

Review of International Co-operation

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Editor: Mary Treacy

Editorial Assistant: Laura Wilcox

International Co-operative Alliance Officers:

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Special Centennial cover: designed by M. Treacy Waugh

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Editorial

On behalf of all the staff at ICA Geneva Headquarters, we would like to wish our readers a very happy new year and good health and peace in 1996.



We hope that you will enjoy this issue of the Review, which is dedicated to the ICA Centennial Congress in Manchester.

After an active year concentrated on the ICA Centennial, the Secretariat will be restructured under the leadership of our new President, Graham Melmoth, to meet the challenges of the 21st century. Once this new structure has been put in place, we will be using this Review to inform our members of the changes and the direction the organisation will be taking in the coming years.

In our first issue for 1996, we would like to bring our readers up to date with the activities of the Secretariat as well as introduce the new players on the ICA scene elected at the recent Congress in Manchester.

We have also had discussions with ICA's Research Committee on a proposal to dedicate at least one issue a year of the Review of International Co-operation to the best research papers of the previous year. We are also offering this Committee the possibility of making all the papers available via the Internet and will be informing our readers of how they can access this information once this part of our Internet project is up and running. This would give the Committee a medium through which its research papers could be published and disseminated widely.

As part of the decentralisation process there may be some changes in the overall scheduling of publications during the first quarter of 1996. However, we will do our best to ensure you continue to receive an issue of the ICA Review or the ICA News as regularly as possible.

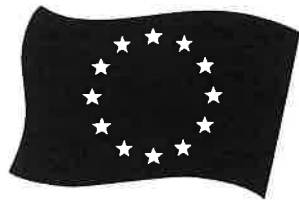
The theme for the International Day of Co-operation, which falls on Saturday 6 July, is presently being decided and will be communicated to you shortly. We would then like to receive as much information as possible about your organisation's plans in that connection.

Finally, we would like to thank all those who have contributed information to the ICA/UWCC Co-operative Gopher at the University of Wisconsin. The ICA is currently updating its Web pages as well as adding many new pages which we hope will be made available by the end of January. These web pages link into the Gopher as well as to many interesting web and Gopher sites on Co-operation and on issues of interest to co-operatives. The Internet is a wonderful medium for reaching a larger public with details of our movement, especially for reaching young people, and this is an opportunity which we should not neglect.

Further details on the overall development of the ICA Electronic Networking Project will be communicated shortly. In the meantime please keep the information flowing in so that we can proudly inform the world about our movement and all the positive activities it undertakes.

A Peaceful and Happy New Year.

Mary Treacy
Director of Communications



The International Co-operative Alliance would like to thank the European Union Directorate General XXIII for sponsoring the ICA Review of International Co-operation and the ICA News during the Alliance's Centennial Year.

Opening Ceremony

by G. W. Money*

Participation in a Co-operative Congress is a special event for any Co-operator, be it Sectional, Regional, National or International. To be present, and to be involved in the Congress of the world-wide Co-operative body in its 100th anniversary year, it seems to me is a very special privilege indeed. This is the 31st Congress of the Alliance, little could those Co-operators responsible for the very first Congress in London in 1895 have envisaged just how their ideas would grow and develop over the next century.

As the President remarked just a short time ago, today we can count more than 750 million Co-operators in our ranks.

Some three years ago at the Tokyo Congress, and incidentally the first to be held outside Europe, our Movement was pleased to extend the invitation for this Congress to be held here in Manchester. This is the sixth

* The son of a Durham miner, Mr Money has been Chief Executive Officer & Secretary of Yorkshire Co-operatives, one of the largest regional consumer societies in the UK, for 17 years. He is also a director of CWS, Deputy Chairman of the Co-operative Insurance Society and Chairman of the central Executive of the Co-operative Union Ltd. He was awarded the MBE in the Queen's 1995 New Year's Honours.



occasion that the Alliance has held its Congress within these shores, the last occasion being 1963 in Bournemouth, on the South coast. But our invitation was specifically to invite a return to Manchester (yes, it was last here in 1902!) as our Movement regards this city as the Co-operative capital of the United Kingdom. The reason is not difficult to understand - the headquarters of the principal Co-operative organisations are right here, literally just along the street from where we are sitting this morning. And, it is those Co-operative organisations, along with the local consumer society, that are your hosts over this period.

From those small beginnings 150 years ago, have grown the Co-opera-

tive Union, the CWS, the Co-operative Bank, Co-operative Insurance Society, Co-operative Retail Services, United Norwest Co-operatives and many other Co-operatives across the country. All are contributing in some way to welcome this Centennial Congress.

I am advised that the official number of participants will be the highest yet - it could exceed 1,100 representatives, observers and guests. That compares with a figure for the first Congress of around 225, 200 of whom were British Co-operators!, and about one half the size of the previous Manchester Congress.

But of course you will realise that there is a significantly larger number of people here this morning and I want to extend a particularly warm welcome to our many friends, local and national, business associates, employees and others who accepted our invitation to join us in this opening ceremony. We hope that you will feel something of the warmth and friendship that exists amongst Co-operators around the world, all of whom are seeking to improve their quality of life through co-operation.

The Congress, and associated meetings are of course working occasions, and for some days now, the various Specialised Bodies that meet under the auspices of the Alliance have been busy dealing with their own particular issues. Some important matters are on the agenda for discussion and debate during the Congress and the General Assembly, which should

have a bearing on the way in which our Movement progresses into the next century.

But, as we all know, occasions such as this are not wholly about formal business or philosophical discussion - they are also about meeting old friends and making new ones, renewing acquaintances, and learning from all the informal contacts that are possible when a group of like-minded people come together. We hope that you will enjoy the social programme that we have arranged we hope that you will find some time to explore the City and its surroundings and what it has to offer, and we hope that you will also find time to venture a little further, and visit Rochdale, where it all began 150 years ago. There you can visit our small Museum, housed in the original first store of the Pioneers, visit a splendid Town Hall and also shop in a Co-operative store.

This, then, ladies and gentlemen is not just a Centennial Congress - but a celebration, a celebration of 100 years of international co-operation, and the Alliance coming back to its roots to do so. As President Lars Marcus has been known to say on past occasions, have some fun!

I conclude, ladies and gentlemen, with some information about our British Co-operative Movement today, not, you will be pleased to hear, by an extended speech from me, but by way of a video, specifically produced for the occasion. We hope that you will find it interesting and informative.

The ICA - What it is and What it has done

by Lars Marcus*

Some of us have had the opportunity to be active within the ICA for decades. I myself recall how I joined as a Swedish member of the Central Committee. It was in 1976, at the Paris Congress.

My major memory is from a dinner in Epernay, where lots of champagne was served, and where I had a talk with a Japanese delegate who was by himself. He was very old. He had attended his first ICA Congress some 50 years earlier, and that evening he shared his experiences with me while other delegates shared their bottles.

He helped me into the ICA work, which is not easy to understand when you are new to the job and agendas mainly seem to deal with endless reports on economics and past activities.

In 1976 I also had a few things for free. As Chairman of the Swedish Co-operative Centre and with a national background of importance to the ICA economy, I was immediately made a member of its newly elected committee for budget and finance, FABUSCOM. The ICA had problems.

* Mr Marcus, ICA President since 1984, retires from the presidency in 1995, to take up full-time personal activities.



Four years later I was elected a member of the Executive, and after another four years I found myself President. This was in Hamburg in 1984.

Many of you are likely to be in the situation I experienced in 1976. I turn to you to bring some light upon what the ICA is, and what it has done during the last few decades. I also turn to those who will take over, as some of us are now stepping down.

The ICA forms a huge and complex organisation. It encompasses agriculture, fishing, banking, insurance, savings, housing, health, tourism, energy, industry and retailing. Some of our 200 members are strong, but most are weak. We operate in English, French,



ICA Congress in Hamburg, 1984.

German, Russian and Spanish. We have our head office in Geneva, Switzerland, and regional offices in India, Tanzania, the Ivory Coast and Costa Rica, with a branch office in Argentina.

Our huge body has a small head. We operate on a budget of roughly 2 million Swiss Francs of annual subscription income. We have enough to allow us to operate with a headquarters staff of 11 and four regional directors. For us, strict priorities are necessary. The ICA cannot be run by events: it has to have a plan, which must be understood and accepted by all members.

In the years 1976 to 1980 we had some major problems, which were becoming urgent. The office had always been in London, where we owned a leasehold in Upper Grosvenor Street. It was

impregnated by tradition, but not appropriate for our needs. Too often among OECD members it was said that the ICA was old fashioned, dusty and sleepy, and had turned away from them to the Third World.

And our development programme during this period, with support from mainly one country, was not under economic control. The ICA started to bleed during the 1980s.

In the years from 1980 to 1984 we finally sold the leasehold and moved to Geneva. Something had to be done, although we temporarily lost both competence and a certain amount of our members' confidence, not only in the UK. The staff was reduced by 50%, yet the financial situation remained out of control. We now survived on the

proceeds of the office sale. The threat of bankruptcy was increasingly present. A worried staff kept members informed. Unrest among the main financial contributors increased.

In the autumn of 1984 the Executive sat down. We had had a brilliant document by the Canadian, Alexander Laidlaw, on Co-operatives in the year 2,000 at the Moscow Congress in 1980. We had also received a survey and evaluation of our problems and structure from another Canadian colleague, Yvon Daneau, which had been well received by the recent Hamburg Congress. We had to make ourselves strong again.

We identified four tasks. In order of priority these were:

1. To function as a network and offer the members a suitable contact structure;
2. To support development in the South;
3. To represent members with the UN community or in response to individual requests; and
4. To care for the co-operative identity.

The short-term priority plan was, in reality, both short and self-evident: stop the bleeding.

With a damaged reputation, we did not go to members asking for more money. We decided that subscription income could not be used for development. We cut staff. We limited our use of languages to mainly English. We

managed to get two excellent secondments for financial control and membership services.

We also put pressure on the regional offices. At one stage we even sold our office building in Delhi, the Bonow House. After staff changes, and with more responsibility taken by Asian members, the building was later able to be retained by the ICA as common Asian co-operative property.

Little by little we noticed a turn for the better. Our development efforts attracted more donors. In Asia, Japan was prepared to play a leading role, and members and donors in Italy, Canada, the Netherlands and Scandinavia also found that collaboration with and through the ICA was beneficial.

New members were attracted. A delegation to Latin America in 1986 was of great help, and the All China Federation of Supply and Marketing Co-operatives joined the year before. The economy started to be all in black figures, and we set ourselves another target. The reserves should be restored to an amount sufficient to cover one year's operating costs.

Now the time had come to tackle tasks three and four.

Contacts with the ILO, our neighbour in Geneva, had improved. The UN Secretary General, Perez de Cuellar, increased his references to co-operatives in his yearly reports. He personally addressed our 1988 Congress in Stockholm.



Lars Marcus presents Perez de Cuellar with a painting to commemorate the XXIX ICA Congress in Stockholm.

And we gave consideration to the defense of our identity. The board decided that a discussion on co-operative basic values should take place at the 1988 Congress.

So far, so good. The next four years, however, developed in a way that was not foreseen.

From the beginning of the century, the ICA had had members in what, in 1917, became the USSR. After 1945 most Eastern and Central European co-operatives became part of State-planned economies. Together, they then formed a strong, united group in the ICA, not always easy to handle, and particularly loud and outspoken when it introduced political themes on our agenda. Nevertheless, they were

respected: and not only for their financial strength. They needed us as a remedy against isolation.

After 1987 we noticed how they became more open and started to speak in the spirit of the perestroika. Also, *they* had problems.

Then it all happened at once. In Poland, the new Government proclaimed that co-operative property was State property. In Russia, the economic reformers said that co-operatives were a part of the past.

The new political leadership in Central and Eastern Europe was not familiar with the role of co-operatives in the OECD economies they wanted to imitate.

So far Centrosoyuz of the USSR had been acting as the leader of co-operatives in COMECON. Now the Poles, East Germans, Czechs, Slovaks, Hungarians, Lithuanians, Latvians and Estonians made clear that they wanted to go West.

We at the ICA asked them all, regardless of future orientation, to sit down together and inform each other and us about what was happening and what could be done. Three such meetings were held during 1990 and 1991. This at least meant that the Eastern bloc co-operatives were not deserted at the most crucial time for them.

At their request we talked to Governments and new political parties in nearly all the countries of the region. Together with the ILO, we organised several seminars on co-operative legislation. We also joined forces with the International Raiffeisen Union for discussions on rural reforms and co-operatives. Information was given to other members in order to encourage bilateral action. We contacted the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the World Bank and the European Union, and we also took part in the Co-op Network, formed to tap these and other sources to finance projects in Central and Eastern Europe.

For a couple of years we concentrated much of our work on Central and Eastern Europe. I do not think this led to any misinterpretations. Work also took place elsewhere.

Through the Moshi office in Africa we had already, in the early 1980s, started

to organize conferences with the participation of co-operative regional leaders and the responsible Ministers and Commissioners. Their purpose was, on the one hand, to strengthen the co-operative image and, on the other, to formulate developmental strategies which could have a follow-up at the next conference. It worked favourably. Similar Ministerial Conferences followed in Asia. Good results have been achieved, not least in legislation.

We were also able to give thought to the future structure of the ICA, as decided by the 1988 Congress. The result was presented in 1992, when the Congress was held in Tokyo. There, we also finalised the discussions on basic values.

From Tokyo came the new rules, and the decision to make co-operative identity and principles our major centennial theme.

I know that some of you had concerns about the new rules. You felt that we in Europe, still the financially strongest part of the ICA, would move away from the other regions. I did not share this opinion, and I feel that my position has proved to be correct.

The regions of Asia-Pacific and the Americas have some very strong members and also many weak, but fast-progressing ones. Europe will need them, and they will need collaboration with European co-operatives.

Africa is a problem, it is true, but for different reasons. Africa must not be neglected. The problems of Africa are not due to its co-operatives, but rather



"Africa must not be neglected, the problems of Africa are not due to its co-ops but rather to an environment of political weakness, corruption stemming from poverty, lack of human rights and high rates of illiteracy." (photo ILO)

to an environment of political weakness, corruption stemming from poverty, lack of human rights, and high rates of illiteracy.

All continents have countries suffering from the same, or similar factors as Rwanda and Burundi: the crazy warlords in former Yugoslavia; the extreme poverty and corruption in Bangladesh; the extinction of large indigenous groups in Central America.

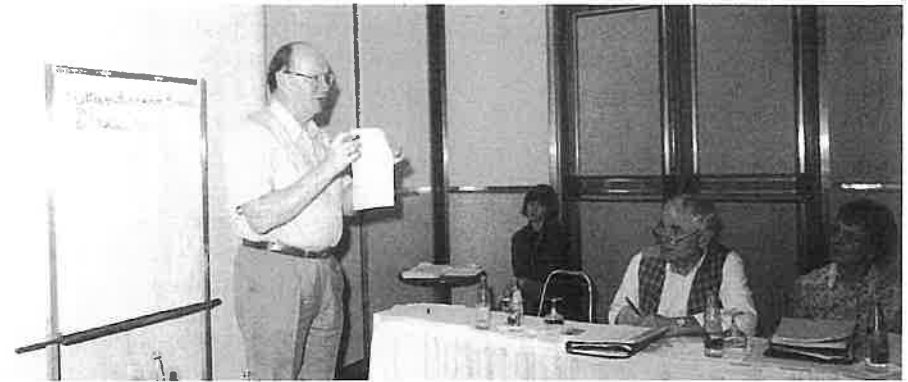
But Africa is an entire continent. Through the ICA we have, for almost 50 years, tried to assist our colleagues in Africa. Last year an evaluation was

made, and guidelines for a new approach, built on hard experiences, were established. We have to have patience. A perspective of 50 years is not too long. It will probably take another 30 - 50 years for the sustainable development of Africa, based not on aid but on its own strength.

My own country also had a long period of poverty and famines. In the middle of the 19th Century, 20% of the Swedish population had to emigrate because of land hunger, and people starved to death. Confronted with the problem of Africa we should all be humble and try to help.

Co-operative Principles

by Ian MacPherson*



Dr MacPherson presents his paper to the ICA Board in São Paulo.

Today and tomorrow we will be carrying out one of our obligations to the continuing life of the International Co-operative Movement. Like co-operative leaders in other generations we will be re-examining our Movement's basic principles and reconsidering its fundamental purposes.

These perpetual questions, which seem necessary to undertake every thirty years or so, are one of the great strengths of our Movement. They force us to drink deeply from our rich and diverse heritage. They compel us to consider respectfully and humbly the complexity of a movement that spans the globe. They require us to examine the record of co-operative achievement

* Dr MacPherson is Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences at the University of Victoria in British Columbia, Canada. He was responsible for the ICA project on the redefinition of the co-operative principles.

of institutions as small as a largely informal neighbourhood child care co-operative or as large and complex as the organisations in whose buildings we are meeting. They become processes of renewal from which we gain a reinvigorated sense of purpose; they are experiences in intellectual broadening from which we can all benefit.

We are in the ideally-named New Century House, a reminder that we are not the first co-operators to think positively and constructively about the future on the occasion of achieving an historic milestone. We are in a complex of buildings belonging to the British Co-operative Wholesale Society, Co-operative Bank, Co-operative Insurance Society, CRS (Co-operative Retail Society), and Co-operative Union, all organisations renowned and admired throughout the international Movement.

As we walk the streets of this city and others nearby, it is not difficult to find co-operative outlets: banks, shops and insurance offices, that suggest the strength and vitality of the British Movement. If we journey northward, we can find the store of the Rochdale Society of Equitable Pioneers, out of which, as David Thompson has reminded us in his delightful recent book, emerged a tradition that still stirs the heart of human beings everywhere. If we go a little farther north we find, wonderfully preserved, Robert Owen's New Lanark, still a Beacon for those who would create better communities and a place visitors to this conference should visit if they can.

We are in an appropriate place, too, because we see all around us the buildings - the factories and warehouses - that remind us of the power, impact and complexity of the industrial revolution. That re-evaluation is important to us because it provided the context out of which our Movement, rural as well as urban, international as well as British, originally grew. As Professor Birchall has explained in the valuable book he has written for this Congress, our Movement largely emerged to control democratically the immense economic and social changes wrought by the industrial revolution. It is an ambitious vision of steadily widening influence we would do well to remember.

But we can also readily see in the streets around us how much that context has changed. The smokestacks are stilled. The armies of working people who flocked to the mills and factories

have been reduced to battalions. The beautiful buildings once hidden beneath the inevitable, depressing grime of the old industrialism have been refurbished, restored in anticipation of a different kind of economic vitality. As one walks the streets, too, one sees many manifestations of a new and different context: the prevalence of service industries, the ubiquitous presence of the computer, global trends in styles and customs, the soaring skyscrapers of powerful financial industries, the mixtures of people drawn from all over the globe, the furtive looks of underemployed youth, the names of companies whose head offices lie thousands of miles from these shores. Much of our past is associated with Manchester; much of what must be part of our future can also be gleaned here.

We are in an appropriate place to end the journey that began seven years ago when our president, Lars Marcus, challenged the international Movement to re-examine its basic values and to provide a clear picture of the Movement's purpose, especially for the troubled parts of the world and for those whose faith in co-operative enterprise was waning.

That challenge was picked up by the international movement. At the Tokyo Congress three years ago the first stage in the resultant discussions came to an end when we considered the work on co-operative values so ably led by Sven Åke Böök of Sweden. Today and tomorrow we move forward; today and tomorrow we will shape our Movement once again, preserving what is important and adding what we must



Members of the primary reference group work together in Marburg.

from our rich heritage and our common experience.

The focuses for our discussions are three documents: a page that provides summative statements explaining the distinctiveness of co-operatives; a background paper that expands on that page more fully; and a declaration which provides some directions for co-operators and their organisations as they look forward into the next century.

I would like to provide some explanation for how these documents were prepared during the years since the Tokyo Congress. First I distributed a questionnaire to ICA member co-operative organisations to ascertain attitudes towards the current Co-operative Principles. The results of the survey, while hardly scientific since not all kinds of co-operatives in enough coun-

tries around the world responded, were nevertheless instructive. They revealed some unhappiness over the existing Capital Formation Principle as well as concern over the omission of a specific reference to gender, the lack of a definition of a co-operative, and the general absence of a reference to values and community obligation.

My primary reference group for considering these results and for exploring alternatives consisted of six people: Ms Raija Itkonen and Dr Yehudah Paz, both from the board of the ICA; Dr Hans Detlef Wülker from the International Raiffeisen Union; Dr Masahiko Shiraishi from Tokyo University, an expert in agricultural co-operation; Dr Hans Münkner from Marburg University, who has done more in recent years than any other individual I know to shape co-operative legislation around the world; and

Bruce Thordarson, the Director-General of the ICA. Altogether we met four times to discuss various drafts, particularly of the co-operative identity page. They were, for me at least, particularly memorable occasions in which discussions were frank and open and in which a wide range of co-operative experiences shed light on some very complex issues.

I also referred early drafts of the documents to an advisory panel of fifty people scattered around the world. I am indebted to them for their reactions and suggestions, most of which I hope I have faithfully implemented.

As the months went by I circulated four drafts (out of some seventeen at one time on my computer) - so many that I know I caused considerable confusion for many people, though translators around the world are indebted to me for all the work I have created for them. The reactions I received to all those drafts, however, were invaluable in understanding what was important and necessary and what the limits of change were.

In addition, whenever and wherever it was possible, co-operators in various parts of the world met and discussed how the Principles should be changed. I attended as many of these sessions as ICA funding and my time constraints would permit. I was struck, both in the meetings I attended and those I heard about, by the degree of unity that was achieved and by the willingness on the part of all concerned to understand co-operative traditions that were different from their own.

Finally, it is important to acknowledge the role of the Board of Directors of the ICA. The Board devoted two lengthy sessions to considerations of the Principles, a significant amount of time for any one topic in the life of such an organisation. I will long remember in particular our last meeting when the Board reviewed the Principles at length in preparation for this Congress. Again, a remarkably wide range of experiences, cast over many types of co-operatives and reflective of many national Movements, was brought to bear on the major issues. Individuals with deeply-held convictions, indeed I suspect among the most important convictions of their lives, struggled constructively to find common ground. I think they succeeded remarkably well.

On a personal level, I want to thank you and the ICA for giving me the opportunity to be part of this process. It has been the most rewarding experience in a particularly fortunate co-operative career. Above all, I have been humbled by the immensity of the task of understanding the international movement. I do not mean 'humbled' in some obsequious way, but in the sense that there is so much to understand. I am a middle-aged, Northern, privileged male whose belief systems and characteristic attitudes have been shaped by that background, a background with much potential good in it but also severe limitations of understanding. For me, therefore, the greatest personal benefit has been in gaining a fuller appreciation of the different societies. My sense of the power and dignity of the Movement has been

deepened and I thank you for making it possible.

All of these deliberations and discussions, however, do not amount to a perfect process: it was merely the best that we could do. The resultant documents are similarly not perfect: they too are simply the best possible at a given point in time. In that respect, they are typically 'co-operative': when you try to mingle ideals and thought with action and practice, the results are always a little messy and rarely as conclusive as some would like. I firmly believe though that they are consistent with the best of co-operative thought and deed: they do show a path that we should follow.

The documents, I hasten to add, do not 'belong' to anyone specifically. They are not mine, they are not the resource group's, they are not the Consultative Committee's, they are not even the Board's, though all of the foregoing accept them. I do hope, though, that, with suggested additions that will improve them, they will be owned by this Congress.

I hope too that we will be able to sustain the spirit of openness and collaboration that has characterised this project from the beginning. Once more, I would like to pay tribute to all those so far engaged in it: women and men who have realised the necessity to accommodate different views, the value in hearing contrary opinions, and the need to reach outward to other peoples. I have learned in this project that 'I have read, I have experienced, I know' is important, but it is not as use-

ful as 'I have heard, I understand, I respect'.

The board has also adopted that approach, attested to most recently by a series of changes it made in response to resolutions submitted by member organisations. Those resolutions were considered by the Board of the ICA on Monday. With some modifications they are going to be presented to you for consideration today and tomorrow. I will refer to each of them in turn as I review the identity page with you.

Over the last several months I have often asked myself: 'What is important about the revisions of the Principles?'. Arguably, one of the important changes is not to the Principles themselves but, rather, that they have been placed in the context of a statement on 'the Co-operative Identity'. This general concern over identity, in a sense, can be traced back to Alex Laidlaw's report to the Moscow Congress in 1980, if not earlier. Alex sensed in that report a crisis around the World as the Co-operative Movement tried to maintain its distinctiveness from the private sector and as it struggled in many countries to escape the dominating influence of the State. They were concerns that were echoed in President Marcus' speech in 1988. There were reasons for even greater concerns in the early 1990s as uncertainty over State/Co-operative relations grew amid the dismantling of most of the command economies, the restructuring of the economies in many Southern countries, and the headlong rush to full market economies in the industrialised world.

I believe that placing the Principles in the context of co-operative identity is an important step. One of the problems of the two previous formulations, I believe, is that they did not, of themselves, offer any understanding of their intellectual or philosophical roots. I think that omission was unfortunate because it unintentionally contributed to the tendency to see the Principles as a set of organisational injunctions rather than as an integral part of a coherent philosophy.

The explanation of the co-operative identity has three parts, each of them as important as the others. The first is a definition of a co-operative. This is the first time in the history of the ICA that it has been possible to accept such a definition. In its deliberations on Monday, the ICA Board considered a resolution from the German Movement requesting that 'cultural' be omitted from the proposed definition printed in the Congress booklet. This change emphasises that co-operatives are concerned primarily with meeting specific goals, including principle social goals, in the market place, as economic organisations. If members decide they would like their co-operative to undertake other activities that right is clearly provided for in other parts of the document. The Board did not see, nor do I, any difficulty in accepting this change especially in light of the entire document.*

The importance of the definition, I suspect, will become more apparent as the years go by. As it is commonly used in public discussions, as it is included in legislation, and as it finds its way into

training and teaching materials, it will help to create a clearer understanding of the unique structures and purposes of co-operatives. For the 'outside world', in particular, the definition may be the most important part of the identity page. It is also fortuitous that the definition conforms relatively well to the one adopted in 1966 by the International Labour Organisation, an institution with which the International Co-operative Alliance frequently collaborates.

From a philosophical perspective, the second part, which refers to the values is profoundly significant. The challenge in summarising values is that there are arguably so many of them that might be included. Those of you who have read Mr Bööck's study will be aware of the complexities. In order to reduce the number of specified values to an acceptable size, they have been divided into two groups.

The first, which, as printed in your Congress book, includes self-help, democracy, equality, equity and solidarity, are particularly important because they directly underlie the organisational structure of a co-operative. At its meeting on Monday, the Board accepted the addition of 'self-responsibility' to the list. This suggestion, made by our German colleagues, emphasises the autonomous nature of co-operatives and provides a certain reference in the values upon which to base the Principle of Autonomy. The Board concurred, as do I, with this view, believing that it clarifies an important part of our value system perhaps not clearly covered by 'self-help'.

Incidentally, I urge you sometime to study the Principles as manifestations of that particular list of values. The relationship is striking and powerful. It demonstrates, I think very well, the integration of co-operative thought despite the varieties of experiences and outlooks.

The second list of values reflects the commitments co-operators have traditionally tried to bring to their organisations. They are: honesty, openness, social responsibility, and caring for others. In addition, the Board, at its Monday meeting, also listened to opinions that the phrase 'in the tradition of their founders' be added back to the Principle; it had appeared in several earlier drafts; the Board agreed to do so. I welcome that return because it indicates the fact that there are several 'founders' to our various kinds of co-operatives.

The final proposed version of the values statement therefore reads: 'co-operatives are based on the values of self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity and solidarity. In the tradition of their founders, co-operative members believe in the ethical values of honesty, openness, social responsibility, and caring for others'.

The third part of the identity page is the restatement of the Principles. Attempting such a task has been, as it was in the past, a daunting but rewarding exercise. Part of the challenge has been that, even more so than previously, we have tried to specify Principles that will apply to all kinds of co-operatives in all kinds of situations. Some have viewed the 1966 Principles as being

still oriented towards consumer co-operatives. I hope that it is completely clear in the document before you that the Principles are equally applicable - to the maximum extent possible, keeping in mind the immense diversity of our Movement - to all kinds of co-operatives.

In particular, I believe they are applicable to consumer, financial, producer, worker, and the main service co-operatives. One of the objectives of this process has been to make certain that all of these great co-operative traditions feel equally at home in their international organisation.

I would also remind you that each sector, in general conformity with these Principles, is preparing its own Statement of Principles, elaborating on any specific needs it might have.

As you generally consider the Principles, I would urge you to think of two of their rather remarkable special characteristics. First, please note their inherent flexibility. I think each Principle demands a form of minimal behaviour from every co-operative. For example, under the Democratic Member Control Principle, a co-operative must invite members to 'actively participate in setting policies and making decisions.' What that actually means in any co-operative will vary considerably depending upon the type of activity in which it is engaged, the kind of decisions that must be made, and the nature of its member communication system. Inevitably, for each significant issue there will be a continuum of possible choices from which a co-

* (Editor's Note: The reference to 'cultural' was subsequently retained, by decision of the General Assembly)

operative can select the most appropriate. The only choice that is questionable is not to make a conscious decision or, more likely, a set of decisions.

All of the other Principles also require choosing among alternatives. In other words, the Principles are only guidelines that indicate minimal standards of organisational behaviour and continuously suggest further possible actions: they are not just commandments. For me that quality of continually raising issues to be considered and resolved is part of their inherent wisdom and power.

Indeed, I must confess that, despite some thirty years of involvement in the Movement, I had never before realised fully the animating quality that the Principles possess when they are employed properly. During this process, I came to realise that, perhaps like many others, the Principles had tended to be a checklist for institutional structures rather than a continuous and energising dynamic. As I look back I realise how much was lost in the organisations on whose boards I have sat because we did not regularly and seriously take advantage of the natural dynamics and objectives that truly alive principles can provide.

I urge you here and especially after Congress, therefore, to think of the Principles as active catalysts and not just as regulatory maxims. I firmly believe that the Principles before you represent a relevant amalgam of what the co-operative founders espoused for their Movement, of what common practices have found valuable, and of

what we can employ as a strategic advantage in the world around us. Far from being a constraint on what we do, as some might argue, the Principles will give us the insights and dynamism we require to become even more valuable in the future to the human family around the world.

The second general quality for which I gained a deeper understanding during this process was the profound way in which the Principles are interrelated. I came to believe that it was just wrong to emphasise any one Principle or even any group of Principles too much over the others. That is why I am not convinced that it is wise to list some of the Principles as 'essential' and others as 'desirable', as was done in the 1937 version.

The point is that the Principles are subtly intertwined with each other: for example, in the ways they reflect their base in the membership concept, on how they facilitate functioning aggressively in the market place, and in how they forge collective entities.

I and others came to the conclusion as the process unfolded that the 1966 formulation did not emphasise enough the importance of members in co-operative enterprises, perhaps because those involved in the earlier process took membership for granted since it seemed like an obvious 'given'. In contemporary circumstances, that is not desirable and it may not even be possible if co-operatives are to succeed. Thus the first three Principles, which refer most directly to the internal dynamics of the co-operative form of or-

ganisation, are phrased deliberately from the member viewpoint so that their diverse roles are clearly indicated. Similarly, the last four Principles - on autonomy, education, co-operation among co-operatives, and community - stress the centrality of member concerns in all these areas.

In fact, the most important emphasis apparent in these revisions has been a celebration of membership as the key element of co-operative distinctiveness; in that connection, I commend the report of the joint project on member participation to you for your careful consideration. Members of that project team will be making their report on Thursday morning.

The new Statement also reflects the perspective that, while co-operatives are collections of individuals, they are also reflective of the joint concerns of the membership. In that sense the whole is greater than the parts. That is why, despite the challenges in finding appropriate wording, the board is suggesting that the practice of indivisible reserves be encouraged, a matter I will be returning to later. That is why, too, a concern for community has been emphasised, albeit within limits approved by members. That too is why the education Principle has been amended to mention the necessity of educating youth and opinion leaders specifically on 'the benefits of co-operation'.

The more one considers such fundamental themes the more one becomes aware of the fact that the Principles are a seamless web: ignore any of them at your peril.

Before discussing some aspects of the revised Principles, I want to emphasise that I do not regard any of the so-called 'changes' as an aberration. As I listened to the ways in which co-operators proposed reinvigorating or expanding their organisations, as I explored the debates of the past, I came to realise that our heritage indeed, that co-operative philosophy is as profoundly broad as it is deep. Each Statement of Principles, past and present, in fact, is a selective set of choices drawn from that heritage in order to meet the most pressing needs of co-operators and co-operatives at a particular time. This report is no different in that respect: to paraphrase slightly a comment made by professor Karve, who chaired the 1966 committee it was 'a process of reburnishing which permits the underlying principles to shine with a brighter light'.

I would like now to discuss the Principles, not in detail but to mention some of the more important points of emphasis.

The First Principle, which refers to voluntary and open membership, has been significantly altered by indicating that people able to use a co-operative's services and willing to accept the responsibilities can not be excluded on the basis of gender. It is a modest but important step in recognising one of the most important social revolutions of our times. It is also, I believe, in keeping with a powerful current evident in co-operatives since the mid-Nineteenth Century. In that respect, it is interesting to read the original rules of the Society of Equitable Pioneers

from a gender perspective: they are remarkably free of reference of gender bias, especially considering the times. Given the background of many of the Pioneers, this characteristic of their rules was not accidental.

The Membership Principle has also added a reference to member responsibilities in the belief that many co-operatives do not explain these responsibilities adequately under the existing Membership Principle. Moreover, since one of the underlying themes of the Principles is to enhance the role of membership, it is important that responsibilities as well as benefits be emphasised.

Perhaps the key 'new' elements in the Democratic Member Control Principles the Second Principle also relate to members: as I mentioned earlier, it requires that members should be actively involved in making decisions. There is also another addition, reminding elected leaders that they are accountable to members for their actions and decisions. It is a reminder of where power and authority within a co-operative should ultimately rest.

Similarly, the Third Principle, which deals with member economic participation, is strongly situated within a member perspective. It is different from the two previous principles on the financial operations of a co-operative in several respects. It is called 'Member Economic Participation'. It emphasises the vital importance of members controlling the capital of their organisation, and indicates that they should receive limited compen-

sation on the capital they subscribe as a condition of membership. The Principle allows for a market return on capital otherwise invested by members. As for capital emanating from other sources, one would have to consider the implications of attracting such capital in light of the Autonomy Principle: the key concern must always be to preserve the capacity of members to decide the fate of their organisation.

There was much debate over the inclusion of a reference to indivisible reserves. The 1966 formulation did not refer to this normal aspect of co-operative economic structure perhaps because the matter had become increasingly complex and practices were beginning to vary. The unfortunate result has been that many co-operators have lost sight of the importance of commonly-owned capital, as a symbol of a co-operative's distinctiveness, as a security for its financial growth, and as a protector in times of adversity.

The problem of including a reference to indivisible reserves has been finding the best wording for a limited space. After much discussion at two meetings, the Board decided, at its meeting last Monday, that the most appropriate wording, suggested to the 1966 version except that it specifically mentions the need for co-operatives to inform young people and opinion leaders about 'the nature and benefits of co-operation'. The reason for making this addition was a perception that the Movement was limiting its future by ignoring youth and failing to explain well enough the values and purposes of the Movement to such peo-

ple as politicians, public servants, educators, and commentators; the result has been a decline in the public understanding of the organised movement.

The Sixth Principle calls upon co-operatives to work together to best meet the needs of their members. It is a principle much like the Sixth Principle of the 1966 formulation. No less than in the recent past, it is a principle that needs to be more carefully observed in the present and future.

The last Principle refers to the traditional co-operative concern for community. At the Monday meeting, after reviewing submissions on this Principle, the Board agreed upon a slight change of wording and recommends to you the statement: 'co-operatives work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies approved by their members'. This Principle implies a commitment to sustainable human development and thus nicely blends with the report on 'co-operatives and sustainable human development'. In fact, the two reports make good companions.

Viewed as a totality, these Principles, linked to their sustaining values and summarised in the definition, indicate what is unique about co-operatives regardless of where they exist. In doing so, they reaffirm in the present what has been central to the co-operative Movement since its inception: a commitment to a truly international perspective. That, of course, was one of the implicit goals of those who formed the ICA a century ago: they envisioned creating an organisation that

would genuinely span the world; some issues do not change, some challenges have been with us for a long time.

It was a task much more difficult than the delegates of a hundred years ago knew. Overcoming the differences created by national perspectives and histories, coping with the ideological cleavages that swept the world in the Twentieth Century, recognising the biases each of us possesses, understanding empathetically the nature of co-operative experiences in non-European societies has not been easily accomplished. In the important book she prepared for Congress, Rita Rhodes has explained the deep tensions that made progress in creating a strong international Movement for most of the Twentieth Century difficult to achieve. It is a story worth pondering as we seek to understand how we can forge even stronger links among co-operative organisations spread around the world.

This revision of the Principles, along with the other elements of the identity page and the background paper, strive to explain the uniqueness of the Movement as it has evolved; that was an issue that perplexed the first delegates to the ICA when they met a century ago, it created considerable divisions in the early years of the Twentieth Century, and it challenged those who were responsible for the preparation of Statements of Principles in 1937 and 1966. In some ways this document has been more than a century in the making.

It is also true that, even with those changes, the documents are not as

crisp and precise as some would prefer. I understand their concerns, and I hope that following this Congress, some of the wonderful communications experts in our Movement will be able to distil what you will have accepted so that it is immediately understandable to people who do not well understand the Movement and what it stands for.

In your Congress book, you will also find a document entitled 'Into the Twenty-first Century: Co-operatives Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow'. It is offered as a declaration of what co-operatives should at least partly try to do in the future. There is some brief mention in this document of the past and present simply to show that there are important patterns of continuity and to show the general benefits of people working together through co-operative enterprise. It also emphasises the diversity of the International Movement and tries to show briefly that, while structures are the same, movements in different regions and nations vary tremendously. Indeed, those differences are profound and they should be welcomed not regretted; they are the potential source of immense power and influence. Moreover, the true value of the International Movement is only partly explained when we accumulate statistics and refer to impressive market shares. The full value is only apparent when we understand the importance of co-operatives for their members and within their communities.

The paper makes the point that co-operatives are far more successful than

many including most of their supporters realise. Many have long histories of accomplishments, most are economically viable. Most have cadres of devoted employees. Most have numbers of devoted volunteers concerned about their welfare.

Moreover, like other economic organisations, many of them have gone through trying times recently but have emerged better organised and more efficient than ever before. They are well situated to confront the challenges that await them.

But, if the International Movement is to meet its potential, the paper argues, it will only be done if co-operators, each and every one of us, continually strive to make our co-operatives more effective. We can do so, I particularly suggest, if we do the following: celebrate the advantages of membership; recognise the unique strengths provided by the Co-operative Principles; empower members, employees, managers and elected leaders; assist co-operatives to combine their resources prudently; help them improve their financial strength; and think strategically about the role of the Movement.

At the same time, co-operative organisations will encourage more people to meet their needs and achieve their aspirations through co-operatives if they do the following: provide better nutrition, housing and health; expand co-operative financial services; provide satisfying employment; welcome enlarged roles for women and young people; protect rural communities; and enhance urban life. The Movement al-

ready has a strong track record in all these areas; there is no reason why it could not become even more effective in each of them.

The reasons why co-operators must build stronger co-operatives and why co-operative organisations must do better than they already do are clearly evident. The rapid growth in the global population, the increasingly uncontrolled movement of capital around the world, the increasing concentration of economic power in a decreasing number of hands, the continuing marginalisation of many women, the increasing numbers of people with decreasing wealth, the bleak outlook facing many of our youth and aboriginal peoples, the misuse of science and technology, the inappropriate exploitation of our environment all of these suggest that in a phrase that was popu-

lar in North America a half century ago: 'the possibilities of co-operation are truly great'.

Today and tomorrow we will complete our rather lengthy pause to consider who we are. We will begin our consideration of where we want to go and how we are going to get there. We do so to enrich our present, to honour our past, and to understand our future. They are not easy tasks because they can disturb our assumptions, cause us to question what we do, and force us to change how we do it. The co-operative values and principles are difficult masters but they can be wonderful allies; they are the means of their own success.

I look forward (in almost equal measure) to hearing the comments, criticism, and suggestions of the delegate body.



Scenes from the ICA Centennial Congress

Joint Project on Participatory Democracy

by Masayuki Yamagishi, Lou Hammond Ketilson, Per-Olof Jönsson, Iain Macdonald, Loris Ferini*

Background and Focus

I remember being at the ICA Stockholm Congress in 1988 and hearing Chairman Marcus talk about basic values. Two of the four key words in his proposal struck me: 'democracy' and 'participation'. They started me thinking. I was also reminded of Dr Laidlaw's report for the ICA Moscow Congress in 1980, in which he warned of an ideological crisis in the movement.

Those words - democracy and participation - would not go away. They began burrowing deep into my mind, like seeds taking root. Jack Craig, in Canada, and Per-Olof Jönsson, in Sweden, watered those seeds. The support of Ivano Barberini in Italy, Graham Melmoth in the UK and Roland Svensson in Sweden kept the plants (democracy and participation) growing.

*Members Ferini (Italian National Consumer Co-ops), Jönsson (Swedish Co-operative Institute), Ketilson (Centre for the Study of Co-operatives, Canada), Macdonald (Co-operative Wholesale Society, UK) and Yamagishi (Co-op kanagawa, Japan), spoke to the ICA's Centennial Congress on behalf of the International Joint Project for Participatory Democracy.

The project came into focus in 1992, at the ICA Tokyo Congress where Sven Åke Bööck proposed five basic values. Our project settled on the second value: participatory democracy.

Historically, co-ops have fulfilled the socioeconomic needs inherent in their relationship with society, and they have enjoyed success in many countries. But expanding business has intensified competition with private sector companies, pushing co-op management to focus even more narrowly on competition. This bias towards economic activities tends to reduce the differences between co-ops and private corporations and, hence dilute the character of co-ops as a social entity. Co-ops have not been using participatory democracy well enough to cultivate their human resources. This ignores the co-operative identity, thus causing an identity crisis. That is why we chose to emphasise this key concept: participatory democracy.

The five countries in this study: Japan, the United Kingdom, Italy, Canada and Sweden, are not the only ones with successful consumer co-operatives nor, for that matter, the most unique. Our study is not intended to be the end of

the road ... rather the early stages of a journey ... to learn more about member participation in co-operatives and to share experiences with one another. The title of our book, *Making Membership Meaningful*, is a simple way to summarise what these five sets of organisations have in common. In their own ways the Directors and managers accept the fact that co-operatives are both business organisations and associations of people. They have developed programs that members find meaningful in the 1990s and their co-operative uniqueness shows. It appears that the good business practices of being efficient and effective are enhanced by involving members and making membership meaningful!

The co-operatives studied in these five countries are in very different cultural and social settings. The movements also have a different tradition. In the UK and Sweden the roots go back to the last century. In Japan, Canada and Italy the movements are younger. The UK and Sweden have enjoyed substantial market share and have had a period of decline, while market share in Japan, Italy and Atlantic Canada is increasing.

Our book gives you the details of these organisations, but we now present a very brief overview:

Japan

The Japanese Consumer co-operative movement is the most dynamic movement in the industrialised countries today. Although the roots of the movement go back to the early part of this

century and the impressive pioneering work of Toyohiko Kagawa, most of the current co-operatives started in the 1940s and have made impressive gains during the 1970s and 80s. The retail industry is highly regulated in Japan, land prices are high and direct buying of food has become popular. Many members' groups (hans) have food delivered each week. This comes directly from the warehouse and one member takes delivery of the food for the group and passes in the next week's orders. This, combined with an integrated network of stores, has enabled consumer co-operatives to be very competitive.

The organisations are premised on women having spare time to attend han group meetings and be involved in the participatory structures. But, Japan is changing. Women are returning to, or staying in, the workforce in increasing numbers. This trend is recognised by leaders and Co-op Kanagawa, one of the largest consumer co-operatives in Japan, is responding to the changes by innovating new ways to involve members and keep membership meaningful. Co-op Kanagawa is an organisation with 150 stores, 950,000 members and sales of 160 billion yen (USD 1.5 billion).

They are doing the following:

- 1) They conduct frequent systematic member surveys, studying the everyday comments of members, and analyzing change in their external environment.
- 2) They have worked to set up 'venues for participation' responding to

the new needs of members. There are eight fields of activity: peace, lifestyle and household accounts, the environment, welfare, culture, health, international exchange, and labour. Each area has an action program on which expansion of activities is based.

- 3) The structure of the members' organisation was changed to adhere more closely to their course of seeing members in the context of community and lifestyle rather than merely from a commercial viewpoint.
- 4) Users' Discussion Meetings are held for each store. For a long time, they have been promoting members' participation in Co-op brand product policy, supply policy, and product development. But now they have also inaugurated a system with the aim of adapting the content of such participation to the current scale of the organisation and of promoting members' participation in business policy-making and policy at associated companies.

Scotland

The birthplace of consumer co-operation is undergoing a renewal process and rediscovering its membership. The CWS Retail operation in Scotland has reactivated its membership base and is again involving members in meaningful ways. Our report focuses on Oban & Lochaber in Western Scotland.

The experience of Oban & Lochaber shows that co-operation, in both a trad-

ing and a democratic sense, can be revitalised given certain conditions. Although the area is essentially rural, it does contain within it some problems of urban deprivation. It reflects the recessionary difficulties experienced throughout Britain, both in general and in its effects on the Co-operative Movement. It emphasised the importance of membership involvement in showing how, despite geographical difficulties, members can become more involved in the running of their Co-operative Society. It also shows there are limitations to that involvement which must be explained and understood through a comprehensive training programme. Increasing involvement brings its own difficulties; particularly for management, which is why their understanding is also crucial.

As a result of work in the Oban & Lochaber area and elsewhere, and through discussion with member groups throughout Britain, the following are examples of proposals put forward as ways of advancing participatory democracy:

- 1) Membership groups should have the physical support of their Co-operative Society, preferably as the exclusive use of premises within an operating base, i.e. the shop.
- 2) Staff should be deliberately encouraged to be actively involved in all aspects of the democratic structure, and staff training should reflect this emphasis.
- 3) Managers should have targets for membership recruitment and a di-

rect responsibility for the promotion of membership.

- 4) Co-operative, ethical and environmental policies should be highlighted at all times, especially in shops.
- 5) Representative committees should have meaningful budgets to promote their own activities.
- 6) Senior management should give serious consideration to the participation of employees in policy making, i.e. a clear commitment to industrial democracy.
- 7) More emphasis should be put on the international nature of the Movement both at local and national levels.
- 8) A less centralised democratic structure should be developed.

Italy

Consumer co-operatives have grown rapidly in Italy since World War II. From 1982 to 1993 the membership has doubled and sales have increased five fold. They are increasing market share and competing successfully with the chain stores. These co-operatives see involving members as good business and have long had a focus on their social objectives, as well as their financial objectives.

Membership of the European Economic Community is changing the retail environment for these co-operatives as large multinational discounters move into urban areas. This is a

concern for management and is being addressed by involving members and keeping membership meaningful. They have spelled out basic member responsibilities.

Responsibility towards members, consumers, employees, and society: from the small community with only one co-operative sales outlet to the more complex relations in large cities. They have a commitment to improve the quality of life for the citizens through positive action.

Responsibility towards the environment, the social institutions, their heritage and the ideals of the democratic approach.

Participatory democracy is highlighted in the social report which all local co-operatives undertake, and is reported annually. Members are not only informed on how the social objectives are being met but also in establishing performance standards for the coming year. Objectives, policies and guidelines are established for each of the co-ops' five major stakeholder groups: members, consumers, employees, the local community and the co-operative movement. An annual audit is performed to measure success in achieving stated objectives, and each co-op's audit is compiled into a comprehensive Co-operative Social Report for the entire system. The report is used both as an informational tool, and a means for programming and planning.

Canada

In North America co-operatives began and gained strength amongst farmers.

The Consumer co-operative movement made inroads into the urban market place in the 1950s, but most have fallen by the wayside with the onslaught of large shopping malls and the current trend to discount chains. Atlantic Canada is an exception. This has long been a depressed region in Canada with high unemployment rates. Co-operatives took root during the 1930s with the Antigonish movement and food co-operatives are now dominant in the Co-op Atlantic federation. They have over 20% of the food market, are continuing to form new co-operative associations, increase market share and are doing it in a different way from its sister movements around the world.

'Each member store is an autonomous co-operative association with a separate Board of Directors and its own membership activity.' While most co-ops follow a conventional model, the direct charge model is important in urban centres and accounts for 45% of Co-op Atlantic's volume in groceries. Co-op Atlantic members also practise co-operation between co-operatives at the local level, where several consumer co-operatives have provided leadership in developing local Co-operative Development Councils which stimulate economic and social initiatives to address local needs and improve the local quality of life.

The second largest consumer co-operative in North America is Calgary Co-operative Association, which has over 30% of the food market share in the city of Calgary, operates 14 shop-

ping centres and has a long history of involving member volunteers. Two recent initiatives include the development of neighbourhood-focused member advisory groups called Community Councils, and a change in by-laws allowing for employee representation on the Board of Directors.

The largest agricultural co-operative in Canada, Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, has the most extensive delegate structure to implement participatory democracy in North America. Saskatchewan Wheat Pool is now under intense financial pressure as global competition challenges the domestic market. Given this international environment, the Pool has recognised that there is a need to access public capital through selling shares to non-members while preserving the democratic control structure. Recognition of the critical importance of member involvement has resulted in a major initiative focused on local committee renewal.

Sweden

The case of Sweden might be said to highlight revitalising the ambitions of a movement that is carrying out its activities in what has been called a post-industrial and a mass society. Consumer co-operatives started in Sweden in the mid 1800s and have a long proud history of breaking monopolies and defending the rights and interests of consumers. As a result, the consumer co-operative movement developed into the foremost retailer by the 1960s, with an average of 20% of the retail market, among other things based on extensive ownership of manufacturing facilities.

The Swedish movement was the inspiration for other movements, showing what could be if consumers co-operated and supported their co-operatives. But circumstances changed dramatically. By the 1980s the consumer co-operatives faced a stagnating market share and suffered reduced earnings. Various measures were undertaken, but nothing helped. Towards the 1990s the economic situation worsened and it was considered necessary to introduce more dramatic changes. Survival was at stake. Most of the industries have been sold, as well as parts of the movement like the petroleum facilities. Pork-butcher and mill industries, however, were kept in order to secure the daily delivery of fresh food to their own shops. The distribution of tasks between the union KF and the consumer co-operative societies were basically changed. KF more directly entered the retail business, while the societies concentrated on member and consumer issues. It is anticipated that some 80% of the total consumer co-operative turnover in the retail sector will be in the hands of KF.

In Sweden they approach the efficiency of the co-operative as a whole by continuing to promote economic efficiency, democratic efficiency and consumer policy efficiency. All three must be properly considered for balanced consumer co-operative development in the long term.

For the time being, economic efficiency, in other words economic benefits for the members, has been given the first priority. In addition to this 'user' aspect of membership, however, a range

of measures are renewed to revitalise the other aspects of membership: democratic member participation and participation in wider consumer issues. The ambition is to combine participation within mainly three member roles - the user, the owner and the consumer - into a meaningful co-operative whole of participation.

In Sweden, as in other post industrial countries, we increasingly faced the question, are consumer needs still strong enough to encourage meaningful participation. We think they are.

Final Report of the Joint Project

Now I would like to outline the findings in our final report.

Firstly, how shall we solve the difficulties we are facing?

We carefully examined what kind of environment we are living in. All co-operators are aware of the problems facing society today: the North-South problem; environmental destruction; conflicts and disputes around the world. When the Cold War ended, we hoped we could begin solving the world's problems. But new ones keep showing up.

If we do nothing but react to developments in the market and society, the movement could disappear. We may seem like idealists, but it takes a realist to see the urgent need for positive action now.

Secondly, the basic values in co-operatives and participatory democracy

This Congress will adopt a Statement on the Co-operative Identity contain-

ing principles defined as 'the guidelines by which co-ops put their values into practice'. Although some people consider participatory democracy an idealistic principle, we believe it is the most concrete, easily applied of these guidelines.

Thirdly, the co-operatives' position in society.

We believe co-ops are destined to play a leading role to realise a new society that is not yet visible but lies just over the horizon.

You may ask why co-ops are destined to lead the way. Why not other organisations or movements? Because the public sector will not show the way. Although democracy can be found in public life, many democratic political systems around the world are still struggle for legitimacy, or only just maintain the status quo. They are not in a position to define a new society.

Nor is the private sector going to lead the way toward a new society. *Laissez faire*, by definition, has no goal. And the profit motive alone cannot lead society to a brighter future.

Thus, it is up to the social sector, where co-ops are the single largest force today. Hence, we believe it is our task to strive for the creation of this new society.

Fourthly, is co-operative identity and participatory democracy.

We believe that the co-operative identity will be established by developing human resources with participatory democracy directed toward realising

the vision of the ideal co-op as well as the vision of the new society.

The participants in this project share a vision of the new society as a peaceful community where people, society, and nature are in harmony. The vision of the ideal co-op is to realise the values and principles in the ICA Statement on the Co-operative Identity. The peaceful society we aim at is needed by all people, and participatory democracy is essential to it. Co-operative activities can help draw out the latent energy of members and reveal the needs of people in the citizen's community. The entire process will enhance the co-operative identity while it strengthens individual citizens.

The final part of the essential elements contains themes and concrete examples for making participatory democracy work. We examined reality. We looked at successful co-ops, large and small, to find out what they were doing right. The members of the Project then defined the main items important to participatory democracy. The different aspects of developing and using participatory democracy seemed to fall into the five categories, which are thoroughly examined in the book.

We found a wide variety of techniques and approaches in each category, and certain ideas and techniques appeared in various forms around the world. We found that wherever participatory democracy was working, co-ops were fulfilling the needs of their members.

Conclusions

So this report, on an idealistic theme, is full of concrete ways to put participatory democracy to work in real-life co-ops, concrete ways of using the attractive force of ideals to focus the power of our human resources.

In closing, we would like to reiterate that our research project has demonstrated that making membership meaningful makes good business sense, as well as contributing to co-operative development. What we report today is not a prescription for practice, rather an attempt to provide informa-

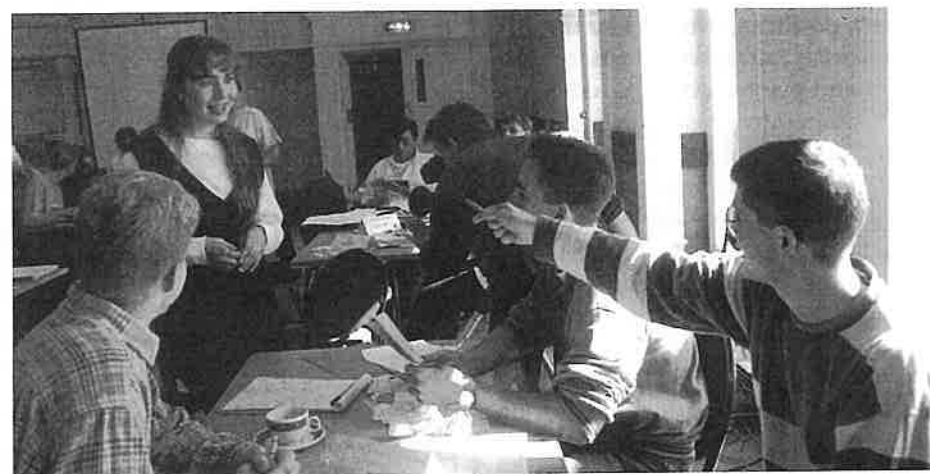
tion and recommendations we hope will stimulate debate and be useful for co-operative leaders.

If our findings can help even a few co-ops renew themselves, we will be pleased. But if the results are accepted widely, if we develop a consensus throughout the co-operative community on a vision for the new society and for the new co-op - if we can do all this, we will be able to generate such enthusiasm that our organisations will blossom and flourish with activity, all members striving for a common goal, a co-operative future.



Lars Marcus addresses Youth Seminar in Stockholm, in 1988

Youth and Co-operation - The Present and the Future



Introduction

We, the representatives of international young co-operators, would like to thank the ICA for giving us the opportunity to present our views at this Centennial seminar.

During the last four days 60 young people, from around the world, representing 21 different countries, have been participating in the 3rd International Youth Seminar. This is taking place at the co-operative college Stanford Hall near Loughborough, 100 miles south-east from here. These beautiful surroundings provide the perfect setting for our conference. This

The speakers from the Youth Forum were Mary Rose Gavieres from the Philippines; Jeppe Jorgensen from Denmark and Monika Kai Medri from Canada.

made it possible to get the most from the various discussions surrounding:

- co-operative principles regarding education, democracy, and the community;
- youth involvement in the Co-operative Movement;
- motivation and opportunities for young co-operators;
- the roles of the different employees and members of Co-operative Organisations.

These ideas were developed through:

- group exercises on values;
- a simulated national co-operative network;
- interactive briefings and lectures.

We have also visited housing and worker co-operatives, credit unions

and LETS systems, the co-operative bank as well as consumer co-ops. During these visits we talked with various co-operators.

The leaflet you have today outlines our present finding generated by our experience so far. It was written, produced and printed with the aid of the RAP Co-operative yesterday including a very long last night, so you might want to check your fingers to see if the ink is dry!! This presentation builds upon the facts outlined in the leaflet and will be further developed in our press pack.

From our studies of the MacPherson paper, we would like to comment on two topics of particular interest: education and democracy, before we talk about the future.

Education

Through the introduction of youth to the co-operative movement new ideas would be brought forward giving a fresh and modern outlook to the movement.

By continuous education, members of the co-operative movement will be kept informed. We believe that an informed member who understands those principles, that are the basis of the co-operative experience, is a member who is active in the co-operative movement and proud of the co-operative heritage. We think by inspiring young people to increase their involvement in the co-operative movement could be a way to help co-ops develop and survive.

A good example of excellent communication and education has been the exchanging of co-operative experiences through the youth of today at our youth seminar at Stanford Hall this week.

By involving the media we hope to reach uninformed youth outside of the movement. All co-operatives should undertake this task of education and information.

By using modern media and modern advertising techniques all co-operatives can reach new audiences. The Co-operative Bank in the UK has done this by taking the ethical angle in its advertising. Alongside that, the bank has produced a display about co-operative history across the road in Balloon Street, which is on display for the duration of the Congress. However, we believe that this kind of historical information should be encouraged on a permanent basis as part of education of the public.

It seems that although the public is not fully aware of co-operative principles there is a widespread feeling that the word 'co-operative' symbolises integrity and high ethical standards. Using this awareness as a starting point the co-operative movement could reach new members like the youth who, driven by basic, grassroots ideals, have particular concern for the state of the world today.

Co-operatives should foster links with both co-operative and non-co-operative youth movements as a source of new membership. We have discovered

that in Israel part of the educational process of the youth movement includes joining and forming co-operative and communal groups. In many countries there is a need for a similar approach, an approach that will give young future co-operators a goal they can look forward to. There are many other educational forums which can be tapped by the co-operative movement: for instance, there is a large population of non co-operative schools and youth movements that can become better informed by involving young co-operators in educational programmes.

It is apparent to many people that the co-operative movement appears to be a little cobwebbed. The movement's image must be modernised in order for it to appeal to younger people. One of the most important ways of making co-operatives more relevant to young people is to get more young people involved in the organisation and decision-making process. It is not difficult to understand that young people do know young people best and therefore can help make policy decisions which reflect the needs and interests of young people. It must be understood that the best way of educating towards responsibility is educating through responsibility.

Democracy

We also believe that democracy, as a vital co-operative principle, separates co-operatives from all other organisations and therefore, if the youth are not given the right to participate in decision-making even at its simplest form, then maybe co-operatives are not dif-

ferent at all. In other words, if youth are not involved in setting the direction of co-operatives, their democratic advantage is lost.

Giving us the opportunity to participate in co-operative decision-making will benefit both the youth and co-operatives.

By doing this, we (the youth) can gain experience, thereby developing new and relevant skills in different areas in the co-op. These skills may include the ability to work in groups and implement decisions. We will bring new perspectives to the co-op. These fresh perspectives will, in turn, benefit the organisation. A first hand knowledge of the needs of our generation is only one of the many contributions that we can make to co-ops.

The Future

We now look to the future. At the youth seminar, we discussed ways to link young people in order for us to continue to learn from one another and we discussed ways that you can involve us in decision-making.

Youth around the world need to be able to communicate co-operative ideas to increase their involvement. In order to do this, we intend to create an International Youth Network based initially on the co-operators who have been involved in this ICA Youth Seminar.

Our first goal in creating this network will be to internationally link youth around the world through written

means. Secondly, we would like to co-ordinate annual meetings for building international relations within the co-operative movement.

Since language is the primary obstacle to effective communications, we will use several languages within our network and the use of information technology such as computer Internet is an additional method; however, we acknowledge that we do not have the resources to contact all our fellow young co-operators by this means, especially those in the third world. Mailed material will be the appropriate means for contacting everyone at this time. In mail, we can exchange news items, publications and we can contribute to the International Newsletter, or even establish a new Youth International publication.

Though written material can be used for communication, youth co-operators need to meet one another as well. We should have international seminars, workshops and congresses. This, we cannot do alone. Resources of guidance and finance are needed. We need your support on this. In order to increase the feasibility of third world youth participation, we believe we should hold many of our events in or near countries with limited resources for travel. For example, there are only two individuals from the African Nations compared with 35 from European countries at our present youth seminar. Africa is a whole continent. Their needs, amongst others, must be better represented.

Increasing youth involvement in the decision-making process of our current organisations is of major concern. Involvement works in two ways: first, youth must take the initiative to get involved without being asked; second, opportunities to get involved must be made available within the structure of co-operative organisations. We know that in order for youth to be heard, they must be seen. There should be opportunities, for young co-operators, as members, to become involved at the top level of decision-making. The board of directors is one way to carry the views of youth, whether it is a youth seat on the board or a separate youth board or even as observers if not yet full participants. The long term goal would be to create a method of promotion from observation to participation in decision-making at the highest level. By attending, we show that we are interested and prepared to get involved.

It is a reality that many of you have dedicated your lives to the ideals of co-operation and for decades have struggled to keep the movement alive. For this we are very grateful.

We are not here to take away this endeavour you have invested in, but instead to offer a hand to pursuing these ideals for generations to come.

For us it is important for you, the delegates to this conference, to understand that youth are not only the co-operators of the future, we are the co-operators of the present.

The International Co-operative Research Forum

by Sven Åke Bök*

The International Co-operative Research Forum

Thank you for putting the International Co-operative Research Forum on the agenda. I take this as an appreciation of the fact that the ICA Research Committee has paid much attention to co-operative values and principles during recent years. So, here I focus on this subject.

The Manchester Forum

The Forum is organised every four years by the ICA Research Committee, local co-operative research institutes, co-operative research societies and co-operative organisations. We held one in Stockholm in 1988, one in Tokyo in 1992 and the most recent was in Manchester a few days ago. In the years between forums we organise one or more seminars.

During recent years there has, as I said, been much discussion regarding issues associated with co-operative values and principles, and these issues were the main theme of the Manchester Forum. The Forum was organised to-



gether with the Co-operative Wholesale Society (CWS), the British Society for Co-operative Studies, the Plunkett Foundation and the Open University's Co-operative Research Unit. Between 130 and 150 participants and observers from most parts of the world attended, and we discussed more than 50 papers and presentations in plenary and workshop sessions.

I will now turn to some of our views on the suggested principles, prepared by our colleague Ian Macpherson. These (with some changes) are presented as the proposal of the ICA Board. Of course, many of these views are research oriented, as they were presented in this Forum and previously in our seminars. This is natural, since

* Mr Bök (Kooperativa Forbundet, Sweden) has been working with the Co-operative Movement since his university days and with the ICA Research Committee since 1984.

the participants were individuals with research-based views. We have not attempted to merge those views into collective opinions or statements representing the Forums or seminars as a whole, because that is not the aim of our activities. Our primary aim is to promote the understanding of co-operative organisations and, subsequently, the development of co-operative theories.

Nevertheless, as chairman for many years (now a retired chairman), I feel that I am in a position to present some interpretations of the Forum.

Views from a Research Perspective

I am dividing my interpretations of the Forum's views into six main points. For a more complete account I would refer you to the report which we intend to publish subject to the necessary finances being raised.

Firstly, the overall reaction to Ian's approach to the co-operative identity and the revision of the principles¹ has been generally positive.

Since I have had some involvement in this process of reexamination I feel qualified to say that I am impressed by Ian's work. It is not easy to transfer the many ideas, experiences, opinions, etc. into so few concrete formulations. In my opinion Ian has managed to carry forward work begun in 1992.

The way in which the basic value identity is expressed might be discussed for all eternity, but I think we now have a

satisfactory formulation. And the bridge from that value identity to the practice - in other words the principles - is built in such a way that it will certainly be in use for decades.

Secondly, we also consider the revised principles to be general enough to include most of the co-operatives likely to be formed during the next century. This is important, since the co-operative world will certainly become even more pluralistic in the decades to come. We urgently need principles that are universal enough to embrace organisations which are basically co-operative in character but such principles must, at the same time, be selective enough to maintain a co-operative identity. Ian has succeeded in managing to handle this delicate balance.

Thirdly, most of us particularly appreciate the fact that Ian has managed to include community responsibility among the principles. As I explained in my report to the Tokyo Congress, this is a self-evident aspect of Co-operation, embedded in its very nature. But it was not previously explicitly expressed by the principles, and this led to some confusion.

So, it is good that Ian has made the community responsibility into a separate principle: all the more so because co-operative models will increasingly spread to those areas of people's needs which are characterised by social and community relations.

I have observed that the proposal in the Congress document has been amended. As I see it, the ICA Board's

amendment introduces an unnecessary mixture of principles and policies. The fact that co-operatives have a community responsibility is, as said, embedded in their nature and constitution: that is an issue about values and principles. The question of how, and to what extent, such a responsibility should be carried out concerns our implementation policy and consequently, as with other policies, is a matter for the members to decide upon. It is not necessary to point this out in the principle about community responsibility, since it is covered by the democracy principle.

Fourthly, regarding capital formation. Some of us, including myself, have hesitated before the fact that the issue about 'capital for independence' - presented under many names in co-operative contexts (such as 'collective capital', 'indivisible capital' and 'social capital') - is not included in the wording of the third principle. It is a large issue, not possible to discuss here, but I know that these issues have bothered many co-operators in theory and practice.

Now I can observe that there is an amendment in the proposal in the ICA documents from the ICA Board. That is satisfactory. However, the problem about the distinction between 'collective capital' and 'social capital' remains. This issue is probably best approached by the implementation policy, since it differs in importance, and the preconditions are different, according to the types of co-operative and the contexts in which they operate.

Fifthly, I must state that some of us also have doubts about the fact that employee and worker participation has not been explicitly reflected in the principle of democracy. I know from the research for my report that this is a long story with differing opinions, and I am not surprised that this aspect has disappeared since my report to the Tokyo Congress. Perhaps it might be considered as a part of the implementation policy of democracy and not as a part of the principles itself. I have heard this argument many times.

Anyway, the future will certainly and for various reasons, demonstrate new (or renewed) forms of combinations of member and worker (employee) democracy, to a large extent in accordance with the old model of co-operative co-partnership. This is challenging for co-operative development, consequently it is important to be prepared for the emergence of such co-operative forms.

Sixthly, and lastly, the principle about education. In our research meetings we spent much time discussing that crucial aspect of co-operative development, as was the case in this Forum in Manchester. I might interpret the majority view by saying that the basics of education are too cautiously expressed in the proposed principle. And I will emphasise that we do not claim this because we are researchers, and thus part of the educational system. We have derived this view from much empirical and theoretical study.

During the 1980s in particular, the subject of education has tended to be ne-

glected. By education, I mean the establishment of an understanding community environment and working to encourage involved members, dedicated employees and committed managers. Step by step this neglect has tended to destroy the co-operative identity. Moreover, a long term co-operative strategy for education should be considered as one of our strengths. Co-operatives are people based organisations, within which it is crucial to continuously develop and mobilise the human social capital.

The sooner we systematically recognise this, the better will be our co-operative future. A principle about education should place a stronger emphasis on such a basic view for the implementation policies.

Note

¹ Ian tells me he thinks it would be unfair to name the revised principles and identity 'Ian Macpherson's principles and identity' since his suggestions were subject to discussion and were ultimately proposed with some changes by the ICA Board. Nevertheless, in my opinion Ian will go down in the future history of the ICA as the person who 'revised the principles in 1995'.

A Co-operative Research Community in the Making

To conclude, I am, as I said in the beginning, a retired chairman of the ICA Research Committee. I should add that I am a 'happily retired chairman', because some of my younger friends and colleagues have decided to continue my role as 'a driving force' for this International Co-operative Research Community. We have gradually built up a reasonably large international co-operative research community, and we are happy to find that a big group within this community is ready to actively support this change and to contribute to the future. This is good, because co-operative development will increasingly need a strong, internationally-based community to carry out the tasks of education and research.

Co-operatives and Sustainable Human Development

by Bruce Thordarson*

Congress Introduction

At the ICA's Tokyo Congress in 1992, delegates passed a resolution which put three new demands upon the ICA. They asked the Alliance:

1. To strengthen its role as an information centre regarding environmental and developmental issues;
2. To establish its own Special Fund for Sustainable Development in order to be able to expand its activities; and
3. To work with its member organisations and specialised agencies towards the development of a Co-operative Agenda 21, which would demonstrate how co-operatives are meeting the environmental challenges set out in the Rio Declaration of 1992.

The Congress Report which you have before you today is the summary of the efforts which have been made in this direction during the last three years.

* Mr Thordarson is Director-General of the ICA in Geneva.



Without wanting to repeat the points made in this Report, I would like to limit this introduction to a few general observations.

The first is that the environment for co-operative development has changed considerably in the last few years greatly since 1992, and enormously since 1988, when the ICA's Stockholm Congress also debated this issue. In the ICA's Stockholm Congress Report, we stated that, "If there is one fundamental obstacle to the long-term growth and success of co-operatives in the South, it is their continued dependence upon, and in many cases control by, national governments."

Although this problem has not disappeared, the situation is certainly much better today. In some cases,

Structural Adjustment Programmes have imposed changes upon governments. But equally importantly, I believe, is the fact that many governments have come to realise that co-operatives must be given autonomy and independence if they are to be successful in carrying out their basic purpose of serving the interests of their members. I think we can also say, with due modesty, that the ICA Regional Offices have contributed significantly to this change in attitude, which is reflected in new legislation in many countries of the South.

A second major development is that co-operatives have regained much of the credibility which they lost during the difficult years of the 1980s. One sees manifestations of this change of attitude in the biennial reports of the UN Secretary-General, which have never been so positive about co-operatives, and in the decision of the UN General Assembly to declare a Special International Co-operative Day this year in honour of the ICA. One sees it in the increased willingness of the World Bank to support co-operative initiatives, such as the major conference on Strategic Alliances being organised by the ICA Regional Office for the Americas in Miami later this year. And one sees it in much of Eastern and Central Europe, where co-operatives have demonstrated that they can not only survive but also compete successfully in the new market economies.

A third change worthy of note is that the concept of development has changed considerably since 1992. The idea of "Sustainable Human Develop-

ment" is likely to remain at the forefront of development thinking for many years. It brings together the concepts of economic progress, social equity, and environmental preservation as three equally important and necessary elements. As the Congress Report says, and demonstrates, this is a concept of development which is perfectly suited to co-operatives.

This in fact leads to a fourth point, which is that the concept of Sustainable Human Development is not of relevance only to the North, or to the South, but is equally important in all parts of our planet. Government withdrawal from previous activities, the dominance of market forces, the problems of social exclusion, and the growing environmental dangers all are present in developing as well as in developed countries. If, as I suspect, Sustainable Human Development becomes a permanent part of the ICA and co-operative agenda, it will be a truly global issue. One demonstration of this is that the ICA's new European Region has already decided that Sustainable Human Development should be one of the priorities of its future work programme.

This leads us, finally, to the specific recommendations which the ICA is presenting at this Centennial Congress and General Assembly to its member organisations.

The first, in response to the 1992 Congress Resolution, is a Co-operative Agenda 21, which has been prepared on the basis of what co-operatives are doing today, and what they have the

potential to do in the future. It is not a set of rules, but rather a set of guidelines which can be used by all sectors to monitor how they are contributing to these global challenges. It also demonstrates how co-operatives are already leading the way in innovative activities within many sectors and in many countries.

Finally, the ICA is proposing to establish a special Trust Fund which would enable it to expand its activities in co-operative development and environmental promotion. This proposal is contained at the end of the Resolution on Co-operatives and Sustainable Human Development, presented by the ICA Board, which can be found on

page 114 of the yellow pages in the English-language Congress Report, as well as in the other language versions. We hope that ICA members, and others, will be prepared to contribute on a regular basis to this fund, not only as a tribute to the ICA's Centennial but also as a testimony to their faith in the ability of co-operatives to contribute to the major economic, social, and environmental challenges of the next century.

With these words of introduction, Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask my colleagues from the regions to provide some more detailed information about the work of ICA and its member organisations.

The Second Workshop for Journalists



The Workshop for Young Journalists and the Communications Seminar provided a wonderful setting for intensive learning and the acquisition of new skills. Midway through the course, a study tour to Blackpool, with its wonderful old tram and special waterfront light effects provided a welcome day of leisure and cultural experience. The Workshop also gave participants an opportunity to make contacts with other journalists and forge lasting friendships. The evening social events, hosted by the students from the different regions were also a source of culture and amusement!

Workshop for Young Journalists from the Co-operative Movement

The Second Development Workshop for Young Journalists from the Co-operative Movement was organised by the ICA Communications Department and the ICA Communications Committee, with resource people provided by the ICA, Co-operative Union, Co-operative Wholesale Society (UK), Co-operative Bank (UK), and Inter Press Service (Bonn office). The Workshop took place at the Co-operative College, Stanford Hall, Loughborough and the CWS Training Centre, Manchester.

It followed on the very successful First Development Workshop for Young Journalists which had taken place in Berlin in 1991.

The Second Workshop was attended by 14 participants from Egypt, India, Kenya, Poland, Romania, Russia, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia. The ICACC provided most of the funding for board, lodging and tuition, supplemented by a grant from the European Union, and the provision of resource persons from the UK Co-op Movement and Inter Press Service.

The participants took part in two one-day workshops on writing and communications strategy and also had sessions in interviewing techniques, gender issues in communications, internal and external communications and ra-

dio interviewing, in addition to daily evening sessions which were dedicated to DTP training.

During the second week, the participants were able to put the new skills acquired during the first part of the course into practice through the production of daily bulletins for the ICA Centennial Congress in Manchester, aided by experienced journalists from the ICACC and support staff provided by the Co-operative Union.

The Workshop also included a Communications Seminar which mainly focused on the Internet and electronic communications. Audio-visual demonstrations and lively discussions took place.

A second topic, how co-operative principles are good for co-op business, focussing on the UK Co-op Bank's Ethical Policy, was also very well received.

After the Workshop, participants were asked to make an assessment of their experience. All said that they were extremely satisfied with the course which they found to be very intense.

Most of the Workshop content was seen as new, useful and relevant to their jobs.

During the first week the "Writing Workshop" and "Interviewing Techniques" were judged to be the most popular courses.

The Communications Strategy Workshop on the last day in Loughborough was also rated highly, with participants showing an extreme dedication to reaching the end result, voluntarily working almost up to the minute they had to leave the college for Manchester.

In general the participants were very appreciative of the work which was conducted on their behalf and grateful to all the resource persons. They all expressed their luck at being able to study in such a fine venue as Stanford Hall and having the opportunity to attend the Centennial Congress of the ICA.

A similar assessment was asked of the resource persons. These reported to have been impressed by the cohesion of the group, the team spirit manifested throughout the course and the enthusiasm, intelligence and energy of the participants. There was a strong personal engagement manifested by all the students to learning and working hard, essential prerequisites for a successful experience.

Judging from the feedback regarding the Congress Newsletter, this was very well received by its readers. The three issues were judged to contain good,

straightforward reporting that covered well the multitude of events and issues arising during the Congress week.

Conclusion

The Second Development Workshop was more of a success than the first, having built on the experience gained in Berlin in 1991, and the ICACC feels that the Workshops will go on improving as the Committee and the ICA Communications staff become more experienced in this domain.

The Committee and the ICA Secretariat both feel that there is a great need for this type of training and would like to organise such Workshops at least annually. However, it took the Committee, with its limited finances, almost four years to save up enough funds to hold a second training course.

It is therefore, imperative to find additional funding if the human resources available are to be exploited for the benefit of the journalists and communicators from countries with relatively less experience in this field.

Any ICA member or development agency interested in sponsoring such a workshop should contact the Secretary of the Communications Committee, Mary Treacy, Director of Communications, ICA, 15 route des Morillons, 1218 Grand-Saconnex, Geneva, Switzerland; fax (41-22) 798 41 22 or e-mail address icageneva@gn.apc.org.

Report of the Vice-President for the Americas

by Roberto Rodrigues*

Two years ago in Geneva, I commented on a set of concerns, a number of ideas and the many hopeful expectations I had when I took up my post as Vice-President of the ICA for the Americas. Today, it is my duty to tell you about the course we are taking, and how far we have got.

I must say that one of the toughest responsibilities I have in the ICA is the one I am tackling now - having to summarise two years of work in less than ten minutes.

Many things have happened and we have many tales to tell, but I suppose that if our renowned author García Marques can recount 100 years of the history of Macondo in 400 pages, I should be able to present my report in three.

Let us put ourselves on the map. The Americas: North America, Central America, South America and the Caribbean: a region made up of 48 countries and territories, 5 trading blocks,



600 million inhabitants, 4 main languages and several dialects. A heterogeneous region to be sure.

And like the rest of the world, our region is facing increasingly rapid political, economic and social changes on the stages on which our co-operative enterprises operate. This has produced new situations, new problems, and new questions. The most striking question, because the answer involves all the co-operative structures, is "What use is membership to us?". The associates are asking the co-operatives, the co-operatives are asking the Federation, and the Federation is asking the organisation at the top of the pyramid; we are all asking the ICA.

*Roberto Rodrigues is President of Eximcoop, Organisation of Co-operatives of Brazil, ICA Vice-President for the Americas and former Chairman of the ICA Agricultural Committee.

This is my starting point for telling you about the process and the results we have achieved so far.

First, three aspects of reality that are not what I thought they were two years ago. *Number one*, shortly after starting my work I reached the conclusion, *which today is irrefutable*, that the position of Vice-President is not really a political post, it is that of a social communicator.

For the past two years, wherever there was an idea that we wanted to promote among our membership, the process has been the same: consult, listen, propose and agree. It is the quality and frequency of our communications that governs the degree of commitment we achieve.

Second, the differences in background across the continent, between north and south, and south-south, which we thought were going to make joint work difficult, have turned out to be one of the great strengths of our co-operative project and the foundations of the proposals for strategic alliances that we are now promoting.

Third, and this is something different, it is *not that obvious* to all the co-operatives and their leadership that co-operatives exist to serve their members and that, in order to do so, they must necessarily be competitive enterprises in their respective markets. The threats from the market to our co-operative *enterprises* have to be faced on the basis of productivity; they cannot be repelled with political artifices.

So, given these realities and questions, the challenge was to define how the

ICA would support its members in the Americas or to establish, correctly, what role the members want the ICA to play.

It being understood, *of course*, that the ICA will do everything our members want in the Americas, *on one condition*: our members *cannot want* us to do everything.

The first task, therefore, is to define the direction to take and on what and up to what point we can work together; to know where we want to go, so as to know if we are moving in the right direction. *If you don't know where you are going, wherever you get to is the right place.*

Continuing the process, we went out first to consult our members. What do they expect from the ICA? We listened and, on the basis of all the recommendations, we proposed a menu of topics to choose from.

To get proposals, we invited all our members to be imaginative, to look beyond the everyday. To say to themselves, like Bernard Shaw, "You see things; and you say "Why?" But I dream things that never were; and I say "Why not?""

To choose, I asked them to be practical. You can agree and assume commitments only on real foundations.

With those two watchwords we went to our first Regional Assembly of the Americas in November in São Paulo. There we forged the common commitment of our members on three topics that constitute what we have called our

Agenda for the Future: first, Co-operative Principles and Values; second, Human Resource Development; and third, Co-operative Business.

The course was set.

In the Americas we firmly believe that one of the ICA's inherent functions is the defence and promotion of Co-operative Principles and Values as the distinctive elements in and support of our identity. We cannot imagine a more important and urgent task in current circumstances.

And I believe that the statement on a co-operative identity that we shall be adopting here in Manchester is like a musical score. It will be for each national movement, each sector, each co-operative, to start to play it in the key of its specific geographical, economic and cultural context. They should adopt the statement, overlay it with their own rhythm, and play it *forte*, because everyone must be able to hear it.

Human resources, as the source, centre and end of all co-operative action, are recognised by our membership to be the decisive factor in the ability of the co-operative enterprise to compete now and in the future

Being effective in this area means that we see the results on the faces of our associates, leaders and employees, and also on the balance sheet of the enterprise. Everything must be brought together to bolster the competitive effort, and competitive ability must in turn be harnessed to serve our members.

I am especially concerned with the case of women and young people. I am personally committed to bringing about radical changes in the way that we have treated those two sections of our membership. For me, it is ridiculous for us to start talking of the future without remembering that it is the young people who are the only ones who can assure that future; young people were the keynote of our first Regional Assembly.

Women are to be the keynote of our second Regional Assembly. Because if we cannot overcome gender subordination in the co-operatives of the Americas, there can be no talk of democracy, and still less of participation.

And our third topic: Business. Our members require - demand - that we use our capability as a continental and world network to help them gain better market positions, to innovate in capital formation, to expand their relations, and to improve technology. Our members hope that the ICA will help them *to do* better business, so as to be able to serve their members better.

Those are the three topics on which we shall be focusing our time and energy in the next few years and they should be seen as a single unit since they interact to define the future of the co-operatives as enterprises and co-operation as an organisational option.

With the course defined, we now need to press ahead to prove, to make it visible to our members, that we are following the course we have defined.

At the structural level, the Regional Advisory Council has been set up and is in operation, with one representative from each country.

The Regional Office that was in operation in Costa Rica for Central America and the Caribbean has, pursuant to a decision by the members, become the Regional Office for the Americas and already has very good close relationships with the countries to the south.

The regional chapters of the Banking Committees are already in operation, as is the insurance network that we had before, and the Regional Energy Committee has been formed. We are currently working on the formation of the consumption, housing and agricultural committees, which should be in place by the end of this year. The setting up of the women's and tourism committees is scheduled for 1996, as is the consolidation of the INCOTEC network.

We are now concentrating on preparing a strategic plan that will make it possible to define how we will be working on each and all of the three components of the Co-operative Principles and Values, Human Resource Development, and Co-operative Business. Our 1996 Regional Assembly's main item will be the adoption of this plan, which we should view by and

large as our passport not only for getting into the next century but, what is more important, for getting there *in time* for the meeting with the third millennium.

The strategic plan for 1996-2000 must reflect our idea of building the largest organisational network of the continent: electronically interconnected; with strong sectoral co-operative integration at the country and region level, based on business; with political structures that are light but flexible; co-operation with the power to negotiate in the processes of adjustment and to make proposals as an actor in civil society.

As you can see, we are still a long way from where we want to be. But we are moving forward. And we are listening, proposing, agreeing. We shall get there.

My friends, I would like to conclude by saying in brief that the work we have been doing so far, and everything we are going to have to do in the future in the Region of the Americas, has but one purpose: to deliver added value to our membership. That means giving positive answers to the questions raised by associates, councils and managers - a meaningful answer to the question "Why are we members of the ICA?".

Report of the Vice-President for Asia and Pacific Region

by Mitsugu Horiuchi*



Mr Horiuchi receives an award of appreciation from new ICA President, Graham Melmoth.

24 months ago, at our Assembly in Geneva, I submitted to you how we, in Asia and Pacific, had made ourselves ready for the start of our Regional Assembly. Today, I would report to you what has happened there, hence.

Before doing so, I would remind you that the ICA region of Asia and Pacific covers a vast area, i.e. from Israel on the West to Fiji in the Pacific on the East, further stretching to east of 180 degrees Eastern Longitude to include

Tonga, just admitted into membership. From this region, 57 national level co-operative organisations from 24 countries and one regional organisation join forces in ICA with some 500 million or 2/3 of global individual membership of the Alliance.

1. Economies on the Rise and Economies in Transition

It may be useful to touch briefly upon the economic situations of countries in the region.

(i) South-East Asian market economies on the rise

Market economies of South-East Asia continue their high growth centred around ASEAN countries.

* Mr Horiuchi, completes his terms of duty as ICA Vice-President and officially retires in September 1995. He is replaced by Hakaru Toyoda, President the Central Union of Agricultural Co-operatives in Japan.

The region covered by UN/ECOSOC registered an annual growth of over 7% in both 1993 and 1994, and some similar growth is expected into years 1995 and 1996.

With cessation of battles, countries of Indo-China are also pushing ahead market-oriented reforms in hopes to share in the dynamic economic growth of Asia and Pacific.

(ii) South-West Asia

In South-West Asia, India, alone having a population of 900 million, set to promote economic reforms since 1991, adopting such policies as inviting foreign investments and technology as well as relaxing regulations on domestic industries. Neighbouring countries are also following suit.

(iii) Economies in transition

China, with its 1.2 billion people, is transferring to a 'socialist market economy' since 1992, with double digit annual growth.

Countries of Central Asia are in the midst of struggling to find ways for development with policy adjustments, switching from radical reform attempts in a period immediately following the collapse of the USSR to more gradual reform.

(iv) Others

The Israeli-PLO Agreement of May 1994 seems to have triggered accelerated moves towards normalisation of relations in the Middle-East, the whole of Australia and insular countries move to strengthen relationships with countries of our region based on their Pacific Rim orientation.

2. Statutory Meetings and Consolidation of Statutes

We were able to have our first meeting of Regional Assembly in January, 1994, in New Delhi, with 112 delegates/observers attending from 15 countries and ACCU as well as SCC and ILO. It was inaugurated by the Union Minister of Agriculture and efficiently conducted by Mr Vishwanathan, President of the host organisation, who was elected as chairman according to our practice.

The Assembly approved some amendments to its Rules earlier drafted by the Beijing Consultation, including a few lines providing for Associate Members, Observers and Special Representatives so it can invite more interested bodies to our ICA regional activities. It also approved draft Rules of the Executive Council saying, among other things, that each member country will be represented by one delegate.

The 2nd Regional Assembly will meet in Malaysia in 1996 by the invi-

tation of Professor Ungku Aziz, Vice-Chairmen of the Assembly. The 2nd Executive Council will meet in India this coming November.

Co-operative Development Programme in the Asia and Pacific Region

Our region has a Regional Office, the oldest of all ICA regional offices, which runs co-operative development programmes. Nine development projects are under way during the year 1995 under the supervision of Regional Director, Mr G.K. Sharma, and conducted by several project directors/advisors. They are:

1. Policy Development and Legislation;
2. Development Planning and Coordination;
3. Agricultural Co-operative Development;
4. Consumer Co-operative Development;
5. Human Resource Development;
6. Gender Integration;
7. Agricultural Management Training;
8. Rural Women Leaders Training;
9. ICA-CICOPA-NCUI Field Project in India.

These regional activities are financially supported roughly one-third each by beneficiary member-organisations in the region, donors from within the region and donors from outside.

Having as many as two-thirds of ICA global individual members, the co-operative development need of our region is substantial, in other words, the developmental projects need to be expanded with support from both within and outside the region.

Some Major Concerns of Co-operatives in Asia and Pacific

Asia and Pacific is divergent not just socio-economically but their co-operatives as well in terms of types and stage of development so that one cannot describe it in a word. Let me limit myself to touch on two aspects of our major concerns.

1. Government-Coop Relationship

Governments in the region usually promote economic and social development based on a national development plan covering several years, and in many cases, co-operatives are given roles in it.

ROAP has convened three meetings of Joint Co-operative Ministers and Top Leaders Conference with the last one in Colombo in 1994, to promote exchange of opinions on the role of Government in co-operative development, relationship between Government and co-operatives etc. The next dialogue is scheduled for early 1997 in Thailand.

Such an interface has already produced some good results: stimulated, the Philippines, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Myanmar and Thailand had their co-operative laws reviewed and modified, while Vietnam

benefitted from ROAP advice in framing a separate law.

In other note, we are told that the All-China Federation Supply and Marketing Co-operatives had been separated to become independent from the Ministry of Internal Trade.

2. Challenge of Marketization

Global waves of market-oriented transformation and deregulation unfinished this part of the world also, be they under former planned economy or market economy, co-operatives in our region, faced with shortages of capital and management capabilities, slow response to global trends in trade in part due to lack of information and data, and having to get Government clearance to do anything, are having hard time adjusting themselves to the new economic environment.

As seen above, countries of Asia & Pacific are washed by waves of reforms. Co-operatives need to enhance management capability to survive and develop in a more competitive environment. In this context as well, it is important to realise favourable legal framework and Government relations. It will be our job, through efforts to achieve these, to demonstrate 'why co-operatives now?', which is basically the theme of this Congress.

My final word, I have been on the Executive of ICA since 1988 and have had pleasure of serving as Vice-President since Tokyo Congress of 1992. Having seen the maiden voyage, as it were, of the new ICA structure, I think that it would be good for me to give it a period and step down together with President Marcus.

Report of the Vice-President for Africa

by Hon. B. Wolimbwa*

Overview

Africa's gross domestic product (GDP) grew by 2.4 percent in 1994 compared to only 0.9 percent in 1993 and fell to 0.3 percent in 1992. Despite this modest increase in growth in 1994, which was the fastest annual rate during the period 1990 - 1994, the African economy has continued to fall behind other developing regions, and GDP growth is yet to keep pace with population growth.

On a better note, agriculture performed better in most parts of the region, resulting in above average harvest, mainly because of the improvement in the weather conditions. The North Africa subregion achieved an impressive growth rate of 12.8 percent, followed by Southern and West Africa subregions, where output is reported to have grown by 3.6 percent and 2.7 percent respectively. In contrast, the East and Central Africa subregions registered negative growth rates of 1 percent and 1.5 percent respectively. Total output of cereals increased.

* Hon. Wolimbwa, the ICA Vice-President for Africa, is Chairman of the Uganda Co-operative Alliance in Kampala, Uganda.



Co-operative Adjustment in a Changing Environment

The history of the Co-operative Movement in the region goes as far back as the beginning of the 20th Century. Ninety years later the number has increased from a handful to thousands.

In this period co-operatives have contributed in a major way to the alleviation of poverty. The access to credit enables rural dwellers to afford improved agricultural inputs and implements thereby increasing their production. Similarly co-operatives have played a significant role in the creation and expansion of employment. In other words, co-operatives in Africa, like everywhere else, have contributed to national and regional development. Within the last five years many African countries adopted the World Bank

and IMF structural adjustment programmes as one way of securing funding from the international donor community. Through the structural adjustment policies, co-operatives have been exposed to competition when they were least prepared. In the short term the impact of these policies has been severe.

I would like to add, however, that co-operatives in Africa existed and will have an important role to play under liberalised economic policies. It should be noted that, in fact, the first indigenous co-operatives in Africa were born as a response to the genuine needs of their members.

Considering the importance of the fast changing environment in which co-operatives are going to operate, ICA commissioned a study on 'Co-operative Adjustment in a Changing Environment in Sub-Saharan Africa' to analyze the situation and recommend a new strategy for co-operative development in Africa. The report was presented at the First Meeting of the ICA Regional Assembly for Africa. The report was also presented to ICA Europe as a document that raises issues that support assistance from the North because there is now an environment for developing autonomous co-operatives.

Restructuring of the ICA

Following the restructuring of the ICA, Mr Momodou Dibba, former Chairman for West Africa, was nominated and later elected as Vice-President for Africa at the 1993 General Assembly. The Regional Assembly for Africa held its First Meeting in Nairobi, Kenya, on 9th September, 1994. The meeting was opened by the Vice-President of Kenya,

Hon. George Saitoti, and later addressed by the Tanzania Minister of Agriculture, Hon. J. Makweta, in his capacity as Chairman of the Africa Co-operative Ministers' Conference.

The meeting was initially chaired by the ICA President, Mr Lars Marcus, and later by the Africa alternate Vice-President following the approval of the Regional Assembly Rules and Guide Lines. In his address to the Assembly the ICA President challenged co-operatives in Africa to do more for the member in the new environment. He also used the occasion to bid farewell to the movement in the region and assured the co-operators that he will continue to be part of Africa.

The meeting was also addressed by the following: ICA Director General, Bruce Thordarson; CICOPA Chairman, Yves Régis; ICMIF CEO, Hans Dahlberg; AFRA Chairman, E. Kwenda; ICBA/Regional Chairman, E. Mureithi.

The Regional Assembly considered and approved the resolutions of the seminar considering Africa's input to the review of co-operative principles. The report on the role of co-operatives in the new environment would be used by each national movement as a background document.

Regional Offices

The Africa Region still operates from two Offices: Abidjan for West Africa and Moshi for East, Central and Southern Africa. Although Egypt participated in the First Regional Assembly Meeting we look forward to the full participation of North Africa in the near future.

Report of the Vice-President for Europe

by Graham Melmoth*

Since the last General Assembly in September, 1993, we have worked hard to establish the European Region of the ICA and define its priorities and work programme.

The process of regionalisation has progressed through regular consultation with our member organisations in Europe. The membership has met three times since the new structure was established: on 10 September, 1993, in Geneva, on 26 and 27 October, 1994, in Prague and here in Manchester this week as a preliminary to the Centennial Congress of the Alliance.

The European Council has met on six occasions, the first three times as a provisional Consultative Committee: in Brussels in November, 1993, in Seville in May, 1994, and in Prague in October, 1994; subsequently, after the formal elections by the European Assembly in Prague, the Council met in Strasbourg in May, 1995, in St. Petersburg last July and on Tuesday last, 19 September, here in Manchester.

* Mr Melmoth, former ICA Vice-President for Europe, has now been replaced by Lars Hillbom from Sweden, in view of his recent election to ICA Presidency.



All of these meetings, which have involved virtually all of the representatives invited, discussed the common problems of Co-operatives in the Region and established the basis for the Statutes of the Assembly and the main work priorities.

These addressed the principle concerns of the European Region and sought to regularise the relationship between the nine Sector Associations and the European Region, with which Co-operative Agreements will, I hope, shortly be signed.

It has been a pan-European perspective which has lain behind the role of ICA Europe and this is recognised in the Statutes. This perspective reflects

the development of co-operation between Co-operative Movements within the European Union, now enlarged to fifteen Member States, and those of Central and Eastern Europe, most of which aspire to join the European Union, including the Co-operative Movements of the Confederation of Independent States.

These first two years of work have enabled the Regional Assembly to be formally constituted, to have definitive Statutes adopted and to have a Council representative of the membership elected. This Council now comprises a Chairman - Lars Hillbom, two Vice-Chairmen - Raija Itkonen and Ota Karen and twelve members. We have tried to evaluate the work we can do in Europe realistically, without creating new structures or adding to the fixed costs of the ICA.

I would emphasise that the work I have described has been achieved thanks to the voluntary work and self-financing of Co-operative member organisations in Europe, supplemented by modest external funding from the European Commission.

When the Regional Assembly met in Prague in October, 1994, the decision was taken to focus the activities of the Working Groups on six priorities:

1. Supporting Co-operatives in Eastern and Central Europe;
2. The corporate governance of Co-operatives;
3. Sustainable human development;

4. Equality between men and women in Co-operatives (the gender question);
5. Improvement in the exchange of information and in communications amongst Co-operatives; and
6. Co-operatives and schools.

The Council and the European Regional Assembly held in Manchester earlier this week reviewed the situation and measured the principle results achieved to date. Amongst the positive results which we achieved were the following:

- Several seminars and projects achieved by Co-op Network geared to support East/West co-operation in Europe;
- Recommendations on corporate governance and management control systems in Co-operatives. This will lead to the publication of a Code of Practice deriving principally from the work of Reimer Volkers;
- Recommendations directed towards development strategies amongst Co-operatives in Africa;
- Recommendations on dealing with relations between men and women in Co-operatives, summarised in the motion "Gender Equality in Co-operatives" which we would hope will be approved by this General Assembly;
- Progress in improving systems for the exchange of information, not least extensive use of E-Mail and

the worldwide web facility promoting the Co-op image;

- A beautifully produced account of the experiences of the promotion of Co-operatives in European schools, a document which will be available for use in other Regions of the ICA.

Our four priorities were adopted by the Regional Assembly when it met here in Manchester on 19 September.

I should underline that the successful realisation of the priorities identified will call for the participation of all European Co-operative Movements as well as the firm collaboration of members of the Sector Associations of the CCACC with which Protocols of Agreement have begun to be signed during the course of this Congress here in Manchester. So what are the future priorities of ICA Europe as they have been defined?

1. **Strengthening Co-ops in Eastern and Central Europe**
This priority will comprise assistance towards the development of Co-operative Movements in Eastern and Central Europe and the CIS in conjunction with Co-op Network, as well as defining the ultimate stages for integrating these activities fully within ICA Europe.
2. **Codes of Practice Governing Methods of Management and Control Systems**
This priority will cover the work following the revision of Co-op-

erative Principles as is to be approved at the end of this Congress, and assistance to Co-operative Movements which desire to apply the recommendations which result from analysis of the seminar on Corporate Governance in St. Petersburg last July and the summary report by Reimer Volkers.

3. Sustainable Human Development

So far as this subject is concerned, ICA Europe proposes to focus its priorities on three aspects: the environment, the creation of employment and the battle against exclusion, i.e. barriers and controls preventing the free movement of peoples, and international co-operation between North and South.

4. About Co-operatives and Improving Communication

This priority includes the final stages of the project "Co-operatives and Schools" as well as the European contribution to the global ICA programme on communications and participation via E-Mail and the worldwide network.

I would like to emphasise two important lessons I have drawn from my experiences in office in the European Region which may be something of a legacy for my successor, my good friend Lars Hillbom, Vice-President of Kooperativa Forbundet, whom I congratulate on his election as Chairman of the Region:

- a. The importance of integrating East/West and North/South initiatives within the Region and of maintaining a continuing dialogue between Sector Co-operatives and Inter Sectoral Movements which are essential for the development of European Co-operatives; and
- b. The necessity to maintain during the process of decentralisation of the Alliance a vision and a global perception of the ICA

as a whole which must rest upon a unitary organisation. We must not allow the ICA to fragment itself in such a way that the Regions are competing with each other. Each Region is part of the whole and the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

I have very much enjoyed my time as Vice-President - Europe and I would like to thank the membership for bestowing that office upon me.

Report of the Audit & Control Committee

by Pal Bartus*

For the first time, the Committee will deliver a summary report for a two-year period as a result of the new ICA structure with the highest authority meeting only every second year.

Detailed reports from the Audit & Control Committee have previously been submitted to the membership for each of the two years; 1993 was included in the ICA Annual Report 1993-1994 (Review of International Co-operation, volume 87 No 4 1994) and the 1994 finances are included in the XXXI ICA Congress Agenda & Reports (Review of International Co-operation, volume 88 No 3 1995).

Since the General Assembly in Geneva in 1993, the Committee has had the following composition: Dr Markus Schelker of Coop Switzerland (Chairman), Dr Pal Bartus of Co-op Hungary, Mr Ivar O. Hansen of NBBL Norway, Mr Jacques Moreau of G.N.C. France and Mr Frank Dahrendorf of VdK Germany. Mr Dahrendorf was unfortunately prevented from participating in the meetings during this period for health reasons, and was substituted by

* Mr Bartus is President of the National Federation of Consumer Co-operatives (Co-op Hungary) in Budapest and member of the ICA Audit and Control Committee.



Mr Wilhelm Kaltenborn. Mr Claes Thorselius, the ICA Deputy Director-General, has been the Secretary to the Committee.

The Committee holds two meetings per year. The first one, in the spring, concentrates on the financial statements for the previous year and the completed audits of all offices. The second meeting, in the autumn, has its focus on a general review of the financial and organisational situation, a special review of one of the Regional Offices and a look at the forthcoming budget and audit work. In addition, the Chairman meets with the auditors for a day in Geneva prior to the spring meeting. Around year-end, the Chairman is also meeting with the ICA President to review the budget and workplan proposals for the coming year.

Through these meetings and in concurrence with the external auditors, Ernst & Young S.A., we are of the opinion that:

1. The structure and organisation of work is correct, although we have to point out again that the Secretariat is trimmed down to a bare minimum and cannot be more cost efficient than it already is.
2. The routines and control mechanisms are appropriate and well functioning.

In our detailed reports we have had reason to point at the lack of discipline regarding timely payment of Subscriptions to ICA and submission of required documents. It is gratifying to see that the complaints have been heard and measures have been effective, leading to obvious improvements during 1994. These improvements are continuing in 1995.

The subscriptions, being the main source of income for ICA, are stagnant. Over the last six years the annual total has been around CHF 2 million. The increase in 1994 over 1989 is a mere 1%, in spite of the fact that the number of member organisations has increased by more than 6% during the same time, the minimum subscription has increased from CHF 750 to CHF 3,000 and there have been increasing turnovers and results in many countries - either as a result of improving business or of inflationary reasons. The reason for this situation is the turbulence on the currency market over the last few years, which has led to the appreciation of the CHF compared to practically all other currencies.

The stagnant income has led to many cost-cutting measures and, as mentioned above, this has been done to its limits. It is also clear that the ICA finances is constantly balancing on a very narrow margin.

1993 was the major year for implementing the new ICA Structure. Unfortunately, deficits were sustained in all of the Offices, except in New Delhi. The total deficit was CHF 184,081, as described in detail in the Annual Report for this year. The Audit & Control Committee recommended that this deficit was covered from the ICA's General Reserves.

Again as presented in our detailed report in the documentation for this Assembly, the financial situation could be turned around. The target of avoiding any deficits and producing a small surplus was reached. The result amounted to a mere CHF 5,957, but still a surplus.

We understand that the Board and the Secretariat will engage in major planning activities regarding priorities and financial issues, including a review of the subscription system, in the near future. The Audit & Control Committee finds these activities of vital importance and will lend all possible assistance to the efforts.

Finally, on the basis of this Summary Report and the individual Annual Reports, the Audit & Control Committee recommends that the Financial Statements for 1993 and 1994 are approved by the General Assembly.

Director-General's Report

This report will be very brief, because I think that everyone is looking forward to hearing the President's Report in a few minutes. And my own report to the General Assembly is, as well, printed in the ICA's Annual Report (beginning on page 13 of the yellow pages), and also translated in the Summary Report.

This meeting, coming two years after our previous General Assembly in Geneva in 1993, represents the end of a special period in ICA's history. Tomorrow we will conclude the review of co-operative values and principles which has involved so many people since 1988. On behalf of the ICA staff I would like to thank the two external collaborators who have worked so closely with us during that period—first, Sven Åke Böök, and now Ian MacPherson. If we have been able to arrive at a consensus among so many different sectors and regions, it is mainly due to the untiring efforts and patience of Sven Åke and of Ian.

Of course it would have been much easier if a few people had sat down to re-write the principles, as happened in 1937 and 1966, but I think that this lengthy exercise in participatory decision-making is quite appropriate in a diversified membership organisation like the ICA.

Now, of course, our attention must be focussed on the future. In the ICA's Annual Report, you will see that almost each section ends with remarks about future plans. For example:

- The study regarding the possible establishment of a Development Trust;
- The expansion of ICA's electronic networking project;
- The strengthening of ICA's collaboration with the Specialised Organisations;
- The integration of the Co-op Network into the new and evolving European Region; and
- The up-coming Board Planning Session designed to review both policy and administrative issues.

I would like to conclude this mini-report with a personal word of thanks to all the ICA staff, the ten others in Geneva and the 56 in the Regional Offices and Project Offices. I think they can be proud of their accomplishments as recorded in the pages of the Annual Report. And finally, I know that they join me in expressing sincere thanks and best wishes to our retiring President.



Above: a scene from the ICA Congress Sessions and below: important participants to the ICA Congress opening ceremony were, from left to right: Bruce Thordarson, Jenny Melmoth, Lord Ted Graham, Lars Marcus, Annhelen Marcus, Alf Morris MP, Lloyd Wilkinson, Graham Melmoth, Lord Richard of Ammanford, George Money, Lord Mayor of Manchester and Lady Mayoress, Irene Morris and Edna Money.

Farewell Remarks by ICA President Lars Marcus

Three years have passed since our Congress in Tokyo. The changes decided upon have had their follow up. Regional Assemblies and elections have taken place. During the preparations for this Congress we, on the Board, have once again turned our attention to our financial situation. We are still in the black (with the exception of 1993), but we have not reached the levels of reserves for which we had hoped. Some major contributors of subscriptions have asked for leniency. Many members do not pay according to what is stipulated in the rules. The Swiss Franc is very strong, and subscriptions paid in local currency lose value when they are transferred to Geneva.

The new structure, anticipating a development that had come anyhow, is likely to require increased contributions both for sectorial and for continental collaboration.

The Board has therefore taken certain measures to increase income, but I believe that before the year 2000 the matter will be brought to the General Assembly again.

I tried to tell you during the Congress Opening Ceremony how we worked to make ICA more effective in a changing

environment. It is fascinating, but also a little frightening. Here we are at the beginning of our next century, five years ahead of the world.

When I say 'we' I mean the Secretariat, and its very competent staff headed by Bruce Thordarson: a friend with enormous work capacity and brilliant intellectual skills. I also mean my colleagues on the Board, all my good friends. A good atmosphere and mutual confidence certainly help when decisions are difficult.

Before the elections I also have the privilege to express my gratitude to all of you, whom I met or worked with during so many happy years of my life. Because our cause is noble.

I also want to say something to my wife, who is present and who now and then accompanies me on my travels. I thank you, Annhelen, for accepting me again and again on my return from my numerous journeys, with or without jetlag, loaded with documents and picture books from cities I visited but never saw. I wanted to say this now, and in not too many words.

Elections will now take place and my successor, once elected, shall immediately have the chair. Please, then, be as generous, friendly and supportive to him as you have been to me. Once again, thank you all.

* Lars Marcus, ICA President from 1984 to 1995, retires after the ICA Congress in Manchester.



Peripheral meetings to the ICA Congress included an International Co-operative Health and Social Care Forum and a European Regional Assembly.



New ICA President's Address

The office of President of the ICA does not pass from hand to hand very often and I count myself as privileged that the membership of the ICA has today vested it in me. It has for so long been the natural adornment of my predecessor that I think it will take both he and I and the staff of the ICA some time to get used to the change. We must be understanding if Lars Marcus should sleep-walk into the headquarters in Geneva from time to time!

I am grateful to the British Co-operative Movement, led by George Money, for its confidence in me and for having supported my nomination for this office. And also to the Board of my employer, the CWS, and my Chairman, Len Fyfe, who nominated me in the first place.

I should make it clear to those who believe I shall hereafter be sky-bound non-stop that I shall be a "Working President". That means I shall continue in my position here at the CWS. Representatives of the World Movement should not lose touch with their own organisations. They must be able to call upon their help and resources in the work of the ICA. Thus in my travelling, I intend to arrange my itineraries carefully to cover as much ground as possible and as economically as possible.

Mr Melmoth, elected to the ICA Presidency, replaces Lars Marcus who retires after eleven years of service.

ble, as I have tried to do as ICA Vice-President for the European Region.

You may ask, in having conferred the Presidency upon me, what are the things which I believe in. The British Movement has always stood for the broadest embrace across the spectrum of Co-operation. I certainly count myself as an Internationalist and a convinced European. That means I am a strong supporter of the European Union and its development as a force for unity and peace on this Continent. One of the best things to have happened to the Co-operative Movement and to Europe was the election as Leader of the European Socialist Group of Pauline Green, a Co-operative Member of the European Parliament, who will address us tomorrow. The British Co-operative Movement has an attachment to the Co-operative Party of which I am a member. However, the ICA is staunchly non-political.

Nor does it take up a dogmatic view about the Social Economy. The Alliance must be broad enough to encompass all political persuasions.

Co-operation is, of course, nothing if it is not about working together collectively. I believe fervently in the principle of Co-operation amongst Co-operatives. As an official, I have struggled with my colleagues with the difficulties of putting this principle into practice. It is a non-stop process in which



Graham Melmoth is a strong supporter of the European Union; he has great faith in Co-operative Member of the European Parliament, Pauline Green, as Leader of the European Socialist Group. She was invited to address the ICA Congress in Manchester.

we cannot afford to relax. As a Co-operative Manager in the CWS for twenty years, I have subscribed to the principle of working with my colleagues as part of a team. I intend to bring that philosophy to bear also within the staff of the Alliance.

Membership and membership education have been important elements of my Co-operative makeup. I do not deny belonging to the school believing in a lighter and freer rein over membership activity than the more regulated school of thought. It strikes me that in life, there is a meanness and a generosity of spirit in equal measure in mortal combat. It won't surprise anyone to know that I support the latter and regard that as an essential catalyst for the application of Co-operative principles.

An important element of my makeup must be the fact that I have worked so long for a great organisation which for over the 130 years of its life has sailed magnificently through the choppy waters of business in Britain. The CWS commands a respect and Co-operative support bigger than those who sail within it and I am proud to have been its Secretary for so long.

So that is a little about what I am and what I stand for.

For those who want to know in which direction I might contribute to the leadership of the ICA, I say that first this is for the Board in consultation with the membership. It is for the Board to determine direction and priorities. We have a planning session marked out for December of this year. Before then, the Director-General and I, together

with his staff, will be collecting our thoughts. If you were to ask me what I thought were the priorities of the Alliance, I would echo what Lars Marcus said yesterday about Africa. I think that the Alliance has to bring large resources to bear on that Continent. I was happy with what the President for Africa, Bernard Wolimbwa, had to say about encouraging participation in the Republic of South Africa and its Co-operative Movements, and I have already spoken to some of their representatives at this Congress. I would like to see them as an anchor for Co-operative activity there.

The Eastern/Western Europe chasm will need more and more attention and, of course, it is the first priority of the European Region under its new Vice-President, Lars Hillbom of Sweden, whose election I warmly welcome as a colleague and friend. The ICA President needs to get closer to the two energetic regions of the world in Asia and the Americas. There are many prospects for the further development of Co-operative activity there.

We must return to the issue of financing the Alliance. The subscription income just about covers its day to day role. There are, I think, some successful and prosperous Movements yet to make a commensurate contribution to the Alliance. The Development Trust will be an important initiative for the ICA.

The re-organisation of the ICA led by Lars Marcus, consummated in 1992, was clearly right for the time, but I suspect the organisation as a whole will

need re-adjustment. We have to be careful that the central core of the Alliance remains strong and that the devolution to regions and the creation of autonomous specialised bodies are not allowed materially to weaken the work and role of ICA Geneva. I think we must address the relationship between the ICA and the specialised bodies. The Director General and I will have an opportunity tomorrow to discuss these issues with the Chairmen of the specialised bodies.

The Regional Assembly of Europe (and I hope this Assembly) has adopted a motion calling for more equal treatment of men and women in Co-operatives. There clearly is an element of lip service to the principle of equal opportunities. I say "equal opportunities" because I think the word "gender" signifies so very little in English. We are talking about equal treatment of men and women in business and every other aspect of life. The ICA could set an example and a standard for others to follow and I hope, with the support of Raija Itkonen who has in recent years dedicated herself to promoting the cause, that we can make something of a breakthrough so as to ensure improved representation of women in the councils of the ICA as well as in the domestic Co-operative Movements.

May I now pay some tributes? First of all to Lars Marcus, a distinguished President for eleven years and a hard act to follow. He will go down as one of the great "Popes"; there are those elected for a short period and who fade away without leaving their mark and there are others who publish encycli-

cals and contribute permanently to the life of the Church. I am not sure that the analogy is entirely apposite, Lars Marcus having no claim to being a religious man, but as regards the Presidency of the ICA, there is the sense of the apostolic succession about it. I would pay tribute to Bruce Thordarson - a deceptively understated personality, with a keen brain and much charm, for whom I have great regard. Also to all his colleagues on the staff of the ICA, not least Arsenio Invernizzi, the Regional Council Secretary, and to the members of the Board of the Alliance amongst whom I count many good friends.

An incidental concern during this Congress, as some people may recognise, has been the organisation of this Centennial event. I had the pleasure of chairing the Committee appointed by the host organisations: a good and positive Committee which proves that Co-operation amongst Co-operatives is more than possible. We achieved a great deal together. I accorded the rather grand title of "Chief of Staff" to the main organiser, Tony Luscombe. Many delegates will know him as the bustling character who appears in several places at once like a genie out of a bottle. I will not single out any other member of the staff from the host organisations who have exemplified the team spirit to which I referred. Sufficient to say that in my view, the work of that team has been magnificent. The team's success is theirs. The failures of organisation are mine. Amongst them I would count the omission from the video at the Opening Ceremony of a reference to Agricultural Co-operatives to which Edgar Parnell, a good friend and colleague,

drew attention. I am afraid that because the CWS being Britain's biggest farmer was shown in the video, the enormous contribution of Britain's Co-operative farming community somehow fell victim to the Editor's cutting machine. That should not have happened. I pay tribute here and now to the significant contribution which Britain's Agricultural Co-operative Sector has made to the British economy and to the Co-operative Movement here. I know this, of course, from direct personal experience as Secretary of the CWS which has a number of Farmer Co-ops as members. The Chairman of the United Kingdom Co-operative Council (the UKCC), Denis Carter, is a distinguished agricultural Co-operator in his own right. The ICA is strongly supportive of the Agriculture Sector. Indeed, the ICA must be seen as an emphatically INCLUSIVE organisation. There is no reason for seeing it otherwise.

Finally, before we return to the rest of the business of this Assembly, I should refer to the two women in my life: my secretary of twenty years, Irene Gigner, who has had to put up with so much, not always uncomplainingly but always efficiently and loyally; to her, grateful thanks. And then to my wife, Jenny, who as some of you will know speaks good French and Italian and a little German; she, if anything, is more of a convinced Internationalist than I am and writes much better poetry than I do. To her I owe a great deal.

To them and to everyone else, I am very grateful for their generous support on having been accorded the Presidency of the ICA. Thank you.

CICOPA - the International Organisation of Industrial, Artisanal and Service Producers' Co-ops

by Yves Régis



Executive

Chairman: Yves Régis (France)

Secretary: Martine Cabanis (France)

Confédération Générale des S.C.O.P. 37, rue Jean Leclaire - 75017 Paris (France).
Tel. (33) 1-46.27.89.58. Fax. (33) 1-42.29.79.00.

Vice-Chairmen: Vishwanhatan - N.C.U.I. (India); Marian Rybar - S.Z.V.D. (Slovakia); Marco di Martino - CECOP's President (Italy)

Members: Enzo di Torre Chafran - C.A.L. (Paraguay); A.S. Kibora - ICA Office Abidjan (Africa); Yuzo Nagato (Japan); Javier Sanz (Spain); Mohamed Sebayi (Egypt); Istvan Szabo (Hungary)

Membership: CICOPA has 72 Member organisations from 55 countries (Europe: 15, Africa: 15, America: 13, Asia: 9)

Publication: CICOPA NEWSLETTER, three times a year

Statutory Meetings: Each year one Plenary Meeting (usually at a place and at the moment ICA Board Meeting is held) and two Executive Committees are held.

These Plenary Meetings were held in Tokyo (October 24th 1992); Geneva (September 6th 1993); Prague (October 24th 1994), and Manchester (September 16-17th 1995).

The most recent Executive Committees were held in Cairo (Egypt) and Vitoria (Spain) 1994; Paris (France) April 24th 1995, and Manchester (Great Britain) September 17th 1995.

Regional Organisations

CECOP: CICOPA-EUROPE located in Brussels is the strongest Regional organisation with a significant budget. CICOPA AMERICA LATINO starting on several specific actions, for the moment in CONO SUR. 4th World CICOPA Conference - VITORIA-GASTEIZ (near MONDRAGON Group) - between the 6th and the 10th of June 1994 - 400 participants from 52 countries.

Opening Ceremony

Jose-Antonio Ardanza, President of the Basque Government; Jose-Angel Cuerda, Mayor of Vitoria-Gasteiz; Paulino Luesma, Minister of Labour and Social Security of the Basque Government; Joe Fazio, Head of the Co-operative branch of the ILO in Geneva (Switzerland); Lars Marcus, President of the ICA (Sweden); Claude Fonrojet, General Delegate for Social Innovation and Economy (France); Yves Régis, President of CICOPA (France)

Technical Visit to Mondragon

Mondragon Co-operative Corporation (M.C.C.)
Caja Laboral Popular
Polytechnical Training Institute
FAGOR - EROSKI, etc...

9 Items in 3 days

1st day:

1. Modern Industry and Democratic Participation
- 2.. Development - Handicraft Women
- 3 . Job Creation - Youth and Co-operatives in the future

2nd day

1. Development and Solidarity
2. Business Exchanges
3. Human Resources

3rd day

1. Formal and Participatory Democracy
2. Indivisible Reserves/
3. Social and Human Mission of Producers Co-operation

Publication:

Records of this Conference with final conclusions are available (in English, French and Spanish at the cost of USD 40.).

CICOPA Development programmes

Principles

- a) CICOPA tries to help development of Producers' Co-operatives organisations in some countries where it is now possible to get a technical support from one of the ICA Regional Offices, where APEX Co-operative Organisations do approve it and where a public co-financing is possible.
- b) Its principle aims are creation of a producers' co-operatives Union (if it does not exist in the country, or Federation and of a first Permanent Service of Advice and Help for Co-operative Management (mainly marketing and financial management).

CICOPA is convinced no lasting development could be realised with feeble and isolated enterprises.
- c) The basic rule is to help the creation and development of such a service but not alone. This is happening with the growing financial participation of the beneficiary co-operatives themselves, at first as partners in the action and then taking full responsibility or ensuring the service goes on after CICOPA financial support stops.

Present Programmes

- 1 In India: both Bangalore (Karnataka) and Delhi (Jaipur, Muradabad, etc. Units-Multipurpose women co-operatives; weavers; metalware, etc...
- 2 In West Africa: Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast with most interesting results (specially line of credit from World Bank) and soon Benin and Senegal.
- 3 In East Africa: project for Tanzania.
- 4 America Latina: Cono Sur: Uruguay, Paraguay, Argentina and soon Chile and Brazil.
- 5 Central America: Costa Rica - Salvador, Honduras, etc...
- 6 Eastern Europe: mainly Republic of Russia (Elaboration and lobbying of a Russian Law upon Industrial Producers' co-operatives).
- 7 Important Project in China with both Gung Ho organisation and All China Industrial and Handicraft Co-operative Federation.

Global HRD Committee

(formerly INCOTEC)

by Yehudah Paz

Our areas of concern: the place of HRD and education within the ICA framework presents us with something of a paradox.

On one hand the centrality of and the commitment to HRD and education in co-operatives has never been more clearly realised and enunciated. This finds expression in our new identity document and our revised principles; in the discussions held here at our Centennial Congress and above all in the growth of HRD and educational activity in our co-operatives - locally, nationally and regionally and in the ICA.



But on the other hand, and in contrast, INCOTEC has been, in the past few years, a weak and indeed an almost non-functioning body. It has suffered from a variety of problems: structural, financial, in terms of personnel etc. Concern with this paradox was not limited to the small circle of those directly involved. It was, it appeared, widespread within the ICA - so much so that, on the basis of a background paper and proposal circulated in advance of this Congress, the largest group of participants in a plenary meeting of INCOTEC in the past decade or more gathered together to discuss the issue. This plenary meeting (which was preceded by a meeting of the executive committee) was followed by an equally well attended workshop session.

The more than 60 participants in the plenary session unanimously agreed - after full discussion - that HRD and education must continue to be a part of the ICA's frame of activity and that there is a need for a global focus for HRD and education within the ICA, which is the global framework for the world's co-operatives.

They further decided to say farewell to INCOTEC and to formally wind it up. To establish a new ICA specialised body - the Global HRD Committee. (Thus, one might speak figuratively of a death followed - virtually instantaneously - by a rebirth.)

The new Global HRD Committee is envisioned as being broader in scope than the old INCOTEC. It will include not only education and training institutions but also all ICA frameworks concerned with HRD - at national, regional and international levels. It would reach out to other relevant bodies - such as the COOPNET of the ILO - Co-operative Branch - and seek to involve them as well.

The Global HRD Committee would seek to serve as a flexible framework linking all those concerned with HRD, education and training, including existant and emerging HRD networks. It will further the exchange of experience, materials, personnel etc. among its members. It will facilitate regional networking and will seek to bring the regional networks into effective contact with each other. It will organise HRD - focused workshops and discussions at ICA general and regional assemblies. It will conduct - once every four years - an ICA international seminar-workshop on co-operative HRD and education (the first of these will be organised through and with the International Institute in Israel). The new committee will be operated on a self-sustaining basis.

The plenary meeting elected a new executive committee which includes some former executive committee members and some new ones. The Committee consists of a group of men and women who are prepared to work together to build a meaningful HRD framework for ICA.

Y. Paz - Chairman

U.A. Aziz - Vice-chairman

F. Shousha - Vice-chairman

T. Nojiri - Vice-chairman

G. Ullrich - Vice-chairman

J.E. Imbsen - Secretary

E. Gicheru - Executive Committee Member

A. Karablein - Executive Committee Member

C.L. Munoz - Executive Committee Member

B.D. Sharma - Executive Committee Member

S. Siafraji - Executive Committee Member

J.E. Imbsen, HRD director of ICA, who was chosen as the secretary, will serve as the international point of reference for the committee's work. The first task of the new executive committee is to draw up a work plan for the coming period - and this task is to be completed within the next few months. It will then turn to

INCOTEC



Gabriella Ullrich, Vice-Chair (ILO) and Jan-Eirik Imbsen, Secretary (ICA), participate in the ICA Global HRD Committee discussions in Manchester.

the further consideration of the committee's structure, framework, finance and scope. Proposals will be laid before the next plenary meeting of the Global HRD Committee - to be held at the time of the next general assembly meeting in 1997. At that time elections will be held as required.

The plenary meeting was very heartened by a most generous offer of practical support - in terms of facilities and equipment - made by Mr José Espriu of the Espriu Foundation, Spain.

We hope that the ICA will give its blessing to this old-new framework for what is undoubtedly a central concern for all of us, and that the blessing of ICA and that of the ICA's members will find expression not only in warm and welcome sentiments - but in strong and practical support as well.

ICA General Assembly Draft Minutes

Manchester, 22 - 23 September 1995

Official Business

President Lars Marcus called the General Assembly to order, at 14:30 on 22 September, following the conclusion of the 2-1/2 day Centennial Congress.

The Agenda, as circulated with the meeting papers, was approved.

The Minutes of the 1993 General Assembly, as circulated in the Review of International Co-operation, Volume 37, Number 1, 1994, were approved.

The Director-General reported that 305 official Representatives of member organisations had registered for the Congress and General Assembly, out of a total of 1,219 participants, thereby establishing a quorum.

Reports from the Governing Bodies

Reports on regional activities were presented by:

- Mitsugu Horiuchi, ICA Vice-President (Asia-Pacific)
- Roberto Rodrigues, ICA Vice-President (Americas)
- Bernard Wolimbwa, ICA Alternate Vice-President (Africa)
- Graham Melmoth, ICA Vice-President (Europe)

Pal Bartus, member of the Audit and Control Committee, presented the Committee's report, which recommended that the ICA's Financial Statements for 1993 and 1994 be approved. Following an intervention by Alexandra Wilson (Canada), and a clarification from the Deputy Director-General about the way in which subscription control and penalties are applied.

The report and recommendation were approved.

Director-General's Report

Bruce Thordarson highlighted issues from his written report, contained in the ICA's Annual Report. He expressed his appreciation to the ICA staff in the Head Office and Regional Offices, and on their behalf thanked the retiring President for his contributions to the Alliance.

Elections

President Marcus referred to the presentation he had made at the Opening Ceremony of Congress, which had traced the evolution of ICA during the 11 years of his presidency. He expressed his thanks to ICA members, to the ICA staff, and to his wife.

Elections were then held to fill vacant positions on the Board and on the Audit and Control Committee.

George Money, Chairman of the Co-operative Union of the U.K., presented the nomination of Graham Melmoth, Secretary of the Co-operative Wholesale Society, as President of the ICA. The nomination was approved without dissent.

Taking the chair, Mr. Melmoth paid tribute to Mr. Marcus, to the other Board members, and to the ICA staff for their significant accomplishments during recent years. He said that the ICA Board would hold a planning session in December in order to discuss future directions. He emphasised his view that ICA must be a broadly-based, politically neutral organisation. The President expressed his thanks to the ICA members for their confidence.

The President then introduced the nominees for Vice-President, as decided by the Regional Assemblies. The General Assembly formally elected:

- Hakaru Toyoda, President of the Central Union of Agricultural Co-operatives in Japan, as ICA Vice-President (Asia-Pacific);
- Bernard Wolimbwa, Chairman of the Uganda Co-operative Alliance, as ICA Vice-President (Africa); and
- Lars Hillbom, Senior Vice-President of KF, Sweden, as ICA Vice-President (Europe).

The President introduced Claude Béland, President of the Desjardins Movement, who had been nominated by the ICA's two Canadian members. Mr. Béland was elected to the Board.

Mr. Melmoth presented awards of appreciation to the retiring Board members: Lars Marcus, Leroy Larsen, Mitsugu Horiuchi, and Momodou Dibba (in absentia).

The President reminded delegates that Wilhelm Kaltenborn, member of the Executive Board of VdK, Germany, had been nominated to fill the vacancy on the Audit and Control Committee caused by the retirement of Frank Dahrendorf. Mr. Kaltenborn was elected.

The President then adjourned the meeting.

Guest Presentation

The General Assembly resumed at 09:30 on 23 September. President Melmoth introduced Pauline Green, leader of the socialist group in the European Parliament, who addressed the meeting.

Reports from the Specialised Bodies

The following representatives of the Specialised Bodies reported on their recent activities:

- Fisheries Committee - Shoji Uemura, Chairman
- Agriculture Committee - Roberto Rodrigues, the outgoing Chairman, who introduced the newly-elected Chairman, Mario Dumais from Canada
- CICOPA - Yves Régis, Chairman
- Consumer Committee - M. Ohya, Vice-Chairman
- Housing Committee - Rolf Trodin, Chairman
- International Co-operative Banking Association - Claude Béland, Chairman, who paid tribute to Terry Thomas, who had retired after seven years as Chairman
- International Co-operative and Mutual Insurance Federation
- Hans Dahlberg, Chief Executive
- INTER-COOP - Steinar Sivertsen, Chairman
- International Co-operative and Associated Tourism Organisation - Michael Grindrod, Chairman
- Communications Committee - Iain Williamson, Vice-Chairman
- Research Committee - Sven Åke Bök, outgoing Chairman, who introduced the new Chairman, Roger Spear from Britain
- INCOTEC - Yehudah Paz, who reported that the members' meeting had decided to disband INCOTEC and to establish a new ICA Committee on Human Resource Development, of which he had been elected Chairman
- Women's Committee - Katarina Apelqvist, Chairperson, who reported that the Committee's name had been changed to "ICA Global Women's Committee"

Dr. S. Kato, Chairman of the Medical Committee of the Japanese Consumers' Co-operative Union, reported on the Co-operative Health and Social Care Forum, which had met in Manchester on 18 September, and which had decided to establish a steering committee with a view to creating a new ICA Specialised Body.

President Melmoth thanked the Specialised Bodies for their reports, and said that the proposal to establish a new Specialised Body would be carefully examined by the Board.

Resolutions

The President referred to the discussion which had already taken place during the Congress concerning the Board Resolution and the Statement on the Co-operative Identity. The Board's views had been contained in a memorandum distributed to participants, dated 18 September. A listing of additional amendments was distributed. Natsuko Yuasa of JCCU spoke in favour of an amendment to retain the reference to "cultural needs and aspirations" in the definition of a co-operative. The Representatives agreed to accept the Resolution presented by the Board, as well as the amended version of the Co-operative Identity Statement (Annexes 1 and 2).

The Resolution presented by the Board regarding the second Congress theme, Sustainable Human Development, having been extensively discussed during the Congress, was also approved (Annex 3).

Per-Olof Jönsson of Sweden spoke in favour of the amendment proposed by JCCU regarding the Resolution on Co-operative Democracy. The amended Resolution was approved (Annex 4).

The President of JCCU, S. Takemoto, spoke in favour of the Resolution on Peace, which was also approved (Annex 5).

Raija Itkonen, ICA Board member from Finland, spoke in favour of the Resolution on Gender Equality in Co-operatives, submitted by ICA Europe, which was approved (Annex 6).

The resolutions submitted by the National Co-operative Business Association of the USA, regarding Strategic Alliances and Lars Marcus, were also approved (Annexes 7 and 8).

Any Other Business

The President reported that the Board had received an invitation from Yehudah Paz, on behalf of the co-operative movement in Israel, to hold the 1997 General Assembly in Tel Aviv. The invitation was accepted.

There being no other business, the President thanked the members and staff of the Congress Organising Committee, the participants, the interpreters, and the ICA staff, and closed the General Assembly.

Resolution on The ICA Statement on Co-operative Identity The Declaration on Co-operatives Towards the 21st Century

(submitted by the ICA Board)

1. Since 1988 the International Co-operative Alliance has undertaken a world-wide review of the values and principles upon which co-operatives base their activities, with the objective of strengthening the identity and role of co-operatives in the global economy.
2. Our vision of the future is that national economies will need more elements of self-reliance, democracy and participation in order to enable people to have more control over their economic and social lives. Co-operatives will therefore become even more important, to more people, in the future.
3. From their beginnings more than 100 years ago, co-operatives have been based on values and principles which differentiate them from other kinds of enterprises. They must continue to maintain their distinctive identity in the future.
4. Therefore, the ICA General Assembly, meeting on the occasion of the ICA's Centennial Congress in Manchester, in September 1995, approves the "ICA Statement on Co-operative Identity".
5. The General Assembly further decides that the Statement should replace the "Co-operative Principles", as adopted by the ICA Congress in 1966. It believes that the Identity Statement provides a broad framework, applicable to co-operatives in all countries and sectors. If further understanding is required, reference should be made to the accompanying Background Paper.
6. The General Assembly addresses the following message to ICA member organisations and to concerned national and international governmental bodies:
 - a) Co-operatives should consider including this Identity Statement in their rules or bye-laws, should implement it in their daily work, and should encourage their Governments to base co-operative legislation upon it, where applicable; and
 - b) Governments should understand and accept the existence of a co-operative sector in the economy, within a legal framework which allows co-operatives

to operate as independent, member-controlled organisations, and on equal terms with other forms of enterprise.

7. The General Assembly also draws the attention of ICA member organisations to the "Declaration on Co-operatives Towards the Twenty-First Century", and requests them to examine how they can apply its message in order to improve the effectiveness and impact of co-operatives in the future.

The International Co-operative Alliance Statement on the Co-operative Identity

Definition

A co-operative is an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly-owned and democratically-controlled enterprise.

Values

Co-operatives are based on the values of self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity, and solidarity. In the tradition of their founders, co-operative members believe in the ethical values of honesty, openness, social responsibility, and caring for others.

Principles

The co-operative principles are guidelines by which co-operatives put their values into practice.

1st Principle: Voluntary and Open Membership

Co-operatives are voluntary organisations, open to all persons able to use their services and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership, without gender, social, racial, political, or religious discrimination.

2nd Principle: Democratic Member Control

Co-operatives are democratic organisations controlled by their members, who actively participate in setting their policies and making decisions. Men and women serving as elected representatives are accountable to the membership. In primary co-operatives members have equal voting rights (one member, one vote), and co-operatives at other levels are also organised in a democratic manner.

3rd Principle: Member Economic Participation

Members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of their co-operative. At least part of that capital is usually the common property of the co-operative. Members usually receive limited compensation, if any, on capital. Ed: check origin of this text "subscribed as a condition of membership. Members allocate surpluses for any or all of the following purposes: developing their co-operative, possibly by setting up reserves, part of which at least would be indivisible; benefiting members in proportion to their transactions with the co-operative; and supporting other activities approved by the membership.

4th Principle: Autonomy and Independence

Co-operatives are autonomous, self-help organisations controlled by their members. If they enter into agreements with other organisations, including governments, or raise capital from external sources, they do so on terms that ensure democratic control by their members and maintain their co-operative autonomy.

5th Principle: Education, Training and Information

Co-operatives provide education and training for their members, elected representatives, managers and employees so they can contribute effectively to the development of their co-operatives. They inform the general public - particularly young people and opinion leaders - about the nature and benefits of co-operation.

6th Principle: Co-operation Among Co-operatives

Co-operatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the co-operative movement by working together through local, national, regional and international structures.

7th Principle: Concern for Community

Co-operatives work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies approved by their members.

Rev. 23/9/95

Resolution on Co-operatives and Sustainable Human Development

(submitted by the ICA Board)

1. During recent years the term "Sustainable Human Development" has been increasingly used to identify a form of economic and social development which is both people-centred and respectful of the environment. Although the concept originated in connection with developing countries, it is relevant to all parts of the world.
2. As institutions whose fundamental purpose is to meet the needs of their members, co-operatives by their very nature contribute in an important way to sustainable human development. As the United Nations General Assembly recognised in a 1994 Resolution, "co-operatives in their various forms are becoming an indispensable factor in the economic and social development of all countries, promoting the fullest possible participation in the development process of all population groups, including women, youth, disabled persons and the elderly."
3. The General Assembly therefore welcomes the report on "Co-operatives and Sustainable Human Development", presented to the ICA Centennial Congress in Manchester in September 1995, and commends it to the membership for review.
4. The General Assembly takes particular note of the "Co-operative Agenda 21" contained in the report, and reaffirms its view that co-operatives should ensure that both their institutional performance and their member education programmes place high importance on environmental considerations.
5. The General Assembly is of the view that the ICA can most effectively contribute to sustainable human development through the activities of its Regional Offices, and therefore expresses its support for the continued growth and strengthening of the ICA's regional structure.
6. The General Assembly recognises the contribution which many of the ICA Specialised Bodies have already made in this area, and expresses its view that they should increase their collaboration with the ICA, both globally and regionally, in order to make the most effective use of available resources.
7. Finally, recognising that the ICA structure is a transparent and cost-effective means of promoting sustainable human development, the General Assembly recommends the establishment of an "ICA Trust Fund", to be controlled by the ICA Board, for the purpose of strengthening the ICA's current development programme; and further recommends that ICA member organisations make regular contributions to this Fund, both to commemorate the ICA Centennial and to indicate their support for ICA's role, in collaboration with its members, as a catalyst of co-operative development.

Resolution on Participatory Democracy in the Co-operative Movement

*(submitted by KF Sweden, and amended by JCCU, Japan,
on behalf of the International Joint Project
on Participatory Democracy in the Co-operative Movement)*

The Centennial Congress of the ICA, at its meeting in Manchester in September 1995:

- COMMENDS** the initiative of the International Joint Project on Participatory Democracy in the Co-operative Movement, involving Canada, Italy, Japan, U.K. and Sweden;
- ACKNOWLEDGES** the difficulties faced by co-operators the world over to find methods for and good examples of active member participation in more complex business structures, under tougher competition, and relatively lacking in young members;
- EMPHASISES** the need of co-operators to positively influence the living conditions of members through new and existing ways of developing participatory democracy so that our values, ideas, and activities contribute significantly to democratic development for justice and solidarity;
- CONFIRMS** the group's finding that participatory democracy (members' participation, commitment, and involvement) must be integral to co-operative activities and continually developed as core conditions for business and society change;
- REMINDS** co-operators that participatory democracy is never fixed once and for all but must be continuously recast and reconquered;
- ACCEPTS** the final report of the project group, comprising
- (1) a description of the consumers' co-operative movement (retailing) in each country,
 - (2) case studies from each country focusing on increasing member involvement and participatory democracy, and
 - (3) conclusions and recommendations;

RECOMMENDS

further study by co-operators in the five areas of the project:

- (1) expanding members' participation;
- (2) the relationship between members and management,
- (3) innovation of organisational structure,
- (4) expanding the relationship with employee participation, and
- (5) economic and social responsibility;

ENTRUSTS

the Board and Regions to initiate measures for coordinating and informing member organisations about the exchange of experiences and opinions on the development of participatory democracy in co-operative organisations in general and on the final report of the International Joint Project in particular.

Resolution on Peace

(submitted by
the Japanese Consumers' Co-operative Union)

The Centennial Congress of the ICA, at its meeting in Manchester in September 1995, reaffirming its own efforts for world peace:

- RECALLS** that the ICA Rules call upon member organisations to "contribute to international peace and security", and that it is now 50 years since the end of the Second World War, which brought the greatest destruction in the history of mankind;
- EXPRESSES GRIEF** over the fact that armed conflicts in numerous parts of the world still sacrifice a large number of people, including innocent women and children;
- EXPRESSES CONCERN** about their hindering effects on economic and social progress, not only in those areas but also in the whole world, thus jeopardising global peace and the environment;
- DECLARES** the will of co-operators worldwide to make efforts to create a peaceful world, and their prayers for early solutions to these problems;
- SUPPORTS** the Resolution adopted by the World Summit for Social Development, held in Copenhagen in March 1995, on the "20/20" initiatives for reducing the growing gaps between rich and poor nations;
- CONFIRMS** the actual contributions which the co-operative movement is making to promote the increased participation of women at the 4th World Conference on Women, to be held in Beijing in September 1995, and to support the development of affordable housing at the UN Conference on Human Settlement (Habitat II), to be held in Istanbul in June 1996;
- RECOGNISES** the importance of following up on the themes of these Conferences in each country, and to this end the necessity of disarmament, protection of human rights, and elimination of disparity and discrimination of all kinds;

WELCOMES

a series of peace initiatives taken by the UN General Assembly, including the Resolution adopted on 2 November 1994 concerning the convening of the 4th UN Special Session on Disarmament, and the Resolution adopted on 15 December 1994 requesting an advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice on the legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons;

URGES

co-operators in the world to make efforts by various means for the success of the UN Special Session on Disarmament towards overall disarmament, the early elimination of nuclear weapons, and the establishment of a non-violent world; and

FURTHER ASKS

member organisations to disseminate the above-mentioned ICA peace initiatives in each country, and to contribute to creating a climate for world peace through the mobilisation of public opinion.

Resolution on Gender Equality in Co-operatives

(Submitted by ICA Europe)

Gender equality is a global priority of the ICA. A better balance between female and male co-operators and employees would be a re-energizing force and source of competitive advantage to co-operatives and improve their image as democratic, people-oriented enterprises. The ICA European Council proposes that co-operatives commit themselves to active promotion of equality between women and men.

A pre-requisite is that we accept that women and men are different and that we respect their differences. Mixed co-operative governance, reduced gender segregation of employees at all levels, and appreciation of the different priorities of women's and men's values, strengths and competence all contribute to a positive development as well as to the improved entrepreneurship and efficiency of co-operatives.

To improve such gender balance co-operatives are requested to set an action plan which should include targets, with a clear idea of what should be achieved and by when.

Women and men must have equal participation and job opportunities, the same working conditions and equal pay for equal work, as well as equal training and educational opportunities. Progress in achieving objectives must be monitored regularly to identify successes and shortfalls.

Shared influence and shared responsibilities between women and men are a key to co-operative excellence.

Resolution on Strategic Alliances

(submitted by

the National Co-operative Business Association (NCBA), USA)

WHEREAS one of the strengths that has contributed to the growth and development of the International Co-operative Alliance over the past one hundred years of its existence has been the dedication of the ICA in building strategic alliances among its members;

WHEREAS as the ICA enters into the second century of its existence, it is even more important, in a global competitive environment, to focus on the importance of such alliances to the development of trade and business relationships between and among its members;

NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT HEREBY

RESOLVED

that the General Assembly, at this Centennial Congress, pledges to continue to build strategic alliances for the purpose of assisting our membership to remain competitive and to promote the co-operative principles and ideals which are at the foundation of our success.

Resolution

(submitted by NCBA, USA, on Lars Marcus)

WHEREAS Lars Marcus, after 11 years of extremely dedicated leadership of the International Co-operative Alliance, is stepping down as President of the ICA;

WHEREAS Lars Marcus has been an outstanding leader in a period of great transition including dramatic political changes in Central and Eastern Europe and the continued growth of ICA in Africa, the America and the Asia-Pacific region, along with a resurgence of co-operatives throughout the world;

WHEREAS Lars Marcus has demonstrated his political acumen and led the ICA to a respected position in the world's Community of Nations;

WHEREAS Lars Marcus has kept the ICA in the forefront of the training and development of co-operative leadership through his support of people all over the world;

WHEREAS Lars Marcus has presided over great changes faced by the ICA and has always kept the Alliance true to the principles set down by the co-operative pioneers 150 years ago;

NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT HEREBY

RESOLVED

that the General Assembly, at this Centennial Congress, does wish to express its thanks for the leadership and guidance which Lars Marcus has provided during his eleven years as President.

BE IT FURTHER

RESOLVED

that Lars Marcus may have many happy and healthy years ahead in his well-earned retirement.

Approved Unanimously by the ICA General Assembly
Manchester, U.K., 23 September, 1995

Interview with the New ICA President

by Mahmoud Bassiouny*



As a parting gift, Graham Melmoth presents the ICA gavel to Lars Marcus, who became well-known during his years as ICA President for his decisive and 'proactive' use of this tool in keeping things moving at ICA forums.

As an old co-operative journalist, I have had sincere relations with the ICA specifically since 1964 during my first visit to the ICA Headquarters in London (11 Upper Grosvenor Street). It is worth remembering that through my dear friend, Dr Jan Hanz Ollman, I got acquainted with all the ICA objectives and activities and, of course, with its leaders. I have also been writing and publishing a great deal about the ICA Congresses, meetings and committees annually since the 26th

Congress in Paris in 1976. Furthermore, I have met and interviewed many international co-operative leaders: Mrs Margret Digby, Dr R.L. Marshall, Dr J.H. Ollman, Mr H. Campbell, Mr J.J. Musundi, Mr A.F. Laidlaw, Mr Y. Daneau, Mr O. Paulig and Mr S.Å. Böök. I have also interviewed the ex-directors of the ICA: Mr W.P. Watkins, Mr W.G. Alexander, Dr S.K. Saxena and Mr R. Beasley. As for the Presidents of the ICA, I have met and interviewed Dr M. Bonow, Mr R. Kerinec and Mr L. Marcus.

* Mr Bassiouny is Chief Editor, Agricultural Magazine, Co-operative Association for Printing and Publishing, Egypt (photos: M. Bassiouny)

Moreover, our Egyptian papers and magazines of the Co-operative Association for Printing and Publishing and



Dr. Bonow hands over the gavel to Mr. Kerinec in 1976 - 19 years elapsed between the two occasions.

Kwatian Co-operative Magazines, represented in my articles, were the first window through which all the Egyptian and Arabic co-operative readers got acquainted with the ICA and its activities.

As to the British Co-operative Movement, it was the first foreign movement which I have known and studied through a UN fellowship of three months field-study of co-operation and co-operative press in 1964, during which I visited Manchester and Loughborough and many other towns in England as well as in Wales and Scotland. My second visit to Manchester was in 1979 to the Central Committee of the ICA. It is worth mentioning that from 1974 till 1981 I paid many visits to the Headquarters of the ICA in London.

Today, it is my third visit to Manchester, not only attend and participate in the ICA Centennial Congress and its second General Assembly, but also to meet my old British Co-operative friends whom I missed very much.

I am now with Mr Graham Melmoth in his castle, the New Century House in Manchester. It is not our first meeting, for we met in 1979 at the meeting of the ICA Central Committee which I attended as member of the Egyptian Co-operative delegation and he as the chairman of the organisation committee of the ICA Central Committee. We met once again in Tokyo in October 1992 at the ICA 30th Congress and later in Geneva in September 1993 at the first General Assembly. In April 1994, in a conference with the Egyptian and Arabic Co-operative movements, we

were honoured to receive in Cairo our distinguished guests: Mr Marcus as the ICA President, Mr Melmoth as the Vice President, and other members of the Board.

Today, in Manchester and after eleven of success, Mr Marcus is giving up the presidential chair to his successor, Mr Melmoth, who is elected unanimously.

Mr Melmoth kindly, and in spite of being very busy, answered my questions giving me the honour of being the first Journalist to interview the new president of the ICA.

Who is he?

First of all, I would like to introduce to my readers the new President of the ICA. A brief background of Mr Melmoth:

- * His name is Graham Melmoth, 57 years old, he is married to Jenny, has two sons, and lives in Macclesfield.
- * He has been Secretary of the Co-operative Wholesale Society Limited for nearly twenty years and is a long-standing member of the CWS Executive Committee.
- * He was appointed a trustee of the New Lanark Conservation Trust, based on Robert Owen's Model Community, in 1987.
- * He is a Director of the Co-operative Bank, Unity Trust Bank and Co-operative Press.
- * He joined the Board of the ICA in 1992.

- * He was elected Vice-President of the ICA for Europe in 1993.
- * He was Chairman of the ICA European Council in 1994.
- * He is now ICA President Elect on 22 September, 1995.

Questions and Responses

As a new President of the ICA, I would like to know your feeling towards your election to this international position, especially when it has been a long time since an Englishman held the office?

If I am candid, I have hardly had time to reflect upon the presidency of the ICA because of the immediate priorities of organising a successful Centennial Congress. However, I feel very proud and honoured to be elected president at this time. As an Englishman has not held the office for forty years, it will clearly provide a considerable challenge for me.

New Structure

Are you satisfied with the new structure of the ICA which has been agreed upon in the last Congress in Tokyo? What do you suggest for keeping firm links between the Board on one hand and the Regional Assemblies and the specialised organisations on the other hand in order to guarantee the cohesion of the ICA?

The reorganisation of the ICA led by Lars Marcus in Tokyo, '92, was clearly right for the time. I think there is a lot of good sense in the regional structure and in the provision for self-administered specialised bodies. But I suspect that the ICA as a whole will need re-



Mr Bassiouny interviews Graham Melmoth immediately after his election to the ICA presidency.

adjustment. We have to be careful that its central core remains strong. What, however, the Board must do is to ensure that the overriding cohesion of the ICA remains. It would be a great pity if the degree of devolution which has taken place should undermine the integrity of the ICA as a whole. It may be, therefore, that the Board should establish firm links by having a liaison member of the Board with each specialised body who will be responsible for coordinating policies.

Revised principles

What in your opinion is the purpose of reviewing traditional co-operative principles? And how far do revised principles differ from those of our pioneers?

The ICA is, of course, the Trustee of Co-operative principles inherited from

the Rochdale Pioneers. This is the third time they have been reviewed in this century. The identity statement which is adopted by the General Assembly reflects today's conditions and refers to the basic values which were the subject of a presentation by Lars Marcus at the Stockholm Congress in 1988. The principal changes are:

- a) The first principle on voluntary and open membership makes special mention of gender and racial discrimination.
- b) The third principle will now make reference to the requirement to set up indivisible reserves.
- c) The fourth principle stresses the importance of independence from Government, and

- d) There is now a new seventh principle relating to concern for the community and regard for sustainable development.

The principles in their revised form do not vary from the fundamentals which have been handed down from the Rochdale Pioneers but they do reflect the concerns of the 21st century.

Future priorities

What are your personal ideas and priorities in the future plans and activities of the ICA? Where is Africa among these priorities?

The Board has scheduled a planning session in December, 1995. The Director-General and his staff will be discussing with me their ideas on the future direction and priorities of the ICA. I hope we will, therefore, be in a position early next year to set our course for the next three years or so. My personal priorities are:

- i) To concentrate on the co-operative movement in Africa, with special regard to the Republic of South Africa. We would like to mobilise the newfound energy of the Republic and its co-operatives to strengthen the co-operative movement throughout the continent and spread the message that co-operatives can play a significant role in the economic growth of developing African countries;
- ii) To ensure that the ICA's global contribution to sustainable human development is based on reality, action and achievement rather than rhetoric;

- iii) To further the promotion of Eastern and Central European co-operatives; and
- iv) Likewise if we are to have a 'gender' policy, i.e. equal opportunities for men and women in co-operatives, both members and employees, then we need seriously to engage with a policy to that end.

However, these thoughts are mine and we need to establish a Consensus of the Board and the Director General.

Developing countries

How, in your opinion, can the ICA be stronger and more active especially towards co-operative movements in developing countries?

Personally I think that the strong movements around the world should be prepared to contribute more significantly to the funds of the ICA, and to do this directly by way of increased subscriptions and also through the development fund to be set up pursuant to the resolution of the General Assembly. The ICA should also continue to bring influence to bear on the World Bank and the European Union to contribute funding for projects in developing countries.

What is your impression about your last visit to Egypt and about the Egyptian and Arabic co-operative movements?

I was very pleased in April, 1994, to visit Egypt. We had the marvellous good fortune of seeing the pyramids and the antiquities in the Egyptian

Museum. The ICA has great respect for the Egyptian co-operative movement. We are also told of the remarkable progress in the North African co-operative world.

What he stands for?

Finally, I would like to record some of Mr Melmoth's words which demonstrate his ideas, opinions and attitudes:

- * 'I should make it clear that I shall be a 'Working President'. That means I shall continue in my position here at the CWS. Representatives of the world movement should not lose touch with their own organisations. They must be able to call upon their help and resources.'
- * 'Co-operation is nothing if it is not about working together collec-

tively. I believe fervently in the principle of co-operation amongst co-operatives. As a Co-operative Manager in the CWS for twenty years, I have subscribed to the principle of working with my colleagues as part of a team. I intend to bring that philosophy to bear also within the staff of the Alliance.'

- * 'Membership and membership education have been important elements of my co-operative make-up.'
- * 'It strikes me that in life there is a meanness and a generosity of spirit in equal measure in mortal combat. It won't surprise anyone to know that I support the latter and regard that as an essential catalyst for the application of co-operative principles.'

Our very best wishes for a fair wind to the President of the ICA

by Yves Régis

Manchester and Rochdale

Manchester - one of the most celebrated cities in the history of the co-operative movement - was the chosen place to hold the Congress marking the centenary of the International Co-operative Alliance.

One of the birthplaces of the movement - the most famous of all - was the small store in Rochdale which was to become a place of pilgrimage during the Congress.

The Congress was a celebration of the foundation in 1895 of the International Co-operative Alliance by the production co-operatives in France and by the English consumer co-operative movement.

Last year - 150 years after the proclamation in 1844 by the Equitable Pioneers which has since echoed around the world - the Queen of England officially opened the Museum of Co-operation in Rochdale.

We respect this magnificent image and recognise, in its Anglican origins, that combination of rigour and realism which also brought political democracy into the world.

But Rochdale is not the only birthplace of the worldwide co-operative movement. I will go further; the Rochdale

idea, like all members of the movement, was to be enriched by a convergence of similar aspirations, prophecies and successful experiments, first in a European and later in a worldwide context.

It is difficult to name a single country without a history of founding fathers and early - and sometimes heroic - achievements, often dating back to well before 1844.

Think of France, with Fourier and Buchez at one extreme and Proudhon and Jaures at the other; of Germany, with Raiffeisen and Schulze-Delitsch; of practically all the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, which rediscovered their deeply ingrained co-operative roots long before the communist tidal wave; of the artels in Russia (the name is used in the Bill on production co-operatives which the Duma is currently adopting); and of Samuel's Farmers' Convention.

Remember, too, Jurkovic in Slovakia (precisely in 1845) and Ampelakia in Greece (1780-1812).

More recent are the developments in Italy and Spain (in the latter country, the Mondragon group in the Basque country was the forerunner of present-day industrial co-operation).

Equally, the pioneers of a co-operative republic in Argentina, the deeply-rooted African traditions and the village tontines deserve mention.

Nor, of course, must we forget the founders of Indian and Asian co-operation, Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru.

I greatly appreciated the address given from the pulpit by the Bishop of Manchester on co-operation, sandwiched between two bugle-calls and other fanfares by the Rochdale Band. But I was not entirely satisfied with the promised ecumenical character of the service. In particular, there was not the slightest element of genuine Islam, of Buddhism or of Hinduism - all of them champions of tolerance - or even of an agnosticism seeking eternal values.

It is true that we have been taught by the European romantics that the Universal is attained by starting from the most profound expressions of individual personality. Nevertheless, during the second century of its existence the ICA must become less English, less European, less consumer-orientated and much more universal.

The new President of the ICA - Graham Melmoth

Mr President: this is, if I may say so, the task we expect you to undertake.

Graham Melmoth, an Englishman from Manchester, comes to us from the CWS (Co-operative Wholesale Society). He succeeds Lars Marcus - a great President, whose main achievements include support for substantial development of the movement in the four

continents and stimulation of a review of co-operative values and principles which led to their reformulation - at the Manchester Congress.

Mr President: now that our values and principles are proclaimed and implemented, you are no longer English, but international; no longer a consumers' man, but an all-purpose co-operator; and your Labour sensitivities must give way to a comprehensively humanistic outlook.

And, as I suggested from the rostrum, there is now a place for each one of us in the enormous task of implementing the values and principles we have voted.

The old theologians used to speak of individual grace. Might your path to that grace not lie in becoming more and more ecumenical and international and open to all patterns of thinking directed towards the achievement of a less unjust society through the instruments of self-help and economic democracy?

The choice of the poorest and the most disadvantaged (work, care and housing; but also knowledge, participation and dignity) is that of co-operation world-wide. In these uncertain times, this choice offers the least risk of error.

It is not so much compromise we need as enthusiasm to seek the aid of all in the honest and persevering application of our renewed values and principles.

Mr President: we wish you a fair wind in your travels throughout the four continents in which the banner of Co-operation flies.

Letters to the Editor

"Yes, But ..."

Comments on Benito Benati's article on Employee Ownership and Participation:

In the most recent issue of the Review of International Cooperation (Vol. 88, No. 2) Mary Treacy, communications director at ICA headquarters in Geneva, refers to two "slightly controversial" articles contained in it.

- I. Mary describes the first one as "thought-provoking" - a term in line with prevailing trends of thinking within the ICA (emphasis on "service" co-operatives the members of which join together to obtain a service, housing, consumer goods credit, etc.).

"Workers' ownership and participation rather than members' ownership and participation". Anything thought-provoking in Benito Benati's article certainly does not lie in this statement; for in production co-operatives there is no incompatibility between employee and membership status, precisely because the members are the worker-producers in the enterprise (be it of an agricultural, industrial, handicraft or service nature).

In our view this fundamental identity between co-operator-members and worker-producers within production co-operatives is a central element in a form of co-operative doctrine and practice which is developing rapidly in all parts of the world.

While we respect the "other" traditional pattern (especially in the consumer co-operation field), our desire is that the leaders of that great family constituted by the ICA should not only accept our basic schema but also recognise its increasing relevance in all developing as well as developed countries.

- II. In our view the mistake made by Benito Benati (the famous manager of the industrial co-operatives of Imola, in Italy) in his remarkable article is to have recommended financial participation of the ESOP type (which he describes and advocates in exemplary fashion) without specifying the ultimate objective, namely the attainment of the democratic ESOP (a form already attained by over 10% of American ESOPs) - that is to say, the genuine

production co-operative in which the "capitalist" logic of "one share, one vote" has been superseded by the democratic and co-operative logic of "one person, one vote".

We have been studying ESOPs in the USA since 1988; we have given them the floor at all the congresses or general assemblies of CICOPA; we are convinced that, together with their twin organization the SAL in Spain, they can offer a major road towards the true objective - that of co-operative democracy; and we warmly welcome the very fine appeal for new legislation and experiments launched by Benito Benati.

Provided that he goes one step further and clearly states that the final objective is still the attainment of genuinely co-operative production, making adjustments to allow access to necessary external capital (a beginning which has been made in a number of countries) and never resigning oneself to accept restriction to the under-capitalized or marginalized sectors.

Let me frankly ask whether any one of these formulas could not be applied to any limited company - or even to any company - in the economic world of today ?

Certainly, after the spectacular failure of State capitalism (often referred to as socialism), and in a genuinely market-economy context, co-operation can offer a real alternative to triumphant capitalism reigning alone.

But seen in the light of its essential "dichotomy", capitalism, in any productive enterprise (in services, distribution, agriculture, industry or handicrafts), places power in the hands of capital, which hires labour as necessary.

But in those same enterprises democratic co-operation will place the real power in the hands of the "forces of labour, of innovation, of creativity" - of "the human factor" (which hires capital as necessary).

This, then, is the ultimate objective - although in individual cases an intermediate stage, involving financial participation only, may be valuable, since without affecting the underlying logic of the process as a whole it can prepare the way for a gradual mutation.

In this connection the new example of shareholders' co-operatives, which are mushrooming in China, is an extremely interesting one. It brings together under one roof both capital contributions (internal and external) and the universally applicable rule of all democratic economic entities - one person, one vote. At the same time, co-operative enterprises of this new type are - or at least appear to be - completely autonomous vis-à-vis the public authorities.

Comments on Hans-Detlef Wülker's article on The Social Economy and Co-operatives:

I do not propose to enter into the discussion launched by Hans Wülker on the subject of the "Brussels bureaucrats" (anybody who does not apply "my" policies is a "bureaucrat" or a "politician") or of the French social-economy Utopians.

If one ignores all the trumped-up charges and theoretical anathemas (for instance, accusations of collectivism - by whom ? to what end ?), it is clearly in the interest of all of us that a minimum corpus of common European legislation covering co-operatives, associative mutual-benefit societies and "management" associations should be developed.

It remains to be seen whether they should be linked, coordinated or merely juxtaposed.

I am far more concerned with the definition of co-operation in general offered in this contribution by the representative of the renowned Raiffeisen group, reading as follows (p. 134):

- "Co-operatives are supported by individuals who pursue private interests and aims;

- "Co-operatives pursue the economic aims of their members;

- "Co-operatives are private and economic enterprises;

- "Co-operatives practise solidarity with their members for the benefit of both sides".

We are faced here, not only with a watering-down of co-operation by means of various practices derived from practice and custom in the dominant economic environment, but also of a watering-down of the very definition of co-operation.

I wish to state here (and here I am currently in disagreement with many of my co-operator friends throughout the world, and particularly in India) that I can see no objection to designating co-operatives as private economic enterprises. But they are more than just that.

They are economic enterprises inasmuch as they accept the logic (and the sanctions) of the market economy, even if their aims lie elsewhere.

They are private enterprises (i.e., acting in the primary interests of their members); they are not public enterprises (which are directed in priority to the service of the general interest - the "public service").

But they are private economic enterprises of a special type -

- (a) on account of their democratic structure (the members hold the power as citizens of the enterprise with one vote for each member rather than as subscribers of capital (which can be borrowed if necessary));
- (b) on account of their end-purpose of inter-co-operative solidarity and community responsibility (cf. Münkner on p. 20 of the same issue). That responsibility may relate to ecological, social or educational matters and be accepted to a greater or lesser degree according to the country, the sector and the co-operative concerned; but it is always affirmed as a fundamental characteristic of the co-operative movement.

The discussions currently under way and confined to the European (one might even say Franco-German) context have got away to a bad start; they should not lead us to lose sight of our realities and our specific and essential co-operative aims.

We must be clear about these aims and insist that (as Professor Münkner of Marburg University puts it very pertinently on page 30 of the same issue): "The essential differences between co-operatives and other organizational forms must be emphasized rather than concealed".

Yves Régis
CGSCOP France

The Social Economy: A Reply to Dr. Wülker

In the last issue of the ICA Review (88-2), Hans-Detlef Wülker set out very clearly the position of his organisation concerning the concept of the Social Economy. It was an article worthy of interest, which could spark a long debate or even an entire seminar. The references which he made to the French position concerning this theme have stimulated me to reply to him, from a strictly personal point of view. Since I have already dealt with some of the problems he raised in a recent essay (1), I shall limit myself here to the key issues which he raised.

First I shall deal with the points on which we are in agreement, and then with the major differences. I shall try to conclude with some positive thoughts.

Three Points of Agreement:

1. Our colleague is quite right in saying that the term "Social Economy" can give rise to as it has in the past quite different interpretations. Some of these go very much beyond those defined in the CNLAMCA Declaration of 1991, the text of which can be almost entirely found in the new Charter which we have just adopted (2). All these conceptions are legitimate, and everyone can choose the one which best suits him. In France, however, the only definition officially approved by all the responsible national organisations is that contained in our current Charter, and it is therefore this version to which I shall refer.
2. He is also quite right in challenging the inclusion in the Social Economy of organisations which are not based on the principle of voluntary and open membership. Our Charter excludes all those based on other principles, whether they are part of the public sector or not. These organisations can be included in a vast "Third Sector", but not in the Social Economy in its strictest sense, which should include only voluntary associations of persons.
3. Finally, he is right in thinking that the common representative bodies of the Social Economy should not replace those of their members. The common bodies should only intervene when there is a common problem that requires coordinated action.

This is how we operate in France. CNLAMCA, which represents the entire Social Economy, does not replace the Groupement national de la Coopération on issues dealing only with co-operatives. Neither does this group act in the place of one of its federation members in an area of its own responsibility, unless it is expressly requested to do so. The basic principle which must motivate our institutions is that of subsidiarity.

Three Points of Difference:

Dr. Wülker will hopefully not mind if I tease him for being too influenced by the "Cartesian" mind-set for which we French are often criticised, and which can lead to exaggerated affirmations.

1. He exaggerates, I believe, the differences which exist among associations, co-operatives, and mutuals. First of all, the respective definitions of the three families vary from European country to country, and therefore the dividing line between their respective activities is not very clear. Depending on the country, insurance is carried out by co-operatives or by mutuals. Popular tourism is, depending on the country, the responsibility of co-operatives or associations. These are not the only examples.

Also, there are considerable similarities with respect to their operation. If one takes the example of the French insurance mutuals, which are significant legal and market forces, it is difficult to see how they are different from most co-operatives. It is true that they do not have equity capital; but in Europe there are many co-operatives which similarly do not have equity capital, as was (I believe) the original wish of F. Raiffeisen. Similarly, many associations operate in France, in the service of their members, in the same way as do co-operatives.

Above all, these three families have one fundamental characteristic in common they are associations of persons, not societies of capital (at least for the local organisations).

2. Their collective activity has nothing to do with "collectivism", even when they have relationships with the State. The fact of dealing with the State does not imply a situation of subservience.

There have always been private companies in Europe which have had contractual relationships with the State, as in the case of public service concessions whereby the State enters into an agreement with a private company in order to meet a public need. It is hard to imagine why this should be possible for capitalist companies but not for co-operatives, mutuals, or associations.

It is true that, in the past, there have been cases of State interference. However, the objective of the Social Economy is to bring an end to this situation by introducing a contractual framework in those cases where, for historical reasons, other kinds of relationships have existed. The history of Co-operation has witnessed a similar evolution, as can be seen in the case of the German Raiffeisen banks and the French Crédit Agricole.

3. The differences within the Social Economy, whether in terms of kinds of activities or goals, do not prevent the co-operatives, associations and mutuals from having in common a certain number of concerns resulting from their being societies of persons.

We all know that, today, the capitalist company is viewed as the ideal model of business, and that all rules are designed with it in mind. This carries great risks for our organisations, which are of a different character, and which are threatened with disappearance. Recently, for example, co-operatives representing individual and family businesses have been threatened by the application of competition legislation. In each of our sectors, our Brussels associations have been hard-pressed to obtain provisions which respect our unique nature as societies of persons.

Looking beyond the issues which concern each of our sectors, the three families share common problems which require them to adopt a common front on certain issues. Can one go further?

Some Perspectives:

I personally believe that there are many reasons for us to move beyond a simple marriage of convenience:

1. The fact that a co-operative is an association of persons and not of capital means that it cannot be indifferent to certain problems which are not only economic in nature it is an enterprise in the service of its members, but the needs of its members can be greater than only the economic objective which inspired its creation.

Although a co-operative's purpose is essentially economic, an association of persons cannot assume that human needs are limited to those of the homo economicus as conceived by the old liberal school of economics. Man has other concerns which must not be forgotten. One need only think of F. Raiffeisen to remember this spirit, which was shared by all our founders.

To give a simple example, a truck-owner who belongs to a co-operative is obviously seeking a financial benefit, but he also hopes that the co-operative's services will enable him to remain an independent businessman and not be forced to become the employee, however well-paid, of a large company. The co-operative thus serves not only his economic needs but also his social need for independence.

One could give many other examples, which is why each cooperative family can regard its activity to be within a certain conception of society, which can of course vary considerably from organisation to organisation.

For similar reasons, co-operatives can hardly be indifferent to the well-being of the profession or the region within which they operate or even their country, or Europe. This does not mean that a co-operative will subordinate its management to an external interest. It means that, while carefully respecting its business needs, the co-operative will try to reconcile its strategy with the more general objectives of the community within which it operates.

The fact that, in Brussels, an association of agricultural co-operatives (COGECA) and an association of farmers' unions (COPA) share common services provides an excellent example of this common concern.

2. The same ideas could be developed with respect to other families within the Social Economy.

Some, like the insurance and health-care mutuals, and many associations, are designed to offer various services to their members, exactly like co-operatives. These organisations must provide the best possible services, but they cannot ignore general problems. A health-care mutual, for example, is obviously concerned with general health policies.

The same is true of charitable associations, which enable people to carry out a social activity more effectively through group action. Their members receive a definite service, but one which comes within a more general framework.

3. These similarities obviously reflect a sharing of values. This emerges clearly from the ICA Statement on the Co-operative Identity, adopted in Manchester, which is based on principles very similar to those expressed by most associations and mutuals. There can be no better example of this commonality than the joint adherence to the concept of solidarity.

It is these shared values which have made us in France support a coming together of these families, while respecting fully the characteristics of each. Such a grouping must never be used to support a policy imposed from the outside; it must be based on a strict adherence to the principle of subsidiarity, intervening only in cases of common interest and when a joint action is more effective than individual efforts. Based on similar structures and values, such a grouping is basically designed to obtain the recognition of our unique organisational characteristics. This is the underlying basis of the Social Economy.

Can one go further? It must be admitted that a sharing of values does not lead automatically to shared objectives. The Social Economy must accept the existence within its ranks of different conceptions of the common pur-

pose which is quite natural when one remembers that its members are based on the principle of freedom of choice. Those who wish to go beyond the common base are as legitimate as those who do not. The important thing is not to confuse representative institutions, which must have a common base and the unanimity of their members, with "like-minded" organisations, which are both more free and less responsible.

In Conclusion:

Unlike Dr. Wülker, I do not believe that the disagreements which have been engendered by the concept of the Social Economy stem from fundamental historical or geographical differences between our countries.

Historical differences are very difficult to analyse and characterise. Although the Republican governments of 19th century France favoured the creation of different co-operative families based on economic or social policies, this was somewhat in line with the more imperial Prussian governments which had already moved in the same direction (3). In France at the same time, very liberal Republican governments supported the creation of health-care mutuals, which they controlled while still respecting the principle of pluralism and freedom of association; at the same time, for the same social purposes, the Imperial German government managed to create compulsory state institutions. In short, history cannot explain the origin of these problems.

But neither can geography. The problems facing co-operatives, associations, and mutuals are not basically different from one country to another, even if there are differences in local conditions. Nowhere is there a contradiction between the concept of the Social Economy and the structure of economies, since in today's Europe the economic structures are becoming everywhere more and more similar.

I believe the real reason for our disagreement is to be found elsewhere. The concept of Social Economy, which was the subject of a lengthy debate in France before being officially accepted, did not give rise to similar debates among European organisations before it emerged on the public scene. It therefore quite naturally aroused concerns among those who had not, either directly or indirectly, participated in its development, and who feared a weakening of the co-operative idea even though the objective is completely different. This gap must be filled.

The process has at least begun. The publication of the article by our colleague, Dr. Wülker, constitutes an excellent beginning of a debate for which I thank the ICA Review, and to which I hope this article shall also contribute.

Notes:

- (1) "L'économie sociale face à l'ultralibéralisme", Syros 1995
- (2) Available from CNLAMCA (Comité national de liaison des activités mutualistes, coopératives et associatives), 6 rue Mesnil, 75116 Paris.
- (3) The Prussian law of 31 July 1895, which created a "Caisse centrale des associations coopératives", with the support and control of the State, is a good model of European practice of that time. These practices are so old that one could easily forget them, even though they have left traces, in France as in Germany. Are not the German Länder still represented in the Raiffeisen banks?

by Jacques Moreau

President of CNLAMCA (Comité national de liaison des activités mutualistes, coopératives et associatives), President of GNC (Groupement national de la coopération), and Honorary Chairman of the Caisse Centrale de Crédit Coopératif in France.

The Social Economy: A Reply to Dr. Wülker

Perhaps Hans-Detlef Wülker (volume 88 no. 2, page 128) intended to provoke - well he succeeded. I, for one. He even contradicts himself: one the one hand "Member-oriented solidarity means self-help" but on the other "Co-operatives have very little in common with ... self-help groups". His thinking, I said to myself, is one reason the movement is in the state it is today - that is, discredited and struggling for survival in many fields. I finally put finger to keyboard at the assertion "Co-operatives do not have any direct social or socio-political tasks." This is simply not my experience - and I have worked in, banked with, and at times lived in, the co-operative movement for 18 years.

There are many examples of the fine work done by co-operatives. In the first co-operative in which I worked - for 8 years - our constitution did indeed explicitly mention our social objectives; at registration we adopted what at that time was known as a "preamble" to the Rules. This "mission statement" - voluntarily assumed - gave the co-op a real sense of where it was going - and it was going far further than Mr. Wülker seems to think possible: today it is ten times the size it was then. A survey in 1985 showed that it was the largest single source of help for other co-operatives in the region too.

What is remarkable about his article is that he totally overlooks the fastest-growing sector of them all - worker co-ops: these do not appear in his list of the supposedly disparate sectors which he says are incapable of collaborating under the social economy banner. They are invisible to him precisely because his federation refuses to admit them, forcing newer forms of co-operation to incorporate under company or association law; and this reduces, rather than increases, the movement's solidarity, resilience and adaptability

Mr Wülker evidently fears that to exhibit solidarity with society at large is a sign of weakness - in other words that the only way to compete is to selfishly serve one's members and them alone. In what century is he living? Even the largest capitalist corporations nowadays make some concessions to being a good neighbour - some even make a virtue of their ethical stance. Co-ops got there first. Serving multiple stockholders is very much the coming trend. And as for his fears of loss of independence, to serve social goals is not to be "used" - it is simply a higher form of being, a recognition of the interdependence of modern citizens.

Mr Wülker needs to open his eyes. Society is changing, and the co-operative movement must not be afraid to change with it. And one does not change by shutting oneself off in an airtight compartment: the most creative developments

often happen at the interface between two ideas. Examples: the tremendous growth of employee ownership (11 million Americans own shares in the company that employs them through ESOPs), social co-operatives (over 2,000 in Italy alone - and they are true co-operatives - bringing the providers and beneficiaries of social services together in the same organisation). These new organisational forms are solving economic and social problems by creatively combining the best features of two other organisational forms: employee-owned companies apply the fruits of management efficiency in an equitable way, and social co-operatives apply entrepreneurial flair in place of state bureaucracy. Society needs these innovations!

Please note that it is these new forms of co-operation which are gaining market share, opening up new markets, and being a creative force in society - not the old-established consumer co-ops, which often do little to distinguish themselves from any other supermarket chain. The movement needs these innovations too!

Defensiveness is not getting the movement anywhere. Co-operatives need to make new alliances. It is right and proper to sacrifice a little bit of autonomy in this quest. The social economy, which is a spectrum, not to be defined in the oppositional way which Mr. Wülker uses, should be seen as just that - a route to greater power and influence. Not a threat, but an opportunity that must be seized.

Toby Johnson
National Expert for European Commission



Tony Wilding, from the Co-operative Union in Manchester, distributes new publications launched during the ICA Centennial Congress.



Book Reviews

Reinventing the Co-operative: Enterprises for the 21st Century

by Edgar Parnell, is published by the Plunkett Foundation, 23 Hanborough Business Park Long Hanborough, Oxford OX8 8LH, 255 pp, price £17.95 inc. postage & packing (airmail - £2 extra), ISBN 0 85042 190 X.

Co-operators are 'obsessed' with their cherished Rochdale Principles and the time has come to reinvent the co-operative if it is to survive into the next millennium, - this claim by Edgar Parnell, Director of the Oxford-based Plunkett Foundation, strikes at the heart of co-operative thinking.

In a new book, *Reinventing the Co-operative: Enterprises for the 21st Century* launched at an official reception during the ICA Centennial Conference in Manchester, Mr Parnell says 'Many people involved in co-operatives find it as difficult to define a co-operative without referring to the Rochdale Rules (or the so-called Co-operative Principles) as most of us find it difficult to describe a spiral staircase without reverting to the use of our hands.

Unfortunately, this obsession with 'principles' has brought an unnecessary complexity to the understanding of the co-operative form of business and has provided a diversion from the

essential simplicity of the concept of co-operation. This fact alone has probably been one of the greatest barriers to the expansion of co-operative forms of enterprise in recent time, as well as being at the root of many management and organisational problems.'

Deploring that in many cases the co-operative model of enterprise has become 'frozen in time', he argues that it still offers untapped potential to contribute significantly to human development but in the past has been 'hijacked' by those with a political agenda and exploited to their political advantage or to further a particular cause.

He continues that because the co-operative model is absent from the curricula of schools, colleges and universities, it has become a 'much maligned and often neglected option' - yet because most of the world's Governments have now abandoned both State and municipal forms of enterprise, 'this leaves the co-operative as the only

real alternative' to investor-driven business.

'The re-invented co-operative can be expected to become the leading institution in the new millennium - if the people involved in them are ready to take up the challenge the future must surely be in the development of real co-operation which is based upon mutual benefit. This will not come about because of some 'airy fairy' idealism but because it makes good economic sense to direct all our energies towards achieving a set of common objectives which can deliver a fair share of benefits to all the parties involved.'

Looking to the future, Mr Parnell says that what co-operatives need are new leaders who have the vision and commitment to reposition co-operation as a credible alternative to investor-driven business structures. He says this is especially important if co-operation is to appeal to the next generation who are likely to demand that organisations are not only more responsive, accountable and responsible to their customers but also display a much greater concern for the environment and the conservation of the world's resources.

Mr Parnell sees unemployment as the greatest problem facing future genera-

tions. Co-operatives can play a considerable role in job creation because they are not dependent on the whims of investors but rather satisfying the mutual needs of their stakeholders.

In too many cases of privatisation the only new stakeholders to replace the State or local Government have been investors. We should expect that if more people become aware of the "co-operative option" then in future, co-operatives run by different stakeholders will be involved in taking over public enterprises.'

Pointing to the growth of co-operatives in sectors like healthcare, financial services, travel and tourism, he says there are many other examples where co-operation is a better alternative, particularly monopolies in the privatised public utilities. 'The provision of distribution services, such as electricity, gas, water or cable connections, also wellbeing services such as health and care, if they are not to be provided by the Government, then they are generally better provided by a co-operative than an investor company', he concludes.

'As more people come to appreciate that they can "self-supply" essential services then we should expect co-operatives to accelerate their rate of involvement in these sectors.

Doing Business with the Co-operatives in Latin America

International Co-operative Alliance Regional Office for the Americas Series: Already published : Guatemala, Mexico, Colombia, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Uruguay, Costa Rica

Did you know that co-operatives are among the most competitive and important businesses in Mexico's graphic arts and publishing sector? That the largest newspaper of the country with a circulation of 170,000 copies has a legal status of co-operative? And that there are co-ops operating at port and airport facilities?

When I was told that the Regional Office is about to send me the information on commercial potentialities of co-operatives in Latin America I was immediately thinking of computer printouts tediously listing goods, prices and addresses.

Well... I was wrong, even very wrong. Instead of badly photocopied printouts I received a collection of colorful booklets, carefully printed, describing co-operatives and the economic milieu in which they operate with a perfect understanding if not erudition.

Each booklet is intended to be a practical guide for investors, businessmen and co-operatives interested in learning more about investment options, especially the numerous opportunities found in the co-operative sector.

Among major topics included are :

- * the most important advantages of beginning relations with co-operatives in a given country;

- * an overview of the economy, incentives and benefits oriented towards the promotion of investment and exportation, as well as the most relevant commercial accords;
- * profiles of the most dynamic sectors and the opportunities with related co-operatives;
- * how to do business with co-operatives : an explanation of potential modalities;
- * general information about the country, its banking system, taxes, including the fiscal advantages of co-operatives, labour law and political regime;
- * and lastly : a list of key contacts for doing business.

And what if I tell you that all booklets exist in three language versions : English, Spanish and French? You will probably rush to get your own copy. The ROAM with its usual efficiency will be pleased to provide you with as many copies as needed for a reasonable price of USD 6.00 each.

Which is not expensive, one must admit, to get a competitive edge over business partners.

Alina Pawlowska

Chances of Co-operatives in the Future

by Hans-H. Münkner : *Contribution to the International Co-operative Alliance Centennial 1895-1995. Papers and Reports no. 31, Institute for Co-operation in Developing Countries, Philipps-Universität, Marburg, 258pp.*

The volume contains 14 papers dealing with co-operative values, principles and practices and deviations from the original co-operative concept. Most of these papers were written in English during the past several years, and published in various journals or seminar reports, some were translated from German. They were put together in one volume as a contribution to the discussions about the future of co-operatives in the next century during and after the ICA in Manchester 1995.

Co-operatives as a specific form of organisation only have a future, if they rediscover their membership base and their dependence on members. This means that co-operatives have to return to their original role, which is still on demand today : to develop innovative approaches to solving pressing problems in times of rapid social, economic and technological change, where neither the market nor the state

offer satisfactory solutions. Many citizens including present and future members of co-operatives are confronted today with new problems (globalisation of markets, unaffordable prices for health care and social security, long-term unemployment and deterioration of the environment) which they are unable to solve alone, for which, however, solutions can be found when co-operating with others having similar problems.

Co-operative leaders and managers have to stand up to this new challenge. It is not sufficient to improve the level of perfection of the services they have been offering for many years and which today are offered by competitors as well. They have to develop new services and products in dialogue with their members, which correspond to their members' needs and which are not offered by others at all or not in the same quality.

Alina Pawlowska

Cooperativismo Latino Americano en Cifras 1995

edited by *Organizacion de las Cooperativas de America, Santa Fé de Bogota, 237pp, tabs. graphs. ISBN 958-95840-0-4*

Statistical publications run the same danger as fashion shows - just presented and already out of date. Some however, by exceptional quality of analysis elude the rule of time. The

past year had been particularly rich in co-op research with many excellent publications, especially regarding the Latin American region. For quite time now the ICA and other non-govern-

mental organisations were publishing short books, sort of instant pictures, on various movements : co-operatives in Honduras, co-operatives in Guatemala etc., The FAO had launched two studies on agricultural co-operatives. There was a general consensus that the time had become ripe to launch a regional, plurisectoral study.

SILAIC stands for Sistema Regional de Informatica Cooperativa or Regional System for Cooperative Information, a network for collecting data developed jointly by OCA, ACI and COLAC with help of the Canadian Co-operative Association. SILAIC proved to be an efficient tool, hence it remained only to find a brave - and well off - organisation which would accept the challenge. The objective was to define parameters of comparison between co-operative sectors in different countries in order to maximise the competitiveness and reduce the weaknesses of the co-op sector. It is noteworthy that the data comes from research programmes initiated by OCA, ICA and COLAC and using the same standards. The time span encompass years 1987 to 1992. Therefore, only primary sources were used for preparation of tables and for socio-economic analysis and the list of those is scrupulously added at the end of every chapter. For obvious reasons, the information for some countries is limited, fragmented or out of time boundaries but it does not impede the overall value of the study. The terminology may cause problems. It will be of help to readers not familiar with regional practices to explain what is meant by agricultural or industrialisation co-operatives within the specific

Latin American context. In spite of this restriction the authors deserve praise for clearly explaining the adopted methodology, specifying difficulties and constraints.

The study is composed of two parts : first the agglomerate regional data including macroeconomic indicators then country with data from Argentina, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Chile, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Puerto Rico, Uruguay and Venezuela.

Each country study, besides statistical information, points out principal strengths and weaknesses of the movement laying foundation for further analysis. Those interested in figures would find everything available on sectors, turnovers, goods and services produced, import, export, growth by activity and even in two cases (Honduras and Panama) membership segregated by sex. Readers interested in socio-economic information can refer to a concise description of the movement at the beginning of the chapter.

Some fashion shows achieve more than merely to show colorful rugs. They illustrate the social change and set trends for years to come. I hope the fashion in co-op research will be for large statistical studies in all ICA Regions. With the hemline, let's say, well below the knee.

Alina Pawlowska

The International Co-operative Alliance During War and Peace 1910-1950

by Dr Rita Rhodes, ICA Publications, Geneva 1995, 430 pp, price CHF 45.00,
ISBN 92 9054 001 X

Rita Rhodes' book on the history of the International Co-operative Alliance (ICA) during the critical period of 1910 to 1950, from pre-war developments before the First World War to the cold war period after the Second World War is much more than a historical record. It sheds light on periods of the ICA which had remained in the dark not only for the ordinary observer but also for research workers who relied on official texts and published sources.

Rita Rhodes' book illustrates, how the organisation is influenced by its origin as a European and consumer/worker based institution and how an international organisation carries its birth marks received from its founding fathers, even after a century. The book demonstrates, how strong or weak leadership affects the fate of such organisation and what strains are put on an international organisation trying to remain politically neutral in times of war, with members coming from the different warring fractions.

The book is fascinating reading, because it reports little known facts of the struggle within the ICA between divergent schools of thought: self-help co-operatives versus co-operatives serving the common good, co-operatives as workers' organisations versus co-operatives of the middle class, co-operatives as communist collectives or

mass organisations of a party in centrally planned economies versus private, politically neutral co-operatives in a market economy. It shows how the devotion to the goal of maintaining the ICA as a forum of persons holding different opinions and of avoiding a split of the world co-operative movement prevailed over the idea of protecting the Rochdale heritage and the true co-operative principles at all cost.

It is interesting to learn details on how the ICA operated with a devoted leadership and staff on a limited budget and how it saw its role in post-war Europe and in the countries devastated by the war.

The book is written in a scholarly manner, close to the original sources (minutes and memoranda, correspondence and reports), many of which published for the first time.

With its many quotations from little known documents, this book is a treasure grove for those who want to understand, how the ICA works, how it could survive in turbulent times and to what degree compromise with socialist ideals was accepted, while compromise with fascist ideas was strictly rejected.

The book is subdivided in nine chapters. It starts with a carefully drawn

picture of the historical roots of the ICA, both in Great Britain and in France and to a lesser degree in Germany and shows how the ICA was initiated by people whom we would call today "true Europeans" or "internationalists", working unselfishly for a common cause. It is interesting to note that the initial congresses of the ICA were not exclusively meetings of co-operators but included prominent people of public life, the peace movement, the labour party and the church.

This is followed by a survey of ICA's organisation and ideology between 1910 and 1950 - with surprisingly little changes in its constitution and organisational set-up during these turbulent decades. It lays the ground for deeper understanding of the ways in which controversies within the ICA were settled in a manner to avoid friction which could break up the organisation.

In the next chapter on the ICA and the First World War it becomes evident that this war did not threaten civic society and the co-operative movement as much as the Second World War did and that it was possible to maintain the co-operative communication channels despite the war.

In this part of the book a hitherto fairly dark part of ICA's history is brought to light. It deals with the issue of whether the ICA has the right to question continuation of membership, if the member follows principles different from those of the ICA and describes how the ICA authorities decided to tolerate communist co-operative con-

cepts rather than to risk a split of the ICA - a trend towards ideological compromise which later caused a lot of trouble and required strong measures to fend off communist pressure to change the ICA and to take over control.

The chapters on the ICA's response to Italian fascism and German nazism and on the situations in Austria, Spain, Czechoslovakia and the Far East on the eve of the Second World War and during that war are interesting reading especially for readers of the respective countries who may not have had the opportunity to see events from this angle. Detailed information is given on the dissolution of the Lega in Italy and the ICA's reaction to the growing influence of the Nazi regime on German co-operatives. Finally, the author offers some explanation why the ICA survived the two World Wars and the Cold War and at what cost.

The book reminds the reader that many of the issues debated today were already on the agenda decades ago - only that those debates have been forgotten. It shows the advantages of undogmatic flexibility and tolerance but also the dangers of abandoning ones' own values and principles. It offers insight into the process of gradual changes of the Rochdale Pioneers' principles designed for consumer co-operatives in the times of industrial revolution in Western Europe to become internationally recognized co-operative principles of the ICA, claiming universal applicability across cultural and political boundaries and validity for all types of co-operatives. The

book shows how difficult it is for the ICA to play the role of the global guardian of true co-operative principles in a world of turmoil, war and aggression, to maintain high standards of credibility and to pursue at the same time a policy of internationalism and tolerance, accepting movements of different ideological colour, different degrees of autonomy and different attitudes towards political neutrality as members.

This becomes particularly obvious in the account of dealings of the ICA with the Centrosoyus. The ICA found unanimity on issues like democracy, although the communists held a totally different view on what democracy meant as compared with that of the fellow members from Western Europe and the USA. While it was stated by non-communist co-operative leaders within the ICA that democracy always includes freedom of association and freedom of speech and excludes compulsory co-operation, Centrosoyus had been admitted and remained an important member and contributor. It was somehow accepted that collectives and party organisations following communist principles were a special form of co-operatives which could be reconciled with the co-operative principles governing the ICA, although the President of the ICA (Maurice Bonow) referred to socialist forms of co-operative organisation and co-operatives according to the ICA principles as mutually exclusive concepts.

It appears that the ICA has learned a lesson from these difficult times, namely to clarify the meaning of the

ICA co-operative principles for considering future admissions of members. To conclude, Rita Rhodes' book may have been the best birthday present the ICA could hope for at the occasion of its centennial, because it clears up ICA's role during the most difficult period of its existence and enhances its much needed credibility. The mosaic of facts presented by her, offers a vivid picture of how and why the ICA survived the two World Wars and the Cold War.

Some may see this account as a late rehabilitation of some Western ICA leaders who struggled behind the scene to keep the ICA clear of communist domination and as an explanation why the Centrosoyus was allowed to remain a member of the ICA despite all difficulties experienced with this member-organisation.

It also explains to some extent, why the ICA as the largest, oldest and potentially powerful Non Governmental Organisation (NGO), which should be the global authority to defend member movements against political oppression and despite its consultative status with the UN-ECOSOC acts as a modest and prudent organisation.

This book is worth reading, not only for practitioners and scholars interested in co-operative development but also for all those who want to know more about the internal working of international NGOs.

Hans-H. Münkner
Marburg/Germany



Dr. Rita Rhodes signs her latest book "The ICA During War and Peace 1910 - 1950" for happily smiling Kalevi Suomela from Finland.

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