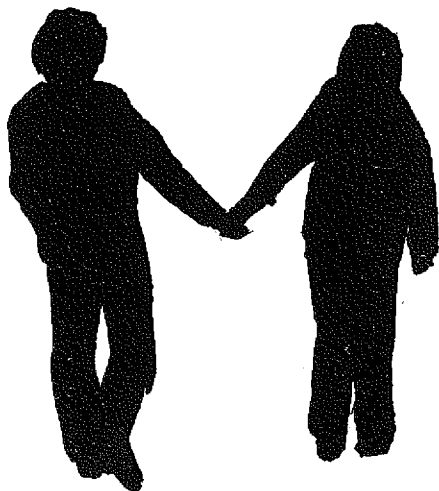


cooperatives

... a

lifestyle



THE JOURNAL OF THE



NEW HARBINGER

a dedication

It is indeed rare for a journal to be dedicated to an individual -- especially when we consider that any cooperative venture, including this journal, is undoubtedly the product of many people's efforts. Let this, then, be the exception, for Moses M. Coady was the exception. Definitely a man whose thinking was decades ahead of society's, M. M. Coady's insight into life and livelihood is a lucid reflection of the issues of social change that surround us today.

From birth to death (1882 - 1959) Moses M. Coady concentrated his work in the Maritimes of Canada. As a tireless worker and speech-maker he became the lifeblood and metabolism of what came to be known as the Antigonish Movement. With its concentration on adult education through study groups and the organization of economic cooperatives on many levels, the purpose of the movement was defined by Coady (1943) to be that of smashing "the inferiority complex of the masses"¹.

The North American Student Cooperative Organization is entering a new phase, sparked by the vitality of the youth and the community cooperative movement. The tasks before us are organizing tasks not unlike those faced by other generations. And, the crucial variable of success (the motivation of the individual ... who 'cooperatively' becomes the mass) is the same as that confronted in other times. The essential difference is that today we have the educational and intellectual equipment to make cooperation work. Our responsibilities are clear; and this generation cannot default on them. We are faced with having to make the highest, and most difficult, form of economic and social organization -- cooperation -- work, or concede that our right to it may forever be forfeited.

Moses M. Coady can, and rightly should, be an inspiration to us. But, right from the beginning let there be no mistake that the burden of the work, and the responsibility for the action, lies with each of us, individually.

WORK TOGETHER BUILD COOPERATIVELY

drm friedrichs, editor

¹ page 78, The Man From Margaree. Coady used the term 'masses' to include "all those who, on the farm, in the mine or factory, on the sea, in the forest, or in the various service occupations, derive their daily sustenance from the performance of those tasks which a somewhat perverse common parlance tends to designate as 'jobs' rather than as 'professions', 'positions', or 'business enterprises'" (pg. 1, Masters of Their Own Destiny)

Our people in a modern democracy have little left under the dictatorship of big business and finance, but they have yet enough to break through to the freedom they desire if they ever muster up in reality the fighting spirit which the revolutionaries attribute to them in theory By intelligent individual and group action, the masses can repossess the earth. The democratic formula, of which economic cooperation is a vital part, is adequate.

Moses M. Coady
Masters of Their Own Destiny

Even if people's thinking is superstitious or naive, it is only as they rethink their assumptions in action that they can change. Producing and acting upon their own ideas -- not consuming those of others -- must constitute that process.

Paulo Freire
Pedagogy of the Oppressed

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The Journal of The New Harbinger is a monthly publication of the North American Student Co-operative Organization. Its purpose is to aid people's search for solutions to organizing problems by presenting a cross section of informative articles on preannounced topics.

An annual subscription is \$8, and entitles you to the Journal, the monthly NASCO news bulletin, and a copy of the annual Community Market Catalogue

COOPERATION IS THE FOUNDATION

Economic group action is something more than mere business. Its spiritual and cultural significance is of infinitely greater value. It offers new and undreamed-of opportunities for the development of character and room for the expanding human soul. It will rescue the people from the dulling and deadening effect of the modern industrial world. In our time the activities of human beings have been reduced to a minimum. Life, even in the country, is no longer what it used to be. In the cities, human beings are becoming . . . robots. All along the line man is dethroned. His creativeness and originality are destroyed. The modern world is wearing him down and there is emerging on the scene a standard, mass man. We are becoming as similar and as uninteresting as the round stones that the pounding sea polishes off and casts in heaps on our sandy shores. We are paying a terrible price for the doctrine of rugged individualism. For the sake of having a few thousand rugged individualists in North America the individualsim of all the remaining millions of the people is being destroyed.

This happens because people no longer can think for themselves. An army of keen profit-seekers look after people from the cradle to the grave. Not only do they supply the material goods that minister to human life, but they also prescribe what we shall eat and what we shall wear. They go farther -- they invade the field of the mind. Our canned music, our cinema shows, our commercial recreation -- our thought-food -- all are prepared for us. And all this at a price! Under the high pressure of modern advertising, the people will do what they are supposed to do -- take things, good and bad, and pay the price.

COOPERATION WILL FREE THE PEOPLE

Group action in the economic field is the very thing that will free the people again -- free them not only economically but spiritually as well. If the people of our country once got to the point where they owned and operated the rough economic institutions that minister to their subsistence living, they would then have the ambition to go on to activities in the fields of refinement and culture. There is a direct connection between these activities and man's spiritual and cultural life. We should take a leaf out of the book of wisdom of the smart men who have been running the economic world in the past. Economics made them. You can see it in their faces. The calm complacency of the well-to-do and their ambition to enjoy the good things of life are well known to everybody. They do not stop with mere rugged individualism! They long ago resorted to group action. While they preached individualism to the common people, they went ahead to form joint stock companies, corporations and . . . international cartels. This is cooperation with a vengeance!

4

Surely we are wise enough to know that we have to match their collectivism with a collectivism of our own if we are to succeed. The effect of economic group action on the spiritual and cultural development of human beings is no theory of mine. History bears it out. A hundred years ago the Danes were serfs. They were bought and sold like goods and chattles with the lands of their masters. . . . (then) they aroused themselves and built their own cooperative institutions. They are now counted among the world's most successful and cultured people. If you want the democratic solution of the social problem, cooperation is the foundation.

BECAUSE THE PEOPLE DEFAULTED

Economic cooperation is not only legitimate business but it is and should be the one first and fundamental legitimate business; it is really the one thing philosophically speaking, that can be called business. It is a technique by which no businessman can take an undue toll from his fellow human beings. Everything is contracted for and everybody gets paid for what he does. There is no chance of garnering in armfuls of unearned increment.

It took the world a long time to find this technique. It was developed only a hundred and six years ago* by the Rochdale Pioneers, to be exact. But we now know that every type of economic operation can be carried on by the cooperative technique. This does not mean that every economic operation must be carried on the cooperative way, but it does mean that man could do it that way were he smart enough.

What is the meaning of this idea that economic cooperation is not legitimate business? It means that cooperation in the eyes of the powers-that-be is all right if it interferes with nothing. If it seriously threatens old-line private-profit enterprise, then it must be stopped!

POLITICAL DEMOCRACY

Now, there are many arguments to prove the legitimacy of cooperation. I shall draw the first one from the idea of political democracy. The time was when slavery was universally admitted. Under the impact of Christianity, slavery began to disappear. Rulers became more benign, but there were still many despotic rulers. . . . Then came the idea of the importance of the people -- the sovereign people. This was the stirring of democracy. The ruler rules only by the consent of the governed. This was the great fundamental freedom. We should not forget, however, that it was only yesterday

*as of 1950

when this great truth was denied. The people were denied the right to rule themselves, denied the right to have a say in their political and social affairs. The same arguments are being used today to deny them a say in their economic affairs.

The real way to have a say in your economic affairs is through economic cooperation, or group action in the economic field. The same autocracy that once denied political democracy to the people is now denying them this economic right. This argument becomes all the stronger when we are considering the fact that political freedom and political democracy fade away when the people lose economic control. Economic dictatorship is soon followed by political dictatorship. Therefore, if the democracies are to maintain democratic freedom, they must also have a corresponding system of economic freedom.

pages 100 to 102,
The Man From Margaree: Writings
 and Speeches of M.M. Coady *

cultural change and the co-op

AN INTRODUCTION

Today's youth co-op culture has a great potential for making advances on the old-world co-ops. Whereas the development of old-world co-ops concentrated on economic problems and the financial sector, the new co-ops are concentrating on the wide and all encompassing scope of culture -- which includes lifestyle, ideology, education, and consciousness, as well as financial considerations.

Using Eric Fromm's terminology, there are two directions in which co-ops, especially housing co-ops,

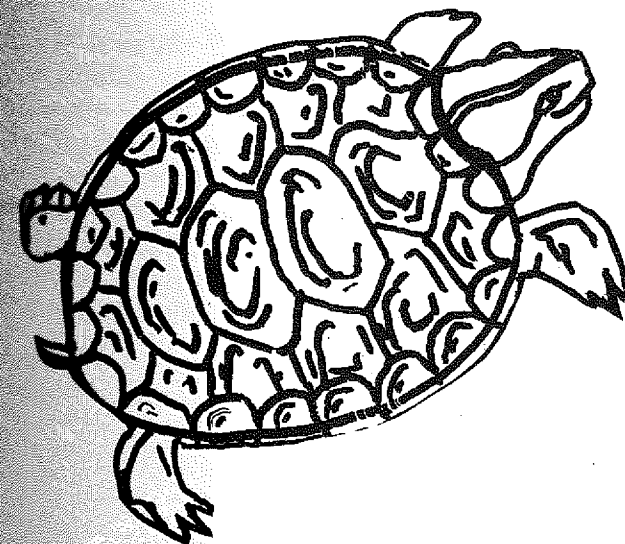
can go: toward mechanical or toward organic solidarity. Mechanical solidarity implies a space, or service, being supplied at some time cost or money cost, to the individual. This usually works out to be financially very economical for the individual's needs. But, are finances an individual's only needs? Does cooperation only imply an economical relationship between men? The assumption of the old-world co-ops was that financial needs were the only needs that the co-op should involve itself with. It was too dangerous politically to do otherwise.

Today there is a potential for co-ops to go beyond the old-world financial-mechanical needs of individuals. This is accomplished with organic solidarity.

Organic solidarity requires an emphasis on interpersonal relationships among members of the co-op. To achieve this requires a cultural change, which, in turn, involves the very values of the individual members of the co-op. In the old-world co-op, the values of the society at large were seemingly good enough to allow the needs of the members to be fulfilled by financial-space transactions. To develop the concept of empathy necessary for organic solidarity, however, requires a more encompassing cooperative approach. A vast cultural change on the part of the individual is needed. The occurrence of such a cultural change in the individual could, and would, alter our very system of property and management.

What is it that we are doing at student living co-ops, then? In many cases disaffected youth -- alienated from the middle-class suburban culture -- join co-ops. In other cases the freshman is thoroughly acculturated, socialized (indoctrinated?). But, in either case, 18 years of non-cooperative experience is most commonly the rule. The question, then, becomes how to reach through the conglomerate of influence of the 'non-cooperative' society.

The idea of organic solidarity is somewhat esoteric, but below the concept is the idea of getting to know someone and others, very well. This, for the freshman, is very important, for he is initially very lost. In a new environment (the university) he is alone, and through disassociation with circumstances that



have influenced his past, he is more vulnerable to new ideas. Culturally, things are different at the university, and exposure to those pursuits, intellectual and/or cooperative, can be reinforcing experiences to the freshman. It is through such exposure that involvement comes.

Even though most beliefs, attitudes and values are formed early in childhood, this does not mean that they cannot be changed. As Milton Rokeach has pointed out, through positive reinforcement, new values can take the place of old values.

In the freshman student's case, new values are introduced (e.g. cooperation) and positively reinforced, perhaps through a discussion of how important cooperation is to understanding individual and group needs. The old values are not negatively reinforced, they are just ignored and forgotten.

New types of cooperatives -- those with a sense of organic solidarity -- should not be limited to the world of students. There are many types of groups for which co-ops are well suited: ethnic groups, old folks, and therapeutic homes, to mention a few.

This brief introduction to the theory and practical aspects of cultural change is meant to introduce the reader to some ideas which can be developed more extensively in further discussions. If you are interested in discussing cultural change and the organic co-op, I hope we can get together at the 'Community and Conscience' Conference at Neill-Wycik Co-op College. (Toronto, Ontario, 20-24).

Peter Trotscha
 Roxburghe College
 London, Ontario

ON COMMUNITY AND CONSCIENCE

OCTOBER 20 -- 24

* Edited and with Commentary by Alexander F. Laidlaw.
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ANALYZING THE ROLE OF STUDENT CO-OPS

On August 21 -- 24 at Neill-Wycik College (a 22 story, dormitory-type living cooperative in Toronto) a study retreat was held for the expressed purpose of analyzing our role in student cooperatives and the role of student cooperatives in America and Canadian society. Most of the 12 people attending were on the Board of NASCO. . . . The importance of this retreat was that it was an attempt to stop and examine both our own personal goals and the goals of the student cooperative movement. My description of the retreat, I hope, will be helpful in getting members of different co-ops to attempt the same sort of discussion of their own.

One of the essential features of the retreat was its method -- adopted from Paulo Freire's book, *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Since our purpose was to examine both our lives in (student housing) co-ops and the co-ops themselves, we needed a method whereby we could, as a group, discover and analyze basic conflicts. Freire's method ideally facilitated this.

The distinction between Freire's method and the method of traditional education is that Freire stresses that people, themselves, must actively participate in the examination of their lives, and thus come to their own realization, whereas in traditional education the role of a student has been that of a passive object who consumes the ideas of the educator. . . .

The retreat attempted to use Freire's method to discover the nature of the student cooperative movement and some of its basic problems. To help us structure and direct our investigation we broke down our general discussion into four topics: 1) the goals of co-ops; 2) our personal goals; 3) dynamic historical forces (affecting both the co-ops and the individual); and 4) contradictions between the three.

A high sheet of paper was tacked to the wall facing us, and under each heading after discussion we listed all which applied to us and to the various co-ops. This device of writing the points down enabled us to remain focused and concrete. . . . Under goals of the co-op, we wrote down such things as: 'a sense of community', 'a cooperative style of life', 'a democratic decision making process', and 'an alternative

Wally Malakoff
(with thanks to Phil Davis)

to American society'. Some of our personal goals included 'meaningful work', control of our environment', 'communication with, and understanding of others', and 'a deemphasis of competition'. Under dynamic historical forces, we listed 'the lack of challenging useful work', 'emphasis on intense personal competition', 'the monopolization of the economic power', and 'the decline of democracy in our lives'.

When we looked at our three lists, we noted that there were many contradictions between our personal goals and goals of the co-op on the one hand and the forces we face in society on the other. We wanted a de-emphasis on competition and a cooperative community yet we face intense personal competition in the outside world. We wanted meaningful work yet we find most of the work in society is unchallenging and alienating. We want control of our environment yet the economy is dominated by monopolies.

We examined these contradictions and saw that all of them were really different aspects of the contradiction between what exists in society and what we want to exist in cooperatives. We called this a 'limit situation' (from Freire's book) because the essential feature of the situation was that the corporate world is a limit to our lives both in school, and after we leave it. . . .

To give a better sense of what we did I will describe how we developed this one theme:

Generative Theme: *Youth Co-op Experience vs. Competitive Corporate Life*

When we related our personal experience to this theme, we found that one person at the retreat had just graduated from college and another was in his last year. When we asked about their futures and what alternatives they had open to them, both were very uncertain -- and not too optimistic. They seemed unable to envision anything about their lives once they left the student community. They had little choice but to get a job in the 'corporate field', there was no other way they could survive other than by getting a menial type of job -- which seemed an

even worse alternative. In talking with them one could sense their uncertainty and despair. It was a dilemma which all of us eventually would have to face, but one which we put off thinking about for as long as possible. Either succumb to the corporate world, or try to avoid getting a menial job. It appeared to be a hopeless situation.

This theme was then posed to us as a dynamic problem to be solved. And when this was done, we began to see ourselves no longer as passive spectators who were engaged in an academic discussion about an unchangeable situation, but as actors who were analyzing a common situation so as to understand and transform it. This led to a discussion about things which could be done to change the situation.

With this theme, as with other Generative Themes we developed, 'Limit Acts' were formulated. These are acts which attempt to overcome the limits imposed upon us by (in this case) the corporate world by helping people become aware of the dilemmas they will be facing once they leave the student community and try to find work. They are also an attempt to initiate discussion about how we can use our future roles as college educated workers within American institutions to radically change society.

Six Limit Acts brought out through our discussion of the Co-op Experience vs. Competitive Corporate Life were: 1) hold regular Freire-type discussion groups in the co-ops to discuss our role in American society once we leave (housing) co-ops; 2) publish

a controversial newsletter filled with theory, ideas, etc.; 3) trust other members of the co-op, support their interests and abilities -- have confidence in their worth; 4) show films followed by analytical discussions; 5) have co-op 'grads' come back to the co-op and describe their lives since graduating from college; 6) hold meetings of regular university courses in the co-op (without the professor) in which people could analyze the course and discuss topics not presented in class.

I think the conclusions of the study retreat could be summarized by saying that if co-ops are to have any significant effect upon lives and upon American society, they must broaden their expectations so as to become a part of the general movement to transform society. This would mean that the goal of the student cooperative movement would be changed from providing us with a temporary experience in cooperative living to the task of dealing with the immediate problems we face as students (such as, the deadening oppressive education we receive, and the alienating type of jobs which we face upon graduation) so as to improve both our own lives and the lives of the more immediate victims of the present system.

If a similar type of discussion were carried on in a co-op in weekly sessions for a year, or even for a semester, the results would be amazing -- both in the development of people's consciousness of their lives and of society, and of the type of Limit Acts which would be thought of and acted upon. If you are interested in initiating a similar type of discussion as was held in Toronto, please feel free to contact me at 240 Langdon St., Madison 53703. I would sincerely like to speak to people about this.

I Took a Trip in Time . . . MEMORIES CROWDING IN

I made a small detour, coming back to Chicago from the League's 1970 Biennial Congress. A visit to the Ithaca, N.Y., consumer's cooperative -- and to the student co-op I lived in in 1935 and 1936, at Cornell.

Actually I was involved in two co-ops then: a small co-op house first, a larger dining co-op later. The consumer co-op

store downtown was just a stall in the local farmers market then: now it's a very successful, modern co-op supermarket. The dining co-op? Well, the Navy sort of took over the campus in 1942 or so -- and the dining co-op ran out of potential members. But it sure saved us money during the five-six years it operated, with an employed cook plus co-op member labor hours.

The co-op house was still there in 1970.

From the outside, it didn't look much different from the days when I tied my motor bike together with baling wire. The nights we sat up long hours arguing those vital differences between Trotskyism and communism and socialism and all the other splinterisms. The house was still crumbling apart, still patched together, still covered with straggly unkempt vines. There were still a few mislaid items on the doorstep and the lawn -- even the lawn was sort of mislaid. And inside? One of the guys took me around. The living room cluttered and, well, lived in -- you might say. The furniture looked about the same -- still ten or fifteen years old. Upstairs they'd changed from the attic dormitory and the large 30-man study hall (I used to go to bed early, get up and study from 1 A.M. to 4 A.M. when it was quiet) -- to smaller three-man rooms. (No, still not co-ed!) And everything sort of thrown around: how, I thought, could anyone stand living in all that mess!

Then I did a double-take: what was it 'really' like when I lived there? Not, really, all that different. The house hadn't changed, but I had: now I'd be uncomfortable in all that clutter, but not thirty-five years ago. Then, it was just comfortable, easy-going -- and I guess it still is. (Wonder if the house meetings were still as hot and rambling? Probably.)

In Syracuse, New York

Learning by Doing

Nonviolent Studies, alias Humanics 480, was a course established as a result of the 1970 student strike to introduce students to alternative lifestyles and fields of employment. It was criticised heavily in the local press as being 'revolutionary' and 'radical', even though it was the largest course registered for at Syracuse University. Students enrolling in the class participated in a variety of community actions which were aimed primarily at raising social consciousness and providing alternatives to existing consumer institutions. Most successful in economic terms was the Food Co-op which ordered in bulk from wholesale outlets, when minimum order quantities were reached.

This year the course is being offered under a new aegis (Public Affairs 307) -- a second alias for the Nonviolent Studies Program. Its coordinator, Jim Marti, feels that recent University action makes it clear that 'an effort is being made to have NVS curb many of those activities certain critics of the Program thought were of an extra-curricular nature i.e., food co-ops, clothing co-ops, organic farming'.

The NVS program, in keeping pace with the situation, defined its role clearly. It has two functions. One, the program will introduce the philosophy of

And I wonder something else: out of the study and organizing of that dining co-op -- the work-shifts, the planning committees, the financial statements, the member recruitment, the member information -- out of all that (and the co-op house before it) came my interest in the cooperative movement. My determination to do what I could to build an alternative society in the middle of the one around me, which I didn't much care for. The interest that led me, after I graduated from Law School, to take a \$10 a week job as manager of a small hole-in-the-wall co-op store. (I don't think my Dad ever got over that one!) And on to continuous activity, as volunteer or staff, in consumer cooperatives -- even in that war-time C.O. camp. (At least we were 'free' there evenings and weekends.)

I wonder if some of the guys coming out of today's co-ops will stick with it. Wonder if they'll develop the skills needed to make it all work better. What we tried to do -- well, some of it has lasted, though not all we dreamed. But it won't amount to much if today's gang doesn't keep at it, build on what we've managed to hold on to so far.

Probably most of them won't: most of us didn't either. But here and there, a few -- to make cooperatives the significant, meaningful movement that's always been our hope and our goal. I think it may happen, from what I see, what I read.

Makes it all a little more worthwhile.

Art Danforth

nonviolence into higher education -- meaning that they will try to disclaim some of the operating assumptions of 'conventional wisdom' about the nature of man, the nature of social institutions, and the nature of war . . . more specifically, the 'myths' of natural aggression, natural competitiveness, and the corollary of the enmity of the sexes. Two, its non-academic program, the program will encourage the incorporation of nonviolence into each of our lifestyles, so that the philosophy to which we hold will be applied in daily existence. In implementing the philosophy the program will aid, abet, and fraternize with campus and non-campus people in setting up food co-ops, clothing co-ops, music co-ops, furniture co-ops and will soon open a People's Restaurant and People's Co-operative Paper Exchange.

An NVS spokesman's reaction to current problems was to say, 'Look, I don't know why the University is trying to limit our operations, we spent all of last year trying to shake off the unmeasured criticisms that go to the effect: 'you guys, are trying to build right here in Syracuse city, upper New York's last vestible of virginal, provincial wit, a political front'. To which a close cohort of Jim Marti's responded, 'Nah'.

S.A. Building, 932 South Crouse Ave. Syracuse 13210

COMMUNITARIAN SOCIALISM

There must be something wrong in a society where one man, however hard-working or clever he may be, can acquire as great a 'reward' (wealth) as a thousand of his fellows can acquire among them.

Julius K. Nyerere*

Apart from the anti-social effects of the accumulation of personal wealth, the very desire to accumulate it must be interpreted as a vote of 'no confidence' in the social system. For when a society is so organized that it cares about its individuals, then, provided he is willing to work, no individual within that society should worry about what will happen to him tomorrow if he does not hoard wealth today. Society itself should look after him, or his widow, or his orphans. This is exactly what traditional African society succeeded in doing. Both the 'rich' and the 'poor' individual were completely secure in African society. Natural catastrophe brought famine, but it brought famine to everybody -- 'poor' or 'rich'. No body starved, either for food or for human dignity, because he lacked personal wealth; he could depend on the wealth possessed by the community of which he was a member. . . .

Those of us who talk about the African Way of Life, and quite rightly, take a pride in maintaining the tradition of hospitality which is so great a part of it might do well to remember the Swahili saying: 'Treat your guest as a guest for two days; on the third day give him a hoe!' In actual fact, the guest was likely to ask for the hoe even before his host had to give him one -- for he knew what was expected of him, and would have been ashamed to remain idle any longer. . . .

A society which fails to give individuals the means to work or having given them the means to work, prevents them from getting a fair share of the products of their own sweat and toil, needs putting right. Similarly, an individual who can work -- and is provided by society with the means to work -- but does not do so, is equally wrong.

The Tanganyikan African National Union government must go back to the traditional custom of land holding. That is to say, a member of society will be entitled to a piece of land on the condition that he uses it. Unconditional, or 'freehold', ownership of land (which leads to speculation and parasitism) must be abolished. We must regain our former attitude of mind -- our traditional African socialism -- and apply

it to the new societies we are building today. . . . In our traditional African society we were individuals within a community. We took care of the community, and the community took care of us. We neither needed or wished to exploit our fellow men.

The foundation, and the objective, of African socialism is the extended family. The true African socialist does not look on one class of men as his brethren and another as his natural enemies. He does not form an alliance with the 'brethren for the extermination of the non-brethren'. He rather regards all men as his brethren -- as members of his ever extending family. UJAMMA, then, or 'familyhood', describes our socialism. It is opposed to capitalism, which sees to build a happy society on the basis of the exploitation of man by man; and it is equally opposed to doctrinaire socialism, which seeks to build its happy society on a philosophy of inevitable conflict between man and man.

We in Africa have no more need of being 'converted' to socialism than we have of being 'taught' democracy. Both are rooted in our own past -- in the traditional society which produced us. Modern African socialism can draw from its traditional heritage the recognition of 'society' as an extension of the basic family unit. But it can no longer confine the idea of the social family within the limits of the tribe, nor, indeed, of the nation. For no true African socialist can look at a line drawn on the map and say 'The people on this side of that line are my brothers, but those who happen to live on the other side of it can have no claim on me'. Every individual on this continent is his brother.

It was in the struggle to break the grip of colonialism that we learned the need for unity. We came to recognize that the same socialist attitude of mind which, in the tribal days, gave to every individual the security that comes of belonging to a widely extended family, must be preserved within the still wider society of the nation. BUT we should not stop here! Our recognition of the family to which we all belong must be extended yet further -- beyond the tribe, the community, the nation, or even the continent -- to embrace the whole society of mankind.

* Nyerere left teaching in early career to organize for the nationalist movement. In 1954 he founded the Tanganyikan African National Union. He was made President of the United Republic of Tanzania in 1964.

FACING UP TO AN ECOLOGICAL LIFESTYLE

Within the last 20 years, American society has undergone a tremendous revolution in habits and attitudes. Unfortunately, what has resulted is an increased dependency on the acquisition of goods, convenience, and technology. The quality of life has likewise come to be considered within a framework based on the quantity of consumption. The problems of what happens in our daily lives are no longer viewed as a question of individual responsibility, but have become a part of a nebulous governmental responsibility.

There is a need for a new sense of individual responsibility -- a new commitment, and the power to change. This change should lead to a feeling of local solidarity within groups sharing interests, and over time, lead to significant change within the society at large.

A victim of this entire phenomena of maximized use, discard, and personal convenience is our natural resources. The commitment of industry to sell the public newer, bigger and more expensively packaged items each year, no matter how superfluous the goods, must be re-examined. The attitude of people towards non-returnable bottles, throw-away packaging, and materials made of 100 percent virgin materials, must also be re-examined. To do so requires experimentation and an honest evaluation of lifestyles to find those most compatible with a new awareness.

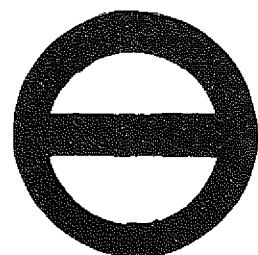
Living cooperatives are a natural for experimentation. Already, people are living and working as a unit. How that unit functions can have a tremendous impact, not only on its members, but also on others that come into contact with it. For example, one or two people cooking for 20 others automatically conserves a great deal of energy. No longer are 20 separate refrigerators, stoves, and dishwashers operating. At the same time, 20 people are being given the time to spend on other activities that it would have taken them to cook individually. A concentration of buying power within the co-op creates a block that can be used to effectively save money. One newspaper is shared by 20 different people -- saving trees. These things, and many more, already exist, because people have already decided in favor of cooperative living.

Based on these experiences, further steps can be taken within the co-op to heighten environmental awareness. Group support and interest are the most important factors involved. Things that can be done, are almost limitless. Recycling of glass, newspapers, cans, and other recyclable solid wastes is a good starting point. If there are no facilities in the area where this can be done, a coalition of cooperatives can be formed to carry out recycling.

Organic waste can be composted and used in improving the soil around the co-op, planting vegetable and flower gardens. Through block-buying power, co-ops can have an amazing impact. Buying only returnable bottles, buying products in large quantities that are not over-packaged, over-priced, or sprayed with all kinds of pesticides, and buying materials made of recycled waste will necessitate change for the seller. All mimeographing, book-making, note writing and publishing can be done on recycled paper.

Recycling is not a cut-and-dry solution to the problems of solid waste management. If there aren't people willing to buy products made of recycled materials, industry will not switch over to the use of recycled materials in production. Co-ops can play an effective role in creating that demand. Most importantly, however, cooperatives can provide an opportunity for people to be together, sharing experiences and growing towards a lifestyle more compatible with the resources we inevitably depend upon.

Pat Taylor
Ecology Action Center
Ann Arbor



BUILDING COMMUNITY

A REPORT FROM COLORADO

Community Design Institute is the name chosen by a group of, at present, 13 adults and 5 children who have joined together to form an intentional community. Planning began two years ago, and a decision has been made to eventually settle in western Colorado, near Montrose. For this interim period of resource building and organization, the community is located in Denver.

The primary goals of Community Design include the desire to turn technology from its present preoccupation with maximum consumption for maximum profit, to a concern for human needs and ecological living, and to maximize freedom while attempting to eliminate rigid sexual roles and the isolated nuclear family (in favor of the extended family along other genetic lines).

The present group has been together since July when an eastern group joined them following the Twin Oaks communities' conference (Louisa, Va.). Ultimately, the community (CDI) will be composed of as many as 100 adults, but expansion from the present number is not planned for in the immediate future.

The social and economic structure has largely been suggested by the kibbutzim and by Skinner's *Walden Two*. Minor personal property will be private; capital (land, housing, vehicles, and industries) will be communally owned. Faced with having to 'incorporate', the community will do so as a non-profit corporation. These, and similar, types of organizational questions, however, are viewed as technical and legal problems quite apart from the internal and operational issues of real community.

A crew of six is kept busy five days a week with a housing construction business. There is plenty of prospective business, and the return on labor (low at present because of inexperience) should soon be substantial. The skills developed have proved useful within the community as well.

Seeking to reorient and improve education, the community will have its own school (which may also function as a boarding school for non-members). Responsibility for the care of children will be shifted from the parents toward the community, the exact balance to be determined by experiment and consensus. Likewise, decisions are made informally and by consensus during general meetings.

The work is divided up by the day -- the intent being to schedule work for two weeks at a time and according to job preferences. In this way labor is, hopefully, apportioned for the greatest satisfaction of the members, and unpleasant work is distributed equitably.

Much importance is attached to maintaining good relations with surrounding residents. And, it is the community's intention to participate and contribute to the local economy and political life, in the belief that it can promote change and help to solve, rather than aggravate, societal problems.

CDI belongs to three cooperatives in Denver: a day-care center, a food-buying co-op, and a bookstore. Several members have previously been active in the cooperative movement, but were led to various experiments in community (amalgamating in the Community Design Institute) because cooperatives seemed to have too much of an economic orientation.

Community Design Institute
2456 Lafayette Street
Denver, 80205

Housing Co-ops for the Elderly

As a society which has elevated its regard for youthfulness to a religion, America treats its elderly citizens with something short of affection. We begin looking around for the most trouble-free and inexpensive means of caring for our parents as they begin to reach retirement age.

The depressing characteristic and perfunctory service of the 'extended care facilities' to which the elderly are sent has been documented and publicized. Many cases of 'senility' might more accurately be called severe depression -- brought on by loneliness, uselessness, and boredom with the American version of old age.

Cooperatives offer an exciting solution to these problems: senior citizen cooperative apartments. We underestimate our senior citizens if we think they are not capable of administering a building and maintaining their own apartments.

Cooperative Services Inc., A Detroit based consumer cooperative, has already constructed two senior cooperative high-rise buildings in a down-river suburb. The newest, the Bishop Cooperative Apartments, was opened to the public for dedication ceremonies October 10th.

This building was fully occupied by the time the last carpet tack in the ninth floor hallway had been nailed down, primarily because of the efficiency with which the Building Committee conducted the moving in of residents. Each floor's residents were moved in just as soon as construction on that floor was completed.

After everyone had settled into their new home, the committees took over the day-to-day management of the building. A Board of Directors, called the Building Council, and consisting of representatives from each floor, now meets regularly to supervise the operation of these committees which handle everything from maintenance and improvements, to rent collection and recreation.

The Cooperative orientation of the building has benefitted residents in various ways. Most obviously, since the cost of professional management is enormously reduced, the rent schedule can be lowered. This factor, in combination with non-profit sponsorship, has kept rent within a 66 to 73 dollar a month range (varying with size of unit and floor) -- an important consideration for senior citizens, most of whom depend upon low, fixed, incomes.

Other benefits are more subtle, but of equal importance. For instance, those old enemies of old age, loneliness and uselessness, find few victims in cooperatively run buildings. The residents are far too busy planning activities, socializing in community areas, and watching out for the welfare of their neighbors.

The Bishop Cooperative Apartments were constructed under Section 202 of the National Housing Act of 1959. Also under Section 202, Cooperative Services had already sponsored the construction of the Wyandotte Cooperative Apartment, located only one block away from the new building.

Since Section 202 is no longer receiving funding, Cooperative Services is now sponsoring similar senior citizen cooperative apartments under Section 236, a subsidized program (bringing the 7.5% market rate down to 1% and providing rent supplements to people with really low incomes (below \$2900 per year near Detroit).

Buildings in Royal Oak, Trenton, and Highland Park are going up now under Section 236. Applications to H.U.D. have also been submitted for additional buildings in Detroit, Madison Heights and Allen Park.

The buildings now under construction in Royal Oak and Trenton have already been oversubscribed. The speed with which these buildings are occupied is eloquent testimony to the need for the more humane accommodations of co-op housing for the elderly.

Barbara Shaw
Cooperative Services Inc.

Correspondence

One co-op not enough

The Wall Street Journal article (9-8-71) included a brief comment by a guy at Madison who'd helped organize Yellow Jersey Bike Co-op to the effect that since organizing this co-op, he'd gotten away from supporting capitalism and was (in effect) now supporting an alternative society.

Well, a bike co-op -- any co-op that can make it -- is great and an important first step. In fact the essential first step. But can anyone be that naive? Where does this group get its bikes and bike parts? Of course, you could say the same thing about any local retail co-op: where does it get its groceries or hardware or natural foods or whatever it handles for its members?

If you're satisfied (and I know none of you are) with this level of cooperative activity, all you've done is draw an illusion screen between yourselves and the real world out there. The important thing is to see this local co-op as the first step in reaching back -- through wholesaling -- to processing. Tough as this is, there's no real meaning to the "alternative society" idea unless this happens. For that's where capitalism -- and what's worse, monopoly capitalism -- really runs the show.

(Parenthetically, the only solid bases for this alternative society are consumer goods and housing co-ops -- preferably both, in a coordinated development. For only in these kinds do you have the frequency of relationships between members and their co-op, with opportunity for member participation that this brings. With these as the base, you can weave around them many other co-op services: health, credit, etc. And strengthen the whole fabric.)

Imperfect as established co-ops are -- and I've never found a perfect co-op -- working with them (when they're there to work with) is one giant step farther toward that "alternative society". It really doesn't matter, even, whether they use this language about themselves or not: fact is, this is what they're building toward as they combine their purchasing power so as to do a better job for their member-owners.

Maybe just a little of your attention at Toronto can be directed toward this truism: that there will be no "alternative society" unless there's a pooling

of capital and purchasing power -- and a reaching back toward sources and processing with that pooled strength. Thousands of little, isolated co-ops will have no effect, other than to give a few people an illusion of escape from the world around them.

Art Danforth
Secretary/Treasurer
Cooperative League

Wants job ads

I am going to be looking for work some time after the first of the year. I would like to work in a co-op or some other alternative organization. Will NASCO be running job listings and ads for people who want to find work?

Alan Jackson

Yes, we will, if there is enough interest. DRMF, editor.

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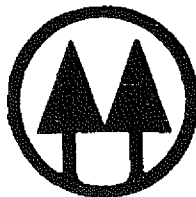
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As indicated on our subscription form, we are renovating. NASCO will publish two issues monthly: a news bulletin to serve as an announcement board and information exchange; and a topic-oriented journal on subjects relative to the cooperative movement.

We hope that our readers will step forward as contributors to the journal as we try to find solutions to mutual organizing problems. Toward this end, we will try to furnish ample notice of monthly topics. . . . e. g. **November, The Toronto Conference;** and, **December, Co-op Education Programs: Where, How, and Why?**



The Cooperative Emblem

The pine tree is the ancient symbol of endurance, fecundity, and immortality. These are the qualities that we see in Cooperation. In the old Egyptian, Persian and Indian mythology, the pine tree and its symbol the pine cone are found typifying life and the perpetuation of life. The hardy pine symbolizes the enduring quality of Cooperation. More than one pine tree is used to represent the mutual cooperation necessary. The trunks of the pine trees are continued into the roots which form a circle. The circle is another ancient symbol of eternal life. It typifies that which has no end. The circle in this emblem represents also the world, the all-embracing cosmos, of which Cooperation is a part and which depends for its existence upon Cooperation.

The color of the two pine trees and the circle is dark green; this is the color of chlorophyll which is the life principle in nature. The background within the circle is golden yellow, typifying the sun, the giver of light and life.

—James Peter Warbasse

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