

collected texts are an essential tool for co-operators to engage the world's Peace (and social justice) movements. Co-operators might well, therefore, use them in pointing out our movement's century-long commitment to active peace work, and of our inclusive, voluntary, co-operative socialist alternatives to the failed authoritarian Marxist models that are still being touted by certain adherents of the pseudo-left.

In the light of the foregoing, I quote from page 34 of Professor Mavrogiannis's text. "Because, we co-operators have the firm conviction that ICA is the only international economic and social organisation which, in spite of the strong impact of the capitalist economy and the disasters caused by two World Wars, has managed to preserve its unity and, overcoming adverse conditions from both sides, exterior and interior, to avoid division or collapse. It has therefore the experience and the right to proceed with the New Economy for further developing the co-operative system, encouraged in that and enhanced as well by the quest of the working and labouring people for decent conditions of work, for social justice and for Universal Peace."

As an indication of the struggle for clarity within the co-operative movement, one can point to the interchange between Danish and Czechoslovakian co-operators at the ICA's 1934 Congress. Such debates serve to show how co-operators through the twentieth century gradually came off the fence with regard to contesting the social injustice that is an ordinate cause of war.

Thus, the Resolution for Peace at the 1995 ICA Congress recalls that ICA Rules call upon member organisations to "contribute to

international peace and security".

This remembrance of a core ICA objective suggests that member co-operative organisations could do well now - in this era of global warfare - to put substantial resources (both material and intellectual) into active peace work.

In so doing, they (we!) would be following the shining example of the International Co-operative Women's Guild at the 1930 ICA Congress, (page 76) which affirmed in both words and actions, "... the conviction of co-operative women that there can be no permanent security for World Peace except in total and universal disarmament and called on the Guilds to collaborate with other organisations for that object."

On page 47, in the reproduced text of the report of the ICA's Congress, 1902, Mr T Bland, the then Vice-Chairman of the Co-operative Wholesale Society, said that he was: "old enough to remember very vividly the disastrous Russian (Crimean) war; and I can see in my mind's eye today many of the men in the streets with arms and legs off."

Today, co-operators - world-wide - see a flood of news reports which prove that, one and a half centuries on, such outrages are now the daily experience of millions throughout the world.

This book, then, is a call to heed the slogan "Co-operation, the hope of the world" and for our Movement to work co-operatively for the true peace that only deep-seated, whole-hearted co-operation can bring.

In summary: for all my reservations about this book's production flaws, this is a valuable resource in humanity's quest for world peace, and I recommend it to all libraries and collections.

The Future of Co-operatives in the European Union at the Threshold of the 21st Century Report on the 14th International Conference of Co-operative Science, Nuremberg 2000

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Reviewed by Jim Craigen

The Future of Co-operatives in the European Union at the Threshold of the 21st Century, edited by Wolfgang Harbrecht, Chair of the Board of the Research Institute for Co-operative Studies at the University of Erlangen-Nuremberg (published 2002) brings together various Papers presented to the 14th

International Conference on Co-operative Science held in Nuremberg in September 2000.

One of the papers then presented was given by our own Ian Snaith on the co-operative movement in the United Kingdom. This report raises some basic issues for co-operatives. Seminal you could say considering the 14th

Conference was attended by over "200 scientists and practising co-operators". For me co-operation somehow calls for more art than science. However, it might be a matter of translation. One speaker did observe that the German translation of the 1995 ICA Statement of Co-operative Identity contains errors which had remained uncorrected.

At this time in European Foreign Policy (if such a thing is possible) New Labour loves to see Britain as a sort of cross-Atlantic bridge spanning from Washington to Brussels in an attempt to make fewer waves. I was therefore the more fascinated by the ideological gulf in Europe between Co-operators in France and Germany. The UK can probably be found somewhere in between.

The fault-line between the French statist attitude and German self-help approach to Co-operation is mapped out only too well in the presentation by Thierry Jeantet on the French idea of the Social Economy and that by Professor Dr Theresia Theurl on the central European concept of the co-operative society as a self-help facility in the tradition of Raiffeisen and Schulze-Delitzsch. I first visited Germany as a teenager and was impressed. A year later in 1959 I went to Paris and was mesmerised! I know now it was a case of style over substance. Germans are serious. The French take themselves seriously.

As every co-operator knows: we are different. The thing is we do not like being pigeon-holed in the private or public sector of the economy. Alas whilst significant to us, a "Co-operative Sector" is insubstantial compared to the big two in terms of capital, employment or technology never mind influence.

Step forward concepts like Third Way, Middle Way, Middle Sector or as the French say *Economie Sociale*. Back in 1998 the European Commission set up a consultative committee for co-operatives, mutual societies, associations and foundations. There were earlier comings and goings in these disparate areas as diverse as non-profit associations and trading businesses run by their customer/members.

The European Commission did not have a spokesman at the conference to speak on attempts to get a European Co-operative Statute, but Dr Hans-Jurgen Schaffland, General Counsel to the German Co-operative and Raiffesisen Confederation, succinctly surveyed the legal terrain in which the

co-operatives in the European Union already operate in fifteen member states, soon to be twenty-five. Dr Hans-H Munkner, University of Marburg, Germany, who also translated many of the conference papers into English, went into greater detail on this in his paper *Development Trends of Co-operative Legislation in European Member States* (all of which are coming from different backgrounds). Pan-European support and recognition of the role of co-operatives is important. Member states may create a favourable climate in which co-operatives can operate. However, co-operation is about spontaneous combustion and common purpose and the state is not best-suited as a surrogate mother.

Somehow reading parts of the Conference Report brought lines of William Shakespeare to mind. One could say some are born into co-operatives. (I was through family membership of a consumer co-operative.) Others achieve co-operation in setting up a co-operative whether for workers, farmers or people wanting housing. Whilst others may have co-operation thrust upon them!

I see a potential danger lurking for unwary co-operators. The day people have co-operation thrust upon them as some kind of state political tool or even European Union handiwork will see collectives not co-operatives.

Co-operatives, certainly those in wholesaling, retailing, banking or insurance and the like need to make a profit. It is what they do with the surplus which contrasts with private companies. Housing co-operatives have to repair roofs and floorboards and employ staff and so costs and income must be in step. Worker co-operatives are not charities either. In fact even charities must pay their way in terms of staff salaries, office accommodation and other expenses before one pound or euro is paid out to beneficiaries!

Some navigational questions face Co-operators who find themselves in the same boat as all other types of organisation vaguely assorted in the Social Economy. Little wonder the Germans with their self-help traditions in banking and rural and other activities have been raising questions on the quayside.

It was a Frenchman, Prof Charles Gide, economist and co-operative philosopher who contended "we must not lose sight of the aim of co-operation which is not so much to destroy private traders as to transform commercial methods and manners."