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Quelling Dissent

The Sacramento Conspiracy Trial and the Birth of the New Right

At lunchtime on July 20, 1934, about fifteen men and women at the Communist Party Workers' Center in downtown Sacramento were startled by shouting and pounding on the front door. The workers dropped their books and card games as dozens of police armed with blackjacks, clubs, tear gas bombs, and sawed-off shotguns charged into the building. The police lined most of the men against the wall and trained their guns on them while detectives searched for "revolutionary material." They found no weapons, but plenty of evidence of dissident politics: picket signs, Marxist literature, and a picture of Lenin. Moreover, the cops congratulated one another when they discovered that along with this seditious material they had captured Caroline Decker and Pat Chambers, two of the state's most famous organizers of farm worker unions. At the same hour throughout the city, police arrested other Communists who organized unions, taught Marxist theory, or spoke against capitalism in Plaza Park, the usual place for radical gatherings in Sacramento.¹

Sacramento prosecutors charged Decker, Chambers, and fifteen other Communists with "conspiring to commit criminal syndicalism," or belonging to a revolutionary organization, and put them on trial in superior court. Reporters from newspapers

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and magazines throughout the country converged on the California capital to cover what the state attorney general called “one of the most important trials in the history of the state.”²

The great Sacramento Conspiracy Trial featured three months of testimony by Communists and growers, sheriffs and strikers, stool pigeons and vigilantes. It starred a lively cast of characters, including a young union organizer whom the newspapers liked to call a “comely blonde firebrand,” a veteran of violent strikes who would be immortalized in a John Steinbeck novel, a bellowing defense lawyer with a passion for justice and a complete lack of decorum, and an ambitious prosecutor with a gift for hyperbole and extravagant patriotic gestures.

Both sides in the Sacramento trial believed that California was the victim of a conspiracy: either a “vicious, reactionary conspiracy to smash unionism,” in the opinion of the defendants; or a vicious, revolutionary conspiracy against the flag, in the view of the prosecutor.³ According to the government, this handful of California Reds, these young organizers with their mimeographed flyers and their “workers’ school” and their storefront headquarters in downtown Sacramento, possessed the power to smash the state and “take away from you what you have” in their frenzied assault on American values.

“You are today MAKING HISTORY,” the prosecutor thundered to the jury. “We stand today on a crossroads. One road points toward Americanism,” he said as he stepped up to the flag at the front of the courtroom and unfurled it. “The other,” he shouted, gesturing at the defendants, “points toward Communism.”⁴ And Communism meant one thing above all: the subversion of the state by agents of Soviet Russia.

The Sacramento conspiracy trial is a story of farm worker poverty, Communist unionization efforts, and official repression; but it is also a window into Americans’ hopes and fears in the Depression. The trial reveals how Californians felt about farms and radicalism, migrants and immigrants, race and gender, and law and politics. It also helps to explain the various political responses to the Depression: the national Democratic Party’s effort to relieve suffering and co-opt radicalism with mediation and reform, the Republican Party’s attempt to maintain existing power relations through ruthless union-busting, and the radicals’ desires to scrap the existing economic system and start anew with socialism. Above all, it shows how California

growers and their allies in state and local government used the fear of Communism as a cudgel to beat back federal government challenges to their dominance in California’s agricultural areas.

Wallace Stegner famously said that California is like the rest of America, only more so.⁵ The struggles in the California fields were similar to struggles elsewhere around the country, but more so and ahead of their time. The state’s multi-racial, multi-ethnic workforce of migrants and immigrants, women as well as men, foreshadowed the coming transformation of American labor. California agribusiness would be the future of American agriculture, and the California Republican party, with its strong anti-Communist rhetoric and preference for repression over reform, would be the future of the national GOP.

The seeds of America’s future were planted in California in the 1930s.

The men, women, and children who picked California’s crops in the 1930s were among the most impoverished workers in the nation. Absentee, corporate landlords accrued vast holdings and relied on armies of migratory laborers to pick their crops. One government report described California farm workers as an “agricultural proletariat, practically landless and propertyless, and exceedingly mobile.”⁶ In the 1930s, these workers were Mexican and Filipino immigrants, along with recent African American and white refugees from the South. Most farm workers earned from \$400 to \$600 a year, abysmal wages even in the Depression, and often they received their wages in the form of scrip for the high-priced company store. National magazines and small-circulation radical pamphlets alike used stark terms to describe this system of “farm fascism” in California. “There is sunshine on California, but there is also blood—and the dark shadow of class justice,” intoned one radical pamphlet.⁷ New Deal administrators sent to investigate the labor conflicts were horrified by the workers’ “savage” living conditions. In 1934, a federal commission reported:

“We found filth, squalor, an entire absence of sanitation and a crowding of human beings into totally inadequate tents or crude structures built of boards, weeds and anything that was found at hand to give a pitiful semblance of a home at its worst. Words cannot describe some of the conditions we saw.”⁸

As the farmers continued to slash wages through the early years of the Depression, many workers grew increas-



The original eighteen defendants in the Sacramento conspiracy trial

ingly militant, and some struggled to form unions. But few professional organizers were willing to take them on. The workers were rootless and divided, and thousands of strikebreakers stood ready to take the jobs of any who dared to walk out of the fields. The growers intimidated and evicted strikers and even hired vigilantes to assault them. In this dangerous atmosphere, the American Federation of Labor declined to mount an organizing battle in the California fields. As one AFL organizer said, “only fanatics are willing to live in shacks or tents and get their heads broken in the interests of migratory laborers.”⁹

Enter the Communists. The American Communist Party decided in 1928 to pursue revolution in the United States by organizing workers in unions and exposing them

to Communist theory and doctrine. In California, the state party took on the most oppressed workers in the state, those who toiled in the canneries and the fields. The Communist-led Cannery and Agricultural Workers International Union (CAWIU) engaged a small, dedicated group of young labor organizers to move up and down the agricultural valleys in search of strikes to lead and organize.

Two of the most talented CAWIU organizers would later find themselves on trial in Sacramento. Pat Chambers was a short, wiry, thirty-four-year-old veteran of the Industrial Workers of the World, the anarchist union that had battled to organize the farm workers of the Central Valley back in the 1910s.¹⁰ Known for his physical bravery, Chambers was loathed by capitalists and idolized by workers throughout



Attorney Leo Gallagher talks with Caroline Decker outside of the courtroom. Decker's co-defendants Lorene Norman (center) and Nora Conklin (right) are in the background.

the state. To reach potential union members, who were often forced to live in camps behind barbed wire and surrounded by armed guards, Chambers would crawl through drainage ditches in the middle of the night.¹¹

In 1933, Chambers and the CAWIU led a large strike at the 4,000-acre Tagus peach ranch, demanding a raise from 15 to 35 cents an hour, union recognition, and abolition of the requirement that workers buy their food at the company store. At the end of the strike, the workers won a raise to 25 cents an hour, which became the prevailing wage for picking fruit throughout most of the state.¹² It was one of the CAWIU's most important victories. Although he was thrilled by the success, Chambers admitted that the twenty-

four-hour strain of organizing and the threat of violence took their toll. "Every time they put me in jail," Chambers remembered years later, "it was a vacation."¹³

At the Tagus strike, Chambers discovered a partner in the struggle whose skills perfectly complemented his own. At 21, Caroline Decker was already a veteran of dangerous unionization drives. In 1931, while she was still a teenager, she had helped to organize mineworkers in Harlan County, Kentucky, known as "bloody Harlan" for its fierce clashes between labor and capital. Moving to California, she soon married another union organizer, a handsome Berkeley graduate student named Jack Warnick, who would later become her co-defendant in Sacramento.¹⁴

Decker and Chambers were an interesting duo: she was glamorous, eloquent, and militant; he was blunt, pragmatic, and plainspoken. Together, though, they made an inspirational and legendary team.

A petite blonde known for her fashionable haircut and chic clothing, Decker could seem more Lana Turner than Mother Jones. Yet this child of radical Jewish immigrants was willing to eat beans and rice with workers, sleep in their shacks and tents, and earn survival wages in return for the satisfaction of organizing the most vulnerable Californians. Decker's dedication won her the position of executive secretary of the CAWIU.

Although it was uncommon for a woman to hold such a dangerous and responsible job, the California Communist Party was unusual among American organizations and even among other Communist chapters in offering leadership opportunities to talented women.¹⁵ Women planned and led some of the Party's biggest events of the year. This violation of gender norms offended some Americans as much or more than Marxian economics. One Sacramento judge voiced his distaste for female "agitators" when he sentenced one of Decker's friends to prison on a trumped-up charge of vagrancy after she gave an inflammatory May Day speech in Plaza Park. "When a gibbering petticoat on a soap box incites men of a low-grade mentality to defy the police," the judge explained, "she becomes a public nuisance and there is only one place for her, and that is jail."¹⁶

Decker and Chambers were an interesting duo: she was glamorous, eloquent, and militant; he was blunt, pragmatic, and plainspoken. Together, though, they made an inspirational and legendary team. John Steinbeck based his two main characters in his 1936 novel *In Dubious Battle* on the pair (though he switched Decker's gender to male in the novel).¹⁷

The top leaders in the Communist Party took directions from Moscow and worked toward the day of revolution, but this ideological ardor did not filter down to the organizers. In the fields, they spoke little of Marxism; instead, they

focused on short-term goals like higher wages and better conditions for workers. Neither Chambers nor Decker cared much about Leninist dogma, or even understood it, as they freely admitted. Their concern, first and foremost, was to empower the workers to improve their living and working conditions. "The essence of leadership," Chambers recalled to an interviewer in 1976, "is not to portray yourself as some sort of know-it-all, but your ability to develop the people you are working with so they themselves can take the initiative and do the organizational drive."¹⁸

The Communists began by organizing Filipino and Mexican lettuce pickers in the Imperial Valley in 1930. The growers quickly mobilized the powers of local, state, and federal officials against them. The county sheriff arrested strikers for vagrancy; federal immigration officials deported Mexican strikers; and the state government charged the strike leaders with criminal syndicalism.¹⁹

When the tools of official repression failed to smash the new unions, the growers turned to vigilantism. In 1931, the CAWIU led a cannery strike in the Santa Clara Valley that was crushed with vigilante power; in 1932, pea pickers in Half Moon Bay, cherry pickers in Santa Clara Valley, grape harvesters near Lodi, and orchard workers in Vacaville all struck for higher wages under Communist leadership.

Then, in 1933, Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal began to transform American labor. The New Deal affected employer/worker relations in the California fields in two ways. First, the New Deal helped to raise commodity prices and to stabilize the economy, thus raising workers' expectations. When most California growers failed to pass along their gains to the workers in the form of higher wages, the laborers were angry and primed to protest. Second, the National Industrial Recovery Act's section 7(a), which guaranteed the right to organize and bargain collectively, emboldened workers

around the country to begin forming unions. Ironically, the New Deal did nothing at the start to help farm workers: the NIRA's section 7(a) in 1933, and later the National Labor Relations Act of 1935, excluded farm laborers.

But farm workers believed that the National Recovery Act and President Roosevelt wanted them to join a union. According to a government report, "The Mexicans have heard of the NRA, they believe that the Federal government is going to protect them and improve their economic status, but they do not know that the NRA does not apply to agricultural pursuits."²⁰ As the workers' wages declined, their militancy increased. The CAWIU responded by helping to channel this militancy and to lead the largest agricultural strikes in the nation's history. Tens of thousands of farm workers joined the 1933 strikes, leaving 65 percent of the state's crops to rot in the fields.²¹

As the strikes escalated, so did the attacks on the strikers. Vigilantes beat pickets with axe handles and clubs, raked them with fire hoses, and smothered them with tear gas. The CAWIU organizers ran the biggest risk. Throughout the state, vigilantes kidnapped and clubbed strike leaders. In Vacaville, a mob of forty masked men took six young strike leaders from the city jail, drove them out to a deserted area, flogged them with straps, sheared off their hair, and slathered them in red enamel paint. The vigilantes left the organizers alive, but too wounded and terrified to continue leading the strike.²²

Soon, the vigilantes moved from assault to murder. The worst violence occurred in the massive cotton strike of 1933, the largest agricultural strike in the nation's history. In response to the growers' refusal to raise wages, more than 12,000 workers on farms stretching for 100 miles refused to pick cotton for San Joaquin Valley growers.

On October 10, about 350 farm workers gathered in the small Valley town of Pixley to listen to Pat Chambers. The young organizer, who was still recovering from a broken jaw he suffered from a vigilante attack in a recent strike, stood on a truck bed, urging the workers to remain non-violent, but to protect themselves if they were attacked.²³ As Chambers spoke, a caravan of cars and trucks filled with forty growers roared into town and pulled up behind them. The men spilled out of the cars, brandishing pistols, rifles, and shotguns. Chambers told the men, women, and children to move into the CAWIU headquarters across the street. As the workers and their families rushed to the

safety of the building, the growers pursued them. When one grower fired his weapon into the air, a striker angrily approached him and shoved his rifle barrel to the ground. Another grower began beating the striker, and then shot him dead. The vigilantes emptied their weapons into the fleeing crowd, killing another worker and wounding eight. Mobs killed another striker in Arvin that same day.²⁴

Appalled by the violence, federal officials descended on the Valley to force a mediated solution to the strike. Reluctantly, the growers agreed to raise wages, but not to recognize the union. Bracing for another wave of strikes in 1934, the growers and their business partners decided that they needed a more coherent strategy to defeat the CAWIU.

In March 1934, the state's largest growers, packers, shippers, and bankers formed a centralized, anti-union organization, the Associated Farmers. (Union supporters always put quotes around "Farmers" because there were few actual tillers of the soil in the group). The Associated Farmers planned to use several strategies against the strike leaders: urging local governments to adopt anti-picketing ordinances; publicizing the Communist ties of the CAWIU leaders and starting a Red Scare against them; and, most important, putting the union organizers behind bars.²⁵

As the growers knew, the state of California offered a convenient legal tool for decapitating the union and thus ending the strikes. The state legislature had passed the Criminal Syndicalism Act in April 1919, at a time when Americans feared a Bolshevik Revolution at home.²⁶ The law made it a crime to advocate violence as a means of "accomplishing a change in industrial ownership or control or effecting any political change." People often faced charges of criminal syndicalism for belonging to an organization whose platform advocated violence, even if they never did so themselves.

In its early years, prosecutors used the criminal syndicalism act primarily against the Industrial Workers of the World, or Wobblies.²⁷ By 1921, forty top IWW leaders had been incarcerated in San Quentin for violating the law; by 1924, 164 people had been convicted. But the most famous Californian convicted of criminal syndicalism was not a Wobbly but a Communist. Anita Whitney, a middle-aged, sweet-faced Oakland heiress and activist, had run afoul of the law by joining the local chapter of the Communist Labor Party in 1919. The U.S. Supreme Court upheld her conviction—and the constitutionality of the law itself—in a landmark case in



Two unidentified men recover after the police raid on the Communist union headquarters in Sacramento.

1927.²⁸ Whitney's patrician friends and allies persuaded the governor to pardon her. But though this elite radical was free to return to Communist activism, the criminal syndicalism law remained on the books, ready for growers and their allies to use against the resurgent Communist threat.

The growers first used the law against farm labor organizers in 1930 in the Imperial Valley, when nine Communist organizers were sent to the penitentiary for up to three years. These prosecutions served as a model for the growers in the turbulent year of 1934, as business leaders throughout the state began to fret that the revolution was coming.

"Is There a Red Menace in Los Angeles?" asked the *Los Angeles Times* in April, before answering its own question affirmatively.²⁹ California businessmen worried that "Mos-

cow gold" funded the unemployed councils of Los Angeles, the CAWIU-led strikes in the fields and in the canning sheds, and hunger marches in Sacramento. Even more terrifying for many business owners, though, was the general strike in California's second largest city.

At the Port of San Francisco, longshoremen went on strike in May 1934 for higher wages and union recognition. After two months, their waterfront employers decided it was time to open the port by force. As police tried to escort strikebreakers to the waterfront, open warfare broke out among strikers, strikebreakers, and police. After police shot two strikers and injured hundreds, the governor sent in troops, with fixed bayonets, to open the port. Infuriated, San Francisco's unions voted to close the city with a general

strike, which paralyzed the city for four days and stalled the transportation of California fruits and vegetables around the world.³⁰

To many Californians, the general strike seemed to signal the beginning of class warfare, with the workers funded and trained by agents of a foreign power. The *San Francisco Chronicle* warned its readers that a “communist army” would soon march down from Washington State to San Francisco, “ready to add terrorism to the strike chaos.” The newspapers were filled with accounts of “flying squadrons” of Communists who planned to destroy railroads and highways as they made the Bay Area a “focal point in the red struggle for revolution and control of government.”³¹ (In a front page editorial, the *Chronicle*, with unintentional irony, advised its readers to refrain from spreading “unfounded and unauthorized reports and irresponsible rumors” that came from any source except the “responsible and trained press.”)³²

Unhinged by the San Francisco general strike, vigilantes rampaged up and down the West Coast. In Seattle, Portland, Oakland, Richmond, Alameda, Stockton, and San Jose, mobs ransacked Communist Party buildings, smashing furniture, burning books, and beating anyone inside. Hayward activists built a public scaffold with a noose as a warning to Reds. In Berkeley, a posse of 300 surged through the city, hurling bricks through the windows of homes of suspected Communists. The bricks carried a warning: “This citizens’ committee is aware that you are affiliated with Communists, Bolsheviks, or other government-destroying groups. Leave here immediately or face drastic measures.”³³

Although the vigilante attacks appeared to be spontaneous outbreaks of mass hysteria, they were often encouraged and protected by employers, as well as local, state, and national officials. We know that the Associated Farmers funded and organized some of the mobs, and county sheriffs or highway patrol officers stood by while strikers were assaulted, kidnapped, and terrorized. At the height of the violence in San Francisco, the National Guard set up a machine gun nest to protect the crowds who were pillaging the meeting places of radicals.

Despite the rhetoric about “red invasions,” some supporters of the strikers believed that the growers had been fomenting and manipulating this red scare since 1933. General Pelham D. Glassford, who came to the Imperial Valley on a fact-finding mission, argued that the growers *welcomed* Communist agitation as an excuse to terrorize the workers.

“It is my conviction,” he proclaimed, “that a group of growers have exploited a ‘Communist’ hysteria for the advancement of their own interests; that they have welcomed labor agitation, which they could brand as ‘red,’ as a means of sustaining supremacy by mob rule, thereby preserving what is so essential to their profits—*cheap labor*.”³⁴

The growers knew that the Communists were providing essential leadership and organization to the workers. Thus, if state officials could be convinced to imprison the Reds, the strikes—and the disruptions to their profits—would stop.

The anti-Communists decided to make Sacramento the site of their putsch against the Party leadership. Although the Communist Party was larger in Los Angeles and more vibrant in San Francisco, Sacramento was “the nerve center of an agricultural empire,” *The Nation* noted, and the headquarters of the Central Valley strike leaders.³⁵ As one informant for the employers explained in a private report, the jailing of CAWIU leaders in Sacramento would leave the Party “without leadership in this section and would result in immediate disorganization and eventual disbandment” of the Party, the CAWIU, and other Communist-led organizations in the state.³⁶ The city also boasted an influential newspaper, the *Sacramento Bee*, which would cover the trial from the growers’ perspective. The *Bee*’s owner, C.K. McClatchy, saw his Central Valley newspapers as “real tribunes of the people, always fighting for the right no matter how powerfully entrenched wrong might be.” But McClatchy also believed that constitutional liberties should be limited to those who deserved them, and he did not put the “Benedict Arnolds of the Moscow persuasion” in that category.³⁷ Finally, the city and county of Sacramento enjoyed the services of several public officials who were as resolutely anti-Communist as the city’s preeminent publisher, including the police chief, city manager, and the jowly, blustering district attorney, Neil McAllister.

On July 20, the final day of the San Francisco general strike, McAllister and city police launched simultaneous raids on the CAWIU headquarters, the Workers’ School, and Sacramento’s “Hooverville,” where Communists often recruited members and distributed free food.³⁸ In all, twenty-two men and women, including Caroline Decker and Pat Chambers, were arrested and charged temporarily with “vagrancy,” to give McAllister time to draw up more complicated indictments.

Police locked the men in a 25-by-30 foot drunk tank filled

with alcoholics and petty criminals. For fourteen days, they inhaled the vomit and filth of the holding cell while they took turns sleeping on the damp concrete floor. Finally, they were released to regular cells, where they stayed during their brief vagrancy cases. The prosecution used the vagrancy trials as a “fishing expedition,” in the view of the defendants’ supporters, to build the case for criminal syndicalism.

Sacramento shuddered with excitement as the conspiracy trial approached. The *Bee* reporters tried to top each other with sensational stories. *Dozens of foreign men reported to threaten prospective jurors! Prosecution witness kidnapped! Young Communist League flyers found at Sacramento High School; Reds try to indoctrinate children! Reds have plot to kidnap President Roosevelt! Thousands of armed Communists set to invade state Capitol!*³⁹ None of the stories turned out to be true, but the *Bee* seldom printed denials or follow-ups.

In the midst of this hysteria, the voters of Sacramento voted Neil McAllister out of office and replaced him with a relative liberal. Central Valley growers and their allies were alarmed. They fretted that the new prosecutor could not be trusted to pursue the case with sufficient vigor. After lobbying from top business leaders, State Attorney General Ulysses S. Webb decided to invoke emergency powers and appoint McAllister as the state special prosecutor in the case.

The trial began in January 1935 before Judge Dal Lemmon, whose brusque professionalism won the respect of both sides. Most of the fourteen defendants faced one count of aiding and abetting criminal syndicalism and one count of conspiring to commit criminal syndicalism, with each count carrying a penalty of one to fourteen years in state prison.⁴⁰ Because the indictments were so vaguely drawn, the defense lawyers were uncertain how to prepare their case.

Once the trial began, McAllister’s strategy became clear: guilt by association. He planned to argue that the defendants were Communists, and Communists were criminal syndicalists, and therefore, the defendants were criminal syndicalists. No matter that the Communist Party was legal in the United States and fielded candidates for local, state, and federal offices. In the 1934 election, for example, Pat Chambers ran as the Communist candidate for U.S. Senate—from jail. In other words, the prosecutor wanted the jury to convict the defendants of belonging to a *legal* political group. McAllister tried to gloss over this contradiction during the trial, apparently hoping that the jurors would not know that

the Communist Party was legal in California—or at least would not care.

To make his case, the special prosecutor spent several days reading excerpts from Communist literature to the jury. Some of this material had been seized during the Sacramento raids, but most he chose at random, often from the files of the Los Angeles Police Department’s Red squad. The jurors heard short (and often misleading) selections from *The Daily Worker*, *The Communist Manifesto*, the program of the Communist International, strike flyers, and pamphlets with titles like “The Road to Negro Liberation.” These were all legal publications in the United States, some of them available at public libraries. But McAllister hoped to shock the jurors with these fragments, and persuade them that propertied Californians would not be safe until the young revolutionaries were behind bars.

Once the tedious process of reading the pamphlets was done, the prosecutors tried to prove their case with testimony from two types of witnesses: spies, who had been paid by law enforcement or farmers to infiltrate the CAWIU; and vigilantes and police officers who had been present at allegedly inflammatory speeches by the defendants. The spies, or “stool pigeons,” as the Communists called them, were a motley group, including an elderly man whose story that he had been “kidnapped” by Reds was shredded by defense lawyers. The informers often tried to exploit the jurors’ psychosexual anxieties by describing the lascivious plots of the Communist conspirators. One witness insisted that a speaker in Los Angeles—who was not on trial in Sacramento—had once voiced the Red desire to strip capitalist women naked and force them to “come crawling through the mire right on their lily white bellies.”⁴¹

While McAllister was the public face of the prosecution, the Associated Farmers privately took credit for shaping the case, compiling the evidence, rounding up witnesses, and paying most of the informers who testified in the trial.⁴² Captain Hynes of the Los Angeles Red Squad earned \$35 a day plus expenses for his services, all courtesy of the big businesses that backed the growers’ organization. Other law enforcement officials and informers received lesser but still generous amounts.⁴³

Some of the prosecution witnesses were not only paid informers but confessed vigilantes. Chambers and Decker were outraged by the appearance of one vigilante in particular, Frank Peterson, who had been among the group of growers

Outside the courtroom, city and state officials dramatized the Red menace with anti-Communist theater.

who fired on the strikers in Pixley. Peterson swore that he had heard Chambers urge the Pixley workers to “make the streets as red as Harlan, Kentucky.” Then, according to Peterson, Chambers had told the crowd: “We will take the law into our own hands. If they get in your way put them in a hospital and keep them there; we will show the damned rats.”⁴⁴ In other words, Peterson argued that the Pixley murders were the responsibility of Chambers, the unarmed speaker, not the men who pulled the triggers. Other witnesses testified that Chambers had not threatened violence; rather, he had predicted that the *growers* would attack workers and make the streets red with blood. A disgusted Chambers charged Peterson with murder during his cross-examination: “You was one of the fellows that did the shooting.”⁴⁵

Outside the courtroom, city and state officials dramatized the Red menace with anti-Communist theater. When some Communist sympathizers announced that they would march on Sacramento to demand passage of a state unemployment insurance law, the *Bee* reported breathlessly that thousands of Reds were poised to “invade” Sacramento.⁴⁶ In response, the city manager deputized 500 local citizens and drilled them in city parks with axe handles and tear gas bombs. The head of the National Guard confessed to Congress that he had violated regulations by ordering fifty infantrymen to stand by, armed and ready, to defend “their homes in Sacramento” and the state itself from revolution. He also suggested that the federal government might need to reinstate the draft to ensure enough soldiers to save the state. “We would have to resort to the drafting of men,” he said, “to try to save California.”⁴⁷

After more than a month of testimony, the prosecution yielded to the savvy, tenacious team of defense lawyers. Leo Gallagher, the lead counsel, had been beaten and arrested many times during his long years of fighting for California radicals. He was not a charming or congenial presence in the courtroom, or, for that matter, anywhere else. “More than any person I know,” said Carey McWilliams, one of his

great admirers, “Gallagher lacks humor, detachment, tact.”⁴⁸ At one point, Gallagher referred to opposing counsel as “a bunch of dumb oxen,” which prompted McAllister to dare him to repeat the remark outside the court.⁴⁹ But Gallagher had a strong sense of justice and, along with his co-counsels, the capacity for enduring endless abuse. He was assisted by Abraham Lincoln Wirin and Grover Johnson, both of whom had been kidnapped and beaten by vigilantes when they tried to advise union organizers in the Imperial Valley.

While the prosecutors portrayed the defendants as murderous, lustful agents of a foreign power, Gallagher countered that they were simple labor organizers using their constitutional right to free speech. Workers and strikers swore that the prosecution witnesses had lied—that, for example, Chambers had counseled *against* violence in Pixley while warning that *growers* wanted to make the streets flow with blood.⁵⁰ Sam Darcy, the leader of the California party, testified for several days, insisting that the Party wanted to win the majority of Californians to its causes through legal and democratic means; only if a minority tried to subvert the will of the public, he said, would Communists turn to violence.⁵¹

The lawyers and six of the defendants made eloquent closing statements to the jury. Chambers presented the case as a brazen attempt by the growers to cut workers’ wages. “In sentencing us 14 men and women to jail, you are sounding the opening gun in an attack on the wages of these workers,” he said. “In releasing us, your service will be to those thousands of agricultural workers.”⁵²

But it was Decker, the “blonde firebrand,” as the newspapers liked to call her, who had the final word. The defendants chose her to deliver the two-and-a-half hour summation to the jury. More than 100 people were turned away from the packed courtroom on the final day of her speech. She passionately urged the jury to show their disapproval of the law and their support for free speech by sending the defendants home. “If you vote for an acquittal,” she told the jurors, “you are not voting for Communism. You are voting for the right of the American people to say what they please.”⁵³

In his closing argument, McAllister attempted to cloak the weakness of his legal case with a thundering, melodramatic appeal to the jurors’ patriotism. The jury was the only institution that could stop this massive conspiracy against Americanism, he said. And if they did not stop it, then an “aroused public” would. “If you fail in your duty . . . vigilantism

... will be the thing that will stop it; you will have bloodshed, you will have another Pixley, and another Harlan.”⁵⁴

Down one road lay bloody battles between Red goons and vigilante thugs; down the other, the land of hope for which their forefathers had suffered so much. “Think of the covered wagon people who come into California,” McAllister urged the jury. “Think of the Donner party coming through the snow.” The Reds, however, proposed to “agitate the country . . . to take away from you what you have, and overthrow this government.”⁵⁵

McAllister concluded by ostentatiously unfurling the courtroom flag, saluting, and reciting the pledge of allegiance. Then he turned to the jury. “Ladies and gentlemen of the Jury, I ask you to think of that Flag in your jury room, and I ask you to think of what it stands for, and I am going to ask you to bring in a vote for that Flag—for the good old U.S.A., for My Country ‘Tis of Thee, for the Star Spangled Banner, for My Own United States, and God will bless you.”⁵⁶

Despite McAllister’s invocation of flags, pilgrims, and pioneers, several jurors remained unconvinced of the defendants’ guilt. They deliberated for 66 hours, as the defendants, reporters, and attorneys played cards or read. At one point, near the middle of their 118 ballots, the jury came back in and asked the judge a question: if they voted for convictions, would that mean the Communist Party was now illegal? The judge told them that the question was irrelevant.⁵⁷

The jury finally filed back into the courtroom on April 1, three days after the start of deliberations and three months since the beginning of the trial. The spectators began buzzing with excitement as they noticed the sheaf of papers in the foreman’s hand: “They’ve got a verdict!”⁵⁸ In all, the jury acquitted six defendants, including Jack Warnick, Decker’s husband, and convicted eight, including Decker and Chambers, of one count of conspiracy to commit criminal

syndicalism (but not, surprisingly, of aiding and abetting criminal syndicalism). As the foreman announced the acquittals, many in the audience sobbed with relief; when he announced convictions, many spectators, and even some of the jurors, wept in sorrow. The evidence against all fourteen was the same, so the decisions to acquit or convict individuals seemed arbitrary. Later, one of the jurors testified that he and a few others, exhausted and intimidated, had agreed to vote for a compromise: the eight guilty verdicts on one count in exchange for the six acquittals on both. “I lost track of things in the jury room,” the remorseful juror told the judge. “But a man has got to live with his conscience.”⁵⁹ Unimpressed, the judge declined to grant bail during the appeal process.

Along with the other defendants, Chambers and Decker refused to repudiate the Party during their sentencing hearings. “I, as a member of the Communist Party,” said Chambers, “who did organize these workers and helped to lead strikes, am proud to say that I go to jail for the reason that these strikes were won, and these workers succeeded for the time being in getting better living conditions.” Decker once again portrayed the prosecution as an attack on workers’ rights. “We are not being convicted as criminals,” she said. “We are convicted for union organization. The verdict is a conviction of thousands of workers, farmers and students with whom we have been associated.”⁶⁰ Chambers and the other men headed to San Quentin to start serving their five-year sentences, while Decker and another woman went to the Women’s State Penitentiary in Tehachapi.⁶¹

The growers and their allies were exuberant. “State has farm peace,” a *Los Angeles Times* headline assured readers. The 1935 summer harvest was “one of the most peaceful and quiet in California in many years,” the newspaper said,

At one point, near the middle of their 118 ballots, the jury came back in and asked the judge a question: if they voted for convictions, would that mean the Communist Party was now illegal? The judge told them that the question was irrelevant.



A crowd outside the courtroom awaits the verdicts in the Sacramento conspiracy trial.

largely because the CAWIU had been “crippled” by the Sacramento trial.⁶²

Radicals and liberals feared that the convictions foretold the dawn of totalitarianism in the United States. The defendants’ supporters warned that California despots like William Randolph Hearst would soon export these union-smashing tactics to the rest of the country. “Is Hearst to win,” Herbert Solow asked, “and spread the bloody tyranny of the California valleys though the whole country?”⁶³ Carey McWilliams and Herbert Klein believed that the period after the trial marked the transition from “sporadic vigilante activity to controlled fascism, from the clumsy violence of drunken farmers to the calculated maneuvers of an economic-militaristic machine.”⁶⁴

McWilliams and Klein used the word “fascism” because they lived at a time when American leftists feared the rise of a home-grown Hitler. But the Associated Farmers and their supporters were not the California equivalents of Hitler’s brown-shirts; rather, they were the leaders of a new, distinctly American movement: one we now call the New Right. Unlike the old, pre-1920s Right, this New Right spoke the language of populism rather than social order; promoted neo-liberalism rather than neo-mercantilism; and refined the definition of un-American from “foreign” to “Communist.”⁶⁵ Above all, this new, western Right was committed to overturning the New Deal Order and its promise of empowering the powerless.

The New Deal had its weaknesses: it was often tentative

and ambivalent, and it deliberately excluded farm workers from its most important protections, because they included rootless migrants, who seldom voted, and immigrants, who could not vote.⁶⁶ Indeed, Roosevelt and his new order largely failed these Californians, and this failure opened up an opportunity for the Communist Party to show that it was the one institution that actually cared about the most destitute Americans.

Yet, for all their hesitation, the New Dealers did insist that growers stop using state power and naked force to keep their labor costs low. And so the growers responded to this political problem with a political solution: they began “vigorously and militantly opposing the present Administration,” as the executive director of the Associated Farmers bragged.⁶⁷ The growers organized populist-themed but corporate-directed resistance to the New Deal threat to their dominance.⁶⁸

The Communist leadership of unions was a gift to the growers. What could be more un-American than Soviet agitators fomenting insurrection on American “family farms”? But the growers did not stop with attacking the Communist union organizers: their bigger aim was to discredit any expansion of government as un-American and to tar the centrist, anticommunist New Dealers as dangerous Red sympathizers. The increasingly sophisticated, modern conservatives in California understood that they could seize this chance to stop unionization and start a permanent Red Scare to discredit the New Deal Order. The growers were discovering how to bash the center for coddling the left—and, perversely, to do this at precisely those times when the center was distancing itself from or failing the left. This dynamic was new to American political culture in the 1930s, but its creators would soon refine it and export it to the rest of the nation.

Two years after the trial, the court of appeals overturned the Sacramento verdicts. The justices held that the criminal

syndicalism law was constitutional, but that the “conflicting irreconcilable verdicts” mandated reversal. First, the court reasoned, the defendants had been acquitted of aiding and abetting criminal syndicalism, yet convicted of conspiring to commit criminal syndicalism. Moreover, the same evidence was used against all fourteen defendants, yet the jury acquitted six of them. “It is impossible to reconcile these verdicts,” the appeals court wrote.⁶⁹ And so Pat Chambers and his comrades were allowed to walk out of San Quentin. Caroline Decker had been freed six months earlier, in recognition of her public service activities, such as teaching piano to inmates at Tehachapi.⁷⁰

The Communist union organizers emerged from prison to find there were no more Communist unions to organize. The CAWIU had been abolished, not by growers but by Party functionaries in Moscow. In 1935, while the Sacramento organizers were still on trial, the American Party had agreed to follow the Moscow line of pursuing a “popular front” with existing unions rather than establishing separate, Communist-led ones.

The jury not only sent the organizers to prison, they also sentenced farm workers to decades of low wages and powerlessness. Some former CAWIU organizers joined the Congress of Industrial Organizations, which started yet another unionization drive in California’s fields in the late 1930s. But like its predecessors, the CIO failed. Later, during World War II, the federal government began importing Mexican nationals, known as *braceros*, to pick the crops, sending them back to Mexico after the harvests. As long as the *bracero* program lasted, union activists found it impossible to organize to improve the wages and conditions of California farm workers.

Once the Party abolished its unions, many CAWIU organizers, tired of the many twists and turns in the Party line, grew disillusioned. For some, including Decker, the Nazi-Soviet Pact of 1939 provided the final reason to break with

The Communist leadership of unions was a gift to the growers. What could be more un-American than Soviet agitators fomenting insurrection on American “family farms”?

the Party. “I couldn’t find the democracy” in the Party’s doctrines, she later explained.⁷¹ After her release, she divorced Jack Warnick, married her appeals court lawyer, and lived out the rest of her days as a suburban mother in the San Francisco Bay Area. Pat Chambers also left the Party, for similar reasons. He drifted to southern California, where he became a carpenter.⁷²

Much later, in the 1960s, Chambers was thrilled to read about César Chávez’s attempts to organize the United Farm Workers. Farm worker unions had been decades in the making, and now Chávez had finally begun to see some success after the *bracero* program ended in 1964. The UFW organized strikes and boycotts to win higher wages for farm workers and, ultimately, the California Labor Relations Act, which extended labor protections to farm workers. Chambers decided that he needed to meet the men and women who had finally achieved this seemingly impossible goal: he would make a pilgrimage to the UFW’s headquarters in Delano.

When he walked into the union offices, the quiet carpenter explained to a union secretary that he “had done a little organizing in his time.” He was hoping to talk with someone in the union. Chávez was not interested in meeting the visitor—until he heard his name. “It couldn’t be Pat Chambers,” Chávez said. But it was indeed. Chávez was honored to meet the old veteran of organizing battles—the man who had paved the way to UFW success. The two men had an emotional conversation. The new leader told stories of his victories, and the old organizer kept repeating, “Amazing! Amazing!” But Chávez was bothered by one thing; why hadn’t Chambers come earlier to offer his support? He was afraid that Chávez would be red-baited, Chambers explained: “I was worried that my coming might hurt you, but now that you won in Delano, I wanted to come.”⁷³

Chávez had attained Chambers’s dream: better wages, union recognition, and empowerment for those who worked in the fields. Farm workers still have far to go to attain the protections and security enjoyed by most industrial laborers, but the days of farm fascism—of sheriffs standing by while vigilantes shot picketers, or of state officials imprisoning union leaders for organizing—remain in California’s past.

The U.S. Supreme Court effectively invalidated California’s criminal syndicalism law in 1969, when it struck down a similar law in Ohio as a violation of the First Amendment.⁷⁴ And in the 1990s, city officials in Sacramento renamed

Plaza Park, where CAWIU agitators waved the Red flag, railed against capitalism, and were arrested for “vagrancy” in 1934. The new name is César Chávez Plaza.⁷⁵ **B**

Notes

- ¹ “Reds are rounded up here in raids by flying squads,” *Sacramento Bee*, July 20, 1934; Mike Quin, “The C.S. case against labor: The story of the Sacramento criminal syndicalism rail-roading” (San Francisco: International Labor Defense, 1935), 10–11. On the trial, see also Kevin Starr, *Endangered Dreams: The Great Depression in California* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 166–73, and Rick Wartzman, *Obscene in the Extreme: The Burning and Banning of John Steinbeck’s The Grapes of Wrath* (New York: Public Affairs, 2008), 121–34, 140–48.
- ² “Webb says red trial here is one of great importance,” *Sacramento Bee*, March 20, 1935.
- ³ Herbert Solow, *Union-Smashing in Sacramento: The Truth About the Criminal Syndicalism Trial* (New York: National Sacramento Appeal Committee, August 1935), 28.
- ⁴ Quoted in Quin, “The C.S. Case against Labor,” 26.
- ⁵ Wallace Stegner, “California: The Experimental Society,” *Saturday Review*, September 23, 1967, 28.
- ⁶ Hearings before subcommittee on education and labor, United States Senate, 76th Con., 3rd sess., part 54, *Agricultural Labor in California*, excerpted in Paul Taylor, *On the Ground in the Thirties* (Salt Lake City: Gibbs M. Smith, 1983), 18.
- ⁷ Solow, *Union-Smashing in Sacramento*, 28.
- ⁸ Report of the United States Special Commission of Agricultural Labor Disturbances in Imperial Valley, February 11, 1934, quoted in Taylor, *On the Ground in the Thirties*, 181.
- ⁹ “Communists Tried Under I.W.W. Law,” *New York Times*, January 29, 1935.
- ¹⁰ Sacramento police department mugbook, “Sacramento, 1933–34,” unpaginated, Pat Chambers entry, Center for Sacramento History archives.
- ¹¹ Jackson J. Benson and Anne Loftis, “John Steinbeck and Farm Labor Unionization: The Background of ‘In Dubious Battle,’” *American Literature* 52:2 (May 1980): 203.
- ¹² Cletus Daniel, *Bitter Harvest: A History of California Farmworkers, 1870–1941* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981), 159.
- ¹³ Benson and Loftis, “John Steinbeck,” 208.
- ¹⁴ For information on Decker, see Sacramento police department mugbook, “Sacramento, 1933–34,” unpaginated, Caroline Decker entry, Center for Sacramento History archives; Quin, “The C.S. Case against Labor”; Anne Loftis, *Witnesses to the Struggle: Imaging the 1930s California Labor Movement* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1998), 17, 43, 91; Benson and Loftis, “John Steinbeck.”

- ¹⁵ Beth Slutsky, "Three Generations of American Communist Women: Charlotte Anita Whitney, Dorothy Ray Healey, and Kendra Alexander, 1919–1992," Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Davis, 2008.
- ¹⁶ "Nora Conklin is sentenced to 90 days in prison," *Sacramento Bee*, May 15, 1934.
- ¹⁷ See Benson and Loftis, "John Steinbeck." See also Mimi R. Gladstein, "Deletions from the *Battle*; Gaps in the *Grapes*," *San Jose Studies* 18:1 (winter 1992): 43–51.
- ¹⁸ Quoted in Benson and Loftis, "John Steinbeck," 204. See also Chambers's oral history at the Bancroft library.
- ¹⁹ On the CAWIU, see Daniels, *Bitter Harvest*, 128–30, 177–230; Dorothy Healey with Maurice Isserman, *Dorothy Healey Remembers a Life in the American Communist Party* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 36–54; Lowell K. Dyson, *Red Harvest: The Communist Party and American Farmers* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1982), 83–93; Devra Weber, *Dark Sweat, White Gold: California Farm Workers, Cotton, and the New Deal* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994); Carey McWilliams, *Factories in the Field: The Story of Migratory Farm Labor in California* (Santa Barbara: Peregrine Smith, 1935, 1939, 1971), 214–29.
- ²⁰ National Labor Board report quoted in press release of February 17, 1934, in folder "Imperial Valley," box 8, collection 1243, Carey McWilliams Papers, UCLA.
- ²¹ McWilliams, *Factories in the Field*, 229.
- ²² Orrick Johns, *The Time of Our Lives* (New York: Octagon Books, 1973), 329–33.
- ²³ Healey, *Dorothy Healey Remembers*, 44.
- ²⁴ See Weber, *Dark Sweat, White Gold*, 101; and Daniel, *Bitter Harvest*, 196.
- ²⁵ Clarke Chambers, *California Farm Organizations: A Historical Study of the Grange, the Farm Bureau and the Associated Farmers 1929–41* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1952), 42.
- ²⁶ For background on the passage of state criminal syndicalism laws, see Ahmed A. White, "The Crime of Economic Radicalism: Criminal Syndicalism Laws and the Industrial Workers of the World, 1917–1927," vol. 85 (2006): 650–770. White notes on p. 705 that the California law was a near carbon copy of the Idaho criminal syndicalism act.
- ²⁷ Quin, "The C.S. Case against Labor," 12.
- ²⁸ See *Whitney v. California*, 274 U.S. 357 (1927). See also Slutsky, "Three Generations of American Communist Women," chapter 2; and Lisa Rubens, "The Patrician Radical: Charlotte Anita Whitney," *California History* 65:3 (1986).
- ²⁹ "Is There a RED MENACE in Los Angeles?" *Los Angeles Times*, April 15, 1934.
- ³⁰ On the San Francisco strike, see Starr, *Endangered Dreams*, chapter 4; Bruce Nelson, *Workers on the Waterfront: Seamen, Longshoremen, and Unionism in the 1930s* (1988); Charles Larrowe, "The Great Maritime Strike of '34," *Labor History* 11 (Fall 1970): 403–51; John Kagel, "The Day the City Stopped," *California History* 63:3 (Summer 1984): 212–23.
- ³¹ "Thousands of Union Men Called From Jobs; Reds Converging on City; Food Running Short" and "Reds March on S.F. to Preach Revolt in Strike," *San Francisco Chronicle*, July 14, 1934.
- ³² "This Is Time For All to Keep Their Heads," *San Francisco Chronicle*, July 14, 1934.
- ³³ "Coast cities join in drive to stamp out red agitators," *Sacramento Bee*, July 21, 1934; "Police jail more reds as vigilantes beat ten," *San Francisco Chronicle*, July 20, 1934. See also David F. Selvin, "An Exercise in Hysteria: San Francisco's Red Raids of 1934," *Pacific Historical Review* 58:3 (August 1989): 361–74.
- ³⁴ Quoted in Taylor, *On the Ground in the Thirties*, 167.
- ³⁵ Travers Clement, "Red-Baiters' Holiday in Sacramento: The Criminal Syndicalism Trial," *The Nation*, March 13, 1935, 306.
- ³⁶ Memo, "Information," April 24, 1934, Center for Sacramento History, *Sacramento Bee* collection legal files, folder "Communists #2 Special Reports."
- ³⁷ Charles K. McClatchy, *Private Thinks by C.K.* (New York: Scribner, 1936), 38.
- ³⁸ "Reds are rounded up here in raids by flying squads," *Sacramento Bee*, July 20, 1934.
- ³⁹ All stories in *Sacramento Bee*: "Witness in red trial is taken to hiding place," October 5, 1934; "Red jury threat is probed by court here," December 14, 1934; "Red scheme to enlist pupils is bared here," December 12, 1934; "Babcock wants M'Allister to stay in red case," December 31, 1934; "Red plan for drive on capital is heard here," January 12, 1935.
- ⁴⁰ Four defendants were charged only with one count of conspiracy.
- ⁴¹ *People v. Pat Chambers et al*, 22 Cal. App. 2d 687 (1937), Vol. 6, 2852.
- ⁴² Guernsey Frazer to Dr. George P. Clements, January 5, 1935, in U.S. Senate, Subcommittee of the Committee on Education and Labor, *Violations of Free Speech and Rights of Labor* (La Follette Committee Hearings), 76th Cong., 3rd sess., Part 55, exhibit 8864, 20257.
- ⁴³ Appendix A in Marion R. Hardy, "The Politico-Economic Implications of the Pat Chambers Criminal Syndicalism Trial," MA Thesis, Sacramento State College, 1964.
- ⁴⁴ *People v. Chambers*, Vol. 6, 2635.
- ⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, Vol. 6, 2678.
- ⁴⁶ "City prepares for Invasion of Reds, Jobless," *Sacramento Bee*, March 9, 1935. See also "Dean Prepares for red march on Sacramento," *Sacramento Bee*, January 18, 1935.
- ⁴⁷ "Armed troops as guards in red peril here are revealed," *Sacramento Bee*, February 19, 1935.

- ⁴⁸ Carey McWilliams, "Leo Gallagher," *Nation*, October 16, 1935.
- ⁴⁹ *People v. Chambers*, Vol. 11, 4896.
- ⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, Vol. 10, 4308, 4313.
- ⁵¹ *Ibid.*, Vol. 7, 3295ff.
- ⁵² Quoted in Quin, "The C.S. Case against Labor," 25.
- ⁵³ Quoted in Loftis, *Witnesses to the Struggle*, 93.
- ⁵⁴ *People v. Chambers*, Vol. 10, 6116–17. The transcript says "Harlem," but the newspapers reported that McAllister said "Harlan."
- ⁵⁵ *People v. Chambers*, Vol. 10, 6125.
- ⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, Vol. 10, 6127–28.
- ⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, Vol. 10, 6179.
- ⁵⁸ "Friends of reds weep as jury's decision is read," *Sacramento Bee*, April 1, 1935.
- ⁵⁹ Quoted in Quin, "The C.S. Case against Labor," 28.
- ⁶⁰ *Ibid.*
- ⁶¹ A third woman, Lorene Norman, was released on bail during appeal because she was pregnant.
- ⁶² "State has farm peace," *Los Angeles Times*, September 29, 1935.
- ⁶³ Solow, *Union-Smashing in Sacramento*, 27.
- ⁶⁴ Herbert Klein and Carey McWilliams, "Cold Terror in California," *Nation*, July 24, 1935, 97.

- ⁶⁵ See John Gerring, *Party Ideologies in America, 1828–1996* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 125–58. Gerring argues that this transformation took place in the 1920s, not the 1930s, and that the New Deal merely reinforced the change. But though Republican antistatism may have begun in the 1920s, I argue that the California growers were innovative in their use of populist anticommunism as a means of building popular resistance to Roosevelt's new order.
- ⁶⁶ See Kenneth Finegold and Theda Skocpol, *State and Party in America's New Deal* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1995), 143.
- ⁶⁷ Frazer to Clement, 20258.
- ⁶⁸ Kim Phillips-Fein also emphasizes the role of anti-New Deal businessmen in forging the New Right. See Phillips-Fein, *Invisible Hands: The Businessmen's Crusade against the New Deal* (New York: Norton, 2010).
- ⁶⁹ *People v. Chambers*, 22 Cal. App. 2d 687; P.2d 746; 1937.
- ⁷⁰ Loftis, *Witnesses to the Struggle*, 93.
- ⁷¹ Caroline Decker Gladstein oral history, Bancroft library.
- ⁷² Loftis, *Witnesses to the Struggle*, 95; Benson and Loftis, "John Steinbeck," 221n72.
- ⁷³ Jacques E. Levy, *Cesar Chavez: Autobiography of La Causa* (University of Minnesota Press, 2007), 153.
- ⁷⁴ *Brandenburg v. Ohio* explicitly overturned *Whitney v. California*.
- ⁷⁵ "Plaza Park Renamed for Chavez," *Sacramento Bee*, April 16, 1997.