

Two Million Dollars Raise in Wages---Rolph Admits Victory Won by Communist Leadership

By Sam Darcy

(NOTE: As this goes to press the huge Miller & Lux ranch signed the union agreement and paid the gasoline for 100 families of pickers to go to work.)

A great victory in the cotton strike has been won! Last year the rate was 40 to 50c per 100 pounds—it was the year of greatest starvation for the Mexican, Negro and American workers—

This year when the rich growers and finance corporations heard the union under the leadership of incorruptible Communists was organizing the workers, they realized they wouldn't get away with it any longer. They met in Fresno and set the price at 60c.

On October 4, 1933 the Cannery and Agricultural Workers Union, affiliated with the T. U. U. L. decided to strike. In two days 15,000 workers were out of the fields and on the picket lines.

After four weeks, having tried murder, race hatred, bravado, deception and nationalism by the Mexican Counsel, mass arrests of leaders, vigilante terror and starvation the state and federal governments, the growers and the finance corporations were forced to raise the wages another 25 percent to 75c per 100 pounds.

Altogether, this will add ONE MILLION DOLLARS more in wages for the 1933 season, to the workers on strike and will add another million to the wages of those in areas NOT struck. Only fools, cowards, socialist party and A. F. L. fakers pretend that strikes cannot be won in time of crisis.

On the Tagus ranch—employing almost 1,000 workers—the peach strikers won last August 25c an hour. Less than a month later they again cut the wages by 5c.

This same Tagus ranch is now involved in the cotton strike. Why should the workers believe these liars and baby starvers when they say they will pay 75c but won't sign an agreement or recognize the Union?

Because Rolph also promises it? Rolph is one of the big landlords in California and if possible a worse deceiver of the workers than the Tagus officials. Among the big ranches

Strong Communist Party and Fighting Union Will Guarantee Victory

struck is Herbert Hoover's ranch near Wasco, the Giannini ranch, etc. Is there anyone fool enough to believe the words of the capitalists?

FOR THESE REASONS THE WORKERS WILL NOT RETURN UNLESS THE GROWERS SIGN CONTRACTS WITH THEIR UNION. The growers pretend to believe in the NRA—NRA officials were trying to mediate the strike—the NRA pretends to guarantee the workers the right to collective bargaining through their own representatives. Why won't the rich growers and finance corporations recognize the union? Many poor and middle growers have signed agreements.

The answer is that this is what they call a "Red" union—one that will not sell out the workers—and therefore there is no prospect for them to cut wages later without a new battle. The first victory is won—75c per 100 lbs.—now for the second victory—UNION RECOGNITION!

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The ancient wise men once said:

What a shrewd man has on his lung

A fool has on his tongue.

And so Rolph issued a statement on the granting of 75c rate.

"We believe that the 60c rate is a fair rate and all that the grower can afford to pay. However in order to salvage what is left of the cotton crop, and in the interests of good American citizenship, law and order, and in order to forestall the spread of Communism and radicalism and to protect the harvesting of other crops, we accede to . . . increase the price of picking cotton to 75c per 100 lbs."

But other capitalist agencies were not so frank in admitting that they were forced to raise wages because the strike was under militant Communist leadership and not under their own lieutenants the A. F. L. fakers.

They carried headlines about the "breaking of the strike", the "great mediator" the A. F. L. faker, Frank McDonald, who won the workers back," etc.

But they spoke prematurely.

The workers wouldn't go back without recognition of the Union. The boss class couldn't hide their chagrin. Especially because they tried to cover up the victory of the revolutionary union with headlines which gave the impression that the workers were forced back by the terror.

Then they had to eat their second helping of humble pie. The growers, bankers and the governor wouldn't recognize the Union but they addressed a letter to the union "requesting" it to "authorize" the pickers to pick.

The miserable San Francisco Chronicle was so cheap as to continue the air of bravado. In printing the governor's letter they substituted the word "compel" for the word "authorize".

The other capitalist press stooped equally low. The Call-Bulletin on Oct. 26 declared:

"Hundreds of strikers, broke, weary to death of herding in filth-ridden camps, disgusted with the all too obvious self-interest of their Communist leaders, are more than willing to go back to work under the 75c scale fixed by Gov. Rolph's 'fact-finding committee.'"

On Oct. 27, one day later, they had to eat their own words by reporting:

" . . . the striking San Joaquin valley cotton pickers refused to return to work. . . . growers reveal that of the 20,000 acres planted in cotton in Kings, Tulare, Fresno, Madera and Kern counties but 400 acres were reported being picked today. The latter represents ranch acreage of the few growers who have acceded to the "jokers" in the strikers agreement—that their Cannery and Agricultural Industrial Union be recognized and that all hiring be done through the union locals."

A bad pill for them to swallow—but it went down. The San Francisco News' hypocrisy and sliminess would fill an encyclopedia. But they too tried to hide the role of Communist leadership. Everything else having failed they represented Caroline Decker, one of the strike leaders and a well-known Communist, whose greatest pride is the honor of being a Communist Party member, as saying in answer to a question as to whether she is a Communist "Why label me?"

This strike is being made victorious by heroic workers!

The workers know that they won by defeating not only the finance companies and rich ranchers, the local sheriffs and their deputies, but the entire capitalist government including the state police, the U. S. State and Federal so-called Mediation Boards, and the treacherous Mexican Consul. That knowledge is power! The workers are better equipped to fight because they recognize their enemies more easily!

It is being made victorious by unity of Negro, white, American and Mexican workers.

It is being made victorious by staunch, incorruptible Communist leadership in the Union!

Now thousands must join the Communist Party and carry on in that tradition—in the great historic struggle between working class and capitalist class!

Tens of thousands must join the Union, weed out the A. F. L. fakers, all national and race issues, and fight to win decent conditions!