MULES, FORDS, HORSES
BRING XMAS GUESTS
School Gives International Program
For Children of Neighbors

Walking, riding horseback or muleback, driving mule teams or the less dependable Ford, Commonwealth's neighbors traversed Arkansas mud to attend Commonwealth's invitation Christmas program. Dances, songs, recitations, and a play, "The Six Who Pass While the Lentils Boil" were sufficiently interesting to lower appreciably the consumption of chewing tobacco until sufficiently satisfied.

The Six Who Pass While the Lentils Boil, one of Stuart Walker's Pontiac plays, was chosen for presentation by Commonwealth's actors, because, requiring as it does, few scenic, property, or lighting fixtures, Commonsers could take eight blankets from as many cots, bring a hand-made stool to the front, introduce a poet from the kitchen, and lentils ditto, thus accented Commonsers transported one hundred Arkansans to the long ago and far away of the little boy who protected the queen from being hooded by hiding her in his mother's bedroom while he entertained a blind man, a mime, a ballad singer, a milk-maid and finally the Dreadful Headsman all bound for the "deapitation."

Lucien Koch played Sir Davie Little Boy with assistance from Mildred Koch, Fritz Hohn, Willi Schaub, Otilie Danielsson, Harriet Babcock, Gertrude Hohn, Irene Gassoway, Peter Hoedemaker, James Foy, and Vaughan Chorlian.

Alice: Labor Delegate
The Polk County proletariat and the teachers of Arkansas have as their sole representative in the annual convention of the Arkansas State Federation of Labor Alice Hanson, 23-year-old instructor of public speaking and literature at Commonwealth College. She is representing Commonwealth Local 194 of the American Federation of Teachers as this issue goes to press.

Alice is accompanied by Wesley Cook, her lawfully wedded spouse, who is spending a two weeks' vacation in Arkansas. Graduate philosophy student at Northwestern, he favored assembled Commonsers with an exposition of John Dewey's social psychology.

"Mind Your P's and B's
Alice Counsels New Class
A course in English pronunciation for the foreign-born represents the latest adaptation of the Commonwealth curriculum to the needs of labor students. Previous courses for the foreign-born have laid emphasis chiefly on grammar and rhetoric; the present work represents the first thoroughly systematic attempt to remedy specific defects of pronunciation.

"Pock, pug, book, pooh!" observes August Danielsson (German) to a classmate whom he chances to meet on the campus. He is not commenting on the weather in the vernacular, but he is carefully distinguishing between breathed and voiced labials.

"By jiminy, judge," rejoins Oscar Easton (Swede) cautiously side-stepping the impulse to utter a consonantal Scandinavian "Y."

Inquiring reporters and statisticians from classes in journalism and in statistics likewise ruffle the campus status quo in preparing their assignments. Only a few Commonsers escape questions concerning their sex, health, academic plans, early indiscretions, and hours of study. The answers find body in human interest stories and index numbers.

The Mena Evening Star, local daily, places a weekly column for "Commonwealth College Notes" at

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Commonwealth College Fortnightly

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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 Fortnightly will be appreciated.

Hectic Days

[Continued from Page One]

finishing inside work in the dormitories or make it possible to delegate the members of painting department to floor scrubbing.

At 5 o'clock the granite washpans usurp the place of the saw, corn-knife, axe, and pitch-fork. At 5:30, 60 forks ascend to 60 mouths, and the demolition of the kitchen crew's creations begins.

Formerly, formal academic work ended with the bell for lunch. But an augmented curriculum and a larger student body this year have made evening classes necessary. German, shorthand, advance work in public speaking, music practices, and play rehearsals are relegated to the hours which follow supper.

With such a program awaiting a Commoner for fulfillment when he rises each morning, it is not strange that his discrete snore do rend the mountain air until another day is almost on him.

What Labor Banking Is and Isn't

By HARVEY O'CONNOR

In Village and 14th street puritans of Manhattan's jaded intelligencia, organization of the unorganized was the dernier cri in the period roughly from July 1, 1925 to June 30, 1926. Triumphant and repulsed by endless repetition of this slogan in coffee-cup analyses of the American proletariat, the intelligencia have passed into fresher and greener fields. Forsaking the narrow and too-trodden paths of organizational diagnosis, they have become interested in psyching peasant and proletarian. The hard and difficult job of emancipating workers from industrial feudalism has been passed back to the workers themselves.

The effort of progressives, for example, to reform the Miners' union in order to reclaim unionism from some 20,000 coal diggers in West Virginia and neighboring districts excited no enthusiasm among the Manhattanese, many of whom had worn their fingernails down to the flesh on programs for the solution of all biliousness, lilies. Composing programs is a dignified and well-bred job for an intellectual, but jumping into the fight along side of sweaty and dirty hewers of coal is really too arduous for words.

Criteria for Judgment

Commonwealthers among others, and other labor folks who believe the organization of the masses is no mere fad for dilettantes are still honestly interested in the big job. Convinced that we can have no labor movement in a real sense until fairly representative sections of the unskilled and semi-skilled workers have struck their first blows for freedom by forming unions capable of coping with third-decade industrialism, Commonwealthers among others, still maintain, I believe, that every activity of our movement must be judged in the light of its effect on this initial program.

The acid test, then, for trade union banking is, Has it aided or hindered this fundamental work of ours? Or has it registered a mere blank?

It is needless here to rehearse the origin and development of trade union banking: how it started in 1920 and 1921 in the minds of William H. Johnston, Warren Stone, Walter McCaleb, Frederic C. Howe, and others as a result of the accumulation of huge bank balances by trade unions in the war and post-war period; how it flourished as the bay tree for the span of five years. Nor need we pause too long over the curious theories of some of these men that by some hokus-pokus labor could capture credit control, nay, control of all industry by the simple expedient of tying up its own boot straps. This hokus-pokus found no deep and permanent support -- although it fostered a few of whose enthusiasm exceeded their good judgement.

Wall Street Deems Moon Safe

Certainly the spectacle of "labor," with a perilous hold on the railroads and a few highly competitive old-fashioned crafts, reaching out for the moon of credit control of America's 122 billions of invested capital must have caused quiet mirth down in the narrow canyons of Wall and Nassau streets. Certainly it caused no alarm to the gentlemen most directly menaced, for they proceeded to insert the most prominent streams of dollars which the trade union bankers "controlled" into their own coffers via alliances with the strongest of the trade union banks.

The urge toward banking showed itself strongest in the unions with the biggest cash reserves. The Engineers started a whole chain of banks and investment companies, the Printing Pressmen bought control in three country institutions, the New York needle trades conceived vaunting schemes which have since shrunk modestly enough into three quiet, serviceable, but very small banks. These unions had accumulated, in ordinary union financing, as well as in pension, mortuary, and other benefit plans, millions of dollars which they were obliged to invest. The urge was to invest their own coffers via alliances with the strongest of the trade union banks.

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Not so pretty a picture can be painted of the local labor banks, two of which have already gone the way of all flesh, leaving bitter memories to hard-working folks who could ill afford to lose their savings. These outfits have often been promoted by selfish, old-line craft union leaders in alliance with smart companies, directly menaced, for they proceeded to insert the most prominent streams of dollars which the trade union bankers "controlled" into their own coffers via alliances with the strongest of the trade union banks.

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Labor Banking

[Continued from Page Two]

they not been diverted into the union institution.

Enthusiasts Reach Earth Again

Many of the idealists who joined the hue and cry in the labor banking craze are now eating the bitter fruit of remorse while they read fulsome accounts in the Saturday Evening Post about the painful deaths inflicted on the theories of Marx and Lenin by the “new capitalism.”

“Except for the name of the door,” declares Frank Parker Stockbridge in the Post, “nobody discovers anything, either in physical set-up, the method of doing business, the appearance and manner of the personnel or the intangible atmosphere of the institution to distinguish it from an ordinary capitalist bank of equal financial size.”

In fact, the pros and the pigs parade are all over, so far as trade union banking is concerned. The number of banks is stationary, two having been born and two killed during the year. Their assets likewise are from an ordinary capitalist bank of the year. With trade union leaders anxious to make supply equal demand. On every day in the week loaves of bread and a pitcher of sorghum on a table in the corner of the dining hall answer not the demand for bread and the circus, but the Commoner cry for bread and the syrup.

Invention’s Mother. Buried deep in each mild breast close to the Heart-Mother-Humanity is the longing to sit at the head of the dining table. By the time boys and girls are old enough to come to Commonwealth, they have attained, on the whole, a dignity commensurate with the proper functioning in such a seat. But at Commonwealth hostesses and kitchen maids are considered as by-products of the construction department, who in a true co-operative spirit have donated their empty nail kegs for this purpose. These kegs with tops one inch below the stave endings make difficult sitting; indeed, those Commoners whom the gods would destroy thus they first make slender. But the custom of rotating this honor has grown up at some tables. How to slenderize? So far the younger generation offer the only solution to the problem: Madge and James Foy, Johnnie and Marian Koch, aged five, seven, nine, and ten years respectively, after rolling prone on the barrels periodically, stand slim evidence of the efficacy of their calisthenic ingenuity.

Up. When Commonwealth located ten miles from the nearest Mazda lamp, it did not leave the problems of civilization behind. General Manager Ernest Koch constantly faces problems in personnel adjustment which would baffle experienced industrial engineers. When Peter Hoedemaker, six feet, four inches tall, first walked into the commons, a startled “Oh!” went up from Domestic Manager Gertrude Foy, who had to furnish him a bed; a pleased “Ah!” from General Manager Ernie, who had been waiting just such a man to assist in the sweet potato harvest. But cool calculation won over unconsidered enthusiasm. Ernie soon recognized the inefficient expenditure of valuable B. T. U’s in getting Peter to and from the ground. Peter went to the laundry crew. But though clothes boil above the ground, tubs at Commonwealth heat low over wood fires. And so after further cogitation, Ernie introduced Peter to Construction Manager Solomon Carp. Sol looked Peter up, and short of ladders assigned him to nailing ceilings.

Ecce Pons. The Castle, over-flow boys’ dormitory, houses an elongated electrician, a hash-slinger, a truck driver, a machinist, a lumber-jack, and a farmer. Situated as the dormitory is on the edge of the cliff which rises abruptly from Mill Creek, the problem of access to and egress from the back of their quarters faced the composite genius of the place. Valiant (Sailor) Chorlian, levantine wonder-worker, kayoed the problem by throwing across the forbidding space a gangplank built to sustain a substantial list on the part of Castle-ites. Now from ground to porch the lads may upward mend their way.

Hit and. Covington Hall, instructor in labor problems, returned to Commonwealth early this month after a visit to St. Louis on behalf of his health. He is undecided as to whether he will be able to remain at Commonwealth. William E. Zeuch has been teaching his class.

Here. Will Chase, Omaha house painter, is stopping with Commonwealth for an indefinite period. Following the usual custom of long-term guests, he is participating in the industrial activities of the school.

Thither. Herman Koch, authentic he-man and father of the entire younger generation of Commonwealth Kochs, who has been a “working guy” of the College for several months, left during the fortnight for Denver, Colo.

Mind Your P’s and B’s

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the disposal of the journalism class. That no such tangible public recognition stimulates the statisticians is tribute to their dispassionate interest in numberology.

It must never be forgotten that education is such a dangerous thing that it is very doubtful whether the invention of printing would have been tolerated if more than a few people had been able to read.—Shaw.
Communications

Foresighted.

Thank you very kindly for sending me the two copies of the Commonwealth College Fortnightly which I recently requested. They were much more interesting than I expected. The only fault I have to find is that the covers of the publication are too close together. You are to be congratulated for publishing such a mighty fine little paper. I wish you every success possible in your courageous undertaking.

Please enter my name on your subscription list. I am enclosing $2.

I have a little daughter three years old. Yours is the kind of academic institution I should like her to select when she becomes older.

Cordially yours,

G. C. MARCLEY.
Ogdensburg, N. Y.

Injunction (Admonishment)
The Editor:

In reply to your request for opinions about Mr. Dodds' criticism on the use of the big words: I want to allow a person to use such words as to him are the best suited to express his ideas of fact or thoughts, even if I have to refer to the dictionary for interpretation. Yet, Mr. Dodds expresses the idea that a teacher of my class in rhetoric and composition said in his instructions. He said: "Don't use big words if you can find a small one that will express your idea; and don't use any more small ones than you have to. If obliged to use a foreign-language word, or even an English word that is not common, explain-in parenthesis of small words-what that word means, as the ordinary reader wants to know your thoughts, and not your education in languages."

Yours truly,

A. H. FLOATEN,
Greystone Winery.
St. Helena, Calif.

(Reader Floaten's mentor is right. Except when on an ironic spore the editors say their say as simply as possible. But adverse criticisms will be welcome.-(The Editors)

Bird Rebutts.

Clay Fulk of the old Sod and John Soltis of Work People's College have taken issue with my suggestion that a radical bloc within the Democratic Party could best promote political progress in the Wonder State at the present time.

Mr. Fulk accuses me of wanting to beseige the Democratic donkey and steer him to the Promised Land. Why not, if there is no other conveyance thither? Even the Savior of the world entered Jerusalem on an ass.

So far as the criticism of Mr. Soltis is concerned, suffice it to say that my ideas on the question were arrived at after a study of Arkansawyers such as, realizing present conditions here. Be it understood that I am not a conscientious objector to starting a farmer-labor party in Arkansas at any time. Practicability is my measuring stick. The present mood (or lack of mood?) of the people make the transplantation of such a tailor-made vehicle well-nigh impossible. Such a thing was tried recently and was a miserable farce.

Mr. Fulk intimates that I would lend "dignity" and "respectability" to the Democratic Party by having the radicals join it. I think it is high time that we chuck overboard those ancient platitudes, which have been dangled before the laboring man for centuries. The material a new party would have to attract is in the Democratic Party, and in all probability will stay there until a radical bloc is formed around which it may collect. Once this is accomplished, a split along economic lines is possible. Just now the farmers are inert and something other than perennial evangelism and wild statements about the great raid "our party" is making on the capitalistic preserves will be necessary to arouse them.

I heartily indorse Mr. Fulk's indictment of the Democratic Party. This I would have done in no less emphatic terms had I possessed his eloquence, but it has nothing to do with refuting my theory. His choice of Mr. Bryan as an example of banding within was unfortunate. The Commener did not borne within the party at all-he captured it with a speech. Also Mr. Bryan was not a radical. He was a spell-binding fundamentalist, and if he ever had any economic ideas except on the free silver question and Florida land speculation, I have never heard of them.

Mr. Soltis would come to Arkansas with a ready-made party without consulting the Arkansawyers. Mr. Fulk seems to think that the passage of a "geological age" of time will be required. I agree with him in this, unless the radicals bury their scruples, quit licking each other, and take the only feasible road out.

FRA~K BIRD,
Commonwealth College.
Mena, Ark.

At the present moment we can establish no theory in Arkansas in a position to demolish any theory that may be established.-Remy de Gourmont.

Good and Welfare

The Last Order of Business

By HAROLD BRONCO

Pass Keys for the Wedlocked.

The theory on which advocates of uniform divorce procedure work is that a code satisfactory to everyone would become the law of the land. Some even think that the expeditious method by which holy bonds are severed in Nevada would become the standard for all these sovereign states. But as a matter of fact, official officiousness would probably see it to it that the harsh provisions of the New York statutes would be extended throughout the nation-provisions which make it necessary for a couple desiring a divorce to enter into insane embarrassing arrangements with friends.

The Mann Act gives us a good example of the temper of federal legislation: one may sin athwart the broad acres of Texas with a reasonable degree of impunity; but let the too weak-minded (or ambivalent Arkansans) (Ark.) take his sweetie for an interstate ride down the main street and perhaps he is already on his way to Leavenworth.

* * *

"If at first you don't succeed, try, try again," may be the guiding principle of the unwilling partner to a marital union today. There is a divorce law for every scruple, taste, and pocketbook. The New York garment worker, craving freedom and proficient at hitch-hiking, may easily establish six months' residence in Nebraska, taking the slack season and return to his trade a free individual. The New York dock worker who has resolved that the ties that bind shall never interk may, if the worst comes to the worst, stow on a boat bound for Yucatan, where he has a good chance of unloading his marital responsibilities while the vessel is taking on cargo. Romance has forsaken marriage; it lingers only in divorce. What though few are enterprising enough to grasp their opportunities?-the fact that these opportunities exist makes the most drab married life a bit more endurable. Do we Americans, with our passion for standardization, wish to reduce even divorce to a dead level of mediocrity?

Laws do not put the least restraint Upon our freedom, but maintain; Or, if it does, 'tis for our good, To give us freer latitude; For wholesome laws preserve us free By stinting of our liberty.

—Butler Hudibras.