

DELANO STRIKERS CLEARED BY PANEL

Coast Grape Pickers Called Free of Red Direction

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SACRAMENTO, Calif., Sept. 9—California farm worker unions were cleared this week by Senate investigators of subversive activity in the conduct of the Delano grape pickers strike of 1965-66.

Nor did the Senate fact-finding subcommittee on un-American activities, composed of three Republicans and two Democrats, accuse Communists of directing the long strike that drew international attention.

The five-member subcommittee, headed by Hugh M. Burns, a Democrat and president pro tem of the Senate, did, however, charge that "known members of the Communist party were on the scene and aiding the strike almost from its inception."

The subcommittee submitted its 130-page typewritten report during a "veto session" of the state Legislature that ended yesterday.

The session, which is to be an annual affair, was authorized last November by the voters to enable legislators to act on bills vetoed by the Governor during the regular session.

Signed by All Five

The Burns subcommittee in some of its past reports has made charges of such character that some members refused to sign them. This year's observations bore all five signatures. The Delano strike, whose most publicized leader was Cesar Chavez, a 40-year-old Mexican-American, occupied a major part of the report.

The subcommittee made a point of clearing not only the farm workers unions but also the Migrant Ministry, a group of clergymen that had drawn sharp criticism from several quarters for its participation in the strike.

"Many people in California, uninformed about the issue of the Delano strike," the report stated, "have jumped to the conclusion that the Migrant Ministry was one of the subversive elements agitating the grape pickers but these conclusions are simply not supported by evidence."

The evidence did show, it asserted, that the strike "was of exceptional interest to the Communist party and the leftists who support it."

Outside Influence Charged

"We are saying that outsiders entered the Delano strike," the report continued, for the purpose of using it for their own purposes and also that the leaders of the unions were perhaps carried away with the idea of achieving power to dictate terms to the growers and to some extent to the state and Federal Governments.

The subcommittee described Mr. Chavez as a "showman par excellence."

Mr. Chavez, when the strike started, headed the National Farm Workers Association, composed largely of Mexican-Americans. The Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee of the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations, actually began the strike, on Sept. 8, 1965, near Delano in the southern San Joaquin Valley.

Mr. Chavez led a 300-mile march from Delano, which ended at the state Capitol steps on Easter Sunday, 1966. Contracts were won with Schenley Industries, the DiGiorgio Corporation and smaller companies, and the two worker groups merged.

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