Planter Attack Arkansas Croppers

Union is Organizing Vigorous Fight Against Terror and Evictions

ENRAGED at the successful and militant convention recently in Little Rock, Arkansas by the Southern Tenant Farmers’ Union, where cotton croppers and pickers from Arkansas and five neighboring states promised themselves to double the strength of their already powerful union during the coming year plantation owners, through their “riding bosses” (overseers) and hired “laws,” have launched a new barrage of terror in eastern Arkansas.

In Earle, Arkansas, a bitterly contested area, a union organizing meeting of the STFU was recently raided by an armed mob of planters, officers of the law and townspeople. Howard Kester, Union organizer, a man widely known in southern labor circles, was dragged from the Methodist church where he was addressing 450 white and Negro sharecroppers. Kester, who narrowly escaped being lynched, and H. I. Goldberger, Attorney for the Union, were carried to the countyline and told never to return unless they wanted to be shot.

Men, women and children were kicked and clubbed, benches overturned and wrecked, church windows smashed with axe handles and billies—all in the name of order and the law!

One member of the mob declared that the planters were “getting ready to stage another Elaine massacre, if you don’t quit disturbing our labor.” Among those raiding the meeting were: “Boss” Dulaney, L. L. Barham, B. L. Lancaster, Ottis Balfour, Jerome Hood, Charlie Hood, Frank Hill and Ernie T. Richards.

The previous night, another union meeting had been broken up by deputies at the planters’ orders, and two men were shot in the back. Meanwhile, more than a hundred men, women and children were evicted in a heavy snow from the C. H. Dibble plantation in Cross County, because of their membership in the STFU. With only $16.00 among them, and with precious little food and clothing, they were turned out of their shacks and thrown upon the highway with their few belongings. Plantation

BUTLER, President of the S. T. F. U., Joins Commonwealth College Faculty

J. R. Butler, President of the Southern Tenant Farmers’ Union, and one of its militant founders, has joined the staff of Commonwealth College. Together with Art Skreberg, former Northwest farmer and organizer, he is giving the course in Farm Problems, dealing primarily with problems of southern agriculture while Skreberg analyzes those of the North and West.

Commonwealth’s faculty has received added strength in Butler’s coming; especially in its training of southern farm and labor organizers, which is one of the primary functions of the school.

A short biography of J. R. Butler, prepared by Clay Fulks, will be given in the next issue.

UNITED FRONT PROGRAM

The entire Commonwealth College group pledged itself to support the following program for the winter quarter 1936, by united front action.

1. To support and build Commonwealth College by increasing its effectiveness as a training center for intelligent activity within the American labor movement.

2. To give wholehearted support in strengthening the forces which are combatting war and fascism, the twin curses of the modern world, and to cooperate in the building of a chapter of the American League Against War and Fascism in Polk County and the building of the American Student Union in Arkansas.

3. To carry on an educational program pointing out the need for a nation-wide farmer-labor party, and to cooperate in the building of a chapter of the American Student Union in Arkansas.

4. To support the heroic struggles of the Southern Tenant Farmers’ Union and of the Sharecroppers Union throughout the South.

5. To support the American Federation of Labor and to participate with the Arkansas State Federation of Labor in the building of a strong militant trade union movement in this state.

6. To cooperate with all other farmers’ and workers’ organizations in their fight for the passage of a genuine workers’ compensation law in Arkansas; and to join in their struggles for the repeal of the poll and sales taxes which now oppress the overwhelming majority of the workers and farmers of this state.

7. To protect our rights of freedom of speech, press and assembly; to combat the forces which are terrorizing workers in their struggles for better living conditions; and to participate in the legal defense of all workers and farmers persecuted for their activities in the farm and labor movement.

8. To continue our support of the Mens Workers Alliance and to cooperate in the building of a state-wide Workers Alliance, especially enlisting the support of the trade unions.

9. To continue to extend the membership and influence of the Pioneer Youth of America which is already established in Mena and in our own neighborhood.

10. To support the movement for a better understanding between the...
Workers Must Read

[Commonwealth College receives frequent requests for lists of important books, study guides and outlines. As a partial answer, this department will publish frequently short lists of books and articles on important topics, such as the one below. Occasionally, more general lists of important books will be printed. Inclusion of an item implies, of course, neither agreement nor disagreement with the author; the attempt is only to include the most important references on each subject.]

History Of The American Labor Movement

By EVERETT J. BOYD

If one can but see single volumes, the history of the American working class, the book of that title by A. Bimba, International Publishers, will probably prove the most indispensable. This is in spite of the liberal amount of soap boxing indulged in by Bimba throughout the several hundred pages.

Refreshingly honest and open in its right-wing interpretation of some latter-day history, is Nathan Fine's The American Farmer, published by the Socialist Labor Party. This should be read in conjunction with Louis Oser's L. W. M., New York Labor News Company, is important volumes on these organizations.

Of course the monumental work of John R. Commons and Associates, History of Labor in the United States, Macmillan, forms the basis of the lesser volumes of many other historians.

You may with profit add these to your list:
Beard, Mary, A Short History of the American Labor Movement, Duran.
Coleman, McAlister, Biography of Debs.
Perlman, S., History of Trade Unionism in the United States, Macmillan.
Wa e, Herman J., Labor Movement in the United States 1860-90, Appleton.
Wester, William J., The Great Steel Strike, Vanguard.

Marx, H. L., American Labor Unions.

Production Is Discussed

Ways of Increasing Efficiency

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Marx, H. L., American Labor Unions.

Campus Notes

By LOUISE ADLFR

The winter term of school at Commonwealth started with a bang! Hardly before anyone realized what happened one of the largest student bodies that has ever attended the school was registered and attending classes. The students have formed good study habits. Every evening from six to nearly midnight the library reading room is crowded.

Students from the southern states held a general get-together with the faculty chairman recently for the purpose of discussing the courses and their adaptation to southern conditions. Recent guests at the college were Professor Dorothy Douglas, who gave several lectures, and Katherine Lumpkin, both of the teaching staff of Smith College, Massachusetts. Professor Douglas is a teacher of economics and Miss Lumpkin is Director of Research of the Council of Industrial Studies.

The woodcrew is quite busy these days. Three rival crews have been organized each with a handy woodman as leader. Socialist competition is speeding up the work and giving it zest. Inexperienced workers are learning to avoid kinking the saw. Wood is being cut faster than the two mule teams can haul it.

Commonwealth is fortunate to have enrolled as a student this quarter, Rose Oser, a trained nurse. Those with the usual winter colds are grateful for her attention. Miss Oser recently learned something about the practice of medicine in the countryside. She helped the local doctor to bring the infant of a neighbor couple into the world.

Miss Oser is a busy girl with both her hothouse and cold frame. He is making extensive plans for a big truck garden this year.

Almost every week-end groups of Commonwealers have hiked into the surrounding mountains. The students from crowded cities especially seek the open spaces and the open air. The summit of Rich Mountain, which has an elevation of 2900 feet and is six miles away, is a favorite spot for the hikers.

Mrs. Deussenbury, a blind ballad singer and friendly neighbor of Commonwealth, is having to move. She says that the thing she regrets the most is that her new home will be so far away from the school. She was a frequent visitor of the school, and students often went to her sing and to watch her spin the "old fashioned" way.
TALK ON WORKERS BILL
By PROFESSOR DOUGLAS

SOCIAL INSURANCE is a method of protecting workers against loss of earnings due to unemployment, old age, sickness, accident or other disability. After all, he said, we have to be able to secure any measure of such protection, and always the attempt of governments has been to get off as cheaply as possible and to put the cost as much as possible upon the workers themselves.

The Social Security Act

TODAY, with mass unemployment and mass lay-offs of aging workers, the sums required for any adequate protection are enormous. Yet the New Deal Social Security Act—(1) bases its calculations on an amount of unemployment only equal to that of the peak "prosperity" period of 1922-29, and figures on the aged remaining at work until they are 681 (If more unemployment and industrial old age than this occurs the scheme simply goes broke). (2) All the money is to be raised by payroll taxes—i.e., the workers themselves have to bear the cost—and the Federal Government, which alone can reach the wealthy taxpayer, specifically washes its hands of any financial aid. In fact it states that to meet Federal approval every State unemployment insurance law must contain a clause guaranteeing that the beneficiary shall have no legal claim upon the amounts provided—if the fund built up from pay-roll taxes runs short, he gets nothing. (3) The amounts, even if they were paid, are inadequate—a maximum of one-half of wages for 16 weeks out of the year after a four weeks waiting period. (On a fifteen dollar a week wage this would equal $3.90 a week for the first 19 weeks, and for all the rest of the year, nothing). (4) A large part of the population is excluded—farmers and all workers in agriculture, domestic workers, all government servants, direct and indirect (including municipal employees and teachers), all workers for non-profit-making concerns (e.g., trained nurses), all workers for small employers, all workers not long-resident in a given state—and, most important of all, all the present unemployed (since they would have had no pay-roll taxes paid for them). In the words of President Roosevelt, "They must first be reabsorbed into industry".

The New Deal version of social insurance was the one that provided by Bismarck in Germany fifty years ago or by Lloyd George in England 25 years ago, in its principles of workers paying for all government assuming no responsibility and initiative being left to the 48 separate states.

WORKERS INSURANCE BILL

In contrast, the New Federal Workers' Bill offers full protection—offers it on the full responsibility and at the sole expense of the Federal Government through taxes on wealth, and offers it to all classes of workers suffering loss of earning power through no fault of their own. Briefly it offers six kinds of social insurance for the unemployed; the aged, the sick and otherwise disabled; the working mothers before and after child birth; the widows with dependent children; and, especially important in these days, the self-employed, such as farmers and small business and professional men who have lost their jobs or are "starving on the job."

For all these classes of workers the Federal Government guarantees a minimum of $10 a week plus $3 for each dependent, and for those above the minimum, the average earnings prevalent in their occupation in their locality. (The maximum is $25 a week plus $8 for each dependent). The cost is made a first charge upon the Federal Treasury, with an initial appropriation of five billion dollars. Administration is by Social Security Commissions appointed by the President from panels chosen by workers' and farmers' organizations, thus insuring an unusual degree of workers' control.

The Bill has been introduced into the Senate by Senator Frazier (Republican) of North Dakota, and into the House by Representative Lundeen (Farmer-Labor) of Minnesota. In its original form last year (The Lundeen Bill HR 2827) it received exceedingly wide support from organized labor groups, and this year, with its careful revision, an even broader mass base is expected. The Bill is sponsored and the revision was undertaken by the Interprofessional Association for Social Insurance, an organization of professionals who was formed to protect their own economic interests and to ally themselves with the labor movement.
The urgency of other copy for the Fortnightly precludes the inclusion this year of the detailed financial report for 1935. Those interested in a full financial report for the year are urged to enclose a three-cent stamp with a request to
Charlotte Moskowitz, Treasurer—Commonwealth College Mena, Arkansas.

ANNUAL CASH REPORT
JANUARY 1, 1935 TO DECEMBER 31, 1935

CASH RECEIPTS:
Balance January 1, 1935 $1,870.07
Accounts Receivable 36.73
Tuition Receipts 4,116.50
Scholarships 831.00
Accounts Payable (loan) 954.90
Donations 2,919.56
Fortnightly Receipts 435.90
Camp Receipts 358.00
Store 268.98
Winson Quarterly Receipts 64.15
Total Receipts $11,399.99

CASH DISBURSEMENTS:
Cellar Expenses $330.16
Plant and Equipment 784.34
Library Expenses 163.37
Accounts Payable 60.00
Store Accounts 399.39
Farm Expenses 108.09
Stock Expenses 410.54
Office, Pub'ly and Print Shoo Expenses 1,675.35
Maintenance Members' Expenses 1,271.01
Gas, Oil and Bulbs 722.70
Kitchen Expenses 2,450.55
Repairs and Replacements 746.57
Miscellaneous Expenses 592.84
Windsor Quarterly Expenses 84.24
Museum Expenses 20.53
Total Disbursements $9,820.68

The full printed financial report, available from the treasurer of the school, includes, in addition to the Balance Sheet and the Annual Cash Report, the following Statement of Maintenance, comparing the cash operating expenses of the school with the worth of the industrial labor contributed by members of the community.

EXPLANATIONS:
Includes, in addition to the above, the list of the amounts of contributions for general maintenance for each student accepted.

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Expenses for Fund, showing the net cost of meals at Commonwealth. In each department.

under the act of Congress.

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