ARTISTS CONTRIBUTE TALENT TO PROGRAM

Pianist and Dancer Enliven Summer Session by Recitals

Not all contributions to Commonwealth come in the form of cash, books, etc. Many visitors to the school make outstanding contributions that are not recorded in the "Thanks Friends" department.

One such contribution was made by Mrs. Harriet Seymour of Chicago. An accomplished musician, Mrs. Seymour on several occasions entertained this music-hungry community by piano recitals.

A similar contribution was made by Carol Beals, San Francisco dancer and wife of Former Student Mervin Levy. During the two weeks that Mervin and Carol were at Commonwealth, Carol provided four evenings of entertainment and conducted a class in dancing for girls who were interested.

Both of these artists were capable of discussing their art in non-technical terms. To an eager but technically ignorant audience they explained what they were attempting to do, and made clear the distinctions between various "schools", and "manners", "expressions" and new art forms, etc. Both are keenly aware of social trends and understand the importance of art as a social force.

A F. OF T. PROPOSES CODE

A Code for Public Education has been proposed by The American Federation of Teachers for consideration by the N. E. A. No date has been set for a hearing upon either the A. F. of T. code or the similar code presented some time ago by Commonwealth.

A resolution urging active support of these codes by all teachers' organizations was passed by Commonwealth Local 194 of the A. F. of T.

"Teachers, like all other workers, will be utterly ignored if they do not put up a militant fight," the resolution declares.

"BUGS," SAYS HAESSLER

Carl Haessler, managing editor of the Federated Press and recent visitor at Commonwealth, has declared in a letter to the college that the Fortnightly columnist could in ascribing Haessler's fidgeting and sock-pulling to nervousness.

"If he were as good an entomologist or parasitologist as he is a columnist," the letter stated, "he would have known that my fidgeting and sock-pulling was due to quite another matter—the Arkansas chigger."

Police Suspect Horn Of Organizing Labor

Since the new deal was dealt there has been much talk of "the right of labor to organize," but the experience of a former Commonwealth student would seem to indicate that there is a hitch somewhere.

An Associated Press dispatch from Lebanon, Pa., declares that, "John Szafriszak and George Horn of Milwaukee and Frank Augustine, 29, of Moxa . . . said by police to be representatives of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers' union, were represented by Chief of Police Harry S. Sager, who this morning and ordered to leave the city."

George Horn was a student at Commonwealth during the spring quarter, 1933.

DELEGATION TESTS ORGANIZATION RIGHT

Commoners Driven from Corinth by Mob; Perkins Wires

The right of labor to organize in the South is now being tested by a delegation from Commonwealth College.

Members of this delegation had just succeeded in organizing workers of the Weaver Pants Company at Corinth, Miss., into a local of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, when on August 11 they were driven out of town by a mob of company bad men. Secretary of Labor Perkins however, became interested and wired the governor of Mississippi, who assured him, according to press reports, that the right of labor to organize would hereafter be recognized in his state.

The delegation is made up of Oliver Carlson, teacher, Jim Porter, Eugene Morse and Al Lehman, students. The members are now in Memphis awaiting developments.

They went to Corinth in response to a wire from an official of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers union asking for an organizer for that town.

After investigating the situation for several days they began holding meetings of the workers.

ARRESTED AND RELEASED

The local sheriff and several deputies broke up one of these meetings, arrested members of the Commonwealth delegation, and took all of the Commoners to the court house. No charges were filed, however, and the four were released with apologies.

After this arrest many workers signed union cards. A local union of about 300 members was formed and an ultimatum was delivered to company officials demanding recognition of the union within 48 hours.

The company granted an increase of wages but refused to recognize the union. Special deputies were placed at the mill.

Members of the Commonwealth Continued on Page Four
There were three of us boys who lived on the farm and we were all flat broke. It was early fall, and since cotton picking had not yet begun, there was nothing much around home to do for a while. Later there would be plenty of work for everyone—several months of hard work from dawn each day until late at night, counting the time it takes to milk and take care of the stock. Cotton picking season is the rush season of the farm. It's the one time of the year when there is money to be made. The rest of the year goes by without a penny coming in, and practically everything is bought with borrowed money, so that the cotton as soon as it is picked is claimed by the bankers. As soon as picking is over, we borrow money to begin another crop.

The three of us decided to go down South a ways and pick where it had already started. The picking season begins earlier down there. Lots of people begin in the Rio Grande Valley in July and work north, ending in Northern Texas, Oklahoma, or New Mexico about Christmas. In that length of time they become regular picking machines. None of us wanted to stay around home for a month or two without a cent of money and nothing to do.

Our equipment we bundled into cotton sacks and suitcases and then the three of us scattered out on the highway. A truck driver who picked us up one by one as he overtook us said that the price being paid for picking was thirty-five cents a hundred. That was the lowest any of us had ever heard of it being. "But Jesus Christ," exclaimed the truck driver, "What can you expect? The poor farmers don't get anything out of it. All they do is take their cotton into town and turn it over to the bankers on a debt that is a year or more old. The bankers set the price. They allow the farmers to pay more than the bankers allow them to have."

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 NAME

 ADDRESS

We found a job, more through chance than anything else. There were three of us in the bunch and we had our own equipment (a few tin cans and cotton sacks). Singly, we would never have been hired.

There was a little two-room shack on the farm. A family of six, a woman and little girl and boys, and a man who had been living in one room. We moved into the other without time to clean up the filth that had accumulated since the house had been used. The only furniture was a bed and you had to live just the same. Money goes out faster than it comes in, and after a rainy spell you find yourself in debt to the farmer who has staked you.

The family in the other room lived in town but had moved out for a few weeks to ward off starvation by picking cotton. They had been without work for a long time and were in danger of being kicked out of their house. Three of the boys in the group had picked cotton in the Rio Grande Valley. They said they hadn't a cent to show for it. And the discretion had been or going freights and going hungry at times. That's one trouble with picking cotton. You work while the sun shines, and then when it rains or you're looking for a place to sleep, you are living. Money goes on faster than it comes in, and after a rainy spell you find yourself in debt to the farmer who has staked you.

We got hot there in the days when we worked. The heat was intense. We kids worked out before sunup and pulled cotton sacks until eleven-thirty. Then they went in to cook lunch, and within an hour we were back at the job in the field. Supper was prepared by the cook, or a kerosene lamp that had no chimney and filled the rooms with smoke. Cooking was never much of a job. The farmer for whom we worked gave us permission to gather dried peas from the field, and that, with bread and soup mash was our diet for three weeks. We had to live cheap. Once or twice it rained and we had to stop work.

As the woman got sick. She was ill for three days there in the crowded shanty, and the only medical treatment she received was a few spoonfuls of castor oil. They didn't have the money to pay for medical services. After the third day she went back to the field with her cotton sack. She was still a bit "puny" but felt it her duty to help support the family. It was just one of the many cases in which the woman was the main work, for the field. Often I have seen women in the late months of pregnancy dragging heavy
This snug little southern town of Corinth, Miss., has not experienced a major disturbance since the Battle of Shiloh, of Civil War days. Even yet we find old "gentlemen" of the South clutching the shadier spots of the town square. As they sit and spit, and with a child-like candor, recall the days when they "fit all right with the northerners", we simply make a mental note that another "Billy be Durn" is about to take his last cud of "Brown Mule" and will soon leave the South to the youngsters.

These youngsters care nothing about the Civil War. They are content to accept the history, be it true or untrue—it makes little difference to them. They are, however, concerned with the problems of freeing themselves from a system that has dragged them to a damning state of existence.

The young people of the mills have not had the advantage of education. Perhaps a few have managed to get some outside schooling but the mass of the workers have never gone beyond the limits of a few sluggish years in the local high school... where little intellectual development is possible. From their inadequate schooling they have gone immediately to a machine in one of the mills. And from the very day that they became acquainted with a machine, life to them has been largely dominated by the machine and the task.

These youngsters must soon become breadwinners in their homes. This means they must work with all their energies in order to draw a few miserable dollars for a week's work. But cotton—when there is no money in it? There is even less cash return from other crops, and bankers and landlords need every penny they can get. Cotton is the cash crop, or it was until came "overproduction". "Overproduction?" Farmers who can't afford a pair of overalls at the time when they are bailing cotton to the gin are beginning to sense the irony in this catch word of the politicians. Farmers' wives who make their children's clothes from discarded cotton sacks wonder why it is that of the great quantities of cotton they see leaving the farm such a small portion ever comes back. They wonder what would happen if there was a real shortage of materials.

The cotton farmer, by tradition a conservative, is beginning to mumble under his breath, and the first signs of revolt show themselves in organizations that are spreading slowly over the cotton-enslaved South.

Workers of Corinth

By JIM PORTER

These young mill workers have found that to stand at a hot pressing machine in a hot, dirty factory for nine and ten hours a day for seventy-five cents or maybe a dollar, is not the normal state of existence.

The church, the home, and the pawns of industry itself, the local civic associations, have all been vigorously exacting in their demands of these young people. It has been the duty of the advocates of righteousness and patriotism to weld this impetuous young generation into the staid community from which they sprang. The dignity of the old South must be maintained. It is honorable... in fact it has been taught that God so desires... that workers, whether in industry or in the fields, should be content to accept whatever pittance the employer or master has to offer.

The Civil War means nothing to the young South. Old southern traditions, although crumbling away, are still a heritage around their necks. Hatred for the "niggers" and faith in God and the church still play an important part in the social and economic ideology. A spirit of intense patriotism exists for their country but this again is the result of their empty training and not a plan derived from intelligent study. This very spirit of nationalism may crystallize into a true revolutionary movement rather than moving towards another world war.

What if they do despise the "nigger" and are huddled into a state of lethargy by traditions? What if they still regard the northerner with suspicion? Do these social mal-adjustments measure favorably with their rebellion against the bosses who have been enslaving them in the mills and keeping them in ignorance?

They feel the injustice keenly. News Continued on Page Four

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of labor struggles throughout the world have reached them. News stories from the North and East where workers have succeeded in gaining more rights for themselves have penetrated this section and have inspired them to make the inevitable comparison. They are not able to understand the organization and strategy of such activity as they might under expert leadership but they are able to make the application to the extent that rebellion is the secret word to be passed among them.

They are encouraged by a few older people who have been through the mill, so to speak, but who have never been able to really break a strike. This element is far in the minority but their small number does not detract from their enthusiasm.

A line of fifteen cars loaded with mill workers wound slowly over slippery country roads towards the rural home of some of the workers. Fifteen cars traveling in such close formation are usually thought of in the South as a lynching party on route to a stout tree secluded from the law. The fellows in that line of cars were just as definitely engaged in a lynching party that were just as clearly their own necks were at stake.

It was their own necks that they were thinking about.

The leader of this party, who has been a presser at the mill for five years and whose labor is worth just eight dollars per week to the company, had gathered the fellows together in a few hours to meet with us four union organizers and northerners at that. From the very moment that we met these fellows and divulged our mission to him, he excitedly poured out his story, the story of all his fellow workers.

The story was tragic. How the mill workers sweated away, day after day, never daring to question the boss for fear of losing their only means of a livelihood. They kept their mouths shut. It was the only thing to do. Secretly they had seen their sufferings and had even ventured to think and talk about unionism. That is, unionism as they vaguely understood it. Their leader had at one time held a membership in a railroad union. He was their leader but in spite of this enlightened leadership they were never able to gain the necessary strength for a workers' organization.

On the 29th of July, that was back in 1921, their ranks were broken by the bosses' willingness to buy a few of the leaders. Such a failure placed an indelible mark of defeatism on the minds of the older workers.

We met with this group of workers and outlined to them how we proposed to cooperate with them in establishing a union for them within their shop. To the man, they displayed their enthusiasm and interest to get the union under way. We carefully explained to them how a union was organized and what were the many benefits of the union.

They went away from that meeting with a vision of a new life for themselves and their families and their fellow workers. They understood their job of serving as a vanguard for the several hundred employees of the mill. Through their efforts the entire shop would be brought together into a solid unit of workers who no longer must suppress their lives to fit the mold of the bosses but who can find it possible to live a decent life even from the factory and the job.

But the fight hasn't been won. A repetition of the 1921 failure is staring them in the face. The picture is not the same in all detail but the fundamental standing block is there. The one weapon used by the bosses threatens to cut the same swath as during the struggle in 1921 for the right to think and act as human beings.

Terrorism. The bosses know how to hedge workers and encourage workers into submission. They have threatened to fire all workers who dare associate themselves with a labor union. In the majority of the cases, where the worker's hand had already expressed their desire for a union, they were either firm in refusing to repudiate their membership. The bosses were not repulsed by this fact. They immediately increased the pressure on the workers.

Social ostracism through devious ways was least accorded to those workers who still defied the boss rule. In community life, such as only the South is capable of producing, social status, whether worker or plutocrat, means much in the life of the residents of that community. Such advantage brought into play by the bosses in order to convince the workers of their lowly position was partially effective. Some of the workers naively returned to the bosses' fold. They were frightened and wholly incapable of facing disgrace even temporarily.

Many of the more militant workers, who were willing to continue the fight, were met with direct threats of violence by the paid thugs of the bosses. Other workers were trapped with lucrative bribes of money.

But to pause a moment and give a thought to the background of these workers, may justify their temporary relapse. They have spent their entire adult life in the mill slavery away for just enough dollars to carry them until the next pay day. Never have they been in the position, either financially or socially, to think of anything but another day at the mill.

A few dollars carelessly flung in their direction is a narcotic sufficiently strong to dull their better senses until their ranks can be broken by the bosses. Or perhaps if all members of a family work at the mill and have the courage to protest, they may meet with threats of dismissal and subsequent community disgrace. Their sense of security for the future is their dominant thought. How can they afford to take the chance?

The young mill workers have expressed themselves. They are still ripe for rebellion in spite of intimidation and threats of violence. Their present difficulties are not a result of wanting faith but one of bewilderment. They have had little training in workers' education. They know now that their right of civil liberties cannot be had without a fight. Trickery of the bosses will only intensify the struggle and quicken the coming of the final revolt.