

Conscientious Objector

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Organize New Amnesty Group

Committee Will Urge End of SS Increase in CPS Discharges

A Committee For Amnesty for War Objectors and Selective Service Violators was organized here last month to secure full pardon from the President for the more than 5,000 draft act objectors now imprisoned.

The committee will carry on the following special programs: Reorganizing Selective Service, and opposing peacetime conscription measures; increasing the rate of demobilization of 2,000 men now in Civilian Public Service camps; and responding more justly with the Army discharges; and liberalization of parole and release of war objectors from prison on terms more nearly approaching those given to ordinary law violators.

Officers Named

The temporary officers of the Committee, whose headquarters is 5 Beckman Street, are: Chairman, A. J. Mustie; Vice-Chairmen, James Bristol and DeWitt Wyckoff; Secretary, Frances Rose Ransom; Treasurer, Evan W. Thomas. Stanley Murphy was appointed as organizer for the Committee. An executive committee composed of the above officers, Winslow Osborne, Julius Eichel, and Fay Blackburn was also established, at the initial meeting of the Committee.

The Committee has issued a financial appeal for \$5,000 as an initial fund to launch the campaign, with a portion of the funds to be used in support of pickets in Washington.

Meanwhile, the Call, in a lead editorial, urged "Amnesty Now" for COs.

Revolution Was Never Like This

An Editorial

The moral planners of our age are about to be confounded, as the economic planners have been, by the bleak reality of science unchallenged unless they stop spending all their time in conference halls and confront the reality with a stronger weapon than oratory. It is as true of the best-intentioned radical and liberal organizations as it is of the most reactionary factions among us that responsible individual conduct is subordinated to the will of officialdom. Such is the evil nature of organizations—but too many meetings, from whence are issued the pronouncements and directives of leadership, tend to exaggerate the evil and entrench the inequity.

Meetings are a nervous habit, like smoking. And just as the smoker faced with a perplexing social situation lights a cigarette for want of a better solution, the moral planner when action is demanded invariably calls another meeting. The high command of modern liberalism, desparately frustrated, is absurdly devoted to the tradition of democratic procedure with all of its elaborate trappings—to the extent that ritual has become an end in itself and the adoption of a resolution the ultimate in revolutionary action.

Our friend Stanley Murphy speaks of the delights of inaction. There is no better illustration of his meaning than the endless committee meetings where brave and uncompromising resolutions are framed—and hung out to dry and wither in the sun, and be forgotten. Superfluous meetings have supplanted action and usurped the responsibility of individuals in a world where the individual action of responsible men is essential to survival. Under the present arrangement a faithful Socialist is constrained even from independent judgment, to say nothing of action, until the official position is proclaimed at headquarters after a series of meetings. Otherwise, he is a bum Socialist, a threat to the unity of the movement. Private opinion is actually discouraged for the sake of party solidarity. Of course, he may be so familiar with the party line that he can anticipate its attitudes, in which case he is still not motivated by his own sense of responsibility. The same thing is true of the pacifist movement, the anarchist movement, the Trotskyites, the Communists

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Atomic Solution

Harold Nisenon of New York sends in the most fascinating suggestion so far made to eliminate the atomic bomb menace. His idea is to suspend an extra-large bomb over every city on earth and for the bombs to be connected electronically, so that if one bomb is set off anywhere on earth all the other bombs will go off at the same time.

—The Call

Training Plan Is Scuttled

Modified Program Proposed By Legion Will Be Considered Next

It appeared last month that the War Department had abandoned hope for the passage of President Truman's compulsory military training bill, and that action would be taken shortly on a drastically modified bill proposed by the American Legion.

The Legion's program reduces the basic training period from one year to four months, at the end of which time the individual could return to school or college and get the rest of his training in the Reserve Officers Training Corps or the National Guard. If he did not return to school, the other eight months could be spent at some type of industrial work deemed necessary to national defense, or the trainee may remain in the Armed Forces.

It is expected that a measure substantially embracing these provisions will be approved by the House Military Affairs Committee about January 1.

A resolution opposing compulsory military training was passed last month by 500 delegates representing 71 organizations in New York State, affiliated with American Youth for Democracy.

Director Assaults Camper at Mancos

By Prescott Vernon
Special to The C. O.

MANCOS, Colo.—A campaign of illegal and arbitrary action has been carried out by the Administration of Civilian Public Service Camp No. 111, which has included assault on one camper by the Director and the arrest of three assignees on false charges of refusal to work. The victims were assignees who have been highly critical of camp management.

The first incident occurred when several campers serenaded the camp manager, R. A. Blackmer, on his birthday, December 8. Hardly had the group finished singing an anti-conscription song and "Happy Birthday," than two strangers emerged from Blackmer's quarters, carrying empty bottles. Advancing on the group threateningly they were followed shortly by Blackmer, Charles F. Thomas, the camp director, and two other camp officials. They followed some of the men into the wash room where they subjected them to a barrage of curses and slanderous epithets. Suddenly Thomas sprang at Harper LeCompte, began pummeling him with his fists, and one blow landed solidly on LeCompte's jaw.

Three days after this incident, Richard Lowenberg was arrested while at work by a U. S. deputy marshal and taken to Denver. On December 17 the same thing happened to two more assignees, Harper LeCompte and James Robinson. When they appeared before Judge Symes, they heard the charges against them for the first time—"violating the Selective Service Act by refusing to work and failing to perform assigned duties."

All three campers had never refused to work or failed to perform assigned duties, and they had not been notified of being given RTWs.

The three men are now out on \$2,500 bail each.

These events are the latest of incidents which have kept the Mancos camp in considerable unrest since its opening as the first government camp. Twice previously assignees had been struck by a foreman who is still an employee. Men have been secretly charged with RTWs. There have been charges that the men have been given inadequate medical care, or even refused the care they needed.

Committee Gets Report

Special to The C. O.

WASHINGTON, D. C.—Lewis Hill, of the National Committee on Conscientious Objectors, stated here last month that the Committee's report on CO labor in mental hospitals had been referred to the Military Affairs Committee, and that Selective Service had been called upon for a complete statement of their policy.

Danbury COs Strike

Special to The C. O.

DANBURY, Connecticut—Fourteen Conscientious Objectors initiated a three-day hunger strike here on Christmas Day in protest against the continued imprisonment of all draft cases.

Chaos Reigns In CPS Camp

SS Orders Men Back and Forth Across Nation At Own Expense

By Foy Finch
Special to The C. O.

(In connection with the disorders reported below, Mr. Roy Finch, writer of the dispatch and assistant editor of The C. O., was arrested late last month shortly after completing his story.)

MINERSVILLE, Calif. — A hectic month, which included the burning of the dining hall, the virtual breakdown of camp facilities and investigation of the camp by the FBI, has culminated here in an attempt on the part of Selective Service to evict six men who have transferred to this camp from church units.

Four of the men had their transfers to Minersville approved by A. S. Imirie, executive officer of Selective Service, on the condition that they transfer at their own expense. Shortly after arriving they were ordered back to Gatlinburg, Tenn., camp again at their own expense, by Col. Lewis F. Koseh, head of camp operations. The other two members of the group came directly from Williamsburg, Va., hospital unit, after their transfers had been requested by the hospital superintendent there.

All six of the men, who are opposed on principle to remaining in a church-sponsored conscription program and had been trying since last June to get their transfers, refused to leave the camp.

A combination of the effects of slow-down tactics, the apparently accidental burning of the dining hall and charges of sabotage has produced a near-chaotic condition in the camp. Project work has been virtually abandoned, and there is a shortage of labor for even necessary maintenance work. One-third of the camp is officially listed as not available

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Indian Troops Refuse To Fight Indonesians

Moslem soldiers, according to a statement in the Indonesian News Bulletin, have refused to fight against the Indonesian people and their Free Republic and have consequently been interned by the British Military Police.

There are no details about the action of the Indian soldiers. All cables from Indonesia are censored by the British Military Command but it is known that feeling in India is very strong against the employment of Indian troops, and leaders of all sections of the Indian people have protested their use.

Mexicans Stuck Here for Winter

Contracts Provided for Return But U.S., Employers Fail to Act

By Worldover Press

The Mexican Minister of Labor visited Washington the first week of December and conferred with top U.S. government officials over what threatens to become a major hotspot in U.S.-Mexican relations.

Now held in this country in conditions of virtual peonage are 50,000 railway workers and another 45 or 50,000 agricultural workers, who came to this country from Mexico under an agreement between the Mexican and U.S. governments. Their contracts expired October 23, winter is here and they want to return home. Yet no real action can be got from the U.S. government or U.S. employers.

At the present rate of return, only a few thousand each month, it will be next year before they are returned to their homes. Few of the men have ever been north in the winter, and none have adequate clothing. Out of their meager savings, they cannot afford to buy coats and shoes that will be useless when they return home.

Representatives of 75 workers in Pennsylvania Railway Camp 337 at Baltimore came to Washington the first week in December to press their case. In the 200 camps of the Pennsylvania Railroad, the Mexican nationals have already threatened to strike or take other forcible action to call attention to their desperate plight. The railway workers have sent wires to E. E. Milliman, President of the Maintenance of Railway Employees, declaring their solidarity with the U.S. union members on the tracks: "We are against using us for the purpose of beating down wage standards in this country." They have likewise asked AFL and CIO national leaders for help in getting their contracts fulfilled.

The contracts provided for transportation from point of work in this country to point of contracting in Mexico. The railroads are not making good on these contracts, though in several cases railroad companies have finally agreed under pressure to send the men back to the border. But they say they cannot be responsible for transportation from the border. Spokesmen for the men pointed out that the situation was anticipated last July and August but government agencies and the railroads made no preparations for the return of the Mexican workers.

To Raise Food Fund

Special to The C.O.

CHICAGO — The University of Chicago OSRD unit is promoting collection of a fund from men in Civilian Public Service not only to help meet the needs of starving people abroad, but also to stimulate the church groups and general public to similar action, it was announced last month.

It is felt that men in CPS—with practically no income—can set a striking example by raising a fund of \$100,000 in the first year of peace, with a pledge of one dollar a month and an extra fifty cents at Christmas. Pledge cards will be distributed to all CPS units, on which the man can designate the relief agency to which he prefers to send his contribution. The money will not be handled by the unit.

Sound Reasoning

Dr. J. Robert Oppenheimer, head man at the atom factory in Los Alamos, New Mexico, was quoted by the Washington Daily News last month as saying:

"It is very difficult for a man to make his life's work the manufacture of atom bombs when (a) he thinks they'll never be used, and (b) that they should never be used."

Chaos Reigns In CPS Camp

(Continued from page 1)

for any sort of work. The majority of the men who do work average only two or three hours a day.

Living conditions have deteriorated even more seriously. There are no electric lighting or laundry facilities and only a few gas lanterns to go around. Since the loss of the dining hall meals have been prepared in a garage and eaten out of mess kits. There is a likelihood of a shortage of wood for heating despite the fact that the camp is in a heavily wooded area. Only wet and unseasoned wood is available.

44 Protest Condition

In a letter of protest recently sent to S. B. Show, regional forester in San Francisco, forty-four assignees called attention to these conditions, adding that "the camp is dangerously isolated with no telephone facilities even for emergencies after 9 p.m." They concluded:

"We urge the immediate closing of this camp and discharge of the assignees, or assumption by the Forest Service and the Selective Service System of their rightful obligations under the law and regulation they are charged with administering."

A number of assignees have charged that the Forest Service is in effect running a concentration camp. They have frequently called this to the attention of local Forest Service personnel. George Burger, project superintendent, recently resigned, although he had previously stated to several men that "you will crack before I do."

While camper resistance for the most part is unorganized, it is widespread and finds expression in the slowdown, singing, marching and other demonstrations intended to demonstrate that "a conscription program can be made to collapse as the result of imaginative resistance." Some of the men have applied the slowdown so effectively that jobs which could normally be done in an hour or two have been dragged out over several weeks.

The resistance to date has met with considerable success in calling the conditions here to the attention of papers in the state, although no action has been taken by the Forest Service.

FBI Called In

When the dining hall burned down, charges of sabotage were made and the FBI called in, the investigator inquiring of the men whether they believed that "the camp would be moved if all the buildings burned down?" No evidence of purposeful destruction was found.

The mix-up regarding the transfers of the six men seemed to indicate confusion in Selective Service since Imirie and Kosch acted at cross-purposes and apparently in ignorance of each other's plans, Imirie in giving verbal assurances through the National Service Board and the Friends Service Committee that four of the men would be accepted and Kosch in countermanding this assurance after the men had transferred.

Received Anonymously

No man is an island, entire of itself,
Every man is a piece of the continent,
A part of the main.
If a clod be washed away by the sea,
Europe is the less, as well as if a
promontory were,
As well as if a manor of thy friends
Or of thine own were.
Any man's death diminishes me, because
I am involved in mankind,
And therefore never send to know for
whom the bell tolls,
It tolls for thee.

—John Donne.

"Does It Matter?"

This is only part of a story. It is only part of a story because some facts have been ruthlessly, maliciously, and illegally suppressed! This is an unfinished story, and you may yet take part in writing the rest of it.

Yesterday, in an American concentration camp, a man was struck. Did you feel the blow? Part of mankind was imprisoned today when another man was hauled off to jail. Do you call this man who dies tomorrow, "Brother?"

Today, December 11, 1945, an assignee engaged in "Work of National Importance" was arrested. The charge? I did not see the warrant. Neither did the man taken into custody! "Does it matter?" I don't know; ask the Americans who are trying Germans for arbitrary and illegal actions. Ask the German anti-fascist who was illegally arrested and put away illegally. Wait, that's right, he is dead and people weren't interested until after his death and by that time questions weren't answered. Let's ask Lowenberg, if it matters; or better still try a night in the Durango jail or Dachau and then ask yourself, "does it matter?"

A reign of terror has descended upon the American concentration camp at Mancos, Colorado. The brutality exhibited by the concentration camp master in striking an assignee on December 8 has been followed by the questionable arrest of Lowenberg without a warrant today.

Does this surprise? Do you start and say, "if this goes on. . . ." Nonsense! This has gone on and is going on and will. . . . Or will it? This is where you may begin to write. You can take an active part in writing the rest of the story, we are living.

Ask why an assignee is struck physical

blows at Mancos. Ask why another assignee is arrested sans warrant. But don't ask me. Ask your public servants, Col. Kosch, Gen'l. Hershey, President Truman. Ask concentration camp manager, Thomas, or the federal marshal who couldn't or wouldn't produce a warrant. They'll tell you. That is, they will if they are still your servants. Dictator Hitler wasn't a public servant. He wouldn't answer, nor would Goering, nor Himmler. However, Our Servants are honorable men, all honorable men. Maybe you can answer, you of mankind. Maybe in your heart you know the answer. Did you stand silent the night they arrested Him in Jerusalem? Are you shouting, "Crucify Him, Crucify Him," to our civil authorities? Will you, also human being, stand mute at another Golgotha? Must blood fall upon us and our children again and again, through century upon century because we will not help? Yes, fellow human, maybe in your heart you know the answer. Are you ready now to help finish the story?

Subscribe to The C.O. for yourself and your friends

Picket For Amnesty

You Are Invited by "Conscience" to Picket President Truman at the White House for Freedom of All War Objectors in Prison.

CONTACT:

JULIUS EICHEL

769 St. Marks Avenue
Brooklyn, N. Y.

For Further Information or Send Contributions for Amnesty Effort.

EX-CONS

Former guests of the Federal Palais require a group of their own to gain freedom of expression for their peculiar views and particular interests.

Men who want to join a purely Social Group, write Hal Lasky, giving their suggestions or registering their names. His address is 8415 Fourth Avenue, Brooklyn, N. Y.

Others having suggestions for new publicity and action tactics for amnesty campaign send them to Albon Man, 8676 191st Street, Hollis, Hollis, Long Island, N. Y.

All C.O.'s who have been "rehabilitated" should apply yesterday.