Campus Teachers Union Backs Ban on Poll Tax

Legislation for democracy "is how Commonwealth College Local 191 of the American Federation of Teachers, whose motto is "Education for Democracy," characterizes Senator Higginbotham's senate bill 200 which would abolish Arkansas' hated poll tax.

In calling for state-wide support of the measure, especially from organized labor, the local's statement to the legislature now considering the bill declared:

"That dollar-a-vote tax is a vicious anachronism that places property rights above human rights. It hampers those who are propertyless and therefore too dollarless to pay the tax from enjoying the constitutional privilege of voting:"

"All progressive Arkansans and their organizations must therefore rally forth at once to demand passage of S. B. 200, thus strengthening American democracy in our own state and for the entire population."

MIMEO HANDBOOKS ON SALE AFTER MARCH 31

Twenty-five fact-studded pages of a "Handbook of Mimeograph Technique" are now being prepared at Commonwealth by Bill Stencil, graphic arts instructor. "You don't have to be an artist to become a good mimeograph technician," declares Stencil. On this premise his booklet will provide all the ABC's of quick, simple and cheap mass reproduction of educational and advertising material used by unions and the labor movement. Formulæ and abundant illustrations will explain to workers in such groups how they can meet their mimeo needs with almost as little as a shoestring and hairpin.

Contents include the "what" and "how" of the mimeo process, layout, use of the mimeoscope, cutting of stencils, cartooning and lettering, color work, and care of equipment. Almost costless home manufacture of everything but paper is shown too. Horizontal copies may be secured at 25 cents a piece by prepaid orders to the college.

NATIONWIDE IRE AT SEDITION BILL WINS OVER MANY LIBERAL SOLONS

1937 CATALOGUE JUST OUT

COMMONWEALTH'S new catalogue for the spring quarter opening on March 29th is just off the press with many important revisions.

Extensive information is provided on the purpose of the college, its method of operation, labor library, tuition cost, campus life, trade union basis and by no means least, courses. A comprehensive description of all 13 courses offered in 1937 is available to prospective students only through the catalogue.

Copies may be obtained free by writing to Charlotte Moskowitz, executive-secretary.

Students Should Register Now for Spring Quarter

Only six weeks from today Commonwealth's spring quarter will open with a full offering of 13 courses for farm and labor organizers, devoted mainly to students preparing for activity in the South.

Since scores of interested queries about classes have come in from prospective students, many from southern states, early registration is urged to permit ample time for campus preparations by March 29th, the beginning date. Applications and requests for further information on the college should be sent at once.

A limited number of partial or entirely free scholarships may soon be available, but those anxious to attend next term can best assure themselves a place by immediately seeking aid from their unions or other groups and sending in an application blank. These forms will be sent upon request.

Addition of one more experienced instructor to the spring faculty is expected to be announced shortly.

Descriptions of each course given in 1937 are provided in the new Commonwealth
ORGANIZATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS INUNDATE GOVERNOR, HOUSE, SENATE WITH PROTESTS!

INTRODUCTION of State Representative Horton's confused and sensation-seeking bill—purporting to outlaw "the teaching of foreign doctrines of government" and the teaching of the "doctrine of free love for the purpose of encouraging the adoption of such an order" (sic)—has thrown hundreds of protests into the legislative mail-boxes. Not only the 5,000 houses of the legislature, but Governor Bailey as the possible final vetar or signer of the bill—have been inundated with spontaneous protests from organizations and individuals in all parts of the country: labor organizations, juridical groups, teachers' locals, cultural clubs, parent-teachers' clubs, political parties.

From the copies we have received of these protests, it seems to us that the cumulative criticism is hardly a "scoop," or a comma of H. R. 18's standing. Every letter has drawn its case and made its point; but we have space in this issue for quotations from only a few. These few will, however, show how actively influential are those who know what Commonwealth stands for, and the broad democratic issues on which their resentment, and their protests to the legislature, are based.

Washington, D. C. . .

At a quarter dinner of the Washington Branch of the American Civil Liberties Union late in January, attended by more than forty members of 20 members of Congress, a resolution condemning the favorable reporting of the bill by the Educational Committee of the Arkansas Legislature, was unanimously passed and forwarded to Governor Bailey and to the legislature. The letter was transmitted further commenting: "This type of legislation (has) a very much wider influence than in the immediate area in which it is applied, and... being connected with the principle of academic freedom in its universal application, we must protest whenever we see a threat to that principle."

At this same meeting, speeches on civil liberties were delivered by Senator Joseph C. O'Malley of Wyoming, Congressman Maury Maverick of Texas, Congressman John T. Bernard of Minnesota, and former Governor Walter M. Pierce of Oregon. The resolution was prepared following the reading of an appeal on behalf of Commonwealth College by Mrs. Caroline O'Day, Representative-at-Large from New York.

Mrs. O'Day expressed complete sympathy with the Commonwealth appeal on the grounds, among others, that the organization of which she is an active member—the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom—has, in recent months, been similarly accused of advocating and practicing free love, nudism and communism.

Juridical Ass'n. . .

Speaking for the International Juridical Association, New York City, Jabez Polier, executive director of the association, presented the Arkansas officials on January 27, as follows:

"To those outside of Arkansas the recent conviction for peculation of Deputy Sheriff Peacher, and the questionable procedure in connection with the conviction for rape of the two Negroes, Rabbles-Cartou and Jim X. Caruthers, would indicate that the use of force and violence is far more of a threat to the people of Arkansas than is the teaching of 'the doctrine of communism or any foreign doctrine of government.' As attorneys interested in the rights of labor, our experience has taught us that repressive legislation, such as H. R. 18, is not genuinely intended to prevent the teaching of the specific doctrine prohibited. It is rather intended and used to interfere with the unionizing and strike activities of the workers. The Tenent Farmers Union in Arkansas has begun an intensive organizational campaign and it was in connection with this that Deputy Sheriff Peacher's criminal conduct was brought to light. The bill to which we are expressing our opposition will not serve to prevent violence but can be used to prevent union activities not the untrammeled teaching of ideas concerning the labor movement. This is all the more apparent from the wording of the bill, which is so vague as to bring within its terms any theoretical discussion of communism or foreign doctrines of government by an individual or any group."

"It would seem that a strict enforcement of the criminal law would be a far more effective check against violence than the proposed legislation."

Francis J. Gorman . . .

According to Francis J. Gorman, vice-president of the United Textile Workers of America: "It has been my experience in the labor movement—and this goes back some twenty years—that lawlessness, 'vi

olence, 'immorality' and other such popular working class attributes stem from ignorance and desperation—when they are found at all in the ranks of organized labor. More often than not, we have discovered that lawlessness and violence is actually perpetrated among the ranks of workers by hired hooligans, most of whom are totally uneducated and unaware of what their real roles are. Contrariwise, when workers have had the benefit of training and study they have tended to become very constructive influences in the mills, factories and on farms and plantations... The graduates of Commonwealth College are not 'menees' to society, either socially or morally. In my experience, workers who have been trained at this school have turned out to be very constructive influences in the labor movement."

Rural Workers . . .

And from Donald Henderson, secretary-treasurer of Agricultural and Rural Workers Union, "No one can prevent the millions of agricultural workers in the South from handing together to improve their conditions. Bills such as the one proposed by Herron Horton can only result in turning a peaceful trade union development into a disorganized, sporadic, blind and violent movement."

The Socialist Party, through its national executive secretary, Roy E. Hirtz, issued a formal protest, calling upon all other organizations to join in protesting against the bill as a "vicious attack against academic freedom in Arkansas." Formal protests, letters or telegrams, were also sent in by leaders of the Farm-Labor Progressive Federation of Wisconsin, Veterans of Industry, teachers and writers' locals.

W. E. M. KOLDOY, educational director of the Young Men's Hebrew Association, New York City, stated in his protest that "as one engaged in adult education, (he) is naturally interested in seeing that no adult education agency that has so fine a reputation in the educational field should be unjustly eliminated" and added that he was taking the matter up with the Adult Education Department of Columbia University.

Letters, Telegrams . . .

Letters and telegrams have been pouring in from individuals in all walks of life—a Wall Street lawyer and a New Mexico geologist; nationally known labor leaders and ministers of the gospel; social service executives; a justice of the peace and a vice-president of a large commercial concern; from the parents of former students and
former students themselves. Every angle of the bill has been considered, according to the predominant interests of the writers; and we imagine that, by now, young Representative Horton must feel as though he is holding a somewhat tattered document in his hand.

For example, Samuel W. Liske, lawyer of Kansas City, Missouri, submitted a seven page brief for the guidance and advice of the Arkansas legislature (in the Liberty League effort of last year), citing a number of decisions as to the unconstitutionality of similar measures driven down by the United States Supreme Court during the last ten or fifteen years. Furthermore, he points out, many things are already held "in communism" in the state of Arkansas: the state capitol, all government buildings and property, state roads, parks, schools, and so on. He continues: "The title, and the 'wholesome' clause and Section 1... by their expression prohibiting 'foreign doctrines of government for the purpose of overthrowing the government of the United States and the state of Arkansas,' impliedly sanction native doctrines for such effect and purpose... The prohibition of 'free love'... is curious. It does not expressly prohibit common law marriages, though such marriages have been common especially among the poorest sharecroppers of Arkansas who lacked the money to pay for a state or local license or preacher's fee... For those who cannot afford the usual fees, the Arkansas legislature might be of material aid by legislating to increase their standard of living. (That would, ipso facto, reduce the probability that the people of Arkansas might resort to revolution.)"

New Mexico...

A prominent geologist of New Mexico, who stopped over at Commonwealth last month, writes, describing his enthusiastic impression of the school and its work in the labor movement—adding cogent comparisons with other great movements of history whose leaders were persecuted: "Jesus Christ was... a dangerous revolutionary feared (and finally crucified) by the small group in power. He was attacked by their priests and the Pharisees. (Is it hard to guess which side the Reverend Summers would have been on?) Jesus was a 'communist':... He said unto the rich young man, 'Go, sell all thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven.' He preached the brotherhood of man; would the Reverend Summers have accused Him of fostering free love?"

Former Instructors...

William Cunningham, state director of the Federal Writers' Project in Oklahoma, and a former teacher (for seven years) at Commonwealth, forwarded emphatic protests which are, in part, as follows: "Free love never has been practiced or advocated at Commonwealth. The school is anti-fascist, which means that it stands for our democratic form of government as opposed to the type of dictatorship that has been established by violence in Germany and Italy. No teacher or student at Commonwealth advocates violence... Commonwealth is being attacked only because it has studied the plight of the tenant farmers of eastern Arkansas and has attempted to aid those farmers. Two years ago these farmers, faced by starvation, organized and discussed all possible means of bettering their conditions. A few of them, the more backward and irresponsible members of the union, were in a mood to avenge themselves on the landlords. Teachers and students of Commonwealth went to eastern Arkansas at that time and used all of their influence against violence. These teachers and students knew that the planters wanted some display of violence so that they would have an excuse to destroy the union. The planters hired rural thugs to break up the members of the Commonwealth delegation.

"In this contest violence is on the other side. The people of the United States know who is advocating violence, and for that reason will stand by Commonwealth now, as they did two years ago..."

Texas...

This from a former Commonwealth instructor, Charles Harris of Dallas, Texas: "I was a special instructor at Commonwealth during the summer of 1933, and both my wife and I can testify that we saw nothing to substantiate the loose charges of free love, nudism, atheism and propaganda for violent overthrow of the government. We had our son with us and felt that the environment of country life and work with stimulating study and discussion was quite advantageous for him. Since that time we have entertained students of Commonwealth at our home in Dallas and have always found them serious minded and con- structive young citizens of whom our country should be proud..."

Another former instructor, now in Tulsa, Oklahoma: "Such acts have been passed in Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy—and the American people have emphatically shown their disapproval of such attacks upon elementary rights in those nations... The 'free love' passages of this act are obviously included only as the traditional 'red her- ring' for the purpose of distracting attention from the subversive purposes of the act..."

Former Students...

And these from former students: Robert R. West, supervisor of two statistical W.P.A. research projects and son of Professor Willis M. West, formerly head of the history department of the University of Minnesota: "Since the charges brought against Commonwealth College include the teaching of communism, I wish to state that I have at no time been a member of the Communist Party, and that my political views and beliefs underwent no radical change while attending Commonwealth College. I was a member of the Minnesota Farmer-Labor Party when I attended the college, and I am today the secretary of our Farmer-Labor Ward Club in the fore­ most political party in Minnesota. I am also a member of Office Workers Union, Local 17,661, affiliated with the A.F. of L., which is not exactly a communist organization.

"I categorically deny that any teacher at Commonwealth ever urged me or my fellow students to use force and violence to overthrow our government. We did discuss the possibilities of peacefully effecting needed economic changes; and it was point­ ed out that no politically dominant and eco­ nomically privileged class ever yielded its power to peaceful persuasion and the re­ sults of the ballot without a certain amount of force and violence on their part. Events in Spain are bearing out this contention... I found the students to be a healthy­ minded, cheerful, intelligent, and very ac­ tive group, and I shall always look back on my days at Commonwealth College as a most stimulating and helpful experience."

Oklahoma...

Another former student, a young woman of Oklahoma City, reviews the general situa­ tion at the school and its work: "The build­ ings were all erected by student labor, the water system was installed by students. The library, which is conceded to be the best la­ bor library in the country, was catalogued by the students. It would be a serious error by the Arkansas legislature to think that they should pass this bill discriminating against a school which is doing such a good job of sending
Former Commons Active
In Cleveland Organization

Success of the recent drive in Cleveland to bring union working conditions to the notoriously low-wage and long-hour packing industry is due in large part to the experience and energy of Ubaldo G. Rich, who was a Commonwealth student in 1927-28 and is now general organizer of the Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butchers Workmen's Union. Only two and a half years ago, he started organizing the retail meat markets; and since that drive started, 90.5 (or 85 percent) of the retail butchers in Cleveland have joined the union, and standards of the trade have thus been materially raised: reduction in working hours, wage increases, seniority rights, and in some instances an agreement to reopen pay negotiations every six months.

Ubaldo Rich has been in the labor movement for many years. When he was only 15, he joined the United Mine Workers, and at 22, was elected president of Local 5257, District 21 (Hatfieldville, Okla.). He learned the butcher trade in his brother's butcher shop, spent a year at Commonwealth, then went on to Ohio to work in packing plants there.

Commenting in an interview published in People's Press, on the improvement in working conditions among the organized Rich said, "I don't know how I can express to you how much I have found able to do. The success of any union rests not only on the shoulders of the organizer, but largely on the shoulders of the members. There is a great deal to be done and I can do it if they help me."

SPRING Quarter— from page 1
catalogue, mentioned elsewhere in this FORTNIGHTLY.

Estimate of accomplishments made this winter despite many legislative and pulpil attacks upon the college can be derived from this comment of Cullen Ott, student body president: "Students and instructors alike we vowed to each other at the outset of 1937 that nothing would sway us from our one and only task—energetic and effective preparation for active, lifelong work in the progressive labor and farm movements. This self-promise has been carried out so far, and we vow again that it shall be fulfilled when the present quarter ends.

"All of our students have without exception made very real and obvious gains that will show well for the time spent here when we go back among our workmates. None of us will have ever left the planter-employer face of workers' and farmers' education as a southern toilers' training center."

Language Dictionaries Are Urgent Need of Library

UGENT need for serviceable, fairly recent French, German, Spanish, and Italian dictionaries is voiced by Henry Black, Commonwealth librarian.

Friends or former students of the college who can donate such permanently useful volumes will win Henry's undying appreciation, not to mention gratitude of those many library patrons who continue to hound him vainly for dictionaries.

PROTESTS Flood Capital—from p. 3
out young people who are able to take an intelligent interest in labor conditions and labor problems."

J. E. Dahn, Hot Springs, South Dakota: "The manner in which those people, students and faculty, live, work and study—cooperatively and cheerfully, though handicapped by poverty and even a measure of persecution—is no less than inspiring to any informed person with a social conscience. . . . I had understood that some of the very finest of doctrines were in vogue in other lands before we were ever heard of. Surely neither Socrates, Plato or Aristotle, nor even Jesus Christ, were native Americans, And all of them promulgated doctrines."

And Mena . . .

And finally, a word or two from one of the many letters sent in by geographically "close friends" of Commonwealth—from the town of Mena and the surrounding country. Mrs. C. H. Dean, of Mena: "We have been going out to the college on an average, possibly, of once a month, for the last six years. In that time I think I have met all of the teachers and most of the students. I have found more real Christianity there and more earnest thought than is to be found in the services of some of our churches. . . ."

needs replenishment for the fight to preserve labor training in the South. Contributions should be rushed to Miss Mossowitz.

Protests (with copies to Commonwealth) must continue to the speaker of the house, the president of the senate and Governor Bailey.

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By Student and Teacher Labor

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