COMMOMWEALTH COLLEGE FORTNIGHTLY
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HUNDRED FRIENDS CAN SAVE SCHOOL

Zeuch Makes Last Attempt to Preserve Life of Institution.

One hundred friends each willing to pledge $25 a year for three years can save Commonwealth College, in the opinion of W. E. Zeuch, business administrator.

The school runs a deficit of $2500 a year and this sum must be raised each year until the capital equipment is completed. Approximately $7000 is needed to build the dam, power plant and work shop which are the very heart of the Commonwealth plan. The trustees believe that they can raise this amount within three years if the school is not forced to close down.

"We are going to make one last effort," declares Zeuch, "to raise funds to meet the yearly deficit. Undoubtedly there are one hundred persons in America sufficiently interested in Commonwealth and labor education to pledge $25 a year for three years. Our aim is to reach those persons with a frank statement of the situation."

"It will be extremely unfortunate to the cause of labor education if Commonwealth has to close at the present time. The college has won a place for itself in the labor movement and has earned the goodwill of its neighbors. Any new project on a similar plan would be faced with the problems which Commonwealth has already solved, and would be furthermore handicapped by this school's failure.

On the other hand, if this school succeeds it has paved the way for numerous other attempts.

"The importance of neighborly good will cannot be over estimated. When we first came here the people of Polk county were suspicious. Wild rumors flew about in the countryside. But at the present time the school is a part of the community. This afternoon I am going to a neighbor's house to show them how to make cheese. Next spring, during the rush season, they will help us with the farm work. They know that our customs are different, in some respects, from theirs, but they recognize our right to be different."

We are sure that few ventures will be found which have achieved more in (Continued On Page Three)

A Real Friend!

With only a few weeks to live, one old friend of Commonwealth yet has time to think of the school. Mr. N. L. Baker of Tacoma, Washington, 86 years old, sends in a pledge of $25.

His letter reads: "Until now, I was watching over my dear old sweetheart in her last struggle for life, so you may guess that my expenses have been immense. My income is mainly a Civil War veteran's pension, but I will promise to send you $25 in a few weeks, with my good wishes. I am 86 and may last a few weeks yet by careful and temperate living. I dearly love to live and see what is going on in the world."

"In our younger days we were devoutly religious—could see signs of the soon coming of the Lord—stars falling, earthquakes. In older days we outgrew all of our religious superstitions and faith in supernaturalism. I am sure we feel better than wandering about in the misty mazes of the unknowable and unreasonable."

Mr. Baker has sent money to the school many times in the past and he has donated over a hundred books—good books, not merely discarded volumes. "You can know a man by what he reads," said a Commonwealth student. "Baker's choice of books shows him to be a highly intelligent man—a man I would like to know personally."

Cunningham Predicts Best Semester Yet

That the next semester will be the best semester the school has ever had is the opinion of William Cunningham, journalism instructor, who spoke at a gathering of teachers and students December 14.

"Even though the school closes we will be able to say, I believe, that we were here when Commonwealth was at her best," Cunningham said.

"Now that the students know the desperate situation facing the school they will not expect the impossible." (Continued On Page Three)

PROMISED FUNDS ARE UNAVAILABLE

American Fund For Public Service Reverses Promise.

Unless a new source of income is discovered within the next few months, Commonwealth College will close its doors May 1.

The American Fund for Public Service has refused to release allocations made several years ago and the school finds itself unable to complete the capital equipment which will make it self supporting. With the present equipment Commonwealth runs a deficit of $2500 a year.

This was the substance of the announcement made December 14th by W. E. Zeuch, business administrator.

Shortly after Commonwealth moved to its present location in 1925 the American Fund sent Clinton Golden to investigate the institution. As a result of his investigation the Fund allocated funds on a budget which was to meet the expense of completing the plant. The Commonwealth accepted this plan in good faith and went to work. From that time until May, 1926, the Fund supplied money for buildings and maintenance equipment. The budget provided for the building of a dam on Mill creek and the installation of a power plant and workshops. With this equipment the school could have earned its own way.

But when Commonwealth asked for the sum set aside for the hydro-electric plant, which was the very heart of the industrial plan for self-support, the Fund refused to release it. No reason was given for this refusal.

The dam, power plant and work shop are sine qua non of the Commonwealth plan. With them the school can accomplish the great purpose for which it was founded. Without them it can only be a parasite, as other schools are parasites, upon the social structure.

Only $7,000 is needed to complete this necessary equipment, and this sum can be raised. Zeuch believes, if the school can carry on for two or three years. It is impossible, however, for the school to continue unless some method can be devised of raising the money for the temporary yearly deficit of $2500. (Continued On Page Three)
Commonwealth College Fortnightly

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Signed articles express only individual opinion.

Editors, particularly of labor and former papers are welcome to make free use of material appearing in these columns. A line crediting the Commonwealth College Fortnightly will be appreciated.

Vol. IV, No. 2 January 15, 1928

WHAT IS COMMONWEALTH COLLEGE?
Commonwealth was organized in 1923 to provide education for workers on a self-supporting basis.

Commonwealth is located in the Ouachitas near Mena, Ark., where it operates agricultural and other basic industries by means of four hours' daily 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.

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Commonwealth is a non-sectarian non-propaganda institution. It sponsors no particular religious, political, or economic dogma. It holds that scientific experimentation carries the only hope of adjustment or solution 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.

Bellmans Leave for Maryland University

Earl S. Bellman, former Executive Secretary, and Helen Bellman, instructor of music, left December 28 for the University of Maryland at College Park, where Bellman will teach in the department of economics and sociology.

Bellman was enthusiastic about his new work. "It will give me the opportunity to study and do research work along the lines in which I am especially interested, Sociology and Social Psychology."

The Bellmans expect to make a second honeymoon trip out of the one to Maryland. They will stop first at Wichita to visit with Mr. Bellman's family and friends, and then at Ottawa where Mrs. Bellman's family and friends reside. The last stop before New York City will be Niagara Falls.

Bellman's last words to the Commoners were: "Do your best and do your darndest—Farewell, I love you all, especially the girls.

"Is It Easier—?"

I
"Is it easier to work your way at Commonwealth than at another school?" asks a prospective student.

For the sake of answering that question let us sketch two wholly imaginary characters, Tom and Dick, and enroll each of them first at a typical state university and then at Commonwealth.

Their adventures may throw some light on the question.

II
Tom was probably yell leader in his high school. He had great respect for the athletic heroes of the school, but somehow never quite managed to make the team, perhaps because he didn't like to practice. He had the cleanest hair and the best "line" of any boy in the school. On the dance floor he was a great success.

Tom goes to the university and gets a job as hasher in a boarding house. But hazing is irksome and he is humiliated at the necessity of carrying food to the rather seedy country boys and girls who are his class mates. He adopts a worshipful air toward a wealthy young man in one of his classes and finally gets on speaking terms with him.

The wealthy young man discovers that Tom is willing to write English themes for practically nothing. The fact that Tom writes rather poorly makes him all the more satisfactory for the teacher never suspects that the moneyed lad is not writing the themes.

Eventually Tom gets a job as furnace tender in the fraternity house of the wealthy young man. Tom is thoroughly happy. His work is the dirtiest. His hours are the shortest. Tom has just enough to pay his room in the fraternity house and pay for his college work. He gets around to the other Greek houses and joins an anti-fraternity club. A half-dozen of his teachers are unintelligent, he is the scum of the earth. The very intimacy of the Commonwealth life makes it impossible for him to "get by" with anything, and getting-by is Tom's specialty. At the end of the semester he leaves, hating the school and all it stands for.

Now let us take Dick.

III
Dick's triumph in high school was his election as president of a literary society. He too admired athletes and unsuccessfully tried to be one, but the cause for his failure was a library that absorbed his time and energy.

Dick too goes to the state university and gets a job as a hasher. He longs to join a fraternity, but knows of no way to do so. He scrubs dishes and reads his textbooks for a year. Then he falls in love with a sorority girl and discovers that, so far as she is concerned, he is the scum of the earth.

Because of this experience he turns against fraternities. He talks of forming an anti-fraternity club. A half-dozen badly dressed, well read, ill tempered self-help students meet with him and discuss "stirring and public opinion."

The school paper refers to them as "library hounds and tattered underwears." That ends Dick's anti-fraternity club.

Dick has always been interested in the labor movement and he has expected his university courses to help him understand the economic situation. He awakes to the fact that his economics teacher is satisfied with things as they are and is afraid of organized labor. Dick sets about presenting the case of organized labor to teacher and class, and fails in the course.

He begins to perceive that certain ones of his teachers are unintelligent. Very rapidly he loses respect for the school. He subscribes for the American Mercury and writes an article for it. When the article is returned to him, with only a rejection slip, he gets a case of "nerves." A month later he goes into a nervous breakdown and is sent home to recover.

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PROMISED FUNDS.
(Continued From Page One)

The Commonwealth experiment is a new idea in higher education. At no other school in the world do both students and faculty members perform manual labor to maintain themselves while they teach and study. Academic freedom is an accomplished fact at Commonwealth.

The college in the words of Clay Fulker, is proof of its independence, material and mental. It doesn't accept millions from the Dukes, the Rockefeller's, or other big bosses of industry and is therefore under no obligations to echo the bosses' ideas on economics and politics. It doesn't look to Buddha, Brahma, Allah, Jehovah, Jupiter, Mumbo Jumbo, or Cal Coolidge for spiritual guidance or edification, and therefore justly claims to be non-sectarian. It has on its faculty a distinguished few individuals who have taught in, or graduated from, such institutions as the Universities of Wisconsin, Illinois and Northwestern and who are able to carry their doctorates in one hand. Commonwealth's aim is to bring higher education within the reach of those rare spirits in the ranks of the working class who earnestly desire to fit themselves for more abundant living and to help raise the general level of aspiration within that class.

But this independence is the basis of Commonwealth's financial troubles. The school has thumbed its nose at every group which approached with a bag of money in one hand and a bag of propaganda in the other. Plenty of money may be had on this or that condition, but Commonwealth has preferred to remain free from outside domination, even though such freedom might mean closing the school.

Even in the matter of degrees Commonwealth has defied all conventions. The student was offered no tag to his name as a reward for paying his tuition for a certain number of years. He was expected to stay only as long as he thought he was getting something out of it. Commonwealth credits have been accepted by the best universities, but Commonwealth did not attempt to be an "accredited" school and thus fit itself into the great educational machine which has been built up in America.

Honorary degrees might have been granted to this or that official of this or that organization, and a tidy endowment built up, but no such thing was ever contemplated by the trustees.

The sources of revenue upon which other schools depend are not available to Commonwealth. It must for a few years depend upon small donations from those interested in a free educational center for workers and if these are not forthcoming Commonwealth must close.

THANKS, FRIENDS!
(Continued From Page One)

Contributions:
Harold Hopton, Bismarck, N. D., $5.
Harold Sobel, Milwaukee, Wisc., $5.
Pledges:

CUNNINGHAM PREDICTS.

from the board of trustees. We are acquainted with each other by this time, and will know how better to avoid the petty squabbles among ourselves that disrupt school life."

Director Zeuch had called the teachers and students together to explain the financial situation. When the students were asked how many wished to remain during the spring semester, even though the school might close in May, there was a unanimous showing of hands. Although several students explained that their financial condition would probably prevent them attending the second semester, they expressed their confidence in the school. Except for the addition of a number of new students, the student body will remain practically unchanged for the next semester.

HUNDRED FRIENDS.
(Continued From Page One)

The educational experiment has been of great value. One hundred and fifty-two persons have attended Commonwealth. The problems of self-maintaining education for workers have been ascertained by experience.

"It is true that the institution might be kept alive for two or three years by mortgaging the school property, but such a method would only postpone the inevitable. The trustees do not feel morally justified in mortgaging all resources without knowing whether in the end they will have sufficient funds to meet all obligations."

Goodhue Leaves For Year's Tour of Land

F. M. Goodhue, one of the three men who has been with the school since its founding five years ago, left December 19 on a year's leave of absence. He traveled west to California where he met his brother. The two of them will start soon on a tour of the country.

He left in the same quiet way he lived at Commonwealth. There were few good-byes; he slipped away without letting anyone except the truck driver, Lucien Koch, know that he was leaving.

His year's leave of absence had been arranged for many months, but his departure had been postponed from week to week because of work that he could not leave.

No Commoner was better liked either at school or in Mena and Polk County than Goodhue. He was infinitely obliging and always thoughtful of other people's wishes and whims. He was ever a force for culture and good breeding, and could talk interestingly upon a great variety of subjects. He was probably the most versatile of the Commoners, having worked in such varied fields as painting, biology, surveying, drawing, writing, translating, photography and accountancy.

"Gee but it's hard to leave," declares Buster

"Gee but it's hard to leave this place," was the simple but heartfelt way that Buster Wynn, Oklahoma miner, expressed his regret at leaving Commonwealth. Buster will be unable to return for the second semester because of a lack of money to pay tuition.

"Buster's leaving is a real loss to the student body," declared one of the students. "His good nature makes him valuable anywhere."

Half the truth is often a great lie—Benjamin Franklin.

WILL YOU ENROLL YOURSELF AS ONE OF THE HUNDRED WHOSE CONTRIBUTIONS WILL MAKE THE CONTINUATION OF COMMONWEALTH POSSIBLE?

If so fill out and mail this blank.

I hereby enclose $........ for the year 1928 and pledge $........ annually for 1929 and 1930.

In case $2500 is not pledged by May 1, 1928, the sum enclosed is to be returned if so desired.

NAME............
ADDRESS............
COTTON FARMERS MUST ORGANIZE SAYS BENTON

"The organization of the cotton farmer is a question," declared W. C. Benton, instructor of law, during a talk which he delivered on the subject of "Cotton" before the students and faculty recently.

"The question is no longer how to produce," he said, "but how to get a decently paid for the job. The individual farmers can get nowhere, the unorganized man has no voice. That explains why the cotton farmer gets such a small part of the social valuation of his labor. His only move is to organize."

Benton cited President Coolidge as being in favor of organization, pointing out that he had refused to do anything for the farmer.

"Coolidge," he said, "showed by vetoing the McNary-Haugen bill that he does not favor aiding the farmer. He is known to have asked the agriculturist to stand on his own foundation rather than petition the government for aid. With such men at the head it is clear the farmer will not get help through congress."

According to Benton if thirty-three per cent of cotton farmers were organized they could achieve invaluable aims, such as stabilizing the cotton market and cutting the shipping rates. He said that the ten per cent now organized and known as the "Cotton Growers Association" have gained some concessions from the railroads and clothing manufacturers.

"The reason I am speaking on the subject of cotton," explained the speaker, "is because we are located in the heart of the cotton territory. As a labor school we should be interested in understanding the cotton situation. There is a big future in that field. The cotton farmer will eventually organize even though his individualistic nature has hindered him up to this time."

His slogan, "Depend on self or perish," is a hangover from pioneer days that is gradually losing its effectiveness.

Mr. S. T. Lawrence, a neighbor, supplemented Benton's speech by explaining the working plan of the present cotton association. "I am going in as a member for the sixth year," he said, "and I expect to remain a member as long as those who produce the cotton are the poorest and wear less clothes than anyone else."

It is said an Eastern monarch once charged his wise men to invent him a sentence to be ever in view, which should be true and appropriate in all times and situations. They presented him the words, "And this, too, shall pass away." —Quoted by Abraham Lincoln.

He who endeavors to control the mind by force is a tyrant, and he who submits is a slave. —Robert G. Ingersoll.

"IS IT EASIER"

(Continued From Page Two)

Dick, at Commonwealth, is a vastly different boy. He may dislike the out-of-door work but he thrives on it. He develops hard muscles and a hearty appetite. He is at heart a social being, though poverty has always kept him out of social affairs. But at Commonwealth he has hope for the future, and so he feels perfectly at ease. He learns to dance, because the other students dance and everybody knows everybody else. His confidence in himself grows. If he wants to spend all morning in the library instead of going to class no one notices it.

His interest in the labor movement is a great asset at Commonwealth. Everybody is interested in labor. He good about it, too, as he is a strong character who has his heart's content and joins in forum debates upon various labor questions.

He discovers that he is ignorant of a great many worth while things and his discovery comes not the day before examination but day by day as he associates with scholars, both in the class rooms and at the wood pile. Intellectual activity is not ridiculed as outlandish, but is taken for granted.

If he were to be referred to at Commonwealth as a "library bound," he would be complimented. If he were called a "tattered underwear boy" he would be puzzled, perhaps, or he might advocate getting a new wringer at the laundry so that the clothes would get through safely.

VI

And so forth. It might be argued that in this sketch Tom has been given all of the bad traits and Dick all of the good. This is not the case. Both have been presented. It is also true that the writer, being a Commoner, is prejudiced in favor of the so-called "Commonwealth type."

The point is this: there are characters, such as Tom, who would find it easier to work their way at another school than at Commonwealth; and there are characters, such as Dick, who find Commonwealth much more satisfactory.

Unquestionably there are admirable characters who cannot get along at Commonwealth; nor does the school make any claim to having a student body one hundred percent noble.

But students at Commonwealth are interested in education and labor for there is nothing else in which they may be interested. There are no fraternities, honor societies, athletics, nor glee clubs. The school grants no degrees nor issues no diplomas. Teachers never nag at students to prepare their lessons. "Here it is," they say in effect. "Come and get it."

"Is it easier to work your way at Commonwealth than at another school?"

The answer to that question is another question: "What sort of a person are you?"

New Student Arrives After Long Journey

Ralph Herman, 17 year old nephew of John McLarro, arrived at Commonwealth December 12, after a round-about trip from Seattle. He will enroll in the school for the second semester.

He left Seattle last May on a merchant ship headed, by way of the Panama Canal, for New York City. Leaving his job as mess boy he entered the metropolis in search of work. He located work at the Jewish Settlement House, but did not remain long. Three months later he was running a pipe line at Wooster, Ohio. From there he drifted to Kentucky where he worked as a farm hand.

While he was in Kentucky he definitely decided to visit his uncle at Commonwealth and so took to the road again. He visited relatives at Bentonville, Ark., for a week, and then hiked to Commonwealth.

Drucker Investigates Colorado Coal Strike

A. P. R. Drucker, teacher of accountancy and economics, is in Colorado at the present time investigating the conditions in the Colorado coal strike.

"I have long wanted to take an active part in the labor movement," declared Drucker, "and this is an excellent opportunity. I am known in Colorado and can possibly help straighten matters out. I feel that it is my duty to at least make the attempt."

Drucker left Commonwealth December 14. At a surprise party tendered Drucker and F. M. Goodhue, the students tried to collectively wish him well in his venture.

"Mr. Drucker is a very lovable personality and a scholar," said Mr. Zeuch. "I wish him success in this attempt and all others."

ISRAEL MUST CLEANSE ITSELF SAYS MRS. O'HARE

"Until the House of Israel cleanses itself, prison contract labor cannot be stemmed," declared Kate Richards O'Hare during a talk she gave December 18 before the Reformed Synagogue, Hot Springs, Arkansas, on the subject "Is Crime Curable?"

"The labor contracting system is dominated by Jewish people," she said, "and it will be necessary for them to take an active part if the penal problem is to be eliminated."

Mrs. O'Hare spoke before 500 people, 80 percent of whom were Jewish. She occupied the pulpit of Rabbi A. B. Rhine, who has been for twenty years the head of the Reformed Synagogue. "Rabbi Rhine," said Mrs. O'Hare, "is one of the most scholarly and interesting men I have met in the state."