guard yelled at me to keep going, stating that Reds would find no pic-
nic on the chain gang as long as he was around. He stood over me, gun
in hand, the whole time I was there, watching my every move. About
eleven-thirty workers and sympathisers came forward and paid my fine.
The guard showed his disappointment in being cheated of the chance to
work a "Red" to death or shoot him should he offer the least resistance.

These bitter attacks upon the revolutionary organisations of the
workers by the bosses is being met with increasing resistance from the
workers. On the very day that I was being sentenced to one hundred and
twelve days on the chain gang for organising the workers to struggle
for work or wages, workers throughout the world were demonstrating mil-
ions strong against starvation. Right in Chattanooga, though all the
leaders were in jail, rank and file workers of the Unemployed Council
held a mass meeting and would have marched on City Hall but for a fierce
rain storm that made it impossible. The attacks of the bosses are bear-
ing fruit but not the kind of fruit counted upon by these bosses.

GILBERT LEWIS

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LIFE AMONG NEGRO FARMERS IN AMERICA.

There are about 12,000,000 Negroes in the United States. The vast
majority of these blacks are on the land, either as agricultural wage
laborers share croppers or poor farmers. They live in certain sections
of America known as the Southern States. In some of these states they
are so thickly concentrated that they form a sort of black country of
their own called "The Black Belt". And strange to say, it is in these
very territories that the Negroes suffer the most brutal oppression.

White ruling class terrorism is so widespread throughout "the
Black Belt", that from time to time whole communities of Negro workers
move away and seek new homes in the Northern States and other parts
of America, where they are able to buy arms and thereby protect them-
selves against mob law.

The most widespread method of terrorism practiced in the South
among the black farming population is what is known as Peonage. This is
the most brutal and demoralising form of economic exploitation. It has
its basis in the rent and profit system which grew out of chattel sla-
very. After the Negroes were "freed" from slavery, they had no land of
their own, or the means whereby to gain a livelihood, so they were
compelled to remain on the plantations of their masters. Some of them
sold their labour power for wages, while others entered into a sort
of feudal contract relationship which bound them to the land like
serfs. The landlords allotted a certain quantity of land to each black
family, and supplied tools, seed, and food to the tenants until the
harvest was reaped. The crop is then taken over by the landlord who
sells it and afterwards made an account to the tenant. The tenants
always given less than what the crop was sold for, and in this way is
continually indebted to the landlord. For example, if a Negro cultiva-
ted a hundred bales of cotton which fetched 600 dollars on the market,
the landlord will present him with an account of 800 dollars for sup-
plies alleged to have been rendered during the year, so even if the
Negro paid 600 dollars he should still owe the landlord 200 dollars
which he would be compelled to pay off by planting another crop under
similar conditions as before.

This is repeated year after year. Even if the Negro took the land-
lord to court his statement of the facts would not be believed, because
the word of the white man can not be refuted by a black. Furthermore,
the Southern landlords are not only the overseers and bookkeepers of their plantations, but are the political dictators of the community as well; and when they make a statement it becomes the law of the court. It is always the prerogative of the ruling class of the South to determine when Negro workers should leave their service, or under what conditions they are bound.

Negroes who rebel against these outrages and run away are arrested by the police and other uniformed thugs with the aid of blood hounds especially trained for this purpose. They are brought back to the plantations and turned over to the landlords either as vagrants or as runaways.

Another method by which labour is recruited is through the chain-gang. Whenever the landlords need labour they simply go the local judge and arrange that the police be ordered to arrest the required number of workers. In this way whole communities of able bodied blacks are commonly apprehended. All kinds of form-up charges are made against them. When in court they have to agree to enter the service of the landlords who pay a small fine for the opportunity to reduce the Negroes to involuntary servitude. In this way the judges and the police get the court fees, and the landlords cheap labour.

A brief account from one of the peonage districts is sufficient to illustrate this point. Passing along the street where a Negro had been mistreated by his white master, an observer inquired of the worker: "Why do you stand this?" "That is just the damned trouble down here" responded the black. "I once complained to the court when another white man beat me, the man denied it and the judge believed his story imposed upon me a fine which I could not pay, so I have to work it out in the services of this man who was present in the court at that time and paid it in order to get the opportunity to force me to work for him."

Whenever there is a shortage of labour the Southern capitalists carry out these repressive measures. Thousands of blacks are still being held as slaves in the coal mines and on road construction work in the state of Alabama, Mississippi, Texas and Georgia. A law was enacted in the State of Florida in 1919 to the effect, that whenever a Negro is unable to pay his debts he is to be imprisoned, and the jailer has the right to rent him out to a farmer until such time as the farmer is satisfied to release him.

Just a few days ago a white man by the name of Wilson, who owns a 7,000 acre farm near Greenwood, Mississippi, went into the country of Moxubee, scouting for Negro farm labourers. He had signed up 25 coloured workers and had chartered two freight cars for their transportation to Greenwood, when the business-men and plantation owners in Moxubee discovered Wilson's activities. They immediately organised a small band of 100 men and drove Wilson out of the town. The Negroes who had dared to sign up to leave were stripped naked and most brutally flogged in public as a warning to other blacks never to attempt to migrate.

There is a special law in Mississippi which makes it a criminal offense punished by fine or imprisonment for agents to enter the State and contract for labour. This law was enacted in order to prevent Negro tenants and agricultural labourers from leaving their masters no matter how badly they were treated, or how high the wage offered by other employers outside of the State.

A recent investigation has disclosed the existence of large peonage farms in the extreme Southern part of Florida. Over 5,000 Negroes have been collected from various parts of the State and lured away to toil in the turpentine camps where they are forced to work day and night under armed guards. Life in these places is indescribable hells-holes. The workers are huddled together in shacks, given a minimum amount of food of the worst quality, and denied the most elementary
sanitary conveniences. Conditions are more primitive than in some colo-
nial countries. As a result, disease is very rampant in these bar-
bed-wire compounds. Hundreds of blacks die annually from starvation and
exposure, while others meet a quicker and more welcome death at the
hands of their cruel task masters.

Negro farmers and agricultural labourers are completely segre-
gated from all forms of social intercourse with whites in the South.
They are not even allowed to ride in the same coaches with the
whites. Wherever railroad companies agreed to permit them to travel
they are provided with small dirty wooden compartments, for which they
have to pay the same fare as the white passengers, who enjoy the most
up-to-day railroad conveniences. In street-cars, Negroes, get in and
off from the rear end, while the white enter from the front and have
priority to the best seats. In those places where Negroes are admit-
ted to the theatres they are huddled together in filthy balconies for
removed from the stage.

Black farmers are not permitted to patronise restaurants which
cater to whites; neither are they allowed to use the same public bath-
ing beaches, or entrances to buildings as other people. Negroes are
barred at libraries, museums, art galleries, and other centres of cul-
ture. Very limited educational opportunities are offered them. In most
places they are compelled to send their children to separate schools,
and as to be expected the capitalist State expends by far more money
on the education of white children than black ones, although the Ne-
gro workers are made to pay the same taxes for the maintenance of the
public school system.

Politically, Negroes in the South are completely dis-franchised.
This is done with open violence and terror. On election days, armed
white mobs, agents of the capitalists, keep the Negroes away from
the polls in the Southern States. Certain enactments known as the
"Black Laws", have been incorporated in the Statutes of some States in
order to more effectively deprive the Negroes of their political rights.
These laws are chiefly based on property and educational qualifications
as the majority of Negroes are propertyless, and their standard of li-
teracy is a matter to be determined by the capitalist politicals, it
becomes very easy for them to be ruled off the ballot.

Wherever one goes in the South one sees a striking similarity in
the appearance of black communities derisively called "Nigger Towns".
The outstanding feature of these ghettos are their very unsanitary
conditions. For the bourgeois politicians although they impel the Ne-
groes to pay the same amount of taxes as the whites, they never spend
any money to improve the standard of life among the black workers.
Epidemics frequently break out in these settlements, taking heavy toll
among the workers, especially their children. The death-rate among
Negro farmers is in some cases 50% higher than whites. This is espe-
cially so in the case of contagious diseases such as tuberculosis,
typhus, etc.

G. PADMORE.

AZERBEDJAN WORKERS KEEP FLAG OF INTERNATIONALISM FLYING HIGH.

One of the most bitter legacies of the Mussewat system was the
National hatred and fratricidal strife fostered by the Mussewat and
Dashnakzutiun Parties.

But they only found a common tongue and "National Peace" when they
had to suppress the revolutionary movement of the toilers of Azerbadjan
and Armenia.

The upshot was the massacres between Turks (Azerbedjan Tartars) and
and Armenians, which later led to a war between the toilers of both re-
publics. Being enged on to attack each other, the toilers of both these