The One Man Circus

Like a magician at a carnival, Reverend Summers has done it again! Only it wasn't a rabbit he pulled out of the hat—it was another Red Herring. Drawing on his abundant store of vile and vituperative language, Reverend Summers has composed, issued and distributed an "Open Letter To The Commonwealth College." There is nothing new in Summers' letter. He only repeats the slander, which he chooses to call facts, taken from the plant-inspired Arkansas Legislative Investigation Committee's report of two years ago.

Instead of presenting a logical and reasoned argument regarding the program and teaching of Commonwealth College, Summers shouts: "Red, atheist, social equality, free love!" and boasts for such charges would be laughed out of any court in the land, just as the "testimony" he uses was laughed out of the Arkansas State Legislature.

Summers' Record

Summers' main attack is not against Commonwealth College. His attack is upon Poor Laws. In a cloaked form, perhaps. He is attacking the well-being of farmers, workers, ex-employed, students and all progressives in Polk County and the Nation.

Let us look at the record of Reverend Summers and his writings of the last few months: Reverend Summers attempted to discredit the struggle of the 3,000 unemployed workers in Sebastian County, Arkansas, to get adequate relief. He ridiculed their strike of two years ago against a cut in relief from 25 cents to 20 cents an hour.

Reverend Summers has supported the planters in eastern Arkansas and has attacked the organization of sharecroppers into the Southern Tenant Farmers Union. He is therefore supporting evictions of sharecroppers and starvation andpeonage which are permitted by the planters.

Summers has attacked the Farmers Holiday Association as "communist." In plain words he is opposed to the organization of wheat farmers in the Northwest to get higher prices to keep possession of the land.

Arthur McEwen to Teach Labor Journ.

Arthur McEwen, new addition to the Commonwealth College faculty, will teach the course in labor journalism for the winter term. The course will include labor reporting, feature writing and shop papers.

McEwen has had experience as Associated Press correspondent, as reporter on a number of large newspapers. During the wartime and general strike in San Francisco he was active in shop paper and general propaganda work. He has done the publicity work for various workers' groups. During the past year he has been assisting in the organizing of the American Writers Union.

Further Financial Aid Urgent Necessity; Orientation Course on Winter Curriculum

Further financial aid to Commonwealth College is an urgent necessity, Charlotte Moskowitz, secretary-treasurer, just returned from a trip to the East, emphasized in her report to the Commonwealth College Association. She reported that the current financial drive had brought in $2500 and that this sum would not secure the continued operation of the school for the coming year.

Charlotte Moskowitz reported enthusiastic approval on the part of friends and supporters for the school's policy of emphasizing its work with trade unions and in concentratizing its main efforts to the South.

"There are an increasing number of national issues such as the Spanish Civil War, the Seamen's General Strike, and the Steel Drive, that place increasing demands upon labor's sympathizers who have money," Charlotte Moskowitz said, "and this means that friends of Commonwealth College will have to increase their efforts to support the school. Applications for financial support will be placed before a number of funds by the first of the year."

During her two and one-half months trip Charlotte Moskowitz met many former Commonwealth College students in New York.

An Orientation Course, to be taken by all the students, has been added to the curriculum for the winter term. The course will provide a comprehensive historical background and the necessary understanding of basic principles for effective work in the labor movement.

The course will include a study of Dialectics; Historical Materialism; Marxist Theory of the State; Feudalism; the Internationals; Industrial Revolutions in England, Germany, America; the American and French Revolutions; the Paris Commune; Imperialism; Nations and the National Question; Russian Revolution; Soviet Union; Labor movement in America; the American Negro; World War and the War Question; Peoples Front and Farmer-Labor Party.

The class meets five days a week.

The Graphic Arts Course, here-tofore meeting three hours a week, will meet five hours a week—one hour a day—during the winter quarter. This change was made because the course is an important practical part of the curriculum, an extensive portion of the graphic arts field being covered and therefore requiring more than the previously allotted time. Bill Stencill will continue to teach the course.

An addition to the curriculum will be an analysis of Imperialism to be supervised by Winifred Chappell. It will be a geographic-economic course, rather than a theoretical one. Different sections or locations in the world that are now subject to imperialist attack such as Ethiopia, Manchuria, South America, Spain will be considered in detail.

Ray Koch will be the instructor in Trade Union Problems and Organization during the next term. The course, as outlined by Andy Overgaard, will cover everything in the trade union field: the organization of the A. F. of L., strike strategy, the C. I. O., etc.

The Public Speaking class will be continued during the winter quarter under the direction of Ray Koch, with the assistance of A. C. Redden, a student who has shown a remarkable talent in speech-making and will be an able assistant in teaching the course.
Commonwealth Requests Civil Liberties
Investigation as Answer to "Liberty"

Below are excerpts from the letter sent by Commonwealth College to Senator Robert M. La Follette, chairman of the Civil Liberties Committee, Washington, D.C., and released to the press, answering the recent attack of "Liberty.

"My Dear Senator:

"This will call to your attention the accompanying December 19 issue of Liberty containing an article entitled "Rub, Rub, Russia," which is a slanderous attack on Commonwealth College, labor school at Meno, Arkansas.

"Such an article appearing, as it does, simultaneously with threats of violence against the college itself to statement of such threats has been previously presented to your committee) only conspires, whether wittingly or unwittingly, to add to the danger that local Polk County persons may be stimulated to do violence to Commonwealth College. We urgently request that your committee investigate this situation in and around Meno, Arkansas, that so threatens the very existence of our institution.

"Emphasis of Commonwealth College's curriculum is upon trade union organization and practice, and this article represents a cowardly attack upon an educational institution for trade unionists, under cover of a "red scare" by people and institutions which would not dare to aim a blow openly at trade unionism and labor organization teaching. We must recall in a commentary on such journalism, that the testimony which was cut and folded for the attack in this article, was found insufficient to warrant any action against the college.

"The repeated scurrilous incitements against it by reactionary journals indicate nothing more than a resort to yellow journalism of the most unethical type by publishers anxious to deny to American labor the right and the opportunity to organize effectively for the purpose of collective bargaining.

"The suggestion that Commonwealth is a communist institution and that, absurdity of absurdities, free love and nude bathing are a part of the curriculum or a practice of the student body, is a palpably ridiculous lie. We would not seek to portray Commonwealth students as more than human, but that the faculty's approach to and difficulties with student discipline are more than or different from that of other schools and colleges we deny flatly and without equivocation.

"In behalf of the institution and its trade union teachings we plead merely for an accurate statement and an evaluation on its real merits and demerits; and take this opportunity to call to your attention the article in question and point out its erroneous and oblique attack on unionism. Commonwealth, as a training center for union organizers, may be attacked by enemies of trade unionism, with the stimulus of such articles as the one in "Liberty," unless an investigation is made by your committee and we trust that you will instruct your committee to make such an investigation.

Nolen Bulloch's "Investigation"

"The article by Nolen Bulloch, who spent in all less than two hours on the Commonwealth College campus, is a barefaced mis-representation of the purpose and activities of the school, cleverly compounded of a garbling of testimony badgered from witnesses nearly two years ago before an unfriendly investigating committee, and of slanders ventured by enemies of the school. For example, Mr. Thomas, whose testimony is quoted, had been a renter for a short while on a small part of the Commonwealth farm, had been an inefficient farmer and had run up a large bill at the Commonwealth store. Commonwealth is a poor school and could not afford to keep Mr. Thomas any longer, and he was asked to leave the college farm and his charge account at the store was closed. His resentment, therefore, and any consequent statements he might make to discredit the college can be understood. It is interesting to know that while he was on the Commonwealth farm he was extremely friendly and took an active part in the social life of the college community.

"Tankersley's 'evidence' is, of course, purely ridiculous. There have always been separate dormitory facilities for boys and girls, and married couples are housed either in separate cottages or in separate suites in large buildings. Members of the Commonwealth group have never had to sleep on pallets on the floor, nor under such indiscerningly crowded circumstances as described in the article.

"We wish to urge again that your committee authorize and conduct an immediate investigation to avoid possible and highly probable injury to the school.

Charlotte Moskowitz
Executive Secretary"
Why Mothers Study
BY REBECCA COHEN

It is a difficult role that a mother has under the present system. To educate children to become sincere and useful members of society is our greatest job. A mother finds it very difficult in "this richest country in the world" to satisfy a thirst for the truths and causes of the present economic situation.

Tuition Reasonable
I was overwhelmed with joy when I first found out about Commonwealth College. Here was a college which offered to students an opportunity to study, to work for their maintenance, and the tuition was very reasonable.

Teachers Well Qualified
My children are grown-ups and self-reliant. That is why I took the opportunity to enter this college. My subjects are English, American Labor History and Political Economy. The teachers are well qualified. We discuss the present vital problems with each other. The students ask the teachers questions. They analyze everything in great detail until the students understand.

I take great delight in participating in the industrial work as well as in my academic work. Every one of us feels that we are members of a big happy family. We have here two mother-students with their sons. I envy them and regret that my own son is not here, but instead is in New York University.

Graphic Arts Course As Part of Training

As part of the training for the labor organizer, Commonwealth College offers a course in graphic methods of propaganda, including instruction in postwork, issuing of leadlets, assembling of shop papers and the different methods used in getting propaganda to the workers.

A study of the graphic arts enables the student to give more effective expression to his work as organizer, for Commonwealth believes that unless the student can use his theoretical understanding of labor's problems by acting effectively for their solution, all study of these issues is just "parlor talk." and of no actual benefit to the labor movement.

Since the finances of most organizations are low, the cost of materials required for duplication processes must necessarily be at a minimum. It is for these reasons that emphasis is placed on economical methods of reproduction such as mimeographing, silk screening, linoleum block cutting, and letterpress.

The class is taught how a mimeograph duplicator can be made out of such materials.

“Liberty” Article Arouses Indignation, Brings Inquiries; Code Adopted by Disciplinary Committee is Published

From Y.M.C.A. Member, Birmingham, Alabama:

“I have just finished the amusing article in the current ‘Liberty’ magazine on Commonwealth College, and it has rankled me that such can find a hearty reception among American people who will accept it as Holy Writ in their eagerness to defend their undefined ‘patriotism’... I see the choice narrowing to fascism and what may be either popular communism or some form of Marxism, and realize that, perhaps in my time, I shall have to decide.”

From California:

“In reply to your advertisement in the December 19th issue of ‘Liberty’ Magazine (p. 6) I wish to ask for two catalogs of your new celebrated institution.”

From an Arkansas Attorney:

“I recall with pleasure that several years ago I had the honor on the occasion of one of your fall opening exercises of being a guest of Commonwealth College. Now I have before me the article in ‘Liberty’ entitled ‘Rah, Rah, Russia!’... Seriously I want to congratulate you personally for discovering the true character of the scoundrel who wrote that article and for giving him the air even if it did inspire him to write, for money, that filthy, revengeful article.”

From an Illinois Worker:

“I am interested in learning something about your college having read this week’s article in ‘Liberty’. . . Furnish me with descriptive data and catalog.”

From a Pennsylvania Worker:

“I have read about your college in the ‘Liberty’ magazine this week. The article was written by Nolen Bullough whom you sent away from your school, I believe that what you did was right. . . Please send me some information about your college.”

From Member of Executive Board, Workers Alliance of America:

“I imagine that the whole school is up in arms about the stinking attack in ‘Liberty.’ You should begin at once to have everyone who knows the school or is sympathetic to start a storm of protest. If there is anything I can do, let me know.”

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Letter to an Editor on "Champions"

BY FRED FIELD

To the Arkansas Gazette:

Dear Editor,

SAY! I want to protest on that champion sharecropper of yours, John E. Shannon of Craighead County, about whom you editorialized so loudly on the 18th inst. The way you fellows talk you'd think the only states there was in the Union was Tennesse, Arkansas, and Mississippi. I'm serving notice on you right here and now that Alabama, Louisiana, Georgia, and Florida is in the Union, too. And right next to the Union lies North and South Carolina, and some folks over my way is fighting lively for admitting Oklahoma, Texas, and Missouri.

All them great and glorious states have their right smart share of sharecroppers, and ain't none of 'em but stands ready and willing, I'll bet, to produce their champion who'll pit his poverty against them qualities of your John E. Shannon of Craighead County, Arkansas.

Well, just to prove it to myself, I done called up my good sharecropper friend, Waite A. Wile, of Baldwin County, Alabama. And after a couple of days when I got the connection here's what happened:

"Waite," I shouts, "three people over here in Arkansas is raising a lot of hullabal-llew about having the champion sharecropper, and I want you should come out and stand agin him for a share of them honors."

"Yeah," whistled Waite, "you ought to know I ain't got any shirt up my back right now," I chuckled, "that's just it. This fellow wears fertilizer sacks for shirts."

"Fertilizer sacks for shirts!" gasped Waite. "Why he must be nigh as broke as I am."

"Of course he is. He's the champion from the bottom of the list of sharecroppers," I assured him. "This fellow comes pretty close to having nothing at all. They done cuiled 4,000 head of sharecroppers to find him. But don't let that worry you none," I hurried on. "You can beat him on all around honors. You got even less than he has unless you've taken to stilling since I left."

"Say," he snorted, "I been packing a palette around on my back these past two months looking for a dry gully to sleep in—an account of my shoe of the farm earned a government check this year."

"You see," I told him, "when it comes to adding up zeros you'll have him beat. Why this fellow goes to the store and buys sugar and flour and coffee."

"I been drinking china berry juice for—"

"And he got a smokehouse and a pantry."

"What's a pantry?"

Excerpts from the Arkansas Gazette editorial eulogizing poverty:

"AN ARKANSAS SHARECROPPER IS THE CHAMPION"

"After all that has been said about the evils of sharecropping, and all the unfavorable publicity Arkansas has received on its account, it is an Arkansas sharecropper, John E. Shannon of Craighead County, who is declared the champion tenant farmer of Tennessee, Arkansas, and Mississippi. He won this distinction against 4,000 farmers who had part in the Memphis Commercial Appeal's 'plant to prosper' contest.

"To make a living the Shannon family has to work hard and count every penny. The father and the boys wear work shirts made by Mrs. Shannon from fertilizer sacks. . . . The Shannon family has only a few dollars a month to spend at the store. This goes to buy, not fat meat and syrup and corn meal, but sugar, flour, coffee, baking powder, salt, and a few incidentals the farm will not produce. For the rest there are the smokehouse and pantry stocked with meats, canned and dried vegetables and fruits produced on the sharecropped land, along with plenty of hay and grain for the livestock."

"Well," explained, "all these sharecroppers over here in Arkansas has set aside a couple of acres out of their fertile three hundred and twenty-five acres and has built themselves nice hollow tile storerooms with concrete floors. They call these their 'pantries.' And they're all filled with shelves groaning and creaking with bams, buns and breads, sausages and cold meats, boxes of chocolates for the kiddies and bolts of silk for the Mrs. and . . ."

"Hello! Let me out of Alabama! Arkansas, here I come!" roared Waite slamming up the receiver.

So you see, Mr. Editors of the Arkansas Gazette, if you keep on publicizing the well-being of your sharecroppers you're going to have them streaming into Arkansas from all over the Southland.

Anyway, Waite is probably on his way over here, and if I get hold of him before you spoil him with prosperity I'll match him up against your man. And frankly, your man ain't got no more chance of winning than a one-eyed man in a squinting contest.

Condemns Government Aid

Reverend Summers opposes the granting of federal aid to poor students who want to go to college. This is true, for Reverend Summers denounces the government aid given in the form of relief to students who, of their own accord, select Commonwealth as the college they wished to attend. Commonwealth has never received money directly from the government, though Commonwealth, a workers' institution, feels it has as much right in this direction as the Wall Street bankers who have received millions from the government.

Un-American Behavior

Commonwealth college has no quarrel with Reverend Summers as a minister of the Gospel. We oppose him when he ceases to act like a minister, we oppose him when he uses vile, insulting language and needles slander; we oppose him when he defends the reactionary and unrepentant employers and Wall Street bankers; when he defends starvation and misery. We oppose Reverend Summers because he is a reactionary. We hold that such behavior is un-American in the fullest sense of the word.