LENIN MEMORIAL HELD
AT COMMONWEALTH

Director Lucien Koch and Harry Schultz, Student, Make Inspiring Talks

Lenin, as portrayed by the bourgeois press to the masses outside of Russia, was cruel, relentless, inhumane. On the other hand, Lenin may be seen, by uncritical ideologists, as a sort of superman, making history, moving through the events of the Russian revolution screen and untroubled -- a sort of Marxist god. Both of these views are, of course, inaccurate.

This was the theme of a talk by Lucien Koch at a Lenin memorial program at Commonwealth January 21. Lucien's topic was "Lenin the Man." Harry Schultz, Commonwealth student, spoke on "Lenin and America."

"The real Lenin," Lucien said, "was thoroughly human, simple in his habits, friendly, willing to admit his errors and able to learn from them. Usually his clothes were shabby. Except for a strong and intelligent face and alert eyes, he was not at all extraordinary in appearance.

"He was certainly not cruel by nature. When he found it necessary to break with a close friend and associate, he did so without hesitation, but there breaks imposed a great strain upon him. They were never easy.

"A high intelligence, a habit of scientific thoroughness, and an all-absorbing interest in the welfare of the working class -- these were his outstanding traits.

"Lenin was not an accident. He was made by history, but he was also a maker of history."

Harry Schultz, speaking on "Lenin and America," explained that while Lenin did not make any, for him, extensive study of American labor problems, he did nevertheless take a great interest in America and wrote some material on the development of capitalism.

Arkansan Is Chosen
Student President

Marion Noble, of Higginsboro, Arkansas, was selected president of the quarterly meeting held recently. He succeeds Al Lehman.

Marion has for some time held the position of industrial manager at Commonwealth. He is, in addition, a mechanic, truck driver, purchasing agent, and a singer of Arkansas ballads.

Oral Towey, new student from Philadelphia, was elected secretary. She is a graduate of the University of Washington, has done office work and has clerked in a women's ready-to-wear shop.

Higginson, Arkansas, vies with Philadelphia in the Commonwealth College officialdom. Rupert King, of that town, was elected a member of the discipline committee. Other members of the committee are Ralph Imes, of Waterloo, Indiana, chairman, and Houston Doriss, of Philadelphia.

Members of the forum committee are Libby Volpie, Rochester, N. Y., Lloyd James, St. Paul, Minn., and Jim Porter, Kansas City.

Gruilow, Former Commoner,
Writes From Moscow

The following are extracts from a letter written by Leo Gruilow, former student, who is now in Moscow:

"Moscow is interesting. I'm editing the weekly Moscow News (weekly edition of the Moscow Daily News) now, and probably in the spring I'll be travelling across the U.S.S.R. as a M.D.N. staff correspondent attached to the Weekly--according to plans, but plans change almost daily here.

"I'll never forget that ride to Harlan, and some of the nights I spent in the Arkansas hills."

Gruilow was one of the five delegates from Commonwealth who were beaten up by a mob of company gunmen in Harlan county, Kentucky, two years ago.

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STUDENT ELECTED TO EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Bob Reed, Texas Youth, Is Made an Officer of The College

Bob Reed, 20-year-old student from Clarendon, Texas, was elected a member of the executive committee of Commonwealth College at the regular annual meeting of the Commonwealth College Association in January.

Bob has been at Commonwealth for more than two years and has been a member of the Association for some time. His chief interest is writing. One of his short stories appears in this issue of the Fortnightly.

The son of a tenant farmer in West Texas, he has first-hand information on the plight of the cotton farmer. Most of his stories are based upon his experiences in the cotton fields or on the freight trains which he has hopped in search of work. One of his stories has been accepted and will soon appear in Jack Conroy's magazine, The Anvil.

At Commonwealth Bob has charge of the milch cows.

THANKS FRIENDS

BOOKS
Jack Conroy, Sidney Hook, H. L. Lewis, Leon D. Ramis

MISCELLANEOUS
G. R. Dewey

CASH
A. E. O. Munson
Elbert D. Pearson.......................... 100.00
Louis N. and Caroline H. Robinson... 25.00
Margaret F. Stotts, Carl L. Rahn J.D... 15.00
V. D. Sam Ziegler, Eugene J. Brock Misy, Godelle Loktorwitzi... 10.00
Shel Weitach, O. O. Wagner, Sr. and Jr... 2.60
Daniel Harris, Mary Franklin Fisher

Beatrice Savin, Ada Sanford, Blanche Rill, Mary E. Rowan, Mrs. J. C. F. Pauline Brown Erickson, J. Lawrence Eri

Circle 1, Yippolis, Bridgeport, Richard Botch... 1.00

Andrea Peterson......................... .50
SPOTTED HEIFER

By BOB REED

Commonwealth Student

"Hello, Nigger. By Jove, it's lot among these trees. Next time I come out I'll choose a better day," He got his straw hat from the back seat and crawled out of the car. "Let's stroll over to the tank. That's the tank over there under the tree, isn't it?"

They started walking across the field, Jake cutting down his usually swinging pace to fit the jerky stride of the other. The tank was a hollow in the black loam, dammed at one end and half filled with murky water. A skinny mule, up to his hocks in mud, was drinking, quivers running up his long neck as he swallowed. He turned and went slowly away, his tail flicking at a horsely that had settled on his haunch.

Jake was worried. He wondered what the man beside him was going to say that would affect his future. Crops were all gathered and sold. After a long year's work, Jake was glad he could say that he would need money. He had paid his debts for the past year, but he had nothing left but a hole in his pocket. If Simms rented him the place for the next year, he would have to see that his renter had the money with which to make a crop. He would take a mortgage on all of Jake's stock and tools, in return give him a small account at his own grocery store in town.

Jake was as much a part of the land as the weeds and the tawny green stalks of corn that grew from it yearly. His father had been a slave and owned and not sold. His life had been spent in work since he was born. If Simms bought it out of place before next year, he would sure hurt his chance for a mortgage.

Pretty soon they walked back toward the car. Dried cotton stalks slung to torn overlalls and creased trousers, Jake got gingerly in the cushioned seat. He was not accustomed to move from place to place through no exertion of his own. Down the half mile lane, worn smooth by the tramp of mules and the grinding of wagon wheels, they flashed faster than a horse could run.

As they neared the shanty chickens flew about anxiously, hiding in the weeds and under the house. A hound with flapping ears barked loudly. A boy, sitting on the edge of the porch, was pulling corky bars from the tail of a spotted puppy. "Got one," Sue, sitting in a crude handmade chair patching overalls. The two girls sitting at her feet followed her into the house. One of them clung to her mother's skirt. Her black shoulder showed through the hole in her dress.

The car seemed out of place before the crude house. Its gleaming polish made the shanty seem more dingy; with rags stuffed in the window, cracks in the walls, and the reed sagging as if it were about to collapse. The shanty, open to let in air, exposed within barren ugliness.

The two men walked to the barn. "Guess I'll see you through, Jake," He attempted jovially, "But I can't put out much money. You'll have to skimp. You shouldn't need much money for food."

"Yassuh, Boss, that right. They would need money for food, but I couldn't tell the boss that right at the start. Last spring when he had wanted to plant a large garden the boss could say only one thing, "Cotton, more cotton; plant all the land you can in cotton." Cotton meant a little more rent money for his pockets.

"Does he expect us to eat cotton?" Jake questioned in his mind.

"It's goin' to be a hard winter. Boss. The shucks was heavy on the corn this year. Tha's a mighty sure sign. I am more looking for it to be disagreeable."

"Yes, that's true; but think of the many people who are out of work and have no place to stay. You should be glad you don't have to worry." Jake then did not have the nerve to ask for money to repair the roof.

"It won't take much money to run you. Times are too hard for me to put out very much good cash to niggers." He drew out his notebook. "Let's make a list of the things you have to mortgage."

Jake drew a long breath. He had known all along that this was coming. Should he tell about the heifer? Sue did not want him to. Would it be dishonest to the boss? It would sure hurt Sue to have her heifer mortgaged.

The calf had been given to Sue by a white neighbor in return for three days' work digging sweet potatoes. Its mother had died and the calf was so weak and small that no one had
she'll be over in his shocks if you don't get her out right away. Though I'd tell you. He's a mighty cranky old man, you know." He prodded the mules with a black jack pole and they shuffled forward, their ears wagging as they walked.

Jake shot a glance at the boss. Had he heard? He was pinching the end off a cigar. He paused and looked questioningly at Jake.

"Thought you had all your stock listed here. I don't have down any spotted heifers." He held the notebook in his hand and squinted his small eyes at Jake. "Not trying to put something over on me are you?" Jake fastened the gate and turned. He dug the worn end of his shoe into the ground and avoided the eyes of the other. He swallowed hard. "Looks like a nigger can't have nothing and they ain't no use to try," he thought. He looked up and faced the other squarely.

"Boss, there is a heifer, but it belongs to my wife." He knew the uselessness of that argument.

"You're keeping a cow on this place without me getting a lien on it?" His face flushed red. "Whadya think this is, nigger? I don't care if she belongs to the president of the United States; anything that stays on this place is mortgaged to me. After I rented you the place and loaned you money, you try to slip something like that by me." He puffed furiously at the cigar. "I don't suppose any nigger can be trusted after he gets out of your sight."

"Boss, ah'm mighty sorry but, you see, it's Sue's heifer. She worked out for it and had to raise it on a nursing bottle. It was so sickly, then grew up and put on so much that I want to keep it free; so she can have something that is hers without mortgages on it or anything. I didn't want to tell a lie, but I feel like Sue ought to have the right to keep one little heifer."

Simms sat down on the running board of the car. He wiped his glasses on his shirt sleeve and then adjusted them again above his nose. He chewed the cigar vigorously for a while.

"Tell you what I'll do, nigger. You know you don't deserve to stay on my place after liking that. You give me a mortgage on the heifer and I'll let me stay. Not many men would trust you after that. Can't let you have any more money than we planned, though." "Boss, I didn' mean no lie. My ol' daddy tol' me never—"

"Don't know what else you'd call it. Guess you're as honest as most niggers—and that ain't saying much."

"Dee deep inside, Jake was angry. No use in the boss rubbing it in. But he didn't say anything. It doesn't do for negro renters to talk back to the landlords. After all, if he didn't stay on that farm he might never be able to rent another. "Sue'll take it hard," he said. He bet she was in the house right then wondering about it. "Yeah, you're right, Boss. I sure want to stay here."

"You're damn lucky, nigger. Not many men would be big-hearted as I am. But I'm warning you, one more trick like that and you're done." He looked at his watch. "I've been fooling around here now until I'm going to vote for an ex-boss town."

Two tiny black heads protruded from the glassless window as the machine whirled away in a cloud of sand. The boy who had been playing with the pup started running down the path towards the barn. About half way he had to stop and pull sand burrs from his bare feet. The ragged overall he wore were made from the remains of an old cotton sack.

Jake flung his straw hat onto the porch and walked on into the kitchen.

CLASS DISTINCTION

Sam Liske, former Commonwealth student and now a Kansas City attorney, has applied to the United States Supreme Court for "leave to practice as a poor person."

To practice in the Supreme Court, an attorney must pay a fee of $15, must travel to Washington, D. C., and be presented in open court by a member of that bar.

"To require a $15 fee for admission to practice, plus requiring the applicant to travel to Washington, D. C., over a thousand miles, merely to be presented in open court by oral motion, where the applicant is a poor person and where there is no person interested who is able to pay or secure the costs, is the status of this case, imposes a burden that is class distinction, and, as such, un-American," Liske declares in his suggestions supporting his application.

"Such requirements amount to saying that unless the lawyer is wealthy, he cannot practice before this court, regardless of how capable an attorney he may be in all the other courts of the land."

Liske explains that since he does not represent big corporations nor wealthy clients, he cannot under the present economic system, earn a living, and that his mother is required to work in a sweatshop to support him.

This requirement, he declares, "guarantees that the only property qualifications, which, in too many cases, in the majority that determines the interpretation of the law, not only of the practitioners, but also of those practitioners who are elevated to the bench, with their property prejudices in favor of the minority against the majority."
WITH MALICE AFORETHOUGHT

by Clay FolkS

The soft-coal miners of the Middle North—particularly those of West Virginia, Illinois, and Old Kentucky—have for years been regularly subjected to punishments of widely-varying degrees of brutality for their recalcitrance to excessive exploitation at the hands of their masters. But these men have their organizations and with their press through which they can at least give utterance to their grievances, expose to the world the atrocities perpetrated against them, and win some measure of public sympathy. Likewise, the textile workers of the country are exploited for: about all there is in them and they, too, are brutally punished when they show any disposition to resist the abuses to which their masters subject them to submit with ox like docility. But they, too, have their organizations and their press through which they can give voice to their grievances, publish to the world the most flagrant outrages committed against them, and consequently win some public sympathy and support.

Substantially the same may be said for organized workers generally. All of them, speaking broadly, have maintained their friends and foes; have been able within a few hours to compel some attention from the civilized world, whenever they were being wantonly punished by their masters. They have had the "messengers of death." The share-croppers of the Cotton Belt have had none.

Of all the exploited and degraded workers of this unfortunate country, the lot of the share-croppers of the Cotton Belt must, by all odds, be the worst.

Without organization; without a press; without a single champion of any prestige or power; without even the powers of articulation except the most pitifully inadequate, and with 'none so poor to do them reverence,' these victims of decaying Capitalism struggle along without hope of economic amelioration; without prospect of any social standing "in this world;" indeed, without rational hope for anything which modern intelligence desires. In short, the only hope left them is that ancient, absurdly superstitious hope of migrating to that mythical land in the skies. (And they have to die before they can do that!)

Talk of the prospects of American agricultural workers being reduced to the status of peasants! Millions on the miserable cotton plantations of the South have already been kicked and shoved far below the line occupied by "the peasantry" of China; yet even poet-ravished, so cheerily. No poet can sing of these hungry, hook-wormy creatures except in mournful lamentations and piteous jeremiads.

But generalities—ever the glittering ones—"can't quite satisfy the mind though to demand real and exact facts. Just what, then, are some of the most salient and damning facts concerning the situation and condition of the share-croppers in the Cotton Belt?

Well, sir, to begin with, these workers, knowing no caste or occupation except forty acres and a mule, propertyless, naked and empty-handed, in their dumb plea to the world: a chance to live. They, performed in excelsis, fell into the only rut open to them; that is to say, they become "my men" to a voracious phalanx of landlords and bankers and, incidentally, the object of the most despicable prac-tices of petty, penny-picking merchants. (The latter take all the canned copper coins contemptuously left to the poor fellows by their landlords and bankers.) By a custom which seems to be universal, the "cropper" is bound to agree to work (and usually often tacitly bound to have his wife and children work for half of the crop he is able with nature's help to produce. He is expected and practically compelled to make the crop on prison fare and often with mere makeshift equipment. Traditionally he plants nothing but cotton; cotton, cotton, clear up to the vast and decayed walls of his drab and decaying shack. In the fall, when the cotton is picked and ginned, the landlord takes the bales in hand and sells them. Then his business instincts assert themselves. He blandly tells the ragged "cropper" that the cotton brought ten cents when, actually, he had sold it for twelve, or sometimes ten cents a pound. The ragged "cropper" then, with or without a whimper, is swindled into accepting something less than half the product of his labor.

But hold, ragged "cropper!!" You didn't expect to get home with your raggedy, scraggly, ragged children with even that did you? Ah, no. The ragged "cropper" knows that he owes all of that, and usually more besides, to the landlord or to the landlord's accomplice, or expo- sition. If the landlord runs a large farm, in one way, of course, the "cropper" was forced to buy at that whindery the sorry sow-

bely he used for meat; in which case he must inevitably, and from year to year, sink deeper into debt.

Of course, it can be maintained that the "croppers" immediate plunderers are, economically speaking, compelled to play the role of "victims" for the Bigger and Better business men above them. Granted. But that only accentuates the utter hopelessness of his condition. It indicates something of how silly it is to expect any capitalistic AAA's or any other form of beneficent, to set the "cropper" up solidly on his feet and make a man of him. Man of him? Oh, yes, he's a man alright—of the type Ed Markham once showed us—and made us shudder.

Books We Need

The Commonwealth library has been built up almost entirely from donations of books. The school has little money to spend upon books, or any other article, therefore the following books are needed very much at the present time and cannot be purchased. Friends are urged to doate these volumes:

Socialism and Co-operation by L. Wolff; Finland, a nation of co-operation, Landmarks of Science, Socialism, and Social Betterment by L. Wolff; Democracy and American History by F. J. Turner; Landmarks of Socialism; an Anarchistic Anti- Disequilibrium by Angell; Housing Question by Knebel, etc.; Liberty and Labor, an Appeal to Unorganized Men; Poverty of Philosophy by Marx; Class Struggles in France by Marx; Selected Essays by Marx; Critique of the Gauth Program by Marx; Critiques of the Social-Democratic Program by Marx; Socialism and Philosophy by Lands; Evolutionary Socialism by Bernstein; Life and Teachings of Marx by Beer; History of the First International in America by Schleier; Need of Reform in Germany; Place of Profit by Ward; Machines and Men in Russia by L. Fichte; The Russian Revolution; Vol. 3 by Trotsky; Red Victory by Ella Winters; Barricades by C. C. Lewis; American Youth, 1890-1920 by Marx; Socialism and Power by V. I. Lenin; Any books and pamphlets on the Zin International; Any books on cataloguing and any reference books such as Whetstone, West in America; History of American Libraries; Educational and Bibliographical Directories.

Financial Report Free

Any friend of Commonwealth College who is interested in the financial condition of the institution and in the industrial work done here may have, free, a printed statement of the treasurer for the year 1933. This statement, condensed from the regular financial report submitted to the Commonwealth College Association, shows the cash receipts, cash disbursements, the balance sheet, the cash operating expenses, and the number of hours of labor that went toward maintenance. It also has in great part a form a comparison of 1933 receipts, disbursements, maintenance expenses and cash operating expenses with those of 1932.

Memorial

Continued From Page One

italism in American agriculture. "Land-award against the extremely flexible tactics of the American bourgeois," Harry declared.