Work Camps for America Merges With International Student Service

Stating that "International Student Service undertakes to promote the work camp movement as developed by Work Camps for America because the ISS believes that work camps will enlist youth's support for a democracy responsive to the needs of its citizens"... and that Work Camps for America "believes the new program of International Student Service will help orient youth in an era of uncertainty." the two organizations announced their merger early in December.

The International Student Service accepted "the responsibility for promoting the work camp movement in a way that will secure the continuity of the policy developed by Work Camps for America according to the principles outlined in the attached statement." These principles include sufficient stress on both work and study, admission of youth from all walks of life and representing "different political backgrounds", self-government, ties with a local community, moderate fees, private non-governmental character, an American as distinct from an international emphasis, participation with local groups in establishing camps, promoting a work camp publication, and maintaining approximately the same age level. Work Camps for America agreed to become a department of ISS, preserving the former name, and to dissolve its Board of Directors.

The new arrangement provides for the participation of non student groups by admitting to the Work Camp Committee of ISS, persons not members of the ISS Executive Committee drawn from labor, farm, Negro or other groups.

The International Student Service has had a history abroad of promoting work camps so that this is not a new departure for the organization. In Switzerland the ISS was responsible in large measure for the outstanding popularity and success of the student work camps. The ISS has won a name for itself in American academic communities through devoted service to the student refugee problem and through an expanding program of student conferences on national and international problems. Supported by the new work camp department and a projected publication the International Student Service will offer a diversified and valuable program of assistance to college students and other youth.

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TO THE EDITOR

December, 1940

In the Editors of Work!

At a time when our attention is turned to problems of defense, it is only natural that some question should arise concerning the role of the work camp movement. Today, advocates of government control and militarization are becoming increasingly vocal. This is a real change of policy changes in the name of "defense" which would result in work camps that were caricatures of democracy.

Work Camps for America in the past has courageously stood for equal participation of all young people interested in democratic work camps. Government control may well mean negation of Negro youth in separate camps, an end to camper self-government, and persecution of political heretics. How can we expect to carry on in the old spirit in an atmosphere that is not as free from the taints of discrimination and autocratic rule as a matter of basic policy.

Defense of democracy has a special meaning for us, but defense must be built on the home front as well. Work Camps for America was founded as an answer to commercialization and disillusionment, as the American reply to the threat of regimentation of the youth. Today, more than ever, we must stand guard over the old ideal. We must be prepared to make such realizations in this time of new problems and new challenges.

Yours for democratic work camps,
John J. Novellis, Chairman
Continuation Committees
Green Parus Work Camp

BLACK MOUNTAIN WORK PROGRAM

(Continued from page 1)

An educational experiment is never an end in itself. It is a kind of demonstration that our educational system needs improvement and a new adaptation to the needs of our society. The schools and educational institutions of the country as a whole, are not as efficient as the new ideas, and rightly so. Educational fashions and new method of education are pleasing to the schools only if they are accepted. If they are thoroughly tested. In the case of work camps, we have evidence that the schools may not carry over the camps, but rather experiment with certain of the work camp principles on their own.

Such an experiment is now being carried on by Black Mountain College, in the Blue Ridge section of western North Carolina. Black Mountain College, even though it is young, has already a tradition in educational experiments. Founded in 1933, the college is proving itself a strong protest against a lack of academic freedom and the suffocating influence of small American colleges. It is based on the idea that the mountain man and the city man have a full share of democratic rights for both backgrounds.

Black Mountain College is at present facing a sort of outer emergency. Its present home will not be available for the college next year. The construction of new buildings on campus owned property is not a dream that has been accomplished through student labor, because the college has no endowment. The realization of this emergency together with a college and community that have made possible the present work program of the college. Students and faculty members voluntarily in a kind of contract with the whole term, to work a maximum of three afternoons of three hours on the building projects at Lake Eden. (Only a few faculty members have the privilege to work five afternoons a week.)

The work camp at West Park in August 1939 proved that a work camp is no college. An extensive library was available, but it was hardly used at all. There are too many hours that can be done in a work camp then in a college - the basic assumption in the experiment at Black Mountain College (which the writer of this article organized), was that a college is not a work camp. The introduction of the organization all and fail if it interfered at all with academic work.

The Black Mountain College work program has been a success, in spite of the many difficulties, and it seems to have been accomplished in the academic work. The experiment will be continued and there seems sufficient enthusiasm left to permit positive results.

It is impossible at the present time to make any final statement. Realistic observers who have been in the college for many years maintain that there is a more serious attitude towards study this year than in the past. The goal of the academic work has been accomplished. It will be continued and there seems sufficient enthusiasm left to permit positive results.

The really fascinating fact about this work project has been watching an idea become a reality. On the day that the students and faculty members started to hold a work project, with no thing but tools and the architect's plans, they already had their foundations laid. We have been on the mountain for four months and the school has been growing. It is a real change of policy changes in the name of "defense" which would result in work camps that were caricatures of democracy.

Abercorn D. Black

stones from the river beds, and saw under their hands an impressive building containing 60 studies for students and faculty members. A system of storage boxes was maintained and it happened frequently that a professor worked under a competent student. To the readers of this periodical who are familiar with what a work program means to college students, even if carried through only four weeks, the importance of this experiment need not be emphasized. Such a program changes its character in three and a half months. The enthusiasm and the spirit of adventure in the beginning changed to a more sober and determined attitude. 'We want to see this through' they seem to say, and during the month of November it was an entirely different thing to go out in snow and rain to fulfill the voluntarily accepted 'contract'.

Every phase of this work program has been carried through in a most democratic spirit. A work committee meets frequently, discussing and deciding every detail of the program. Given so much freedom people are also free to do many things not only of their own actions, but for the groups with which they are working. They realize that in a group of people working together, intelligent following is just as important as intelligent leadership. This realization is probably one of the most valuable results. The work program structures the social experience of the students at Black Mountain College. Every Saturday night there is a social dance at the college and sometimes there is a band to make things better. It seems almost incredible to think that there is such a thing to be found in such a dink. It can be easily imagined that a new sort of social consciousness, a new spirit of cooperation is emerging in such a way.

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Abercorn D. Black
The First Work Camp
in Republican Germany

An Interview with Peter Martin Lampel

Armistice in 1918 found the German nation exhausted and torn by bitter hatreds. The dream of a farm for every returning soldier was never realized. In the cities youth were developing a cynical pattern and adopting the bitterness and extremism which has later characterized the Nazi regime.

Youth movements such as the republican Vandervogel arose to meet the challenge and to promote healthier sympathies among the young citizens of post-war Germany. One of the chief aims was to transport urban youth into an environment more conducive to tolerant and hopeful views. Through hikcing, working on farms, camping through the country, youth leaders, young men themselves, sought to bring peace of mind and a new faith for their fatherland to their associates.

In Silesia the problem was made more acute by the post-Armistice war with Poland. Consequently Silesische Jungmannschaft, the local section of the Deutsche Freischier and lead by Hans Dehmel, was faced with an unusually difficult problem. Seeking to bring together the youth of all classes, and to promote good will toward foreign countries, the Silesische Jungmannschaft conducted tours to foreign countries. During the course of one trip to Bulgaria Hans Dehmel and other leaders of the Silesische Jungmannschaft saw young men in uniform working in the forests on the roads and on the farms. Attracted by this Bulgarian labor service they asked to be allowed to work along side of these young men and served for several months. Returning to Germany they spread the word of what they had seen and in time many German educators and youth leaders became interested in the idea.

In Silesia the Volkbildung, a movement to bring to the peasants and workers of Germany a new, popular education, had succeeded in securing the cooperation and financial support of the Governor in establishing a school, the Boberhaus, on the banks of the Bober river. In order to prove their interest the people of Silesia had gone out to raise a share of the money and students gave dramatic performances by the roadside to help raise this sum. Here at the Boberhaus four week sessions were given throughout the year for the miners, and peasants and students who came to participate in this Folk-school and to work to build up the House and garden.

Germany has long been noted for its estates and landed nobility but after the war the historic movement to secure "settlements" for the people, to give them farms as they had been promised, acquired new strength. The Jungdeutsche Orden, which included a large number of the young Reichswehr officers, played a large part in this movement and sought to educate the people for the division of the estates, and to train the youth for the time when they might work on their own farms. Ernest Michler, one of their leaders, saw in the Bulgarian labor service and in the Boberhaus establishment an opportunity to advance this cause.

In this way the youth movement of Germany, the Bulgarian labor service, the Volkbildung, and the drive for division of the estates combined to create one of the first German work camps. To a distressed people this camp represented a hopeful and creative expression for their youth. Other groups adopted the idea, although the Communists and Nazis remained opposed to it until the Communists were liquidated and the Nazis took it over for their own ends, and by 1933 there were more than 350 work camps throughout Germany.

Quoting from his book "PACKT AN! KAMERADEN" written in 1926, Mr. Lampel said "the work camps are the organized willing of the young people who today are without possibility of work, to find a way to become active in building a better future for our state."

Robert E. Lane

WORK CAMPS FOR AMERICA MERGES WITH ISS
(Continued from page 1)

ISS has elected to its Executive Committee Algernon D. Black, formerly President of the Board of Directors of Work Camps for America and the founding father of the first "Work Camps for Democracy", and Kenneth Holland, author of "Youth in European Labor Camps", and former Secretary of International Student Service in the United States. Members of the National Advisory Committee of Work Camps for America have been invited to join the National Committee of ISS. Robert E. Lane, formerly Executive Secretary of Work Camps for America has been appointed Work Camp Secretary for the work camp department of ISS, which will retain the name Work Camps for America.

Work with shovel and pick means work at the wash tub.

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