Do You Want Us to Carry On?

AN OPEN LETTER

I have come back from three months of traveling through the North and East with a heightened sense of the significance of Commonwealth and the Commonwealth idea in workers' education.

I found no one of the experimental colleges so fundamental a departure from the academic tradition as is our little educational community. No one of the workers' education projects I visited is so proletarian, so broadly cultural, so much a free workers' forum, so inclusively and fundamentally labor. Nowhere did I find the simplicity of life, the catholicity of outlook, the uniqueness of methods, the complete break with parasitic luxury and collegiate hokum, the democracy that so characterizes our experimental co-operative workers' educational community.

Aside from the few summer and year around resident workers' schools the workers' education movement seems almost dead. Few independent evening classes for workers have survived. The trade union colleges, with rare exceptions, are no more. The Workers' Education Bureau remains a publication and information agency only. The various propaganda night schools are declining. The adult education movement offers strictly cultural courses to a decreasing number of business and professional people; it has never been interested in labor courses. Distinctly workers' education is at low ebb.

The reasons for this condition are fairly obvious. First of all American workers on the whole are not labor minded. They think in terms of escape from the ranks of the workers. Even their job consciousness is, for the most part, temporary. Workers' education based upon the idea of loyalty to labor and preparation for service to the labor movement appeals at present to very few workers. Secondly, there is an open or covert antagonism toward workers' education on the part of many of the older labor leaders. They distrust intellectuals, do not want educated youth in the rank and file, think that workers' education breeds radicalism and unrest, and fear for their jobs. Fortunately there is now emerging a younger leadership in the unions which possesses a greater measure of labor statesmanship and sees the part that a developing workers' education must play in a dynamic labor movement.

But between the indifference of the majority of the workers themselves and the fearful opposition of many old line labor leaders pioneer workers' education communities such as Commonwealth have a hard row to hoe. About the only hope that such projects have of fighting through to a permanent self-maintaining foundation lies in the support of intelligent liberals—within and without the labor movement. The labor movement in the United States has never financed any workers' education projects.

My recent trip was aimed to enlist support to complete our capital equipment. It is still too soon to know with certainty whether it was productive of funds. No one knows better than I that I was not cut out to be a go-getting gold digger, ever for Commonwealth, but I did put our needs before a half dozen liberal foundations, some labor groups, and many liberal persons of means. There have been some definite promises of aid and no refusals thus far except from one fund which seems for the present to have adopted a non-co-operative watchful waiting policy toward our experiment. But no organization was ever built on watchful waiting—at least not Commonwealth.

We Commoners have solved practically all our problems except the one of complete self-support. Everywhere on my trip our friends insisted that it would be almost criminal for us to give up now in view of the progress made and the work being done; they urged that we fight through. But there is a limit even to the strength of fighting pioneers. Many who have been and are on our Maintenance Fund suggested that we repledge them for another three year period and try to increase the number of pledgees so as to insure the continuance of our work until the matter of funds to complete the capital equipment could be more thoroughly canvassed. We will follow that suggestion.

Within a few days letters will be sent out asking all pledgees to renew for a three year period. Other letters will be sent asking friends to join our Maintenance Fund by pledging for three years. We trust that the replies to these letters will be in by June 10 so that we will be able to inform our friends and the public generally in our June 15 issue whether we have the prospect of the wherewithal with which to fight through.

Do you want us to carry on?

Signed: ZEUCH.
Commonwealth College
Forthnightly

Vol. VI, No. 6
April 15, 1930

Labor Courses Offered
at Summer Session

The short eight weeks summer session of Commonwealth's academic year begins June 16 and ends August 8. Five courses will be given: Labor Economics, American History, Public Speaking, Labor Journalism, and Effective Writing. The tuition fee is $40. Twenty hours of industrial work a week are required. Classes will be held six days of the week.

The Summer Session was arranged to give an opportunity to workers interested in a labor education who are able to leave their jobs for a few weeks in the summer only. All applications for entrance should be in the hands of the Director by May 15.

HAIL AND FAREWElLL.

[Continued from Page Four]
listed at once in our venture and immediately took up his tasks getting onto the ground and onto the job before others of the group could get away from their contracted positions.

For three years he worked loyally at the numerous tasks necessary in educational pioneering. During the summer vacations he acted very successfully as field secretary. During the school year he handled the correspondence, taught a course in literature and took work in psychology, history, economics, and labor. Despite an intense individualism he grew in that loyalty to the interests of the workers which shaped his subsequent brief years. In 1926 his official relation to Commonwealth was severed and he at once entered upon these various labor activities of the last four years of this life that caused Labor News, official news agency of the Federated Press to say of him, "He enjoyed wider contacts in the labor and radical movement than perhaps anyone his age."

A few weeks before his death he spent an evening with me at Bolton Hall's in New York City. After talking over Commonwealth and discussing the many problems bearing upon his own work he said on leaving, "After all, Father Zeuch, I wish to be thought of and remembered as one of the founders of Commonwealth." He then mounted his motorcycle and in the 'wee sma' hours disappeared in the dawn down one of the drives of Central Park.

So be it,—"One of the founders." 

ZEUCH.

ZEUCH RETURNS HOME
FROM LONG JOURNEY

[Continued from Page Four]
with Commoners discussing plans for the coming year. Sunday afternoon he arrived in Menas—and home.

In the evening students and teachers demanded of Zeuch to be told about the trip. He was kept talking until late at night. The following day he met his classes in labor, history, and economics. In the afternoon he worked in the garden. So does one slip back into the life of a Commoner.

Planting Time
and Commoners

Springtime is planting time at Commonwealth. Then tasks are done plantation style—a gang working on one job until it is finished—then on to the next. Potatoes, onions, and other garden vegetables are in.

"All spare hands on the onion planting," the personnel manager announces. Ten students and teachers go to the field, throw off their shoes, and begin working. Two mark off the rows, some lay out the onions, others plant them. The foremost demonstrates to the novice. There is much talking and gayety along with the work, but soon the job is done.

The plantation method is also used in planting potatoes—some cutting seed, some furrowing out, others dropping the potatoes.

Discord. The lettuce has frozen! Who is to blame? The Business Administrator, Ray Koch, blames Fritz H 8; one in a n, greenhouse supervisor; Hoffman blames Gardner Zeuch; and Zeuch blames both the others. These communal problems will be the death of us yet!

The Mud-Sill Theory.

By the "mud-sill" theory it is assumed that labor and education are incompatible and any combination of them is impossible. According to that theory, a blind horse upon a treadmill is a perfect illustration of what a laborer should be—all the better for being blind, that he may not kick understandingly. According to that theory, the education of laborers is not only useless but pernicious and dangerous . . . but free labor says "No." Every head should be cultivated and improved by whatever will add to his capacity for performing its charge. In one word, free labor insists on universal education.—Abraham Lincoln.
SOCIETY NOTES

"Hurry Back." Four left by car on a recent Thursday for points North and East—good-hearted Dorothy Alfrey, impish David and kid-dish Harriet, newlyweds; and paradoxical Neli, who could tell us our faults and yet be a pal. We shall miss you all at table and from class groups, and your saying a word as we pass on the campus.

—And our Cuban boys, Ernesto, Gustavo, Victor and Juan, who left Monday—how do you like hitch-hiking, have you yet reached New York, have you found work? George, we wish you luck during your search for work this summer.

"Howdy," Bonnie Thornburg, who attended Commonwealth last year recently returned just in time for the Spring Quarter. Abe Melden and Albert Bauer, recently arrived new students, left Los Angeles via hitch-hiking. Unable to get the hitches they decided to try freighting. In Arizona Albert got bumped on the head by a dicky. He recovered in a few hours. In Texas their money was taken. They bummed their meals the rest of the way. "We had a great time!" they told the Commoners upon arrival.

Another Arkansawyer is added to our ranks. Bryan Fulks, brother of Clay Fulks, instructor in law, arrived recently with his wife and son. Fulks has taught in the schools of Arkansas, but wishes to prepare himself further as a labor teacher.

Culture. Joseph Rudolph’s arrival is for Mrs. Dusenberry, blind bard and neighbor of Commonwealth, almost as an answer to prayer. Songs of the mountains long forgotten by the world are at the old lady’s command. In a high clear voice with a faint tremolo she sings folk songs hours on end. She has given Prof. Goodhue a hundred titles of folk songs she knows. Her dream has been to get these songs made into phonograph records. Rudolph, excellent pianist and something of a composer, in his own right, is going to transcribe the music instead, and so preserve these songs of the hills.

Welcome. Five visitors have come to Commonwealth during the past few weeks. They have stayed and worked for a few days or a few weeks. Dr. Barton had many interesting facts to tell about the headhunters of the Philippines, among whom he had studied for ten years. Louis Zwerling, Ena Douglas, and Bob Whitcomb, New Yorkers, are stopping over a short time before leaving to visit to Mexico City. Perry Schofield, a young poetess from New Orleans, arrived on the campus recently with a boyish bob and dressed in knickers. Students had a laugh on Dr. Zeuch when, totally deceived by the disguise, he commenced directing Perry to the Boys’ dormitory. Perry, however, did not leave Zeuch long in the dark.

JENKINS AND RUDOLPH JOIN TEACHING STAFF

Both were interested in labor. Both were looking for an atmosphere of freedom. Both are now at Commonwealth teaching. Ira Jenkins, 23 years of age, hails from the University of Chicago, where he was doing graduate work. Joseph Rudolph, age 26, is a graduate student from the University of Minnesota.

Says Jenkins: "I wanted a free atmosphere for physical and mental expression. I wanted to get nearer to natural surroundings. Commonwealth seemed to promise me this."

Says Rudolph: "I was frankly bored with the faculty and students of the conventional college. They are hidebound. Here at Commonwealth one may look for anything to happen. I desired a place where I could both teach and study."

Jenkins received his B.A. from Ohio State University. He spent one year in Chicago University Theological Seminary, and one year in philosophy in the graduate school. For one year, 1928-29, he visited China, teaching for nine months in Lingnan University, Canton, China. For a short time he served as secretary of the Chinese Civil Liberties Union. While at Ohio State University, he acted as executive secretary of the Optional Military Drill League.

Rudolph majored in psychology and philosophy at the University of Minnesota, taking there his B.A. For one and one-half years he studied at the New School for Social Research in New York. He has done social work in New York and in Minneapolis.

Jenkins teaches economic problems and washes dishes. Rudolph teaches public speaking and Marxian Economics and does masonry work.

BOOK REVIEW

"American Conquers Britain—A Record of Economic War."—Ludwell Denny, Chief Editorial Writer of Scripps-Howard Press. (Knopf—$1.00)

War Declared, the headlines will scream in the near future. The world is armed to the teeth. Naval and military budgets of Imperialist powers were never larger. Never was the struggle between rival groups of capitalists for raw materials and markets sharper than today. These facts Denny shows in great detail. He has already written "We Fight for Oil" out of a rich experience as a foreign correspondent for the UP. Mr. Denny has been at the fountain head of news for a number of years and is qualified to analyze the world situation for American intellectuals. This is a great book for pacifists, liberals, and other intellectuals to read. Organized labor will of course be interested in the next war.

Holy wars are made from unthink-able wars. The cousin myth and the illusion that Canada is a buffer are effectively shown up. There can be no doubt of the power of these facts for Denny writes as an orator. Four hundred pages of telling oratory backed by documentation make any reviewer eager to pass his copy to friends. As you read the fascinating account of the fight for oil, tin, sugar, rubber, cables, radio, railroads, ships and air lines, the gigantic structure of Imperialist rivalry looms up in every act of our daily lives. America has tremendous power and has only begun its climb toward capital­ist world hegemony. Britain still has the lead in foreign investments. The score now standing—Britain $20,000,000,000; America $15,750,000,000. The era of Financial Imperialism is coming to its zenith and must end in the ancient and honorable revolu­tionary method of war to bring in a new era. Mr. Denny knows the British and American capitalist better than Mr. Forbes and can thus predict with inevitable accuracy the most horrible war in human history.

LATIMER JENKINS.
SCHOOL OBSERVES SEVENTH BIRTHDAY

Occasion Is Used for Self-Criticism of Methods and Policy

—And can you blame us for being sleepy today? Yesterday we celebrated Commonwealth’s seventh anniversary—breakfast at 8:30, the banquet at 3:00, luncheon at 7:00, and a program at 8:00.

Toasts at the banquet were criticisms of Commonwealth. The toastmaster, Fritz Hoffman, set forth the rules for students and teachers: “Your criticism may be constructive or destructive, personal or general. Everything goes.”

Suggestions were made as to better ways of giving new students the “Commonwealth idea,” and to help them to find their places in the whole scheme. Some students criticised Commonwealth as being unrevolutionary. Others because it was not directly tied to labor organizations.

A skit, a convention to discuss ways and means of organizing the South, was the feature of the evening program. The cast was a motley crew made up of a Birmingham steel worker; a textile mill hand; a rag time piano player; Blacksnake Johnson, the negro, was nobody’s fool and held his own and, consequently, was accused by the Communists of maliciously sabotaging the convention.

Southern songs by Cornelia Reed and Ira Jenkins enlivened the program, as did an operatic vocal selection by Albert Bauer, and piano selections by Joseph Rudolph. Mr. Hamilton read replies to a questionnaire as to the nature of the sorghum which he had sent to leading senators in Congress. A breakfast-table dispute had supposedly caused the sending of the questionnaire. The replies were highly amusing and undoubtedly registered the prejudices of each noble senator.

Hail and Farewell

Blanched, incredulous countenances of the older Commoners met the recent newspaper announcements of the death of Harold Z. Brown, first Executive Secretary of Commonwealth.

Shortly after the organization of Commonwealth in April, 1923, Harold was recommended as a possible secretary for the school. At my invitation he motorcycled over from St. Louis to Urbana, where I was then teaching at the University of Illinois, and spent the week-end with me. He was barely twenty, high-spirited, competent at secretarial work, well educated—though he had never spent a day in school in his life, willing to undergo the hardships incidental to the establishment of the projected pioneer workers’ school; withal, a most promising youth. He was en-

[Continued on Page Two]

Thanks, Friends

CASH

Alma Wilson Bell, memorial for Mrs. Mertie Wilson, Pleasant Lake, Ind. $25.00
Mary D. Britts, Cincinnati, O. 10.00
Dr. Peter Boyle, Cincinnati, O. 25.00
H. H. Broach, Washington, D. C. 20.00
Ewan Clague, New York City 25.00
Edwin N. Durland, Chicago 10.00
David Englestein, Montreal, Canada 10.00
Prof. Martin Glasser, Madison, Wis. 25.00
Henry Hauser, Taylorville, III. 5.00
Dorothy K. Minster, Cincinnati, O. 100.00
F. C. Niles, Kansas City, Mo. 50.00
C. J. Norman, Wernecke, Yukon Ter., Canada 10.00
Prof. and Mrs. Louis N. Robinson, Swoathmore, Penn. 25.00
Prof. E. A. Ross, Madison, Wis. 25.00
Prof. Paul A. Raushenbush, Madison, Wis. 25.00
Willi Schmalt, Chicago 10.00
Alfred D. Schoch, Chicago 25.00
Margaret Shipman, Lee, Mass. 25.00
Prof. Summer H. Slufter, Washington, D. C. 5.00
D. D. Snyder, Kansas City, Mo. 15.00

BOOKS AND MAGAZINES

Prof. Edward Berman, Urbana, Ill. 25.00
Justice and Mrs. L. D. Brandeis, Washington, D. C. 25.00
M. B. Rutstein, Calif. 5.00
Mrs. Edward U. Condon, Minneapolis, Minn. 10.00
Bryan Fulks, El Dorado, Ark. 5.00
Mrs. T. Hayden, Chicago, Ill. 10.00
F. H. MacMillan, Madison, Wis. 25.00
Charles Nagel, St. Louis, Mo. 5.00
S. Skoglund, Waukegan, Ill. 10.00

ZEUCH RETURNS HOME FROM LONG JOURNEY

Talked in Northern Cities on Commonwealth, Labor, and Education

After spending three months journeying over five thousand miles, interviewing hundreds of persons, talking to many thousands in over fifty meetings before labor, liberal and college groups; after visiting the chief experimental colleges, investigating adult education, and surveying the field of workers’ education, Director W. E. Zeuch returned to Commonwealth, March 23, looking none the worse for his strenuous trip.

During the last two weeks of his journey Zeuch’s itinerary included Chicago, Milwaukce, Madison, Urbana, and Kansas City. At Chicago he was the guest of the Rapaports, beloved of Commoners. On March 7 he was the speaker at a joint dinner of the Chicago Liberal Club and the League for Industrial Democracy. Zeuch also spoke on Commonwealth before the Chicago University Socialist Club and the Dill Pickle Club. He interviewed labor leaders, educators, and others. The Chicago sojourn was ended March 13, with a dinner at the Rapaports for Chicago Commoners and friends of Commonwealth.

Friday, March 14, Zeuch went to Madison, where he talked at the home of John R. Commons to the Friday Nighters, a group of sixty interesting in labor economics. On Saturday evening he spoke at Milwaukee on Commonwealth before the dinner guests of the Women’s Trade Union League. There were over a hundred guests from socialist, educational and labor circles.

Then back to Madison and the University of Wisconsin. There for three days, Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, Zeuch lectured before classes, on labor, economics, and workers’ education, for Profs. Commons, Perlman and Ross, and at the Experimental College. Thursday noon Zeuch reached Urbana. He remained until Friday afternoon, giving four talks at the University of Illinois, including the subjects labor, co-operative personnel, and workers’ education. He was the guest of Prof. Edward Berman.

Zeuch arrived in Kansas City Saturday morning and spent the day

[Continued on Page Two]