FRIENDS
WORK CAMP

REVIEW

Highlander Folk School
June 24 --- August 19, 1936
For eight weeks nineteen of us under the leadership of John and Evelyn Culver have lived together at the Highlander Folk School. Through the experience of doing physical labor and through a study of labor organization in the South, we have been trying to obtain a realistic grasp of the forces making for conflict in our society and trying to discover what we can do to solve these conflicts peaceably.

First on the boys' work program has been the building of an athletic field for the community of Summerfield. Sore muscles and blistered hands soon helped them appreciate how a laborer feels. The economic stress of the workers in this community was vividly brought to light when someone figured out that at the local scale of wages the energy spent digging stumps and sawing wood might be worth seven cents an hour.

Almost half of the seven hours each boy spent each day was devoted to improving the school grounds: helping to finish Myles Horton's new cabin, aiding Alf Kilgore on the farm, digging, draining ditches, and building a new sewage system.

The nursery school started by the girls has grown from an enrollment of four to nearly twenty. Besides enjoying the new well equipped playground, the children have been given an opportunity to paint, draw and do elementary woodwork. Much time and thought has been given to this project since there is a possibility that this is the beginning of a permanent nursery school sponsored by Highlander for the community. In addition a recreational program has been carried on for an older group of children.

Canning was the girls' other major project. Several hundred quarts of beans, cabbages, beets, rhubarb, peaches, and blackberries were prepared and packed. Though most of this will be used by the Highlander staff during the coming winter, some will probably go to the needy families of the community.

On rainy days the girls, with some help from the boys, dusted and sorted more than 4000 books for the school library.

Last but certainly not least the girls did the cooking not only for the work camp but also for the many unexpected guests.

A feminist revolt arose early in the season, and class warfare continued sporadically thereafter. But the excellent meals which the girls, under the expert direction of Mary Hammers, consented to provide, did much toward finding a non-violent solution.
The Highlander Folk School is a cultural and educational center for the
laboring people of the South. Because it believes that unionization is the best
way to attain social justice, it has been a constant source of inspiration and
guidance to labor leaders. Its staff has spent much time aiding the T.U.C.C. drive.
In its two six week school terms, Highlander trains workers in both economic phil-
osophy and in organizing techniques. Its extension programs reach many workers
who are unable to attend regular sessions. Furthermore, the staff is particularly
interested in developing labor's political power and has taken an active part in
Labor's Political Conference in the recent elections.

In one of our meetings, Mylés Horton, the director of the school showed
us how large a part the school played in the local community. In spite of the
initial antagonism of many conservatives, the school, both through its educational
and recreational programs and through personal contacts, has won the confidence of
the economically stranded population. For the future it has plans to supply medical
service as well as to expand its recreational programs. Although at present union-
ization has been the means of raising the standard of living, in the future the
staff hopes to establish some type of cooperative enterprise.

In the many conversations we all have had with Jim Dombrowski, the sec-
rotary of the school (and "our Russian professor"), we have discovered how the
Highlander fits into the picture of Southern labor. Like other members of the staff,
Jim believes that through education workers must be convinced that a more rational
and just society can be brought about through the efforts of organized labor.

In several meetings "Chairman" Bill Buttrick spoke to us on the economic
philosophy which lies behind the school curriculum. True to Marxist principles, he
points out that the inherent contradictions in capitalism make its decay inevitable.
Bill's talks always aroused animated debates.

Because Ralph Toffertoller, "the king of square-dance callers," was called
away six weeks ago to be an organizer for the Amalgamated, we have not heard the
building reverberate with "Dosidos" and "Partner Swings" as much as we might have
wished. On his week-end visits, however, he has taught us many new folk dances.

With Zilphia learned many new songs,
only "How Long Brotheren"
and other selections from
but also songs such as
and "The Young Man who
her own collection of
times she has been pre-
our singing with her dau-

A special vote
Kigeloves: to all for his
the products of his farm-
spice dishes she has
able; and to Eldridge,
worker, and truck
Two important
mention here: Hoboken,
piled milk for our table
has supplied the noisy canine atmosphere without which no camp would be complete.

For many of us, "The People of the Cumberland," which we saw in Tracy
City the last evening in camp, will long be remembered for its vivid presentation
of the economic condition of the people here and what Highlander is doing for them.
We have been living in one of the most impoverished regions of the country, the Southern Cumberland Plateau. As we saw on our trip to Ravenscroft and Soddy, our own community of Summerfield is only one of the many spots where the coal industry has collapsed, leaving the miners stranded. Only a few of us have had the opportunity to become acquainted with the homes of the people; all of us learned in our meeting with the state relief officials (Aug. 5) that 60% of the heads of families in Grundy County were unemployed, and that 90% of the families were living on less than $500 even with the produce of their farms figured in. Mrs. Thompson, secretary of the Public Welfare Department, showed us that state relief cannot adequately deal with the problem. Tennessee has no direct relief and the appropriations for Old Age Pensions and Aid to Dependent Children fall far short of the need. When we visited the Cumberland Subsistence Homesteads, established by the Farm Security Administration at Crossville, we saw that the Federal Government could absorb only a small proportion of the unemployed through these expensive projects. The immediate remedy is the W.P.A., which at present is providing only an emergency standard of living for the families of this community. One of the interests of the school has been to sponsor unionization of the W.P.A. workers in order to raise wage levels. What the permanent solution is remains an enigma to most of us.

Many of our contacts with the community have been with the boys and girls of our own age. They have joined us on our swims, picnics, and dances. Few of us realized how hopeless their prospects for the future were until Jim Flint of Madison, Wis., stopped by on July 19th and got several of the community people to record their ideas for the radio forum he plans to give this fall. Jim has been making similar recordings with groups all over the country. The Summerfield group felt that it wanted to escape from the hopeless conditions of the mountain and yet was unable to do so because there are no jobs in the cities. This is the very problem which Don McKee has been emphasizing this summer in his Sunday School class. Don's class feels that we cannot lead the full life which religion advocates as long as these conditions continue.

To many of us these experiences with the community have posed the question: what can the individual do about these injustices? From this point of view the work of the school staff has taken on new significance. On one of our trips we met two pioneers in social service work. The first, Dr. Johnson, a retired college professor, has devoted the remaining years of her life to rescuing the delinquent community of Ravenscroft. The other, Mr. De Jarnett, the Congregational minister at Soddy, is attempting to set up cooperative handicraft industries to provide a secure living for his people.

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One solution to the problem both in this community and in the nation at large is cooperation. The school plans for a cooperative medical clinic and possibly a cooperative farm for the community. The larger aspects of the cooperatives were discussed on July 12th by Mr. Siegenthaler and Dr. Wells, members of a committee for legislative action on labor problems and leaders in the Nashville cooperative movement. They suggested that the gains both to producer and consumer were so large that the cooperative system might conceivably replace private enterprise in the future.
DISCUSSION PROGRAMS

Most of the campers came to the camp expecting something more than physical education, and after the feelings of the group had been plumbed by several discussions on what the members of the group expected to learn, a tentative program of discussions centering around talks given by visiting speakers was decided upon, with the aim of giving students an approach to the problems which arise in the community which was our home for two months - the Folk School and the background in which it works: Summervield in the narrow sense and the field of union activity in the South in the broad sense. We were not able to deal with all the matters we would have liked. Since we had very little leisure in which to make our own studies for discussion purposes, we were forced to leave gaps in the program where we could not arrange for speakers. The importance of the Textile industry to the South gave us a peg on which to hang discussions on organized labor, sometimes over the dinner table, sometimes in straignt succession on weekday evenings. We were not long in coming to a realization of one general problem - the low level of wages. This was a starting point for discussions on the remedies or palliatives available - cooperatives, a different economic order, the backing of labor organization by the National Labor Relations Board, etc. Although it has been evident throughout the camp that there were wide differences of opinion, it seems certain that the program through the body of new experience provided, has done something to widen the viewpoint of us all in degrees varying from awakened interest to revolution.

Every week-end labor organizers come to the Highlander Folk School to talk over their problems. Through personal and group discussion with these people our knowledge of the special difficulties of Southern labor has grown.

One of the most outstanding speakers, Roy Lawrence, the regional director of the Textile Worker's Organizing Committee, explained to us how the South has served as a refuge for Northern mills which move in order to lower their labor costs. When the depression brought low prices and restricted markets, these mills have drastically cut the already inadequate wages. Yet because of its surplus of impoverished laborers, the South has remained immune to unionization. As a result, Mr. Lawrence, explained labor cannot progress on a national scale until conditions in the South improve.

The second night of camp, Paul Stiles, regional director of the N.R.L.B., described the machinery provided by the government to protect unions and gave an informative talk on the T.W.O.C.'s activities in this region. The next evening Paul Christopher, technical advisor to the T.W.O.C. in the South, continued the discussion, showing us how important it was for unions to have expert knowledge of the technical and financial conditions of the mills they were organizing.
On July 3rd Billy Faily and Alino Bryant, organizers for the I.L.G.W.U., spoke to us on the hardships of contacting workers and convincing them that unionization can improve their low living standard. We were impressed with the violent means which anti-union employers use to intimidate organizers. E.S. Callaghan, vice-president of the American Federation of Hosery Workers, further elaborated this point. He also stated that this type of opposition came largely from sweat-shop industries, for business leaders were coming to recognize the usefulness of the unions arbitration boards and their economic advisors.

Our trip to Huntsville on August 11th and 12th emphasized the violent opposition of mill owners to organization. Several times around the dinner table Franz Daniel had told us that the Huntsville crisis was the key to the fate of the T.W.O.C. The Lincoln, Merrimac, and Dallas mills have been closed because of lack of business for some nine months and had refused to reopen on the basis of union recognition. Negotiations were started and the unions agreed to wage cuts and speed ups, but in the middle of the discussions the Dallas representative disappeared. Organizers besides being branded as "outside agitators", were threatened with violence. A set of city ordinances, denying civil liberties, increased the tension. In spite of this persecution, the unions increased their strength. When we arrived, the unions had already won a partial victory. The Lincoln mills had opened under agreement to bargain collectively as soon as the T.W.O.C. has been certified, and both the Merrimac and Dallas mills are prepared to resume negotiations. We were able to go through the Irwin mill, to visit all the mill villages, and to attend a meeting of the Industrial Council. Our informal conversations with the workers gave us a sympathetic understanding of the feeling of solidarity among the union members.

Since the Wagner Act is the most important weapon labor in the South has to enforce economic justice, we were fortunate in having Mike Ross, N.R.L.B. publicity director, as our guest on August 2nd. He pointed out that the majority principle was the only feasible solution to the problem of representation, for without this the board would have been powerless to enforce its decisions. Because the N.R.L.B. was tied up by injunctions during the first 18 months of its existence, and because it lacks sufficient funds, it has been able to deal with only a few important cases.

Only in our discussion with Larry Hosoy on the conflict within the Automobile Workers did we diverge from our program of Southern labor problems. On July 14 Larry, who has spent several months in Flint, presented an able defense of Homer Martin.

Unfortunately our efforts to get in touch with mill owners and A.F.of L. representatives failed, and, therefore, we feel that our study this summer has to some extent been somewhat one-sided.

A study of the problems existing in the South would not be complete without some discussion of tenancy among the cotton farmers. However, in a sense, such a study was found to be impossible for our group since we had no opportunity to visit the homes or talk with the tenants themselves. Two possible means of approach open to us were individual study and discussion with the few people who had had personal contact with tenants and who visited us. On June 30th and July 3rd three of the girls told us something of their own study of this problem. The living conditions of the tenants, their opportunity for education, and the present governmental plans under the A.A.A. for alleviation of their distress were described to us. On July 25th Mill Julia Allen and her "traveling seminar" spoke to us of their experiences.
while living with tenant farmers in Arkansas this summer. With their background of first-hand knowledge of conditions, they could explain the need for stronger Southern Tenant Farmer unionization. On August 11th and 12th, although we had no opportunity to enter them, we observed for ourselves some of the homes of both Negro and white tenants as we drove through northern Alabama.

**TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY**

It was felt by many that a brief study of the T.V.A., because of the effect it has already had upon the South, would help us in our attempt to understand the social and economic problems of the people here. The first dam we visited was Chickamauga (July 11th) where we were given an excellent opportunity to see a dam under construction. This dam will make possible river navigation up to Knoxville. Wilson and Wheeler dams, which we saw August 12th made perhaps a greater impression on us because they were in operation. At Wilson, Mr Schweppe told us of the aims of the T.V.A. dams. The problem of flood control is a most pressing one for the loceroes on the Mississippi and those becoming inadequate, and a means, therefore, for holding back the water at its source and using it where it is to the advantage of the people must be found. It is also felt that extending river navigation will lower the freight differential. A cheaper means of transporting raw materials and finished goods cannot help but have an effect upon a rapidly industrializing section such as this. A third aim is to provide electrical power for the Southern states. We drove out in the country where we saw the results of rural electrification.

On August 16th Mr. Little of the personnel division of the T.V.A. spoke to us on the vocational education in the Muscle Shoals area of the T.V.A.

Those of us interested in what can be done to alleviate the distress of the people in this area feel that regional planning, based on the findings of this first experiment, may prove to be one possible solution.

**NON-VIOLENCE**

The search for non-violent solutions of social and economic problems was announced by the American Friends Service Committee as a fundamental part of the camp's purpose. To help us in our thinking of these lines, the committee sent out a series of speakers to visit the various camps. It is not possible to sum up the reaction of the camp as a whole to these talks: the campers varied too widely in previous acquaintance with the philosophy of pacifism and non-violence. Those of us who already had done some thinking on these lines got a good deal more out of the discussions than did those meeting this philosophy for the first time. Most of the campers felt that there was not enough application of non-violent principles to specific labor problems; the fact that we found no labor organizers who were familiar with this point of view left it still harder to make the connection. The chief value of the discussions lay in bringing forth certain ideas that some of us felt to be basically pertinent to our camp experiences.

Ellmore Jackson, of the Service Committee, arrived five days after camp opened to spend several days with the group. The evening of his arrival was spent in discussing the purpose of the camp, and the setups at the various camps.

The next week, on July 7th, we heard from Paul Brested of the Federated Council of Churches. He talked about non-violence, especially about his experience in India. Aside from considerable argument over the meaning of terms, the main point of discussion was the question of non-violence as a way of life rather
than merely a technique.

A picnic at Eagle Bluff preceded Larry H osang's talk about the Fellowship of Reconciliation. The group heard more about pacifism as a religious way of life, and pondered over its use of the word 'religious. Perhaps the center of the discussion was the dedication of one's life to non-violence that certain people had shown and had sought, and the problems of conflict of duties that are involved.

For those interested in non-violence, labor problems, Franz Daniel of the T.W. D.C., on the three weekends he was here, provided a challenge in his description of the atmosphere of violence and antagonism present in the union struggle in Huntsville, Ala.

On July 27th Brooke Anderson spoke to us on the possibility of peaceful solution to the problem of race conflicts. Only when Negroes and whites can sit down and talk the problem over together will the necessary understanding be gained.

For a good part of the group, perhaps, the most satisfying discussion in this field was with Homer Morris, of the Service Committee, on August 10. He explained that the basis of the Committee's activity was its philosophy of pacifism - that violent means cannot achieve the ends we seek; but that since the call for social change is an imperative one, constructive non-violent methods must be found. Homer put the fundamental problem of social change as being that of making people change their minds, which cannot be done by force. He felt that labor's greatest need is to develop techniques for peaceful change, as labor has much to lose through the use of violence. A good part of the discussion concerned drawing the line between violence and non-violence in various specific instances.

The talk then switched to the work camps. Homer told some of the history of the idea as related to the Service Committee's basic philosophy. He felt the two unique values of the camp were the use of work as an educational technique and the use of group meditation to help give meaning to the work.

On August 13, Dr. Reinhold Shairer, formerly a leader of the youth movement in Germany, and now of the University of London, spoke in the great need of solving the problem of unemployed youth. He stressed the danger of Fascism arising from a failure to give a nation's young people the chance to work.

Bob Davidson, professor of philosophy at Hiram College in Ohio, talked with the group (Aug. 15) on the role of the Southern Church in social change. Already there are signs, he said, of a new social consciousness in religious groups in this section.

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GROUP MEDITATION

The technique of group meditation has proved to be a very valuable part of the work camp experience. Besides offering an opportunity for the development and exercise of leadership of the highest type, it tends to draw out the finest and best that is possible within a group.

As ideas are expressed, fresh thoughts are born, and the subject grows and gathers new meaning - until often the result is much more than the sum of all the ideas.

During the moments of quiet, the individual endeavors to make the things he has learned meaningful to his own life and future actions. He will also try to measure his final impression by the ideals of the Master that we are all trying to follow.
RECREATION

The Fourth of July celebration for the community found us playing the role of active sportsmen, for after playing baseball and volleyball, we still had sufficient energy to dance that evening. After the second week of work, however, muscles rebelled and enthusiasm waned. The baseball team, which went down to ignominious and consistent defeat, sustained a disastrous loss of membership and volleyball was completely abandoned. Croquet and ping-pong were able to survive only a few weeks.

One sport, swimming, increased in popularity, possibly because it was satisfyingly refreshing, possibly because our hot water system had broken down. Repulsed by the porcine atmosphere of Elk Creek, we soon ventured further afield to Foster Falls, where we staged two successful picnics. Soon some of the staff members introduced us to the equally spectacular and more accessible Deer Lick Falls.

Picnics provided a relief from dishwashing and an opportunity for the boys to practice their culinary arts on hotdogs and marshmallows. The spread at Lookout Mountain, staged on our trip to Chattanooga, came off later than anticipated, but not too late to enable us to enjoy the beautiful sunset. Eagle Bluff was the scene of another picnic the night that Larry Hasey spoke.

Dancing proved to be one of our more active sports. When Teffie was not on hand to direct the festivities, Norman was always ready to teach folk dances such as the "English Quadrille" or the Varsovienne. One week-end we survived three successive dances.

Singing was the least violent and the most spontaneous form of recreation. The girls managed to learn the words to new songs as they yodeled away the hours in the kitchen. Then on a picnic or on some such occasion as Ed Marlow's birthday party singing would get under way, not to stop until everyone was thoroughly hoarse.

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Peggy Russell suggests that we should have a reunion in New Haven on the third week-end in December. When plans are definitely arranged, she will let us know.

Since Smith seems to be the center of our nation, it has been decided to hold a reunion for members of all work camps there again. This will take place on the first week-end in December.

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Frank Smith has taken a set of movies of the work camps. He will be doing some travelling this winter and hopes to get in touch with campers in the towns through which he is passing in order to show the films to them. If you want to get hold of the film or of any of his photos, please get in touch with him c/o the Friends Service Committee.
SOLIDARITY

When the Union's inspiration through the Workers' blood shall run
There can be no power greater anywhere beneath the sun.
Yet what force on earth is weaker than the feeble strength of one?
But the Union makes us strong!

Chorus: Solidarity forever!
         Solidarity forever!
         Solidarity forever!
         For the Union makes us strong!

They have taken untold millions that they never toiled to earn,
But without our brain and muscle not a single wheel could turn;
We can break their haughty power, gain our freedom when we learn
That the Union makes us strong.

In our hands is placed a power greater than their howded gold,
Greater than the might of armies magnified a thousand fold,
We can bring to birth the new world from the ashes of the old,
For the Union makes us strong!

CRAWDAD

You bring a line
And I'll bring a pole, Honcy.
You bring a line
And I'll bring a pole, Baby.
You bring a line
And I'll bring a pole.
We'll go fishing
In the Crawdad Hole,
Honcy, Sugar, Baby of mine.

Yonder comes a man
With a sack on his back.
Got all the Crawdads
He can pack.

He fell down
And bust his sack.
Ya augh soon
The Crawdads backing back.

Crawdad, Crawdad
Three for a dime.
Did you ever see
Crawdads all like mine.

Crawdad, Crawdad
You better go deep.
I's goin' to catch you
Porc deat.

Lot more verses
To this song.
Guess I'd better
Be goin' along.

2. No more mourning, no more mourning,
No more mourning after while,
And before I'll be a slave
I'll be buried in my grave,
Take my place with those
Who loved and fought before.

3. I know you're goin' to miss me.

4. Oh, freedom, oh freedom.
WHO'S WHO AMONG THE CAMPERs

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About Christmas time we plan to issue a News Letter.
Before Dec. 1st, please drop a line to Bob Cory telling
where you are and what you are doing.

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