Little Mag. What Now?

Little mag, a press, to the right, little mags to the left, onward they volley and thunder. A new John Reader, Midland Left, 'address all Miss. to Rebecca Pitts, 5025 Julian Ave., Indianapolis, Ind.' Its big New York brother, The Partisan Review, starts the New Year right, that is, left, with CP support and enlarged to 96 pages of Farrell, Le Sueur, Seaver, Gide, Frank, etc. Kosmos No. 7 advances publication date to Jan.-Feb. Jay Harrison remarks, "Your notes on the spurious 'personal' letters emanating from publishers' offices is timely. All who have read book Ms. by newcomers haven't taken a single one. They read 'em and return 'em while the author weeps.' But in this indelicate matter of "mimsywhimsy" in the current Little Mag., What Now?, the editor (in the same old gab) says, "I know something of your work and would like to know more. I hope you will remember us when the book is finished. The catch is, I'm the only unpublished author in the world who hasn't even put Chap. 1. to paper yet, and can't intend to. H. H. Lewis is going to paper his cow shed so he can tell everybody he's got his cow shed papered with birds from editor publishers." Harold Emery, Newlano, La., starting radical monthly news-mag for teachers, Educational Front, Sen. Carlton communicates: "I just got a copy of Prose, 37 Maltby Ave., New Haven, Conn., containing a little gem of mine called 'Ahl/Youth, Youth!' This bi-monthly is very badly mimeographed and my contribution to it is a lousy little bit of my whimsy. 'Mazel-Tov' by Al Lehman of Commonwealth appears in the current Literary Workshop. A new one goes over the top, Hilltop, High Springs, Florida. For a really little mag to get a bird's-eye quiet of Dec. 30, 30 Mt. Vernon St., Newport, R.I., but, to offset this, The Lance, Dayton, O., admits that it's 'America's Largest Hand-set and Hand-printed Magazine.' In celebrating its first birthday with an "MUSEUM OF SOCIAL CHANGE" [PAGE 4]

COMMONWEALTH COLLEGE
FORTNIGHTLY

VOL. XI, No. 1 MENA, ARKANSAS, JANUARY 1, 1935

Little Student Body for Winter

The winter quarter at Commonwealth began December 31 and although not all the students have arrived as the Fortnightly goes to press, indications are that the student body will number over 30. This is a considerable increase over the enrollment of the fall quarter.

When all the new students have arrived the Commonwealth dormitories will be full. During the holiday week teachers and maintenance members were shifted about and crowded together to make room for the newcomers.

I. L. G. W. U. Sends Students

The International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union has established two scholarships at Commonwealth. The union will designate two students each of whom is to attend the school for the full nine months.

Large Grant Given to College

A $750 grant from the Mrs. Leonard Elmhirst Committee brings the total returns of Commonwealth's financial drive to more than $2000. This amount, together with money yet to be raised and an increased number of student tuitions, will enable the school with strict economy to operate efficiently until the next harvest, according to an estimate by Charlotte Moskowitz, school treasurer.

Under the item "money to be raised" Charlotte includes a $500 grant from another fund. If this grant does not come through the financial situation will still be quite acute.

So many persons have contributed within the past two months that it is impossible to publish all their names in the Fortnightly.

Einstein Sponsors C.C. Student

Albert Einstein, world-famous mathematician, is paying the tuition fee of a young friend of his, Paul Beek of New York City, to Commonwealth for the winter quarter.

Einstein is now at Princeton, having left Fascist Germany some time ago. He became interested in Commonwealth recently and approves of the work being done here.
The Commonwealth Library

The college library has benefited by a number of additions and changes during the past year. Two new tiers of book stacks have been built, increasing the shelf capacity about sixty percent; one of these tiers is reserved for the steadily growing files of newspapers and periodicals. All the books have been reshelved and are so distributed as to allow for expansion. Three badly needed new magazine racks have been built by the college carpenter and placed in service.

During the Christmas recess the floors and tables and benches were thoroughly scrubbed and the floors oiled. This was something of a radical step, as although the whole building is swept and dusted regularly, no one on the campus could remember when the floors had been scrubbed last.

About 475 new books, nearly all of them gifts, were added to the library in 1934. During the summer quarter several hundred out-of-date, worn-out, unneeded duplicate copies and other unnecessary volumes were removed from the shelves to make room for newer and more useful material. Recently the whole pamphlet file was examined and pruned of out-of-date or irrelevant material. The remaining five bushel baskets of pamphlets and leaflets no longer needed were removed to the store-room to allow space for newer items. Approximately 125 volumes were recataloged and placed in more appropriate classifications.

The card catalog, which has been steadily growing along with the book collection, was strengthened and made a more convenient reference tool by the removal of many hundreds of cards representing books that had been withdrawn or lost, by the insertion of numerous cross references, and by changing a number of subject headings.

Reference work has been improved by the presence of a 1929 unabridged dictionary, which replaced the old 1912 edition that has done duty for so long. Several other reference books were also added. The periodical collection was increased by the addition of many of the "little magazines".

The library workroom, which has wandered all over the campus during the past year or two, has finally found a permanent location in the Lab, next to the classroom. Cataloging work has been made much easier by the acquisition of several long needed classification manuals and rule books.

Henry Black, who served as cataloger last fall and winter, returned to the campus in late October and has since been in charge of the library. He is assisted by Mildred Price, imperialist teacher.

The library is forced to depend on gifts for practically all of its new books. Especially needed at this time are the following:


Two special needs may be noted. Our subscription to Harpers Magazine has expired and the magazine is badly missed; the gift of a year subscription would be greatly appreciated. Also there is needed, to complete our small collection of cataloging tools, a copy of Introduction to Cataloging and the Classification of Books by Margaret Mann.

Ben Low to Direct Dramatics

Ben Low, who came to Commonwealth recently from Llano Colony, will have charge of Commonwealth labor dramatics during the winter quarter.

Ben, in the nine years of his hectic theatrical career, has done everything from third-rate vaudeville to Shakespeare. His most recent affiliation was with the Phila. JRC Theatre Group in the capacity of director. He is convinced of the sterility of the bourgeois theatre and thinks that the only hope for the theatre lies in the growth of a vital and dynamic Workers Theatre.

Invitation to Expelled Students

The students recently expelled from U.C.L.A. for their radical opinions and the students kicked out of Louisiana State for voicing their opinions of Huey Long have been invited to apply for admission to Commonwealth.

Students and teachers of Commonwealth have united in voicing their indignation at the growing vigilante and fascist oppression in American universities, and they promise that any individual at this college who attempts to prevent the free expression of radical opinion will be instantly expelled.

On to Washington for Social Insurance

Ten delegates from Arkansas and eastern Oklahoma will go in a Commonwealth truck to the National Congress for Unemployment and Social Insurance to be held in Washington January 5 and 7. Bernie Stevens, mainaining worker, Charley Rehmer, student from Colorado, and Ray Koch, teacher, will make up the Commonwealth delegation.

Arrangements to send this delegation were made December 22 at Fort Smith, Arkansas. The members of the delegation are Ralph Fox, student at this college who has benefited by a cataloging tool; Mildred Price, imperialist teacher; and Helen Rehmer, student from Colorado.

The conference endorsed the Workers Unemployment and Social Insurance Bill, which will be brought before Congress during the coming session. The conference also came out for workers representation on bodies administering relief in this section.

Arrangements were made to set up a permanent united-front committee to work for more satisfactory relief administration.

Labor Journalist to Teach Here

Marvin Sanford, who has been publishing a number of little magazines, including Anvil, Blast, Kosmos and others, at Llano Colony in Louisiana, will come to Commonwealth early in January to join the permanent staff. Mrs. Sanford is now at the school. Marvin will teach the course in labor journalism. He has been interested in labor papers for many years and has founded and edited a number of them. In 1930 he founded the Cooperative Herald of Oakland, California.

For reference material he has one of the two best collections of American labor journalism in the world—a collection which he has built up during the past fifteen years.

Koch Completes Trip

Lucien Koch, director of Commonwealth, returned to the school December 25 after a three months' tour of the East and Middle West.

His last stops were Minneapolis, where he spoke on the subject "Can War and Fascism Be Averted?" at the Liberal Club; Des Moines, where he spoke at the Unitarian Church under the auspices of the Des Moines League Against War and Fascism; Kansas City, where he spoke at a meeting of the Saturday Lunch Club; and Topeka, where he spoke at the Unitarian Church.
First Farm Course Concluded

Commonwealth's first short farm course ended December 18 with a lecture by Raymond Koch summarizing the results of the various teachers and students who participated. Bob Reed, student maintenance worker from Clarenden, Texas, took charge of the course. It is planned to hold a similar course during the last three weeks of each semester for those students who are interested in farm organization and have grasped the fundamentals of economics and labor history.

TWO NEW ASSOCIATION MEMBERS

Two student maintenance workers, Claude Gower of Annapolis, Ill., and Al Lehman of New York City, were recently admitted to the Commonwealth College Association.

Al Lehman has charge of the publicity department during Clarice Cunningham's absence. He is also a member of the wood crew. His chief interests are writing and organizational work.

Claude came to Commonwealth as a student in October, 1935. He is now manager of the college farm.

WHAT IS COMMONWEALTH COLLEGE?

Commonwealth College is a non-traditional labor school which has as its function the training of young men and women for active service in some militant organization in the labor movement.

Its courses, which include economics, history, labor problems, proletarian culture, creative writing, public speaking, journalism, psychology, etc., are taught from a point of view partisan to the working class.

Most of the food consumed at the college is grown on the college farm. The school has its own laundry, cannery, print shop, etc. All work is done communally by members of the group. The school pays no salaries or wages. The tenants receive only their maintenance allowance.

Students pay $40 tuition per quarter term (three months) and receive their board and room in exchange for a certain number of hours per week during fall, winter, and spring terms, and 15 hours per week during the summer term. In some cases, in the garden, office, library, etc.

Commonwealth College is located near Mena, Arkansas, in the Ouachita Mountains, the southernmost range of the Ozarks.

FLAT TIRE

SOME COMMENT ON THE STORY BY BOB REED

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following paragraphs are extracts from reviews appearing in the latest issue of The Literary Workshop on Flat Tire

Jack Conroy
Author of THE DISINHERITED

Bob Reed's story has the flavor that many bourgeois writers seek but never find. Why? Because it embodies two elements that are essential to a successful story of proletarian background. The first is intimate acquaintance with the lives and mental reactions of the characters, the second is social direction and awareness.

... Bob Reed has been a cotton picker and a farmer; he's still a farmer, and talks with and lives with farmers daily. He knows that they think about their bellies now and then, and to write about them faithfully, you must consider belly-hunger as well as the sex-hunger and soul-hunger we have read about time and again, world without end, amen.

Why is Bob Reed's story more important than, say, one about a gigolo? Because most of us don't care what becomes of the gigolo, no matter how prettily or eloquently the author writes about him. In contrast, there are the clash of social forces, the undertones of battle, a basic dramatic situation, and everything the movie need but seldom find telescoped in Bob's tale of the impoverished cotton farmer and the pampered son of a banker. No minor tootling on the erotic sife.

So I'm not going to "criticize" Reed's story. He knows what he's about, and if he's wise he'll go his own way and not pay much attention to criticism.

"Capitalism is degenerating in the domain of culture," says Serge Dinamov. "Its artists either defend it by means of crude and false art, or they expose its decay by means of relatively great art. The pathos of doom, this is what moves the bourgeoisie art forward. But this forward movement is heading for catastrophe, for the end, for destruction...."

The best writers are seeking new foundations for their creation; they gradually go to other positions; they quit the bourgeois soil, and, parting with their petty-bourgeois illusions, they join the ranks of the fighters for revolution....

The moral is: look around you and see if you can find something new to write about. So many times have men and women died for love and worms have eaten them.

Granville Hicks
Literary Editor NEW MASSES and author of THE GREAT TRADITION

... Bob Reed's story, Flat Tire, is a fine piece of work. In four pages he has created three unmistakably real characters. Long John is a particularly impressive creation. Moreover, Reed has shown these characters in what I regard as a representative and important situation. The story beautifully illustrates a point that Marxist critics often make, namely, that the class struggle reaches down into the smallest details of life. A farmer refuses to help a rich boy change a tire; that is all; and in that refusal we see the barrier between the two classes.

Reed is a good writer, and I am eager to see more of his work. In line after line he shows us how well he knows Long John and the life that has shaped him. He is, moreover, economical; he knows when he has got his effect, and he refuses to add a single unnecessary word. I am grateful to The Literary Workshop for publishing Flat Tire.

I say all this, and yet I must confess that I am not deeply stirred by Flat Tire. It seems to me fragmentary and marginal. Its implications are far-reaching, but the incident itself is, as of course Reed knew, a little trivial.

Well, why not? It is the implications that matter; that I admit. Must the writer be always portraying strikes and demonstrations? Certainly not. As an incident in a novel, this would be fine. What worries me is that so many young writers, the overwhelming majority of our best proletarian authors, are, like Bob Reed, dealing with these marginal incidents. On the one hand, I am delighted that they can reveal so clearly the omnipresence of the class struggle. On the other hand, I can't help wondering why they stay on the outskirts of the battle when there are so many dramatic events going on in the midst of it.

You see, it is largely a matter of emphasis. If all our writers were describing picket-lines and hunger marches and food riots, I should be the first one to say that some of them ought to be taking a look at the less obvious aspects of the struggle. But as it is, the emphasis is all falling to another way, and I want at least to raise the question why....
Commonwealth’s Winter Curriculum Continued from Page One

and its Relation to GreatBritain, Nationalism in India, The British Labor Movement, and The Spanish Insurrection.

Marxian Economics I, taught by Bill Cunningham, will take up Contradictions in the Capitalist Mode of Production, The Commodity, Value, and Profit, and Petty-Bourgeois Commodity Production. Surplus Value, Constant and Variable Capital, Productive Relations in the Soviet Union, Wages, General Law of Capitalist Accumulation, etc. The course will also include material on the Marxian Theory of the State and Historical Materialism.

Marxian Economics II, by the same teacher, will take up Wages, Distribution of Surplus Value, Economic Crises, Capitalism in the Epoch of Imperialism, and Communist Economies. Problems will be taught by Lucien Koch. It begins with a study of European conditions that led to the settlement of America and comes down to date. The development of the labor movement will be studied not in isolation but in relation to its broader economic and social setting. The search after the causes for the particular trend of the movement (or movements) in the U.S. will be uppermost, and the role of the political parties as well as the role and emergence of the trade union movement will be taken up.

Public Speaking, by the same teacher, although primarily a practice course in speech making, will give some attention to the theory, problems and technique of effective public speaking and debating. Brief instruction in parliamentary procedure will be included. The subject matter for talks will be relevant to the problems of the workers and farmers. Of outstanding importance will be the collective criticism, by the class, of each individual presentation.

Fascism and Social Revolution will be taught by Henry Black. It reviews the maturing of capitalism and its rapid decay since the world war; the futility of the various attempts to end the depression by orthodox legal means. Fascism is considered as the final resort of a desperate capitalist class. Development of Fascism in Germany, Austria, Italy and the Balkans, and of Fascist tendencies in England and the U.S. will be taken up. Special emphasis is given to American conditions.

Effective Writing, by Rose Brown, is intended for students who need training in syntax, grammar, etc.

Creative Writing, by Bob Brown, Irene Merrill and Bill Cunningham, is planned for students who are approaching maturity. It may reasonably hope to begin contributing to the little magazines before the course is concluded. The course will be for the most part individual literary coaching.

Labor Dramatics, by Ben Low, is "extra-curricular" in that any member of the group may participate at any time in the presentation of labor plays.

Charlotte Moskovitz will teach typing to those students who can show that they have immediate need for it in their work in the labor movement.

Each Wednesday night Mildred Price conducts a "A Hi-monthly of the varied attemp to end the depression by orthodox legal means. Fascism is considered as the final resort of a desperate capitalist class. Development of Fascism in Germany, Austria, Italy and the Balkans, and of Fascist tendencies in England and the U.S. will be taken up. Special emphasis is given to American conditions.

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