ZEUCH TELLS STUDENTS OF PIONEER YEARS

Founders Waited Six Years to Launch Commonwealth, Director Says

"The Commonwealth idea of workers' education was formulated just ten years ago at Ruskin, Florida, where Mrs. O'Hare and I, at that time unacquainted with one another, had gone to associate ourselves with Ruskin College, the first resident workers' college in the United States."

Such were the opening words of Director Zeuch, co-founder with Kate Richards O'Hare of Commonwealth College, in an informal talk to a group of new students recently at White Lodge, his cottage home.

"Ruskin College," he resumed, "had much of promise but was destroyed by the war which stripped it of almost all of its young men students and left no one to carry on the work. Over a period of several months, Mrs. O'Hare and I studied Ruskin, talked over our own educational ideas, and decided to work together to establish a school for workers. The war cut into our plans. It sent Mrs. O'Hare to prison because she didn't approve of war as a means of settling disputes. It drew me into the service for a while. When the war was over we took up our plans again. For a period of six years, all told, we searched for an opportunity to launch our experiment. Finally in 1923, we entered into a contract with a co-operative group in Louisiana and started our project. After a year this contractual relation was broken off because of many reasons, chief of which was that through mismanagement the co-operators were unable to carry out their agreement to provide for the incoming students."

Director Zeuch then told the story of the search for a new location for Commonwealth. He and Professor Goodhue spent many weeks in the summer of 1924 traveling in an old Ford through the highlands of eastern Oklahoma, western and northern Arkansas, and southern Missouri. [Continued on Page Two]
Commonwealth College
Fortnightly

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Vol. III, No. 4, March 1, 1927

The Commonwealth Idea

Commonwealth is a school for workers. The son or daughter that sends to college followed by a flock of checks is not likely to be attracted by the 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 opinions. 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.

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WHAT IS COMMONWEALTH COLLEGE?

Commonwealth was organized in 1923 to provide education for workers on a self-supporting basis.

Commonwealth is located in the Ozarks near Meno, Ark., where it operates agri-cultural and other basic industries by means of labor from its students and teachers.

Commonwealth seeks to develop in young men and women 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 is the only hope of just measurement 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.

Zuech Tells

(Continued from Page One)

searching out the fertile valleys, measuring the streams for power, and in many other ways trying to find a satisfactory site for a permanent school home. After traveling over 2,000 miles, sleeping on the ground wherever night overtook them, and after looking over dozens of possible locations, they reported back to the college group as favoring the Ouchita Mountains region.

In December of 1924 the college removed from Louisiana to Meno, Arkansas, in the heart of the Ouchita (Washtitas). Living in rented houses, the group carried on the communal tasks and the usual college courses. The winter in Meno was the most trying period in the whole history of Commonwealth. Often it was a question as to whether the school could finish the term. Undis­mayed by the hardships, however, the group carried on through the year and in the spring, after a conference of the group, the decision was made not to give up the project but to purchase the location that had already been determined upon and to begin the task of building the college community.

"From the spring of 1925 to the present steady progress has been made toward the realization of the Commonwealth ideal of a self-maintaining educational community for workers. Much remains to be accomplished before the ideal is worked out but the progress made is a promise of ultimate success," Zuech concluded.

If you suffer your people to be ill-educated, and their manner to be corrupted from their infancy, and then punish them for these crimes to which their first education disposed them—you first make thieves, and then punish them. —Sir Thomas More.

Ah, little recks the laborer, How near his work is holding him to God, The loving laborer through space and time. —Whitman.
LAND OF THE HILLS

Commonwealth nestles amid the pines, oaks and hickories on a ninety-foot bluff overlooking the level bottoms of peaceful little Mill Creek Valley. A few miles to the north and west loom the Ouachitas, the southernmost of the Ozarks and the highest mountains between the Alleghanies and the Rockies.

Nature has here fashioned her work with loving and gentle hands, and with an eye seemingly forever fixed on beauty. The country is rolling and rugged, but even in the ruggedness there is a magical softness. Often coming through a boldersown gorge one comes out unexpectedly upon small fertile valleys tucked away between the ridges. All the acres, aside from the farms and small plots of glades, and the forests are restful to those who have known the cities too long.

In science, as in art, and, as I believe, in every other sphere of human activity, there may be wisdom in a multitude of counsellors, but it is only the one unpardonable sin.—Huxley.

Commoners Commune

(Continued from Page One)

pressing financial problems. First of all the school must raise sufficient funds to meet the current operating deficit until such time as the community is completely self-supporting. Second, it must find some friends who can see the significance of the Commonwealth methods and aims and who are able and willing to help build up the productive capital equipment to the point where the educational community is economically completely self-sustaining.

No decision has yet been reached as to the best employment of the student labor after the building program is completed. A part of the labor will continue to be used in communal tasks and in an enlargement of the agricultural program. There will be considerable labor available for other purposes, however. The trustees have been studying the matter for some months and believe that a small plant for the manufacture of wood novelties and a shop for the making of wearing apparel will probably employ the surplus labor of students and members to best advantage.

Capital is only the fruit of labor and could never have existed had labor not first existed.—Lincoln.
COMMONWEALTH ANNOUNCEMENT

1927-1928
C A L E N D A R

1927

October 1—Registration for fall semester.

October 3—Classes begin.

November 24—Thanksgiving (holiday).

December 25—Christmas (holiday).

1928

January 1—New Year's (holiday).

January 11—Fall semester ends.

Registration for the spring semester.

January 16—Classes begin.

April 2—Foundation day (holiday).

April 29—School year ends.

COURSES

Preparatory Department


College


Short Labor Course


The standard course consists of three fifty-minute recitation periods a week. No student will be permitted to take more than four courses—twelve hours a week. Recitations, group discussions, or lectures in

standard courses will take place from 7:30 a.m. to 12 m. each week day.

The Preparatory Department is designed to be a testing and training school where those unqualified for higher education may be eliminated.

ENTRANCE

Admittance to Commonwealth is by written application only. The application blank may be secured by writing to the Executive Secretary, Commonwealth College, Mena, Arkansas. No individual under eighteen years of age will be admitted except by special arrangement with the Educational Director. A grammar school education or its equivalent is necessary for entrance to the Preparatory Department. Any adult who has completed a secondary school or who can demonstrate his ability to carry the work may enter college. The short labor course is open to persons active in the farm and labor movements who can spend but a short time at college and wish to avail themselves of the opportuni-

Society Notes

Dressy. College campuses are usually dress parades. Freshies in caps and flapping bell bottoms, Sophs a bit subdued but still flashy, and the upper classmen in more conservative cuts, blend into one general pattern that makes each campus the duplicate of every other. All unwittingly Commonwealth avoids the commonplace. There is no telling a Freshie by the cut of his jib. There is no certainty that the sedate, cane-swinging figure across the campus is a Senior about to go forth full of everything but the humility of great knowledge. The man in denim may be either a student or a member of the teaching staff. This is not to infer that all Commonweathers dress alike as policemen and convicts. The variety in work clothes is endless. It is sectional as well as individual. Texas farmers will never learn that bibless overalls (dungarees) with natty copper rivets at the points of greatest strain are more comfortable. The boys from up "noth" insist on a jumper. The carpenters will have their white overalls while the truck driver unfailingly dresses his lean form in a corduroy Norfolk and army breeches. Since clothes lend no dignity at Commonwealth the faculty goes about as though it had been rigged out from missionary barrels. As for the female Commonweathers — their costumes beggar description. But then, nobody cares about dress at Commonwealth. The absolute lack of standards in matters of clothes is so complete that it is unthought of until some outsider brings it to our attention as something astonishing.

WE THANK YOU

Louis F. Post, Washington, D. C., sends a copy of his work, "What is the Single Tax?"

Mrs. Rachel T. Dunlop, Santa Fe, N. M., a constant donor, sends three excellent new books.

S. Kahn, Mobile, Alabama, sends his check for $50.

Commonwealth needs the financial aid of every friend of workers' education. Our buildings must be finished and our industrial plants equipped in order to achieve complete self-support.