Former students active in movement

Commoners engaged in many and varied types of work throughout country

Commonwealth students who have left the campus remain active in the labor movement and put into practice theory and tactics they learned at the college. Ex-Commoners are scattered all over the country, on farms, in colleges, doing social service work, writing for labor papers, in factories or in the field for political parties, carrying on and translating their labor education into service for the working class.

Examples of this are gleaned from letters of Commonwealth "alumni" that come into the college office. One former student writes that he is active in dramatics at a large Eastern college. He is helping to start a workers' theatre and is on the staff of the first production.

Another former student is employed at Hull House in Chicago. She is planning a talk on Commonwealth and writes that she is active in dramatics at a large Eastern college. He is helping to start a workers' theatre and is on the staff of the first production.

Democrat rule to be short, coy predicts

Roosevelt's unpopularity in the colleges of the country may be an omen that the Democratic party will suffer the fate of the Liberal party in England, in the opinion of Harold Coy, Commonwealth teacher who is working temporarily in St. Louis.

"In a poll of about forty colleges," Harold writes, "Thomas carried five. Among them is St. Louis University, a Catholic institution, and Catholies, as you know are forbidden to vote for a Socialist. At the University of Arizona, my alma mater, where Debs got five votes in a straw vote in 1920, Thomas got more than two hundred. The colleges show a strong tendency to split into two camps, the conservatives for Hoover and the radicals for Thomas, with Roosevelt running third in a large number. Perhaps this is a sign that despite its present ascendancy, the Democratic party will suffer the fate of the Liberal party in England.

"When we have toboggoned four years under Roosevelt and people hate him as much as they now hate Hoover what is more likely than a strong shift, first, back into the Republican party, and second, forward into the Socialist party or some kind of labor party. It will take more than four years, of course, for such a trend to be realized, but there are unmistakable signs of such a direction.

"Of course much of the discontent may be "canned" into some sort of liberal third party, but these liberals are rather impractical when it comes to organization, and the Socialists with a jump of over a million votes on them and a going organization, will have a distinct advantage.

Jim and Flora fourth couple to wed here

Seventy-odd Commoners are amazed but Ock has fun ready

The fourth wedding ceremony to take place at Commonwealth occurred November 3 when Flora Watson of Los Angeles, California, and Jim Murphy of Gardner, Massachusetts, were married in the Commons at supper time.

The wedding preparations were kept a secret. Campus suspicions were left unraveled until the supper bell failed to ring at the usual time and reports went around that the tablecloths and holiday foods were appearing on the tables. When the bell finally did ring and those rumors proved true, the appearance of Jim and Flora in "store" clothes added some point to speculation.

Then Clay Fulks, who later turned out to be master of ceremonies, came in with "Squire" Sam Robinson, a neighbor. Clay introduced Mr. Robinson, saying he was a justice of the peace as well as a farmer, and inquired whether anyone wanted to take advantage of this opportunity to get married. In response, Flora and Jim arose, and with seventy-two astonished Commoners as witnesses, were legally united in the bonds of matrimony.

Immediately after the ceremony Bill Cunningham welcomed Jim into the ranks of the married men. O. Hittenrauch followed with a toast to the bride and groom, the climax of which was the couplet:

"Marriages are made by schools like Commonwealth
But only God can make a trio."

Flora and Jim were both students at the school last year.

The other three couples married at Commonwealth are Wanda and Wallace Russell, Harriet and David Kennedy, and Charlotte Moskowitz and Raymond Koch.
UNTIL THE MORTGAGE IS DUE

A ONE ACT PLAY BY WILLIAM CUNNINGHAM

(Scene: Living room of farm home. Very poor and rickety furniture. As the curtain goes up the farmer's wife is sitting in a chair darning a sock. The farmer is sitting on a box tying his shoe. Farmer's wife sings to tune of "How You Gonna Keep 'em Down on the Farm?")

Reuben, Reuben, I've been wonderin'. What we're gonna do. All the flour's used out of the bin. We've sold our hens and the cow's gittin' thin.

Farmer sings:

Rachel, Rachel, I've decided
There ain't no other way.
I've got to go and butcher Bossy
So that we can have her bay.

Both sing chorus:

How you gonna keep us
Down on the farm
After we're out of grub?
How you gonna keep us away from the poor farm
Livin' in tents at county expense.
How you gonna keep us tillin' the soil?
That's a mystery.
Ain't no use pretendin' we can make
a go,
Livin' on cotton stalks and roasted egg.
How you gonna keep us
Down on the farm
After we're out of grub.

(Banker and clerk enter through the audience and walk up side toward stage. The farmer wears a frock coat; the latter a very high and stiff collar. The banker is declaiming in a loud bass voice.)

Banker: We've got to preserve the sanctity of the American home. We've got to protect American womanhood.

Bank Clerk: (in a high squaky voice.) We've got to preserve the sanctity of the American home. We've got to protect American womanhood.

Banker: These farmers will have to get down and do some real work like the rest of us. They've got to learn to get along without things, automobiles, and so forth.

Bank Clerk: (Repeats speech.)

Banker: They've been sendin' their kids to school an leavin' their cotton stand in the field's, just because cotton is cheap. They've got to be made to teach their children to be useful.

Clerk: They've got to be made, etc.

(Banker and clerk have by this time reached stage which they mount, knockin' at improvised door at side of stage. Farmer's wife opens door and exclaims:

"Oh, it's the banker." Banker walks in with an exaggerated swagger.

Banker: Howdy, neighbor!

Banker: (singing) I am the banker, the banker am I.

Farmer: (singing) He is the banker, the banker is he.

Banker: (singing) The fact is, I am a wonderful guy.

Clerk: (singing) He is a wonderful guy as you can see.

Banker: (singing) When war is declared I stay in the bank
And fight for the red, white and blue,
I also protect the American home
Until the mortgage is due.

Clerk: (singing) Until the mortgage is due.

Banker: I have decided to put you folks out.

Farmer: Put us out?

Clerk: Put you out.

Farmer: Why, how much do I owe you?

Clerk: (consulting book.) Three hundred and thirty nine dollars.

Banker: Three hundred and thirty nine dollars.

Farmer: I don't quite understand all this. A good many years ago I owed you one thousand dollars. Wheat was $2.50 a bushel. I figured I owed you 400 bushels of wheat.

Clerk: That's right.

Banker: That's right.

Farmer: Well, if you remember, we fixed it up so that I would pay you forty bushels of wheat each year for ten years.

Clerk: $100 a year for ten years.

Banker: $100 a year for ten years.

Farmer: Well, it was the same thing.

Clerk: It was the same thing.

Banker: It was the same thing.

Farmer: I got it in my book. I'll show you. (Takes book from mantle.) The first year I brought in forty bushels and paid you off.

Clerk: Yes.

Banker: Yes.

Farmer: The next year wheat was down to $2.25. I brought in 44.2 bushels, and the year after that I brought in 50 bushels at $2. Well, wheat kept on going down, and I brought in more every year, until my drill wore out and you wouldn't loan me the money to buy a new one. But I didn't worry: because I added up all the wheat I had brought in, and I found out I had brought in more than 400 bushels. Now you say I still owe you $339. Wheat is now 25c a bushel. That makes me owe you — let me see (figures) 1356 bushels. I owed you 400 bushels. I paid you 400 bushels. Now I owe you 1356 bushels. I don't understand.

Banker: You owe me dollars, not wheat.

Clerk: You owe him dollars, not wheat.

Farmer: But ain't a bushel of wheat just as good now as it was then? Ain't it better, with so many people starv­ing to death?

Banker: You're a radical. Your wheat is just as good but my dollar is a lot better than it was. Do you mean to destroy the government by questioning the value of my dollar? I'll have you deported.

Clerk: He'll have you deported.

Farmer: Deported! Why, my great grand dad was born in this country. I been on this farm for sixty years. Is it my fault that your dollar is worth more than it used to be? Will I have to starve to death or be deported to another country because your dollar is so important?

Banker: Now you folks quit arguing nonsense and get out of the house.

Clerk: Get out!

(Door opens at side and several big farmers come in.)

First Newcomer: Hello, neighbor! We noticed the banker's automobile outside and we thought we'd come in and see what was happening.

Banker: These people have been ordered to leave the place.

Clerk: They've been ordered to leave the place.

First Newcomer: (to Banker) Is this your place?
Banker: Certainly it is. He has refused to pay his debt.

First Newcomer: How many farms do you own?

Banker: Why, counting this one, fifteen.

First Newcomer: How many of 'em did you homestead?

Banker: Homestead? None of them, of course.

First Newcomer: How many of 'em did you clear?

Banker: Clear! Do you think I've got time to clear land?

First Newcomer: Well, now, for the past twenty years I've raised and brought to town enough stuff to feed ten people. How many people have you fed?

Banker: Me? I haven't fed anybody. I've been busy in the bank. I have been busy protecting your money.

Farmers in chorus: What money?

Farmer: The only thing we've had in your bank has been notes and mortgages. You've protected them, all right.

Second Newcomer: You say you've been busy in the bank. How many hours do you work in the bank every day?

Banker: Why, I usually get down to work about ten and work until noon. Then I go out to lunch and get back at two. I work until four and spend the time from four to six playing golf for my health.

Second Newcomer: What do you do while you are "at work"?

Banker: Why, I sit at my desk and talk to you farmers about your notes. You can't imagine how tired a fellow gets, simply because you farmers refuse to pay what you owe. Some times, like today, I have to come clear out into the country to order one of you off your place. I couldn't stand the strain, if I didn't take a couple of months off every year to tour Europe.

Second Newcomer: You didn't make any European tour during the war did you? You arranged it for us fellows to tour Europe. And the ones of us who came back won't ever forget that little tour.

Banker: Say, I'm getting tired of this radical talk. We've got to guard against radicals. We've got to protect American womanhood.

First Newcomer: (musingly) You folks all remember Jane Manus?

Second Newcomer: Sure, I remember her. I went to school with her. She was the brightest little girl that ever went to that school, and the best behaved.

First Newcomer: (to banker) You remember Jane's husband, Jim Manus. He was drafted and sent to France. You was on the draft board.

Banker: That is true. I was on the draft board. I gave one afternoon a week, to that work. Although the bank needed me, I gave my time, absolutely free, one afternoon a week, to my country. I have never been one to forget my patriotism.

First Newcomer: Well, you sent him to France, and he was killed, so Jane and her little son had to go back to live with her folks.

Banker: Yes, Yes. First Newcomer: Then you foreclosed on her parents and sent them to the poor farm.

Banker: That's true. I took a personal interest in those people. I spent a couple of hours arranging so that they could go to the poor farm, although the bank needed me.

First Newcomer: Then you fixed their farm into a golf links where you and the grocer could play golf every afternoon.

Banker: Yes. I won the county championship. (sings) I am the county golf champion.

Clerk: He is the champ, the champ is he.

Banker: I'm the best putter that ever you seen.

Banker: He's the best putter you ever did see.

Chorus: While the farmer is hoeing I go out and play.

My putting is wonderfully true.

Also I protect the American home,

Until the mortgage is due.

Clerk: Until the mortgage is due.

1st Newcomer: Well, anyway. To get back to Jane. She tried to get a job in town to support herself and her boy. But she couldn't. Finally you caught her in your kitchen at night with a loaf of bread under her arm.

Banker: Yes she was a burglar. The minimum sentence for burglary is twenty years in the pen.

1st Newcomer: And when you caught her she faintetl, didn't she? And when they took her to the jail a doctor was called and the doctor said she had fainted from hunger; and the county had to feed her for a couple of weeks before she was strong enough to go to trial.

Banker: Yes. She was a good expense to the county.

1st Newcomer: But finally she was tried, and you testified against her and she went to the pen.

Banker: Yes, that's true. I never shirk my duty in bringing criminals to justice.

1st Newcomer: Well, I just heard what happened to her. Her boy was sent to live with his uncle. But his uncle is a farmer, and the family did not have enough to eat. The boy got pellagra and was about to die. They wrote Jane about it, and she sort of lost her head. She tried to break out of the penitentiary and one of the guards killed her with a load of buck-shot.

Banker: Yes, she was a desperate criminal. We must protect society against criminals. We must protect our property.

Sings:

We must protect our property
And the job of protecting falls on me
I'll never shirk my plain duty
In dealing with bad criminals.

Chorus:

When a wicked woman breaks into my place
I'll see that she gets her due.

Also I protect the American home

Until the mortgage is due.

Clerk: Until the mortgage is due.

1st Newcomer: Well, anyway you got a good golf course. And you are going to protect American womanhood.

Banker: That's true. But this has gone far enough. You people get out. I'm taking possession here.

Farmer: Yes. This has gone far enough. You'll not foreclose while we're alive.

1st Newcomer: You'll not foreclose while we're alive.

Farmers sing in chorus:

You've turned our farms into golf links
Where you can swing your sticks.

And because we were quiet and lowly
You have called us rubes and hicks.

You think we'll always meekly starve
You think we will always be dubs,

But when our babies are hungry
You'll see that we too can swing clubs.

Always before we've stooped to impair
We've come to you on our knees.

But never again while we are men
Will you turn out our children to freeze.

(They carry the banker and the bank clerk, none too gently, down the aisle. The banker can be heard shouting something about the sanctity of the American home.) — Curtain.
COMMONER'S COMMENT

Last summer's students and campers will be interested in knowing that the newest arrival to the campus is Freddy Chayes, Chicagoan who was a member of the group that has been working at political campaign printing in the Windy City, but who has decided to return to Commonwealth for the remainder of the fall quarter. It took him about fifteen minutes to doff his capitalist tweeds and slip into a lumberjack and become one of the group again.

Sure signs of coming winter: The store gets in a supply of canvas gloves for the wood crew workers... a new stove is set up by volunteer labor in the lower end of the Commons, so the fireplace is not "chopped" for orientation lectures... Hats and caps, heretofore scorned by Commonwealth males, are fished out of trunks and closets and donned... Ken Thurman, exile builder, is busy as the proverbial one-armed paperhanger... students wheelbarrow a load of logs from the power saw to their dorms... atavistic males display their tendencies in the courtyard of the girls' dorm... Commonwealth's first coal is bought for the pot-bellied stove in the new room of the library.

DEMOCRAT RULE TO BE SHORT

Continued from page One

Those of us who look forward to a new social order rather than a rebuilt capitalist one should use our influence to see that the third party, wherever else it may be, does remain definitely a labor party and not merely a more liberal Democratic party. It should welcome support from sympathetic intellectuals, but it should not seek their support at the cost of departing from its mission of representing the working class as a whole (which includes, of course, both hand workers and brain workers).

The only interest radicals can have in a third party is to bring together the producing classes in their own political camp. In this recognition of a group task red has the value of a third party. A third party which is merely vaguely liberal and which appeals to all classes is so more desirable, and not nearly as feasible, as would be an organization devoted to help the Huey Longs and the Alfreda Bills capture the country.

"It took a long time for the British Labor party to get its start, but when it once got its initial impetus (as the Socialist party is now doing) it grew rapidly at each succeeding election."

FORERMIN STUDENTS ACTIVE IN

MOVEMENT

Continued from page One

workers in Pennsylvania and Virginia in the interests of a political organization.

At a recent meeting of the Washington Open Forum in the District of Columbia, two ex-Commonwealths were among the speakers. The meeting was to protest the expansion from the University of Maryland of two young men refusing to attend compulsory military training. The resolution of protest was introduced at the forum by a girl who attended Commonwealth in the spring and summer quarters, and was sure that her school teacher who vacationed with his family on the campus last summer.

From the farmer's holiday area of the Northwest comes news that former students are active in the fight the farmers are staging for a just living. The publicity director of the national holiday movement is a former student who attended the University of Wisconsin after leaving the campus. He is active in picketing in Minnesota and suggests that his neighbors should be able to use the play written and staged by Commonwealth students and teachers for the farmers near the school. As in other farming communities, eviction is one of the chief threats to farmers. A recent case was handled in the former student's region is indicated in his letter: "We had a case in our neighborhood where the banker intended to take away a sheriff's sale of a tenant farmer's house. The farmers in the community ganged together and said, "There ain't gonna be no sale; and there wasn't!"

An "alumnus" now living in South Dakota is in the farm work in that locality. He was instrumental in getting the farmers to send a truck load of men to a farmer's national relief conference in Washington, and to help put a stop to evictions of Dakota tenants.

In many other instances besides the above, Commonwealth learns that its former students are working for the cause of the common people in the spheres of activity where they can be of most use to the labor movement."

INTRODUCING

Members of Commonwealth Group

HOWARD BOLDT became a sailor after leaving high school, and was assigned, as one of his first jobs, the task of steering a liner through the crowded New York harbor. He has visited many ports in northern Europe and once he participated in a steve 'one's strike in a Belgian harbor. Returning to his home in Bridgeport, Conn., he became a salesman, and an advertising manager. He quit the latter position because it was just too darn uncomfortable. Meanwhile, he had decided on journalism as his career, and now helps edit one of Commonwealth's wall newspapers. In his middle twenties he is brisk in his movements, an energetic speaker and does the dinner dishes as his part in the school's industrial work.

SHORT SHUSTER can be spotted a mile off. With his flaming red hair and his blue overalls and work shirt, he is a colorful Commoner. Working on the wood crew he finds no task at all, for past labor experience has dispelled any sentiment about the dignity of labor, as far as he's concerned. Quoting: "When I was 14, I worked in a cotton mill as a wire dropper... The working conditions were terrible; air stale; lighting conditions very poor, so much so that I was blindfolded one eye a half-day after wiring a silk loom... we had to work like dogs to earn a fairly decent wage." After high school he travelled over the United States, picking up odd jobs here and there, the oldest one being a paper salesman in San Francisco. "Red" came to Commonwealth this quarter to train for public speaking and writing in the labor movement. His home is in New Bedford, Mass.

CHICAGO GROUP ACTIVE

"A theatre with its footlights facing the new social order" has been organized in Chicago, with Alice Ettinger, former Commoner, as assistant director. The Lincoln Center Theater, 700 Oakwood Boulevard, "will present plays which deal with basic problems of social and economic change," according to an announcement received at Commonwealth. Alice Ettinger was a student-teacher at Commonwealth last year, handling the work in labor drama. The first play staged by the Lincoln Center group was "Can You Hear Their Voices," former Commoners in the cast were Manford Ettinger, Joe Hamburger, Sara Lissitz and Paul Gogol.

November 15, 1932