures that "systematically exclude" full testimony by witnesses hostile to CRLA.

However, he quoted remarks purportedly made before the commission by Salinas attorney William Morena, branding it a "kangaroo court."

Uhler also read a telegram purportedly sent to the commission by a former CRLA employee who stated after observing the commission's action she refused to "subject myself to insult and abuse" in a proceeding "that is a farce and insult to the American system of justice."

L.A. Herald Examiner

5-22-71



Tribuna Photo

LEWIS K. UHLER ... assails federal commission

San Gabriel Tribune 5-22-71

Lawyer Intimates CRLA Tampering

By JOHN FRANCIS
Tribune Staff Writer

ARCADIA — Lewis K. Uhler, director of the State Office of Economic Opportunity, said he is distressed over the decision of a federal commission investigating the California Rural Legal Assistance program to dismiss testimony from Soledad prison as unfounded.

Uhler, speaking before the Arcadia Rotary Club Friday, said that his key witnesses in the Soledad case were never called before the commission due to the murder of a guard in another section of the prison while hearings were under way.

Uhler's office is attempting to convince the commission that federal funds to CRLA should be cut off.

One charge against CRLA is that its attorneys were "improperly involved" with Angela Davis and three prison inmates known as the Soledad Brothers. The commission, after

conducting hearings Wednesday at Soledad prison, said the charges were unfounded and without merit.

Uhler complained Friday that the commission heard testimony from prison inmates supporting CRLA, but called off the hearings prematurely because of a murder in the prison.

In a detailed report, Uhler has charged that CRLA attorneys "intervened" at the prison in an effort to arrange a meeting between Miss Davis and one of the inmates.

He said that he has sworn testimony from one of the prisoners that a CRLA attorney asked him to "muzzle" his testimony in a murder case and also change his testimony.

Uhler charged that the witness is now out of prison and a gag rule has been made in the court in which he is to appear. He said the gag rule will prohibit his witness from telling the court about the CRLA attorney.

The OEO director also charged the CRLA with working directly with Cesar Chavez and his labor organization the United Farm Workers Organizing Committee.

He said that CRLA attorneys and Chavez are "right in bed together" and that the attorneys might as well be on UFWOC's payroll.

The CRLA grant prohibits attorneys from working with labor organizations. The program is intended to provide civil lawyers for poor people.

Uhler said that he has witnesses who will prove that CRLA is working with Chavez and his farm labor movement but he does not know how much of their testimony will be accepted by the commission.

He said that during the hearings so far the commission has restricted OEO attorneys from cross-examining CRLA witnesses. CRLA attorneys, according to Uhler, are free to cross-examine OEO witnesses.

He also told the Rotary Club that attorney Bill Mora recently testified in the hearing for the OEO and called the commission a "kangaroo court" and walked out.

The same night Moreneo's offices were fire bombed. "I have no proof that this is related," Uhler said.

He added that it could have been an irate client taking opportune time to throw a bomb into his offices.

"We're not playing v greasy kids' stuff," Uhler said.

He said that his witnesses being harassed and threatened and that it has to end soon.

Uhler said that the commission will not have the final word on the CRLA case and indicated that he will pursue the matter through the courts.

MAY 22 1977

Allen's P. C. B. Est. 1898

The CRLA Probe Brings Reactions in Four Cities

By George Murphy
Chronicle Correspondent

El Centro, Imperial County

The Federal investigation into alleged improprieties by the California Rural Legal Assistance program caused rumbles in four widely separated cities yesterday.

In El Centro, the three-judge commission conducting the investigation heard testimony attacking the CRLA on its weakest point — its connection with Cesar Chavez' United Farm Workers Organizing Committee.

In Salinas, the offices of an anti-CRLA attorney were firebombed, causing an estimated \$100,000 damage.

CRLA spokesmen in El Centro deplored the incident.

UHLER

In Los Angeles, Lewis Uhler, State Office of Economic Opportunities director, told a press conference he didn't think the federal commission is going to "whitewash" CRLA, but added:

"The panel members are boxing themselves in with procedures designed to exclude, rather than include, information."

And in San Francisco Governor Ronald Reagan told newsmen:

"I have to tell you that any hopes I had in the beginning that this might be an actual study of legal assistance to the rural poor are out the window. I don't think this

commission is going to find anything that has real bearing on why CRLA should be changed or improved."

SYMPATHY

As the commission completed two days of lengthy hearings here, witnesses for both sides left the impression that CRLA lawyers have

deep sympathy with Chavez' union.

They are barred by federal regulations from taking part, as CRLA attorneys, in union activities.

But three of them testified they went on their own time to fields affected by last summer's farm workers' strike here.

Their reasons for following UFWOC pickets to the fields were best explained by CRLA attorney David Fielding.

'EXCITING'

He testified that he felt the strike was "one of the most exciting times in the history of the (Imperial) valley . . . one of the most historic moments in the farm workers' struggle."

The major charges against CRLA contained in the so-called Uhler Report have, for the most part, been dismissed by the commission, but the connection with UFWOC appeared to elicit strong interest from the three justices.

In Salinas, the office of attorney William Moreno at West Laurel drive was destroyed when a Molotov cocktail was thrown through the window at 2:29 a.m.

Salinas Fire Chief Paul Mehninger said there was "no doubt" the fire was incendiary in origin.

Earlier this week Moreno had attempted to testify before the commission at its Salinas hearings, but was prevented under commission rules from going into detail about his charges against CRLA.

Uhler, at his Los Angeles press conference, said he believed the commission — appointed by the Nixon Administration — had come to California "with a preconceived notion of the kind of procedures they'd take."

These procedures, Uhler said, "have produced a very distorted result."

REAGAN

Reagan's comments came as he entered a University of California regents' meeting in San Francisco.

Referring to the commission's ruling Thursday that charges against CRLA involving Soledad prison inmates were without merit, the governor said:

"The attorney general's office had to step in and rule against some of the (Soledad) employees testifying because they would be testifying on a matter before the courts."

"So the commission, in ruling there was no evidence, was in reality distorting the situation, because they know — as judges — that they were prevented from hearing any testimony to the contrary."

The commission completed its hearings here last night, and will resume taking testimony at various California cities during the first week in June.

Oakland, Calif.
Tribune
(Cir. D 225,038, Sat. 209,931,
Sun. 251,534)

MAY 22 1971

Allen's P. C. B. Est. 1888

Anti-CRLA Witnesses Fire Bombed

SALINAS (AP) — A fire bomb did an estimated \$90,000 damage early yesterday to the offices of two attorneys who had testified against the California Rural Legal Assistance Monday and Tuesday at a federal commission hearing.

Fire Chief Paul Mehringer said the blaze was "definitely arson" caused by a gasoline bottle bomb thrown through a window of the one-story building in north Salinas. Police said there have been no arrests.

Senior partner William Moreno, who estimated the damage, undertook to testify Monday about CRLA involvement with the United Farm Workers. He stalked out of the hearing, saying he was being muzzled.

Partner William P. Carnazzo testified Tuesday about CRLA anti-eviction suits on behalf of farm strikers.

Moreno said several windows of their offices were smashed last January after Gov. Reagan's office issued a report detailing reasons for vetoing federal funds for the legal assistance project.

LIT. 5.22.71
**Unionizing
By CRLA
Probed**

EL CENTRO (UPI)—Testimony before a federal commission investigating California Rural Legal Assistance turned Friday to allegations that CRLA attorneys were involved in efforts here to organize melon pickers.

The United Farm Workers Organizing Committee picketed melon fields around this community in June, 1970.

The commission, composed of three retired judges, is holding hearings into the CRLA at the order of the Nixon Administration. Gov. Ronald Reagan vetoed the federal grant funding the organization last December.

Et. Douglas McDaniel, an attorney who represented the Abatti Produce Co. in obtaining a restraining order during the strike, testified he saw CRLA attorney John Denvir with a group of UFWOC pickets after the union had been informed of the court order.

McDaniel said Denvir told him the pickets were there to defy the court order in an attempt to force a contempt citation.

McDaniel also testified he saw CRLA directing attorney Fred Altschuler at the UFWOC office in Calexico several days later. He admitted, however, that he had no knowledge of the extent of Denvir's influence on the workers.

Another witness was Angel Avila, a foreman for Sam Anders Sons, who spoke through an interpreter. He said he saw CRLA attorney Robert Johnstone trying to persuade farm workers on buses in Calexico not to go to work in the field.

Lt. Oren Fox of the Sheriff's Department, who was in charge of law enforcement problems arising from the strike, testified he saw Johnstone with pickets during the strike.

The Reagan Administration has charged that CRLA attorneys were improperly involved in the organizing attempt.

C. A. Herald prisoner
5.22.71

5-22-71
Anti-CRLA

Attorneys Firebombed

SALINAS (AP)—A fire bomb did an estimated \$90,000 damage early Friday to the offices of two attorneys who had testified against the California Rural Legal Assistance Monday and Tuesday at a federal commission hearing.

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Moreno said several windows of their offices were smashed last January after Gov. Reagan's office issued a report detailing reasons for vetoing federal funds for the legal assistance project.

L.A. Herald-Examiner

5-22-71

S.F. Examiner 5.22.78
**Damaging Witness
At CRLA Hearing**

By Joel Thumak
Examiner News Staff

EL CENTRO — The California Rural Legal Assistance office here altered and falsified records to cover up staff connections with the farm workers union of Cesar Chavez, a former CRLA employee told a special investigating commission.

Mrs. Ollie Rodgers also testified yesterday that she was told an agreement was made by Chavez and former CRLA Executive Director James Lorenz to put community worker Hector Reyes on the CRLA payroll "to work fulltime for the union."

Damaging

A CRLA community worker herself until 10 days ago, Mrs. Rodgers proved to be the most damaging witness against CRLA during two weeks of hearings.

The appearance of the articulate black witness before the commission finally revealed who the person was

who turned over a secret CRLA document to one of Governor Reagan's investigators.

The memo from Robert Johnstone, a CRLA attorney in the office here, to Martin Click, CRLA's chief of litigation in San Francisco, said:

"For the past four years Mr. Reyes has basically worked full time out of the United Farm Workers office in Calexico."

Illegal

Under federal guidelines, it is illegal for CRLA to serve the interests of a labor union.

This is one of Reagan's charges against CRLA that the state has been able to support with witnesses before this special investigating commission.

The testimony of Mrs. Rodgers visibly upset the attorneys representing CRLA.

They did not get a chance

—Turn to Page 4, Col. 1

X

→

Damaging Witness Against CRLA

—From Page 1

to cross-examine her very much or present rebuttal witnesses, because the testimony took place just before the two-day hearings here closed.

The commission asked Mrs. Rodgers to come to San Francisco June 3 to continue her testimony.

Work Records

Mrs. Rodgers told the commission she was ordered by Johnstone just after Governor Reagan vetoed a \$1.8 million grant, to "take blank time and attendance sheets to (Johnstone's secretary) and have them altered to show employees on leave time instead of having worked."

She explained this was to cover up the activities of community worker Reyes and another employee on behalf of the farm workers union.

After the Reagan veto, Johnstone also readjusted work schedules listing Reyes in the CRLA office here five half days a week instead of the two half days originally scheduled, Mrs. Rodgers said.

Phone Calls

"The purpose was to have him here on paper if not in person," she said.

She also said Reyes and

Manuel Chavez, Cesar's brother, charged union calls to the CRLA phone. She testified she accepted many of these calls when the phone company asked for verification.

This point is mentioned by Johnstone in his now famous memo:

"However, one potentially embarrassing feature of his (Reyes) time there (in Cal-exico) is a large number of telephone calls from that office to the Delano UFWOC office which are billed to our telephone.

"Our position on this is that we never authorized it and since we discussed this we issued immediate instructions to the telephone company that we would accept no more billings."

Won't Say

The biggest flap yesterday came when Mrs. Rodgers refused to reveal the name of the state investigator she gave the memo to.

The commission ruled it would consider this refusal "in evaluating the credibility and weight to be afforded her testimony."

It said it feels the identity of the investigator "might lead to other relevant evidence."

The commission will resume its final week of hearings with each of the three commission members hold-

ing one man hearings June 1 and 2 in several farm communities throughout the State.

Final testimony will be taken June 3 and 4 and that will end the commission's inquiry. It must report its findings to Washington by June 15.

May 28 1971

Strike Figures In CRLA Probe

EL CENTRO (UPI) — Testimony before a federal commission investigating California Rural Legal Assistance turned Friday to allegations that CRLA attorneys were involved in efforts here to organize melon pickers.

The United Farm Workers Organizing Committee picketed melon fields around this community in June, 1970.

THE COMMISSION, composed of three retired judges, is holding hearings into the CRLA at the order of the Nixon administration. Governor Reagan vetoed the federal grant funding the organization last December.

F. Douglas McDaniel, an attorney who represented the Abatti Produce Co. in obtaining a restraining order during the strike, testified he saw CRLA attorney John Denvir with a group of UFWOC pickets after the union had been informed of the court order.

McDaniel said Denvir told him the pickets were there to defy the court order in an attempt to force a contempt citation.

McDaniel also testified he saw CRLA directing attorney Fred Altschuler at the UFWOC office in Calexico several days later. He admitted, however, that he had no knowledge of the extent of Denvir's influence on the workers.

ANOTHER WITNESS was Angel Avila, a foreman for Sam Anders Sons, who spoke through an interpreter. He said he saw CRLA attorney Robert Johnstone trying to persuade farm workers on buses in Calexico not to go to work in the field.

Lt. Oren Fox of the sheriff's department, who was in charge of law enforcement problems arising from the strike, testified he saw Johnstone with pickets during the strike.

The Reagan administration has charged that CRLA attorneys were improperly involved in the organizing attempt.

In Salinas, meanwhile, a fire bomb did an estimated \$90,000 damage to the offices of two attorneys who had testified against the California Rural Legal Assistance Monday and Tuesday.

FIRE CHIEF Paul Mehringer said the blaze was "definitely arson" caused by a gasoline bottle bomb thrown through a window of the one-story building in north Salinas. Senior partner William Moreno, who estimated the damage, undertook to testify Monday about CRLA involvement with the United Farm Workers. He stalked out of the hearing, saying he was being muzzled.

Partner William P. Carnazzo testified Tuesday about CRLA anti-eviction suits on behalf of farm strikers.

L.A. Times
5-22-71
**Fire Bomb Hits
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MAY 22 1971

OEO LEADER HITS FEDERAL PANEL ON 5 CRLA DECISIONS

BY PAUL HOUSTON
Times Staff Writer

The Reagan Administration Friday lambasted a three-judge federal commission for absolving California Rural Legal Assistance of five of the charges leveled against it by the state.

It was the third time in a week the Administration had used the media to discharge blasts at the commission, whose hearings it is boycotting.

Lewis K. Uhler, director of the California Office of Economic Opportunity, accused the judges of holding preconceived opinions and basing their decisions on insufficient testimony.

However, he strongly defended the state's refusal to participate in hearings being held across the state, despite the commission's repeated requests for more evidence from the Administration.

Please Turn to Back Page, Col. 1

CRLA RULINGS

Continued from First Page

Appearing at a press conference here, Uhler was sharply critical of the commission for clearing CRLA attorneys Thursday of charges they were "improperly involved" with Angela Davis and three prison inmates known as the Soledad Brothers.

Hits Hearings

Uhler complained that the judges acted without hearing testimony from officers at Soledad Prison. A closed hearing at the prison was suspended Wednesday after a prison official was stabbed to death in another part of the facility.

Uhler implied the officers had important testimony to give.

The judges were not available for comment as they continued hearings in El Centro Friday. Observers noted, however, that under commission procedure the judges are given an advance written summary of what witnesses plan to say.

Uhler also criticized the commission for clearing CRLA of four other charges

before all the hearings were concluded.

He said he wasn't calling the judges — the retired chief justices of Wisconsin and Maine, and a Colorado Supreme Court justice — dishonest or politically motivated. But it was "abundantly evident," he said, they had been "primed" by federal antipoverty officials in Washington to form a biased view of the CRLA charges before they began the hearings.

Hearing Rapped

Uhler complained that witnesses testifying against CRLA were not permitted to range beyond the Uhler-prepared charges, and that private attorneys representing these witnesses were not permitted to cross-examine pro-CRLA witnesses.

He said that since the state was the review agency for CRLA, it was "inappropriate" for the state to join the commission's adversary proceedings.

"It's like a teacher who graded the student being called upon to engage in a hearing as to how the process of grading is conducted," Uhler commented.

Los Angeles, Calif.
Times
(Cir. D 955,915 - \$ 1,269,459)

MAY 22 1971

Allen's P.C.B. Est. 1888

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Los Angeles, Calif.
Herald Examiner
(Cir. D 519,391)

MAY 22 1971

Allen's P.C.B. Est. 1888

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Los Angeles, Calif.
Herald Examiner
(Cir. D 519,571)

MAY 22 1971

Allen's P. C. B. Est. 1868

STATE SAYS CRLA WAS 'IMPROPERLY CLEARED'

California Rural Legal Assistance Corp. was cleared improperly of involvement with Angela Davis and three Soledad Prison inmates, State Office of Economic Opportunity Chief Lewis K. Uhler charged here.

At a press conference yesterday, Uhler blasted the federal investigative commission announcement that Reagan Administration allegations accusing CRLA attorneys of "improper involvement" with Miss Davis and three inmates known as the Soledad Brothers, were totally unfounded and without merit.

Uhler said the announcement was made without the benefit of testimony the commission refused to hear.

Uhler said the commission, headed by retired Maine Supreme Court Justice Robert B. Williamson, abruptly terminated its Wednesday hearing at So-

ledad Prison after taking testimony from a few inmates.

Reason given for terminating the hearing, according to Uhler, was the execution style slaying of prison administrator Kenneth E. Conant, 49, shortly after the three-member commission entered the northern California prison.

Uhler charged the commission is "without any information to make the decision which was released yesterday during a hearing in El Centro."

He said the Reagan Administration has become "deeply disturbed" with the commission's review techniques and its "piecemeal decisions" released on the basis of "inadequate and insufficient information."

He said the commission appointed by the federal OEO came to California with a "preconceived notion of the action it was supposed to take," and has

adopted procedures that "systematically exclude" full testimony by witnesses hostile to CRLA.

However, he quoted remarks purportedly made before the commission by Salinas attorney William Morena, branding it a "kangaroo court."

Uhler also read a telegram purportedly sent to the commission by a former CRLA employee who stated after observing the commission's action she refused to "subject myself to insult and abuse" in a proceeding "that is a farce and insult to the American system of justice."

Los Angeles, Calif.
Herald Examiner
(Cir. D 519,371)

MAY 22 1971

Allen's P.C.B. Est. 1888

Unionizing By CRLA Probed

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The United Farm Workers Organizing Committee picketed melon fields around this community in June, 1970.

The commission, composed of three retired judges, is holding hearings into the CRLA at the order of the Nixon Administration. Gov. Ronald Reagan vetoed the federal grant funding the organization last December.

Ft. Douglas McDaniel, an attorney who represented the Abatti Produce Co. in obtaining a restraining order during the strike, testified he saw CRLA attorney John Denvir with a group of UFWOC pickets after the union had been informed of the court order.

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Another witness was Angel Avila, a foreman for Sam Anders Sons, who spoke through an interpreter. He said he saw CRLA attorney Robert Johnstone trying to persuade farm workers on buses in Calexico not to go to work in the field.

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The Reagan Administration has charged that CRLA attorneys were improperly involved in the organizing attempt.

Sacramento, Calif.
The Bee
(Cir. D. 172,411 San. 200,546)

MAY 22 1971

Allen's P. C. B. Est. 1888

Buchwald's Column

WASHINGTON — No matter how I try, I can't stop worrying about Gov. Ronald Reagan's personal financial situation. As everyone knows by now, Gov. Reagan had such bad financial reverses last year that he didn't have to pay state income taxes.

Instead of Californians sympathizing with him over these financial reverses, they become upset and felt



Art Buchwald

there was something wrong because they had to pay taxes and Reagan didn't.

Very few people in the state said, "If the governor makes \$44,000 a year as salary and has assets of around \$1 million and still can't pay his state income taxes, then he must be hurting very badly, and needs pity rather than censure."

My first thought was that the governor should seek legal aid from the local Office of Economic Opportunity. Although Reagan is trying to abolish legal aid for the poor in California, I'm sure the poverty lawyers would take his case anyway.

CLIENT — To make sure, I telephoned a CRLA (California Rural Legal Assistance) lawyer in California and asked him if he would take Reagan as a client.

"Yes," he said, "he would qualify for free legal aid. Our charter specifically says that any governor of a state whose finances are in such poor shape that he doesn't have to pay personal state income taxes is in no position to pay a lawyer, and is therefore eligible for free legal advice."

"From a legal standpoint it would probably be the most interesting case we've ever handed. Most of our cases have had to do with people who didn't pay any state income taxes because they didn't make any money. This would be the first time we represented someone who made money but didn't pay income taxes."

"Surely there is something wrong with the system if the governor of the largest state in the union has been hurt so badly financially that he can't pay any taxes."

DEFENSE — "But what legal defense would you have for him?" I asked.

"First, we would have to find out what financial reverses Mr. Reagan had, whether they came from cattle, oil, real estate or the stock market. Then we would prove that it wasn't his fault that his investments went sour. It was probably due to the general economy."

"But the Republicans are in charge of the economy right now. Wouldn't it look bad if Reagan blamed his own party for the fact he had such a bad income situation?"

"I guess you're right. We'll have to think of something else. Perhaps we could persuade the courts to allow the governor to make one motion picture a year."

"Or a new Death Valley Days series," I suggested.

"I was thinking of a remake of the 'Grapes of Wrath,'" the lawyer said. "They could shoot most of it around Sacramento, so the governor wouldn't have to be on location too long. But the important thing is to get him healthy financially so he doesn't have to eat from the public trough."

"This thing has far more ramifications than anyone wants to admit. We're trying to pull the poor up by their bootstraps so they become honest, hard-working citizens. But if they see somebody like Gov. Reagan, who has worked all his life and still has nothing left over for income taxes, they're going to say to themselves 'the hell with it. Let's stay on welfare.'"

Fresno, Calif.
Bee
(Cir. D 110,294, Sun. 142,020)

MAY 21 1971

Allen's P. C. B. Est. 1888

3-Judge Unit Dismisses Charges Against CRLA

Page 1

EL CENTRO (AP)—A federal commission has dismissed as unfounded Reagan administration charges that California Rural Legal Assistance lawyers were "improperly" involved with black activist Angela Davis and the Soledad Brothers.

Commission Chairman Robert B. Williamson said yesterday the three-

Uhler gets OEO funds despite
blasts, A2.

judge panel had asked the state for more evidence on its charges against the CRLA but received none.

He said the commission specifically asked for details on allegations concerning Miss Davis and three black Soledad Prison inmates accused of killing a white guard.

"But no evidence whatsoever has

been produced to support any claim of misconduct by CRLA personnel or attorneys regarding these matters," said Williamson, a retired chief justice of Maine.

A report by Lewis K. Uhler, state director of the Office of Economic Opportunity, charged CRLA attorneys "intervened" at the prison in an effort to arrange a meeting between Miss Davis and one of the inmates.

During yesterday's proceedings the commission heard testimony from an Imperial County welfare worker who stated termination of the CRLA program would cause bitterness among the poor.

Donna English said the CRLA was instrumental in the adoption of the Work Incentive Program to assist welfare recipients obtain training that would qualify them for jobs.

Fresno, Calif.
Bee
(Cir. D 110,294, Sun. 142,020)

21 1971

Allen's P. C. B. Est. 1888

Uhler Assails Probe Of CRLA

By James Wrightson
McClatchy Newspapers Staff Writer

LOS ANGELES—The federal commission investigating California Rural Legal Assistance was bitterly attacked today for making "piecemeal decisions" and not taking testimony to support charges by Gov. Ronald Reagan.

But the man who attacked the commission, Reagan appointee Lewis K. Uhler, director of the state Office of Economic Opportunity, maintained the position his office would not participate in the hearing probing charges which he himself made.

Uhler flew here from Sacramento today and held a press conference.

"We in Sacramento who have the responsibility for the CRLA are deeply disturbed by the course and direction of the commission charged with gathering the facts," he said.

'Lack Of Precision'

"The best evidence of the lack of precision of the commission is its announced decisions in a piecemeal way."

The former John Birch Society member was referring to the commission's action in El Centro yesterday, dismissal as "totally unfounded and without merit" allegations by Uhler that CRLA was improperly involved in the cases of Angela Davis and the Soledad Brothers.

Uhler said because a hearing in Soledad Prison was recessed after a guard was killed and before some correctional officers could be heard, "there was no way the commission could say whether the charges against CRLA were right or wrong. It is incredible that the commission would

make pronouncements without taking testimony."

Uhler also complained the commission has permitted cross-examination of witnesses and is not vigorously investigating his charges.

Asked if he had any idea why a commission of out-of-state supreme court justices would distort the proceedings, he replied:

"They were primed before they came out here by federal OEO officials."

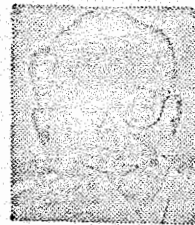
Word Change

Later, he withdrew the word "primed" and said he meant "briefed."

He said his office would not participate in the hearings because "it is improper for the reviewer of a program to have the same status as those who receive the dollars. If each time the governor of any state vetoed a program he found himself looking down the gun barrel of a federal commission, it would do violence to the veto."

The Art Buchwald Column

What About Reagan As CRLA Client?



WASHINGTON — No matter how I try, I can't stop worrying about Gov. Ronald Reagan's personal financial situation. As everyone knows by now, Gov. Reagan had such bad financial reverses last year that he didn't have to pay state income taxes.

Instead of Californians sympathizing with him over these financial reverses, they became upset and felt there was something wrong because they had to pay taxes and Reagan didn't.

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My first thought was that the governor should seek legal aid from the local Office of Economic Opportunity. Although Reagan is trying to abolish legal aid for the poor in California, I'm sure the poverty lawyers would take his case anyway, just to prove that they will take anybody in dire financial straits, regardless of race, creed or elective office.

To make sure, I telephoned a CRLA (California Rural Legal Assistance) lawyer in California and asked him if he would take Reagan as a client.

QUALIFIED — "Yes," he said, "he would qualify for free legal aid. Our charter specifically says that any governor of a state whose finances are in such poor shape that he doesn't have to pay personal state income taxes is in no position to pay a lawyer, and is therefore eligible for free legal advice. It would be our pleasure to help Gov. Reagan in anyway we could."

"How would you go about it?"

"From a legal standpoint it would probably be the most interesting case we've ever handled. Most of our cases have had to do with people who didn't pay any state income taxes because

they didn't make any money. This would be the first time we represented someone who made money but didn't pay income taxes.

"Surely there is something wrong with the system if the governor of the largest state in the union has been hurt so badly financially that he can't pay any taxes."

"But what legal defense would you have for him?" I asked.

REVERSES — "First, we would have to find out what financial reverses Mr. Reagan had, whether they came from cattle, oil, real estate or the stock market. Then we would prove that it wasn't his fault that his investments went sour. It was probably due to the general economy."

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"This thing has far more ramifications than anyone wants to admit," he said. "We're trying to pull the poor up by their bootstraps so they become honest, hard-working citizens. But if they see somebody like Gov. Reagan, who has worked all his life and still has nothing left over for income taxes, they're going to say to themselves 'The hell with it. Let's stay on welfare.'"

San Diego, Calif.
Union
(Ch. D. 149,337 - S. 258,850)

MAY 21 1971

Allen's P.C.B. Est. 1888

TV Cameraman Jailed After Tiff With Judge

San Diego Union Staff Dispatch

EL CENTRO — An NBC television cameraman was jailed yesterday after a judge said the cameraman blocked the way to his clerk's office in the Imperial County Courthouse and threatened him.

The cameraman, Lesley Paul Meeks, 42, of Granada Hills, an NBC employe in Burbank, was released on a writ of habeas corpus obtained by an El Centro attorney retained by the network.

Meeks was in El Centro filming the appearance of a commission investigating California Rural Legal Assistance.

CAMERA SET UP

Meeks had set up his camera on a tripod in the second-floor hallway of the courthouse adjacent to the office of El Centro Justice Court Judge Hugh L. Keating.

Keating said he approached Meeks and told him he wanted to enter the office and that the camera was blocking the way.

He said Meeks told him "not to touch the camera" and then made threatening statements.

Keating said he asked a secretary to call the sheriff's office because he wanted Meeks arrested.

CONTEMPT CHARGE

He said he found Meeks in contempt of court under a section of the California Penal Code which states that criminal contempt is "resistance willfully offered by any person to lawful order and process of court."

He ordered Meeks to pay a \$50 fine or serve 10 days in jail. Meeks was taken to jail by Sheriff Raymond Rowe, but released later on the writ obtained by attorney Orlando Foote.

Superior Court Judge Victor Gillespie said he will set a date Tuesday for a hearing on the case.

Santa Barbara, Calif.
News Press
(Cir. D 37,612 - S 39,636)

MAY 21 1971

Allen's P. C. B. Est. 1888

Federal Commission Says No Misconduct by CRLA

EL CENTRO (UPI) — A federal commission has dismissed as "totally unfounded and without merit" allegations by the Reagan administration that attorneys for the California Rural Legal Assistance were "improperly involved" with Angela Davis and the "Soledad Brothers."

The decision was made in a closed session at Soledad Prison during a public hearing here.

"No evidence whatsoever

has been produced to support any claim of misconduct by CRLA personnel or attorneys regarding these matters," said the commission chairman, Robert B. Williamson, retired chief justice of Maine.

The commission, composed of three judges, is holding hearings around the state into the CRLA at the direction of the Nixon administration after Gov. Reagan last December vetoed the federal grant funding the organization.

POLITICAL ADVERTISING

San Jose, Calif.
Mercury
(Cir. D. 125,382)

MAY 21 1971

Allen's P. C. B. Est. 1888

CRLA Panel Puts Gilroy on Agenda

GILROY — A hearing into which has been taking testimony throughout the state, allegations by the Reagan administration that the California Rural Legal Assistance (CRLA) acted improperly comes to Gilroy June 2. The hearings moved to El Centro Thursday.

George R. Currie, retired Wisconsin Supreme Court judge, will listen to testimony at a time and location to be announced later. They opened the week at Salinas and were scheduled for closed session at Soledad Prison Wednesday. The slaying of a prison official forced their cancellation.

During the first week in June the three-judge panel,

San Francisco, Calif.
Examiner
(Cir. D 203,025 - Sat. 159,057)

MAY 21 1971

Allen's P.C.B. Est. 1888

CRLA and Chavez

Linked

By Joel Thumak
Examiner News Staff

EL CENTRO — The state, in its attack on California Rural Legal Assistance, is focussing on the relationship between CRLA and the United Farm Workers Organizing Committee of Cesar Chavez.

Evidence to support some of Governor Reagan's key charges against CRLA has been non-existent during the special probe of the poverty attorneys.

But on the UFWOC question, the state has produced evidence of improper and illegal conduct by CRLA.

There is no question, after testimony here yesterday before the special commission probing CRLA, that Robert Johnstone, a young CRLA attorney, has been stretching his "free-time" association with the Chavez cause to incredible proportions.

Evidence Cited

Photographs of Johnstone on UFWOC picket lines, testimony on his serving subpoenas for UFWOC, a verbal picture of Johnstone threatening the jobs of Mexican green-carders if they didn't strike — they all gave the impression that Johnstone worked for UFWOC full time and CRLA in his spare time.

Other witnesses today — a prominent El Centro attorney, a deputy sheriff and a Mexican bus driver — have implicated other CRLA personnel in UFWOC and its activities.

They named CRLA attorney John Denver and CRLA community worker Hector Rayes in UFWOC picketing.

Attorney F. Douglas McDaniel, a former CRLA trustee and now CRLA's biggest critic in the area, said Denver told him he was asking UFWOC pickets to violate a court order against the pickets at a melon farm.

The attorney said Denver told him:

"We are advising them to violate the order. We are trying to invite a contempt citation. We don't think much of your order and we're going to test it."

Driver's Story

The Mexican bus driver, Angelo Avila, said that Johnstone told Mexican workers not to work and that he (Johnstone) represented the government.

Fred Altshuler, head of CRLA's El Centro office, expressed this dilemma quite candidly yesterday:

"We inevitably have a lot of contact with them (UFWOC people). We try to get along with them.

"Everyone would know we personally feel sympathetic, but more than that, we have to get along with them in serving our clients."

He was speaking about UFWOC picketing CRLA for a period because Chavez claimed the poverty attorneys were not responsive to the needs of his workers.

Johnstone himself realized that, in one incident, he should not have given CRLA poster boards to students who requested them for a UFWOC demonstration.

"The whole thing seemed fairly trivial at the time," Johnstone said. "We have a difficult community relations problem. I didn't feel I could say why we couldn't give them the poster board."

Admits Error

Later he said:

"I probably shouldn't have done it."

Johnstone said he picketed for UFWOC on his own time, taking off during the day for a few hours from his CRLA work.

"Wasn't it poor policy?" asked Justice George Currie of the Wisconsin Supreme Court, one of the commissioners.

Johnstone responded by saying CRLA attorneys should take off full days — not just a few hours — when planning to demonstrate.

In San Francisco today, Governor Reagan said the commission was "distorting the evidence."

The commission members, as lawyers, should know some relevant witnesses are not appearing before them, he said.

He said his hopes that the commission would provide some evidence that CRLA would be improved or maintained are "out the window."

San Francisco, Calif.
Chronicle
(Cir. D 478,704 - Set. 443,306)

MAY 21 1971

Allen's P.C.B. Est. 1888

Newsman at CRLA Hearing Jailed

El Centro
Imperial county

An NBC-TV cameraman was arrested on contempt charges in the Imperial county court house here yesterday, a few feet from where the investigation of the California Rural Legal Assistance program by a federal commission was going on.

Leslie Paul Meeks, 43, of Burbank, was taken to the county jail and held in lieu of \$50 fine given him by Justice Court Judge Hugh A. Keating, 62.

At the jail, Sheriff's Lieutenant F. F. Fulmer said, "he (Meeks) has not paid his \$50 fine so he must spend 10 days here. His release date is May 29."

NBC attorneys in Burbank were attempting late yesterday to hire a local lawyer to free the cameraman.

Meeks and Judge Keating engaged in a shouting match when Meeks refused to move his TV camera, which, the judge said, was blocking entrance to his courtroom.

Our Correspondent

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EL CENTRO, CALIFORNIA

FRIDAY, MAY 21, 1971

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TESTIMONY RUNS GAMUT

CRLA tied to UFW strike activity

By NANCY PAVLACKA

Staff Writer

Testimony during the first day of hearings in El Centro by the three-judge panel appointed to review charges against the California Rural Legal Assistance ran the gamut of pro-CRLA witnesses predicting "tragic" results if the legal service is terminated to anti-CRLA witnesses criticizing local CRLA attorneys.

Testimony continued this morning concerning a United Farm Workers Organizing Committee melon field strike last June.

El Centro attorney F. Douglas McDaniel, who represented the struck Abatti Produce Inc., in obtaining a restraining order during the strike, said he saw CRLA attorney John Denver with UFW picketers after the union had been informed of the court order.

McDaniel claimed Denver told him the group was there to violate the order and "They were trying to invite a contempt citation."

McDaniel also claimed he saw CRLA Director Attorney Fred Altshuler at the UFWOC office in Calexico several days later.

However, during cross-examination, McDaniel admitted he "had no idea of Denver's influence on the workers" but added Abatti's losses could have been as much as \$100,000 a day if workers were not on the field.

Also appearing was Angel Avila, Holtville, a field foreman for Sam Andrews Sons. Speaking through a court interpreter, Avila said he witnessed CRLA attorney Robert Johnstone trying to persuade farm workers on buses in Calexico not to go to fields.

Avila said Johnstone claimed he was an attorney and worked for the "government." However, under cross-examination, Avila said he did not know if, at the time, the melon strike had been certified as a bona fide dispute by the government.

A third witness this morning, Lt. Oren Fox of the county Sheriff's Office, strike force commander during the labor dispute, also testified he saw Johnstone with picketers during strikes on the field.

Thursday, the commission heard reports on six incidents cited in state OEO Director Lewis K. Uhler's 283-page report supporting Gov. Ronald Reagan's funding veto.

Johnstone in Park

The first incident cited — Johnstone's participation in a December rock festival at Bucklin Park in El Centro — was refuted as "absolutely false" by the lawyer.

Johnstone explained to the judges he had informed local students organizing the festival he could not represent them at an El Centro Council meeting.

"But I did speak with them and suggested they cooperate with the city council," Johnstone said.

He explained a story in an out-of-Valley newspaper identified him (Johnstone) as the counsel for the organizers but a letter from the reporter to federal OEO Director Frank Carlucci later explained the mistake.

Another charge involving Johnstone's participation in planning the "Children's March to free Chavez" on Dec. 11, was denied by both Johnstone and Arturo Rioseco, an Imperial Valley College sophomore and march organizer.

Only from Papers

Johnstone said his participation in the march from IVC to the county courthouse was "spontaneous" and he learned of the following demonstration on the courthouse steps only the day before from a newspaper article.

Rioseco supported the attorney's claim, stating he did not know Johnstone until after the Dec. 11 activity.

However, both James F. Hamilton, Citizens for Agriculture member and an El Centro finance firm manager, and Harry Free, county clerk, presented photographs showing Johnstone at the march and demonstration.

Free, also showed a photograph taken of Johnstone in front of the United Farm Workers Organizing Committee Office in Calexico.

He said he took the pictures "because I had become quite concerned with the CLRA participation with UFWOC activities in the county."

He added, however, he did not object to the CRLA attorneys participating in such events on their own time.

On Vacation Time

Johnstone earlier claimed he had taken vacation time in or-

der to participate.

Hamilton said he objected to demonstrations of the type held Dec. 11 but admitted he organized picketing against CRLA Thursday morning in front of the courthouse.

Denvir, who serves as counsel -
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CRLA linked to UFW ag pickets

(Continued from Page 1)

for the Brawley Migrant Clinic, article from which the charge claimed a charge of misrepresentation in sending a telegram signed for Dr. Elmer Werner, former Imperial County Medical Association president, was a matter of "misunderstanding and poor communication."

Denvir explained he solicited a telegram from Dr. Werner in an effort to thwart a recommendation from U. S. Rep. Victor V. Veysey, D-Calif., to suspend federal funding of the clinic.

Telegram to HEW

Denvir said he offered to send a telegram to department of Health, Education and Welfare officials informing them of a recent medical association resolution requesting a county health needs survey before a decision was made on suspending clinic funds.

After the telegram was sent, however, Denvir said Dr. Werner claimed there was an apparent "misunderstanding" regarding permission to send it.

Appearing in opposition to the CRLA attorney's position as clinic counsel was Dr. John S. Felt, Brawley, who, with several other Imperial County physicians, presently is involved in litigation to terminate clinic funds.

Denvir later explained he had been requested by HEW officials to represent the clinic as "house counsel" for one year.

Didn't Seek Them

Regarding an OEO report charge involving "solicitation" of clients in litigation against Valley feedlot owners, James D. Lorenz Jr., former CRLA state director, said a CRLA attorney was misquoted in a newspaper

article from which the charge originated.

He explained the attorney, Frank Dennison, had talked with various groups regarding various kinds of "litigation strategies," but had not personally sought out possible litigation sponsors.

The purpose of Dennison's interest in the matter, Lorenz said, was the basic CRLA goal of "enhancing the economic lives of people served by the program."

Although county District Attorney James E. Hamilton had been scheduled to testify on the matter, he did not attend the proceedings.

A further charge of providing poster board for UFWOC signs during picketing in June, 1970, during the melon strike also was denied by Johnstone.

Although Johnstone admitted he "probably shouldn't have done it" and he "wouldn't do it again," the attorney explained he gave the poster board—left over from signs made by CRLA to announce a summer trainee program—on the stipulation the UFWOC representatives would pay the CRLA office for it. Later, Altshuler, testified UFWOC had paid for the material.

Testifying on the final charge heard Thursday, Valley farmer Mario Saikhon said he saw Johnstone "quite often" during UFWOC melon field picketing in June and July, 1970.

Another Time Off

Saikhon said he saw the CRLA attorney—who explained he was on a leave of absence to work as counsel for UFWOC—picketing his fields and packing sheds and talking with farm workers from Mexico at Calexico pick-up stations.

Describing several incidents during which he talked with Johnstone, the farmer said, however, he had "no personal animosity" toward the lawyer.

In addition, Daniel Jacquez, a former field foreman for Sam Andrews Sons and now a public relations worker for the Citizens Committee for Agriculture, said he heard Johnstone tell Mexican farm workers in Spanish he was a lawyer, "worked for the government" and that the "company was on strike" and the workers would "lose their green cards" if they continued to work for it.

Jacquez said after the incident the workers were "shaken up" and about 10 of the 100-member group refused to work.

CRLA Need Cited

During the morning proceedings, attorneys for CRLA called several witnesses testifying to the community need among the poverty group for the legal services.

Witnesses who were named in Johnstone's memo describing their potential testimony agreed they were not offended by the attorney's description of their appearance and personality.

Rev. Oscar Newby, Neighborhood House director in Calexico, said the only fault in Johnstone's description of him was a 10-year discrepancy in age and "This pleases me very much."

Calexico City Councilman Luis Legaspi said he "considered myself fortunate to be on the honor roll" . . . and said the description of him meant he had "The courage to state my opinion and no one could stop me."

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CRLA Charges Dismissed

EL CENTRO (AP)—The Reagan administrations claims that California Rural-Legal Assistance lawyers were "improperly involved" with black activist Angela Davis and the Soledad brothers were dismissed Thursday by a federal commission as "totally unfounded and without merit."

The commission is receiving testimony in hearings throughout the state on the Republican governor's charge that CRLA has violated federal regulations and does not properly serve the poor.

Robert B. Williamson, commission chairman and retired chief justice of Maine, said the group had asked the Reagan administration for additional evidence on its charges against CRLA regarding Miss Davis and the inmates.

"But no evidence whatsoever has been produced to support any claim of misconduct by CRLA personnel or attorneys regarding these matters," Williamson said.

The commission made the statement here after hearing testimony at a closed meeting at Soledad Prison.

Lewis K. Uhler, director of the State Office of Economic Opportunity, had said that CRLA attorneys and another lawyer intervened at Soledad, to arrange a visit for Miss Davis to meet with inmate George Jackson.

Jackson is one of three men accused of murdering a prison guard. His brother Jonathan was killed with two convicts and a Superior Court Judge in San Rafael last August. Miss Davis is charged with murder-kidnaping and conspiracy in the courthouse slayings.

The commission's ruling also covered Uhler's charges that CRLA attorneys were involved improperly with several other Soledad prison inmates known as the Soledad Brothers charged in the death of another prison guard.

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CRLA Cleared of 3 Major Charges

By George Murphy
Chronicle Correspondent

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El Centro,
Imperial county

A federal commission investigating charges against the California Rural Legal Assistance program opened its hearings yesterday in this hot Imperial Valley town by throwing out three major charges against CRLA.

Commission chairman Robert B. Williamson read a unanimous decision by the three justice panel.

It held that allegations CRLA had acted improperly with regard to cases involving Angela Davis, the Soledad Seven, and three Soledad inmates accused of murdering a guard were "totally unfounded and without merit."

The commission's ruling included some of the harshest language used since the panel opened hearings in San Francisco last month.

Referring to a report by State Office of Economic Opportunity Director Lewis K. Uhler, which charged the CRLA with some 129 improper or unethical acts, the commission said the Soledad section of the report contained "certain charges and insinuations," adding:

"... No evidence whatsoever has been produced to support any claim of misconduct by CRLA personnel or attorneys regarding these matters, and no supporting evidence was attached to the Uhler report."

FLOOR

Yesterday's hearing opened in a second floor courtroom of the 47-year-old courthouse, and the crowd jamming into the room was so large that Williamson informed spectators the fire marshal had ordered no one else could enter.

The atmosphere here indicated some of the antipathy toward CRLA felt by many Imperial county residents.

Pickets representing the Citizens Committee for Agriculture — which is primarily opposed to Cesar Chavez's United Farm Workers Organizing Committee — paraded in front of the courthouse.

They carried signs reading "CRLA Eats Cesars Salad," "CRLA Doesn't Help The Poor," and "Keep CRLA Out of Our Schools."

Motorists parked in the

See Back Page

Three CRLA Charges Are Thrown Out

From Page 1

courthouse area found under their windshields flyers reading "El Centro Stinks" and "CRLA and UFWOC Have Caused Problems in Our Valley" ... "They have harassed and intimidated us."

DISMISSAL

The commission's dismissal of three more Uhler Report charges was the sort of thing which had angered Governor Ronald Reagan the day before.

In a Wednesday letter to Federal OEO director Frank Carlucci, the governor said he was upset because the commission had dumped three other charges after holding hearings in Salinas.

CRLA attorneys here are confident the commission will recommend federal funds be given them to continue their work.

Last January, Reagan vetoed a \$1.8 million federal grant, but Carlucci gave CRLA six months of temporary funding pending the commission's findings.

The commission, coming close to its June 15 deadline for completing its report, ordered an extraordinary session until 9 o'clock last night. Normally, the commission had been ending its daily work at about 4:30 p.m.

WITNESSES

Among yesterday's witnesses here was Donna English, a county welfare department employee who earlier this week, it was charged, was being kept under virtual "house arrest" by her superiors to prevent her from testifying in CRLA's favor.

Mrs. English took a day's unpaid leave from the welfare department to appear.

She said the high opinion the rural poor in the area have of CRLA attorneys was exemplified last January. "When the poor people heard of Reagan's veto of CRLA, a large group ... went to the church and lighted candles for them."

El Centro attorney F. Douglas McDaniel appeared at the counsel table for witnesses opposing CRLA here.

MEMO

Earlier this month McDaniel had somehow obtained a confidential memo between two CRLA attorneys concerning various witnesses to appear here. The memo so enraged Reagan that he fired off a telegram to Carlucci urging a joint Federal-State investigation of "possible misconduct" on CRLA's part.

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State Agency

A Senate Panel Cuts OEO Funds

Sacramento



LEWIS UHLER
Undaunted

The Senate Finance Committee slashed funds earmarked for the State Office of Economic Opportunity yesterday, but the OEO's embattled chief still talked optimistically of prospects for an expanded staff and budget.

Funds provided for the OEO in Governor Ronald Reagan's budget were reduced by the Senate committee from \$70,000 to \$46,000. The action followed a hearing at which some witnesses called for abolition of the state OEO.

But the anti-poverty agency's boss, Lewis K. Uhler, said at a news conference later that he wasn't discouraged by the budget cut.

STRIKE

Uhler noted that the Assembly Ways and Means Committee voted two weeks ago to strike the entire \$70,000 from the budget, but that committee chairman Willie L. Brown (Dem-San Francisco) said he planned to introduce a special bill to finance the OEO.

"Let's wait and see how this finally develops," said Uhler, who declared that any reduction in funds would necessitate staff cuts.

Uhler said "we're working with Willie Brown now" on his bill, which would tie OEO funds to a proviso that a considerable number of Uhler's aides must be poor people. He said that might require enlargement of his staff, which would necessitate more, not less, money.

But some of the people who appeared before the Senate committee yesterday argued against any funds at all for the OEO. A representative of the NAACP said Uhler himself should be taken off the payroll.

PROGRAMS.

Uhler defended his office against charges in a recent federal OEO report that he had used his staff to "spy on" and "harass" local anti-poverty programs, and had not done enough to assist such programs.

Senator Alan Short (Dem-Stockton) declared angrily that Uhler had no "rapport" with poor people and minorities. Short specifically accused Uhler of attacking the California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation because its anti-poverty lawyers had "taken you to court and beaten you time after time, and that's what made you mad."

"I'm not mad, Senator," Uhler replied calmly, adding that he found it interesting that CRLA "doesn't have one black attorney on its entire staff."

Short sought to strike the entire \$70,000 in OEO funds from the budget, while Republican committee members favored approval of the entire amount. The compromise figure of \$46,000 was finally approved without audible dissent.

Our Correspondent

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CRLA probe rules Davis, *Imperial Valley Press 5-21-71* Soledad link 'unfounded'

The federal commission holding hearings in El Centro into the California Rural Legal Assistance activities in Imperial County ruled Thursday allegations that CRLA was "improperly involved" with Angela Davis and the "Soledad Brothers"

were "totally unfounded and without merit."

Chairman Robert Williams announced Thursday that the state Office of Economic Opportunity and the general public were invited to offer evidence to support the charges in a re-

port by state OEO Director Lewis K. Uhler.

"No evidence whatsoever has been produced to support any claim of misconduct by CRLA personnel or attorneys regarding these matters, and no supporting evidence was attached to the Uhler report," Williams said.

"Therefore, the commission finds these allegations and implications of CRLA misconduct totally unfounded and without merit, and we shall so report to Director (Frank) Carlucci," Williams continued.

The decision was made in a closed session at Soledad prison Wednesday but was not announced until Thursday during a public hearing here.

The commission, composed of three judges, is holding hearings around the state into the CRLA at the direction of the Nixon administration after Gov. Ronald Reagan last December vetoed the federal grant funding the organization.

Thursday's announcement referred to charges contained in a report prepared by state Office of Economic Opportunity Director Lewis K. Uhler. He alleged that CRLA attorneys and another lawyer "intervened" at the prison in an effort to arrange a meeting between George Jackson, one of the "Soledad Brothers," and Miss Davis.

The decision also applied to charges that CRLA attorneys were involved improperly with another group of inmates known as the "Soledad Seven," three of whom are on trial for the death of a guard.

The commission will consider other allegations made by the Reagan administration against CRLA at a hearing in San Francisco June 3.

CRLA charges possible 'criminal' actions by Reagan to subvert probe

By NANCY PAVLACKA

Staff Writer

Attorneys for the California Rural Legal Assistance have filed a memorandum complaining actions by Gov. Ronald Reagan, his staff and allies the past week have "descended from irresponsible and unethical to that which may in fact be criminal."

Filed in Salinas with the federally appointed three-judge commission hearing testimony on CRLA, the document claims state officials have tried to obstruct proceedings by "increasingly devious and deceptive tactics designed to subvert efforts of this commission."

The memo cites at least six areas in which CRLA opponents "embarked on a series of tactics designed to throttle this commission and prevent it from examining the facts and ascertaining the truth."

In addition to the now well-known theft of a document naming potential witnesses for CRLA written by El Centro CRLA attorney Robert B. Johnstone and the release of the document by Gov. Reagan's office, followed by the punishment of Imperial County welfare worker Mrs. Donna English—named in Johnstone's document—by the welfare director which the lawyers for CRLA described as a "form of house arrest," the memo filed points to other areas of misconduct by the governor and his aides.

To Find Evidence

Criticizing Lewis Uhler, state Office of Economic Opportunity director, in depth, the CRLA report claims members of Reagan's staff have sent Department of Human Resources Development investigators "to every corner of the state in which CRLA attorneys can be found" to find "some evidence—any evidence—of impropriety on the part of CRLA and its attorneys."

It also claims California Farm Bureau officials "sent an urgent and desperate message to all its members asking they immediately send Mr. Uhler any information they felt would damage CRLA."

The memo goes on to say the state attorney general forbade all his deputy attorneys general to testify before the commission.

"This directive prohibits CRLA from producing testimony of two deputy attorneys general who have worked both with and against CRLA over the past several years," the report claimed.

Murder, "Fixing" Charges

In another area, the document claims Uhler "engineered a press conference" by Moe Comacho, California Correctional Officers Association president, at which Comacho charged CRLA attorneys were "guilty of complicity in the tragic murders... at the Soledad Correctional Training Facility."

"Mr. Uhler knew then and knows now that those charges are so preposterous as to border on the ridiculous; he likewise knew then and knows now that neither the correctional officers nor any member of the staff at the prison has any reliable evidence supporting those charges," the document says.

The document also claims a former CRLA employee scheduled to testify for the state at the El Centro hearings which begin today has questionable motivation "since the reason for her termination was the refusal by CRLA to increase her salary." The statement also says "The preponderance of her affidavit is false and misleading."

Letters "Misleading"

In addition, in a three-page document titled "Exhibit A" and filed together with the main document, the attorneys for CRLA noted misleading use of several letters relating opposition to the legal service by Uhler in his original report which recommended vetoing CRLA funding. According to the attorneys, the letters were misused because:

—A resolution by the Sonoma County Bar Association used to show criticism of CRLA in the Uhler report was misconstrued, according to bar association President Newton dal Poggetto in a letter to Frank Carlucci, federal OEO director.

—A critical letter from Chester Ross, San Benito County Bar Association president, was reported to speak for the entire group. Ross later explained he was writing as an individual and not a group spokesman.

Hendry Refutes Claim

—A statement solicited from a blind minister from an OEC investigator and used as an example of community opposition to CRLA was later refuted by the minister who claimed he made no such statement.

--A letter from Imperial County Economic Opportunity Commission Executive Director Cameron Hendry used to exemplify local criticism of the legal service later was explained in a follow-up letter by Hendry as "not the purpose of my letter to criticize the operation of CRLA."

"Exhibit A" also claims of seven statements taken from Soledad inmates "despite the efforts by Mr. Uhler's investigator to distort," all but one praises CRLA attorneys for their efforts on behalf of prisoners.

And, the document claims testimony from former Deputy Attorney General J. Bradford reverses the charge of improper solicitation against CRLA in the "250 Farm Workers vs. Schultz" court case.

In conclusion, the document by attorneys for CRLA asks the commission "to consider these matters in the week or more of hearings which are to come," although the document's authors concede "this commission lacks the powers of injunction and contempt to which its members are individually accustomed."

