

Secret Report Tells of Turn of Negro Masses to Communism

By CYRIL BRIGGS.

A LARM that the Negro masses are turning to the revolutionary struggle as the only way out against the capitalist hunger program, lynch terror and race hatred poison is expressed in a secret report made to the Fellowship of Reconciliation by Howard Kester. The report was given at a conference held in New York City, Oct. 15 to 18. It was not intended for publication. In spite, however, of all efforts to keep it secret, the Daily Worker secured a copy of it.

The Kester report admits that in Alabama alone there have been at least 75 Negro victims of the boss lynch terror since August of this year.

"Private citizens are known to have disguised themselves as officers and to have shot Negroes in cold blood. Six Negroes were killed in a freight train near Ensley by deputies,"

"It was reported at police headquarters that they had been killed in a wreck in the yards," the report states.

Bosses "Decide" To Get Rid of Militant Negroes.

The report shows that with the increase of the boss lynch terror there has also been a growth in the militancy of the persecuted Negro masses. It shows, too, the bosses sharpening the terror in the attempt to crush out this militancy;

"The white element has become frightened

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SECRET REPORT TELLS OF TURN OF NEGRO MASSES TO COMMUNISM

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and DECIDED TO RID THE COUNTRY OF ALL 'QUESTIONABLE' CHARACTERS." (Emphasis mine, C. B.)

Every worker who dares to fight for the right to live, and against starvation, wage cuts, denial of unemployment relief and social insurance, against lynching and national oppression of the Negro minority, becomes a "questionable character" in the eyes of the imperialist murderers of white and Negro workers. Militant Negro workers who resist landowner robbery and dare fight for their wages are "questionable characters" to be got rid of by the capitalists. And where the bosses find it inconvenient to carry out their murders of Negro workers by rope and faggot, the bosses' courts are there to frame them up in a nice "legal, respectable" way, and railroad them to death sentences. Witness the case of Orphan (Lee) Jones in Maryland, framed up for the murder of a rich white farmer for no other reason than that he once worked for the farmer at ten cents an hour, was robbed of one day's wages, and had the militancy to protest against the robbery! Witness the case of the nine innocent Scottsboro Negro lads, whose only crime is that they are black and unemployed.

Bosses Are Disarming Negro Masses.

And to make it easier to carry out their terror, to prevent resistance from their Negro victims, the bosses are disarming the Negro masses, denying them the right of self defense. The Kester report states:

"Already there is talk of a race war and so great is the fear of such in certain sections, notably Alabama, that Negroes are being disarmed wholesale. Hardware stores, pawn shops and dealers in firearms have been instructed not to sell firearms or ammunition to Negroes. In Birmingham during the recent disturbance

veritable arsenals were reported discovered in Negro homes. No attempt has been made to disarm the whites."

"Alabama," the report says, "has become the focal point of race tension in the South in the last few months. The tension has gradually spread throughout the lower South."

Sharpening of the National Question.

That which the Kester report tries to cover up with the use of the term "race tension" is the sharpening of the national question, the rising struggles of the Negro masses against lynch terror, legal lynching, Jim Crowism, landowner robbery, and other forms of white ruling class persecution, against starvation and mass misery.

The report is silent on the frightful conditions forced upon the Negro masses by the white bosses. There are admissions that "the economic status of the Negro is extremely low"; that "besides suffering from the various types of unemployment to which nearly all workers are subjected the Negro worker must contend with prejudicial unemployment"; that "Negroes are paid from one-third to one-half the wages" paid to white workers. Of the robbery of the Negro croppers by the landowners, of the system of forced labor, of the pollution of Negro women by the white landowners, the report is discreetly silent. We will fill in a few of the details from a worker's report to the Daily Worker on conditions around Camp Hill, Alabama, where rich landowners and police a few months ago shot down and jailed Negro croppers for daring to organize to fight for better conditions. The report to the Daily Worker says:

Robbed of Crops and Government Loan.

"Conditions in and around Camp Hill getting worse. Planters say they will cut off the croppers food allowance entirely after Nov. 1.

"Some of the croppers have no hogs to kill—and the landlords even take part of the syrup they make. They have to sell the seed at a low

price and at planting season buy it back again at high prices. This is in the cotton belt, yet they must go around in tattered, torn clothing. The white croppers are in just about the same bad fix though they (some of them) get a little better treatment.

"White children go to school, but the Negro children are denied any schooling. Some of them at 15 years of age have been to school but once in their lives.

"Some of the croppers were supposed to get a government loan, but the landlords took it all and gave them maybe one-tenth of it. When some of the croppers kicked, W. E. Wren, County Farm Agent, went around to them and asked how they got so smart. Then the landlords came around and threatened them with death for daring to write away about this brazen robbery. Shows how closely the County agents and all other government officials work with the landlords. Chief of Police Wilson of Camp Hill took the whole crop and money of one of his croppers who was then arrested and threatened with death besides. . . . Chief of Police told the active members (of the Share Croppers' Union) that he was going to 'kill out all the bad 'niggers.'"

Rape Wives and Daughters of Negro Workers.

"White landlords are not content with squeezing the last bit of blood from workers and their families but are visiting their lust upon the Negro women. Those 'chivalrous Southern gentlemen' are forcing Negro workers' wives and daughters to sleep with them—at the point of a gun. Pat Heard, U. S. Army soldier on furlough, came into a Negro worker's house and at the point of a gun ran the worker off and brutally raped 3 girls. Three white landlords attacked the wife of a Negro cropper. Of course the bosses' government didn't even say a thing about this."