OFFICE METHODS TO BE ON CURRICULUM

Executive Secretary to Handle Course in Labor Secretarial Work

The mimeograph, as well as the banner and the soap box, is a weapon in the struggle for a better social order.

Other humble but telling weapons are the addressograph, the mailing list, the dues book, the cash book and ledger, the minute book, the financial guide, the filing case and the financial report.

A course in office methods, to be given for the first time at Commonwealth during the fall quarter beginning October 2, will take up the art of using these and other related and useful tools.

The purpose of the course is to train the student to handle more efficiently the office duties which are so likely to be thrust upon a worker in the labor movement. It aims to be beneficial to anyone likely to fill the post of recording, corresponding or financial secretary of a union or to have charge of sending out letters, statements and appeals for a workers' or farmers' organization.

THE HOLE-IN-THE-WALL OFFICE

Conditions prevailing in a small office where one person has most of the responsibility will be kept in mind throughout the course.

The course will be under the direction of Charlotte Moskowitz, executive secretary of Commonwealth. Other faculty members will contribute from time to time out of their specialized knowledge and experience.

Students entering the course will be expected to know typewriting or to take the course in typing before enrolling.

The office methods course will cover one quarter. Because of the variety of topics to be covered, it will necessarily be rather cursory. It will provide, however, a guide, the filing case

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COOLEY INVITED TO JOIN COLLEGE STAFF

Former Official of Cooperative League May Teach at Commonwealth

Oscar Cooley, former executive secretary of the Cooperative League, has been invited to join the Commonwealth staff. Although final arrangements have not been made, it is considered likely that he will offer a course during the fall quarter in consumers' cooperation.

Cooley, who is editor of "Co-operation", the official organ of the Cooperative League, will continue to edit the paper at Commonwealth. "Co-operation", he says in a letter to Lucien Koch, "as a method of action by the working people to gain control of the tools of production, is particularly important in America, since the people's cause here is so closely linked up with the struggle of the farmer, and it is the farmer who has made most progress in cooperation. The course I would plan would be largely consumers' cooperation, since that is the revolutionary and significant kind, but I should try to throw a few spotlights on producers' and credit cooperation as well."

Cooley was brought up as a farmer and has taught one year in high school. For the past seven years he has been doing editorial work in New York City.

The addition of Cooley to the teaching staff is a step in the direction of specialization planned by the faculty last spring. His work will be largely with advanced students who plan to specialize in the work of organizing and conducting cooperatives.

HAY IN DANGER

Fall rains are menacing Commonwealth's hay crop, according to Ray Koch, acting farm manager. About six tons of grass hay have been put up, but most of the cultivated hay is still uncured.
STATE COLONY

By SARA BROWN
Commonwealth Student

Here is a three-dimensional picture of one of the institutions where we care for unfortunate. In this story — although not at the institution — inmates are regarded as human beings.

—Editor.

In her room at the State Colony for Feeble-Minded Males was a window placed squarely in the middle of the wall. After supper when she was fatigued and lay down for a while, she looked up now and then to see a rectangle of peacock blue sky rimmed with the great flat frame of cream-painted wall. And then along toward eight o'clock, when she was reading or sewing, came the mournful song of the half-wits below, harmonizing richly or plaintively, piping and chanting a song to God. She wondered if their sores and swellings hurt as dreadfully as they looked.

The singing was merely sad and strange at first — as sad and strange as the older men of the idiot cottage whom she saw blinking away the flies when she went past on her way to the school house; as unreal as Batty Baxter, the brightest of the idiots, who sang after her across the stretch of campus, "Halloo lil gal! Lil gal has pretty dress." He sang this nearly every day.

They were finished now with the song to God, and she heard the faint stir of their undressing and the shoving of furniture, until the radio below was turned on.

Every other Saturday the boys had Wild West movies in the evening. And on the Saturdays in between, there was Farm. Ten cents was given them by the state, but some were lucky enough to have extra spending money from home. The teachers and office helped arranged boxes of candy across a long counter. About one-third the store opened.

The idiots came to the store first and they had to be led and pushed and held up by their attendants. They could not have any candy wrapped in paper. They might eat the paper. Stumbling, drooling, blinking, and with random gestures, they vaguely indicated, if they could at all indicate, whether they preferred licorice or chocolate drops, or perhaps mixtures of peppermint sticks, suckers, orange slices, round hard candies, or anything else on the counter.

Someone said to her: "I felt like crying, too, when I came here."

And then she thought that the idiots were the only human beings at the colony, or maybe in the entire world, because they hadn't even the ability to reflect on a week's desire and pain about the candy. Nor had they any need to place it in a scale of values where the immediate and physical sensations gave all value to life. They were beyond the pale of idiotic reflection on purpose and meaning of life — which idiotic state, she concluded, could only make for happiness. She wondered if their sores and swellings hurt as dreadfully as they looked.

The imbeciles came in next and they were mostly younger than the idiots. Among the latter were quite a few men between the ages of thirty and fifty. The imbeciles were more vigorous, their sores more obvious, their gestures of no uncertain character. They were finished now with the song to God and it rose, the epitome of futile effort, through the half-wits below, harmonizing richly or plaintively, singing a song to God and it rose, the epitome of futile effort, through the window.

She could have sworn that the light of reason shone in eyes here and there in the blue-overalled group. Remarkable, that efficiency of the colony psychologist. Idiot IQ to 25. Imbecile IQ, 25 to 50. Moron IQ, 50 to 70. Borderlines and there they were lined up in front of the candy counter, every one with an imbecile IQ and an imbecile humanity. One could make correlation between IQ's and gestures. Imbecile smirking was — well just imbecile smirking at an IQ of 40. They too sang "Now I lay me...". That meant they could memorize a little. Their greed was ugly, she noted. They snatched and grimaced and cast furtive, rapacious looks. Their gestures and expressions were caricatures of the gestures and expressions that she knew intimately among her friends.

The last imbecile walked out in all the swagger of his caricature sex appeal and following him came the little group from the moron cottages. The small boys, whom she taught hand-work and later reading and writing, led the group. And compared with the rest who had already had their candy, these were a joy to behold. One of these were Negroes, and their black eyes were wild and ariile with the realization of a week's dreams about candy. The school boys called her by name, since she was their teacher and also had some of the power of distribution in her hands. They knew her better than the office girls because she scolded and yelled at them every day and played baseball with them and was sometimes sent into a blind when they told long, heartbreaking lies about their adventures in the "outside."

Elwood Miller was there, taller than the other children whose small and stunted bodies fit their mental ages much more closely than their chronological ages. Elwood Miller was the blackest Negro and had the romantic life of the kleptomaniac in the "outside. He was the brightest one, being a borderliner, and secretly he was her pet. He was proud and sensitive and competent. He could put the other children in their places by a contemptuous "Ah, you're feeble-minded anyhow!" He accented the word "feeble-minded" when he said "feeble-minded." Or he would appeal to her and embarrass her very much at first by asking, "He's feeble-minded, ain't he, Miss Brown?" Whereupon often followed frantic and resentful appeals of resignation: "What is feeble-minded, Miss Brown?" "Am I feeble-minded?" "Ah, we's feeble-minded, anyhow."

Elwood could read and once when he went to get some raffia from a large pasteboard to her. Half read the words of the address on the side of the box: "State Colony for Feeble-Minded Males."

Sam was with the school boys, too. He knew that he was of normal intelligence but was insane and the teachers talked of transferring him to the state insane asylum. He was about fourteen years old, almost as black as Elwood, and the most beautiful school boy. When he took the candy his eyes were cast toward the ground because he felt the childishness and petty charlat-
A SUNNY afternoon. Long lines of taxis and limousines are drawn up in front of Pier 78. The ocean liner Santa Maria is being commissioned with great ceremony. The giant steel hulk glitters. Every piece of metal gleams from long hours of polishing. Flags fly from the masts, fore and aft. The crew, in spick and span white uniforms, directs visitors formally and briskly. They are tired from days of hard labor getting the ship in shape for the occasion. Officers strut about, usually explaining the prettiest girls the mechanism of some intricate part of the monster’s anatomy.

Back on the street, beyond the line of the elite, their limousines, and taxis, is drawn up a cordon of mounted police. Patrolmen also stand about trying to act important and official. A crowd gazes longingly at the proceedings. Old wrinkled Italian women comment on the clothes of a current debutante. Bums stare and watch for glimpses of the crew. They look with envy at these men and wish they had such jobs. Others, once economically secure, glare in hatred of those who are still secure, formerly their allies.

Old Gus leans against a wall in the background. He hates these new ships, these usurpers of the sea. He recalls the good old days and wishes he were back on the Mary Ann, as trim a sailing vessel as ever graced a port. Next to him, against the wall, leans Mike. He smells of liquor. He is still trying to forget. He also hates the ship, and the plutocrats in their shiny cars and pressed pants. They symbolize that which he has lost, the security which gets fainter in the past and in his hopes.

ON "GETTING AWAY"—Once in a while at Commonwealth you find it necessary to "get away" for a few days. Perhaps you are appointed a member of a delegation to go to Fort Smith and buy a suit.

Going to Fort Smith is not such a simple matter as it might seem. You get out your only suit and discover that it has spots of mold on it. It needs cleaning and pressing, but that is a lot of trouble, just for a trip to Fort Smith.

You discover that your dress-up shoes have mold on them and you spend half an hour fixing them up. But when you put them on you discover to your amazement that they are too small. You have been going barefooted, or wearing boots, and your feet have spread. You decide to be sensible and wear your boots. With pants legs over them no one can tell they are boots.

You dress up, and the effect is disappointing. Your pants have a hanger crease in them just above the knees. Yet out your only shirt wasn’t ironed, and has no button at the collar. Your necktie has been reposing (so you discovered) and your dress-up shoes have mold on them. You put the suit away and buy a button-down cotton shirt.

You step out upon the sidewalk, dressed to a labor convention only if the extreme left wing had control.

You pull your shirt together, as a weak gesture toward respectability, but your proletarianization is complete. Once again you despise the middle class. And now to look at mules. Milk spots on your pants ought to be an advantage when you are buying mules. Mule dealers will assume that you know a ring bone when you see one, and they will be afraid to try to put anything over on you.

By the time you get to Fort Smith you have developed considerable self-confidence. The hanger creases seem to have disappeared, for that part. You feel that you look for all the world like a prosperous out-of-town buyer. But Fort Smith is a lot bigger than you remembered it. You conceal your nervousness in traffic. Skirts are longer.

You fall back into your bourgeois habits of thought. Packards look nice—only what you thought, in your rustic ignorance, was a Packard turns out to be a new Chevrolet. Perhaps it might have been better, after all, to remain a liberal and drive one (with a blue eagle on the windshield).

You step out upon the sidewalk, confident that at least you look like a liberal—until you catch sight of yourself in a street mirror. Street mirrors were never very friendly, even when you were prosperous. In contrast to bedroom mirrors they are realists. They show you up for what you are, down to the last whisker you missed.

One glance in this Fort Smith mirror is enough. The spots of mold on your suit look exactly like milk. Your boots are boots after all, and no one with normal eyesight could mistake them. The hanger creases have remained, but the creases put in at the cleaning shop the last time this poor suit was in to be pressed, have disappeared without a trace. Your buttonless shirt is open down the front, exposing your chest, and the necktie still plainly reveals its behind-the-dresser conditioning.

You are a proletarian if there ever was one. You would be admitted as a delegate to a labor convention only if the extreme left wing had control.

You pull your shirt together, as a weak gesture toward respectability, but your proletarianization is complete. Once again you despise the middle class. And now to look at mules. Milk spots on your pants ought to be an advantage when you are buying mules. Mule dealers will assume that you know a ring bone when you see one, and they will be afraid to try to put anything over on you.

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NAME __________________________

ADDRESS ________________________
ARKANSAS FARMERS
ASK FOR ORGANIZER

The article in a recent Fortnightly about Hugh Gore, native Polk County farm organizer, has brought response from other parts of Arkansas from groups wishing his services in the struggle against intolerable living conditions and inadequate relief.

One man writes, "We call ourselves farmers although we make part of our subsistence by farming and the rest making and hauling timbers. There are also a few lumber mills and stave mills scattered about over this county and all of them so far as I know are violating the NRA by running ten hours a day at 15 cents an hour. Our crops are more than half burned up and we won't have more than feed crops are more than half burned up and we won't have more than feed

ever, a thousand and one "helpful hints," as a starting point for the perfection of practice by subsequent experience.

SUBJECTS TAKEN UP
Following are some of the topics included in the course. Each will take from one to six class periods, with outside assignments.

Letter writing
Filing
Mailing lists
Addressographing
Preparing copy
Reading proof
Mimeographing stencils
Routing lecture tours
Simple accounts
Fund-raising
Budgets and financial reports
Bank accounts and business instruments
Chippings
Minutes
Postal guide
World Almanac and other reference books
Visit to circulation department of a newspaper.

THE "KNOWING HOW"

The spirit of the course will be a practical and realistic one. It is based on the conviction that the pioneer in the labor movement will be twice as effective if he has the knack of doing some of those little jobs which must be done but which few know how to do.

Even the psychology of "office relations" will not be neglected. The instructor's idea for the introductory talk contains the suggestion, for example, that comrades who are too prone to disturb office routine by long visits and unprofitable loquacity be "put to work folding, stuffing and addressing envelopes or some such thing."

Thirty-eight Hundred Hours Donated

The thirty-one persons who were on the campus after the close of the summer term had a total of 3822 hours of overtime, all of this accumulated since January 1.

Bert Hodges, ever active carpenter, headed the list with 664 hours. Several others are close to his mark.

Overtime at Commonwealth is that time donated by the worker above the amount of time required by the school. Thousands of hours are thus donated every year.

Commonwealth will have between thirty and forty students for the fall term beginning October 2, according to an estimate of Charlotte Moskowitz. This is an average fall enrollment for Commonwealth.

As usual, students will come from all parts of the nation. The first new student to arrive, Armin F. Shuman, is a Philadelphian who has lived for the past few years in California, New York, Chicago and Philadelphia will be well represented.

Courses offered will include labor problems, world history, Marxism, labor journalism, proletarian literature, farm problems, office methods, typing, impersonal public speaking, labor dramatics, and probably consumers' cooperation. Certain other courses may be arranged upon demand.

The student body for this fall will include a comparatively large number of advanced students. This is in sharp contrast to last fall, when the enrollment broke all records but included very few old students.

CARLSON BACK IN CORINTH

Oliver Carlson, Commonwealth teacher, is once more working in Corinth, Mississippi, as an organizer for the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America. Al Lehman, James Porter and Eugene Morse, students who went with him to aid in organizing at A.C.W. local at Corinth and were later driven out of town by a mob of fifty men, returned to Commonwealth and are now in New York for the vacation period.

After members of the Commonwealth delegation were driven out of Corinth, Secretary Perkins became interested and wired the governor of Mississippi. When Carlson returned to Corinth after this intervention by the governor, the mayor, the city attorney and the aldermen promised him complete protection.

Although a company union has been formed by operators of the Weaver Pants Company, Carlson hopes to reorganize the A.C.W. local, broken up by the reign of terror. He is now doing educational work and has established regular headquarters in Corinth.

NEW BARN BEING USED

All of Commonwealth's crops are being placed in the new barn. This is the first time that the school has had sufficient barn room.

A potato cellar and a new hen house are the chief building needs of the school at the present time.