

The Role of the College: Students Report

NOTES FROM 1980

The following notes are taken from papers submitted through Mr. O O'Brien, Director of Studies at the College, by students of "the class of 1980".

1. FROM PROFESSIONAL STUDIES

FIONA DOUGLAS

(Completed the Certificate in Distributive Management Principles)

I commenced work with the North Eastern Co-operative Society on July 24th 1978 as a Management Trainee with 'O' and 'A' level qualifications. I have received experience in the various aspects of food and non-food retailing and functions of the Society's financial group including control documentation procedures. During the first year of my training I attended a local technical college and was awarded a National Examinations Board for Supervisory Studies Certificate in General Industries.

On January 6th 1980 I commenced a Certificate in Distributive Management Principles course at Stanford Hall, the Co-operative College. The subjects covered in this course are:

Marketing and Merchandising	Law
Personnel Aspects of	Financial Aspects
Distributive Management	Co-operative
Economics	Distribution
Distributive Management	

It is a six month intensive course as opposed to the normal two year day release. I found the continuity of this method, although concentrated study, a more satisfactory learning process than the disjointed pattern of day release. . .

The students are of a very cosmopolitan nature coming from over 30 countries thus making the social life varied and interesting.

This year 6 students studied the C.D.M.P. course, 3 from the North Eastern Society the remainder from Scottish Societies. We attended lectures daily from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. and found the tuition good except that occasionally when short course students arrived the lecturers gave them priorities and the C.D.M.P. group had to study on our own. This resulted in fairly heavy pressure towards the end of the course attempting to cover the subjects in the syllabus.

Interesting aspects of the course were visits. . . On a more practical note we engaged in business games, interviewing techniques and made an audio visual presentation of a fictional Crown Court case.

In conclusion the C.D.M.P. was an interesting and varied course which I am sure will prove useful to me in my future career.

2. FROM SOCIAL AND CO-OPERATIVE STUDIES

MELVYN BATTERSBY

(Completed the Diploma in Political, Economic and Social Studies)

If a few years ago anyone had told me that the extension of Co-operative principles was fundamental to the socialist advance, I would have replied shyly: "what are the Co-operative principles that you refer to?" Only now after completing a two-year full-time adult educational course at the Co-operative College for the Diploma in Political, Economic and Social Studies (Dip.PESS) awarded by Nottingham University, can I confidently and truthfully say: yes, I understand what the Co-operative Movement stands for, and endorse that Co-operative principles and Co-operative activity must play an important role in any future socialist society.

What I maintain then is that the Dip.PESS course has enabled me to understand a great deal more of the past and present political and economic complexities. Moreover, in addition to teaching me the history of the Co-operative Movement and merits of Co-operation, the course has also enabled me to reach a conclusion that the future of Co-operation will be one of prosperity.

Behind the background of Government education cuts, the Co-operative Movement can be justifiably proud of its contribution towards adult education. The Co-operative College on behalf of the Co-operative Movement is fulfilling the Rochdale Pioneers call to extend popular education.

The Dip.PESS which is similar to courses, for example, at Ruskin College, Coleg Harleg and the newly established Northern College, but has the additional merit of a greater concentration on Co-operation. In addition it allows the student in the second year to write a dissertation on certain aspects of Co-operation and does I believe make a significant contribution to the Labour, Trade Union and Co-operative Movement.

The Students?

A substantial minority of adult students having first completed the Dip.PESS course do become Co-operative "activists" either by working full time for the Co-operative Movement or through voluntary activity. Others now occupy high positions in other parts of the Labour Movement. Many other adult students, however, before seeking full-time employment go to University; thereby using the Dip.PESS as a "gateway course".

The value and success of the course therefore speaks for itself. Furthermore what the Dip.PESS has provided for working-class adults like myself is a second chance of further education.

Most adult students who have completed, or are in the process of completing the Dip.PESS course, are from a working-class background; and before coming to the Co-operative College were in full-time employment. I, for example, from leaving school in 1965 at the age of fifteen, until 1978, worked underground as a coalminer.

While working down the coal-mine I had taken an active part in the Trade Union Movement and

local politics. However it became apparent to me that in order to contribute more effectively in the Labour Movement I had to acquire a greater body of knowledge. My decision therefore to apply to the Co-operative College for the Dip.PESS was not an accident; my political and trade-union activity had made the decision for me.

The Course - the Future?

The Dip.PESS course is composed of: Economics; Economic and Social History (1700-1939); Social Psychology; Political Theory and Institutions; Industrial Relations and Co-operation and the Co-operative Movement. It has much variety therefore, providing each student with a greater understanding of the wide-range of social science subjects.

The future for the Dip.PESS course is optimistic. There are plans afoot which, if implemented, will restructure the course, allowing the second year student to specialize on a number of subjects which he/she finds particularly interesting. I believe, along with fellow students, and the lecturers involved in the social science subjects, that this new Dip.PESS will increase the attractiveness of the course for the adult student.

The residential Co-operative College is having to continually expand its educational and training facilities to meet the growing demand for the professional leaders required in the world-wide Co-operative Movement. However, I hope that the Co-operative Movement still finds it essential to continue the Dip.PESS course; a

course I found extremely satisfying; a course that allowed me and my fellow adult students a second bite of the educational cherry; a course where I acquired a Co-operative education and which in due time I hope to repay by putting into practice Co-operative ideas.

I will do this alongside other hard working and committed "activists" in the Co-operative, and other Labour Organisations.

3. FROM CO-OPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT OVERSEAS

J. D. BATRA

(Completed the Diploma in Co-operative Development and Management)

Born on the first day of the first month of 1938 in Pakistan - British India, I migrated to India in August 1947 when India achieved Independence. I graduated from Punjab University in Economics and obtained Master's degree in Economics (1960) as well as in Political Science (1962) . . .

I joined National Co-operative Development Corporation in 1964, a statutory organization created under an Act of Parliament, charged for planning, promoting and financing programmes for production, processing and marketing of agricultural produce and notified commodities through Co-operative Societies. Now I am Deputy Director,

in charge of the project office, Patna state and deal with promotional and development aspects of the Co-operative programmes. . .

I believe that Co-operation is an alternative means of organising the society and it forms an important segment of the social framework. The Movement can find solutions to the problems in the present crisis in the economy of countries. This belief has been confirmed at the International Co-operative Training Centre, where the participants from various Asian, African and Pacific countries are pooling their experiences gained in serving their respective Co-operative Movements and this experience is getting richer and supplemented by getting training at the International Co-operative Training Centre and many lessons from the British Co-operative experience are learnt to be applied for improving the Movements back in their own countries after training.

Need for Co-operative Teaching

The major thrust of the economic policy in the less developed countries and developing countries is, at present, on achieving substantial progress towards full employment, eradication of poverty and the creation of a more equal society. The principal objectives of planning of various countries are defined as:-

1. The removal of unemployment and under-employment.
2. An appreciable rise in the standards of living of the poorest sections of the population.

3. Provision by the State of some of the basic needs of the people in these income groups, like clean drinking water, adult literacy, elementary education, health care, rural roads, rural housing for the landless and minimum services for the urban slums.

These primary objectives would be attained while:

- (a) Achieving a higher rate of growth of the economy than in the past;
- (b) Moving towards a significant reduction in the present disparities of income and wealth; and
- (c) Ensuring the country's continual progress towards self-reliance.

The Role of I.C.T.C.

The Co-operatives will play their role successfully for realisation of the above objectives as Co-operation is being built up as one of the major instruments for decentralized labour intensive and rural orientated economic development. The I.C.T.C. is a means towards achieving this end. The officers from less developed countries working with Co-operatives are selected for training at the I.C.T.C. at Stanford Hall, where they can enter a nine month course of study, in subjects appertaining to the management of agricultural productive units, leading to:

- (i) Diploma in Co-operative Development and Management;
- (ii) Diploma in Co-operative Accountancy and Financial Management;

- (iii) Diploma in Co-operative Education and Training; or
- (iv) Certificate in Co-operative Management and Supervision.

These courses lead to examinations - arranged for the first three, jointly with Loughborough University.

The I.C.T.C. has, over the years, earned the reputation of being the prime institution of its type in the world for the study of Co-operation and other allied subjects. In India, to cite an example, there is a keen competition to be selected for courses at I.C.T.C. I am one of those lucky and privileged persons to be selected, through the British Council, for a 9 month Diploma Course in Co-operative Development and Management. I can record my impression about I.C.T.C. with a sense of satisfaction and gratitude. . .

Need For a Change

It appears that the College has adopted flexibility to meet the needs of Co-operative Movement from time to time but there is a need for change. Teaching methods must change and so the present examination system too. The present teaching is more academic rather than practical on the 'job'. There are of course, visits to various Co-operative Institutions over all parts of the United Kingdom and there are attachments and research projects but their share is insignificant and above all there is a dreadful limit of 7,000 words on dissertation resulting from study of a topic related to the candidate's work.

The special study should be given a serious consideration and related to field work on attachments and visits. What is the practical use of special study? - Nothing except that a student is engaged in a serious research project throughout 3 terms and at the end may feel frustrated to find his work ended at a shelf in the library or in the cold storage.

What is required is that it should be developed to work for leading to higher studies leading to M.Phil or Ph.D degree. The special study should be published or referred to the Government departments concerned to take appropriate action on the basis of the findings of the student. It may be got published and knowledge disseminated from those who know to those who need to know so that they may take necessary measures to implement the suggestions, put forth on the basis of work undertaken in the field, for improvement and innovations.

It is felt that the courses should be specially tailored for the needs of mature students. They are responsible officers in their respective countries, who are returning to study after a prolonged absence of say 15-20 years. Films, video, role play and case studies form an important part of the study resources available but their proportional use is very limited. The library needs more volumes to be added. The College, however, must be complimented for the good atmosphere for study. . .

The Future Programme

The teaching of Co-operation is rapidly making its way into the curriculum of different

universities in various parts of the world. The Co-operative economy in Britain has its roots in the past and achieved success and it would be in the fitness of things if I.C.T.C. is converted into a fully-fledged University for the teaching and practice of Co-operation and it would be the first of its type in the World. It can cater for the training needs of Europe, Asia and Africa. The teaching of Co-operation has already become a world-wide reality and so a World University for teaching of Co-operation should become a reality. The I.C.T.C. is in a position to be extended as a University because of its central location and the land/buildings available for this purpose. The world Co-operative Movement can finance it.

It is important as "today business organisation is moving strongly towards Co-operation. There are in Co-operation great hopes that we can even gain in individuality, equality of opportunity and an enlarged field of initiative. Those who either congratulate or those who fear that Co-operation is an advance toward Socialism need neither rejoice nor fear. Co-operation in its current economic sense represents the initiative of self interest blended with the sense of Service." (President H. Hoover, U.S.A.)

Co-operation is complex - as a scientific discipline it involves the analysis of economic, social and political conditions under which Co-operative action takes root. It involves study of law and commerce, agriculture and horticulture, agricultural economics and management, food science and food technology, social science and statistics, agricultural extension and rural development and so on. Therefore there

is a need to have the following Departments at I.C.T.C. :

- (1) Agriculture Economics and Management
- (2) Agriculture and Horticulture
- (3) Statistics
- (4) Food Science (5) Social Science
- (6) Rural Environmental Studies
- (7) Business Studies (8) Development Economics
- (9) Rural Development
- (10) Development Policy and Planning
- (11) Project analysis and Management
- (12) Co-operation in all its aspects. Including Law and Commerce and allied subjects.

The list is not complete and many more departments can be set up.

There should be a research programme in some of the disciplines leading to Master of Philosophy (M. Phil)/Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D) by research. It is a sad fact that in all the varied activity of the academic world, matters of Co-operative interest play a very small role. Courses and research schemes on specific Co-operative topics are rare. There is no sustained interest in the Co-operative Movement anywhere. This is surely a surprising fact and a great pity. There is, however, a silver-lining in the teaching of Co-operation at the Universities in Antigonish, Wisconsin and Puerto Rico. A gap can be filled if the I.C.T.C. is converted into a University exclusive for the teaching of Co-operation and all its allied subjects.

"A Social and Economic Laboratory"

The I.C.T.C. can be a social and economic

laboratory with experimental units for practical training and demonstration. The Co-operative problems of developing and less developed countries can be solved, a solution can be found and Co-operative centres can be formed for them. The teaching cannot be separated from research which can be the basis of sound teaching and as such, research at I.C.T.C. can be the basis for literacy production in the Co-operative field. The text books on Co-operation can be prepared, as at present there is a lack of undergraduate text books. The proposed University at Loughborough can take an interest in the problems of Universities teaching Co-operation throughout the world, and promote the preparation of suitable text books for the purpose. There can be co-ordination of efforts made in teaching and training for Co-operation and the I.C.T.C. University has to take the lead. . .