STUDENTS WORKING ON LABOR PROJECTS

Field Trips By Students and Teachers Are Now Being Arranged

Besides his regular class work, each Commonwealth student is undertaking this quarter to work out on his own initiative some research or practical project in a field in which he is particularly interested. Faculty members act as advisers and helpers, but have not attempted to restrict the choice of subjects, except insofar as they urged that studies be made, if possible, in the industry, activity or locality to which the student would return when leaving the school.

It is felt by both students and teachers that field trips are a vital part of this work — that for instance, the student studying a phase of the oil industry should make trips to the oil fields — and every effort is being made to overcome the handicaps of limited funds and transportation facilities so that these expeditions can be made.

Many of the projects, however, are being worked out in the immediate vicinity of Commonwealth. This is true of the workers' education group. Through the activities of Herman Streisant, Muriel Levin, Joe Kliban, Flora Watson, Hoot Rasmussen, and Sidney Seckin, who are proceeding cooperatively, forty Arkansas children are getting their first taste of progressive education. These children meet on the campus every Saturday to play games, paint pictures, model clay, construct toys, read stories and discuss their common problems. They are divided into three groups according to age. The senior group plans to build a clubhouse in the woods adjoining the campus.

Likewise Libbie Volpie and Bessie Schwartzstein expect to establish a workers' play production group among the young people of the neighborhood. Harry Lessin, who is also interested in labor drama, has begun the production of a play "Scottsboro Limited" with Commonwealth students.

Trial Postponed

The damage suits which grew out of the flogging, last spring, of the Commonwealth delegation to Kentucky, have been postponed for one year, according to a wire received at Commonwealth from Harold Coy and Director Lucien Koch, who with Sam Sandberg, student, went to Kentucky to testify at the trial.

The suits amounted to $112,000 and were filled by the two Commonwealth teachers and three students, who were members of the delegation, against Mayor J. M. Brooks, Police Chief Pearl Osborne, and Dr. C. B. Stacy, all of Pineville, Kentucky. The cases are being handled by the American Civil Liberties Union.

Lucien Koch, Director of Commonwealth, and Harold Coy, teacher, and Leo Grulich, Sam Sandberg and Ike Greenberg, students, went into Kentucky last spring to carry relief to starving miners and to investigate conditions there. At Pineville they were seized and turned over to an armed mob. Members of this mob took them through the county and finally flogged them at an isolated spot near the state line.

Books We Need

Books needed by the class in Workers' Education.

World Workers' Education Movements .... H. Ross
Democracy and Education .......... Dewey
Education and the Good Life ......... Russell
Education, the Machine and the Worker... Kallen
Education in the Soviet Republic ... Counts
Cultural and Education in America ... Rosenberg
The Child-Centered School ....... Rosenberg
Education for a Changing Civilization ... Kitpatrick

Supplies are needed for this project.

If friends of Commonwealth have any of the following articles lying around unused, they are urged to contribute them for the use of the neighborhood children, whom the workers' education class is organizing into clubs: children's books, especially those with a labor slant such as Coleman's "Pioneers of Freedom", Illis' "New Russia's Primer", Van Loon's "Geography", indoor baseballs, toys, volley balls, tools, crayons, paints, etc.

BIG CROWD COMES TO TENTH OPENING

Talks, Labor Songs And One-Act Play Are Features of Entertainment

Commonwealth held its formal opening October 23. Neighbors from many miles around crowded the Commons, peered in at the windows.

The one act play "Until the Mortgage is Due," was followed by a program for presentation especially before farm audiences, opened the program.

After the play Bill Cunningham, Commonwealth teacher, told the neighbors that Commonwealth is a college for poor people, maintained by poor people. "If any of you in this audience have money," he said, "you are welcome here this afternoon but you are not one of us."

Two new songs were heard for the first time at this program. Agnes Cunningham, student, has set several well-known revolutionary poems to music. "The March of the Hungry Men" by Kaufman was one of these, and was sung by a male chorus. A chorus of girls sang a new Commonwealth song, the words for which were written by another student, Muriel Levin.

The main address was given by Oliver Carlson, member of the faculty, who emphasized the need of a union between city workers and farmers. "All workers are exploited," he said.

"They have the same interests, whether they live in the town or the country. Commonwealth is one of the few schools where workers can study their own problems. The universities are owned by the rich and the man who pays the fiddler names the tune.""

After Carlson's talk, Ray Koch, who acted as chairman, asked if anyone had any questions to ask Mr. Carlson or any written notes to ask a C.A. farmer arose and said he agreed with everything that had been said.

Refreshments were served to approximately two hundred and fifty people.
ARKANSAS SOCIALISTS ORGANIZE

By SAM SANDBERG

Commonwealth Student and State Secretary of Socialist Party of Arkansas.

Eighteen counties were represented. Of the delegates, there were miners, oil-field workers, farmers, clerks, industrial workers, a doctor and the Commonwealth students.

For two days the delegates discussed organizational problems — under a boiling sun. They ate communally, slept under the stars and fought over Arkansas, Clay Folk, an instructor with tense emotion. As a result of their deliberations, a State Central Committee was created, a state secretary-treasurer was elected, a constitution was drawn up and accepted, a candidate for Governor and a National Executive were nominated, a platform and program were formulated, resolutions were passed and the Secretary-Treasurer was appointed Campaign and Educational Director by the State Central Committee. Thus was organized the Socialist Party of Arkansas.

Two months later there were twenty-one locals of the Socialist Party in Arkansas. There are one hundred and twenty members at large. Of the seventy-five counties in the state, fifty-four had been visited and organized. One hundred thousand pieces of literature had been distributed. The candidate for Governor of Arkansas, George Wilson, a doctor and the Commonwealth College, was receiving enthusiastic receptions wherever he spoke. J. C. Thompson toured the state, educating and organizing.

The State Secretary filled in on dates which the candidate could not cover. In all, one hundred and forty speeches have been delivered to date, to an average audience of one hundred.

Due to scarcity of funds, utmost care had to be practised in planning the campaign tours. Cooperation was secured from members and sympathizers. Thus board and lodging was assured to the campaigners. The aggressiveness of our campaign forced capitalistic newspapers to give us publicity, thus creating for us an audience which we otherwise could not have contacted.

We kept in constant touch with the labor press; secured our Vice-Presidential candidate, James M. Maurer, for a series of five campaign talks, including one radio address; and in general succeeded in breaking down existing barriers of ignorance and prejudice.

As the end of the campaign approaches, a practical and well defined policy for the future has already been formulated. To a great extent the miners have been won over. It is planned to carry on organizational and educational work until every county in the state is well organized. On November 8th the first state Socialist Executive will be called in Arkansas and will make its appearance. It is called the "Liberty Spokesman" and it is edited by Clifton Hicks, a former Commoner at Norfolk, Arkansas. The purpose of the paper is to serve as a medium of contact between the locals, print the state, national and international news from a labor point of view, and to encourage action for a solution of the economic ills.

The amazing reception that the miners, the oil workers and other workers of hand and brain gave to the message of a new social order proves that concentrated, intelligent effort, based upon a paper appeal, can win for the most indigent organization the sympathy and backing of the oppressed.

TWENTY STUDENTS TO ATTEND ANTI-WAR CONGRESS

Approximately twenty Commonwealth students are planning to spend their between-quarters week's vacation by attending the Student Congress Against War, which is scheduled in Chicago for Christmas vacation week.

The movement for this congress is being set under way by the National Student League in accordance with the call issued to it by the World Congress Against War held in Amsterdam. Great effort is being made to secure the attendance of all students interested in the prevention of war, regardless of their political affiliations. Those who expect to go from Commonwealth are Jack Copenhaver, Howard Bost, George Wright, Henry Forblade, Gus Levy, Jean Goldberg, Lily Goldman, Sam Freedman, Miriam Revsine, Henrietta Katz, Sam Lissitz, Hugo Fiebig, Harry Lessin, Bessie Schwartzstein, Dina Gilerowitz, Alex Garber, Sidney Sorkin, Russell Rattell, Truman Peebles, George Wilson, Sam Romer and Norman Geshwind.

ARKANSAS EDITOR RESPONDS TO PLEA FOR MUSIC

The last issue of the Fortnightly containing an appeal for phonograph records had been in the mails only a few days when a package of half a dozen records came from A. M. Bennett of Lamar, Arkansas, editor of the Lamar Leader. Mr. Bennett selected music for a variety of moods and moods. The records included Sokwatale, an overture, and "Ach! du lieber August" a waltz, as well as some late dance numbers.
MILDRED PRICE RETURNS WITH CHRISTOPHER

Mildred Price and Christopher Coy arrived at Commonwealth on October 19th. Lucien met them in the college Dodge at Hot Springs, to which point they journeyed by train from Greensboro, North Carolina, where Christopher was born last August 2nd.

Enroute Mildred and Christopher stopped for two weeks in St. Louis, and Harold Coy, a conventionally proud father, learned all about infant reactions and the more practical aspects of having a descendant. He immediately wrote back to Commonwealth that Christopher had "slate blue eyes which may turn out to be gray or brown," that he was "something of a ball and chain but very sweet," and that he lives on nationally advertised products.

The moment this youngest Commonwealther arrived on the campus he was surrounded by eyes both scientific and sentimental, which scrutiny he returned with solemn, philosophical interest. He is a "good" baby and seldom cries.

Mildred, returning after an absence of almost four months, found a new room added to her house and new faces everywhere. She is not resuming teaching until the winter quarter.

CELLAR STOCKED FOR WINTER

With the canning season now at an end, Mabel Fulks, manager of the cannery, reports that her establishment contains a few hundred over five thousand quarts. This is an increase over last year's store of approximately three thousand quarts, so the percentage of home-canned goods consumed during this year will be substantially raised, in spite of the fact that there are twice as many people sitting down to every Commonwealth meal.

The purchase last June of canning equipment — two retorts, one small boiler, a stove, a can sealer, and cans — made greater efficiency possible in this department. Mable and Jack Copenhagen, her first assistant, were kept busy there most of the time from the middle of June until the end of September; and from four to six additional pairs of hands were required whenever beans had to be snapped or peaches peeled.

The results, estimated in quarts, (gallon cans were used for the most part) are: strawberry 282, blackberries 322, corn 144, okra 56, beans 795, peaches 76, grapes 621, greens 134, jellys and jams 468, pickles 193, kraut 48, apples 1160, tomatoes 983, peas 29.

Barbering — There are always a few white-collar workers at Commonwealth, but never yet has there been a barber. Not many students and none of the teachers have the money to get hair-cuts in Mena, twelve miles away, and few are willing to let hair grow as it will. Thus amateur barbers, scissors wounds, notched hair, ridicule and broken friendships.

Cigarettes — The old custom of rolling your own, once universally observed at Commonwealth, has given way to new production methods. In Arkansas and other states where there is a cigarette tax, cigarette machines are sold. One type of machine rolls the tobacco in a gummed paper; another pores the tobacco into a paper tube. These machines are becoming numerous on the campus and are the wonder of the visitors from the northern and eastern cities. (Perhaps this is the first instance in history where the rural dweller can display a new-fangled gadget to the city slick.) But not all the college's can adapt themselves readily to new ways. Director Lucien Koch still rolls his fags between thumb and finger.

Town Trip — After a few months of semi-pioneering, you begin to tire of the sound of pines whispering, of acorns popping under your feet, of wild geese flocking overhead, of Mill Creek muttering among its pebbles, and you begin to enjoy the sound of the Delco motor at work over its dynamos. Nootalgia develops for a sight of the Empire State building, the Tribune tower, St. Louis Cathedral and Jackson Square, or Notre Dame of Paris — also the newest metropolis is Mena, Arkansas. You arrange with the truck driver to go to town. Twelve miles of rocky, dusty road alters your mood. The Mena pavement — what there is of it — is soothing. The side walks feel good to your feet. You dodge a T-model and enjoy the exhilaration. You look at the covers of the MacFadden magazines on display, and try in vain to purchase Turkish cigarettes. You order a coke in the drugstore and speculate upon the complexity of modern life. You purchase a hamburger in the restaurant and wonder how often they tune the mechanical fiddle, wonder if they would give your money back if you bought a tune and then complained that it was out of tune. You tire of Metropolitan life and long for simplicity. You ride back over the rocks to Commonwealth and serenely watch the sun set over Bear mountain.

Organizations — An Arkansas high-school boy wrote in recently wanting to know what fraternities we have at Commonwealth. We hastened to inform him that "Deeks" and "Sigalafs" have no chapters at our school, but we have no dearth of organizations. There is a local of the Conference for Progressive Labor Action, one of the National Student League, and a Socialist Party local. And there is also an organization peculiar to Commonwealth. It is of and for students who belong to nothing else. It calls itself the "Disorganized Organization of the Disorganized Organs" or the Do's. Evidently none of these organizations appeal to the imagination of our young Arkansas friend, for we have not heard from him again.
Students Work on Projects

Continued from page One

wealth students for material. Another labor dramatist is making a study of puppets as a means of propaganda, and is constructing his own puppet show.

In the field of writing four students are setting out to produce some form of labor literature, while others are studying aspects of labor journalism, and one is making a survey of modern radical literature. One student, proficient in music, has taken for her project the composition of labor songs, both words and melodies.

Some of the projects involving research primarily are: Racial Discrimination, with special emphasis on Jim Crowism (being undertaken by Henry Forhblad, Jack Copenhaver, Jean Goldberg and Howard Boldt), A Survey of the Economic Sources, Wages and Conditions of the Lumber Industry of the Southwest (Hugo Fisher and George Wilson), Popularizing the Material Given in Commonwealth Courses, so that it can be presented to working class groups with little formal education (Russell Rattel), Problems of the British Worker Today (Lawrence Riley), The Labor Injunction (Sam Freedman), Child Labor in Pennsylvania (Dr. William Copenhaver), The History of the Farmers' Holiday Movement (Arnold Suedeen), The Income and Expense Account of Farmers, with Polk County as a case study (Joe Schmidt), A Study of the Attitudes in Social Groups Which hinder Social and Economic Change (Roland Murray), Emotion and Revolution (William Nelson).

Increased library facilities are essential to carry on this work, and the Commonwealth library is building up its collection of pamphlets and pamphlets with the projects in view. Some projects will be completed in one quarter, but many of them will extend over three quarters or longer.

Names Taken from List

About 800 names are being taken from the Fortnightly list after this issue. If you have not yet subscribed and wish to receive the Fortnightly you should correspond at once with Charlotte Moskowitz.

Commoner's Comment

Elsewhere in this issue of the Fortnightly is a news article about the college opening for the neighbors held last Sunday, so it only remains for us to come along with our handful of impressions.

Hereewith they are: The yard of the gardener's cottage turned into an impromptu parking space for the autos that brought visitors out of town... A span of mules tied in the shade of a carpsaw tree... Neighbors liking the musical skit and commenting later on the satisfactory way in which the "banker" was dealt with when he tried to foreclose on the "farmer"... Can and punch for everybody... One of the nearby farmers tried his hand at a guitar and cowboy ballads and is soon encircled by a cluster of students... Guests viewing the Library and looking over the gardens and farm... a group of young fellows from a nearby school talk over the possibility of a volley ball game on the campus court.

Today there was a hint of rain in the air. Breakfast-going Commons squeezed at the sky, made a mental note to remember where they had last seen their raincoats, and scuttled off to eat. Spartans who insist on swimming every day were cheered on by the fact that they will keep it up all winter hoped for a shower to bring the creek up. Carpenters and roofers worried about getting the day's work done before the storm came, while the wood crew looked virtuous over the fact that they had delivered stove and fireplace wood to all the cottages and dormitories.

The self-supporting program of Commonwealth holds true not only for the school but for the individual as well. Commoners, men and women alike, sweep their own rooms and, as there are no rugs to sloosh the dirt under, must perform a fairly good job. Mending chairs and tables, painting room furnishings, going after kerosene for lamps, scouting in the woods for pitch pine, making beds, etc., all part of the day's activities. While Commonwealth does not deliberately try to fit its students to become Robinson Cruises in their own right, let's hope that the ingenuity forced on a student here will be of some use to him when he goes into other fields.

Koch to be in New York

Director Lucien Koch will be in New York City during the next few weeks. He can be reached through Federated Press, 32 Union Square.