SEPTMBER IS QUIET
---IF YOU'RE NOT HERE

22 Commoners Who Remain During Intermission Make Ready

September is a month of quiet at Commonwealth. Relative quiet, that is, quiet and not rest; for those who remain at Commonwealth during the month intermission between the end of the summer session and the opening of the fall quarter find duty dogging their heels like nothing human.

With the close of the summer session the campus population fell from its 50-to-70 norm to a bare 22. The 22 are teachers, students hanging around for the reopening, resident workers, a couple of visitors.

Three tables in the commons instead of eight. More informal cross-table chatter. Fewer mounds to feed and milk, cream and fresh vegetables per month.

Chillier nights, sometimes chilly days. Searing leaves, dying dog fence, the creek running a little low, eyes cast skyward, the prospects of rain discussed.

Seasons Wait on No Man

For the 22 who endure there is work abounding. No school in session, yet faculty and administrative problems galore, and plans to make for the coming year, which promises to be the biggest yet in point of enrollment.

And not school problems alone, for Commonwealth is an economic unit as well as an educational one. Crops to be harvested, to buy and now, for nothing is more eternally seasonal than a crop. Kitchen improvements to be made, so that more hungry mortals than ever before may be fed. The home stretch of the canning season, with the canning crew pulling for the goal of 6,000 quarts of fruits and vegetables. Building repairs to be made, roofs to be fixed, the ceaseless battle against wind and rain, wear and tear. Dormitories to be cleaned out and fixed up; water buckets and kerosene lamps.

Okla. Farmers Plan No Pink Tea For Their Holiday

Nothing is more exciting in the current war than the spectacular agrarian flare-up. To a school like Commonwealth it's doubly interesting. William Cunningham, our labor journalism instructor, hitch-hiked over to Oklahoma City last week to attend the state organizing meeting of the National Farmers' Holiday Association. A former Oklahoma farm boy himself, he tells how things look to him. On another page is an article by a former student on the aims and workings of the holiday movement.

Recently in Oklahoma, several hundred of our farmers, near farmers or ex-farmers publicly gave up our ambition to break into the middle class. We had assembled at the call of Milo Reno of Iowa, head of the "Holiday" organization, and we vowed our satisfaction when he jeered the "master farmer." We have not yet adopted into our vocabulary the term "scab." We don't like the word 'strike.' We propose a "peaceful campaign" to induce folks to give up give our products that will cover the cost of production. We believe, or at least publicly profess to believe that an earnest advocacy of the golden rule is all that is required of us. But no one should confuse this new organization with the Farmers' Union or the Grange.

Not As Radical As Lincoln

We've been bellyaching for a good many years out among the sand dunes and over in the Ozarks—those of us who are not master farmers—but now we've stood up in "the City" and yelled our indignation. And as soon as we learn something of the difficulties of organization we will invent a good rural synonym for "scab" and get our pitchforks and puncture tires. You've got to make us all master.

Two important steps toward breaking down the idea of education as a series of isolated bodies of knowledge are being taken at Commonwealth during the school year beginning October 3 with the introduction of a Labor Orientation course and individual field or research projects.

These changes are more fully explained in the preliminary announcement for 1932-3 issued as a supplement to the present Fortnightly.

Despite the fact that Commonwealth gives a labor content to its courses, the curricular set-up has followed too closely conventional university models in the past. While Commonwealth has been experimenting boldly in working out a technique of partial self-support which is a source of strength in times like these, other workers' education projects have gone farther in curricular reorganization.

The experiments on which Commonwealth is now embarking will attempt to do two things: (1) open to every student a unified sweep of that knowledge, in bare outline, which the faculty believes is most essential for the formation of an intelligent social outlook and a labor philosophy, and (2) see that every student undertakes some piece of original work under the personal guidance of a faculty member.

OFF TO A HOLIDAY

H. Lee Jones, instructor in psychology, and Hugo Fischer, student, are spending a part of the month intermission before the opening of the fall quarter visiting the scenes of the farm holiday movement in Iowa—Des Moines, Sioux City, etc. From there Hugo will go to Chicago, Jones to South Dakota, where he once farmed.
The Farmers’ Holiday

BY RICHARD BOSCH

Richard Bosch, a former Commonwealth student, is publicity director for the National Farmers’ Holiday Association, and here tells something about the background of the holiday movement and the way in which it operates. The article recalls Oscar Angier’s remark, quoted in the last issue of the Fortnightly, that the farmers are the class most likely to start thinking and acting on the near future. —Editors.

Reformers and believers in progress are disheartened by the passiveness, if not cowardly submissiveness, with which people in general are accepting the suffering and injustice caused by a ruthless economic system. Up to now there has been no formidable voice of protest against the exploitation of millions of workers and farmers; there has been no strong resistance to the sacrifice of all human rights for the protection of property rights.

Is there any group with the will, courage and strength to challenge and overthrow the power of financial and economic tyranny in its mad course of destruction and robbery, in the name of “economic readjustment”? Liberals and intellectuals talk a lot about what must be done, but they do not constitute a social movement. They have no unified concrete program. They are not putting up a fight and besides have no political or economic weapon with which to fight.

Small business men are like liberals in that they are a group but not a movement. They have no program of concerted action, no dangerous weapon that they can or will use. They have no desire for any significant change.

Labor, whom we have traditionally regarded as the natural-born enemy of the capitalist, has so far failed to repel the attacks upon wage levels and the standard of living. With millions unemployed, labor’s chief weapon, the strike, has been sadly crippled.

The farmers as a class have been called individualists, petty bourgeois. They are property minded, hard working, patient and submissive. But they will fight. And when they do—look out! The farmers are now doing what practically everybody would have said was impossible they are going to strike, to take a “holiday.”

Selling Below Cost

Why are the farmers striking? As an independent producer within the capitalist system, the farmer has certain costs to meet, such as taxes, depreciation, equipment, labor. If his income is less than his costs, he goes into debt and sooner or later goes broke. Farmers everywhere are facing bankruptcy or have already gone bankrupt, losing their homes, their savings, their means of livelihood.

If you don’t get your cost of production you’ll go broke as surely as two and two are four. This is the simple and obvious fact that is everywhere catching the imagination of the farmers. And why don’t the farmers get their cost of production? Because they continue to deliver their products regardless of the prices received. The common sense remedy as it appears to farmers is to refuse to deliver their products at a price less than cost. Nobody else delivers goods regardless of price. Why should we? Let’s call it a “holiday.”

As Veblen said: “Any accredited account of economic theory could point out certain fallacies and difficulties in the above cost-of-production argument. But theoretical validity is irrelevant. The argument is simple, logical, understandable. It gets people to act, which is the important thing.”

The farmers are combining to use their economic power, not in the name of planned economy or the class struggle or historical materialism, but in the name of agriculture as a basic industry, in the name of liberty, equality, justice, Americanism and God Almighty. But the program, nevertheless, looks toward a planned economy. If cost of production prices are established for farm products, and if there should be no surplus above that price, each farmer, according to the plan of the Holiday Association should keep and hold on his own farm his proportionate share of the surplus. This means a sharing of limited opportunities, comparable to the sharing of jobs among workers in some of the labor unions.

How It Is Done

The methods of organization are simple, speedy and cheap. A mass meeting is called in a state. A state committee is elected and they in turn arrange for mass meetings in each of the counties within the state. The county committee is elected, and it selects a man in each township who, with five or six helpers of his own selection, calls upon every farmer in the township. Each farmer is asked to sign a pledge to refuse to sell his products for whatever period the “strike” may be called, or until he obtains the cost of production. In this way every farmer is visited in the county or state which is being organized. Usually from 50 per cent to nearly 100 per cent sign. A few refuse to sign, but vow they will strike just the same. A very few insist on sticking to the old way of selling when you please.

As at this writing (September 5), the farmers’ holiday is being organized in twelve states. Eight other states have asked the Holiday Association to come in and organize, and the movement promises to be nation-wide. In organizing for the holiday farmers, Tile farmers have asked for and received the moral, and to some extent the financial, support of other groups, small business men, professional people, labor unions. Labor unions have endorsed the strike. A jobless railroad man is helping organize. The unemployed helped the farmers in Iowa to picket, and the farmers’ furnished free food to the unemployed.

As far back as 1927, when thirty-six farm organizations, constituting the Corn Belt Committee, met at Des Moines, a resolution was unanimously adopted that “if we cannot obtain justice by legislation, the time will have arrived when no other than organized refusal to deliver the product of the farm at less than production costs.” And the farmers believe that time has now arrived.

The leaders of the Holiday Association are men who have long been active in farm organizations. The managers and officials of some of the farmer cooperatives support the strike and some oppose it. The officials of a large milk producers’ association sent a statement opposing the strike to every one of the members. But the farmers themselves are lining up for a strike. Their attitude is: “If those fat boys are opposed to a strike, to hell with them. We’re the producers. And now is the time to strike.”

Speak in Terms of People’s Needs

The lesson of the farmers’ strike movement, as I see it, is that you can accomplish the impossible if you don’t know that it is impossible. Where there is a widespread discontent, a general feeling of a need that must be met, there is a basis for an organized mass movement—of protest, even if...
COSTS
Aside from tuition of $40 a quarter ($120 for the nine-month term), the only charge made by the school is a breakage deposit of $5. Breakage costs are pro-rated and deducted at the end of each quarter, usually amounting to from 60 cents to $1. As the student earns room, board and laundry service by part-time work, his only other expenses are for tobacco, candy, clothing and incidentals. The college is located ten miles from town, and there is little incentive for spending more than a few cents a week. Outdoor or work clothing is usually worn.

FACULTY

**LUCIEN KOCH**, Director of Commonwealth Labor History and Problems
M. A., University of Wisconsin; '31; Carpenter; former Commonwealth student; faculty member, Experimental College at Wisconsin

**BEA CARLSON** Labor Drama
Studied at University of Chicago; active in directing amateur dramatics

**OLIVER CARLSON** Marxist Theory and Capitalist vs. Collectivist Economy
Studied at University of Michigan; advanced study; University of Berlin and London School of Economics; wide experience in union and political labor activity, co-operative movement and workers education; research associate in political science, University of Chicago

**HAROLD COY**
A. B., University of Arizona, '24; newspaperman, labor researcher

**CLARICE CUNNINGHAM** Labor Journalism and Commercial Courses
Studied at University of Oklahoma; writer of Little Blue Books, articles and stories

**WILLIAM CUNNINGHAM** Labor Journalism and Writing
B. A., University of Oklahoma, '25; formerly editorial assistant, Haldeman-Julius publications and Illinois Miner; newspaperman and writer

**DAVID ENGLESTEIN** World History and Public Speaking
Formerly teacher World History, Workers' College, Montreal

**CLAY FULKS** Arkansas Farmer and his Problems
Member Arkansas bar; contributor to American Mercury and other periodicals

**H. LEE JONES** Psychology
Graduate of Antioch College; M. A. Ohio State University, '23, and instructor in psychology there; former director People's School, Cincinnati

**RAYMOND KOCH** Economic History and Resources
Seven years student and teacher at Commonwealth; former counselor Pioneer Youth Camp

**MILDRED PRICE** Imperialism and Current History
M. A., University of Chicago, '30; formerly high school teacher, Y. W. C. A. Industrial secretary

**WILLIAM REICH** Methods in Workers' Education
M. S., University of Illinois, '32; former high school principal; director Pioneer Youth Camp

For Additional Information or Application Blanks Write to EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
COMMONWEALTH COLLEGE MENA, ARKANSAS

Preliminary Announcement for 1932-3

**FALL QUARTER** Opens October 3, 1932
**WINTER QUARTER** Opens January 2, 1933
**SPRING QUARTER** Opens April 3, 1933
**SUMMER SESSION** Opens July 3, 1933

Purpose

**COMMONWEALTH COLLEGE** is a school dedicated to the cause of labor and the common people. It believes that the times call for a new type of education which will help young men and women improve their lot as a working and farming class and build a better social order for the great majority of the American people. A pioneer in this direction, Commonwealth is entering its tenth year as a labor school of the social studies.

Commonwealth extends a hand of welcome to those young men and women who realize that we are no longer living in the past and who are willing to abandon the individualistic office-boy-to-millionaire tradition in favor of the people's hang-together-or-hang-separately tradition. It is interested in two types of students: (1) the young person whose ideas
of what he wants to do are fairly well formulated through study and experience, but who desires additional training and background, and (2) the one who is still groping for his way and who hopes to find it at Commonwealth.

Commonwealth is a non-factional, non-sectarian school, encouraging its students to co-operate with their fellows in those various economic, political and cultural activities which may be inclusively described as the labor movement. Education, it believes, should not only make people broadminded; it should make them militant doers.

METHOD OF OPERATION

Commonwealth has developed a method of bringing education within the financial reach of young people of very modest means. Students pay tuition of $40 a quarter (twelve weeks) or $120 for the nine-month term, and earn their room, board and laundry service while in attendance by 20 hours work a week. This unprecedented opportunity to live and study for about $1.8 a month is made possible by the fact that Commonwealth operates its own farm and carries on its own communal activities by the part-time labor of its teachers and students.

LOCATION

Commonwealth is located in the Ouachita Mountains near the Talihina Highway, ten miles west of Mena, Arkansas. The college site, which is within a few miles of the Oklahoma line, is on high bluffs bordering on Mill Creek. The encircling mountains rise to a height of 2,700 feet, and the region is noted for its equable and healthful climate. The campus and surrounding country are heavily wooded, and the creek which traverses the campus provides opportunities for swimming.

Semi-pioneer conditions prevail at Commonwealth, and those attending need to be able to "rough it" to a certain extent. Only a few public buildings have electric lights; otherwise kerosene lamps are used. Water is carried from a well in buckets. Food is adequate and wholesome but necessarily rather plain.

Mena is the postoffice and freight and express receiving point for Commonwealth. It is on the Kansas City Southern Railroad and on bus lines from Hot Springs, Fort Smith and Texarkana. Students frequently hitch-hike from distant points.

ENTRANCE

There are no hard and fast entrance requirements at Commonwealth, and work can be somewhat adapted to students of varying educational backgrounds. Formal education is not nearly so important as seriousness of purpose and eagerness and ability to learn. No degrees are granted; whatever the student takes away he must carry in his head. Students are accepted on the basis of written application on a form which may be obtained from the Executive Secretary.

PLAN OF STUDY

Commonwealth has a basic two-year course. Students doing special advanced or research work sometimes stay for a longer period. All students are urged to plan their attendance for at least one year, although when this is not financially or otherwise possible, they are accepted for as short a period as one quarter. Students are accepted at the beginning of any of the four terms, but the largest proportion enroll the fall quarter. During their first quarter, all students enroll for the following:

1. The Labor Orientation course.
2. One theoretical course in the social studies.
3. One additional course, either theoretical or technical.
4. A research or field project under individual faculty supervision.

As the Labor Orientation course lasts one quarter, an additional course may be taken after the first quarter. The program of second-year students will be made up of some combination of the following: (1) courses not taken the first year; (2) special advanced courses, and (3) more intensive project work.

LABOR ORIENTATION COURSE

This course strikes the keynote for the entire curriculum at Commonwealth and is required of all students during their first quarter. It seeks to give a scientific presentation of the philosophy of a militant labor movement today. The course is planned to bring together co-ordinated materials from the various social sciences. Consequently each faculty member contributes from his field in throwing light on the situations under consideration.

The course will open by posing a series of present-day problems and calling attention to the conflicts out of which they rise. It will then proceed to a rapid historical survey of conflict situations from primitive society to the present day. Major emphasis will be laid on the period of capitalism, especially the post-war period.

Situations to which particular attention will be paid include: colonial revolt and the war danger, the prosperity myth, basic industries, agricultural problems and the new agrarian revolution, types of union and employers' organizations, faction within the labor movement, reformism and revolution, psychological approaches to labor tactics; methods of workers' education, including study classes, journalism, dramatics, etc.; Soviet Russia and concepts of planned economy versus capitalist economy.

COURSES IN THE SOCIAL STUDIES

The first-quarter student, after consultation, takes one of the following courses:

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<td>Labor History and Problems</td>
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<td>Business Spanish</td>
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TECHNICAL COURSES

First-quarter students elect either a second course in the social studies or one of the following technical courses:

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<td>Effective Writing</td>
<td>English for the Foreign Born</td>
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<td>English for the Foreign Born</td>
<td>A Modern Language (by permission)</td>
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FIELD OR RESEARCH PROJECTS

Each student undertakes, under the personal guidance of a faculty member, a field or research project. This will be in a problem connected with the student's own region of the country or in some other topic in which he is especially interested. For beginning students, the projects will be rather simple; for advanced students they will be more pretentious.
WORD AND DEED
BY COVENTGTON HALL

Let those who will, for ism's sake,
Twist Word and Deed their hairlines
make;
The Word's the fuse, the Deed the
spark
That dynamites the social dark.
The Thought is to the Action's course
As Might and Power are to Force;
The - Thing - Within - the - Thing that
Wills,
As mind all Matter moves and thrills.
The Deed is Thought made manifest,
The Word in final terms express;
It stands to Thought in Nature's laws,
As ever stands Effect to Cause.

Bill Murray "hasn't got no fish worm for
a backbone." He said "get
the cost of production and all other things
will be added unto you."

He said "We've got to decide wheth­er
we are going to be men or mice."
He said that a farmer who sold for
less than the cost of production was a
skunk and a traitor and a bungler and
had a streak of yellow.

"Cost of Production"

He said that the organization was
going to determine the cost of produc­
tion and then refuse to sell for less.
This of course is exactly what all other
industries have done for years, and,
as he pointed out, we have a right to
do it. He said that the surplus that
could not be sold would simply be kept
on the farm. Every farm, he said,
should have 2500 bushels of wheat
stored on it. He didn't explain about
how to make bins, and I wondered
what we would do ten years from now
with 25,000 bushels stored on every
farm. I meant to ask him but you know
a fellow hates to get up in a meeting.

The plan is this: Every township
will have a key man who will super­
vises the marketing of the farmers of
the township. These men will form
an executive committee for the
county, and so forth. The price of farm
products will be determined at the
depot, right at the grass roots,
rather than at the top, Wall street.
I hoped he would say something about a
local organization to see that farmers
were not kicked off of their farms be­
cause they could not pay taxes and in­
terest, but he did not mention this.

He didn't talk about a strike. Each
of our officers made speeches. They
were good speakers, all but one. They
talked very loud. They said "it gives
me great pleasure," and "I was surprised" and so forth. They didn't talk
about a strike. One of them said "If
you stand by the organization, your
neighbor will." I wanted to ask him
about this. There were less than 500
farmers at this meeting and there are
100,000 in the state. I wonder if he
knew for sure about the 159,700 who
didn't come.

Golden Rules and Strikes

One of the officials referred to "the
dead farm strike." He was kind of
hoarse and nervous. You could tell he
wasn't in the legislature. I suppose it
was a slip of the tongue. He meant to
say something about the golden rule,
but "st-t-pe" kind of slipped out.

The only speaker who sort of hinted
at picketing and rough work was not a farmer. He was a representa­
tive of the unemployed workers of Oklahoma
City. And this is the surprising thing.
The farmers seemed to yell a little
louder at what he said than at any­
thing else.

Blind Senator Gore was there and
he made a speech. He recited a thou­
sand figures to prove that the farmer
was in a bad way, financially. I think
he convinced everybody.

The thing is that we are sore. We
are just as sore as the miners in Illi­
nois and Kentucky. They get the picket
line, and they are rough with scabs. I meant to ask some of
the speakers how we are going to keep
our town; not only the mine town, but any town. I asked about our neighbors, the 159,700, if
they sell below the cost of production.
But you know how a fellow hates to
get up in a meeting.