Students Discuss Trade Union Trends

BOB WOOD WILL LECTURE ON SOUTH NEXT WEEK

The fifth week's discussion group of Commonwealth College's 1937 summer session, July 26 to July 31, will be held on Trends in the American Trade Union Movement.

The balance of the summer term's weekly discussion groups will be devoted to the following subjects:

August 2 to August 7
Special Problems of the South Today
Bob Wood

Wood is a southern labor organizer and defender active throughout the South.

August 9 to August 14
The Sharecroppers, Rural Workers, and Farmers Movements
Clay Johnson and J. R. Butler

Clay Johnson is editor of the Southern Farm Leader, and Butler is president of the Southern Tenant Farmers Union.

August 16 to August 21
The Youth and Student Movements
Abbott Simon

Abbott Simon is a member of the American Youth Congress.

August 23 to August 28
Trends in the Cultural Movement
William Cunningham and Joe Jones

Cunningham is author of several novels and director of the Oklahoma Federal Writers Project. Joe Jones painted Commonwealth's mural and has recently been awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship.

August 30 to September 4
Labor Action in Current Politics
Howard Y. Williams

Williams is the national organizer for the Farmer-Labor Political Federation.

Chucky and Ray Leave Commonwealth; Don Kobler is New Secretary-Treasurer

Chucky, Ray Assume Educational Work
In St. Louis Trade Unions

With an enviable record of more than ten years' service and devotion to the aims of Commonwealth College, Charlotte 'Chucky' Moskowitz, secretary-treasurer, and Ray Koch left their positions at the school recently to assume new responsibilities in St. Louis. In St. Louis Chucky and Ray are to continue their work in the field of trade union education, carrying forward that devotion to the American labor movement which they both served so well in their duties at Commonwealth College.

Charlotte Moskowitz and Ray Koch both came to Commonwealth a few years before it became a trade union college. They were among those instrumental in securing the change in the policy of the school, helping to win the college for the labor movement.

Since the first days of her ten-year stay at Commonwealth Chucky has acted as executive secretary, contributing immeasurably to the successful functioning of the school. In 1934 she assumed the additional duties of treasurer.

Ray filled many important posts during his twelve years at Commonwealth, includ-

Kobler Former Student
And Instructor Here;
Also Sec'y New Era Schools

On July 15, Donald Kobler, a former Commonwealth student and teacher, took up his duties as secretary-treasurer of Commonwealth College.

Don, 25-year-old college graduate and a former public school teacher in New York state, first came to Commonwealth in January, 1936, as a student. Later, he took the position of maintenance worker on the college grounds, at the same time attending classes, and also taught in the school’s Sharecropper Division as well as a class in Workers’ English.

In September, 1936, Don left Commonwealth, going on to Little Rock, Arkansas, where, for ten months, he worked for the Religion and Labor Foundation and the New Era Schools. During these ten months Kobler did educational work with Southern Tenant Farmers Union, the Little Rock Central Trades and Labor Council, the International Ladies Garment Workers Union, and with several local college groups. He was active also in the Workers Alliance at Little Rock and was a delegate to the Central Trades and Labor Council from the American Federation of Teachers, Local 424.

Don, who had been active in Arkansas trade union work, was elected to the position of secretary-treasurer by the Commonwealth College Association, having been highly recommended by some of the leading figures in the state's trade union movement.

Tuition Rates

$1.00 a day plus work.
$2.00 a day — no work required.
$7.00 a week plus 15 hours work.
$14.00 a week — no work required.
$25.00 a month plus 15 hours work each week.
$50.00 a month — no work required.
$50.00 for ten weeks — plus 15 hours work per week.
$100.00 for ten weeks — no work.

Note: These rates include room, board and laundry.
Impressions
Of Commonwealth

BY NORA JACKSON

In the student body, these stand out: an eagerness to learn; an interest in workers and their organizations, in the problems of workers as a class; an aliveness to what is going on in the world today, particularly here in the United States.

Isolation, self-absorption. These are almost totally lacking in Commonwealth students. And the school curriculum is particularly well adapted to the desires and needs of these students who have flocked from all parts of the country to study trade union problems in order to be able to best identify themselves with the American labor movement.

Desire for Active Participation

Their interest in the welfare and the progress of the working class is their sole motive for study. Their desire to actively participate in the struggle to advance working conditions throughout the world is a controlling factor. There is a natural interest springing from whole-hearted enthusiasm and interest.

Perhaps a bit too flourishing this. But, coming from four years of the dry sterility of an American college existence, associating with Commonwealth life and Commonwealth students is an education in itself.

Cooperation, vitality is here. Not plodding, not self-centered ambitions. No defeatism, but a sincere faith in the future of the American working class. It is this that is healthy in American life.

One can't avoid being infected with the spirit of cooperation which symbolizes the Commonwealth campus. There is no authority from above dictating actions. The students are given to feel they are their own masters, deriving from this self-discipline.

Theory and Practice

It is this, then, that is important: theory and practice are intimately linked in the very essential exercises of Commonwealth life: self-discipline taught by practicing self-discipline; cooperation taught by enlisting the students to participate cooperatively in all the many phases of Commonwealth school and industrial work.

The spirit being developed at Commonwealth is one of cooperation and forward-looking. All these people who will later go out into the world are now being taught the essentials of how to help build and work for a better life, being shown the need for a united working class. Soon they will go out into the world, and they will help teach others to join in the common struggle of organizing the ranks of the American workers.

Letter from Ray and Chucky

Dear Friends and Commoners:

By the time this is printed we will no longer be at Commonwealth. It is one thing to put one's eyes on a job in St. Louis. It is quite something else to pull up roots after all these years of work, trying to help Commonwealth best serve the interests of the American labor movement.

We are proud of whatever share we have had in the development of Commonwealth. We are proud of the physical developments of the plant which mean more comforts and less distractions from study. We are proud of the development of an adequate curriculum, revised quarter after quarter to best fit the needs of the labor movement. And we are proud of the hundreds of students and teachers who have gone through periods of study at Commonwealth and then taken their place in the labor movement.

The next few months will see an important broadening of Commonwealth's program. In addition to the steady curriculum there will be specialized classes for particular trade unions, and a good deal of extension work in this area for those unable to break from their work for three or six months at a time. We call upon all of Commonwealth's friends and supporters to watch these developments and to continue and increase their support: financial and moral.

Donald Kobler, who is taking over the secretary-treasurership, is highly capable and sincerely devoted to the building of a strong, powerful, healthy, progressive trade union movement in this country. We are certain you will find your relationship with the school, through him, very satisfying.

Losing steady contact with all the former students and friends will be the saddest part of our leaving, so an occasional letter will help. Letters marked "personal, please forward" will reach us promptly.

The time we have spent at Commonwealth has been worth a great deal to us in training and experience, and we expect to put it to good use in whatever work we undertake in the labor movement.

Ray and Chucky

Commonwealth College
Mena, Arkansas
July 15, 1937
Why 'n' Wherefore?

Answers to the questions below will appear here next issue. Send your own queries to the Why 'n' Wherefore Dept. of the Fortnightly

PREPARING FOR WAR

1. What is the "Industrial Mobilization Plan"?

2. Who would control and carry out the Plan in time of war?

3. How would labor be treated under the Plan?

4. How would the Plan affect wages?

5. How does the Plan affect women and children?

Answers on Security vs. Tenancy

1. The Farm Tenancy Bill (HR 6240) is an administration bill introduced in the House by Representative Jones providing $55,000,000 for rehabilitation loans and land purchase for the first year.

2. The Farmers' Security Bill (HR 6898) is a bill introduced in the House by Representative Boileau providing for $500,000,000 for rehabilitation loans and land purchase for the first year and is designed to relieve the farm tenancy situation.

3. The Security Bill is the more democratic because it provides for county committees of five, democratically elected by meetings of working farmers, farm tenants, and sharecroppers. The majority of the committee must be farm tenants or sharecroppers. The Jones Bill provides that in each county committees of three be appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture.

4. No. Only the Farmers' Security Bill will help those most in need, since it is designed for that purpose. It includes co-operatives and states specifically that "No... person shall be eligible if his income is sufficient to maintain his family, pay operating expenses and taxes on and maintain property owned by him, and discharge the interest on any indebtedness secured by such property." The Jones Bill will help only those who are able to make an initial down payment, or who own livestock or farm implements, and omits co-operatives.

5. Under the Farmers' Security Bill the tenant will find it the easier to purchase land. A Federal Corporation will buy the land from the private owners and will sell the land to the tenant after a five-year lease period. It provides for a 40-year contract at one and one-half per cent interest. Annual payments are limited to one-fourth of the cash value of farm products produced for sale. To insure equitable distribution of funds the corporation determines farm population and tenancy on the basis of latest U.S. Census. County committees of farmers must certify all land, its value, and the tenant purchaser.

The Jones Bill provides for direct purchase of land from present owner by the tenant. Repayment must be made in 30 years at 3 per cent interest. The Secretary of Agriculture determines farm population and the extent of tenancy. The county committee (see answer to third question) must approve tenant, farm, and its value.

6. The Farmers' Security Bill provides that the Corporation will operate in only those states which require written landlord-tenant contracts, compensation to tenants and croppers for improvements, permission to tenants and croppers to quit leased land on reasonable notice, and "... further guarantees... to insure the security and civil rights of farm tenants, sharecroppers, and farm laborers." The Jones Bill does not bring any pressure to bear on the states to improve tenant legislation.

Bechtold Leads Discussion On International Peace


- Eugene Bechtold of Chicago led the third weekly discussion group of Commonwealth College's 1937 summer session, July 12 to 17, in a study of the last twenty years of the American labor movement, as it affects and as it is affected by international peace.

Beginning with a study of the problems created for American labor by the entry of the United States government into the World War in 1917, Bechtold traced the international developments leading to the present world struggle for peace. A leading labor educator in Chicago, Bechtold based the week's discussion on his personal experiences in the American labor movement during the last twenty years.

Study Peace Leaders

The highlight of the week's discussion was a study of the organizations and individuals leading the present drive to mobilize the masses of the American people in the struggle to maintain international peace. Particular emphasis was given to a study of the history and development of such organizations as the American League Against War and Fascism and the Emergency Peace Campaign, with an analysis of the part played by these organizations in the international scene.

Also considered by the discussion group was the role which could be played for peace by the organized ranks of the American workers through the American Federation of Labor and the Committee for Industrial Organization.

Do You Know That...

- An intensive campaign to bring many of the 800,000 federal employees into the United Federal Workers Union of America has been launched by the C.I.O. Only executives with the right to hire and fire will be excluded.

- Commonwealth College has the best labor library in the country.

- Charges by Tom Girdler of "irresponsibility" against the C.I.O. were dismissed as quite unproven by the Federal Mediation Board in its report to Secretary of Labor Perkins.

- The total membership of the C.I.O. unions in New England is now approaching 200,000.

- The A.F. of L. achieved an increase of 622,664 in membership during the last ten months of the drive for organization.

Discuss Role of American People

In discussing the influence exercised by the American people on the general world situation, Bechtold stated: "We in America, living in one of the more advanced countries in the world today, can play a decisive role in the struggle to maintain world peace. We must strive to win the American government for cooperation with those world forces today striving to secure the enforcement of international peace. Our slogan should be: 'Keep America out of war by keeping war out of the world.'"

The final session of the week was devoted to a study of the effect of the struggle to form a united American labor movement on international peace.

Henderson Talks on U. S. S. R.

Preceding Bechtold, Arch Henderson, also active in labor education in Chicago, led the discussion on the international scene during the week of July 5. Henderson devoted his study to an exposition on the developments in the U. S. S. R., and their effect upon the international scene. Other subjects dealt with by Henderson during the week's discussion were: Cooperative Farming in the Soviet Union and the new Soviet Constitution.

Henderson devoted two hours to analysis of the provisions of the new Constitution.
SOUTHERN SEMINAR OF R. AND L. F. SPENDS 2 DAYS AT COMMONWEALTH

Group Visits College As Part of Four-Week Tour Through Southern States

TEN MEMBERS of the southern seminar of the Religion and Labor Foundation spent July 21 at Commonwealth College, holding conferences with administrative officers, members of the faculty, and the student body.

Eighteen, including ministers, college and high school teachers, a Y. W. C. A. secretary, university students, and industrial and office workers, have participated to date in the first half of the Religion and Labor Foundation's four-week field trip, studying current developments and trends in various parts of the country.

After a three-day series of conferences in Washington with Resettlement Administration and Department of Labor officials, progressive legislators, and various union leaders, including John L. Lewis of the Committee for Industrial Organization, the group toured the Tennessee Valley, stopping at Norris, the Cumberland Homesteads, Chattanooga, the Highlander Folk School, and Muscle Shoals.

The problems studied by the seminar concerned the relocalization of natural resources and the current efforts to organize southern industrial workers.

Leaving the Tennessee Valley, the group entered the sharecropper country, spending a week-end at the Delta Co-operative Farm at Hillhouse, visiting typical milltowns, and holding a series of inter-racial conferences at Little Rock on problems of industrial workers.

On leaving Commonwealth the group planned to visit resettlement projects in eastern Arkansas, and holding a series of inter-racial conferences at Hillhouse.

The group will then proceed to Michigan where four days will be spent in Lansing, Flint, and Detroit in conferences with Governor Murphy, Horner Martin, local ministers, Chamber of Commerce representatives, auto manufacturers, and auto workers.

The group which visited Commonwealth is one of two traveling seminars being conducted by the Religion and Labor Foundation this summer. Harold L. Lunger of New Haven, Connecticut, minister and Foundation associate secretary, headed the group visiting Commonwealth.

The second seminar, held under the leadership of Wiliard Uphaus, executive secretary of the Foundation, will begin a four-week study of the industrial, labor, and political problems of the pacific northwest.

Sanford Speaks On Industrialization Of the South

M. R. SANFORD, labor historian and faculty member of Commonwealth College, addressed an augmented audience of students, faculty, and visiting members of the Religion and Labor Foundation's traveling economic seminar July 21 on the Industrialization of the South.

Marvin pointed out the inducements offered northern manufacturers by local southern chambers of commerce, under the slogan, "A Mill a Week," to bring their factories and industries south today.

"This exodus of northern manufacturers south," Marvin stated, "aided in transforming a previously agricultural region into a haven of refuge for manufacturers, the chief attractions being the primacy of cheap labor, especially in the cotton textile industry, and the exploitation of energy resources, namely, water power and electric current."

Marvin then dealt with the effect of the migration of northern industry to the South on the entire social and economic life of the rural population, now transformed into city workers and forced to live in company towns in extreme poverty and degradation.

Approaching the question of "wage differentials," which have been used as an explanation by southern industrialists for the low wages paid southern workers, Marvin showed by quoting statistics and survey reports that living costs for workers in the South, in almost all cases, are not sufficiently lower to justify the differential.

On Saturday, July 24, as a follow-up to his previous discussion, Marvin lectured on "The Effects of Growth in Industrialization and the tasks which it has created for the southern worker. In his Saturday lecture, Marvin showed how the migration of northern industry stimulated the growth of A. F. of L. craft unions in the building and printing trades and industrial unions of lumber workers. Marvin stated that the pre-war South possesses a proud tradition of militant and progressive unionism which has proved a sound base for the growing southern labor movement of today.

VOTE OF THANKS

A vote of thanks is extended by Commonwealth to our old friend, A. A. Knight of Waldron, Arkansas, for his gift of one dozen hand-split and hand-shaved ax handles.

In a note accompanying his gift, Friend Knight says: "The bitterest drop in my cup is that I am not able to do a thousand times more for the cause that is nearest and dearest to my heart, your cause, Labor's cause."

Books Needed By Library

From Bryan to Stalin, by William Z. Foster.

The Legal Foundations of Capitalism, by John R. Commons.

Eyes on Japan, by General Victor A. Yanakhtov.

Japan's Feet of Clay, by Frieda Utley.


Three Comrades, by Erich Remarque.

Social Security, by Maxwell Stewart.