THREE BEST ESSAYS
SELECTED BY JUDGES

Arkansas Virginian, Pennsylvanian
Awarded Free Scholarships to Commonwealth

Isabella L. Carson of Decatur, Arkansas, Gaillard Hunt of Falls Church, Virginia, and Walter McCabe of Philadelphia were chosen by the Commonwealth faculty as winners of the essay contest last spring. They may attend Commonwealth free of charge during any quarter of the 1934-35 term.

Of the thirty-four essays submitted, thirteen were outstanding, and the faculty had difficulty in picking the three winners. Excellent papers were entered by Mary Jorie Conway of Chicago; Joseph Driscoll of Forest City, Pa.; Otter T. Holdall of Novato, Calif.; Louis J. Kaye of New Haven, Conn.; F. B. Kval's of Rice Lake, Wis.; Samuel Malik of Toledo, Ohio; Melvin Olds of St. Louis; Walter E. Ransom of Pittsburgh, Pa.; and Jim Whitfield of Amarillo, Texas.

SHIRTLESS FASCISM

Gaillard Hunt's essay was entitled "The Immediate Aspects of the Fight Against Fascism." He believes that this country is threatened with "official fascism of a peculiar shirtless variety" and calls attention to the hypocrisy of the American press, which makes a show of attacking such a "handful of clowns" as the Silver Shirts and at the same time supports a fascism "far more deeply than anything Pelly could concoct." — THE ARKANSAS FARMER

Isabella L. Carson, an Arkansas farm girl, writes on "The New Deal and the Farmer of North-West Arkansas." Drawing on her and her neighbors' experiences, she shows what the New Deal has actually done for the farmer and comes to the conclusion that the problem can be no real one of "except a market for farm products provided by working people with fat, regular pay checks.

Koch's Schedule Announced

Lucien Koch, director of Commonwealth, will leave October 20 on a three months' trip to the East and Middle West.

The purpose of his trip is to create interest in the need for workers' education, and specifically to raise money for scholarships and general maintenance of Commonwealth and to get in touch with young men and women who wish to come to the school as students.

Lecture dates are being arranged for him in the various centers. His topics will be:

THE CHALLENGE OF WORKERS' EDUCATION

What's Next in the Labor Movement?

Can Fascism be Averted?

ARKANSAS HILL FARMERS, 'COPPERS AND MINERS

Persons living in the cities he is to visit who wish to arrange for lecture dates or personal interviews should correspond immediately with Charlotte Maskowitz, executive secretary of the school. His itinerary is as follows:

October 11-13 Memphis
14 Nashville
16-17 Cincinnati
20-21 Washington
26-27 Baltimore
29-30 Philadelphia
31 Bethlehem, Pa.

November 1 Paterson
2-14 New York
15 Harrisburg
17-21 Pittsburgh
24-Dec. 3 Chicago

December 5-7 Milwaukee
9-10 Madison
12-17 Minneapolis
19 Des Moines
21-22 Kansas City
23-24 Topeka

WRIGHT AND PRICE TO BE ON FACULTY

Replace Sachio Oka and Winifred Chappell as Commonwealth Teachers

Mildred Price and Mary Wright are on the Commonwealth faculty for the fall term to fill the vacancies left by Sachio Oka and Winifred Chappell. Oka, who taught imperialism here for three quarters, will locate somewhere in the East to do literary work. Miss Chappell has returned to New York to take up her work as one of the editors of the Social Service Bulletin.

Mildred Price, a former teacher at Commonwealth, has been in Spain for the past six months with her husband, Harold Coy. There they studied the Spanish labor movement, and Mildred's articles upon that movement have appeared from time to time in the Fortnightly. She will teach imperialism at Commonwealth.

Mary Wright, from New York City, a member of the Communist Party Opposition, will teach labor history and public speaking. Previously she has conducted various labor courses for the National Shoe Workers' Association and for Local 22 of the International Ladies Garment Workers' Union. Miss Wright acted as state organizer in Maine for the National Shoe Workers' Association and set up in New York City one of the leading social and educational clubs sponsored by the educational department of the International Ladies Garment Workers' Union.

Plays Available at Low Cost

Copies of Free Labor Plays, a booklet containing I'm a Predictin', For the Love of Humanity, Until the Mortgague Is Due, Risen From the Ranks, The Forgotten Man, together with a copy of The Devil's Deputy, will be mailed for ten cents. Additional copies of the war skit alone will be sent for three cents each.
(SCENE: Hell. The stage is quite dark. Red footlights provide the only illumination. At one end is the Devil's throne draped in red and situated on a dais. The Demons' bench is also draped in red. The bench must be long enough to seat six people. Weird music is heard in the distance. The curtain opens and the Devil's attendant, a girl or boy dressed in red and wearing a red mask, enters carrying a torch. He walks slowly to the center and stands facing the audience and holding the torch high above his head. Six Demons enter, cross the stage and form a line in front of the dais. They wear black crepe paper costumes consisting of jacket, hood and mask. Ordinary dark trousers or shorts form the lower part of the outfit. A glowing sound and loud raucous laughter echoes up and down the stage. The Demons cross their hands in front of their foreheads and bow deeply remaining in that position. The Devil enters, walks slowly across the stage in front of attendant and Demons and seats himself on his throne. He is dressed in red shorts and jacket and wears a red head-dress with horns. His face is painted hideously. He clasps his hands and the Demons stand up. He makes a sweeping motion and they seat themselves on the bench. The attendant goes out. The Devil rises to speak.)

DEVIL: My fellow evildoers, this is a most important occasion. This is the most significant assemblage that has ever been held within the realm of Hades during the thousands and thousands of years of its existence. This is the first time in the history of my reign that I have felt the need of a vacation. I am grown weary, my fellow demons. During the last five hundred years I have with your assistance done my work so thoroughly and have thrown so much energy and effort into my work that I, your great kaiser, am near the point of exhaustion and am laboring under great strain. My chief work which I have done so well and of which I am so proud, has been the division of humanity into two great opposing classes—the very rich and the very poor, and by doing this I have brought upon the earth the greatest possible degree of human suffering. The very rich are few and far richer than ever before. The poor are many. They are huddled in the cities and scattered over the countryside by the millions—yes, tens of millions. I have planted the seeds of misery throughout the world by accomplishing this great task and now I must rest for I am grown weary. I have called this meeting for the purpose of selecting a worthy deputy who shall take my place during the time that I am out of commission. This man shall be second in authority only to myself therefore he must possess capabilities second only to my own. Now, my fellows, let me hear your reports. Let me hear of your most diabolical deeds, the most evil and horrible tasks you have performed, that I may make my choice.

First.

Claps hands. 1st demon rises and salutes by crossing hands in front of forehead and bowing as before.

1st DEVIL: Your majesty, I am the Demon of Murder. I go over the world creating situations from which in order to extirpate themselves people must murder. I make the poor murder the rich in order to gain riches—I make the rich murder in order to gain more riches. I make the jealous murder his rival. I make the wife murder the husband when he cannot get rid of her. I make the father murder his children so that he will not have to watch them starve. I, your honor, deserve the great position of Devil's Deputy.

DEVIL: Very good, but murder is after all such a heavy charge take all of society into consideration. My deputy must be a man of super abilities—he must be a super devil in every respect. Next.

2nd DEMON sits down. 2nd demon rises and salutes.

2nd DEVIL: I am the Demon of Ignorance. This to me is the worst of all conditions existing upon the earth. If it were not for ignorance, your honor, none of the other evils could exist. If people were not ignorant they would rise up and revolt against the conditions which hold them down. I creep into fresh young minds and keep out any enlightenment which might enter there. I hold the vast majority of humanity in a vise from which it cannot escape. Ignorance is the root of all the suffering. I, of all the demons in the hall, deserve the position of Deputy.

DEVIL: You have done good work, my fellow, but what you have done requires but little action. People are born ignorant. All you have to do is keep them that way. The Devil's Deputy must be an aggressor—a demon of action. Next.

3rd DEVIL: As Demon of Vice, I wish to call your attention to the thing which is fundamental in bringing about the downfall of all being. That thing is alcohol, your honor (holds up bottle of liquor). Ninety percent of all crimes are committed because of the influence of this vile liquid. I crawl into the bodies of human beings and create a desire for drunkenness. Even the most enlightened of all persons cannot escape me once I have made him my victim. I am ruthless. I cause man to lose his self-respect which is all important if he is to enjoy happiness. No true happiness can exist as long as I do my work, your honor. I . . .

DEVIL: (interrupting) Wait! We will listen to no such petty twaddle. I demand that my deputy be an active creator of human torture. You are a mere spooler of happiness. Take your seat. Next.

4th DEVIL: I am the Demon of Immorality. I travel about the world making people into machines controlled by their evil passions. I break the will power of my victim and render him entirely unable to resist temptations. Much human misery results from my work. No immoral practice exists that I do not have a hand in. To me belongs this great honor of being made your majesty's deputy.

DEVIL: Never! Never! Some of the happiest people in the world are immoral. Sit down! A hundred of your kind wouldn't be equal to this great task. Next.

5th DEVIL: Your majesty, the worst curse with which mankind has to deal is to live through life in a state of disease. I am the Demon of Disease. I take happy human beings and make miserable wretches out of them through disease. Little children suffer untold agonies because of me. I make death a long terrible process for the aged. How could any demon produce a more suffering than I have produced and what a demon could be better qualified and fitted to hold the position of Devil's Deputy than I.

DEVIL: But you are a weaker. During the last several hundred years the scientists of the world have wiped out existence of some of the most terrible of all diseases. I want no weaker for my deputy. Be seated. Next.

6th DEVIL: I am the Demon of Theft. People steal because of me. I create within them a desire to take things that do not belong to them which your honor must admit is a terrible crime. I make men go into bakery shops and steal bread. I make the servant girl steal the jewels from her mistress. I make little boys take apples from fruit stands. I . . .

DEVIL: Enough! These things are nothing—nothing. Do you not know that the real stealing is done by the rich who steal constantly from the poor? Sit down. These things you mention are crimes and your work amounts to nothing. Oh, will I ever find a Deputy in this bunch of nincompoops? None of you are fit for this position! Not one! Why don't you grow wings and fly up to heaven where you belong? Begone—all of you. Get out! (demons hurry away, though frightened) Oh what shall I do? Is there no Demon in all Hell who can qualify for this position? Crime, immorality, ignorance, bah! Such petty things. Such trifles. One demon should be able to take care of all those things single handed. Theft (muttering as he walks the floor) disease, vice, bah!

Attendant enters as before.
ATTENDANT: Your honor, another demon has arrived and is waiting outside. He says that he has heard of this meeting and wishes to make his report that he may be candidate for the position of Devil's Deputy.

DEVIL: (hopefully) Show him in.

Takes throne. A demon wearing a large placard "Depression" enters and salutes.

DEMON: Your royal highness, I am late, but that is because I am constantly busy these days. I am the Demon of Depression and the moment my co-workers are out in the world performing unspeakably dreadful tasks. My co-workers are Unemployment, Starvation, Eviction, Prostitution, and Suicide and each is doing his job well. We are working double time during these last four horrible years and together we have created so much misery that I cannot begin to describe or estimate it. I can but give you a few glimpses of our work. Unemployment is the most important of my assistant's. Because of his name, a lot of people like this man cannot find work.

SCENE: Man sitting on park bench, ragged and forlorn.

(This scene and those following may be presented at the side of the stage opposite the Devil's throne with the use of a spotlight and blackout. Or they may be arranged behind a drop curtain and the curtain raised before and lowered after scene as if sitting on a dais in the Devil's throne and Demons' benches, which may be arranged in front of the stage and the scenes performed on the stage, the main curtain being used to disclose them.)

Starvation in all his ghostliness visits families, thousands and thousands of families in the large cities and throughout the country, making wrecks out of body and soul not only of men and women but of children as well.

SCENE: Woman sitting by table holding an infant. On the table is an empty milk bottle which she picks up and looks at. She drops it abruptly. Her head falls on her table.

Eviction is a wicked worker. All over the land, as well as factories, workers are being evicted from their homes because of debts and mortgages which they cannot possibly pay. They are being ruthlessly kicked out into a cold heartless world without food and shelter. They must beg for food and sleep in back alleys. They are friendless.

SCENE: Man and woman walking very slowly carrying large packs on their backs. Woman carries a baby. In order to avoid starvation many young girls fall victim to the Demon of Prostitution. His ways are evil and torturous but there is no other path for this young woman to choose except starvation.

SCENE: Girl on street, flashtly dressed, poorly made-up. Drunken men come along and she plays up to him. They go off together.

Suicide is working much harder now than ever before. And he is accomplishing dastardly deeds. Many persons, men, women, and children are being killed in their victim. There is no hope for them in life. They have no jobs, no homes, no friends, so they choose this way out.

SCENE: Man drinks poison, falls and dies in convulsions.

We are doing wonderful work, your honor. These are but glimpses. I now wish to offer myself as candidate for the high position of Devil's Deputy.

Devil: I have been a better worker, my fellow. (comes down and places hand on demon's shoulder) I doubt if I shall find a more worthy candidate than yourself. Will you accept this position without further hesitation?

DEMON: With greatest pleasure.

DEVIL: Then I will place this crown upon your head.

Starts to take off crown when noise is heard at back of room. A void man enters the room and bobbles down the aisle shouting in a feeble squeaky voice, "Wait, wait. Hold on, etc." He mounts the stage and begins his recitation.

OLD MAN: I heard about this meeting and I came all the way down from Europe to attend. I have been working hard there and I would like to offer myself as candidate for another world war. I am the Demon of War and I have made alliance with Mars, the God of War. I go all over the world from one country to another spreading propaganda for war. I have put into people's heads every possible argument in favor of war. I have made the young men and boys think that war is a glorious thing—a wonderful adventure. I have given them bright uniforms and glittering equipment. Look at this soldier.

(Soldier on cot, first fleshy leg is seen and then disjointed arm is raised in the air.) He is a great hero. He thinks he is a great hero. He is right.

SCENE: Soldier on cot moaning in delirium. Nurse attempts to quiet him. He calls for his mother.

Mothers, wives and sweethearts back home are constantly waiting to hear terrible news from the front. I, the Demon of War, am responsible for a particular type of human torture, your honor.

SCENE: Woman receives telegram, opens it, reads and falls, crying: "My son, my son."

Thousands will come home hopelessly crippled and broken in body and spirit. Could anything be more horrible than this?

SCENE: Wooden-legged, one-armed soldier, haggard face, ragged clothing.

And, your honor, the next world war will be much more horrible and gruesome than the last. I have made bigger guns, higher powered explosives and all kinds of poisonous gases that will destroy whole armies at a time. The human suffering that can result from such a war is not to be estimated. It is beyond imagination. And there are a few men like this who will sit at home and make billions of dollars from the war. He will not have to go to the battlefield and will never suffer any of the agonies of war.

SCENE: Well dressed man with silk hat. He takes out a huge roll of bills and starts counting them.

And many like this for whom there will be no jobs and who must beg on the streets for every penny.

(Crippled beggar drags himself to center and holds out cup to rich man who quickly thrusts roll of bills in pocket and drops penny in cup.)

DEVIL: (bursting into horrible laugh) Did you see that? That was a penny he offered in that cup. A penny. (Laughs again and slaps war demon on the back several times.) And that man owns billions of dollars. Ha-ha-ha!

DEMON: Yes, your honor, that is part of my work. And now I have come to receive my just reward.

DEVIL: (placing crown on demon's head) You are indeed a genius, my fellow. If I had searched all through hell for the next 1000 years I could not have found a more worthy Deputy. War is indeed the most horrible of the horrors and in preparing the world for another world war you have performed the vilest of all vile deeds. I gladly give you my crown and throne and do here and now make you my Deputy, a position which you will hold throughout eternity. And now I wish to ask a favor of you. These horrible and gruesome remains of the war annuse me a great deal. Might I see them again?

DEMON: Certainly, your highness, certainly.

SCENE: Certainly, your highness, certainly.

CURTAIN
Arkansas Labor Federation Veers Left

That the 26th convention of the Arkansas State Federation of Labor, held at Pine Bluff on September 11 to 13, marked a definite shift to the left for that body, was pointed out by Lucien Koch and W. L. Cunningham, who attended the convention as delegate and alternate delegate from Commonwealth Local 191 of the American Federation of Teachers.

According to Koch and Cunningham, two trends could be distinctly linked at the convention. One was represented by guest speakers from such agencies as NRA, FERA, Subsistence Homestead Division, American Legion and the Chamber of Commerce. These speakers called upon the delegates to be patient and tolerant in their difficulty; paid lip service to the labor leadership of President Roosevelt; and spoke of the intrinsic worth to the working man of the New Deal program. A representative of the local Chamber of Commerce asserted that the "labor of this country deserves a lot of credit for not becoming Bolsheviki."

In contrast to this confusion of liberals stood the resolutions passed by the convention which spoke eloquently of the sentiment of most of the delegates. These resolutions condemned the NRA as now administered, demanded freedom for Tom Mooney, endorsed the Workmen's Unemployment Insurance Bill HR7286 and the second U.S. Congress Against War and Fascism, declared in strong language for the immediate enactment of an Arkansas compensation law, gave sympathetic support to the struggle of the farmers through sending greetings to the Polk County Relief League. Other resolutions of a more conventional character were passed.

Although 38 teachers' locals exist in the state only 2 were represented at the convention. D.T. Honderson, who was active in organizing the locals, assured the convention, however, that teacher delegates would appear in larger numbers at the next meeting of the state body.

Boulder Dam Topic of Visiting Teacher

"Boulder Dam, Epitome of Our Civilization," was the title of an informal talk given the Commonwealth group recently by Rebeca Shapiro, civics teacher in New York City Industrial High School and a member of Local 5 of the American Federation of Teachers.

Miss Shapiro visited Boulder Dam out of interest in federal projects while on a vacation trip. She obtained her information in conversations with about fifty persons, most of them workers, at Las Vegas, Boulder City and the dam site, and also from a pamphlet issued by the Boulder Dam Scenic Company, Las Vegas, Nevada. Her talk was given at the invitation of the Commonwealth group.

"Boulder Dam," she said, "which will be the highest dam ever constructed, will be a precedent to the workers who gave their lives to the building of it."

A fifty-six hour week, temperatures ranging from 100 to 127 degrees, salt in the drinking water to offset the weakening effects of sweat—these are the conditions under which about 14,000 American workers are building this tremendous government project. "The work and living conditions which obtain are startling," Miss Shapiro said, "in this period of N.R.A. philosophy and attempts. The answer seems to be the contract which was made in 1931 when the work was let out to Six Companies, Inc.

"The work is done on an eight-hour basis, three shifts a day, seven days or 56 hours a week. After about two months or so of regular work the worker may be given a lay off. But few wait for this, and take off a day every two weeks or so at their own expense.

"There is a first aid hospital in the canyon. Injuries are not infrequent, both major and minor. There are no indirect compensation acts in Nevada, other than for carbon-monoxide poisoning. Arizona has a compensation act, and lucky is he who sustains a major injury on the Arizona side. It was not possible to get information on the number of deaths or serious injuries. The estimate was thousands of both.

"The region in which Boulder Dam is located is one of the glorious phenomena of our country, the sort of surroundings to call forth the creative imagination in color and philosophy. Free unhampered people living in such environment should be able to make a fundamental contribution to society. But in sharp contrast to this possibility, one must look at the lives led by these workers on the job, the hazards they face, their remuneration for their sweat, the absence of cultural opportunities. The future claims their contribution to this masterpiece."

Drought Halves Production
Says Farm Report

Commonwealth's 1934 crop is less than half of the crop of a normal year. This is the substance of the report turned in recently by Claude Gover, Commonwealth's new farm manager.

The cost of living at Commonwealth will rise. Less food has been grown and groceries cost more. Food to fatten hogs and porkers will have to be purchased.

For a period of 109 days, beginning May 4, this locality had no rain heavy enough to lay the dust. The school had small patches of wheat and oats which did fairly well, but these crops were cut for hay and used up as feed during the drought when pasture was no good.

Claude plans to put in both wheat and oats as forage crops, conserving the scanty supply of winter feed.

The school has more livestock than ever before and indications are that fresh beef and pork, milk and butter, turnips and canned peaches will be important items on the winter menu.