COLLEGE DRAMA GROUP FORMED
Collective Planning Features Production of Play

The Commonwealth Experimental Theatre, which has been organized this quarter by Ben Low in connection with the college's drama activity, is one of the most stimulating projects of the school year. The work of the Experimental Theatre is carried on, outside the regular curriculum, by ten students and is an intensive training course in the production of plays, from the writing to the actual performance. The primary purpose of the project is to give the students a thorough knowledge of workers' theaters so that they may organize labor-drama groups when they leave Commonwealth.

The group is now working on its first play, which will be presented to the Commonwealth audience near the end of the quarter. The theme of the play, the menace of censorship was determined collectively. The general treatment and the broad outlines of the plot structure were also decided by the whole group. The writing is being done by one member and will be submitted to the other nine, discussed and rewritten. Production will go forward under the leadership of three members particularly interested in directing.

Stage effects and lighting are being given much attention, and the Commonwealth stage is receiving a complete overhaul. A new system of lighting is being installed.

LECTURERS DATED FOR SUMMER SESSION
14 Notables Scheduled To Supplement Courses

The speakers who will add tremendously to the effectiveness of the Commonwealth Summer Session, and dates of their lecture series, are listed below:

- David Englestein, July 1-14
- James T. Farrell, July 1-18
- Jack Conroy, July 1-20
- Ward Rodgers, July 15-28
- Marshall Lakey, July 15-28
- Ellenor Risley, July 20
- John Gould Fletcher, July 22-28
- Carl Haeusler, July 26-August 1
- Ben Batkin, August 3 and 4
- Bill Reich, August 4-18
- Winifred Chappell, Aug. 10-Sept. 8
- Charles J. Finger, August 15
- Ella Reeve Bloor, Aug. 26-Sept. 8

Mother Bloor, in making final arrangements for her sojourn at Commonwealth, writes: "The dates are 6-k. You may not know it, but I have been one of your boosters for a time. . . . My farm organizer husband, Andrew Ombolt, and I may drive to Mena, making a tour desired by farmers in Kansas, Nebraska, etc. If you know of special places in Oklahoma and Arkansas where I should stop and speak enroute let me know." (Oklahoma and Arkansas, take note! The opportunity to hear Ella Reeve Bloor and Andrew Ombolt is a rare one and we hope that all interested organizations will communicate with us immediately so that they may be put on the Bloor-Ombolt schedule.)

Ward Rodgers, who is now touring the country on behalf of the Southern Tenant Farmers' Union, writes us: "I will be happy to be with you in July. I am to speak at the National Convention of the N.A.A.C.P. between June 25 and 30, therefore I can go from there to Commonwealth unless something extraordinary comes up. The situation is

FIRST ALL-SOUTHERN MEET AT CHATTANOOGA
Commonwealth Represented At Conference for Civil Rights

Three students and one teacher went as delegates from the United Front on the campus to the All-Southern Conference for Civil and Trade Union Rights, held at Chattanooga, Tennessee, May 25.

The students are Joseph Gonzalez from Massachusetts, Charles Rehmer from Colorado, and Oral Fauls from Arkansas. Raymond Koch is the faculty representative. Funds raised by the United Front Committee helped to pay the expenses of one more delegate from the share-croppers of Arkansas.

The purpose of this conference is five-fold: (1) immediate repeal and defeat of all existing and proposed sedition and anti-labor laws; (2) recognition of the bona fide labor unions, and of their rights to organize, strike and picket; (3) against lynching, and for the disbanding of all armed fascist bands; (4) for the freedom of all victims of capitalist persecution; (5) and for the right of all citizens, white and Negro, to vote without payment of poll tax, and abolition of all other discriminatory and coercive measures preventing the exercise of political rights.

Plans for this conference were laid several months ago by a cross-section of the Southern labor movement. The sponsoring board includes Howard Kester, Grace Lumpkin, Southern Tenant
Commonwealth Courses

EDITOR'S NOTE: Beginning with this issue, Commonwealth teachers will give a description of the way in which the courses they teach are conducted, and a resume of the material dealt with.

Carl Parker, who outlines below the work and objectives of the course in Farm Problems and Organization, has had years of experience with farm organizations all over the country.

Farm Problems and Organization

CARL PARKER, INSTRUCTOR

ANNOUNCING the most serious of Commonwealth students are those taking the course in farm problems. The class is a large one—a dozen regular students plus a group of auditors—but not a "bunch-warming" in the lot. Lively discussions follow hours of research—the Statistical Abstract and other volumes, which to the uninitiated appear dull and even forbidding, become fountains of knowledge to the students. Books, charts, index numbers, assume the importance that a hammer, level and saw do to a carpenter—tools to work with, tools for a big job.

The position of the farmer in capitalist society is analyzed. Who is the "farmer"? Is he the planter who owns thousands of acres, whose basis of operation is the exploitation of scores of croppers and day laborers? Is he the cropper who is vitally chained to the land with links of rent, taxes and debt? As many "gradations of rank" are found in the country-side as in the cities. There are the rich and the poor, exploiters and exploited, the favored few and the forgotten ten millions. It is hardly necessary to state here that the farm problems studied in the course are the problems of the great masses of ruined and "surplus" farmers.

The AAA and its accompanying legislation has certainly placed many vital problems before the rank and file of the farm population, the most immediate of these being the problem of keeping the farmer on his farm. The economic disfranchisement which such legislation, coupled with the natural disaster of the drouth, has meant for the poor and small farmer, for the sharecropper and the agricultural laborer, has been the spur behind many local and regional farm conferences, and has resulted in the growth of the rank-and-file farm organizations. The relief struggles, eviction fights, and strikes of the city workers are showing the farmers that this must also be their way. The farmers are waking up. Once regarded as a conservative part of our people, they are now dispensing with illusions (including their own) and are coming forward with inspiring militant struggles for relief, for crop and feed loans, against evictions, and the like. And with their increasing awareness of their oppressed position in society, the farmers recognize more than ever before the need for farm organizers, equipped with theoretical as well as practical organizational training.

It is the special purpose of the Farm Problems class to train such organizers. Already the advantages of this course are being recognized by many farmers and farm organizations from Minnesota to Texas, students having come to Commonwealth College for this course in particular. But the class is not made up of farmers alone, and the visitor is just as apt to meet there a worker from New York or California as a farmer from South Dakota or Arkansas.

The problem of the farmer is part and parcel of the problem of the working class. Neither the workers nor the farmers can emancipate themselves without the co-operation of the other. It is in this light that the subject is studied, and this accounts for the unusual interest in this class. To the question: "Can the farmer meet these special problems and conditions that confront him?" the Commonwealth student's answer is: "Armed with facts and organizational strength...Yes!"

Society Notes

THOSE of you who saw the play "Rain" have an idea how we Arkan sawyers have been feeling the last couple of weeks. If you remember, the very first thing you did when you came out of the theatre was to pull up your coat collar, even though the moon was shining one hundred per cent.

Paradoxes came wholesale in Arkansas. Last year at this time the Wonder State was just getting ready to usher in one of the worst drouths the Southwest ever experienced. So this year Old Man Pluvius is working overtime.

Each morning for some time now Stella Matthews, our student laundress, has been cocking a wistful eye heavenward. Invariably she gets it full of rain. But the girl is a Minnesota die-hard, for she never fails to see to it that the laundry boiler has its steam up and the water piping hot. Between rain drops a sheet is hung on the line, but back it comes. And Stella is more determined than ever. When the old sun finally comes out Commonwealth will see the laundry commissar doing a three-week's plan in three days.

The rain hasn't completely drowned us out yet, but Mill Creek looks very much like the Mississippi. Ambitious swimmers are somewhat surprised to find themselves down in the creek about a quarter of a mile immediately after a swallow dive. And they are doubly surprised to find they just can't swim back—and the simplest method of return to their towels is to crawl out on the bank and trudge through yards of underbrush. It is hard on a man's bare legs.

Our agrarian commission is having its hands full. We told you an issue or two ago about the excellence of the Commonwealth farm. It is the best for miles around, and already producing for the college table. But this abundance of rain is making the farm a problem. Because the only possible way to traverse the plowed acres is with seven-league boots, and the same rain which is making the vegetables and corn grow is giving the weeds and cockle-burrs their day.

But as this goes to press a bright sun is peeping out from behind a flurry of white clouds. It almost flooded our agricultural aspirants, who have been foiled by a few hours of sun before. But they are taking no chances. Right this minute Claude and Charlie are oiling up the cultivator—and if the sun persists, modern machinery and man power will have their day, and weeds will be no more.

The most reliable weather bureau at Commonwealth is Clay Fulks. But he
has decided to take off the title and donate it to Maude, the mule. For the past three weeks now it has done nothing but rain—and we are beginning to believe one needn't be a weather prophet to know what it's going to do tomorrow. Clay slipped up one day and prophesied a pretty day. It turned out pretty wet.

**Students' Experiences**

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** The following article is the first of a series by Commonwealth students dealing with their personal experiences. Commonwealth students come from all over the country with varied backgrounds, as these articles indicate.

Betty Bogner is from New York City and is a member of the Food Workers' Industrial Union. She worked for six months in the Soviet Union during 1932.

**Soviet Youth on Parade**

**BETTY BOGNER**

As soon as I arrived in Moscow I got busy looking up friends to show me the "real" life of Soviet Russia. I politely rejected the Intourist guide's offer to conduct me on a conventional tour and instead set out to locate my friends. I was told that I would have to take a street car and then change for another. After considerable effort I managed to squeeze into an overcrowded car. About ten minutes later the car stopped and the conductress announced that we would stop here until the Physical Culture Parade was over. I had no idea what this parade signified and when I heard that it would take at least a few hours I was really annoyed, annoyed as Americans can become when things don't move according to their standards. However, I had no choice, all vehicles having stopped. The entire city seemed to have ceased its normal course of activities. All that mattered was the Parade.

I climbed out of the street car and was caught up by the stream of people forming lines on the sidewalk. Each minute the crowd became greater until every available space on the sidewalk was occupied. Now and then a militia man warned the people not to stand on the street. Just when I began to feel the strain of being part of a thick mass of people the Parade began.

First came a band playing a victorious march. Then followed young men and women, marching twenty abreast, their sun-tanned faces proud and smiling. Dressed in white shirts and green shorts or blue athletic shirts and white trousers and carrying red flags and banners, they gave the impression of exotic birds. They marched at a steady pace, their sturdy arms and legs swinging gracefully.

There were representatives of every conceivable sport. A section of oarsmen made a happy sight as they marched by, each man bearing a polished oar. There passed a group of wrestlers, their thick muscles exposed. Then came boxers wearing their gloves, walking in the peculiar fashion their sport develops.

There was a white clad group of men and women swinging tennis rackets that brought the full significance of this parade to me. I suddenly realized that before the revolution tennis playing was the sport indulged in only by the privileged classes. And now here were thousands of workers with tennis courts at their disposal, and the leisure to use them. The slogans spread out on white and red banners proclaiming the object of physical culture had new meaning to me now. The object was to build handsome and harmoniously developed bodies instead of the stunted and distorted physiques of those who lived in earlier days and were broken upon the rack of poverty.

I forgot my tiredness and the heat, and with the unceremoniousness of a foreigner I pushed my way through the streets until I came to the edge of the Red Square. The buildings on the Square had been decorated with flags and banners. Photographers could be seen perched precariously on some edge of a roof taking pictures of the youth of Moscow as they passed before the reviewing stand. Now and then a group would stop, and a section would be given to the camera. Some rhythmic movements. Various groups also stopped before the stand to form the design of a slogan, or cheer.

What made my heart leap, however, was a mass dance performed to the surprisingly tuneful singing of thousands of voices. I am certain that there could have been no rehearsal of these singers, and yet what harmony they revealed! And this harmonious mass singing came to me a symbol of the entire Soviet system. This triumphant youth of Moscow seemed unconquerable. All the lies screeched forth in the capitalist countries about Soviet Russia disappeared from my mind and I saw clearly. Here were new bonds to match the new minds of the new men and women who had been nourished under the Soviet system.

The last band marched by playing the "International," and slowly the vast square emptied, but I hated to leave. I lingered, watching groups of friends talking and laughing cheerfully. The multi-colored sport clothes blended into one vivid picture in the fading north light, and reluctantly I started back to the hotel. My whole being was filled with elation and a pleasant tiredness. This first day in the Red Capital, through the festival of Moscow's youth, had opened up before me a new world—a world worth striving for.

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**NOTED WRITERS JOIN RUSSIAN TOUR GROUP**

Artists and Writers Conducted By Browns on Ten Week Soviet Trip

Among the well-known writers traveling to the Soviet Union this summer with the Artists and Writers Group are William Saroyan and Grace Flindrau. Saroyan is author of The Daring Young Man on the Flying Trapeze and stories which commanded much attention from literary critics. His work has appeared in Story, New Masses, American Mercury, etc. Mrs. Flindrau's latest novel, Indeed This Flesh, was published last year, and her stories have appeared in Scribners.

The Artists and Writers Tour is being conducted by Bob and Rose Brown, Commonwealth instructors, who are in New York completing arrangements for sailing June 29. Reservations may still be made by communicating with the Browns at World Tourists, Inc., 156 Fifth Avenue, New York City.
Associated Little Magazines

S TATION C.C.F., broadcasting from Commonwealth College, Mena, Arkansas May 26. The following report is one of a series presenting the latest developments in the little literary scene.

Report: Associated Little Magazines. Since its formation three months ago, this organization has been growing steadily: Has 14 members; has obtained national publicity for member mags; paid advertising to be placed in Associated Little Magazines is being negotiated; regional headquarters are being established in bookshops, etc. The Scrapbook, The Notebook, Arcadian Life, Nebuline and other sponsors "Scribbers' Fair" in Detroit, June 28 to 30. Get in touch with G. C. Smith, 99 Woodward, Detroit: for dope on "Poetry Mart" see Leon J. Gaylor, Inlay City, Mich. Rumors are rife: Medallion (Medallion, where have I seen this name before?) is now in new hands and its editors promise an important announcement within a fortnight.

At the same time that plans for visiting lecturers are taking final shape, other arrangements for the summer session are reaching completion. The entire curriculum and resident faculty will be welcomed in the next issue of the Fortnightly.

THEATER FROM PAGE 1

is being installed and adequate sets constructed. This part of the work is badly handicapped because of insufficient materials. Readers of the Fortnightly possessing lighting fixtures, scenery materials, etc. can help by sending the Commonwealth Experimental Theater such things that they can spare. Front curtains are especially needed.

Members of the Commonwealth Experimental Theater are also members of the New Theater League (114 West 14th Street, New York City), a workers' drama organization established in 1931 which has approximately two hundred and fifty groups in the United States.

CONFERENCE FROM PAGE 1

Farmers' Union, Sharecroppers' Union, Dr. Broadus Mitchell, Erskine Caldwell, Younger Churchmen of the South, Cumberland Workers' League, Highlander Folk School, Commonwealth College, and many other individuals and groups. The American League Against War and Fascism and the American Civil Liberties Union also have been active in making the Conference a success.

As this issue of the Fortnightly goes to press the Commonwealth delegates have not returned. Their report will appear in the next issue.

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KOHCS WRITE OF TRIP

LUCIEN KOCH, the director who is on his first vacation in four years, and his wife, Irene Merrill, are having a fine time out West. They left Commonwealth April 26 on a six weeks hitch-hiking trip to the home of Lucien's parents in Oregon, and planned to see the scenery, ride on a freight like real hoboes, and get a good rest. The pictures and letters they send back indicate that they are accomplishing all their vacation ambitions.

Lucien writes in part: "This is a life. Reached Myrtle Point ahead of schedule because we are so fast. Came zooming through the mountains northward with Koch at the wheel some, in a big freight car. This is country, people, life, and parts of the country we've never seen before, and it's beautiful at the time."

"We boarded our freight all right. Couldn't locate a reefer, so took a box car. Other bums were sprinkled on the floor, snorting and groaning with cold. Came zooming through the mountains northward with Koch at the wheel some, in a big freight car. This is country, people, life, and parts of the country we've never seen before, and it's beautiful at the time."

"We spread a blanket and bounced through the night. Behind us in a box car someone started a fire to fry some bacon. It got out of control and the floor had to be torn up. A bum split a füger wide open in the struggle. A hobo in our group started a blaze for warmth, the while he had a roll of blankets which he used for a pillow."

"One of the most interesting events of the trip was hearing the account by a three-times eye witness of the Hopi snake dance. The priests are bitten many times with rattlers and save themselves by jumping in a green liquid and partaking of same, he told us."

"The Kochs will return to Commonwealth about the middle of June."

NEW WORKERS' MUSIC

The music director of Commonwealth has received recently two collections of workers' songs which should be called to the attention of all groups in the labor movement.

Workers' Song Book No. 2, published by the Workers' Music League, 799 Broadway, New York, contains twenty songs, both words and music, dealing with many phases of the workers' struggles. The addition of these songs to the more familiar and growing the country over will contribute much to the effectiveness of mass singing.

The Rebel Song Book, published by the Rand School Press, 7 East 54th St., New York, has eighty-seven labor songs, both old and new. Commonwealth students were introduced to some of their favorite songs through this fine collection.