

Dr R L Marshall: an appreciation

Gillian Lonergan

With the death of Dr Robert Leckie Marshall, at the age of 95, the Society for Co-operative Studies has lost one of the people most closely involved in its formation. In his memory, the Society wishes to record its recognition and appreciation for all that he did to develop the Society and this Journal,

Dr Marshall was born in Lanarkshire, the son of a miner, and his first degrees at St Andrews University were assisted by a miners' scholarship. An MA in Politics at Yale University was followed by two years in the Scottish Office. He served in the army from 1939 to 1946, leaving as commandant of the School of Education. He was subsequently awarded an OBE for services to army education.

He joined the co-operative movement as principal of the Co-operative College in 1946. His services to the co-operative movement were recognised in 1976 when he was elected President of Congress. (Graham, 2008)

Dr Marshall's involvement with the Society of Co-operative Studies began at its inaugural meeting, held at the Co-operative College, 3-4 April 1967. Over 60 participants from universities, colleges, trades unions and co-operative organisations gathered to elect officers, and discuss the scope of the new society. At a later meeting, Dr Marshall and Dr Wilson were given the role of leading a panel to draft the constitution (Society for Co-operative Studies, 1967a). According to that first constitution, it was determined that the purpose of the Society was to promote the exchange of information and experience on co-operative studies and research and to help in identifying and developing the studies and research that were still needed. (Society for Co-operative Studies, 1967b)

Robert Marshall and Tom Carbery were joint editors of the Society for Co-operative Studies Bulletin (later the Journal of Co-operative Studies) for 28 years. John Butler, of Co-operatives^{UK} who

knew Dr Marshall as principal when he was a student of the Co-operative College, as well as through his long involvement with the Society for Co-operative Studies said:

Like most students studying at Stanford Hall (I was a student between 1970-1972) one developed a deep respect and admiration for Bob Marshall. This was a period that coincided with the realisation for many that co-operative retail societies were no longer the pioneers of retail change. Change was then being forced upon the movement by competitors able and willing to offer retail facilities appropriate to a more discerning and sophisticated public. What the Journal did was so important at that time, as Tom Carbery [Carbery, 2003] correctly asserts, it brought together those involved in the day-to-day business activities of co-operatives, the national federal bodies, lay activists and academics with an interest in the movement's success and who were prepared to contribute to the debate. I well remember that a phone call from Bob Marshall would more often than not result in a commitment to write an article for the next issue of the Journal. The production of that article would then be your number one priority despite other pressing issues in the office. (Butler, 2009)

Dr Marshall's leadership of the Society for Co-operative studies during its formative years gave the Society the foundation to develop into the UK Society for Co-operative Studies as it is today, with a Journal read all over the world and accessible both in print and electronically and conferences attracting a wide range of co-operative activists and academics.

The Society would welcome memories of Dr Marshall and would like to include them in a future edition of the Journal. They can be sent to the address below.

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Butler, J (2009) Unpublished notes on Dr R L Marshall.

Carbery, T (2003) *L Marshall: 90 not out*. Journal of Co-operative Studies Vol 36 No 3.

Graham T (2008) *Robert Leckie Marshall: a lifelong educationist, he was the Mr Chips of the Co-operative Movement*. The Guardian 31 October 2008.

Society for Co-operative Studies (1967a) *The Society for Co-operative Studies*. Society for Co-operative Studies Bulletin 1, June 1967 pp5-7

Society for Co-operative Studies (1967b) *The Society for Co-operative Studies Constitution*. Society for Co-operative Studies Bulletin 1, June 1967 pp13-14.