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INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATIVE ALLIANCE

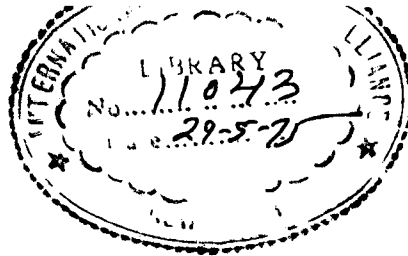
YOUTH CONFERENCE

LONDON

MAY 7TH AND 8TH 1969

A REPORT

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INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATIVE ALLIANCE

A REPORT OF THE YOUTH CONFERENCE

held in LONDON on MAY 7TH-8TH, 1969

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I. INTRODUCTION

The first formal Conference on Youth and Co-operatives was organised by the International Co-operative Alliance in London on May 7th and 8th, 1969. Concern had been evident among the membership for some time that there was a need to encourage and prepare Youth for Co-operative service. This exchange of experience and opinions was, therefore, timely and necessary.

Delegates from fourteen countries attended and there were guests from three United Nations' specialised agencies and from two international non-governmental organisations. A list of participants is attached. A background paper, prepared and circulated by the I.C.A. Secretariat, had posed a number of questions, and several papers were supplied by member countries on their own activities in the field of Youth. A list of these papers is also attached.

The Director of the I.C.A., Dr. S. K. Saxena, presided at all sessions.

Opening Remarks

On behalf of the I.C.A. the Director welcomed all participants to the Conference. For some time now the problem of attracting Youth had been exercising the minds of many national Co-operative movements. It was hoped that as a result of the discussions, guidelines would evolve which could be submitted to the I.C.A. Executive Committee for their consideration and possible future action. The presence of the representatives of the United Nations' specialised agencies and of the other non-governmental organisations was an expression of the fraternal relations already existing between the I.C.A. and other organisations and the Director hoped that the Conference would indicate more areas for collaboration.

The procedure of the Conference was as follows:

Statements from international organisations other than the I.C.A. on their work in the field of Youth, followed by questions;

Reports from the member countries represented, again to be followed by questions;

A summary of the broad issues arising out of the preceding statements and the open plenary discussion could then be followed by a general summing-up.

II. STATEMENTS OF REPRESENTATIVES OF
INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS *

F.A.O. MR. WARREN SCHMIDT

The Food and Agriculture Organisation of the U.N. had approached its Youth work in two ways, first by the strengthening of rural Youth programmes and secondly, through the Freedom from Hunger Campaign under which the Young World Programme was launched.

Co-operatives could assist Youth by organising special Youth programmes which called for self-reliance, team work and the sharing of responsibility. Co-operatives could also spread knowledge and skills of group organisation by posing problems, eliciting opinions and making decisions. In the developing countries, Youth had an opportunity to express itself through the activities and close association of co-operatives. It was recognised that co-operatives were as much a part of the "establishment" as adult institutions, but their particular structure with its accent on democratic decision-making gave Youth an opportunity to influence the course of action and to some extent bridge the gap between the generations.

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Of particular interest was the pilot programme being carried out by the F.A.O. in Uganda with the help of the Ministry of Agriculture which had a Young Farmers' Programme. The Co-operative Union of Uganda was also involved. This project was being followed closely.

* No verbatim records were taken of the proceedings of this informal Conference. Remarks attributed to individual speakers are, therefore, only broad summaries of their comments.

U.N.E.S.C.O. MR. V. KUZMIN

For some time past the interest of governments in Youth had been growing. The turning point had been the very successful conference at Grenoble in 1964. UNESCO's budget for Youth has now been increased. It was very necessary to set up studies to explore the needs of young people. For example, on student unrest and the rights and responsibilities of Youth, there was insufficient knowledge, and all organisations could help by supplying information and in this particular field the I.C.A. and its members could be of special assistance. U.N.E.S.C.O. had a programme of Associated Youth Enterprises by which organisations were invited to present projects in the field of Youth. Awards were offered and co-operatives should be encouraged to take part in the scheme. Lastly the vital need for education in developing countries was emphasised and the work now being done in Algeria was briefly described. Experts there are developing Youth centres, where education, particularly of an out-of-school character, is provided. With the further developments of these Youth centres it was hoped that young people would be encouraged to remain in rural areas. There were opportunities for dialogues between Youth and Youth, and between Youth and adults. This should be encouraged. During the summer of 1969 U.N.E.S.C.O. intended to invite twenty students to Paris for special studies. Mr. Kuzmin concluded by pointing out the special opportunities co-operatives could provide for Youth and this was in line with the spirit of U.N.E.S.C.O.

I.L.O. MR. E.S. KRAUSE

The 50th Anniversary of the I.L.O. was being celebrated. Many Conventions and Recommendations had been adopted during that period, which bore out the organisation's concern for the protection of young workers. I.L.O. had a strong interest in co-operatives and much information for reports and manuals had been collected and some research undertaken. Assistance had been given to co-operatives in many parts of the World and this in turn benefitted young people. There was scope for closer co-operation among various organisations on these subjects.

WORLD ASSEMBLY OF YOUTH. MR. PIET DJIKSTRA

Mr. Djikstra referred to the cordial relations already existing between the I.C.A. and W.A.Y. which had found practical expression in the joint seminar held in recent years for rural youth. W.A.Y., which co-ordinated youth action between 60 countries, regarded co-operatives as useful instruments through which to carry out its work. Co-operatives offer opportunities in the economic life, e.g., in the implementation of land reforms and in the buying and selling of agricultural products.

Co-operation was a subject included in many W.A.Y. seminars. In France a European seminar directed its attention to Co-operative farming. At another seminar the discussion centred on the pressures applied to farmers by money lenders. It explored the possibility of setting up Co-operative credit banks in the area. It was hoped the type of joint seminar held two years ago in S.E. Asia in collaboration with the I.C.A. would be followed by similar action in Central and Latin America.

Mr. Djikstra concluded by mentioning the selected reading list and articles on Youth and Co-operation published by W.A.Y.

INTERNATIONAL FALCON MOVEMENT. MR. MIGUEL MARTINEZ

The I.F.M. educated children and young people to become good citizens by working together and following a democratic way of life. It taught its members about Co-operation and in their camps and schools the children applied it in a practical way by setting up co-operatives. In their national and international homes they formed producer co-operatives.

Close relations have existed in some countries between the Co-operative Movements and the affiliates of the I.F.M. e.g., United Kingdom and Paraguay, and Mr. Martinez welcomed the possibilities this Youth Conference presented in the way of joint action.

* * * * *

In the discussion which followed the foregoing speeches, Mr. Kuzmin gave supplementary information on Associated Youth Enterprises. This was a scheme designed to assist international non-governmental organizations to promote out-of-school education projects. For example, a Youth Co-operative might apply for help with equipment; a round-table for youth discussing ways and means of participation in co-operatives might qualify for assistance from U.N.E.S.C.O. All projects had to seek the approval of the National Commissions. The budget for this work was limited.

On the Algerian experiment, Mr. Kuzmin answered that evaluation was only just beginning.

III. STATEMENTS OF NATIONAL DELEGATES

AUSTRIA. MR. P. HOFFERER. KONSUMVERBAND.

Mr. Höfferer described Vereining osterreich Genossenschafts Klubs (VÖGK) which is the official youth organisation within the Austrian Co-operative Consumers Movement. Certain adjustments had been made to its structure during the previous year and he was the new official. The aim was to strengthen the appeal to Co-operative Youth. This was attempted through seminars, training for Youth Leaders, sports (in particular, skiing championships), public speaking, drama, culture and do-it-yourself training. Youth had been encouraged to assist in the maintenance of a children's village. They had collected 900 books, had adopted a new symbol which had become widely known and useful contacts had been made with other youth, scouts and U.N. youth groups. VÖGK also welcomed collaboration with the Co-operative Women's organisation and it worked closely with the boards and committees of the societies, regionally and nationally. Their members discuss the problems of the Movement and contribute opinions in the correspondence columns of Co-operative journals. They have 2,700 members in 9 clubs but their activities are open and many thousands were contacted during the year.

DR. H. KLEISS. ÖSTERREICHISCHER RAIFFEISENVERBAND.

Dr. Kleiss, representing the Austrian Raiffeisenverband, said he led the work for youth in rural areas where they had in membership 4,000 rural co-operatives. The fact that every 3rd Austrian saves through

the Raiffeisen Bank, demonstrates the strong economic influence of their form of Co-operative credit.

The approach to youth work is two-fold; firstly, through their own groups to members up to 25 years of age. For these groups, courses and seminars provide training which culminate in examinations to qualify for manager status in co-operatives. Secondly, they had excellent contacts with outside organisations for rural youth and joint sports events and competitions were arranged. Similar contacts had been made with the Catholic youth organisation and rural agricultural schools. Brochures were published for both pupils and teachers; flannel graphs were used and, school saving schemes were promoted. The Raiffeisen youth in Austria have few links with organisations in other countries.

BULGARIA. MR. D. DJENEV. CENTRAL CO-OPERATIVE UNION

Mr. Djenev spoke of the importance his Co-operative Movement attaches to the encouragement of youth. A very large proportion of the membership were young people. A good example was the large poultry farm outside Sofia where the annual production was 5 million broilers. Here 90% of its workers were young men and women.

Special emphasis was being laid on training. With the mechanisation of farms young people, particularly women, were taking over the responsibilities. Social and cultural activities in the villages were also developing. It can be claimed that this was resulting in the youth wanting to remain in village life. Facilities of all kinds were available; modern Co-operative buildings, swimming pools, camping, etc., and this counteracted the draw to city life.

The speaker asked that a report of this Conference be circulated and a body established within the I.C.A. which would have special functions, dealing with young people.

CZECHOSLOVAKIA. MRS. ING. M. TAMELOVA. CENTRAL CO-OPERATIVE COUNCIL.

Mrs. Tamelova reported that the Czech Co-operative Movement had no separate organisation for youth but in 1967 a Youth Co-operative Committee was set up to establish contacts and to arrange exchanges of young people.

The productive co-operatives were attracting apprentices, many at 15 years of age. Much interest was centred on service in motor car and electrical workshops. The consumer societies, active mainly in the villages, provided clubs in some areas for young Co-operators. They organised social activities, lectures, fashion shows and excursions. Financial support was given in some cases to students at universities and their Youth Committee had arranged some contacts with other youth organisations.

Mrs. Tamelova also suggested the I.C.A. should consider a special committee to facilitate the exchange of information between countries.

DENMARK. MR. P.S. NIELSEN. D.K.F.

Mr. Nielsen said the Central Union of Urban Co-operative Societies had contacted the youth organisation of the Social Democratic Party, the trade unions and the Danish Falcons. The purpose was to show youth that co-operative societies were more democratic than the private system. As the young generation would be taking over responsibilities in a few years' time, it was necessary to teach them the merits of Co-operation. His organisation was arranging conferences for various youth groups.

The Central Union was also examining the Danish school books which gave little information about the Co-operative Movement but paid much attention to private trade. It was hoped to persuade the authorities to rectify this position. The Co-operative idea must be "sold" to young people; merely offering them Co-operative flats, goods and services was not sufficient.

MR. F. OLSSON. F.D.B.

The Union of Retail Societies was also anxious to influence youth through education. In 1969, 7 conferences had been held for group leaders. At these meetings the participants were not only informed of what the Co-operative Movement meant and was doing but they were asked for their suggestions on future action. This had resulted in many useful propositions. Much educational material was used. For example, games and toys of an instructional nature were designed for young children.

There was an F.D.B. calendar carrying information on

Greenland and the Faroe Islands for the older students and the journal "Samvirke", was used in schools. It carried articles and, in connection with these, provided sets of film slides.

Later this year representatives of the Scandinavian countries were to meet in Copenhagen to explore possibilities of co-ordination of youth work.

Finally Mr. Olsson posed the question as to what could be done to educate adult members to co-operate with youth. This was a problem of vital importance.

FRANCE. MR. C. PROY. F.N.C.C.

The Federation of Consumers Societies had a membership of 3,500,000 families and a network of 10,000 shops with a trade turnover of 5 billion French francs.

For many years it had been interested in Youth. Close contact had been maintained with Co-operative holiday camps. Before the War there was a Co-operative Youth organisation but this had been dissolved. The Co-operative Technical School had the task of training young leaders and 1,200 had taken its courses in 10 years. The Institute of Co-operative Studies, the staff of which were professors and leaders of the Movement, kept contact with the universities and the general public.

A survey on Youth was to be presented to the Co-operative Congress being held in Vichy in June 1969. The survey would analyse the position of the Youth and the Co-operative Movement. Difficulties arose from the generation gap, the language gap and the reluctance of Youth to involve itself in organisation.

Solutions had to be found to the following points:-

1. How to improve the encounter with Youth; that is, at the point of distribution, by modernising methods and commercial policy.
2. The Integration of Youth leaders into the Movement.

3. The presentation of Co-operative ideals at the same time as meeting the volume of consumer demands.
4. Research into the means of propaganda.
5. New structures. The report would try to assess the future consumers' society and the policy of the Movement. It would recommend the production of a plan for 1975-80.

Mr. Proy concluded by returning to the question of the language gap. The words "democracy" and "co-operation" did not mean much to young people now. The problem was to know which was best; to leave youth to discuss among themselves or to integrate the discussions with the older generation.

NORWAY. MR. E. YTREARNE. N.K.L.

N.K.L., the Norwegian Co-operative Union and Wholesale Society, opened a Youth Section in 1964 under the direction of the Education and Information Department. Mr. Ytrearne is the leader.

There was no Co-operative Youth Organisation as such but in Norway there were approximately 60 national youth organisations - political, religious and social - many of them linked with the U.N. Association, W.A.Y. or the Council of European National Youth Committees. Within this mass of organisations about 50% of the nation's youth between the ages of 14 to 25 years were associated. The N.K.L. saw in this field much of its potential future membership.

Films and speakers for Youth meetings were supplied by N.K.L. A Swedish discussion course had been adopted with great success. It included subjects such as the United Nations, the threat of the atomic bomb, help for the developing countries, etc.

There was also collaboration with the schools in this programme. The Norwegian Education Department had authorised the use of 2 film strips with text-books in schools. One was "What is Co-operation" and the other "Consumers Co-operatives in Norway". Under the new 9-year school period, vocational training was included and a 6-day programme of practical work in shops was being prepared by N.K.L. In addition to the provision of literature, visits by school classes to Co-operative premises were being planned.

PHILIPPINES. MR. D.C. PUNZALAN

Mr. Punzalan said that he was attached to a Co-operative Institute where young managers were trained. There had been some contact between the co-operatives and the 4. H. Clubs in the Philippines. He believed that children in primary schools and students in universities should receive some Co-operative education.

POLAND. MR. Z. KOTLARCZYK. C.A.U.

The Co-operative Agricultural Union has 4 million members of which 9% are under 27 years of age.

Children were introduced to Co-operation at school. Co-operative shops were operated in schools and such interests as rabbit-breeding and mushroom production were promoted through small co-operatives. The surpluses were used for camps or holidays.

C.A.U. was responsible for 100 schools. Employee training was undertaken and the certificates awarded had the same value as those of the State. Many scholarships were offered.

In answer to a question as to how 9% could influence the 4 million members, Mr. Kotlarczyk said that many young people were elected to the committees and councils of co-operatives and it should be remembered that they were eligible for positions from 18 years of age.

SWEDEN. MRS. ULLA JONSDOTTER-HANSSON. K.F.

Mrs. Jonsdotter of the Swedish Women's Guild was accompanied by Mr. A. Johansson, youth officer. Both were representing Kooperativa Förbundet, (K.F.)

There is no Co-operative Youth organisation in Sweden but the Movement was very aware of the importance of Youth. They lived in an affluent society and every 2nd family in Sweden was in membership of a Co-operative Society. This was not only in retailing but in housing, insurance and other forms of Co-operatives. Youth have money to spend and they should be encouraged to buy at Co-operative societies. But meeting material needs was not sufficient. Co-operation had an ideological side and was motivated by a social purpose. Therefore apart from the wide coverage by

general publicity, literature and study group materials were provided for a variety of subjects. Study groups were very popular and were created to meet specific demands but on completion were terminated. By way of example, people consume air or water and when either is polluted they want to know why. So they study the problems; with a view to future action.

The Youth Officer had the task of contacting youth organisations. Recently meetings have been arranged in many towns for young people from the Social Democratic party and the Labour movement. Panels representing the organisations, the local society and K.F. were faced with a variety of questions such as "Does the Co-op have an Ideology". "Do you buy from South Africa or California", "Members' control over K.F.", "Alcoholism", "Political and Religious neutrality", etc. This had given an opportunity to young activists. There was evidence of more young people attending the annual meetings of Co-operative Societies.

Lastly, young Co-operators had been encouraged to assist in the extensive international work undertaken by the Swedish Co-operative Centre. Through the special collection which created the fund "Without Boundaries", youth in many developing areas of Africa and Asia were being helped.

SWITZERLAND. MR. P. MEYER. CO-OP SCHWEIZ

Co-op Schweiz was involved in applying Co-operative ideology to an up-to-date management structure, concentration of the organisations and raising the quality of management. At the same time, a report was being prepared on the possible activities the Movement could arrange for young people. A co-operative youth organisation had been in existence for many years but it had failed to make much impact. Now an approach would be made through well-prepared public relations.

The areas under examination were:-

1. The Co-operative weekly paper with a circulation of 800,000 copies and published in German, French and Italian. A youth supplement could be proposed.
2. Cultural events.

3. Six Co-operative educational centres were operating and more were planned. At these, general and professional courses for young people were to be provided.
4. Advice and assistance in education.
5. Cheap and original offers in tourism to appeal to Youth.
6. Public Relations activities designed to arouse interest in the Co-operative Movement, e.g. by drawing on young people's ideas on management.

In answer to questions, Mr. Meyer felt that hitherto there had not been sufficient information given to employees.

UNITED KINGDOM. MR. G. JEFFERY. CO-OPERATIVE UNION

Mr. Jeffery explained the disappointing situation which had resulted in the recent decision to close down the national Co-operative Youth Movement. Lack of planned development, unfortunate selection of untrained leaders, lack of co-ordination and financial problems had contributed to the closure. Young people would not accept an imposed policy.

Nevertheless this did not mean that all Youth work would cease. Many societies have continued to maintain youth clubs, often helped financially by local education authorities. In addition there are cultural activities, choirs, elocution and drama groups.

The Woodcraft Folk, an affiliate of I.F.M., was also strong in many societies and financial assistance was being continued both locally and nationally. Furthermore in some areas a Young Members Organisation was meeting with some success.

It was pointed out that Co-operative Youth work in England was not linked with staff training or trade development.

Supplementary information on the Young Members Organisation was given by Mr. F. Dent (London Co-operative Society). He emphasised that the programmes for Youth must have some Co-operative context. In the changing structure of the Movement, democracy is experiencing a crisis. Fewer people are able to play a part and, in any case, those remaining are in an older age group. The Young Members Organisation will organise

seminars, build up overseas contacts and generally turn its attention to Co-operative principles

MRS. M. WEITE, R.A.C.S.

Mrs. M. White, although representing the Royal Arsenal Co-operative Society was also the General Secretary of the Woodcraft Folk. She described the work her organisation did with children. Through the policy of teaching them the art of living together, they continued to benefit through adolescence and adult life. Play for the children was a preparation for life if carefully organised. Toys can have an educational value and war toys should be avoided. Camping and outdoor activities were a special feature of their programme. Much educational work was carried out and this qualified for local authority grants. Many exchanges with groups overseas had taken place. The Woodcraft folk had been very active in the project launched by the British Co-operative Movement to promote Co-operatives in Botswana. A very large sum of money had been collected for this purpose.

U.S.S.R. MR. V. MASLENNIKOV, CENTROSOYUS

The consumer Co-operative societies in the U.S.S.R. have 56 million members. Last year's increase of 2 million reflected the rapid development taking place, and in the Ukraine 80% of the new members were young people.

Many concessions were given to Youth and they had special rights in consumer co-operatives. Employees were given facilities for training on the premises and although correspondence courses were conducted the students were able to visit their Co-operative institute each year. Students also had a 4-day working week as against the normal 5 days. They had an extra month's paid holiday.

Regarding help to the developing countries, Centrosoyus paid all expenses to bring in students for courses. For example, 122 students had been catered for at the institute to which Mr. Maslennikov was attached.

Housing priority is given to young people; nurseries and kindergarten are provided for children. Libraries and sports facilities are also available. Youth is attracted to Co-operation because it saw its usefulness and its opportunities for promotion.

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Mr. Maslennikov then turned his attention to the I.C.A. and pointed out that no action on Youth had been undertaken by the I.C.A. and suggested the following points for discussion:

1. Forms and Methods of Activities.
2. Training of Staff.
3. Possibilities of promotion for Youth.
4. Improvement of Professional qualifications.
5. Participation of young Co-operators in Management and Control.
6. Development of International Contacts.

The I.C.A. should be a co-ordinating centre for the study of the experience and problems of Youth. A consultative committee on similar lines to the Women Co-operators' Advisory Council should be set up. Through this the contacts with the U.N. Specialised Agencies could be strengthened.

Furthermore there should be association with other organisations such as World Federation of Democratic Youth. Centrosoyus also suggests that the I.C.A. should request the U.N. to set up Youth Centres in developing countries. It would be willing to provide instructors.

At the I.C.A. annual seminars Youth should be included and there should be regional seminars which would be of special help to national movements. If an international camp was organised in 1971, U.S.S.R. would support it.

Commenting on Mr. Maslennikov's remarks about I.C.A.'s lack of action in the field of Youth, the Director pointed out that the work of the I.C.A. was limited by the means available. Finances were stretched and priorities have to be carefully worked out. On collaboration with other organisations, the I.C.A. usually worked with them when they asked for help with Co-operative activities.

KENYA. MR. S. J. OUMA.

Mr. Ouma said that about 1,000 Co-operative societies were established in his country but these were under the direction of the Government. Many boys were working in these societies but there was no formal Co-operative Youth organisation. The Government Youth Service Scheme was

most useful and provided training for 16-year olds. He made reference to the collaboration between the Ministry of Agriculture and the Young Farmers' Clubs being tried in Uganda. F.A.O. would be very welcome in Kenya if it would offer similar projects.

IV. MAJOR AREAS FOR DISCUSSION

The Director opened the final discussion by summarising the major areas on which the group could now concentrate its discussions. Perhaps the question could be formulated as follows. Do young people exercise the influence they should in the affairs of the Co-operative Movement? If not, how can this situation be corrected and what rôle can the I.C.A. play in bringing about this change? In trying to answer the question, the following aspects would need careful consideration.

Education and training by co-operatives

One gets the impression that our methods are becoming routinised and in a world of T.V. and other entertainment, the Movements do not offer the excitement available elsewhere. It may be, as suggested by a previous speaker, that the Co-operatives have become a part of the Establishment where the parliamentary structure has become highly stratified, denying promotion to Youth. What could be done to counteract this situation?

Appeals to youth

How can youth be persuaded to join Co-operative Societies? Is it that the Co-op image is not appealing enough? Does the average individual consider the Co-operative Society only as the place at which he gets a dividend, an incentive which is available elsewhere in other forms? An allied aspect is whether it is more effective to work through a separate youth organisation or to have youth activities integrated within the Co-operative Movement.

Research

Much more research is required in several areas touched upon in the Conference. Firstly there is need for research into broad issues such

as the generation gap, the structure of values in society, patterns of authoritarianism in the family, the place of employment and the society as a whole. Studies in these fields do not fall within the competence of Co-operative organisations, but should be commended to U.N.E.S.C.O., F.A.O. and departments of sociology in universities etc.

A second field for research is related to the confrontation between the Co-operative Society and Youth. Some aspects have been mentioned in the Secretariat background paper, e.g. opportunities for employment and promotion, appeals to the Youth in recruitment policies.

The rôle of ideology in present society

Has the Co-operative ideology lost its appeal and vigour? Is it both desirable and feasible that the Co-operative Movement shows its commitment to those issues which are of fundamental concern to humanity? As one national statement pointed out, Youth must be given a deeper sense of absorption in problems such as those of the developing countries, human rights, political injustices etc.

* * * * *

The second part of Dr. Saxena's question related to the I.C.A.'s rôle and the greater involvement of Youth at the International level. Several delegates had suggested that the I.C.A. should act as co-ordinator. What should be the content of this co-ordination in terms of

- a. Relations and joint activities with other international organisations, keeping in mind the recent U.N. Resolution on the Rôle of the Co-operative Movement in Economic and Social Development;
- b. Collection and Exchange of Information;
- c. The use of publications especially for the needs of Youth in Co-operative Movements;
- d. Seminars, Conferences and Youth Camps;

The suggestions of this Conference would be taken to the Executive Committee who could then decide the course of action for the I.C.A. in the field of Youth and Co-operatives.

V. PLENARY DISCUSSION

Mr. Jeffery

Training and technical education had to remain a part of the managerial function. What did we want of Youth as Co-operators? There had to be some form of indoctrination but our teaching methods had to change. The old techniques had to go. There was a need to cater for the children of 11-15 years whose parents were not members, by giving them practical demonstrations of how democracy works.

Dr. L. Sieber, Education Secretary, I.C.A., emphasised the problems of the generation and language gaps. He reminded the Conference that next year was International Education Year and this was a chance to stimulate the interest of young people.

Mr. Proy felt there was insincerity in the vocabulary of the adult. Youth wanted more substance; it was seeking a new world. There had to be a re-examination of the structure of Democracy and to discover the point of contact between the young and older generations. This also concerned education which meant the Co-operative Movement should seek the help of other organisations and maintain contact with the universities.

Mr. I. Wrigglesworth, Co-operative Party, U.K., advocated more professional and market research to ascertain the population re-action to the Co-operative Movement in the 70's. There may be a need for further reforms on the trading side before young people responded.

Mr. P. Dijkstra suggested there were 3 points for examination.

- a. Co-operative image as a commercial enterprise.
- b. Co-operation as a Movement with an ideological basis.
There was great scope in the promotion of school co-operatives.
- c. Co-operation and its possibility for organisation. Co-operation had much to teach in its form and structure.

Mr. Kotlarczyk agreed that the I.C.A. must play a co-ordinating rôle by

- a. being a clearing house for information;
- b. supporting seminars, conferences, etc.;

- c. supporting bi-lateral exchange between member countries;
- d. encouraging school co-operatives; (Poland would be prepared to supply information);
- e. exploring the possibilities of further work with U.N.E.S.C.O. on study tours;
- f. by extending its contacts with other democratic organisations.

Mr. R. Martin, R.A.C.S., U.K., said that since the dissolution of the former International Federation of Co-operative Youth there had been no co-ordination on youth. If the I.C.A. did not do something, then national organisations should take the initiative.

With the re-organisation of national structures, the question of member contact had become a back number in co-operative considerations.

Mr. Schmidt felt the Conference had opened many doors but had it produced any guide lines? He offered the following points which appeared to him to have emerged.

- a. The need for a different approach to different age groups;
- b. A different approach to the developing countries;
- c. The development of the 'Big Business' image of the Co-operatives tends to discourage the interest of youth;
- d. Both in the developed and developing countries, co-operatives must provide means for youth to learn by doing.

Mrs. Jonsdotter-Hansson felt that the former I.F.C.Y. was a failure and Co-operative Youth were not prepared for another federation. Nevertheless there should be a follow through of this conference. She suggested a working group which could collect data on experience. A questionnaire might be circulated.

Mrs. White said the I.C.A. should provide an opportunity for bringing together young people in a seminar to explain its own work and plans.

Mrs. Tamelova recommended regular meetings of youth once or twice a year to discuss current problems.

Mrs. M.J. Russell, Secretary for Women Co-operators, I.C.A., explained briefly that the administration of the Conference had been carried out by the Women's Department. The encouragement of Youth was of special concern to the Women Co-operators' Advisory Council.

A full report would be prepared and circulated. Thanks were due to all organisations which had supplied papers, including some which had not been able to be represented at the Conference.

After commenting on some of the points which had been raised in the Conference, Mrs. Russell suggested that Youth was in fact influencing the Co-operative Movement without perhaps being fully conscious of it. The new trading methods and new structures now being adopted by many member organisations of the I.C.A. were the result of pressures from the new generation which demand changes in line with modern trends. The older generation would have felt more comfortable maintaining the old ways but had been forced to meet the demands of Youth if their organisations were to compete. What potential new Co-operators had to watch was how much they would lose in self-government and expression if the new structures squeezed out the former democratic character of the Movement.

Dr. Saxena concluded the Conference with thanks to all the organisations which sent representatives and in particular the U.N. Special Agencies and the international non-governmental organisations. He hoped that the new associations which had been established would continue.

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VI. SUMMARY

The main points which emerged from this Conference were as follows:-

ACTION BY THE I.C.A.

1. The I.C.A.'s initiative in calling this Conference was appreciated.
2. Future meetings should be held. Possibly the agenda should be adjusted to give more scope to discussion of proposals and future action.
3. There was no desire to establish the former International Federation of Co-operative Youth but there were a number of suggestions asking for co-ordination of youth work through the I.C.A., either by an advisory youth council or by regular meetings.
4. Exchange and dissemination of information could be channelled through the I.C.A. or by direct communication.
5. Better use of publications could be made keeping in mind the needs of Youth in Co-operatives.
6. A particular officer in a country or organisation could be made responsible for receiving information and for passing it on to the I.C.A.
7. I.C.A. could arrange seminars, schools, camps etc. There was support for a conference or camp in 1971.
8. Through the I.C.A., stronger contacts and collaboration could be maintained with the U.N. Specialised Agencies and other international N.G.O.'s.
9. The foregoing point also leads to action in the developing countries. The work being done in Algeria by U.N.E.S.C.O. and Uganda by F.A.O. has special interest for co-operatives and should be studied and followed up.

ACTION AT NATIONAL LEVEL

10. There is a variety of methods of approach to youth in member countries.

11. Where there is a separate organisation in being for Youth, the results are not uniform.
12. Many countries which had formal Youth organisations have disbanded them. Where they are maintained, the membership conditions have been relaxed to reach out to non-members when staging events e.g. VÖCK, Austria.
13. Many countries approach youth through the machinery of the movements (i.e. the Co-operative Society's members' meetings) or through existing youth organisations.

EDUCATION

14. In some instances useful liaison is established with the schools. (e.g. Scandinavian countries)
15. School co-operatives, run by the students themselves give practical experience.
16. Extensive training is being given in Co-operative colleges and schools.
17. Correspondence courses and study groups are popular.
18. Contacts are made with universities. These should be extended.
19. Literature, films and other visual aids e.g. flannelgraphs, printed games, are distributed.

RESEARCH

20. More research is needed on the broad issues of youth and its place in the modern world. This should be undertaken by outside bodies specialising in this work.
21. Research in the field of Youth and its relationship to Co-operation could be undertaken with advantage by Co-operative Movements.

SOCIAL CONTACTS

22. Programmes with a social and cultural content are undertaken by several countries.
23. Travel opportunities for exchange and study tours are arranged.

24. Camps, both at home and abroad, are encouraged.
25. Choirs, drama groups, ski competitions and sports are features of youth activities. Panels, discussion and public speaking contests are arranged.

THE APPEALS TO YOUTH

26. The "Co-op" in the developed countries where the Consumer Movements are strong appears to be "big business". This tends to obscure the motivating idealism.
27. The trading side has to find ways of being attractive to youth, both commercially and idealistically.
28. Youth looks for protection for the consumer and the Co-operative Movement has to prove it is carrying out this task.
29. There must be a more realistic approach if Youth are to be attracted to the maintenance of democratic control.
30. In building new structures, avenues for participation by Youth must be left open.

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