AMERICAN FRIENDS SERVICE COMMITTEE BULLETIN

WINTER 1959

# AFSC ACTS TO MEET CHALLENGES IN SOUTH

By Alex Morisey

I stood on the sidelines one September morning in 1957 and watched North Carolina begin integration of its public schools. Five Negro children walked calmly across the time and space between segregation and desegregation in Greensboro.

What I saw was the first breakthrough in the Southeast. About 18 months earlier the AFSC started a school desegregation program in the Southeastern Regional Office. It encouraged and stimulated community efforts to comply with the historic 1954 school decision.

For many years the AFSC has conducted work in the South on an integrated basis and has had race relations programs in other parts of the country. The newest southern program is in Little Rock. Another is in Louisiana and Mississippi, and one is scheduled to start in Houston in January.

After Greensboro I watched desegregation begin in Charlotte and Winston-Salem, the other two cities where the AFSC school program focussed most of its attention in 1957. North Carolina's "token integration" tally at the week end was 11 Negro children in previously all-white schools.

Now desegregation has started in seven cities, and 53 Negro children are in formerly white schools. The number is more than three times that in 1958-59. The communities are Greensboro, Winston-Salem, Charlotte, High Point, Durham, Goldsboro, and Havelock.

**Desegregation began in Durham, N. C. this fall when five Negro students were transferred. A total of 225 had asked to be reassigned.** *Photo courtesy Carolina Times*

### Staff Participates

In a mass citizen effort in Durham last summer, the Committee on Negro Affairs got 225 applications for transfer in a week. Upon request, an AFSC staff member worked with them. Five of the students were reassigned.

Two Negro girls enrolled this fall in previously white schools in High Point, the location of the Southeastern Regional Office. Work of the High Point Civic Committee, the AFSC staff, and other citizen groups encouraged the School Board to grant the transfers. Thirteen applications were placed before the Board.

Prior to 1954, the AFSC was busy on two fronts. In Washington it was helping to bring integration to schools in the nation's capital. Programs in North Carolina and Texas were trying to open new job opportunities to Negro workers. It seemed possible that desegregation experience in Washington might be applied in North Carolina, where there was a strong regional office constituency, and a somewhat flexible pattern of race relations.

In 1956, its first year, the North Carolina program held a seminar attended by about 40 Greensboro teachers, established contact with influential policy-makers and administrators, and distributed information on desegregation.

In the second year the only concrete measurement of progress was 13 instead of 11 students in desegregated schools in the same three cities. Even so, another 96 applications for transfer were filed throughout the state.

In other parts of the South new programs are beginning. A one-year Little Rock program was started this fall after a year of exploration by the Southwest Regional Office and the National Office. Two experienced staff members were assigned. A man from the North Carolina school program helped get the work underway. The former director of the Philadelphia Suburban Housing Program will remain throughout the year.

The staff plans to reach students, both white and Negro. It will try to strengthen communication between the races, and help the community come to grips with the basic moral issues in the problem.

Since 1954 the AFSC has organized a merit employment program in Baton Rouge, La., where rapidly expanding industrial development is helping to change the Southern economy. A new undertaking in merit employment is to start January 1 in Houston, Texas. The AFSC was invited there by a group of local citizens who laid the groundwork for the venture on their own initiative.

### Resources Isolated

Resources in Southern race relations are individuals who are often isolated and see little or no opportunity to express their liberal convictions in action.

This year the AFSC started a program tailored to help these scattered individuals get more security, support, and wider opportunities to influence the South's response. A staff member is in the initial stages of the assignment

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## ...not merely sentiment...

*Philadelphia, Pa.*
*November, 1959*

*Dear Friends:*

With Christmas approaching many of us naturally are thinking of little children. Christmas day is their day, just as the Kingdom of God is said to be "theirs" too. But ideally every day should be like Christmas and the Kingdom of God may belong also to adults — to the pure in heart, to the peacemakers, and to all those whom Jesus congratulated in the Beatitudes.

The American Friends Service Committee has long been mindful of children, not once a year, but day in day out. As in our pictures, so in our thinking, children are often in the foreground. The School Affiliation Program and the Children's Program bring together those of our land and those of other lands. By gift, by exchange of letters, and even of teachers and pupils across the sea, we build up mutual knowledge and understanding.

Particularly in our refugee programs do we often think of "one of these little ones," "one of the least of Christ's brethren." The newest groups to whom we have been ministering are the people of Lebanon, the Algerians who have escaped to Morocco or Tunisia, and the young people and children of the Chinese refugee families, crowded unbearably in the teeming and swollen area of Hong Kong. Meanwhile in our own South the patient and understanding assistance to children, both white and black, deprived of schooling because of public resistance to integration, is an unexpected service open to us.

It is not merely sentiment and appeal to the Christmas spirit that leads us to mention here the children. For we recognize that sentiment can be sense as well. The welfare of children is inseparably bound up with that of parents and vice-versa. Atomic fallout has made us particularly sensitive to the relevance of what we do today to future generations. Hence the increase of understanding and friendliness at any level is serviceable to all. We can rejoice in a rounded and varied program. Others may care only for what goes on "at the summit." Our Committee is willing, while remembering the children, to include all, as the Bible says, "from the least to the greatest."

*Yours sincerely,* Henry J. Cadbury *Chairman*

### TRIBUTE TO A REFUGEE — A CHRISTMAS GIFT

**An early Christmas gift to the AFSC contained this explanation:**

**"I want to tell you of a young man, a Spanish refugee. One of his first lessons in life at the age of three was to run and hide when he heard a plane. Bombed from several homes, with his father fighting in the army, at the age of seven he was in that terrible flight over the mountains to France. Among starving, with nothing but what they had on their bodies, they were put into a concentration camp surrounded by barbed wires with nothing inside, and it was winter.**

**"The first time he ever heard of America was when the American Friends came and put up modern shelter from the weather — and from that moment he thought America must be a good place and wanted to come here. He was educated in France, married an American girl, came here and is now an instructor in a good college — with small pay and a small son. I am afraid he is critical of a good many American things, but it would be nice if my gift went from him . . ."**

**Again this year the Friends Service Christmas gift plan will be available to contributors. Instead of personal gifts to friends or associates, contributions in their names can be made to the AFSC. An attractive Christmas card will be sent by the AFSC to each honoree.**

# 25 YEARS O

### *HOW IT BEGAN . . .*

By Ray Newton

During the domestic conflict of the early thirties in this country there was violence between labor and capital, between the white and the Negro, and among other groups. I thought a pacifist ought to be brought face to face with these conflicts. I was influenced by followers of Ghandi who became intimately acquainted with the important issues by participation in local conflicts on a non-violent basis. As secretary of the AFSC Peace Section, I felt compelled to see what we could do.

In order to help, it seemed to me that we pacifists must know from experience what we were talking about. Furthermore, I felt pacifists ought to be talking and thinking about ways to function in tension areas—ways that were consistent with their philosophy.

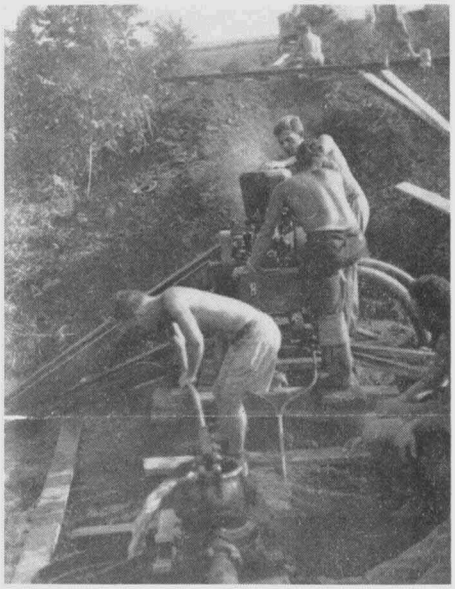
I was influenced by the rehabilitation work which the AFSC did in Europe after the war, and by Pierre Ceresole's efforts to organize European pacifists into relief teams to work in flood situations, avalanches, and other disasters. But it didn't seem to me that American pacifists ought to sit around and wait for either war or natural disasters in order to express compassion for their fellow men.

Obviously pacifists couldn't just go to a tension area and live there and walk around posing as angels of light and love. This would be thoroughly misunderstood. To know people in a community where tension existed one had to work alongside them and help them accomplish things which the community thought were important. From this thinking the work camp idea grew.

In the early stages there were many problems. The idea was new, recruitment was difficult, and ideas about what a group of this kind could do were few. People were suspicious. Why would anybody want to come in from the outside and do this kind of work?

It was only after Wilmer and Mildred Young agreed to serve as leaders of the first camp that the AFSC was willing to undertake the experiment.

# F WORK CAMPS: AN IDEA GROWS



**The first work camp laid a water line to serve 50 mining families.**

### *THE FIRST CAMP . . .*

By WILMER and MILDRED YOUNG

THE FIRST American work camp was held in 1934 in Westmoreland County, Pa. It began before the end of June and continued through August. We insisted that members arrive at the beginning and stay to the end. There was an excitement in the newness of everything; we had neither traditions nor experience, nothing beyond a few hints from Ceresole's Service Civile Internationale.

We were fortunate in many ways—having to create our living quarters using a barn and a vermin-infested house with several feet of water in the cellar, and the kitchen and dooryard of another house. Only the kitchen had a water supply or plumbing. Thus everybody was put to work immediately and all skills and all physical resources were called out.

Second, we had an excellent, compact, and sufficient work project. We dug a ditch a mile and a half long and in some places over six feet deep, between an artesian well and a hilltop reservoir. Then we laid an eight-inch cast iron pipeline in the ditch. This was to provide the water supply for a community of about 50 mining families who were soon to move from several nearby worked-out, or unprofitable mines and form a "subsistence homestead." The government was helping to establish these homesteads in those years as a means of meeting some problems of the depression. The women did not work in the ditch, but, besides feeding the men, they scattered out to the forlorn mining camps in teams and organized play groups with the children, or sewing and knitting circles with the miners' wives. They also worked with the women in a large central canning operation.

Third, we were flung into the middle of a graphic example of the weaknesses of our economic system, and shown an attempt to patch it. The situation itself raised many questions. We gathered almost every evening to discuss these questions with speakers or leaders who were interested in the camp's novel approach to both education and service. They joined us for an evening, or for several days, and in and out of the ditch.

By the end of the summer we felt that in the future the number of participants in the Westmoreland camp should be divided into three camps. Nevertheless, the smaller camps which followed could never perhaps quite duplicate the verve of that big camp of forty men, fourteen women, and three children, all working with a brand new instrument.

The other day we heard someone say, "traditional methods such as the work camp. . . ." Twenty-five years!

### *THE PRESENT SCENE . . .*

By MATT HERRON

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS have brought many new lines of development to the work camp idea. But the same practical and compassionate response to human need underlies the evolution of today's work camp program. As the problems of the depression were disposed of, it became more difficult to find work projects which answered a clearly recognizable need. Early camps frequently responded to human disasters caused by unsolved social problems. Later, work camps began to be used as tools to get at the roots of the problems themselves. Thus a work camp, which constructed bus shelters on an Indian reservation, united Indians and work campers in constructive labor as it sought to break down attitudes of discrimination.

A participant from the Westmore-

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**A 1959 work camp helped erect a center for migrant workers near Sodus, Mich.**
*Photo by Matt Herron*

## CHALLENGES IN SOUTH

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which will concentrate on Louisiana and Mississippi.

Other AFSC projects supplement the programs in education and job opportunity. In High Point, for example, an interracial workshop and dinner for children's workers offered inspirations and new ideas for improving intergroup relations. Encouragement and support was given to seven Negro students of High Point who attended Quaker seminars in Washington and at the United Nations. In the past five years work camps, seminars, internes in industry projects, and surveys with teen-age and college participants have been conducted in scattered Southern communities.

## AFSC CAMPS

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land work camp of 1934 would notice changes in a contemporary project. The groups are smaller and more uniform in age. Participants are drawn from all faiths and racial backgrounds, and frequently from countries abroad. Quakers are in the minority.

As work camps shifted their emphasis toward social problems, new types of projects evolved. In 1944 the Internes in Industry Program was begun in response to growing interest in labor-management problems. Many who wanted to participate also needed to earn money during the summer vacation. The internes found factory jobs, lived together in the heart of the city, and studied the effects of industrialism on American society.

During World War II, Institutional Service Units were begun in mental hospitals and other institutions as an outgrowth of the experience of conscientious objectors serving in similar settings. Internes in Community Service, begun in 1952, have offered experience in urban social problems by providing jobs in social service agencies.

While the work camp idea was taking new lines within the United States, the movement was spreading beyond our borders. In 1939 Ray Newton started the community service program in Mexico and El Salvador. In the same year in Philadelphia, David Richie launched an experiment with week-end work camps for the Friends Social Order Committee. His idea spread throughout the world as far as India and Japan.

With the opening of the Overseas Work Camp Program after World War II, the work camp idea came full circle.

It now sends Americans into camps in Europe, Africa, and Asia, and welcomes volunteers from these areas into AFSC camps in North America and abroad.

Since 1934, AFSC work camps and related summer programs in the U.S. have provided an outlet for service to more than 7,000 young people in about 500 projects. In 1959, over 2,500 volunteers served in week-end work camps and Institutional Service Units, and another 400 filled the 24 service projects held in this country last summer.

"Traditional method?" Yes, but the history of AFSC service projects shows this traditional method expanding to meet the fresh challenges of a rapidly changing society.

### New Publications

REPORT FROM THE MATERIAL AIDS PROGRAM — A two-page illustrated sheet describing AFSC response to refugee needs of Algerian refugees, Arab refugees in Jerusalem, and assistance to Southern Italy through the Union for the Struggle Against Illiteracy.

PEACE IS IMPERATIVE — A folder describing how the AFSC works for peace through conferences, seminars, information and education programs.

IN YOUR HANDS — A folder in support of World Refugee Year and describing work with refugees in Austria, Hong Kong, Germany, Jordan, France, India, and Israel.

CATALOGUE OF PROJECTS AND PROGRAM MATERIALS — An index prepared by the Children's Program listing projects, people, and countries in "Days of Discovery," and "Friendly Things to Do." (Available on request.)

SEMINAR FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS — A folder giving schedules and details of 1959-60 seminars to be held at the United Nations, in Washington, and at Pendle Hill, (Wallingford, Pa.).

CHOICES — A pamphlet of information about conscription; useful for counselors and conscientious objectors.

OVERSEAS WORK CAMPS 1960 — A two-page flyer describing overseas summer work camps for young people.

### Program Aids Available

Two packets, "Days of Discovery," and "Friendly Things to Do," (price 25 cents each) contain service projects prepared by the AFSC Children's Program for December and January. A new Christmas idea is "Treasure Trees" of gifts which may be sent to children abroad. Christmas Caps is a project in which children may contribute wool yarn and needles for Algerian boys to knit themselves caps.

AFSC BULLETIN Number 65 © 3547 Requested

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