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# WHEN SOUTHERN LABOR STIRS

## PART IV

## THE STRIKE AT Marion

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## VII

## THE MARION STRIKE

THE Marion strike revealed the same terrible conditions of the mill operatives as in Gastonia and Elizabethton, the same unswerving hostility of the owners, the same faithlessness of the company to its "gentlemen's agreement," the familiar ruthless use of state troops to crush the strike. And in addition to all of this, in Marion the company dared to go one step further. As a result of this step, six strikers were shot dead in cold blood directly in front of the cotton mill.

The Marion strike occurred on July 11, in the wake of the Elizabethton and Gastonia strife. It was not as large as either of the two others, but before it was over it grew in significance all out of proportion to its numerical size. At first one cotton mill and 650 operatives were involved; then two other mills and 1,500 more workers became entangled, and for a while 2,150 were on strike. This strike was settled, but in a short time the first mill came out again and the original strike of 650 workers dragged on indefinitely.

Marion is a small city of 8,000 population in Mc-

Dowell county, North Carolina. It is beautifully situated at the base of the Blue Ridge Mountains and surrounded by high pine covered hills. Many scenic points in the state are just outside Marion. It is on the main highway to the "land of the sky," and appears, as one drives through its streets, a peaceful community, climbing slowly towards southern grandeur. Like Elizabethton and Gastonia, Marion is a county seat and has a courthouse to which come at regular intervals the circuit riding judges together with the legal lights of the state, who pass on rules of conduct, fines, prison sentences, and turns on the state's chain-gang; and in general provide amusement for the town.

In the city itself there is no glaring poverty in evidence. The buildings are new and handsome enough; people amble slowly around the courthouse, gossip on the streets, or sit in friendly conversation in front of the McDowell Hotel. A traveler stopping there for lunch, as many do, would see very little in Marion to remember unpleasantly. But out on the edge of the town, and quite removed from the route to the land of the sky, there is a very different Marion. This other part is two miles away in physical measurement, but the distance is far greater than that reckoned by any other mode of calculation.

There are three cotton mills there, two of them standing in one yard and owned by the Clinchfield Manufac-

turing Company; and about one half mile from the village which surrounds the Clinchfield mills, there is another cotton mill owned by the East Marion Manufacturing Company. It too stands in the center of a village owned by the cotton mill. The Clinchfield mills are natively owned and operated; the East Marion mill is operated and controlled by the Baldwin family of Baltimore, Maryland.

Work conditions in the three mills were, by and large, the same before the strike. The mill villages had similar standards too, and compared with the state as a whole, the mill conditions of Marion might be placed in the average or perhaps the lower bracket. There was a 12-hour shift, extremely low wages, night work, children of illegal age employed, and the stretch-out system in operation. Each company owned a village, but neither one had enough houses to accommodate all of its employees and both rented some privately owned buildings to house their operatives. There was a free strip of land adjoining both villages where a small percentage of the working force lived in their own or rented homes independently of the companies.

In both villages there was a company-owned store in which a United States post-office was located. A company credit system prevailed and a sharp practice of fleecing the operatives by their selling the company

credit money at reduced rates to officers of the mills for United States currency. A majority of the operatives were always in debt to the company.

The mill houses were poor and dotted over the hillsides, standing on high brick stilts, without cellars or closed foundations. There were no sewers. Outside privies were built so as to accommodate more than one family. The sanitation surrounding the privy pits was wretched, and the general upkeep of the houses and the villages far below par. The mill houses had no running water. Driven wells stationed here and there throughout the villages furnished the water supply, and it was extremely difficult to pump or pull the water to the surface. The houses were painted an ugly uniform gray in the Clinchfield village, and in East Marion they were haphazardly painted—some were and many were not.

There was a great deal of sickness in the mill villages. Pellagra especially was rampant there.

Neither village practiced elaborate welfare schemes. There was a recreational building housing a company Y. M. C. A., and some space for games, but all activities were paid for as utilized by the operatives. There were churches everywhere, partly subsidized by the mills. No social activity outside the church services, no moving pictures, no dance halls, and no parks were found there. The companies ruled supreme, but the control was not vicious. People worked in the mill all

day and all night. The bought such things as they needed in the company stores, and after that they could do as they pleased, so far as the company was concerned. Sometimes they went to church two or three times a week. Bootleggers sold whisky to some of the "sinners," and there was no mill interference. In slack time, the operatives went away to visit their country relatives or trudged right out of their back yards into the mountains to see the hills again.

The two villages were separated by only a hard-surface road that led out of Marion proper. The people visited each other and moved from one village to another as they exchanged their jobs.

The companies normally paid very little attention to life in the villages. They employed their operatives in the mills, paid them a wage which returned to the company in exchange for a house, store supplies and fuel. When the whistle blew the managers expected their "hands" to appear for work. Except for that the company did not care.

What the workers thought of their lot is described as follows by Lucy Sparks who was an operative in the Clinchfield mills (where conditions were a bit better than in the East Marion village):

Everybody spits on the floor. And many tuberculosis patients work in the mill. I've been there six years, and I see them while they are ill, until they can stand up no

longer. The mills are swept while we are working and fill our breath with lint and dust full of lint and germs.

The man who scrubs, pours water from a barrel, rubs it around, and then sweeps it into a shovel. Nothing is cleaned by such scrubbing.

The toilets are filthy and ill-smelling. We have to drink in there. Water is put in the toilet room in a pail carried from one of the wells in the village. One dipper is furnished with each pail. All the workers in one room drink from the same dipper. That is why many of the workers wait until after they go home at six o'clock to drink water.

The doffers and spinners have to eat their dinner any time they can, the mill does not stop off for the noon hour. The mill runs day and night. Tags are sewed on to show who makes the most defects. More bad work is made at night.

An inspector sits and keeps her eyes on moving cloth as thousands and thousands of yards fly over the roller without any rest. Is it any wonder that eyes and muscles ache?

If a worker is caught up with work they cannot leave the mill. One worker worked hard and got one-half day ahead. She stayed home and was docked for losing the time. Inspectors earn $8.50 a week; $9.35 is the highest wage which happens once a month. The graders make $.20 a day more than the inspectors.

I am thinking about a widow woman in the village who has a little girl ten years old to feed and clothe and keep in school. She also has an invalid father to support who hasn't done any work for four years. He has nervous disease. Her older sister and mother are too old to work in the mill, but manage to do the housework, washing and

ironing for the family. The widow makes eleven dollars a week to support all of them.

She is a spooler, and stands on her feet from six in the morning until six at night. She underwent an operation six years ago—she isn't strong. There is a fine doctor in Marion who does this family's doctoring without pay. There are many other village families who have a hard struggle.

Some few live on back lanes and have gardens. They fatten a hog, keep a cow and chickens. They get along better.

The houses in the village are built high off the ground. Very open and cold in the winter time. Haven't been painted inside in ten years; are smoked and dirty. The roofs leak badly.

The toilets in the village are earthpit toilets. This summer they were digging new pits for the toilets. The old pits were filled up with filth running all over the ground into a ditch in front of a house by the street, and it was left in that condition. The mill workers had to bury it themselves after they came home from work in the evening.

The president and the secretary of the company live in Marion a mile and a half from the mills. The overseers and store force are paid living wages. Have much better wages than the other workers. They have water in their homes and also got a Christmas bonus.

Those in charge over the workers do not like to give them notices to vacate the houses for they know the conditions. Many are sick and without money to move.

I hope there is some information here that you do not have. I am very sorry I haven't education enough to write as I wish.

The strike occurred first at the cotton mill in East Marion. Baldwin, the president of the company, together with his aunt, Miss Sally Baldwin of Baltimore, owned a majority of its stock. He divided his time between a Baltimore home and his residence in Marion. His house there is built on a hill with just enough shrubbery and trees standing between to hide the ugliness and unsanitary conditions of the place where the operatives live. His residential strip of land is well kept; at one end of it is another handsome house, the home of his mill superintendent, Mr. Hunt. Across the private roadway the sheriff of McDowell county lives. Everything there is beautiful and luxurious. All of the mill that can be seen from that point is the tall smokestack atop the factory. However, in a few minutes' walk from "Bossman's Row" as the place is called, you come into the most miserable section of the village.

Mr. Baldwin is a man of parts, of which intelligence is not the most outstanding. He is rather a poor lawyer and a worse textile manufacturer. He is deeply religious and used to walk down to one of his churches in the village to teach a Bible class for his operatives every Sunday he spent in Marion. He assumed his workers were happy and contented, and he was deeply pained when they ungratefully walked out of his factory on strike.

A native of North Carolina by the name of William Pless owned stock in the East Marion mill and was a

member of its board of directors. Mr. Pless is a practicing lawyer in Asheville and at one time was the attorney for the Baldwin mill. His son was the state solicitor of McDowell county at the time of the strike. When the strike broke out Mr. Pless publicly attacked Baldwin for his labor policy, and sided openly with the strikers. He came to Marion and conferred with them, sympathized with all their demands, and gave a statement to that effect to the press. Then he boarded a train to present the workers' case to the mill directors' meeting in New York City. Thereupon he was removed from the board and faded out of the controversy.

The Elizabethton-Gastonia strike news inspired the Marion workers to organize a union. On top of a long list of other grievances the stretch-out was installed, but without the aid of the stop-watch engineer. Mr. Hunt, an untrained executive, was in charge and he gummed the works in installing the new system. As a result, $40,000 worth of material was ruined and in order to recoup the loss Hunt called the operatives together. Telling them of his error he announced that the deficit would be recovered by the addition of twenty minutes to the 12-hour shift. The workers were to come ten minutes before six o'clock and remain until ten minutes after. They talked this proposal over in the village, and decided to resist it.

The next day the 12-hour–20-minute schedule

went into effect. A committee of East Marion operatives left the village that night to "look for somebody who can help us organize a union."

In Elizabethton they met Alfred Hoffmann, and the union campaign began.

By the middle of June the union, being strong enough to risk an open meeting, called one in the courthouse in the city of Marion proper. Workers from both villages came in such numbers that a huge courtroom was crammed to overflowing, hours before the scheduled time. The people sat there packed in like sardines, waiting for the union organizers to drive over the mountains from Elizabethton in a pouring rain.

It was decided by the union forces to concentrate on the East Marion mill, so that at first very little attention was paid to Clinchfield, although the workers from both villages participated in the union from the very start.

The reaction of the Baldwin mill management to the union was to discharge the men in its employ who were most active in the campaign. When the number of discharged reached twenty-two, a committee chosen from this group attempted a conference with the management. Mr. Hunt refused to see them, and they then called at Mr. Baldwin's office. He met them with ridicule and playfully offered to pay them to strike his mill. The committee walked from Baldwin's office uptown to consult Hoffmann who was then in Marion. He

in turn consulted President McMahon of the United Textile Workers in New York City by long distance telephone. Hoffmann then advised the committee to go back to the village and prevent a walkout. The committee returning to East Marion found that all of Mr. Baldwin's textile workers had already walked out on a strike which completely closed down the mill. This was on July 11.

A lot was secured by the union on the edge of the village in the borderland between company property and the free section. Meetings were held night and day, participated in by thousands of workers from the struck mill, the Clinchfield village, the surrounding farms, and by the workers of Marion in general. Parades marched daily through East Marion and into the Clinchfield village with thousands of singing workers in line. A picket line was maintained for twenty-four hours a day at the struck cotton mill and operatives relieved themselves, for the first time in their lives, of their pent-up opposition to the boss's program.

A week after the strike a load of raw cotton was shipped into the mill yard and Mr. Baldwin wanted it unloaded, but he had no "hands." Rounding up the bossmen and the sheriff he attempted to lead strikebreakers through the mill gate to unload the cotton. The workers massed themselves in front of the gate and refused to move. Mr. Baldwin was dumbfounded and ran into the court for help. At the trial the fol-

lowing day, after having solemnly kissed the Bible, he swore that he had been struck on the head with "a heavy object," and knocked unconscious to the ground. The sheriff, standing right by Baldwin, testified that he hadn't seen any of this; and Baldwin's head, which is as bereft of hair as a billiard ball, did not show a tiny scratch. The judge gave the strikers a friendly lecture in fatherly fashion, bound them over for trial, and adjourned the court. The same evening he issued a sweeping injunction to Mr. Baldwin, denying the strikers the right to carry on. The injunction was promptly disobeyed by the workers and their strike grew, agitating and inspiring the whole labor world in McDowell county.

All the beauty and inspiration as well as the ugliness and despair that are a part of all mass struggles were brought to the front in the contest of the workers and cotton mills at Marion. In the early weeks the strike curve went to dizzy heights. It was summer and the natural surroundings were extremely beautiful. The air was thick with the perfume of magnolia trees. The pine forests of the mountains came right down into the village. Summer flowers hid some of its misery. The people themselves were expressing the sensation of industrial freedom for the first time in their lives. Hymns from their churches were sung at the strike meetings, and were later transcribed into songs of the strike. Re-

ligious emotions too were transferred into the labor struggle. A striker would rise to speak, and in his zeal for the brotherhood of unionism he used the very terms of a church revival meeting. The crowd would encourage him with "amen." Thus everybody would envisage a new kind of religion and a new kind of enemy. Many a prayer went up from the Marion strike lot that summer asking God Almighty to "help us drive the cotton mill devil out of this here village."

The so-called better element of Marion was shocked and disgusted with the marching mill people. The uptown ministers kept their customary distance, while the village preachers lined up openly with their boss in the cotton mill. The sheriff, Oscar Adkins, once an independent grocer in the village but crowded out by the company credit system, was elected by the workers as their friend. He was neutral at first, but soon went over to the side of the cotton mill. Solicitor Pless too failed to show any of his father's sympathy for the cotton mill workers.

The strikers had to be fed early in the conflict. The company did not evict them from their homes at first, but everything except housing had to be furnished to them by the strike organization.

The operatives were organized in a local union of the United Textile Workers and this union, with the Elizabethton strike deficit on its hands, had little money for

the Marion struggle. This perhaps accounts for the hesitation with which Mr. McMahon went into the strike.

Alfred Hoffmann was in charge for the United Textile Workers, but he is an organizer for the Hosiery Workers union which is only a federated part of the United Textile Workers. Therefore, Hoffmann was not in full control of the Marion situation. He had to rely on the New York office of the United Textile Workers to furnish him money and settlement strategy. Hoffmann had been in the South for his own union for several years and had a good following in the southern labor movement which helped out as best it could, but he did not have a half dozen different strike organizations at his disposal, as was the case in the Communist set-up in Gastonia. The American Federation of Labor as a whole turned a surprisingly cold shoulder to the southern textile strikes. Hoffmann had to write the press releases, organize the strike pickets, arrange the mass meetings, make the speeches, march in the parades, collect money, handle relief, and fulfill the thousand and one other duties that are common in all strikes; but especially onerous in one where the rank and file are new to unionism.

Alfred Hoffmann had on his hands a difficult strike which he had not himself called, and he had to get help where he could.

President McMahon had indicated that his union was unable to finance the strike alone, and because of

the small amount of relief that had been sent by the American Federation of Labor to the struggle at Elizabethton, not much enthusiasm was generated in Marion by the thought of the Federation's financial support. Paradoxically enough and in vivid illustration of the confused philosophy of our labor movement, the newspapers carried a story to the Marion strikers in the early weeks of their fight, and while they were in dire need of relief, that President Green of the American Federation of Labor had accepted an appointment on a committee to raise funds to support the Citizens Military Training Camps.[1] The psychological effect of this story was deadening. At the moment militia from the same training camps were crushing the New Orleans street car strike and just before, the much nearer Ware Shoals textile strike had been defeated by South Carolina troops. Both strikes were of American Federation of Labor unions. Moreover, shortly afterwards the Marion strikers themselves were to be similarly driven into bitter defeat by soldiers of their own state. And all the while excuses had to be conjured up by union speakers to explain why Green's organization did not send adequate relief for hungry strikers in Marion.

Most of the money to finance the strike came from sources outside the regular trade unions. The Emergency Committee for Strikers' Relief which helped

[1] Federated Press, July 20, 1929.

finance the Elizabethton strike sent thousands of dollars and relief administrators into Marion. Brookwood Labor College [2] contributed the services of some of the members of its staff. The Federal Council of Churches, the Quakers, the Church League for Industrial Democracy, and various interested individuals assisted materially with relief. Other church groups helped; as did units of the Young Women's Christian Association. The Conference for Progressive Labor Action [3] lent a man to the strike who also functioned for the Emergency Committee for Strikers' Relief. These groups for the most part functioned independently of one another, and not any one of them had the authority to dictate a strike policy. No one in Marion, not even Hoffmann, had complete right either to call or to settle the strike.

In the end this set-up, or rather the lack of any set-up, was very ineffective, but for a time all went well. Food and money poured in; speakers came and went. Strike stories got into the press, and the strike went gloriously forward. Everybody who participated in the early part of the Marion strike will remember those days—the picket lines at night with their camp-fires burning; the women and men stationed there chanting re-written Negro spirituals across the darkness to inspire faith and courage; the mass meetings oftentimes

[2] Hoffmann is a Brookwood graduate.

[3] Organized in New York, May, 1929, and headed by A. J. Muste of Brookwood Labor College.

in a downpour of rain, and the strikers singing. In those early weeks of the strike the Marion cotton mill workers caught a glimpse of something intangible, but something which they obviously and unanimously felt none the less. They would express it at their meetings thus: "We see a light over the hill-top. Something is coming that will make us free—us mill people free men and women."

When some teachers of the Southern Summer School for Women Workers came over from Burnsville to speak to the strikers, the Marion mill people were overcome. Afterwards they said, "Those fine educated women coming here to talk at our strike, and we thought all their kind was against mill people."

The strike was a new experience. It was the first time many of the workers had ever thought of themselves as anything but mill "hands."

It was impossible to keep the Clinchfield workers out of the strike, although Hoffmann tried his best to do so. He wanted them to join the union but not to strike until a settlement had been reached at East Marion, for there were 1,500 workers employed in the two Clinchfield mills and to feed them together with their dependents would have involved a tremendous additional financial burden.

Soon, however, an initial step in the tense situation was taken by the mill management. At first, neither Mr.

Hart, superintendent at Clinchfield nor his bossmen discharged operatives for union affiliation, but toward the end of July they began laying off union men. In the first week of August a hundred members of the union were fired with one stroke of the pen, and the mill closed its doors of its own free will. The lock-out precipitated an official strike order, so all three mills were down. In the East Marion village, eighty per cent of the 650 employes joined the union; at Clinchfield the percentage was much lower, because the union had been hesitant about advancing into the village. Then too no adequate membership lists were kept, so the actual union strength was unknown.

The Clinchfield mill attempted to operate on Monday, August 19, and the union threw a picket line around the mill. B. M. Hart, the superintendent, wired the Governor for troops. An unusual procedure was followed to maneuver the soldiers into the village without some formal excuse. Ex-judge N. A. Townsend came from the Governor into the mill village instead of the actual soldiers, but he carried with him the authority to summon the militia—"after an investigation." On discovering a picket line sufficiently potent to cripple the operation of the mill without violence of any kind on the strikers' side, Townsend ordered troops to move "as far as the Marion courthouse"—two miles from the village, where they re-

mained while he attempted to persuade the strikers to remove their picket line.

While the soldiers were stationed at the courthouse and Townsend in the village, dynamite was heard exploding in the village every night. No person or property was damaged, but strikers were arrested charged with using the dynamite.

During those difficult days the pickets stood their ground at the mill gate against all arguments to have them leave. Townsend became exasperated and announced that the workers were violating the law. "What law?" the strikers answered, "we have a right by law to picket." Finally, Townsend addressing the pickets said, "to save the honor of North Carolina" he would have to move the troops into the village unless "this assembly will disperse immediately," and he appealed to Alfred Hoffmann to persuade the strikers to disband at once. Hoffmann then asked the workers to decide the next step for themselves. The crowd answered, "Bring on your soldiers!"

So the soldiers were moved into the village on September 1, ostensibly to save the honor of the state.

Aside from the dynamiting for which many workers were arrested during the strike but none brought to trial, the only other actually unlawful act with which they were charged was a case that arose when a striker in the Clinchfield village was evicted from a company-

owned house and an imported strike-breaker's furniture moved into it. Some mountain mill workers carried the non-union family's furniture out of the house onto a highway, with great care not to injure it. There they stood guard to prevent the sheriff from carrying it back again. This happened on August 28, while the soldiers were stationed in the courthouse yard. The militiamen routed the strikers, put the furniture back into the house and then returned to the courthouse yard. For that crime 148 strikers, among them Alfred Hoffmann, were haled into court, some of them charged with "insurrection against the state of North Carolina," others with rioting, and still others with resisting an officer of the law. The soldiers, however, were not brought down to the village on that pretext, nor for the alleged dynamiting. They came in to break up a lawful picket line.

Once in the village the soldiers prevented picketing. Then without further provocation more troops were brought into the Baldwin village, and set up a virtual reign of martial law although it was not officially declared. All strike activity was suppressed; striking mill workers were prevented by fixed bayonets from going to the United States post-office for their mail. No parade was permitted even on Labor Day. In this atmosphere Baldwin's cotton mill, as well as the two at Clinchfield, began to operate with "loyal" and imported operatives. The strike in Marion was there-

fore crushed, as it had been in Elizabethton, by the military power of the state. It was formally called off on September 11, after a conference had been set up to work out a settlement, but it broke out again and was smothered with strikers' blood.

The soldiers had defeated the strike long before the conference to settle it occurred, but, nevertheless, a formal conference was brought about, largely through the efforts of L. L. Jenkins, a banker and textile manufacturer of Asheville. He is reputed to be a millionaire, and he owns or controls several banks besides a string of cotton mills in Gaston county. He is prominent in poiltics too, having run for governorship of the state on the Republican ticket. His previous labor activity was the effecting of a settlement, which recognized a legitimate union, of an Asheville street car strike, and he had the good will of the general labor movement of that city.

In the Marion strike Mr. Jenkins was a somewhat mysterious figure, but his activities there were honorable if somewhat confusing. In the end his sympathies seemed to be with the workers' side of the case. As a large textile manufacturer he was familiar with the industry. He brought together into the conference Mr. Hart and Mr. Baldwin representing the mills, some officers of the North Carolina Federation of Labor, as well as representatives of the strikers and Judge Townsend. No signed statement came out of the con-

ference, just a gentlemen's agreement to settle the strike and bring peace to both villages. The 60–65-hour week was reduced to 55 with a corresponding reduction in the weekly wage, since hour and piece rates remained as before. The shorter day was to be tried out for three weeks and then a vote taken in the mills to determine whether the workers preferred the short week to the 60–65-hour one. The employers were to see if they "might increase wages later on."

All the strikers were to be re-employed except twelve men from the East Marion mill who had particularly displeased Mr. Baldwin. These victimized strikers were the key men in the union, of course. Committees elected by the workers were to deal collectively with the employers, but no union was to be recognized. These were the terms quoted by Mr. Jenkins, who had made notes of the understanding as it was reached point by point, and his verson is corroborated by the labor men present. Before the conference was over Jenkins, who had tried to drive a better bargain for the strikers, made a speech in which he said he thought the settlement was very one-sided, and asked the mill owners to pledge their word as gentlemen to obey the terms of the agreement. This they agreed to do. Jenkins then pledged his words as a member of the cotton mill fraternity to see to it that the agreement was carried out. The representatives of the workers promised to recommend to the

strikers the acceptance of the settlement. Everybody shook hands and the conference adjourned.

That night the workers, by a vote at the union meeting in the village school building which was opened to them for the first time, accepted their defeat in silence.

Alfred Hoffmann left Marion to enter a campaign of his own union in Philadelphia. John Peel remained to handle the Marion situation for the United Textile Workers.

Judge Townsend ordered his troops out of Marion the moment the strike was called off. Mr. Baldwin went to his Maryland home. The strikers returned to the factory to work. Neither company paid any attention to the agreement that had settled the strike, insofar as discrimination for union affiliation was concerned. Mr. Hart of Clinchfield was less brutal than the Baldwin officials. All during the controversy he was much more intelligent from the manufacturer's standpoint than Baldwin. He maneuvered the union into a strike in his mills at a time when it was impossible for its leaders to handle the situation properly. Then when he wanted to open his mill he had the soldiers brought in to crush the strike for him. He willingly sat in at the conference and automatically nodded his head to the various terms of the agreement, and just as automatically disregarded the terms of that agreement when the conference was finished. He employed no rigid blacklist at his

mills; he kept those workers whom he had imported to take the place of his strikers, but put the strikers back when he felt like it and as he needed them. He made it plain—without any deception—that he had no intention of "remembering" anything that was said at the strike conference.

At Baldwin's mill the tactics were different. Mr. Baldwin himself left the re-opening of the factory to Mr. Hunt, his superintendent, while he rested up in Baltimore. Mr. Hunt bluntly added more than 100 names to the blacklist agreed to at the conference and accepted by the strikers' vote. Strikers were brazenly insulted and laughed at when they applied for work.

The breach of the agreement meant more than the blacklisting of over a hundred strikers. It set in motion the forces that were to lead to the cold-blooded shooting of six pickets three weeks later at dawn by the mill gate. The occurrences during the time are worth tracing in detail because of the light they throw on Mr. Baldwin's responsibility for the massacre.

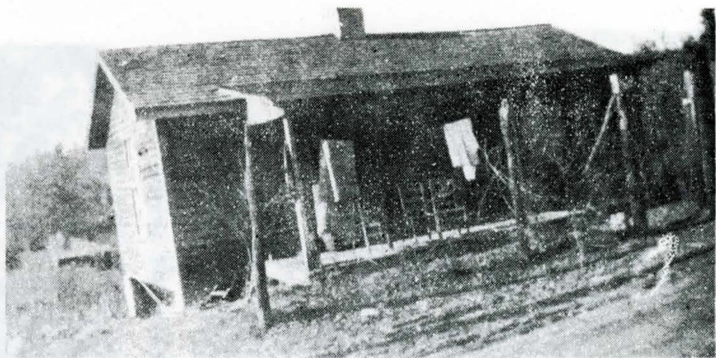
When the company broke the agreement by refusing to take back its workers, John Peel, with a situation on his hands with which he was unfamiliar, did not know what to do. The management refused to talk with him or any workers' committee. The reinstated strikers were restive; all the key men and women who had inspired the strike, more than one-sixth of the entire force, were

SOLDIERS BLOCKING THE ROAD TO THE POST OFFICE

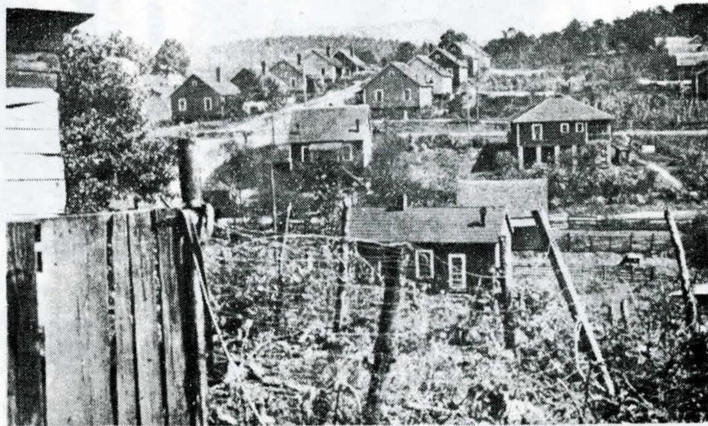
MACHINE GUN PRACTICE IN THE MILL VILLAGE

WHEN THE MILITIA CAME TO MARION

THE BALDWIN RESIDENCE



A WORKER'S HOME IN THE VILLAGE — A BLOCK AWAY



A SCENE IN THE VILLAGE

WHERE PEOPLE LIVE IN MARION

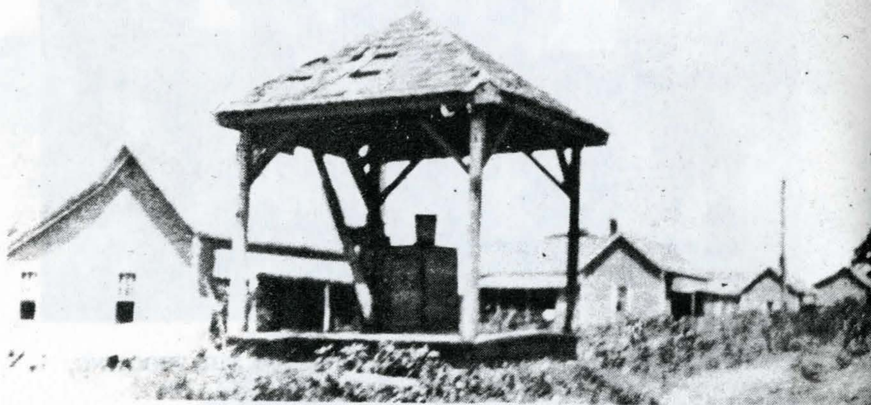
THE FUNERAL OF THE MILL WORKERS

THE SHERIFF AND SPECIAL DEPUTIES WHO DID THE SHOOTING, POSED BY THE MILL GATE A FEW HOURS LATER

THE MARION MASSACRE

RIGHT: THE MOUNTAIN MIDWIFE IN THE MARION STRIKE

BELOW: A WELL IN THE MILL VILLAGE, MARION; THE WATER SUPPLY BEFORE THE STRIKE



victimized. Peel, naturally enough, attempted to persuade Judge Townsend to return to Marion to see that the agreement to which the Judge had been a party was enforced. Townsend was no longer interested in Marion. Mr. Jenkins was notified of the situation. He telegraphed Mr. Baldwin informing him that he was advised that the agreement was not being carried out. Mr. Baldwin telegraphed a reply, amazed at the "rumor" and denied it forthwith. Mr. Jenkins came to Marion, September 27, to ask the victimized strikers for concrete evidence. They escorted him through the village, and gave him a list of more than 100 strikers refused jobs. Mr. Jenkins then telephoned Mr. Hunt to request an interview. Mr. Hunt would not see him. Nevertheless, Jenkins went to the factory.

There followed an exchange of telegrams in which Jenkins maintained the agreement was being violated and Baldwin denied the charge. Jenkins diplomatically suggested a public meeting in the courthouse to have a show-down, and urged Baldwin to return to Marion to put his mill in order. Jenkins, realizing that the workers would strike again at Baldwin's mill unless some action were taken, was motivated by a desire to avoid further dissension in Marion. He was also interested, he said, in the honor of the textile fraternity which he thought was being violated by Baldwin's disregard of the agreement. Jenkins thought a gentleman kept his word.

Mr. Baldwin finally agreed by telegram to return to Marion on October 2. Jenkins then called off the public meeting on the ground that there was a possibility Baldwin did not know the real post-strike condition in his cotton mill. He, therefore, urged the strikers not to permit another walkout at the factory until after Mr. Baldwin's return, which was only four days off. Jenkins promised to come back to Marion on Wednesday and "put all the cards on the table" for Mr. Baldwin. So it was agreed to let the matter stand for four days.

The whole village knew of Jenkins' visit and was astir over it. That night the mill people crowded like sheep around the union headquarters. Reports were made by men and women who had worked that day in the factory, telling of the bossmen's hostility to all signs of unionism. The workers said they had been tricked into going back. They were so willing to strike that a committee at work on the night shift stole out of the mill, came to the meeting and asked if the night shift was supposed to walk out then and there.

John Peel urged them all to remain at work, in accordance with the Jenkins' suggestion, until after the Baldwin-Jenkins conference. The workers agreed and walked quietly past the mill, lest the night shift hearing them should come out on strike.

Meanwhile the series of strikes had stirred the labor world. The southern federations within the American Federation of Labor had scheduled at Rock Hill, South

Carolina, a conference on September 29, to consider plans to unionize the whole South—two days after Jenkins' Marion visit. John Peel and other Marion strike leaders journeyed to the conference to report on Marion. Francis J. Gorman, vice-president of the United Textile Workers of America, also came from New York to address the meeting. The delegates from all over the South drew up a resolution calling upon the American Federation of Labor to organize the South, and ordered the resolution sent to the convention of the Federation scheduled to meet in Toronto, Canada, on October 7, 1929.

From Rock Hill Mr. Gorman went further South. Mr. Peel visited his family in Durham. The Marion situation was considered at a standstill until Wednesday when Mr. Baldwin had promised to return.

William Ross was in Marion at the time representing the Emergency Committee for Strikers' Relief and the Conference for Progressive Labor Action. He attended the Rock Hill Conference and drove back to Marion on Sunday evening. There the bossmen had continued their campaign against the strike settlement. Monday more union men were refused jobs. Mr. Ross in the absence of any United Textile Workers official, reminded the workers of the conference on Wednesday. On Tuesday some of the workers saw Mr. Baldwin talking with the sheriff in the front room of the Baldwin residence at Marion, and that fact sent the workers

into consternation again. Obviously there was another trick, for Baldwin had telegraphed Jenkins that he could not possibly reach Marion earlier than Wednesday, and there he was at home Tuesday conferring with the sheriff. Some one telephoned the residence. "Mr. Baldwin won't be home until to-morrow," said the voice from Baldwin's home into the telephone. This sent all sorts of wild rumors through the village of another strike, but the night shift went tensely into the mill. There, as darkness fell, appeared the sheriff and eight armed deputies. The bossmen also carried guns.

In the middle of the night a strike occurred when a foreman reprimanded a weaver for union activity. The worker shut off the power of his machine, called "strike" and walked out of the factory. All the other operatives followed him into the village street, which runs directly in front of the mill through the mill village and connects the two main concrete highways leading into Marion. Many of the strikers remained in front of the mill to notify the day shift which went on at six o'clock of the strike. Others went to their homes and to bed. The sheriff then increased the number of his officers by deputizing and arming several petty bossmen from the cotton mill.

The mill is surrounded by a high galvanized wire fence. The front fence is built right on the street and crowds the road to a width of about fifty feet. There is a gate in this front fence through which the operatives

pass into the mill yard. Directly opposite the gate across the narrow street stands one wing of the company store parallel with the street. The United States post-office is located in that section of the building, facing the cotton mill. There is a concrete wall rising from the street level about six feet that supports a sidewalk in front of the post-office. What you have there, then, is a stretch of dirt road about fifty feet wide flanked on either side by a wire fence and a concrete wall. The top level of the wall and the fence are equal. The spot opens at both ends into the village.

During the early hours of the morning and before daylight, the sheriff and the mill officials commanded the strikers to leave. The strikers refused and insisted upon their right to remain on the street and picket the gate.

When the day shift approached the mill all the union members in it naturally joined the striking night crew at the mill gate. The non-union element composed of "loyal" and imported operatives just as naturally stood down the street or on the hillside, aloof from the union crowd.

At this point the mill machinery was set in motion and added its noise to the general racket. The superintendent came out of the mill, crossed the yard and called out to the non-union group urging them to come into the mill. They remained where they were. The superintendent then walked up to the

fence and spoke through it to the sheriff, who was standing with his deputies directly in front of the cotton mill gate. The sheriff immediately released tear gas into the strikers' ranks. George Jonas, a crippled mill worker, 65 years old, was standing right by the sheriff. As the gas burnt the old man's eyes he, in pain or perhaps anger, began grappling with the sheriff. While the sheriff, who struck Jonas over the head with his gun was handcuffing the old man, the deputies opened fire. Fifty or sixty shots were fired in rapid succession. Thirty-six strikers were hit by the bullets. Old man Jonas lay in the road, with a bullet in him, his hands locked together. Others lay moaning or dead in the dust. Two died instantly, Jonas and another one on the way to the hospital. Another was dead on the following day, and the sixth died several weeks later. The hospital was full of wounded strikers; 25 of them were seriously injured. Not one deputy sheriff or mill official was hurt. All the dead workers were shot in their backs, like rats, as they tried to escape from the burning gas. The strikers were caught in the narrow street and found escape difficult because of the concrete wall that blocked their way. Many of them were shot as they tried to scramble up that barricade.

Six men dead, and 25 wounded, instead of the conference with Mr. Jenkins, was the fruit of Mr. Baldwin's return to Marion.

There were the usual two versions of the shooting in

the court trial which followed. The strikers in large numbers swore that they were unarmed, that the shooting followed the tear gas by a second, and that no warning was given. They were first tear-gassed, and then shot in the back as they ran away from the deputy sheriffs.

The sheriff testified at the first hearing that he did not see any guns in the workers' ranks, but that some of them carried sticks. He repeated that statement twice. He also said he released the tear gas "so that I could arrest the leaders," but he swore that he did not fire his gun. He testified, that when he released the gas Jonas grappled with him and he put handcuffs on the man. Jonas was dead from bullet wounds when he was carried onto the hospital operating table. The handcuffs were still on his wrists.

Seven deputy-sheriffs admitted shooting, but contended they shot in self-defense. All deputy-sheriffs and mill officials corroborated each other. No concrete evidence was submitted to sustain the testimony of the deputies at the first trial, but two and one-half months later and in another county, at a second trial a hat was produced riddled with bullet holes, which was then said to have been worn by a deputy the night of the massacre. The hat was not mentioned at the first trial in Marion, and in neither trial was any other tangible evidence produced.

There was one disinterested witness at the trials. He was Douglas Ellar, a newspaper correspondent for the

*Asheville Citizen,* who, having heard of the strike impending at the mill, was in Marion waiting for a scoop. He got to the mill before the shooting occurred, and was an eye-witness to the tragedy. He testified as follows: [4]

"I got down to the mill about 6 o'clock," said Ellar. "The sheriff was there with a number of deputies. Some had shotguns and others carried pistols.

"I walked to the union headquarters and when I got back to the gate six or eight men attempted to enter the mill. About that time the sheriff and Jonas (one of the dead men) got into a fight. The tear gas was used by the sheriff's men and somebody fired as the crowd was running away. I can not say who fired the first shot.

"I ducked into a rain barrel until the firing quieted down. I raised up and the firing started again. There were about 60 or 75 shots fired and the shooting lasted about two minutes.

"I came out of the barrel and put one man in the car. Another got in without assistance. Another asked me if he could ride and got into the back of the car between the tire rack and the body of the roadster. He was unconscious when we got to the hospital. I did not know he had been shot.

"I was the first one to get to the hospital. I told the nurses what had happened and with their assistance and that of an orderly we laid our men on the floor.

"Then they began to arrive pretty generally. I saw Jonas picked up from the floor, placed on a bed and carried upstairs with the handcuffs still on him.

"I saw no firing from the strikers' side. My back was

[4] Quoted in *Charlotte Observer,* October 3, 1929.

to the sheriff's forces and I was facing the strikers. However, strikers could have fired with my not seeing it."

The dead men were George Jonas, 65; Luther Bryson, 23; Sam Vickers, 54; Randolph Hall, 22; T. L. Carver, 50; and J. Will Roberts, 18; Carver, Jonas, and Vickers left wives and children, Hall a bride, and the other two widowed mothers. Young Roberts' father, a worker in the mill too, had died of pellagra in the Baldwin village two years before. The boy had assisted his mother support four small children. Mrs. Roberts was employed before the start of the strike at $7.50 for a 60-hour week in the Baldwin mill.

Right after the shooting, the union forces swore out warrants for the arrest of the superintendent and two foremen in the mill, and for the sheriff and fifteen deputies charging all of them with murder. All were released at the first hearing except seven deputy-sheriffs, who were indicted for second degree murder and held over for trial.

Judge Townsend brought in troops again the day following the massacre, and put them up in the company Y. M. C. A. building adjoining the cotton mill.

The shooting of the six workers in the Baldwin village shifted the southern strike scene from Gastonia, where Ella May Wiggins had been shot two weeks before, to Marion. Writers of note together with a dozen press correspondents from the leading news agencies came to town. The *New York Times* ordered its repre-

sentative to Marion from Gastonia. While the undertakers were preparing the bodies for burial, reporters telegraphed massacre articles all over the country. The world was informed of how workers had been first gassed and then shot while striking against incredible hours, wages and working conditions in Marion. Telegraphic protests from all over the country poured into Governor Gardner's office in Raleigh.

William Ross was the only outside labor man in Marion at the time of the shooting. He was unaware of the midnight strike, and was aroused from sleep by the ghastly noise of the massacre. Ross got to the mill gate in time to help gather up the murdered men from the road. It was on his shoulders, more than any other outside man's, that the horrible problems of the massacre fell. Judge Townsend began to bulldoze Ross as a "foreign agitator" and then changed his attitude when he discovered that the visiting celebrities in town were personal friends of the "agitator."

Francis Gorman, on a train in Georgia, read of the shooting and turned back, but could not reach Marion until the day the strikers were buried. John Peel did not get over from Durham either before the day of the funeral.

On Friday morning, October 4, the murdered strikers were buried. There was a mass funeral on the lot where the strike had been carried on for two short summer months. The only change in the place was the

addition of wooden frames built by the strikers, on which the caskets rested in front of the speakers' stand. From daybreak the mill workers had been bringing flowers from their yards and the nearby hills. The speakers' stand and the whole ground surrounding it was a mass of blossoms. A ribbon strung along the caskets indicated that the dead men had been members of the United Textile Workers of America. The October weather had dressed the land of the sky in glowing colors. The trees were splashed with all hues, shaded by evergreen pines which started at the village edge and marched straight up the side of the mountains to the summit of the Blue Ridge chain surrounding the whole of Marion. The South, often a paradox of beauty and ugliness, was certainly such on that October day.

A huge crowd swelled into the village as news camera men caught the pathetic sight for all America to see. Marion's upper class remained aloof, a little shocked and inarticulate. No minister from the town had gone into the mill homes to offer Christian consolation. No minister from that whole section of the country, though many had been asked, would come to dedicate the bodies to the God in whom all the victims sincerely believed. James Myers of the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America spoke instead of a churchman from the South. An old mountain preacher moved by sorrow, stepped forth.[5] Unsophisticated and untrammeled

[5] Cicero Queens.

by the mill influence he fitted logically into the tragic human drama. Dropping to his knees and extending his long arms outward, he began to pray:

O Lord Jesus Christ, here are men in their coffins, blood of my blood, bone of my bone. I trust, O God, that these friends will go to a place better than this mill village or any other place in Carolina.

O God, we know we are not in high society, but we know Jesus Christ loves us. The poor people have their rights too. For the work we do in this world, is this what we get if we demand our rights? Jesus Christ, your son, O God, was a working man. If He were to pass under these trees to-day, He would see these cold bodies lying here before us.

O God, mend the broken hearts of these loved ones left behind. Dear God, do feed their children. Drive selfishness and cruelty out of your world. May these weeping wives and little children have a strong arm to lean on. Dear God—what would Jesus do if He were to come to Carolina?

Mr. Gorman and others spoke from labor's point of view. The dead Marion cotton mill operatives were placed by the labor men in the long list of martyrs who have died in the struggle for the advancement of mankind.

Mr. Jenkins came from Asheville and brought flowers for the dead. He said a few words to the effect that he had tried to prevent the tragedy, and left the speakers' stand weeping.

The bodies were taken away to different graveyards, but one was buried in a cemetery adjoining the Baldwin village. The funeral had to pass the cotton mill where soldiers stood at guard. One young militiaman in violation of the regulations, removed his soldier's hat and rested his rifle in mute sympathy with that which was passing before him. As the body was disappearing in its grave in the cemetery the undertaker called for a minister. None was present, so a labor leader [6] stepped forward and said, "We consecrate this worker's body to the earth from which it came. He has fought a good fight in a noble cause. He will rest in peace." The smoke from Mr. Baldwin's cotton mill, a stone's throw away, plied skyward. Marion had buried its dead.

The evening before the funeral, visitors in town did what they could to relieve the suffering of the afflicted families. They discovered as they went from one stricken home to another that some of the families were literally without food. In the house of the old man who had been shot after he was handcuffed there was not an ounce of anything to eat. His family said that for twenty hours before the shooting he had not eaten. His widow was barefoot and had to be provided with shoes to walk to his funeral. Poverty in all its horrible raw-

[6] A. J. Muste, head of Brookwood Labor College and of the Conference for Progressive Labor Action.

edged manifestations came to light in the village that night. Money was collected on the street to buy such necessities as overalls and shoes to permit families to appear at the funeral. Never was there a better barometer by which to measure living standards in a cotton mill village than the findings of the Marion visitors in the homes of the dead textile workers afforded. Sinclair Lewis was so moved by conditions which he saw that he wrote a series of articles about them for the Scripps-Howard papers.[7]

While all this was going on in his village, Mr. Baldwin sat in his comfortable home on Bossman's Row. His attitude during those hours was such that people writing of him at the time hinted of insanity. Not a word of regret or remorse came from his lips. On the morning of the funeral he called the newspaper reporters to his residence and said that Alfred Hoffmann and his associates were as much to blame for the shooting as though they had been at the mill and ordered it done. When the official interview was over, Baldwin passed cigars around and moved into a lighter vein to discuss the shooting again. One of the correspondents was speculating as to the actual number of shots that had been fired. In answer to that speculation Mr. Baldwin said:

I understand there were 60 or 75 shots fired in the Wednesday's fight. If this is true there are 30 or 35 of the

[7] Published later in pamphlet form by the United Textile Workers.

bullets accounted for. I think the officers are damn good marksmen. If I ever organize an army they can have jobs with me.

I read that the death of each soldier in the World War consumed more than five tons of lead. Here we have less than five pounds and these casualties. A good average I call it.

The correspondent to whom Mr. Baldwin made that uncanny statement, in the presence of a group of national news writers, reported it to his paper, the *Asheville Citizen*. The paper published it on October 5, the very day after the dead strikers were buried, and the president of the East Marion Manufacturing Company made no comment.

When the deputies came to trial in Marion on November 17, the court granted them a change of venue to another county, and the case was postponed.

Four days later, November 21, Alfred Hoffmann and the three strikers indicted on August 28 in connection with the furniture incident were tried. The insurrection charge was dropped, but all of them were found guilty of "rioting" after a trial lasting ten days. Hoffmann was fined $1,000 and sentenced to serve thirty days in jail. The three strikers were given terms of six months each on the state chain-gang. They appealed the case to the supreme court.

Ten days after the union men were sentenced the deputies came to trial in Burnsville. The state was

theoretically prosecuting the case. Clyde Hoey came over from Gaston county, boutonnière and all, to head the defense. On December 21 the jury returned a verdict of "not guilty." All the deputies were freed, "so they could go home for Christmas," said a juryman afterwards.

Governor Gardner had sent North Carolina troops to Marion to break the strike for Mr. Baldwin. The aftermath of their arrival was the massacre. Now the union resolved to ask the Governor to cause an investigation to be made in such a way that the public would get an authentic account of the whole affair.

The labor people thought that the reckless slaughter of textile workers by the drunken officers of the law before the cotton mill where state soldiers and mill officials stood uninjured holding smoking revolvers must move the governor to extraordinary action. But the union was mistaken, and the governor ordered no such investigation.

The union leaders saw Governor Gardner the night of the funeral. There had been a conference in Marion, with Judge Townsend sitting in to represent the Governor a few hours after the strike victims were buried. Mr. Jenkins and a group of labor men headed by Frank Gorman also attended. The cotton mill was not represented. The meeting in Marion was a heated one, with Jenkins and the labor men who had participated in the

strike settlement conference maintaining that Baldwin had violated the agreement. Judge Townsend, on the other hand, was "unable to remember" much of what had been said at the meeting that settled the strike. Townsend had never shown the slightest appreciation of what had been occurring in Marion all summer. The ghastly poverty with all its poignant manifestations did not register in his consciousness. His attitude was based on an ingrained conception that the cotton mill operatives were inferior people, apart and different from society as a whole—a point of view that one constantly runs into in the South.

The labor men insisted on a thorough investigation into the massacre and the conditions that precipitated it. They maintained that the sheriff had deputized criminal types to function. They specifically cited the case of one mill employee [8] under indictment for shooting up union headquarters, whom the sheriff had deputized and armed a few hours before the tragedy. Others in the sheriff's forces were mentioned as drunkards with general "bad men" reputations. The deputies were further charged with having been drinking heavily all during the night of the massacre. It was also stated boldly at the meetings that the cotton mill had furnished the sheriff with the tear gas gun which he did not know how to use, and that when he released it his drunken deputies, under the assumption that firing

[8] Jim Owens.

had begun, shot their guns without provocation into the fleeing strikers. There was no mention made at the conference of the strikers having arms, and the story that they had started shooting did not spread through the town until after the court trial. In the investigation that the union forces proposed to Townsend they demanded that, aside from the massacre itself, the financial condition of the mill be looked into and that Baldwin should be compelled to produce his profit and loss statement together with salary and dividend payments for a period of years. Moreover, they wanted the actual wages and hours to be drawn from the company's payroll and made public.

Mr. Townsend was placed in the position of defending the Baldwin mill with its ghastly record as against the workers, who clearly had an excellent case. He stalled and reminded the conference that he was merely representing the Governor. Then the labor group said it would go direct to Gardner himself, and it was so arranged.

That evening the labor men were on the way to Raleigh. At the capital the delegation was enlarged by the addition of Sara Bernheim of the Labor Bureau Inc. of New York City, and of executive officials of the North Carolina Federation of Labor. They were ushered into the Governor's room at the executive mansion at 10:30 P. M. The massacre victims were hardly cold in their graves, the wounded were still

writhing in agony in the Marion hospital, some of them blinded and full of lead.

Judge Townsend had preceded the labor men and clothed in full evening dress was smoking a good cigar, when the labor delegation arrived. Outside the rain beat down in torrents and in it stood the inevitable group of newspaper men.

The conference lasted into the night. The labor men put the case bluntly and frankly up to the Governor of North Carolina. They presented a formal written proposal to him and, furthermore, restated and supplemented, for the benefit of Gardner and the added labor officials, the points that had been made at the Marion conference.

Governor Max Gardner is a man of education and intelligence. He is a cotton mill owner himself and had been involved, as the head of the state, in the incredible situation at Gastonia, so the business before the house was not new to him. A few days before his interview with the labor delegation he had publicly declared for sweeping improvements in the industry, including abolition of night work, reduction of hours, increase in wages, and the discontinuance of the mill village system, so as to enable the cotton mill operatives to become assimilated into the independent citizenship of the state.[9] Except for the omission of the establishment

[9] Gardner's speech, reported in *New York Times* September 30, 1929.

of trade unions, the Governor's proposals for the industry were much more progressive than anything the unions themselves had demanded. The discussion, therefore, was not lowered to the level of ignorance and stupidity that ordinarily is the case when cotton men discuss their labor problem.

Gardner is suave or perhaps by nature kindly. He did not change the tone of his voice to patronage when cotton mill operatives came into the discussion. And he presented no brief for such manufacturers as the Baldwin type. The labor men were not servile in the presence of royalty.

In their group were minds that had a complete grasp of the financial, business, and humane phases of the industry. They were also intimately acquainted with the long struggle of American workers to establish a union machinery to protect themselves from the ravages of modern industrial organization.

John Peel bluntly told the Governor of Townsend's refusal to inject himself into the Marion situation after the strike agreement had been violated. The judge continued to smoke. Gorman insisted upon the right of his union to function in the South. Sara Bernheim told that the Labor Bureau had made a survey of Mr. Baldwin's published financial accounts which showed a fabulous war-time profit for his mill and a healthy dividend for the current year.[10] The sheriff of McDowell county

[10] **"Survey of Baldwin Mill Profits"—Labor Bureau, Inc.—2 West 43rd Street, New York City.**

was spoken of as a dangerous moron, his deputy sheriffs as criminals. The Governor was requested to appoint a committee, for which the union should select one representative, to investigate the whole situation, and to let the union and Mr. Baldwin meet the consequences of the facts the investigation would disclose.

Much was made of L. L. Jenkins' part in the drama. He did not accompany the delegation to see the Governor, but at his request the labor men reported the statements he had made at the preceding meeting in Marion. He had, furthermore, signified his willingness to attend the conference if he were needed. The Governor felt Mr. Jenkins' presence was not essential.

Before the conference ended it was quite obvious that Governor Gardner could not grant an investigation such as the committee proposed. Certainly he could not look into Baldwin's financial and labor policy without the opposition of the whole textile manufacturing group, and this he said frankly.

The delegation left late in the night. Outside and still in the rain the reporters stood waiting. The labor men handed them a copy of the investigation proposal which they had left with the Governor. It received wide publicity the next day. Governor Gardner did not order an investigation.

The refusal of Gardner to comply with the union's request for a public investigation, with at least one person on the investigating committee who could op-

pose a whitewash, was not unexpected. As a matter of fact, there is no law that requires or even permits the Governor to make such an inquiry. He did order a special court investigation, which naturally confined itself to the actual shooting and did not consider any of the fundamental causes that brought it about. The accused deputies, no matter what type of men they were or the circumstances in which they were sworn into duty, were officers of North Carolina. No state is in the habit of convicting its own police officers who get into trouble in pursuit of their "duty." It is a commonly known fact that a sheriff who is recruiting deputies for strike service gathers together low-typed individuals, for the better element will not enlist in such emergencies to shoot or beat up strikers. When Sheriff Adkins was asked in court why he had appointed such characters as the Marion deputies he replied, "Because I could not get any one else to serve." [11] Liquor, also, always plays an important rôle in difficult strike situations as many past investigations have shown.[12] Neither North Carolina nor any other state can afford to let the public back of the scenes to find out the genuine rôle the state plays in an industrial dispute between cotton mill owners and cotton mill workers.

Of course, the Governor could have sensed the obvi-

[11] Quoted in the *Asheville Citizen*—October 9, 1929.
[12] Roach Indictment—Gastonia. Congressional Inquiry Pittsburgh Coal. Pittsburgh.

ous emergency and, although no statute had been written to meet it, he might have ordered a searching investigation, but he is not that kind of governor.

In the last analysis, no matter how much the two men differ in other respects, the governors of Tennessee and North Carolina were alike in their strike policy. Both sent the military power, without provocation, into a strike situation to fight with the absentee owning group against the native population of each state.

The Marion workers had a just case which they had carried for a decade silently and unassisted by any power of the State. When they followed a logical line of reasoning and massed their collective strength against the intolerable conditions imposed upon them by their employers, they organized an effective strike. This was crushed by officers of the law who smothered it with the strikers' own blood.

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