Fight on War and Fascism Discussed by Mother Bloor

THE FIGHT Against War and Fascism was the chief topic of Mother Bloor's first lectures the week of July 20th to 25th and completed the fourth in the series of eight discussion groups at Commonwealth's summer session.

Mother Bloor expressed the fundamental lesson of her lectures when she said, "Don't think that fascism is something peculiar to Europe. Don't think that we can't have fascism in this country. We already have manifestations of it in the United States. Our capitalists use extra-legal methods against the sharecroppers, the miners, the mill workers, and all of those who oppose and struggle against their oppression. Our only hope to combat and defeat fascism is in the United Front. We must build this at all costs."

On Monday Mother Bloor told of the development of fascism in Italy. This lecture was followed by others on its development in Germany and Austria. Mistakes made by the workers of these countries, making possible the coming of fascism, were pointed out and the importance of our profiting by their experience was stressed. Mother Bloor in her discussion, using recent news reports from Spain and France, brought out the fact that in each of these countries fascism has been blocked by the formation of a strong united front.

Telling of the concentration camps, prison conditions, forced labor forms and low living standards, she showed how fascism hangs like a pall over Germany. The noticeable lack of cheer. The beaten down spirit of the people. The cultural decay evidenced on all sides. These are the inevitable consequences of fascism.

Friday morning Mother Bloor talked on her personal experiences during the investigation of the Chicago stockyards and the beef trust in 1906, when with the aid of the Socialist workers in the packing companies she forced Theodore Roosevelt's administration to definite action.

Next week's discussions, led by Mother Bloor, will be on the Growth of a National Farmer-Labor Party, forces working for and against it, and the prospects for 1936.

MOTHER BLOOR WELCOMED AT COMMONWEALTH; LOUISE JESSEN ADDED TO ANTI-WAR FACULTY

Popular Woman Lecturer Remains Here Two Weeks

Mother Bloor was given an enthusiastic reception by Commonwealth students, who had been looking forward to her arrival since the opening of the summer quarter. She will be on the campus for two weeks, during which time she will speak on the Farmer-Labor Party and the fight against War and Fascism.

"I feel since I was here before that there has been a great increase in the interest of the people in a united front. It is a living thing." This expression of confidence in the progress made by the united front was based on full knowledge of the situation.

After leaving Commonwealth last summer Mother Bloor went back to Nebraska to stand trial for doing organization work in a creamery in that state and was sentenced to jail with several farmers.

Since her release from jail she has been speaking against war and fascism and for a united front. She finds the united front movement quite strong in Pennsylvania, Connecticut and other eastern states. She has worked some this year with Bill Reich, who will lecture on Organization of the Unemployed during the latter part of the quarter. In accordance with Mother Bloor's chief interest, much of her work has been directed to the youth. She lectured at various schools and camps.

Anti-War Teacher Is Active In Peace, Labor Movements

LOUISE STEVENS JESSEN, one of the leaders of the labor movement in Louisiana, will be a member of the faculty of the Southern Workers Anti-War Summer School to be held at Commonwealth from August 31st to September 19th. Mrs. Jessen has delivered hundreds of speeches in the past few years in New Orleans, before all sections of the working class and the peace movement, addressing labor, unemployed, progressive and middle class groups. Her courage, dynamic personality and devotion to the working class have made her an outstanding figure in the city of New Orleans.

Louise Jessen was born of pioneer stock in western Kansas in 1888. She first became interested in economics and theoretically convinced of the desirability of socialism at the University of Chicago in 1906. She did not become active in the socialist movement until she met and married Otto Jessen, a Danish immigrant and former member of the Social Democratic Party in Copenhagen.

Following the suppression of the movement after the World War, Mrs. Jessen was forced to devote her full time to the problem of making a living at farming in the South. Since 1922, however, she has been actively engaged in the fight for political and economic rights and is at present state representative of the Socialist Party in Louisiana.

Nation-wide attention was drawn to Mrs. Jessen in 1933 when she was arrested in New Orleans for distributing handbills in an effort to organize the unemployed. At a later time, when she was leading a delegation of Negro and white unemployables to memorialize the state legislature, she was arrested and kept in jail until the legislative session closed. She became involved in an important civil liberties case when she was arrested during her campaign for member of the Commission Council in New Orleans. A more recent arrest for picketing the reactionary, war-mongering movie...
Willi Roesle
BY CICILIA MATTOX

Back in 1923, during the year Commonwealth was founded, Willi Roesle, now kitchen manager at the school and well known campus figure, was attending a labor school of the Metal Trades Union in Saxony.

"I remember it very well," said Willi, "because of a discussion which we had at that time of Italian fascism. Our teacher, Engelbert Graf, was sure that such a fate could never overtake Germany because we had such a highly developed working class movement in our country.

Graf, who was educational director of the trade unions and author of many books, was one of the first victims of the Nazis after Hitler came into power.

"This history of the world is the same kind of talk from many people who do not think fascism is such an immediate and serious danger for America as for the European countries. We should profit by the experience of the German working class and not commit the same mistakes. It is hoped, at least, that a school like Commonwealth understands the situation today better than the school I attended in Saxony in 1923. We must realize at Commonwealth the necessity of a united struggle against fascism."

Willi regrets that when he first came to America from Wuerztenberg, which is in the southern part of Germany, his contacts were almost entirely among German organizations and friends. When he came to Commonwealth in April, 1925, through the Syracuse, New York, branch of Nature Friends, international proletarian cultural society, he knew very little English.

Willi says he’ll never forget that first wild, hectic day in Commonwealth’s kitchen. His only cooking experience had been for youth groups on camping trips in Germany. He understood very few of the instructions which were given to him. Panicky, he stood for half an hour, staring at the ingredients before him. Like a man in a dream, visions of his mother at work in her kitchen in Germany were gradually revealed to him.

His mind began to recall slowly the intricate ritual of mixing eggs with flour, with sugar, with salt... scarcely able to realize now how it was ever accomplished, he had dinner ready at the appointed time, but was so nervously exhausted that he himself was unable to eat. Now Willi not only manages the kitchen department with efficiency and ease, but has learned to speak English so that he can participate and lead in discussions on the campus.

In Germany, Willi was employed in the Masuer munitions factory and was a member of the Factory Council of the Metal Trades Union. He entered the World War when he was eighteen years old and served for three years in the Machine Gun Battalion, a special group of 150 men who were rushed to any section where extreme danger threatened. Willi was one of the three of the original group who survived and deserted the war two weeks before the armistice was declared.

After the war, Willi returned to the Masuer factory where more than half the employees were ex-soldiers. He participated in the first general strike in southern Germany, called out in protest against the ten per cent income tax levied upon the workers. He took an active part in the struggles of the post-war industrial unrest, serving for several years as secretary of his union.

"We could not realize at this moment," says Willi, "that we possessed our factory. The Kaiser had fled, the exectives of the factory had fled and the economic and political power came automatically into our hands. But we were not sufficiently educated or trained to realize at this moment that it was our factory, our state, our government that we must bring into action. We had a feeling that all this was not ours. Our mistake was that we spent all day in groups outside the factory, discussing, discussing... and work!... we did not do any work. We smoked cigarettes all day—what cigarettes!—Buchenlaub, made from tree leaves. We should not have been outside, but in the factory and working! Our reaction was not a natural one, but a reaction trained in the capitalist world.

With rich experiences in the German working class movement, Willi has much to say.

Caricature of Willi Roesle
Cut in linocut by Charles Mattox

What I See
BY MYRTLE MOSKOP

Note: Myrtle Moskop, sharecropper student at Commonwealth last quarter, sent this article to the Fortnightly from her home in northeastern Arkansas in which she returned last month.

I see a land of uncounted wealth, where all should have abundance and the right to pursue happiness.

In this land of wealth I see babies deformed and passing on to the dark shadows of death because they did not have the attention of a good physician.

In this land of wealth I hear babies cry and beg for milk, while our federal government kills thousands of head of cattle and burns them to keep the people from eating them.

I hear the cry for food among the great masses of the exploited people, while our government pays for millions of pigs to be drowned that a few might reap the benefit and profit of the remainder.

I see children of school age prohibited from getting an education, because they haven’t sufficient clothes to protect themselves against the weather and public smears. I see dilapidated school houses used for barns and dwelling places for the tenant and sharecroppers. With all hope gone for the country children to get an education, they grow up in ignorance, never knowing A from Z.

I see children with all kinds of diseases, caused by the lack of proper nourishment. Some with large stomachs and little spindly legs and arms, some with big bug eyes and little peaked faces. Some develop diseases that become chronic causing them to be cripples all their lives. Most of these people live on bull dog gravy.

I see young women forced to prostitute themselves because of the weather imageable.

I see the prions filled with people who had to steal something to keep their families from dying of hunger.

I see people forced into all kinds of unbelievable slavery.

I see people being evicted from their homes, thrown on the roadside in the worst weather imaginable.

I see revolt of the exploited working class to overcome their condition of economic slavery.

I see the militia and rangers called out to crush the revolt. I see people being whipped and shot and lynched.

And I hear the people crying, "We cannot stand this very much longer!"

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Down on the Farm

BY ALEX LANG

BECAUSE of the month-long drought which was causing the crops to wither and die, the farm has been a much discussed problem on the campus. Commonwealth has about 320 acres, a large part of which is planted in crops for fodder, corn and green vegetables. The farm lies along the creek, just over the bluff from the college grounds. Since the recent rains have bolstered the crops and brought fresh green- ness to the plants, there has been much rejoicing.

Dave Roebuck, a quiet fellow from Florida, who is at present in charge of the farm, drew a large crowd of witnesses the other day when he slaughtered a calf. It was the first execution most of the new students had ever seen. It was raining and the day was dreary. The calf, seeming to sense that it was doomed, ran around for a half hour before it was cornered and dragged to the barn. It was held steady while every thing was made ready. Then an awful second of pause—but the veal was savory at lunch.

While the calf has disappeared in several parts at Commonwealth meals, attention has been turned to another recent addition to the stock, a very young bull. It has sad eyes and mournfully moo's for its mother (at least, that's what the newcomers think, who scratch its nose and pat its neck in an effort to comfort it).

Thus the new crew of commoners, many of whom have never lived in the country before, are being introduced to the mysteries of the farm, the animals and the growing plants. They play tag with the romping mules and gently talk to them while putting on the harness, but mostly argue with each other as to whether our horses are mules, mules are donkeys, or mares are horses. Many of the boys from New York City who was sent down to the farm to pick string beans, it was discovered, was unable to recognize that common legume. He now knows that string beans do not grow on trees or tomato plants. Others have learned what back-breaking toil it is to dig potatoes. And one helpful soul advised Ed Norman, our new dairyman, to milk the cows at night and save himself the trouble of getting up early in the morning.

Much of what comes from the farm goes directly to the cannery, where Jenny Davis and her helpers (all of them are "honey" to Jenny, who hails from Kentucky) have been kept busy for several weeks. A regular crew is engaged in cleaning jars, washing berries, keeping the large furnace blazing, cooking the berries in huge pots, sealing them in air-tight jars and storing them away in a cool basement. One enterprising statistician in the group has estimated that almost 3,000 quarts of berries have been put away or that over three mill-

American Youth Congress Attended by Commoners

COMMONWEALTH COLLEGE was represented by two of its students, Mort Brown and Eino Jokinen, at the Third American Youth Congress, held in Cleveland during the week-end of the 160th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence.

"Seated in Cleveland's huge Public Auditorium," reported Mort Brown, "we were thrilled at the immensity of the American Youth Congress. More than 3,000 voting and fraternal delegates, representing more than a million and a half students, organized and fought the battle of Peace, Freedom and Progress. The delegates discussed their problems for two days and declared at the close of the session their readiness to fight for the American Youth Act and to wage a more determined fight against war and fascism.

"That the Congress was a success was indicated by the increasing number of broad organizations which came together under the banner of Peace, Freedom and Progress. The delegates discussed their problems for two days and declared at the close of the Congress their readiness to unite for the American Youth Act and to wage a more determined fight against war and fascism.

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Maps Desired

DURING the next few months the college curriculum will be very largely centered around international affairs. For this reason we are badly in need of a collection of maps, particularly the larger wall maps. Any one who can spare such maps, covering all or parts of North or South America, Europe or Asia, is requested to send them in. The maps published by the National Geographic Society would be especially useful. If you have maps that you do not care to give away, could we borrow them for three or four months? Safe return will be guaranteed. Address correspondence to Henry Black, Librarian, Commonwealth College, Mena, Arkansas.

Jules Karstein Teaches Public Speaking Course

DURING the third week of the summer session, Commonwealth students received an unexpected and greatly appreciated course in public speaking under the direction of Jules Karstein.

The course on the Fight Against War and Fascism was postponed to the week of July 20th to 25th because Mother Bloor was unavoidably detained. The discussion of the Youth Movement was held a week earlier than scheduled. Jules Karstein, who had lectured the preceding week on the Soviet Union Today, added to his popularity with the students by offering them an unusual and profitable course in public speaking, combined with joint discussions of the Youth Movement by instructor and students.

A majority of the students volunteered for five-minute speeches on subjects of their own choosing and revealed a wealth of personal experience and a keen insight into important contemporary issues. Ed Norman, a truck driver from Florida, gave a graphic account of the grueling work of truck drivers and pointed out the need for unionization of these poorly paid workers. Maurine Austin, a school teacher from Texas, discussed the methods of organizing the white collar workers. Forrest Crump PAGE FOUR

STUDENT BODY ELECTS OFFICERS FOR SUMMER

AT THE first meeting of the student body for the 1936 summer session the following officers were elected: President, Elmer Brasheer, New York City; Vice-president, Maurine Austin, Palestine, Texas; and Secretary, Esther Swirk, Kansas City, Missouri.

Hanna Hatcheck of New York City and Gale Bascombe of Minneapolis, Minne- sota, were elected as student representatives to the Association, in accordance with a provision recently made in the revised constitution of Commonwealth College giving the students a direct voice and vote in the administration of the school.

The United Front Committee for the summer session includes the following: Richard B. Whitten, Association; Charles Mattox, faculty; Don Kohler, maintenance; Willi Roselle, Cecil Hart, student body.

Elections were made to the other committee as follows: Forum, Wu-Kou Liu, Nat Brown, Forrest Crump, Bill Stencll; Disciplinary, Ed Norman, Sylvia Davis, Gretel Handov, Ben Goldberg, Gertrude Linder; Sports, Norman Lawe, Art Rosenberg, Mort Brown, Jim Bridger, Eino Jokinen, Esther Swirk; and Entertainment, Mary Alexander, Hanna Hatches, George Abrams, Sylvia Davis and Sophie Kasen.
Plans For Production of 'Bury the Dead' Proceed

REHEARSALS have already begun at Commonwealth for the production of the immensely popular anti-war play, "Bury the Dead." The students and teachers who form the cast hope by this means to spread the fight against war into this corner of Arkansas. Neighbors from miles around will be invited to the initial performance at the college, and if the play proves successful it will be taken into the nearby town of Mena, in order to give it as wide an audience as possible.

"Bury the Dead," which proved enormously effective in its New York production, deals with the revolt of a few dead soldiers who rise from their graves and refuse to be buried. Its action is set in the next world war, and it clearly reveals the hopelessness and stupid futility of war as a whole.

Mara Alexander, who is connected with the Theatre Union in New York, is directing the play and confidently expects it to be an effective weapon in the national opposition to war.

Campus Notes

Frederick Maxham, formerly editor of the Windsor Quarterly, literary magazine published at Commonwealth last year, visited the school for a few days. Maxham is at present employed on a writers' project in Oklahoma City.

Mabel and Cecil Keezling of San Francisco spent several days at Commonwealth on their way to New York City. Cecil is an ex-Commoner and worked in the print shop while a student here.

Will Field, son of Ralph Field, Commonwealth maintenance worker, visited his father here for two weeks. Will returned to his home at Rochester, New York, where he is working and attending school.

in New York.

Mrs. Jenson was one of the leaders in the fight which ousted the city librarian of New Orleans, a man who was opposed to the labor movement because of open sympathies and agitation for Italian fascism. Her most recent efforts were lent to the opposition to the proposed Major Emergency Disaster Ordinance, an anti-labor measure sponsored by the City Council and New Orleans Association of Commerce. A victory was won for the labor movement in the tabling of this dangerous proposal.

Among the anti-war organizations with which Louise Jenson is actively associated are the Women's League for Peace and Freedom and the League for Industrial Democracy.

Bob Wood, Labor Leader, Addresses Student Body

BOB WOOD, well known leader in the Southern labor movement and southern secretary of the International Labor Defense, addressed Commonwealth's student body July 14th on southern labor conditions.

He discussed principally the harsh exploitation that exists in the southern states, especially in Georgia, Mississippi, and Alabama. "The landlord terror and the company deputy systems of the steel corporations in the South are the most vicious, cruel, and flagrant in the country," he said.

In Mississippi, it was discovered that convict labor had been hired out to work in private factories. When this practice was brought to light, the convicts were pardoned, thus complying with the letter of the law which forbids the use of convict labor in private industry.

Another flagrant violation mentioned was the use of W. P. A. money to subsidize the building of factories. Buildings were given rent free and tax exempt for ten years to private industrialists in some places.

Bob stressed the moral disintegration which wretched living conditions were causing in the South. He told of the widespread prostitution into which fifteen and sixteen year old girls were being forced in many southern cities.

During the discussion period that followed his talk, Bob described the backwardness of the southern trade union movement, but he asserted that the C. I. O. drive would mark the rebirth of the southern labor movement. "The southern workers are beginning to waken and with this new vigorous organization to which they will make labor history," he declared.

[Willi Roesele from page 2]