WINTER APPLICATIONS
NOW BEING RECEIVED

Prospective Students Urged to Answer Questionnaires Immediately

Student applications for the winter quarter beginning January 2 are now being received and considered.

Charlotte Moskowitz, executive secretary, urges that all prospective students who wish to enroll for the quarter get their applications in immediately.

Courses to be offered will include farm problems, public speaking, imperialism, working-class history, labor journalism, proletarian literature, office methods, cooperation, and one or two others not yet decided upon. It is likely that Marxism will be included upon the curriculum for the coming quarter, although a teacher for that subject has not yet been added to the staff.

Commoners to Attend Chicago Conference

Three Commoners will attend the Farmers Second National Conference to be held in Chicago November 15 to 18 under the direction of the Farmers National Committee for Action.

Bob Harting, student and head librarian, will go as a fraternal delegate from Commonwealth College. Marion Noble, industrial manager, and Bob Reed, stockman, will also attend. Marion and Bob Reed are both dirt farmers from the South.

Arkansas will have seventeen representatives at the conference. There are twenty-eight Farmers Protective Association locals in the state affiliated with the Farmers National Committee for Action. Members of the Commonwealth group are in constant touch with these organizations, aiding them in their educational and organizational work.

NOVEMBER 7, 1933

M. LITVINOFF
IN CARE OF S. KYRISHK
WASHINGTON, D. C.

COMMONWEALTH HAS LONG RECOGNIZED SOVIET RUSSIA AND ITS TREMENDOUS SIGNIFICANCE TO THE FUTURE OF ECONOMIC PLANNING. IT EXTENDS GREETINGS AND PELICITATIONS TO SOVIIET RUSSIA'S ABLE REPRESENTATIVE AND INVITES HIM TO VISIT AND INSPECT COMMONWEALTH A WORKER'S COLLEGE AT MENA, ARKANSAS WHICH SUPPORTS ITSELF BY RUNNING A KOLHOZ OR COLLECTIVE FARM WIRE ANSWER COLLECT

COMMONWEALTH COLLEGE
MENA, ARKANSAS

COMMONWEALTH COLLEGE
MENA, ARK.

MR LITVINOFF INSTRUCTS ME TO THANK YOU HEARTILY FOR YOUR KIND TELEGRAM OF CONGRATULATIONS SINCE HE WILL BE IN THE UNITED STATES ONLY A SHORT TIME HE IS UNABLE TO ACCEPT YOUR CORDIAL INVITATION

IVAN A. DIVILOSHY
GENERAL SECRETARY

MONEY IS RAISED TO MEET PRESENT NEEDS

School Financial Crisis Averted Through Help of A.E.O.

R. Munsell

Commonwealth’s financial situation is better than it was a month ago, although there is still not enough money in sight to carry through the entire winter.

Director Lucien Koch, now in the East, has succeeded in raising enough money to care for immediate needs.

The best help that the school has had recently comes from A. E. O. Munsell of Baltimore, Maryland who has donated $200 on a $500 pledge and has also pledged, in addition, four dollars for every one dollar that Lucien is able to raise before the first of the year. The total donation not to exceed $2500.

The Friends of Commonwealth group at Paterson, N. J. gave loyal support. Some of the members of this group are silk workers and are now out on strike. These strikers pledged one-tenth of their wages for the first week after they return to work.

Other donations are acknowledged in the “Thanks Friends” department of the Fortnightly.

Lucien’s schedule is as follows: November 10 to 30 Philadelphia, Pa., December 2 to 9 Cleveland, Ohio, December 10 to 24 Detroit, Michigan.

MARPISM BEING TAUGHT

Because there is this quarter no regular course in Marxism at Commonwealth, David Englestein and Bill Cunningham are holding a night class in that subject once a week. All students are free to take this course in addition to their regular classes.

The application of a number of prospective Marxism teachers are being considered, and it is likely that a teacher of this subject will be added to the staff for next quarter.
ON BEING A COMMONWEALTH TEACHER

BY ONE OF THEM

are quick to criticism, even of their own number, their own institutions, their own teachers. After the dull apathy of the ordinary classroom, it is invigorating to sit without the amplified and purposeful Commonwealth discussion. But he who likes to play with electricity must expect to suffer a shock now and then.

I shall try below to list the outstanding qualities which it seems to me a Commonwealth teacher should have. It is an embarrassing thing to attempt because, like an author writing his first novel, one is suspected of essaying a disguised self-portrait. Or at least of extolling the collective merits of himself and his fellow-teachers. Let it be conceded at once that we teachers are not all we expect our future colleagues to be. The following are the specifications for an ideal Commonwealth teacher. None, present or future, will measure up in all details, but the teacher who falls down seriously on several of these qualities, without prospect of improvement, is probably not meant for Commonwealth.

INSPIRATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Most important of all, I would say, is that the Commonwealth teacher should have an inspirational quality. Not inspirational in the Rotarian sense, of course, nor in the health-and-success-book sense. Nor even in the sense of the liberal preacher, well-meaning though he may be. The Commonwealth teacher's inspirationalism should be of a kind that awakens enthusiasms, kindles loyalty to the cause of labor and imports a spirit of cooperation and determination to do. The teacher who is colorless and over-retiring in his manner of presentation needs a more sheltered environment than Commonwealth can offer.

The prospective Commonwealth teacher should have some knowledge of and a strong bond of sympathy with the militant labor movement. If he has not had experience in the labor movement he should be capable of identifying himself as a part of that movement and not merely as an interested outsider. He must not, in other words, be simply a "liberal" or a "friend of labor." Many Commonwealth students consider themselves more mature politically than the liberal and would think of themselves as having something to teach him rather than something to learn from him.

Norr must the teacher be the sort of person who likes to present "both sides" of a problem and then stand off in a detached manner and let the dear young things decide for themselves which is right. At Commonwealth we take it for granted that everybody has chosen labor's side, that he wishes to identify himself with the effort to make work an order and that he is actively interested in the practical problems of that effort.

Commonwealth looks forward to a worker's world. Its teachers need not necessarily be workers by social origin, but they need to be able to identify themselves with the workers' struggles. The Commonwealth teacher is in the position of a fellow-combatant rather than merely a lender of moral support.

The Commonwealth teacher should have the habit of mind of looking for the economic and social significance of a given situation. The social, psychological, cultural and scientific forces are, of course, considered, but these are viewed in their relationship to the mode of production of a given epoch. It is absolutely essential that the Commonwealth teacher be beyond placing his faith of social regeneration in such things as good will speeches, peace pacts, disarmament conferences, free silver, the securities act, managed currency, or a reconciliation between capital and labor secured through the intervention of a benign and impartial government.

THOUGHT, NOT PHRASES

At the same time, he should not be the phrase-slinging type, of which there are all too many in the radical ranks. The skillful phrase-slinger sometimes goes over for the first few weeks in Commonwealth, but then he begins to run out of phrases and repeat. At this point everybody gets tired of him and he is through. You have to have several records on your Victrola at Commonwealth.

One needs to have a sense of humor too. Donotless it is useful anywhere. We are terribly in earnest at Commonwealth, but we try to keep a sense of proportion by laughing at ourselves sometimes. A sense of humor is also a shield against over-sensitiveness. A teacher who has vigorous views of his own on controversial matters in the labor movement is going to get lots of opposition. He needs to be capable of a good-natured comeback instead of getting his feelings hurt when some unpolished proletarian tells him he is all wet on a point of strategy. At the same time that he is ready to excuse the lack of fact in others, he needs a little of it himself.
A rather shocking and grievous—yea, a cruel and unusual—fate has recently overtaken a slightly notorious neighbor of Commonwealth's who lived just across the Oklahoma line. The sovereign state of Oklahoma, acting through one of her criminal courts, was ruthless enough to condemn this neighbor of ours. Mr. Coe Thompson, to fifty years in the penitentiary for unfair business practices.

Now, I am not so blindly devoted to the doctrine of laissez faire as to be unable to see some necessity for preventing, or at least for regulating, things that can be said of the interests of the community—to say nothing of the reciprocal rights and obligations of business rivals themselves—seem to require such restrictions. There might have been a necessary measure of retributive justice, therefore, in giving him a year or two; but for such a common peccadillo as unfair business practice fifty years in the penitentiary is just simply too much.

According to the allegations, and attendant circumstances, the facts of the case appear to be as follows: On account of the Depression, presumably, Mr. Thompson—who, by the way, seems to have been a pretty capable and enterprising man—walked into a small town bank one day and asked for the money. After brief negotiations he got the money and walked out, neglecting to sign the customary I.O.U. or to leave his address. It appears that the customary business formalities were waived in this instance, not so much because the bank was lax in its dealings as because Mr. Thompson made a display of armaments.

Now, it is a matter of common knowledge that many bankers, especially since the Depression came, are exasperatingly hesitant about handing out money. In fact, handing out the money seems to involve some difficulty which they can not, without the aid of a sudden and extraordinary stimulus, overcome. Mr. Thompson showed his business acumen by foreseeing that a kind of stimulus; and, having provided it, the transaction was successfully negotiated.

But a little later, and after some reflection, the bank seemed to become much dissatisfied about it Mr. Thompson, for his part, was making no complaint—not publicly, at any rate—about the amount of the return on his investment, considering the risks involved, etc. It appears that he was willing enough to let by-gones be by-gones. But the bank suffered a lapse of sportsmanship, squealed on him, and appealed to the state to punish him.

The state looked into the case and discovered that Mr Thompson had robbed the bank from the outside! and the too enterprising fellow was adjudged guilty of unfair competition and was given fifty years in the penitentiary.

The state of Oklahoma did this terrible thing notwithstanding the fact that the defendant-competitor had

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WITH MALICE AFORETHOUGHT

Continued from page 4

... done much for the state. For years he had been a generous and frequent cash contributor to the wholesale coffers of the state. He, himself, told me that day he gave me a hitch on the highway as I was hiking into Mena—that he had made eleven hundred-dollar contributions to the fund which Oklahoma annually and perenially raises ostensibly for the welfare of the state. True, he had made these contributions at the earnest solicitation of the state but he had done so cheerfully and in good and lawful money.

Mr. Thompson, it seems, was an admirer of Mr. George Washington, Mr. Andrew Mellon, et al., and had decided to follow one or two of his profitable examples. In short, he had gone so far as to threaten, Clay Fulks, Commonwealth teacher, is well known as a contributor to "The American Mercury", "The Baltimore Sun", "Labor Age" and other publications.

Mr. Thompson was willing to help his neighbors, had gone so far as to threaten, more or less solemnly in some of his letters, was called on. Also, he had contributed much time in attending court to listen to the frequent complaints of the state.

He had numerous competitors, of course, in the liquor business but these competitors were good sports; they accepted the laissez faire philosophly like men; that is to say, they accepted it in its pristine purity and lived up to it in letter and in spirit. And had Mr. Thompson been a little less ambitious—he had not aspired to go into the banking business (from the outside)—he might today be a free, useful, happy, and respected citizen.

But he challenged business men who were too big for him. In his first controversy with them, he found the state to which he had contributed so much promptly, openly, and unblushingly taking sides with his business rivals.

Mr. Thompson must have felt keenly the ingratitude of such a state. Still, it must be admitted, he made an error of judgment in choosing his technique; an error due, perhaps, to a blurred vision. For, in the lively art of extracting money from modern banks the practitioners are required, by the official rules, to observe some very nice distinctions as to the technique to be employed. Some of these distinctions are, indeed, too fine to be seen at a distance; others too fine to be seen at all except by the aid of powerful glasses. But the state of Oklahoma showed a wanton and malignant disposition in imposing a penalty so egregiously and so shockingly out of proportion to such an error of judgment in choosing a technique.

Given a reasonable term of service, with decent treatment, Mr. Thompson, who is now about 55, upon regaining his liberty, might adopt an approved method, go into the banking business in a different manner, and soon become an eminently successful and respectable business man. Fifty years, however, will undo him utterly.

But this disaster to our neighbor, sad as it is, will not dry up the source of that vociferous conviviality which characterizes the occasional big square dances given for the neighbors in the hall of the Commons. Mr. Thompson's old competitors, now heartened, can easily supply a brand of corn liquor just as potent, though maybe not as smooth, as his; one that will inspire young hillmen to stamp the days-forever into that same delightful abandon and to chase that purty girl 'Round the world just as furiously as they did during his dispensations.

Fifty years in the penitentiary for unfair business practices! But Justice, poor little Justice—wasn't she blind at birth?

Editor's Note: "With Malice Aforethought" will hereafter appear as a regular department in the Fortnightly.

MILBURN'S "TRUMPETS"

No More Trumpets—George Milburn—Harcourt, Brace (68¢)

George Milburn, the Oklahoma boy who several years ago carried most of the water that went into the cement that went into the fireplace at the Commonwealth library, has got out his second book of short stories. "Oklahoma Town", which George began at Commonwealth is the best picture of that state ever printed.

Perhaps the greatest test for a written short story is this: Can it be told? Try to tell one of the silly stories you have read in the "Saturday Evening Post"—or for that matter try to remember one of them.

George's stories can be told. When the name Milburn is mentioned in a quiet conversation on a winter's evening, you immediately think of his group to tell one of his stories. And if you tell one, some other member of the group will exclaim "Say, that reminds me of something that happened in my home town. There was an old fellow..."

As a matter of fact George has done what every other great artist has done; he has achieved utter simplicity. It is a commonplace observation that only genius can achieve simplicity, clarity, honesty, ease of expression; while mediocrity regularly attains to difficult and elaborate structure, to complexity, to brilliant display.

George never crusades, except mildly in behalf of a boy who is working his way through school, but he is fond of displaying upon his literary pin the funny little Rotarian, "A Pretty Cute Little Stunt", "The Apostle"—George is not a proletarian writer. His art is a synthesis of the ideologies of the small town and "the civilized minority". He is not a revolutionary. (Commonwealth was a liberal school where he was here.) He knows about poverty but doesn't know what can be done about it.—W. G.

HONOR DEBS: CELEBRATE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

A memorial service for Eugene V. Debs was held at Commonwealth November 5. The sixteenth anniversary of the Russian Revolution was celebrated November 7.

At the Debs memorial service Jimmie Fulks and Abe Dobkin spoke.

November 7 was an industrial and academic holiday. The program in the evening included a mass recitation translated from the German, a talk upon "The Amateur Proletarist" by David Englestein, and a short dramatization of the Russian Revolution. Material for the drama, written by Mildred Price and Agnes Cunningham, was taken from Joe Reed's "Ten Days That Shook the World."