I.S.S.
BULLETIN

I.S.S. AND THE YOUTH MOVEMENT
By Joseph P. Lash

PACIFIST WORK CAMPS

I.S.S. NOTES

DR. GIDEONSE ON WORK CAMPS

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I.S.S. AND THE YOUTH MOVEMENT

The luxuriant growth of new organizations among young people today is a heartening sign. For a long time after the Nazi-Soviet pact there was a condition of shell shock or paralysis among liberal young people. Until that time the American Youth Congress and the American Student Union were considered the youth movement and commanded wide confidence. Suddenly with the pact and the Soviet invasion of Finland these organizations failed to respond in terms of their professed purposes. Youth watched the slogans and loyalties of one month become the anathemas and heresies of the next.

It was a paralyzing situation because you could not put your finger on what was happening. In the popular front era lines between young communists and democrats had completely broken down (in the youth movement). It was not that democrats had become communists, but vice versa. But with the pact the young communists quickly reform their frictions within the youth movement to put across the new policy of the Communist International. One did not have to be able to identify individual communists to prove a case of communist influence—the chirping of crickets is a sufficient indication of the presence of crickets even if one can’t see a single cricket. But it’s difficult to fight the unseen. And it was difficult to fight communist control when communists paraded as liberals and isolationists. Another cause of paralysis among the non-communists was a fear that by voicing one’s real suspicions one would give comfort to witch-hunters and reactionaries who had always wanted to destroy the youth movement.

The very volatility of the youth situation today is encouraging, for it is a clear sign that the log-jam is broken.

Among the organizations which have recently sprung up avowedly to fill the gap created by the defection of the American Youth Congress and the American Student Union are Democracy’s Volunteers in Kansas, the Youth for Democracy groups in the midwest, the Student League for Progressive Action and the Student Defense League in eastern colleges, the Student Committee for Democracy in upper New York
State colleges. What is interesting about these groups is that despite the totally spontaneous way with which they spring up they reflect a common point of view. Their disagreement with the ASU and AYC is over the way these latter organizations have compromised progressive purposes and aspirations. What they seek are channels for liberal and progressive action in the American grain.

It is interesting to describe the ideas that define these groups. They stand for a positive attitude toward national defense and for support of all the forces resisting aggression. They believe that the conflict between democracy and totalitarianism is irreconcilable. They believe that the world is in the grip of a vast social revolution the key to which is the need to subordinate modern technology to the public interest.

And with the President they would say that U.S. influence in the world community must be to secure a peace based upon four essential human freedoms: freedom of speech and expression; freedom of religious worship; freedom from want; freedom from fear.

The newly formed Student Defenders of Democracy which within a week received the endorsement of 250 student leaders in 115 colleges for a program of this character is not only undertaking to integrate and unify the various groups that we mentioned, but to provide channels of expression and organization for the many thousands of students who are looking for an action program.

Where does International Student Service fit into this picture? It is not an exaggeration to say that I.S.S. has become the major catalytic agent for the creation of a new student movement in this country. This is true in spite of the fact that I.S.S. itself espouses no program except faith in the democratic process. If the democratic process is to operate, student America must learn how to evaluate critically all the alternatives for social salvation that confront it. It must learn how to arrive at convictions and then how to implement those convictions with action.

In a sense what I.S.S. is trying to do is to give the democratic process a chance to operate on the campus. The leadership of

I.S.S. is fully aware that much of the success of the young communists in maintaining their hegemony over the youth movement lies in their ability to prevent new groups from organizing. How do they do this? In part by paying great attention to the training of their people—training them in the devices of parliamentary maneuvering and in how to interpret the communist position with skill and eloquence and in non-communist terms. But that is only a part of the technique. The other part lies in packing meetings at which a new group might organize and in using any and every tactic to break up an incipient opposition. What immobilizes student democracy is not a lack of program—the program will come later—but a lack of technique with which to meet these tactics and promote an alternative program.

If a new youth movement is to be built there must be a new youth leadership. That leadership does not have to be one that advocates any particular day to day program. But it must be leadership which is able to think critically, to defend its conclusions, and to act courageously. I.S.S. today is uncovering the vast resources of leadership that exist on the campus. It is the training school of student democracy.

If it is becoming increasingly clear that mankind will never go back to the post-Versailles status quo, it is not at all clear what the picture will be in a few years and how much that is good in democracy will survive. The shape of things to come will in some measure be determined by the type of leadership young people are developing today. If anti-democratic forces are allowed to secure a monopoly on the articulate youth leadership today, they will have a decisive hold on the future.

Joseph P. Lash

This issue of the Bulletin appears in a format considerably different from that of the first. We trust it is better, but we should like our readers' opinions on the subject. We are enclosing a postcard for the purpose of recording your response to this and a few other questions. We shall be very grateful if you would fill it out and return it.
I.S.S. NOTES

Conference Department

FOLLOWING our thumpingly successful conference at N.J.C., during the Christmas holidays, this department took two days off to recuperate and then plunged back into the endless round of consultations, field trips, agitated long-distance calls and midnight coffee-pot debate, all of which is attendant upon running conferences for college students. But we think the labor is more than worthwhile, for we have in prospect two very exciting gatherings to be held in February and March.

The first is an I.S.S. Institute on "War Aims — The Elements of a Just Peace." It will be held at Smith College, on February 15 and 16, and will be limited to fifty students from the Connecticut valley colleges. This restriction on numbers is not in any sense a case of snobbish exclusiveness; rather, it is the result of a general feeling of many I.S.S. associates that large conferences are too cumbersome for studious and intensive consideration of an issue. This conference, then, is in the nature of an experiment; it will resemble a seminar rather than a mass meeting. The discussion, however, promises to be vital and timely.

Late in March or early in April Yale University will play host to a two-day session on "Students and National Defense." The subject was discussed at our recent conference at N.J.C., but many delegates felt that it was important enough to require more extensive treatment. Being, as always, ready to oblige, we assented. The student's obligation to the government will be debated, as will be the practical participation in the defense effort that the student qua student can undertake.

This is the sort of letter that softens the burden of the day's labor:

Hampton Institute
International Student Service
8 West 40th Street, N. Y. C.

Dear Sir:

I attended the I.S.S. conference at New Jersey College for Women during the Christmas vacation, as a delegate from

Virginia

January 6, 1941

Hampton, Virginia

I.S.S. BULLETIN

Hampton Institute. The conference provided one of the greatest experiences of my college career. I found the commissions mentally stimulating, and was glad to have an opportunity to know what other students are thinking, feeling, and doing. I want to thank you for the courtesies extended in general, and in particular to me, a Negro student.

I am interested in knowing more of the origin and history of I.S.S. so that I may give my fellow students a more comprehensive report than I may otherwise be able to do. I would appreciate any information about I.S.S. that you could send me.

Best wishes for your continued success in serving Student America!

Sincerely yours,

Alyce W. Morris

Refugee Department

BY ONE central method the refugee department of I.S.S. carries out its two-fold task of serving European and American students. That method is the placing of refugee students in American colleges, a service valuable not only to those who wish to continue their own interrupted educations, but equally so to those American students who wish to have a share in the education of their European contemporaries. As the BULLETIN goes to press, sixteen placements have been made for the second semester of the current academic year, and as many more are in process. The total for both semesters of the year 1940-41 will probably be sixty students.

In February I.S.S. plans to compile a survey of refugee students in the United States. A questionnaire has been sent to all American colleges, the replies to which will, it is felt, disclose arrangements whereby colleges previously unable to admit refugee students may in the future be able to do so.

While making every effort to place the maximum number of candidates, I.S.S. cannot ignore the plight of those who do not secure scholarships. For this group the staff intends by the beginning of March to establish informal study groups in New York City, so that the prospective students may learn from
actual American students something of the civilization in which they have sought refuge. If this design can be carried out, it will also include occasional social meetings under the auspices of I.S.S.

The chief activity of the spring will consist in an active campaign for scholarships in 1941-42. In this effort the refugee department would like to enlist the aid of many undergraduates whom we hope will form refugee committees on their own campuses. In addition, we are considering proposals whereby various private organizations may be able to provide maintenance in colleges able to offer only tuition scholarships.

Publications Department

The birth of a magazine usually follows a simple pattern. Some bright lad gets an idea, he communicates it to another bright lad, together they seek backing, or a printer gullible enough to extend credit, and if they get one or the other the publication eventually appears.

But I.S.S. is an innovator in this as in other fields. In planning a new national student magazine, we do not rest content with our own carefully nurtured conception of what it should be. Rather, we are essaying a collective birth. We are inviting the participation of the academic and literary community.

We start with the proposition that there is a lot of writing talent abroad in American colleges that is eager for expression. At the same time there is great need for a new democratic leadership on the campus. We feel that by developing fledgling writers—through the medium of a professionally-executed magazine—we can make a significant contribution to the democratic process in the colleges.

By the nature of I.S.S., any publication we issue must be non-partisan in a political sense. Its credo can go no further than "faith in the democratic process." Nonetheless, we feel that a journal whose only platform is the publication of good writing of all points of view can be both vital and alive.

But we want to be sure. We therefore addressed two questions to a number of teachers and writers: "Do you think that a magazine in the nature of a forum, which concentrates on literary and intellectual excellence and the presentation of a diversity of views rather than any single one, is the best type of magazine to be published by and for students today? If not, what type of publication would you suggest?"

The answers that we receive—they are just beginning to come in—are interesting and suggestive. They will be a distinct help in shaping our plans and consequently we would like to put the same questions to the readers of this Bulletin.

We earnestly solicit your comments.

Behind Our Letterhead

Our executive committee members seem to like being talked about. No angry protests came after the last gossip column (or aren't they on the mailing list?), and I am delighted to proceed. But I do suggest making this a revolving assignment—to prevent lopsidedness.

We never seem to meet without at least one representative of Smith. The Smith presidents of the last twenty or twenty-one years are active members: Dr. William Allen Neilson, the liberal fighter for the rights of students; Mrs. Dwight Morrow, last year's acting president of Smith College, lecturer, writer, a great friend of China, keen-witted, and charming: somewhere, she even found time to write delightful poems.

Then, of course, there is Dr. Walter Kotschnig, professor at Smith and Mount Holyoke (Harvard—summers only), General Secretary of I.S.S. when he was even younger; harassed expert on the 'Overcrowding of the Learned Professions' due to a by-now famous book on that subject. As energetic chairman of the I.S.S. Refugee Committee—a job which he loves but forever threatens to give up—he and his students at Smith raised amazing sums for I.S.S. refugee work.

It's rather dangerous to be known as an "expert" in this organization. You are immediately grabbed, made the head of a committee, and are then completely at the disposal of an exacting staff; you work—or else. With the Work Camps just hitting their stride and the magazine rather imminent, the chances that this exciting situation will change are luckily rather dim.

Trude Pratt
WORK CAMPS
AN INTERVIEW WITH DR. GIDEONSE

There are two groups of young Americans who need work-camps in the opinion of Harry D. Gideonse, the 39-year-old, Dutch-born president of Brooklyn College. They are, first, the city-bred young men and women who have rarely done enjoyable work in groups and who have scarcely seen more of the country than can be observed from a Manhattan-Brooklyn subway train as it comes to the surface. In the second group are those sons of the rich who have never done any work and who have a snobbish disrespect for their fellow-countrymen.

Dr. Gideonse does not advocate "Forced labor battalions" as has been charged by some of his critics. He believes that by experimentation with voluntary work-camps there will be an opportunity to study the various techniques used by the Quakers, the William James camp in Vermont, and the I.S.S. camps. The camps should be voluntary, but he hopes they will become nationwide—a desirable supplement to book-learning.

One of the worst tendencies amongst city-folk is to "verbalize," Dr. Gideonse remarked during the course of our interview. "Verbalizing in turn gives rise to splinters," he added. Thus he finds young intellectuals always forming their own little political groups if they are unable to see eye-to-eye.

"On the other hand, camping makes young people group-minded. They sing together and they work together. There is a value in such sheer group activity. It is the kind of experience one never forgets, just as one never forgets how to swim."

He contrasted the New England Town Meetings with the Town Hall of the Air sessions to bring home his point.

"In the old town meeting the participants had a common background of action," he explained. "What a man said was measured against what he had done. In terms of group morale this was important; if a citizen had done a hard job well then what he said carried weight. But if he only spoke eloquently but could not work in a group what he said would be discounted."

Yet at Town Hall of the Air what a man says from the floor can only be measured in terms of the juxtaposition of his words. No one knows whether he has ever done anything. As a verbalizer he might be excellent, but as a worker he might be without any merit.

Dr. Gideonse does not envisage the work-camp movement as a panacea for all social ills. But he believes that it would be helpful in overcoming race prejudice. In his opinion "race prejudice flourishes where minorities are bunched together." It would be a good policy to send young people to sections of the country with which they are not familiar. In that way they would get a national perspective, which many now lack.

Robert G. Spivack

OHIO WORK CAMP

Since nothing succeeds like success, we have decided on a repeat performance of our last summer's work camp at Hudson, Ohio.

Hudson lies between Cleveland and Akron, in the heart of the mid-west farm country. The camp, housed in the Goodrich Social Settlement, thus boasts a social laboratory of two industrial cities—now booming with defense contracts—as well as an extensive rural area.

The work program will probably consist of the construction of an overnight bunkhouse and playfields for settlement house kids, and a tree nursery for the farmers.

The study program, this year as last, will enlist speakers from the rubber unions, Standard Oil Company, the churches and the relief, educational, health and recreational institutions of the area.

Campers will be college students, factory workers, farm youth and refugees. In addition, three or four Mexican young people may participate.

The camp will be held in July. Anyone desiring more information, or wishing to apply for admission, should write to Work Camps for America at the I.S.S. office.
PACIFIST WORK CAMPS

Pacifist work camps, sponsored by religious groups, have for many years been an important part of the work camp movement. Their aims and methods, however, are little known among the general public. Below we present two short articles surveying the camps established by the Friends Service Committee and the Church of the Brethren.

The Church Adopts Work Camps

WORK CAMPS of the Church of the Brethren began with the desire to demonstrate the effectiveness of democratic and non-violent methods in meeting the problems of depressed American communities. Starting with two camps in the summer of 1939, the Work Camp movement has already become one of the most potent forces in the Church. The values realized were found to be two-fold: service to the community, and enrichment of the campers—the latter being by far the greater value.

Both in the Church and in wider circles the 78 campers from sixteen states, in the last two summers, have exerted an influence far out of proportion to their number. The campers have come largely from the student group, but many teachers, ministers, social workers, and a few farmers and laborers were represented. The movement thus far has been on a somewhat unofficial basis, a large part of the program being shouldered by youth who are interested in paying more than lip service to democracy, and who see the unique values of “education through exposure.” All the camps but one have been co-educational with about a fifty-fifty sex proportion. Each camper is responsible for his own fee—approximately six dollars a week. A system of scholarships, however, is now being planned.

The acquisition of useful knowledge, the learning of creative skills, the development of constructive social attitudes—these natural educational products of a Work Camp experience are seldom found in the traditional class-room activities. Many of the educational values of a Brethren Work Camp emerge from the informal experience in cooperative living, in democratic planning and sharing of responsibility, in numerous per-sonal contacts with persons from all walks of life, in the variety of manual labor offered. This type of learning cannot be easily enshrined in an academic gown, but it is valid!

Along with the informal educational activities there have been many planned discussions with educators, labor leaders, business men, peace workers, economists, social workers, sociologists, foreign relief workers, etc. It is to be regretted that the campers have had so little time to use the adequate library facilities at each camp. Field trips to the mine, plantation, migratory camp, factory, etc., implemented text-book knowledge. This well-rounded program enabled the campers to see their daily tasks in a meaningful context.

Human need is almost the sole criterion in selecting locations for Brethren camps, for service to the community is held to be fundamental. The actual site is determined by finding a good handle for a physical project. The first two camps in the summer of 1939, however, met largely recreational needs. In Chewelah, Washington, nine campers spent two months constructing an asphalt surface to be used for tennis during the summer and for ice-skating in the winter. The other project was located in the hard-hit anthracite area of Pennsylvania.

At Cooperstown

Photo by W. F. Brinton
Here in a small community near Scranton the campers built recreational equipment and conducted craft classes for the children of unemployed miners.

Last summer the three camps found projects which met more basic needs. The camp which was situated in Yakima, Washington, among the Joads, drew campers from New York to California. The group first lived in a government Farm Family Labor Camp, helping to conduct recreational activities and to build four schoolhouses. Later it moved out into the hop fields where a day nursery was conducted for approximately one hundred and fifty migrant babies. After he had seen some almost unbelievable conditions and had contracted two minor diseases from his migrant friends, one camper said, 'I've tasted the bitterness of the 'Grapes of Wrath.'"

A large camp was conducted in a former company town near Johnstown, Pa., in the bituminous area. Here two dozen campers helped the people get on their feet by improving a road, by helping build a cooperative store, and by other activities. The third camp was a unique experiment, an all-girls camp held at Westminster, Md. The main projects were sewing garments and directing crafts.

Ernest Lefever, Secretary
Pennsylvania Work Camp Committee

Year-Around Camp for CO’s

After six years of experience in the operation of summer work camps devoted to service and study in "areas of social and economic tension," the American Friends Service Committee established a year-round work camp at Cooperstown, New York, last autumn. Summer campers had found their experience so fruitful that many desired to carry on that type of cooperative living for a full year. They desired a lengthened period of self-discipline in which to think things through, to experiment in the non-violent way of settling human conflict, and to offer some needed service to their country.

At present at the Cooperstown Work Camp there are twenty-six campers, five of them girls. The girls do the housework while the boys toil with the United States Forestry Service.

The government has established a timber cooperative to help the farmers work their lumber more advantageously. Instead of cutting a large area at one time, and waiting for more than sixty years before the land produces another saleable crop of trees, the farmers are being encouraged by the Forestry Service to cut only certain trees every year, thus assuring a steady annual cash income.

Under the direction of the Forestry Service, some of the campers are working as "cruisers," advising the farmers which trees should be cut. Others have been building a seasoning shed to be used with the sawmill. In the spring they will replant areas already cut. The conservation work will also include the construction of small dams to prevent serious erosion from surface runoff. Areas better suited to farming will be cleared.

The routine of the campers will be familiar to all those who have attended summer camps. After the 5:45 rising and breakfast, there is a daily period of meditation during which the campers attempt to achieve that deeper sense of unity which comes from an appreciation of the significance the day's labors should hold for the individual and his community.

In the leisure time remaining after the eight-hour day of
strenuous physical labor, the boys carry out a varied program of studies. The cooperative movement, the New Testament, non-violence and pacifism are some of the subjects being pursued. Three of the boys are carrying on a sociological investigation of the community. Others conduct or assist in the leadership of young people’s groups in the two churches of Cooperstown. Still others participate in the church choirs and glee clubs.

The campers are there for a great variety of reasons. Some desire to develop the skills necessary to fit themselves for leadership. They want to help others to help themselves, and restore a satisfactory way of life to their local communities. Others with theological school background are at the camp to develop an understanding of the work camp technique so that they will be able to return to their own churches and start denominational camps. One boy has stopped his college career in mid-term to have a year in which to reorient himself, to think out some of our more pressing problems, so that his final two years of college will be more meaningful. An artist hopes to gain from the camp an understanding of a cooperative way of life, permitting him to live more adequately in a manner contributing to his own profession and to his community.

But these reasons are all secondary. In spite of the seeming diversity of objective, nearly all of the campers are united in their basic belief in the pacific method of solving our disputes. Men of good-will must join together to form a solid bed-rock of mutual understanding and cooperative living before ultimate peace will come.

HOWARD WRIGGINS

To: INTERNATIONAL STUDENT SERVICE
8 West 40th Street
New York City

I am interested in the work camp idea and would like to know more about the Work Camps for America program of International Student Service.

Name .................................................................
Address ............................................................
Student (year) ....................................................
Faculty (department) ...........................................