

September 25, 1970

# EL CENTRO C.R.L.A. STINKS

The El Centro, Calif. office of the California Rural Legal Assistance has been putting out many press releases which are printed in the local newspapers and the San Diego Union. In this propaganda put out by the C.R.L.A., it tries to build up its reputation as the defender of the poor and the protector of the civil rights of the poor.

THE TRUTH IS THAT THE EL CENTRO OFFICE OF THE C.R.L.A. ACTUALLY PRACTICES DISCRIMINATION AGAINST THE WHITE POOR (ANGLOS). THIS AGENCY HAS BEEN HERE 5 YEARS AND HAS NEVER FILED ONE PRACTICAL LAWSUIT OF THE "CLASS SUIT" WHICH WOULD ACTUALLY BENEFIT THE POOR WHITES.

The importance of "class suits" must be explained to realize how the Calif. Rural Legal Assistance in Imperial and Coachella Valleys, is depriving the poor whites of the legal aid to which they are entitled. The C.R.L.A. gets the money to operate from the Federal Government through the OFFICE OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY.

At present, there are 4 white lawyers in the El Centro office. They are paid good salaries by the Government to be "bleeding hearts" for the poor. I emphasize this for as you know I have filed a lawsuit in January 1970 (Civil No. 297-70) in the U.S. District Court of Washington, D.C. against the Secretary of the Interior to compel him to set the retail electricity rates of the Imperial Irrigation District.

This is a "class suit" and if won will result in electricity bills being 1/3 of what they are now not only for the poor whites (anglos), but also for the poor browns (Mexican-Americans) and for the poor blacks (Negroes). I have already spent \$1,600.00 on this lawsuit for which I am not being paid a salary by the government to do. I am a "bleeding pocketbook" who is spending his own money to help the poor BECAUSE THE 4 LAWYERS IN THE EL CENTRO C.R.L.A. WHO RECEIVE SALARIES TO BE "BLEEDING HEARTS" HAVE NOT DONE THEIR JOBS PROPERLY.

So you understand now that a "class suit" is a lawsuit which if won would result in the benefitting of many people at one time. In the instance of the Washington D.C. lawsuit to get the Secretary of the Interior to set the retail electricity rates, 110,000 people in Imperial and Coachella Valleys would be helped and it would not matter if they were poor or in moderate circumstances.

There are many problems in Imperial Valley and there are only 4 C.R.L.A. lawyers and they have only limited time and money available. So instead of wasting their time on a bunch of nonsense, they should use their energies and the government's money for "class suits" that benefit all the poor.

It is necessary to show the discrimination shown by the C.R.L.A. against the poor Whites by reciting some of their legal activities for the benefit of the Browns and Blacks. There were about 10 Mexican-American families in the Town of Imperial who did not have water and sewer connections. The C.R.L.A. lawyers put out press releases to the newspapers in which they raved and ranted against the injustice of these 10 Mexican-American families not having these conveniences. They threatened lawsuits. But what they forgot to tell the public was that the other poor Whites, poor Browns, and poor Blacks had paid to get these conveniences. It would be discrimination against these other poor if these 10 Mexican-American families got them for free.

Every family in Imperial and Coachella Valleys buying their electricity from the Imperial Irrigation District is cheated by the high prices out of \$50.00 to \$250.00 yearly in an electricity swindle that amounts to \$14 millions annually. It has never occurred to these 4 braintrusts who are the C.R.L.A. lawyers that they should file a lawsuit like I did to get the exorbitant rates of electricity cut to 1/3 of what they are now. In this way these 10 poor Mexican-American families will be able to save the money to be spent for getting water and sewer connections.

You must be reminded again of what I wrote in the Newsletter of January 5, 1970 entitled, "CALIFORNIA RURAL LEGAL ASSISTANCE CHEATS THE POOR". I told how a group of Mexican-American boys in the Brawley High School wanted to wear a button on their lapels with the inscription, "CHICANO POWER". So the El Centro C.R.L.A. files a "class lawsuit" on behalf of these Browns. Why should the C.R.L.A. spend time and money on such a lawsuit? HOW IS IT GOING TO HELP THE POOR WHITES AND THE POOR BLACKS?

Lack of space does not permit me to give details of similar types of activity by the C.R.L.A. I know of not one instance where there has been a single "class lawsuit" to help the poor whites. The El Centro office of this agency appears to be under the domination of the Mexican-American Political Association so that it does not engage in activities which will help all the poor.

James Lorenz, Jr. of the C.R.L.A. came to the El Centro office and filed a lawsuit (#40096) on Dec. 16, 1968 which at the present time is just a lawsuit to rearrange the areas of the I.I.D. for the election of the Directors of the Imperial Irrigation District. This essentially is a lawsuit by means of which the Mexican-American Political Assoc. hoped to get elected to the Board of Directors a Mexican-American from the Calexico area. BUT THIS REARRANGEMENT OF VOTERS IN VARIOUS AREAS IS NOT GOING TO RESULT IN LOWER ELECTRICITY RATES. What benefit do the Poor Blacks and Poor Whites get from such a lawsuit?

The local newspapers and the San Diego Union on Sept. 18 and 19, 1970 announce a lawsuit by the C.R.L.A. and the Mexican-American Political Association and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People in the U.S. District Court at San Diego, Calif. The lawsuit charges the Imperial Irrigation District with discriminatory practices in the hiring and promotion of the Blacks and Browns.

BUT HOW IS SUCH A LAWSUIT GOING TO HELP THE POOR WHITES?

The newspapers tell that Fred Altshuler of the El Centro C.R.L.A. office filed the lawsuit. But why should the money and the services of the C.R.L.A. be spent for about 12 blacks and 90 Browns that work for the I.I.D. when there are 110,000 people waiting for this agency to file a lawsuit to get relief from the electricity swindle?

It is customary in such instances for those who feel injured to file charges with the California Fair Employment Practices Commission. The Browns have a legal organization "Mexican-American Legal Defense and Educational Fund" and the Blacks have a similar organization to help them in such matters. The Poor Whites have no such organization and the money and attorneys of the C.R.L.A. has not once been used in a "class suit" for the poor whites.

I believe it is fair that the resources of the C.R.L.A. be used for all the poor and not to discriminate against the Poor Whites. I challenge the C.R.L.A. lawyers to take over the Washington, D.C. lawsuit which will help all the poor. I have spent \$1,600.00 on it and am running out of money to pay the private lawyers. After all the Federal Government does not give me money to fight for the poor.

I also challenge the lawyers to file a lawsuit on this situation. The All-American Canal was built by the Federal Government at a cost of \$30 millions. In the contract for repayment of this money, the I.I.D. must collect land taxes to pay back the cost of building. Three years ago, the I.I.D. stopped collecting the land taxes. So absentee landowners like the Irvine Co., United Fruit Co., Purex Corp. etc, which own 70% of the land, escape paying their share of the repayment. So all the poor and persons in moderate circumstances do the paying!!!