

War Is Over--'Conchies' Want Out Conscientious Objectors in California Camp Stage Slow-Down Strike on U. S.

By JACK FOISIE

Chronicle Staff Writer
MINERSVILLE, Cal., May 20—
Deep in this mountain fastness of Trinity National Forest, isolated from the public opinion they seek to attract, a campful of conscientious objectors are staging an unprecedented "slow down strike" against Federal authority.

It is a Ghandi-like example of passive resistance at its best. To date officials at this Selective Service administered camp have been unable to stamp it out through normal disciplinary measures.

Ten men have been arrested in one move to break the back of the demonstrations which have been going on, in varying degrees, since the camp opened last June. They have been charged with refusing to obey a lawful order. The case has been hanging fire for several months.

Small scale sabotage raged

The Conflict Of Conscience

Conscientious objector: "One who, for conscience' sake, objects to warfare or to military service."

—Webster's Dictionary

"Any . . . person . . . because of such conscientious objections . . . shall, if he is inducted . . . be assigned to work of national importance under civilian direction."

—Selective Service Act

"Conchies:" Short for the above.

—G

throughout the camp during the winter months—but no arrests were made.

Camp Director Biles Haynes said Federal law-enforcement agencies are now reluctant to prosecute. This

is not only because the slowdowners are operating so deftly in the fringe between legality and violation, but also because Selective Service believes public opinion now stands in the corner of the "conchies."

However, people of the county seat of Weaverville, 17 miles from here by twisting mountain road, are bitter against the "conchies" and will not generally allow them in town, according to Russ Keeney, editor of the Trinity Journal.

"Haynes is too soft on them," Keeney declared.

All this is evident after a two-day investigation of incidents which amount to successful defiance of the United States Government.

Though small potatoes in itself, the Minersville demonstrations symbolize the general unrest at such Government-run camps throughout the country. Minersville is the so-called "Alcatraz of the conchie



Conchies post strike slogan

because to it, Selective Service says, go all troublemakers.

The strike here sets the tempo and the tactics for all, according to released objectors in San Francisco who now help correlate the nationwide program of protest.

At first sight Minersville looks like
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By Chronicle Photographer Ken Melaschlin

Bull Session in the Barracks—the 'Conchies' Talk Tactics

These conscientious objectors sit around their barracks stove discussing the "slow-down strike" they are waging against the Government. A few of the youths seen here are not participating in the protests but still take part in the

conference. This "bull session" lasted far into the night as strike ringleaders explained how the tactics called for a moral protest against conscription by doing nothing in the way of work except when specifically ordered to do so.

The average age of this group is about 25, and many are college graduates. Before the war they worked as electrical engineers, lawyers, a decorator of glassware, in an undertaking parlor, and in educational work. Only one was at-

tending a ministerial school. The PW on the shirt, meaning "prisoner of war," were painted by the men to carry out the theme that since they are conscripted because of their beliefs, they are "slaves" in a "concentration camp."

'Conchies' in L. A. Jail Hold Hunger Strike

LOS ANGELES, May 20 (AP)—Six imprisoned conscientious objectors today neared end of the third day of a hunger strike protesting county jail action in segregating a Negro member of their group.

"If they continue to refuse their meals, we will have the jail doctor check their condition," said Inspector Charles A. Fitzgerald.

The objectors were held in county jail for Federal officers on charges of disobeying Selective Service regulations at a conscientious objectors' camp.

The hunger strike began when Richard B. Steinhilber, 25, New York, was placed in a cell with other Negroes and the other five objectors were kept in a different cell.

More About Conscientious Objectors' Slow-Down Strike Staged in U. S. Camp

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just another civilian conservation camp, which it formerly was. Now it is officially called Civilian Public Service Camp 148.

There are only 28 conscientious objectors confined in the camp. A staff of 10 Forest Service officials supervise them.

There is no fraternization here—the "keepers" and the "inmates" live distinctly apart. Months of the slow-down has made the tension between the two groups almost unbearable at times, although there has been but one moment of violence. (Last winter Haynes struck a man after being called foul names.)

In their rough and rather unclean barracks the slow-downers explain why they are striking. There appear to be two principal reasons:

1—The short-range cause: protest against alleged discrimination in the rate of discharge.

2—The long-range cause: moral refusal to recognize any longer the right of a government to conscript any man, for any reason and especially to wage war.

The strikers charge—and it is not denied by Selective Service officials—that whereas 87 per cent of the Army had been discharged as of April 30, only 44 per cent of the objectors in CPS camps had been released.

The slow-down angle itself symbolizes their slogan that "you can enslave our bodies but not our minds," explained one of the strikers, Jim Cassels. Two of Cassels' three brothers were killed in combat during the war.

Political, rather than religious, convictions have appeared in the demonstrations. The strikers put in their only day of work last May 1, "to show our unity with the working stiff."

"If you want a red herring, there it is," chuckled one of the men. But most of the strikers, if they express any political ideas, declare they are Socialists rather than Communists.

(Note: This is the first of three articles on conscientious objectors. Tomorrow: How the slow-down works.)

Envoy to Bolivia

AP Special Washington Service
WASHINGTON, May 20—Joseph Plack of Grenoble, Pa., took oath of office today as Ambassador to Bolivia.