

# People's Rights Bulletin

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## Arkansas Share Croppers Defend Civil Rights

Recent events in Arkansas have made the lot of the share cropper intolerable. The following is the most complete and reliable summary that the Southern Committee has been able to get for the information of its members and supporters.

### Evictions

On January 16 one hundred persons were evicted from the Dibble plantation near Parkin, Arkansas. They were set down along a plantation road where there was no room to put up a tent. After their household goods had been exposed for three days they hired a truck and moved in to Parkin where they set up an encampment. Memphis liberals bought six tents for them and colored families in the neighborhood cared for many of the children.

Seven families were evicted from the Avery plantation near Heth. Axe handles, pistols, and shot guns figured in the support of the eviction order.

Forty-one evictions were admitted by a WPA investigator in Crittenden County.

### Terrorism

Two meetings of the Southern Tenant Farmer's Union have been mobbed in Crittenden County. Howard Kester, Secretary, and H.I. Goldberger, the union's lawyer, were dragged from the platform and threatened with lynching. Twenty planters, some of them freshly deputized "officers of the law", in the meantime "worked over" the crowd, numbering about 500, with axe handles and billies.

On January 16, Constable Everet Hood raided a meeting at St. Peter's Church, Earle, Arkansas. When Jim Ball, the doorkeeper, took Hood's gun away from him, he and three spectators were seized and hustled off to jail. When Hood, accompanied by Deputy Sheriff Peachers, returned from the jail, the meeting was over. Shots were fired at members of the union and two of them were wounded in the back by buck shot.

### "Legal" Suppression

Jim Ball and the three spectators have been tried and sentenced. Ball received seven years for assault with a deadly weapon; the others received one year each for "rioting". The complaint on which the Dibble evictions are based states that the men, as members of the Southern Tenant Farmer's Union, had "banded themselves together in a conspiracy to retain possession of their homes and jobs".

### The Factors

Many forces underlie the Arkansas terror.

(Continued on Page Five)

## U. S. Supreme Court Condemns Extorted Confessions

The Supreme Court of the United States has recently heard with indignation the case of three Negro sharecroppers, convicted of murder in a Mississippi court on the sole evidence of their own extorted "confessions."

In Kemper County, Mississippi, Raymond Stewart, a landlord, was found murdered in a storeroom. A few hours later, Yank Ellington, a Negro cropper on his place, was taken to the Stewart home by Deputy Sheriff Dial. There Ellington was faced by a mob which accused him of the murder and demanded confession. Ellington denied any knowledge of the killing. Thereupon a noose was thrown around his neck and he was drawn up to a limb. When he was lowered to the ground and threatened with death if he did not confess, Ellington still denied knowledge of the murder. A second time he swung in the air, was lowered to the ground, and he was threatened if he did not confess. He would not confess. The crowd stripped him, tied him to a tree, and beat him with the buckled end of belts until his blood flowed. But he refused to confess.

The following day Deputy Sheriff Dial took Ellington to Meridian for "safekeeping." On the way, Dial, to secure a confession, stopped the car and beat the manacled Ellington with a strap armored with metal. For a while Ellington persisted in avowing his innocence, but when he could endure no more, he agreed to say whatever Dial told him to say.

In the Meridian jail, Ellington discovered his friends, Ed Brown and Henry Shields, from whom a similar "confession" had been extorted.

### Official Testimony

The testimony of Deputy Sheriff Dial at the trial, when he was cross-examined by the district attorney in regard to the first mob beating, was illuminating.

Q. Did they whip them (the Negroes) in your presence?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Did they hang him (Ellington) there?

A. Well, you know they didn't hang him. They pulled him up but they didn't hang him.

Q. Of course they didn't kill him.

A. No, sir.

Q. How many times did they pull him up?

A. I didn't see them pull him up but one time.

Q. Did they whip him any after they pulled him up?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. When did you first offer your friendship to him?

(Continued on Page Two)