THIRTY STUDENTS ON ROLL FOR FALL TERM

Working Class History Proves Most Popular Course Offered

Commonwealth opened its eleventh year October 2 with thirty students. This is an average enrollment for the school.

Working Class history, taught by David Engelsstein, is the most popular course this quarter, having seventeen students.

There are only four foreign-born students in the present group. Three of these are natives of Germany and one of Russia. States represented include New York, Minnesota, South Dakota, Illinois, Virginia, Connecticut, New Jersey, Washington, Wisconsin, California, Ohio, Missouri, Pennsylvania, Texas, Arkansas, Massachusetts.

Commonwealth students are members of such widely varying organizations as the Universal Esperanto Association, the League for Industrial Democracy, the Young People’s Socialist League, the Communist Party, the Proletarian Party, the Socialist Party, Nature Friends, the Workmen’s Circle, Sigma Delta Chi, and the Farmers Equity League.

The average age of Commonwealth students this quarter is 26.

Members of the present student body have worked in factories, on newspapers, on farms, in hospitals, in dry goods stores and millinery shops, in restaurants and in offices.

They have been house painters, truck drivers, teachers, servants, jewelers, printers, salesmen, etc. One is an X-ray technician. Two of them have never had jobs, having been unable to find employment when they graduated from high school.

Prices are going up. Commonwealth needs your financial support if its work is to go on unimpaired.
CROSS-SECTION: WATERFRONT

By HENRY WILLIAM SCHULTZ
Commonwealth Student

n't mind visitors but as soon as darkness fell he would order everyone ashore. In fact, visitors were necessary. Otherwise, who would listen when he would explain what kind of a guy this . . . . . . Hitler was, and how the old country was "going to hell." Still, he couldn't see anything wrong here on the waterfront. He never contemplated why there were so many bums and why they were so bitter and why they stole things. After all, wasn't he living on the Mary Ann, one of the finest, fastest, neatest sailing ships that ever graced a port?

MIKE walked along the wharves wishing he was aboard a ship far away from this God-forsaken place. What would he do with the old fool's reading glass, now that he had stolen it? He contemplated whether he should buy a good meal of steak and onions and some 'smoke'. Well, first he had to hack the damned thing anyway. He turned into Dock street and walked past many pawn shops in front of which acquaintances were standing. Here was a place.

"How much can you give me on this genuine German-lens reading glass?" he asked forcefully, with a bold front. The old Jew examined it in the light and said, "Twenty cents.

"Why, it was just stolen fifty down the street." The Jew turned up the corners of his mouth in an owl-like smile and replied: "I'll give you a quarter; take it or leave it.

"Well, O.K." After taking the quarter which the Jew reluctantly fished out of an old cigar-box, he walked down the street, making wise-cracks to his "friends". He had to forget everything. This misery, Two years of wandering, drink, lack of physical or mental security. Two years away from all persons and things that he had loved in the past.

An hour later he had forgotten his troubles. A puff of smoke had transferred him into a realm of peace and happiness.

NIGHT on one of the largest suspension bridges in the world. Lights glittered on the foot-paths along both sides of the bridge. Two miles of twinkling lights. The city beyond and below spread out as in a dream. Only the occasional whistle of a ferry-boat or the rumble of a distant elevated train broke the stillness. Everything was so quiet, peaceful, and contented. Below and between the foot-paths automobiles and trolleys whirled over the asphalt at a rapid pace. They carried a human cargo of sophisticat-ed city-dwellers going and coming from parties, shows, road-houses, cafes, dance-marathons, seashore bungalow, and speakeasies.

In the shadow of this monstrous structure men stood in soup lines, fought in drunken brawls, sat desiring in waterfront missions, got excited over a good crap game, and tried to enjoy life in view of becoming one of those above on the bridge some day. Farmers discussed the political situation at hot-dog stands with longshoremen and warehouse hands. Excitement seekers browsed about looking for action. Habitues slunk into dope dens and houses of prostitution. Neophytes gazed on in wonderment. Passersby stopped at the water's edge and wondered what made the bubbles and gobs of mud pop up from the river bottom. Now and then, out on the water, blinking buoy lights were visible, and sometimes the tinkle of a muffled bell came across the water. A crowd of boys were diving into the scummy, oily water from an empty barge.

PEOPLE were streaming into Pier 3. They came from subway, elevateds, buses, taxis, parkers, and some on foot. The Hoover Line steamer State of Delaware rolled slightly in her berth. Little waves slapped at her sides. High school boys and girls filed aboard over the gang-plank. Here and there were a few older people, out for an airing on the river. The jazz orchestra was already getting in, or rather out of, tune. A "moonlight excursion".

With a stentorian snort from her whistle, the Delaware cast off her moorings and backed out into the river. Up in the moonlight on the hurricane deck boys were plunking away on ukuleles and here and there a banjo or guitar. Garrulous flappers chattered and giggled. Necking parties were under way, between lifeboats and emergency pontoon. The stench of oil and engines was absent up here in the open air.

Everybody talked, about nothing. They were on this ship to forget their worries. They were also transferring, like Mike, into a realm of
A Sunny afternoon. Long lines of taxis and limousines are drawn up in front of Pier 78. The ocean liner Santa Maria is being commissioned with great ceremony. The giant steel hulk glitters. Every piece of metal gleams from long hours of polishing. Flaga fly from the masts, fore and aft. The crew, in spick and span white uniforms, directs visitors formally and briskly. They are tired from days of hard labor getting the ship in shape for the occasion. Officers strut about, usually explaining to the prettiest girls the mechanism of some intricate part of the monster's anatomy.

Back on the street, beyond the line of the elite, their limousines, and taxis, is drawn up a cordon of mounted police. Patrolmen also stand about trying to act important and official. A crowd gazes longingly at the proceedings. Old wrinkled Italian women comment on the clothes of a current debutante. Bums stare and watch for glimpses of the crew. They look with envy at these men and wish they had such jobs. Others, once economically secure, glare in hatred of those who are still secure, formerly their allies.

Old Gus leans against a wall in the background. He hates these new ships, these usurpers of the sea. He recalls the good old days and wishes he were back on the Mary Ann, as trim a sailing vessel as ever graced a port. Next to him, against the wall, leans Mike. He smells of liquor. He is still trying to forget. He also hates the ship, and the plutocrats in their shiny cars and pressed pants. They symbolize that which he has lost, the security which gets fainter in the past and in his hopes.

peace and happiness.

ON "GETTING AWAY"—Once in a while at Commonwealth you find it necessary to "get away" for a few days. Perhaps you are appointed a member of a delegation to go to Fort Smith and buy a mule.

Going to Fort Smith is not such a simple matter as it might seem. You get out your only suit and discover that it has spots of mold on it. It needs cleaning and pressing, but that is a lot of trouble, just for a trip to Fort Smith.

You discover that your dress-up shoes have mold on them and you spend half an hour fixing them up. But when you put them on you discover to your amazement that they are too small. You have been going barefooted, or wearing boots, and your feet have spread. You decide to be sensible and wear your boots. With pants legs over them no one can tell they are boots.

You dress up, and the effect is disappointing. Your pants have a hanger crease in them just above the knees. Your white shirt hasn’t been ironed, and has no button at the collar. Your necktie has been reposing (so you discover after an hour’s search) in the corner behind the dresser for several months, has adapted itself to this environment and is loath to resume its proper function. When you put it on you find that its lower end persists in standing out at right angles to your bosom.

But when you appear, thus attired, in the Commons for breakfast the response is immediate. "Look at him!" "Bourgeois!" "Look at the necktie, and we thought he was class-conscious." The humor, of course, is not very good, but you feel that these proletarians have been impressed in spite of themselves. "You think business is picking up?" "Tack a blue eagle on 'im."

By the time you get to Fort Smith you have developed considerable self-confidence. The hanger creases seem to have disappeared, for the most part. You feel that you look for all the world like a prosperous out-of-town buyer. But Fort Smith is a lot bigger than you remembered it. You conceal your nervousness in traffic. Skirts are longer.

You fall back into your bourgeois habits of thought. Packards look nice—only what you thought, in your rustic ignorance, was a Packard turns out to be a new Chevrolet. Perhaps it might have been better, after all, to remain a liberal and drive one (with a blue eagle on the windshield).

You step out upon the sidewalk, confident that at least you look like a liberal—until you catch sight of yourself in a street mirror. Street mirrors were never very friendly, even when you were prosperous. In contrast to bedroom mirrors they are realists. They show you up for what you are, down to the last whisker you missed.

One glance in this Fort Smith mirror is enough. The spots of mold on your suit look exactly like milk. Your boots are boots after all, and no one with normal eyesight could mistake them. The hanger creases have remained, but the creases put in at the cleaning shop, the last time this poor suit was in to be pressed, have disappeared without a trace. Your buttonless shirt is open down the front, exposing your chest, and the necktie still plainly reveals its behind-the-dresser conditioning.

You are a proletarian if there ever was one. You would be admitted as a delegate to a labor convention only if the extreme left wing had control.

You pull your shirt together, as a weak gesture toward respectability, but your proletarianization is complete. Once again you despise the middle class. And now to look at mules. Milk spots on your pants ought to be an advantage when you are buying mules. Mule dealers will assume that you know a ring bone when you see one, and they will be afraid to try to put anything over on you.

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Every dollar sent in as a subscription to this paper is an aid to workers' education.

And for that dollar the reader gets a fortnightly report on the only institution of its kind in the world.

Tear off this corner and send it in immediately with a dollar bill.

NAME ..............................................

ADDRESS ........................................
New Periodical To Be Issued At Commonwealth

The first issue of a periodical, printed news-let­ter, for ex-Commoners will be issued at Commonwealth in a few weeks and will be sent to all former students and teachers whose addresses are on file in the office. Because only a small percentage of the readers of the Portnightly have ever been at Commonwealth, it is impossible to devote much space in this paper to "personal." And yet all ex-Commoners have a natural curiosity as to what is happening to those persons on and off the campus whom they knew at the school. The news-letter will attempt to supply this information.

Half of the letter will be devoted, perhaps, to campus events; and the other to news of ex-Commoners.

The Friends of Commonwealth groups are urged to send in reports immediately. Former students should write to the school, telling what they are doing; and they should also include the addresses of any other former students with whom they are in correspondence.

The news-letter will be issued twice a quarter (eight times a year). The approximate cost for postage, printing, etc. will be twenty-five cents per year. Send in your twenty-five cents immediately to insure your receiving all issues.

COMMONWEALTH HERD NOW NUMBERS FIFTEEN

Commonwealth now has a larger herd of cattle than it has ever had before. Seven cows are now giving milk, and two are dry. Six calves are growing into cowhood.

This herd is of course not nearly large enough, but until recently the school did not have sufficient barn room to care for more than three or four.

The seven producing cows give approximately 110 pounds of milk per day, according to Bob Reed, stockman. This is not a high yield, but Commonwealth cows are not of aristocratic stock. When there is more money the scrubs will be replaced by good milk producers.

"Hearty," who came to Commonwealth sick with tuberculosis and a broken leg is now an excellent cow and recently gave birth to a daughter. More than a year ago Hearty belonged to a neighbor. She frisked in front of the college truck and suffered a broken leg. The college bought her. No one expected her to live, but her constitution was strong and a few weeks later she was limping about the campus.

SCHOOL DECLARES "SWEET POTATO HOLIDAY"

October 12 was a "sweet potato holiday" at Commonwealth. Several acres of sweet potatoes had to be harvested. The regular supply of labor was not sufficient. Industrial Manager Noble consulted the group. A state of crisis was declared, and the entire Commonwealth community went down on its knees in the sweet potato patch.

Although rain interrupted the work in the afternoon, most of the crop was gathered. Farm Manager Ray Koch estimates that about 70 bushels were harvested. "This is enough to keep us all that" sweet potatoes all winter," he declares.

There are at least 20 bushels yet to be brought up rays. The full of Irish potatoes will be good, and since fall potatoes are easy to keep it is unlikely that the school will have to purchase potatoes.

The hay crop is good, in spite of some damage by rains. Ray believes that there is enough feed on hand to last until next summer. However some corn must be purchased, since the Commonwealth corn crop failed.

This year enough seed has been saved from all the crops so that it will be unnecessary to spend money upon seed next season.

OPEN FORUM AND CURRENT EVENTS EXTRA-CURRICULAR PROGRAM

An open forum each Sunday night and a current events class each Wednesday night is the nucleus of the extra-curricular program at Commonwealth this term.

"The Omnibus College" was the title of a talk by Cecil Keesling at the first student forum of the year, held October 1.

Cecil described his experiences as a bus driver for the unique school which tours the country each summer. Although he knew little about the country over which they were traveling, he was often asked questions about the points of interest which they passed. "I gave them lots of information," he said, "which may or may not have been accurate, since I invented it specially for the occasion. But none of the school ma'ams in my bus doubted it, so it served the purpose."

Al Shaw, Armin Shuman, Libbie Volpie and Bob Reed were the speakers at the second forum, October 8. Each covered a special phase of the labor movement with which he or she was familiar.

Mildred Price, teacher of imperialism, has charge of the current events class. Each week Mildred and others report upon the most important current situations the world over. Topics covered in the first meeting of the year included Cuba, labor strikes in American industry, the United States Congress Against War, the NRA, and the A. F. of L. convention.

Oscar Cooley, former executive secretary of the Cooperative League of the United States, has joined the Commonwealth staff and is teaching a class in "The Role of Cooperation."

"This course," he says, "is designed to picture the role which the cooperative movement is playing in the general revolutionary trend from a system of production for profit to a system of production for use."

Cooley is convinced that of all forms of working-class action, cooperation is the least known and understood. "However workers, particularly prospective leaders of the workers, cannot afford to be unacquainted with it," he says.

"We will first take up the typical consumer's cooperative, the retail and wholesale, and the complete chain of production, from raw material to consumer's table, which is growing up in many of these simple types-forms. The history of this movement, and of the International Cooperative Alliance in particular, which now has affiliates in forty-one countries, with over 70,000,000 adherents, will be covered. Special attention will be given to Great Britain, the Scandinavian countries, Russia and the United States.

"The essentially voluntary characteristic of cooperation, its relation to radical political action and to labor unionism, promise some interesting, perhaps exciting, sessions."

"Much attention will be given to cooperation among American farmers, this being the largest development of cooperation in this country today. Clay Folks, who gave the course in farm problems, and I will work together in this field."

"Industrial producer's cooperation, as exemplified by the Columbia Cooperative Company, and credit cooperation, as manifested by credit unions, will receive minor treatment."

"Finally we will ask ourselves, what can the young worker do about this thing cooperation? To what extent can he help to organize cooperatives? Are there those at Commonwealth who feel attracted to this branch of working-class action and wish to make it their specialty? If so, how and where to begin? The entire course will lead up to a consideration of these practical questions."

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