SUMMER SESSION TO OPEN JULY 2

DIRECTOR RETURNS FROM PENNSYLVANIA

Organized Classes for Workers of the Hard Coal Section

Lucien Koch, director of Commonwealth, returned to the school recently after a stay of three months in Pennsylvania where, in cooperation with the Affiliated Schools for Workers, he helped to organize and supervise workers' classes in two towns of the hard coal region.

Some of the courses conducted were labor history, current events, public speaking, English, labor drama, parliamentary law, folk dancing, etc.

He reports that excellent work was done by the Affiliated Schools for Workers in cooperation with the public schools, but he predicts that local pressure will be brought on the public schools by groups hostile to the program thus making impossible cooperation over a long period of time.

GROUP STAGES PLAY FOR ARKANSANS

Twelve teachers and students of Commonwealth went to central Arkansas June 1 and 2 and put on two farm plays, written by Commoners. The program also included talks on war and fascism.

The performances, staged in schoolhouses in the vicinity of Russellville, were well received. The poor farmers and agricultural workers of this section are quite militant, according to Commoners who went on the trip. A recent strike threat, they report, increased the wages paid for chopping cotton.

COURSES ANNOUNCED FOR COMING TERM

Mother Bloor Called to Paris; May Visit Commonwealth Later

What promises to be Commonwealth's most interesting summer session will open July 2.

Regular courses to be offered will include labor problems taught by Lucien Koch, imperialism by Sachio Oka, psychology by Raymond Koch, Marxian economics by William Cunningham, public speaking by Lucien Koch, labor dramas by Agnes Cunningham, and other courses such as labor journalism, creative writing, proletarian literature, typing, shorthand, etc. if there is sufficient demand.

Winnifred L. Chappell, one of the editors of the Social Questions Bulletin, will conduct a class three days a week in current events. Miss Chappell is a graduate of Columbia University and is an experienced teacher. She is on the speakers' bureau of the American League against War and Fascism and has lectured for the L. I. D.

BLOOR MAY FIND SUBSTITUTE

Mother Bloor writes that she cannot come, as she has "been sidetracked by the International Woman's Congress Against War and Fascism." When I get back from Paris perhaps I can go for a short time anywhere to Mena and tell you about it." She is attempting to find someone to come in her place as a special lecturer.

SUBSCRIBE TO THE FORTNIGHTLY

If each person who reads this issue were to become a regular subscriber Commonwealth would no longer have to put on financial drives in order to keep alive. The school would be entirely self-supporting.

The Fortnightly tells the story of an institution unlike any other in the world — not a freakish place but one whose strange characteristics are necessary and inevitable.

You know something of proletarian culture — the art, philosophy and politics of the class of the future. What happens when a group of young men and women in the mountains of Arkansas studies and accepts this culture and makes some contribution to it? For $1 a year you can not only watch the progress of this experiment but aid in carrying it on.

We cannot close this campaign for funds on June 1, as we had hoped to do. Enough money has some in to keep the school going this summer. This gives us three months in which to find persons willing and able to make large or small donations. A thousand new subscribers to the Fortnightly will guarantee the existence of the school.

SEND IN YOUR DOLLAR.
SIDNEY HOOK REPLIES

Editor of the Commonwealth College Fortnightly:

Mr. William Cunningham's criticism of my book 'Towards the Understanding of Marx's Economic Prerequisites to a Criticism' on pages 987-990 of the March 20, 1932 issue of the Commonwealth College Fortnightly is invalid. He has misunderstood my main point. He says I have not managed to explain the central features of Marx's economic doctrines as a closed hypothetic-deductive system which contains nothing but the equation of the capitalist system and in which human activity can exercise no significant influence upon the economic trends, laws and tendencies which control it. The main point of my treatment of the Marxian economic doctrines is to show in what way economic problems are social and political problems; and how the political activity and effective class consciousness of the working class can react upon and affect its own economic conditions. The economic laws are abstractions, but not less true for being so: they have not the immitigated force of natural laws driving the working class necessarily to a subsistence wage and capitalism to an automatic collapse. As an illustration of my point I quoted Marx to the effect that historical and moral elements enter into the determination of the value of labor-power so that the economic and political struggles of the workers have economic effects. It is here where I say:

"The outcome of to-day's class struggle affects the measure of value tomorrow. When crisis comes or war or unemployment, their social and political consequences are not merely a matter of economic laws inevitably working themselves out, but of the pre-ence or absence of working-class activity. This is what Marx means when he says that man is at the basis of production and all the laws of production. The portion of surplus value which goes to the entrepreneur, the landowner, the banker on the one hand, and to the proletariat on the other..." (Italics mine. — W.C.) Any beginning student in Marx knows that surplus-value does not go to the proletariat, since by definition it is that part of the new value created which is not returned to its creator, the proletariat. Mr. Cunningham is not even ignorant. He says, page 202, "What is produced during this latter time (surplus labor time) is surplus value for which the worker receives no return whatsoever." Mr. Cunningham evidently reads words and not sentences. He could find even more difficulties and contradictions if he read letter-by-letter instead of by sentences. Mr. Cunningham a few questions to make the point clear. Why did Marx reject the theory of the subsistence wage? Is there anything else beside the variation in the price of supply and demand which accounts for the fact that the price of labor-power can at certain times be higher than the value of labor-power? Has the mass activity of the workers in raising wages, bettering conditions of hours and labor anything to do with it? Suppose the workers succeed in forcing legislation upon the ruling class providing for unemployment insurance at the expense of the government and the employer. Where do the funds come from? Are they not part of the surplus value which the ruling class — entrepreneur, landlord and banker — have filched from them, and which the workers compel them to return in part? Sooner or later, the working class will try to get at the money out of its workers which they receive in the form of benefits. Certainly. But whether they will succeed depends upon the degree of organized class consciousness and activity of the working class. Granted there is a tendency on the part of capitalism to increase exploitation by lengthening the working-day or by intensifying speed-up or by both. Does that make it impossible to agitate for and win a 10, 8, or 6 hour day, or to strike successfully for control of the speed-up? Why did Marx hail the 10-hour Bill as a victory of a principle, as a victory of the economic and political struggle of the working class? What is involved here is not a simple mistake but a whole philosophy of social action — of social revolution — precisely that aspect of Marx's thought which Mr. Cunningham's social democrats, Mr. Cunningham ignores.
There is nothing unusual nowadays in the spectacle of a modernist preacher saying shocking things to please the skeptical sons and daughters of the grand bourgeoisie, but when people do so not from the pulpits of the Presbyterian Church but from the pulpit of the Presbyterian Church of Paris, Arkansas, the event is worth some study.


distinct between Marxism and Engels says: "In one of the many places in which he speaks of ideologies, Engels says: "'Ideology is a process which is carried on with the conscious-" says Mr. Cunningham, "to the following quotations from A. V. Lunacharsky. 'But Marxism is more than such a theory (theory of human society and its evolution); it is itself the ideology of a definite class—the proletariat.'"

"But Williams is not one to be frightened by an eviction notice. He intends to remain in the house until his back salary is paid. If it is never paid he will get a title to the house and turn it over to some labor institution. On the date set for his eviction, he will have an all-day picnic on his lawn for miners, farmers and young people.

"But the fundamental difference between Williams and the typical modernist is this: Williams speaks for and is supported by coal diggers rather than by wealthy young agnostics. And the support they give him is emotional, not financial."

In 1932 he supported the miners on strike and helped to rebuild the union. Since that time he has been in every labor fight in that district. Recently his career as pastor for the Presbyterian flock was ended by the church board, which found him guilty of "disloyalty to the church and communism." Now, although the church owes him $2,000, in back pay, it has notified him that he must get out of the house which he occupies. Only about 117 of the 126 members of the church are opposed to him, but the board is controlled by a wealthy real estate man and a woman of the landed aristocracy.

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Now with a wife and three children this ex-Presbyterian ex-preacher is without any means of support. He knows the miners too well to believe that they can get any financial support. Most of them are on relief jobs. Moreover he has known for a long time what he was getting into. He in the fight so deeply that he is more interested in the fight than in his own welfare.

"By 'religion' he means the same as a Marxist means by 'class-consciousness.' He is under no illusion as to the possibility of persuading the exploiting class to surrender its power peacefully. "Which is better," he asks his mine audience, "a comparatively short and decisive period of violence, or the long-drawn-out violence you are experiencing now?"

However much we may object to the use of vague and ancient terms for revolutionary concepts, we should recognize the concepts for what they are. Granting the historical fact of the Paris Commune is more enlightening to the young radical than is the story of the revolt of the Moseled Jews of the Old Testament.
Englestein Attends State Convention

Reports That Arkansas Workers Show Greater Militancy Than Ever Before

David Englestein, teacher of working-class history, went as delegate from the Commonwealth local of the American Federation of Teachers to the special convention of the Arkansas State Federation of Labor held in Little Rock May 30. Charlotte Moskowitz, executive secretary, went as alternate.

The convention vigorously condemned a rehabilitation program which includes subsistence farming for unemployed miners of the state, and went on record for a program of militant trade unionism, a fight for the thirty-hour week, higher wages, better working conditions and unemployment and social insurance.

Growth in membership was reported by a number of affiliated unions. Recently twenty-five Teachers' locals, with a membership exceeding 1,500, were organized in Arkansas.

“There was an awakened spirit of determination,” Englestein reports, “among many of the delegates who are ready to join in the struggle against industrial oppression under the NRA and discrimination under the Emergency Relief Administration. The workers of Arkansas are being stirred by the wave of industrial unrest throughout the country.”

Former Commonwealth Teacher Jailed In Ohio

Bill Reich, former Commonwealth teacher, is now serving a term in the workhouse in Columbus, Ohio, on a framed charge of “disorderly conduct.”

In April Reich was addressing a meeting of the unemployed at Columbus when the police charged in. Many were injured. Reich was pulled from the speakers’ stand and slapped into unconsciousness. As soon as he was out of the hospital he was sent to the workhouse.

“Events of the past month,” he writes, “should make clear to all reformists and parliamentarians the utter hopelessness of expecting justice through the capitalist state.”

He hopes to visit Commonwealth about August 1 and give a series of talks on his recent experiences.

PRESBYTERIAN IN REVOLT

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New ‘One Big Union’ Organized In State

Workingmen’s Union of the World Aims at Forty Million Members

The idea of “one big union” is persistent. This time such a movement is raising its head in Arkansas. Although the ambitious program of its founders may not be realized its formation indicates a growing change in the attitude of many Arkansas workers.

It is called the Workingmen’s Union of the World. Organized in Ft. Smith about a year ago, it now claims a membership of about 3,000 with 250 dues paying members. The leaders are working toward a goal of forty million members.

Those participating in the W. U. W. have faith in its success. They recognize the need for unified action. They are giving open opposition to a yielding, unaggressive A. F. of L. leadership.

The W. U. W. is now sponsoring a strike of 500 relief workers against the “payment in kind” system.

SUMMER SESSION

Continued from Page One

Paul Mattick, a writer on Marxism, will be at Commonwealth from July 15 to 28. Some of his lecture topics are “Theories of Accumulation and Collapse by Marx, Otto Bauer, Rosa Luxemburg, Stolberg, Lenin, Buchariin, Grossman and others,” “Different Interpretations of Marxist Dialectics,” “Production and Distribution in Communism,” “Is Russia Building Socialism?” etc.

Prof. John Ise of the School of Business, University of Kansas, will be here August 13 to 27 and will give a series of lectures on such topics as “Rationality,” “Market Price and Fraction,” “Monopoly,” “Insecurity,” “Pascal,” “Socialism,” “Communism,” etc.

James P. Cannon, member of the Communist League of America and of the editorial board of the Militant, will be at Commonwealth for a time but definite dates have not yet been set.

Lectures on current situations and upon such topics as proletarian art and culture, American and world literature, etc, will be given by various members of the group.

There will be, of course, swimming, dancing, hiking, tennis, ping pong, and other forms of entertainment.