COMMONWEALTH COLLEGE
FORTNIGHTLY

VOL. IV, NO. 23
MENA, ARKANSAS, JANUARY 1, 1929.
$1.00 A YEAR

COMMILLERS TABLEAU
SORROWS OF MASSES

Friends of the College Spend Christmas Week on Campus

Commons decked in holly and cedar and mistletoe, yule log cracking in the open fireplace. Christmas tree a-glisten with baubles, wide-eyed youngsters and elders filling rows of benches and lining the walls; and on the stage appropriately accoutered and caparisoned actors tableau the trials and tribulations of the masses "when Caesar ruled with strong command."

The shifting scenes of the tableau depict modern working class problems in a Biblical setting. A cotton farmer is dispossessed because he cannot pay his taxes; a negro is lynched because of an alleged assault upon a white woman; strikers are starved into submission; workers become machines. As Capital lashes Labor behold! a new tableau de-

[Continued on Page Two]

TOGA OF AUTHORITY
DESTINED TO ZEUCH

Destiny is a strange thing. For some men it operates smoothly, efficiently, as if they had control of the leverage. For others it behaves like a wheezy old Ford whose steering gear is completely on the bum. Educational Director William Edward (Father) Zeuch has learned this much about Destiny.

Thinking to "loaf" for a few years and "invite his soul," he announced (Fortnightly. Nov. 1, Dec. 1) that he did not choose to run for re-election. But what man proposes, Destiny disposes. The faculty of Commonwealth, acting in accordance with divine writ, returned him to the educational directorship for the sixth time.

Thanks, Friends

S. H. Abramson, Montreal, Canada, one year's subscription to The Canadian Mercury.
M. B. Butler, Taft, Calif., one book and magazine.
Edwin Durland, Chicago, Ill., packages of books.
Flint Garrison, St. Louis, Mo., $25.00.
Michael Gold, New York City, $5.00.
Kirby Page, Long Island City, N. Y., $5.00.
Mary F. Shields, Los Angeles, Calif., $25.00.
T. J. Stetigrove, Dawson, Ga., $25.00.
Dr. W. Van Netto Clyde, Ohio, $5.00.
O. O. Wagner, Millerton, Pa., package of periodicals.

"Happy and Satisfied"
Kate Writes Commoners

"It is Not Likely That I Shall Ever Come Back to Commonwealth"

While echoes of the church bells still rang in her ears Kate Richards O'Hare Cunningham, lighted in grey, silver-trimmed dress, grey, rose and silver hat, grey shoes, stockings and gloves, sat down near a typewriter in her San Francisco apartment and pecked out "all about it" to Commoners over the Rockies and far away.

"I am profoundly happy and satisfied," she brishtly cooed. "Married on short notice ... impetuosity of our extreme youth ... more than occupied with the whole gamut of new adjustments ... deep and profound love... touch of the magic of romance ... rare companionship ... I am having one grand and glorious time being a real old-fashioned, middle-class, mid-Victorian wife."

"It is not likely that I shall ever come back to Commonwealth. We have not decided where we will live. Mr. Cunningham has property interests all over the map, with interest and taxes to match. The newspaper stories of his wealth are, like the report of Mark Twain's death, slightly exaggerated."

There are a thousand backing at the branches of evil to one who is striking at the root.—Thoreau.

CUNNINGHAM TRAVELS NORTH FOR COLLEGE

Will Explain Situation Here to Friends of Workers' Education

William Cunningham, assistant educational director-elect and instructor in feature writing, will journey to Chicago, Detroit, Cleveland and points between in the interest of a bigger and better Commonwealth. He will be absent from home and wife approximately one month, commencing January 5.

Cunningham will congress with friends of workers' education and talk over with them Commonwealth's needs and plans.

"I want to reach friends of Commonwealth with a frank statement of its condition," he said. "The college is standing nicely on its legs. Thanks to the maintenance fund planners, it will continue to stand on its legs for at least two more years. By that time, I hope, the capital equipment prerequisite to self-support will be secured.

"Funds for the completion of the capital equipment—for the building of a hydro-electric plant and workshops—necessarily must come from individual liberals and laborites. The college will not barter away its independence of mind.

[Continued on Page Two]

COMMUNIST TALKS ON LABOR UNION POLICY


With his wife Ruth Fern, also communistically active, he is visiting Commonwealth indefinitely.

Said he: "Scarcely three million out of a possible fifty million wage-earners are organized. The most important industries, such as the steel, oil, and automobile industries, have not yet been unionized. The A. F. of L. is going nothing in that direction; the I. W. W. is decadent; the Socialists apathetic. The Communists alone are making an effort to organize the unorganized."
Commonwealth College
Forthnightly

Published twice a month at Meno, Arkansas, by Commonwealth College, a school for self-maintaining, non-propaganda education for workers. Subscription: one dollar a year. Entered as second class matter, January 30, 1925, at the post office at Meno, Arkansas, under the Act of August 24, 1912.

Signed articles express only individual opinion.

Editors, particularly of labor and farmer papers, are welcome to make free use of material appearing in these columns. A line crediting the Commonwealth College Forthnightly will be appreciated.

Vol. IV, No. 23 January 1, 1929

WHAT IS COMMONWEALTH COLLEGE?
Commonwealth was organized in 1921 to provide education for workers on a self-supporting basis.

Commonwealth is located in the delightful near Meno, Ark., where it operates agricultural and other industries by means of four hours' daily labor from its students and teachers.

Commonwealth seeks to develop in young men of the working class the capacity to serve the labor movement.

Commonwealth is a non-sectarian, non-propaganda institution. It sponsors no particular religious, political, or economic dogma. It holds that scientific experimentation carries the only hope of adjustment or solution of personal and social problems.

Commonwealth is the only institution for higher education where both teachers and students earn their maintenance by part-time labor while engaged in academic work.

COMMONERS TABLEAU
SORROWS OF MASSES
[Continued from Page One]

attic cheer (assorted fruits, nuts and candies) to the amount of twenty pounds.

Besides neighbors and Commoners, the following out-of-towners either attended the performance or visited during the Christmas week: Mrs. Clay Full, Mary Ellen and James Fulk's, Byron Hooks, Frank Bird, one-time (1926-27) student, and Fritz Holcvar, also one-time (1926-28) student.

CUNNINGHAM TRAVELS
NORTH FOR COLLEGE
[Continued from Page One]

It will not accept money from any group capitalist, labor, or liberal—with strings attached. Commonwealth has consistently refused to propagandize the ideas of any single group—the Power Trust on the one hand and the American Federation of Labor on the other."

Government must be more than a machine for performing a routine. It must have the ability to clothe itself with human understanding of the daily, living needs of those whom it is created to serve.—Alfred E. Smith.

To Work, Ye Braves!
By Irving Weissman

I.

Often enough professors will talk straight-from-the-shoulder about the "lock-step" system of education now in vogue—within the privacy of their homes. Sometimes a famous schoolman will speak with his mind right in public—secure in the knowledge that he is too big a man to be given the gate. Once in a while a professor will have at the "system" with vigor and inventive—and then quickly and courageously turn his back on it.

Professors, be they ever so kosher, have moments when their fancies turn lightly to thoughts heretical. Whereupon their adversaries become excited to a torrential pour of cortical secretion: they vocalize heresies without any gloss or scholia; they were not against the "marble halls of learning," wherein they function as polishers of craniums gnom Babbitt. They even use such bolshevist descriptives as "hunk" and "blah" and "hire education."

II.

The long ears of the press, of course, catch this muscular talk. "The boys," as the gentlemen of the press are irreverently called, are electrified into action. They swoop down upon the fulminating profs who, taking a tip from movie stars, lickspittle ward-healers, real-estaters and likeminded artists at ballyhoo, put on a show in the grand manner. As pencils fly over paper and cameras click, the professors act as if they were each playing the title role at a lynching. Thus do they accomplish the herculean in crowding buxom bathing beauties an natural off the front page.

The feat would get our unsainted praise but for the sorry fact that, measured by sincerity and conviction, it is simply pop and piffle. The professors stampeded the academic conventions and went on a bust, it is true, but this unprofessorial conduct is to be interpreted in the nature of an emotional jog. For they did not suit action to words nor break with the "system" against which they inveighed so vehemently. Their pedantic posteriors still fill the chairs in ology, ics, and ism.

III.

David did not slay Goliath with words nor can the professors affect a change in the educational system with words. If education is to be vitalized, our educators must be up and doing. They must adventure in education. They must take their professional lives and futures into their own hands and, in defiance of consequences, bend together in small groups and establish educational laboratories where might evolve, without hindrance from Rotarians and proletarians, educational methods consonant with modern needs.

Our present educational system aims towards mere literacy. But mere literacy, says Glenn Frank, president of the University of Wisconsin, "is not the vital education upon which a valid democracy depends. We might see to it that every man, woman and child in the United States could read and write and still be a grossly illiterate people. There is an illiteracy of the literate—political illiteracy, economic illiteracy, power, and social illiteracy—that stands like a wall between us and an increasingly rational and realistic social order."

The conquest of illiteracy of this elementary sort, he goes on to say, "leaves us still challenged to evolve an education that will more and more effectively help character to keep pace with the new powers and the new perils of modern civilization. . . . The brutal fact is that the majority of our sons and daughters come out of our schools inflexibly committed to American civilization as it is, stamped with the qualities of unquestioning defenders of the status quo instead of the qualities of questioning pioneers."

IV.

This job of reinvigorating education is for men of blood and muscle, not for tory schoolmasters. Probably the only way for them to establish colleges where the experimental attitude may prevail is to dig them out of the soil by their own labor. Financial support will not be readily at hand, for few individuals and less organizations of wealth are inclined to assist ventures that choose to be non-propagandistic.

There will be many lean years ahead for those bold adventurers in education. Though Commonwealth is now six it is still very much in a pioneering state. Teachers do not receive salaries, but work four hours six days a week for maintenance—same consisting of simple meals that contain meat but twice a week and butter on special occasions, and of absolute necessities in the way of clothing and incidentals.

What our country needs most of all is educators who have vision and the moral courage to act upon it—educators who will cease goose-stepping; quit the sterilized education factories; leave off speaking—educators who will don overalls; roll up sleeves; and do some honest-to-God educating.
POWER ECONOMICS

Consequent to the publication of a series of articles dealing with the power approach in economics Fortnightly has received numerous letters expressing in their criticism and comment the significance of the new economics being developed at Commonwealth. Whenever able, the editor will print in this column extracts from communications.

Labor Is Incompetent.

I think I now get an idea from your letter as to why you placed so much emphasis on sovereignty and so little on custom and economic going concerns. I think that back of sovereignty is the power of organization of the classes that use it for their instrument, and it is just as much to get rid of sovereignty and to use economic power as it is to use sovereignty. My whole discussion of sovereignty is to show how it begins with individual valuations and becomes the dominant custom of a class, partly through economic power and finally through political parties and control of sovereignty.

I doubt whether your approach, unless you change your angle, can account for the power of the Federal Reserve system. I think that sovereignty represented in Congress is much less influential than the associated bankers, working as a trade union. However, I can see how you can introduce the idea of negative sovereignty, which I also emphasize, as the condition under which economic power is permitted to dominate. Power is all important, but it does not amount to anything if it is not accounted for through concerted action.

My main criticism of your ideas is simply this: that labor as a class is incompetent to organize and manage sov-

Campaign Results

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erignty. And as for stabilization of capitalism, I never have said that stabilization is the same thing as justice.

JOHN R. COMMONS,
Department of Economics,
University of Wisconsin.
Madison, Wis.

Bible Poetry Talk Draws Pro and Con Audience

Fret not thyself because of evil-doers,
Neither be thou envious against them that work unrighteousness.
For they shall soon be cut down like the grass,
And wither as the green herb.
Trust in Jehovah, and do good;
Dwell in the land, and feed on his faithfulness.
Psalm XXXVII

Atheists, Christians, agnostics and Jews to the number of twenty-five sit on chairs and on the floor of the Guest House reception room listening to a child of Israel pouring out the songs of his race. All is still except for the rustle of [Continued on Page Four]

Communications

In this column, letters of comment and criticism from our readers will be printed, regardless of their tone, but not regardless of their length. The editor reserves the right to print extracts from communications.

Our Latch-String Is Out.

I'm as broke as you are—— so that's why I ought to help somehow. Who can understand a pauper as well as another pauper? I like the spirit of the college, as demonstrated in the little paper. You don't sound as if there were any stuffed shirts among you. I'd like to hike out your way sometime and spend a few weeks being taught how to milk a cow. Have you a Professor of Cowology? Regards, good wishes, and comradely greetings.

Yours for-you-know-what,
MICE GOLD,
Editor, The New Masses.
New York City.

A Lot.

There is a lot I like about Commonwealth and I certainly hope it is going to work its way out.

NORMAN THOMAS,
Socialist Candidate for President
New York City.

Leadership.

Without having consulted with our committee, I venture to say that the experience of being a student at Commonwealth College would contribute in a very valuable way to preparation for leadership in such a movement as ours, especially in the department chiefly concerned with the interests of the industrial group.

KATHERINE L. ALLER,
Secretary of Personnel Bureau,
National Board of Y. W. C. A.
New York City.

Will You Enroll Yourself as One of the Hundred Whose Contributions Will Make the Continuation of Commonwealth Possible?

If so fill out and mail this blank. I hereby enclose $ for the year 1928 and pledge $ annually for 1929 and 1930.

NAME

ADDRESS
BLE POETRY TALK DRAWS
PRO AND CON AUDIENCE
(Continued from Page Three)

the pages of the Bible as the reader,
David Kaplan, turns from the Psalms to the
Songs of Solomon to the Lamentations
to the Book of Job.

Every now and then David rereads a line
or a figure of speech to impress the
beauty of it upon his listeners. Between
readings he tells briefly the story of
these poems, allegories, laws and pro-
phetic writings recorded in this Holy
Book of the Hebrew people.

“These early Hebrew poems," says Da-
vie, “are full of the fire of passion, full,
too, of keen insight into nature, into her
power to awaken or sustain human emo-
tion. They are written in swift, half-
formed outlines, in metaphor piled on
metaphor, with a purpose to any prin-
ciple of proportion or verisimilitude other
than the emotional harmony of each
broken figure with the dominant feeling.

“I consider these songs great. What
Herder says of the Songs of Solomon—
‘they need no fiction of a topical or di-
dactic purpose to commend them as pure,
lovely, and worthy of a place in a Holy
Book’—I may say for an even greater
portion of the Bible.

“Now I am no speaking of the theol-
y of these writings. I no longer be-
lieve in it. I speak of its poetry only;
and this poetry for beautiful imagery is
almost incomparable. Coloride once
listed side by side figures of speech taken
from the Bible and figures of speech tak-
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