WHITTEN IN NEW YORK

'Many Need Labor Education'

"I am finding a tremendous interest throughout the country in the problems of Commonwealth and workers' education," writes Richard Babb Whitten, director of Commonwealth, "but I find the overwhelming interest to be on the part of hundreds of excellent young students anxious to attend in order to strengthen their effectiveness in their trade unions, unemployed organizations, etc.

"Everywhere I find the same story - 'been unemployed,' can't pay the tuition, but feel desperately the need for training in public speaking, writing, organization methods, theory.' These students are driving me to work without rest to raise the necessary funds. I want to see these young people at Commonwealth where they can get the education they so badly need.

Whitten arrived in New York on the 14th of November and will remain there until the 30th. New York readers wishing to arrange lectures or interviews can reach him care of Francis Henson, Room 310, 20 Vesey Street. He is lecturing on these subjects:

Commonwealth College - a Southern Labor School

Recent Sharecroppers' Struggles

Workers' Education for Southern Labor

United Front Against War and Fascism

The Prospects for a Labor Party

Persons living in the cities he is to visit who wish to arrange for lectures or personal interviews should get in touch with the key person in their city as given below, or correspond with Charlotte Moskowitz, executive secretary of the school. The remainder of his schedule follows:

Dec. 1-2 - Boston.
Dec. 3 - Syracuse.
Dec. 4-5 - Rochester.
Dec. 6-9 - Detroit.
Dec. 10-13 - Chicago.
Dec. 19-21 - Kansas City (Jean Sherry, 422 West 47th Street).
December 22 - Topeka, Kansas.

AN APPEAL TO FORTNIGHTLY READERS

As the Fortnightly goes to press approximately $330 has been received from sixty-three donors, in addition to which two fifty-dollar scholarships have been pledged for Arkansas sharecroppers, according to Charlotte Moskowitz, treasurer. This is not enough.

Here are three of the many letters we receive daily:

From Southern Tenant Farmers Union

I have been looking around for students for the next term and have a number of prospects. One of these is George Andrews, who is one of the men jailed for strike activities in the cotton picking strike. It is quite a proposition for us to select students, as most of our people have families that must be cared for. As you know the average sharecropper marries young, and begins the struggle for existence. We realize the importance of the training which Commonwealth will give, and hope to have ...our people up there for your next term. Fraternally, H. L. Mitchell, Executive Secretary.

From the Kentucky mines

... we are very anxious to get students to Commonwealth. ... they are worthy, intelligent, sincere and fearless leaders, but need more theory and understanding. These students we would send you would surely be serious and ... get a lot from the experience with you. ... we feel that you do have just about what we want ...our students will be pulled right out of struggle in the front lines ... and will want real stuff - how to build an organization that will stand against all the fascist brutality that we know here in Kentucky. We remember that a delegation from your school came up here a few years ago and showed real guts. We liked that ... We hope you will take our special situation under sympathetic consideration and meet us as far as possible in straining every possibility to get our four students to the winter term at Commonwealth Fraternally, (name withheld).

From the North Carolina textile mills

I have been working in the finishing room of one of the worst hosiery sweatshops in town. Making my bread is all I make there. Since I feel rather muddle-headed on many points and particularly wish to learn to write labor pamphlets, I wish to enter Commonwealth to think and study and I am too tired to do either after working ten hours in the sweat shop and preparing my meals afterward for I do not make enough to pay board. I am glad I went back into the factory for I understand the work that must be done to change the psychology of the workers. I realize how silly some of our approaches to workers have been. Sincerely, (name withheld).

This is the kind of student for which Commonwealth exists — and this is the kind of student who cannot even raise a dollar of his tuition. The job we have had to undertake is not only the special financing of individual students through scholarships but also the general financing of the school to make a smoothly functioning community where these students may be effectively and efficiently trained.

What will you do to make it possible to accept all of these students?

The entire Commonwealth group considers it a major tragedy every time a single such student is turned down for lack of funds. "Surely," they say "there are thousands of progressive people in the country, vitally concerned with workers' and farmers' problems and struggles. Let them know. Reach them somehow."

Anything you give to Commonwealth is a concrete contribution to labor education whether it is a large equipment grant, a fifty-dollar scholarship, ten dollars toward the month's flour supply, or a single dollar.

'DAUGHTER' AND 'LEFTY'

Under Peter Frye's direction, the labor drama class will present Caldwell's 'Daughter' at the college December 7, and 'Waiting for Lefty' in Mena at a later date.
Workers Must Read

Compiled by HENRY BLACK, Commonwealth Libraries

[Commonwealth College receives frequent requests for lists of important books, study guides and outlines. As a partial answer, this department will publish frequently short lists of books and articles on important topics, such as the one below. Occasionally more general lists of important books will be printed. Inclusion of an item implies, of course, neither agreement nor disagreement with the author; the attempt is only to include the most important references on each subject.]

FASCISM

Fascism is probably the most important single problem before the world today. With fascist governments in Italy, Germany and Austria, and semi-fascist regimes in Hungary, Poland and other countries, the nature and purpose of fascism is a problem of immediate concern in every country. There are now scores of books and pamphlets and hundreds of magazine articles dealing with its various aspects. The following references are probably the most useful in giving one a general introductory survey of the nature and activities of fascism.

GENERAL BOOKS

Although this book is now two years old and hence somewhat out of date, it is still the best introduction to the whole subject. Simple and very lucidly written.

The most complete single work on fascism. Excellent general survey.

Nearing, Scott. Fascism. Ridgewood, N. J. Published by the author. 1933. 60p.
Nearing believes that fascism is primarily a revolt of the middle class, an opinion sharply at variance with that of other students.

FASCISM IN ITALY

An account of Mussolini's regime has done to Italy. The picture is not a pretty one.

Discussion of the differences, in programs and activity, between Italy and Russia.


FASCISM IN GERMANY


Events in Germany since June 1934 and prospects for the future.

Mr. Steel is one of the best known and most penetrating foreign-news reporters.


PROSPECTS IN ENGLAND AND AMERICA


Mr. Dennis is the leading exponent of fascism in America.


Charlotte Moskowski, Executive Secretary
Last Edition

A short story by Rex Pitkin

Darling Naomi! The night side staff left an hour ago and I've been sitting in the sports room alone. I've been staring at the flickering of the green shaded lamp over my desk, trying to find words to say to you. For two years I've worked here night after night and you don't know what the grind of a small town sheet does to a newsman. A sports writer finds it hard to express himself. This is the toughest copy I've ever written. I've got to explain something to you that I know you can't understand. I've just done an awful thing, Naomi.

You know that this job was my reason for being. I wrote because I loved to write. While I was still in school I used to hang around in all that was said and developing photographs in my mind of all that was done. Words were important to me. They were just like people. And I thought that a sports reporter was a glamorous fellow who lived in a constantly changing world of excitement. Journalism was real romance in the textbooks and novels and movies. But in the past two years I've learned a lot about the relation of sports to the rest of the world. I've written so much about so little that words mean nothing anymore. I've learned to write without linking without feeling. The man who writes words which mean nothing is a dead man. He's like a man without a dream. Yes, working on this newspaper used to mean almost everything to me. They were just books. I have to write endless columns of copy I've used to mean almost everything to me. They hegan to answer the questions which filled my thoughts, questions I couldn't escape. They began to answer the questions which filled my thoughts, questions I couldn't escape.

You and I have been close to each other, Naomi, and even you can't understand what's going on inside me. Several times I've tried to tell you how my thinking has changed, how my world has crumbled about me. But you thought I was just nervous and overworked and moody. You thought all the weight of the world on my shoulders and laughed and I laughed with you. I tried to put all the jumbled ideas out of my head. But I couldn't. They were bigger, stronger than I am.

Last week the Chief sent me to Middle­ton to watch the local team there and bring in the advance dope on one of their final practice sessions before the big game with our team. I found a little old second-hand book shop hidden on a side street. The little, stoop shouldered, weather beaten old man, a skull cap on the back of his head, showed me several books. I took them home and devour ed them. They set my heart afire. They said everything I've wanted to say. They began to clear up my obsession about war. They began to answer the questions which filled my thoughts, questions I couldn't escape.

You and I planned to be happy together. You wanted me to become the sports editor and get married. You had faith in me. That gave me faith in myself. You want me to go on with the grind and continue so that someday... But I can't.

It is four in the morning and my eyes are beginning to hurt. I'm sleepy. Only black coffee is keeping me awake. The big game was played yesterday and... hurray — our team won. The college band led a snake dance down Main Street. As the drunken mob weaved its way along the car tracks the band played stirring music, martial music, and at one time you could hear only the roll of the drums... In Africa drums are also rolling. I can hear them coming closer and closer... The sight of the drunken schoolboys made me see the students of Ethiopia and Italy laying on a battlefield, without arms, without legs. Two hours ago I sent my copy of the riot to the composing room. Tomorrow

"Last Edition" is a first story by a young sports writer who is now studying at Commonwealth. It was written for the class in proletarian literature.

Book Review

The Green Corn Rebellion by William Cunningham, Vanguard Press, New York. $2.00.

At last, in this book, American farmers are presented as understandable human beings, beings who are not the types sought after by the critics on the hunt for "characterization". Every person from a small town in a farming region has known the characters in The Green Corn Rebellion, some of whom, in 1917, turn, from a lifetime of treading manure, to rebellion as a means of escape from the "bad breath" that is Oklahoma. A desire to fix it so that heat and dust and stink would not dominate human life causes Jim Tenley, young farmer, and others to join in a march on Washington to stop the war and capitalism.

The thoughts and words of Jim (and all the Jims) are played against a living background by sensitive William Cunningham to picture the beginnings of social revolution in the land, the beginning of revolution in a man's mind.

Listen to Mack, the old Socialist, on the retreat from Daniels' hill: "When we talked about overthrowin' the capitalist system we was like a bunch of roosters in the henhouse crownin' at midnight. To listen to 'em you'd think it was mornin' sure enough. But that don't make it mornin'. But at the same time, you can be sure they'll start crownin' again in a few hours, and that time they'll be right."

and to "uneducated" farmer Jim, as he audaciously muses on the superstructure of capitalism:

...The rich gave the poor a shot of dope, and the poor went around in a daze all their lives doing what they are told. And if they developed any wills of their own the bank got a bunch of town loafers and the sheriff to shoot hell out of them and arrest them...

This is an alive novel that can be experienced by any "living" reader. Sections of this novel are irrelevant to the Green Corn Rebellion, but these sketches of healthy chunks of rural life. Here we have real people in rebellion. We have had so many rebellionspuppets. — T.F.

Mural Photos

Photographs of Common wealth's Joe Jones mural may be secured from the college for $2.50 each. The four panels of the mural are reproduced in true relation and proportion on a picture three feet long by eight inches wide.
TEACHERS' UNION TO HOLD STATE PARLEY

In an informal gathering during the session of the Arkansas Teachers Association in November, members of the State Federation of Teachers adopted progressive resolutions and laid plans for a convention in August at the time the State Federation of Labor will meet. In Little Rock at the time were John Barnett and Raymond Koch, members of Commonwealth local 194 of the A.F. of T. They attended the meeting, and report the nomination of Claude Williams, progressive minister and friend of the college, for the post of executive secretary of the state body.

Copies of the revised edition of the Commonwealth catalog are available upon request. This 12-page booklet lists and describes courses, teachers, methods, and activities.

"Last Edition" by Rex Pitkin

The paper will play it as the most important local story in a month, and I'll get a by-line on the front page. You will be proud of my story. You will paste it in your scrap book. But after I wrote that I was so disgusted, Naomi, that I did something which you can't comprehend.

Darling, you are proud of the fact that I am a reporter. A newspaperman seems a little better as a sweatheart than, say, a grocery clerk or iceman. . . . Newspaperman. . . . It sounds important, dignified, professional. Like doctor or lawyer. A reporter has standing in the community, for I read Lenin. and he made me want to drive the mules, by being scared of the brutes when they balk, by getting blisters the first day, by working beyond our strength. But we learn quickly, and soon are shouting at the mules as if they were in the next county, and cursing them as if they were the class enemy. The finer arts come more slowly. How to turn a corner with a long wagon seems to mark the turning point in our farm education.

At the warning bell we have stowed the last load away, and we plod back to the dorms, to undress and rush to the swimming pool with a cake of soap. After such refreshment, appetites are chisel-sharp, and after supper a long rest and bed seem more enticing than the benches of the library. In the field we get a taste of farm problems, and a foretaste of collectives in the new world.

FORUM GETS REAL DOPE ON LABOR PAPERS

Worker correspondence is the foundation of successful labor journalism. This was one of the points made by Marvin Sanford in a talk given before the Sunday Forum on November 3. The journalism teacher told the Commonwealth group of the highlights of workingclass papers past and present, and gave histories and analyses of leading workers' dailies all over the world today.

BOXT FULL OF BOOKS

New Yorkers Give 26 Volumes

Last Tuesday saw an excited group gathered around a large box which had just arrived on the campus. The anticipatory grins of Henry Black, our inveterate librarian and Myra Page, our writer, gave the whole thing away, even before the covers were off. Books! Twenty-six of them. And such books: Jack London, John Reed, Agnes Smedley, Billinger's Fatherland, Sherwood Anderson, Sinclair Lewis, Robert Cantwell, Strachey, Pud yevev, Tretiakov and other modern Russian writers, and many more; all valuable additions to our college library which is fast becoming one of the best-equipped library laboratories in the country.

These books are the thoughtful gift to Commonwealth from the Workers' Cooperative Library of New York City. Commonwealth's students, faculty, and maintenance workers join as one in sending their appreciation to these New York worker readers for their generous sharing of their books with us.

HORACE BRYAN MUST REST, DOCTORS SAY

Neve fatigue, a condition requiring complete rest and inactivity, is what ails Horace Bryan, former student at Commonwealth who has been active in the Arkansas labor movement, according to an extensive diagnosis made by St. Louis physicians.

Bryan, believing he was suffering from Brights disease, was on his way to St. Louis for hospitalization when he was arrested and held without charge in Fort Smith a month ago. He is returning to his home in Greenwood, Arkansas, to recuperate.

LIBRARY BOOK NEEDS

Among the books needed in the library, the following are the most important:

- Permanence and Change, Kenneth Burke;
- Controlling Depressions, Paul H. Douglas;
- America Faces the Barricades, John l. Spivak;
- Soviet Journey, Louis Fischer;
- Science and the Social Needs, Julian Huxley;
- Dawn Over Samarkand, Joshua Kutznitz;
- 1 Change Worlds, Anna Louise Strong;
- The Kingdom of Necessity, Isidor Schneider;
- A Sign for Cain, Grace Limpkin.

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