

# THE SOCIETY FOR CO-OPERATIVE STUDIES

## Constitution

### I. TITLE

The title shall be the Society for Co-operative Studies.

### 2. PURPOSE

The purpose will be to promote the exchange of information and experience on Co-operative studies and research and to help in identifying and developing the studies and research still needed.

### 3. MEMBERSHIP

Membership will be open to all individuals and organisations interested in the development of Co-operative studies and research, each organisation nominating one person as a participant.

### 4. ORGANISATION

(a) The Society will be an independent voluntary organisation working in close association with the educational organisations of the Co-operative Movement and not intended to overlap the executive functions of these organisations.

(b) There will be an annual general meeting of individuals and organisations in membership of the Society. Organisations will have one vote each. Decisions will be taken by a majority of the votes of those present.

(c) The annual general meeting will appoint the following national officers.

(i) *Presidents*

The number will be decided by the annual general meeting and will represent professional service both inside and outside the Co-operative Movement. Presidents will be eligible for re-election.

(ii) *Chairman and Two Vice-Chairmen*

The chairman will hold office for one year, and shall not be eligible for re-election in the following year.

(iii) *Secretary and Treasurer*

This appointment will be made annually.

These officers will be responsible for the affairs of the Society between annual general meetings and in accordance with any decisions of policy made by the meetings.

(d) Members of the Society within a Section, or group of Sections, of the Co-operative Union will be invited to appoint two joint conveners, one primarily associated with the Co-operative interest and one primarily associated with the academic interest, to take a lead in organising regional activities.

The officer of the Education Department of the Co-operative Union in the Section or region will act as Secretary for each set of joint conveners.

## 5. ACTIVITIES

Without setting a limit to the activities that may carry out the purpose of the Society, the following framework will give some guidance.

### (a) *Fields of Study*

Appropriate fields of study for the Society to keep under review will be:

- (i) Structure of the Movement;
- (ii) Business efficiency;
- (iii) Member participation;
- (iv) Service to the Consumer;
- (v) Political action and organisation;
- (vi) Role of the British Movement in international Co-operation;
- (vii) History of the Movement;
- (viii) Development of Co-operative principles in other fields of economic and social activity.

### (b) *Lines of Development*

These will include:

- (i) Encouragement of courses and research projects at universities and colleges and at the Co-operative College.
- (ii) Meetings and seminars regionally.
- (iii) Meetings and seminars nationally.
- (iv) Relations with international organisations for Co-operative studies and research.

### (c) *Publication*

Policy on publications, whether through the Society's own or other media such as Co-operative College Papers, will be determined by members at the annual general meetings.

## 6. FINANCE

The annual subscription will be set at a rate appropriate to cover the running expenses of the Society and will initially be £2 for an individual member, and £10 for an organisation.

## 7. AMENDMENTS

The constitution can be amended by a majority vote at an annual general meeting. Notice of the proposal of any amendment must be made to the Secretary and Treasurer at least four weeks before the annual general meeting.

# The Society for Co-operative Studies

## ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1971/72

1. The Presidents of the Society — with Sir Robert Southern taking the place of Lord Jacques — have remained in office during the year. Mr. W. E. Lawn has occupied the Chair and Mr. D. Hopwood has served as Vice-Chairman. In accordance with the practice of the Society the 1970/71 Chairman, Mr. John Roper, has been invited to attend meetings of the National Officers during this year.

The Officers have had three meetings and the following is their report for presentation to the Annual General Meeting on 7th/8th April, 1972.

### 2. Membership

(a) At 31st January, 1972 the membership of the Society (with the 1971 figures given in brackets) was:

Region	Individuals				Organisations				Total	
	'Co-operative'		Other		'Co-operative'		Other			
Metropolitan and										
Southern .. ..	6	(9)	5	(4)	6	(6)	1	(1)	18	(20)
Midland .. ..	11	(13)	3	(5)	5	(4)	1	(1)	20	(23)
North .. ..	3	(4)	2	(1)	1	(-)	1	(-)	7	(5)
North-West ..	8	(9)	8	(8)	8	(5)	1	(1)	25	(23)
Scottish .. ..	21	(18)	7	(9)	2	(3)	2	(2)	32	(32)
South-West ..	3	(3)	-	(1)	1	(2)	1	(-)	5	(6)
West .. ..	4	(6)	-	(-)	-	(-)	-	(2)	4	(8)
Yorkshire and										
Humberside ..	4	(4)	1	(1)	6	(8)	1	(-)	12	(13)
Overseas .. ..	1	(2)	-	(-)	-	(-)	-	(-)	1	(2)
	<hr/>		<hr/>		<hr/>		<hr/>		<hr/>	
	61	(68)	26	(29)	29	(28)	8	(7)	124	(132)

(b) The recent record of total membership, at the end of January in each year, has been 142 (1970), 132 (1971) and 124 (1972). About the distribution of membership at 31st January 1972 it is worth noting:

- (i) That the Co-operative Union nominates 12 and the S.C.W.S. 11 members.
- (ii) There are 11 new individual members and 6 new organisations.
- (iii) The proportions of "Co-operative" and "Other" members in 1971 and 1972 remain pretty much the same.

### 3. The "Bulletin"

The programme has been to publish *Bulletins* No. 13, 14 and 15 during the year. The annual bibliography is intended for *Bulletin* No. 15 and again we are much indebted to the service of Mr. B. Howcroft, FLA, Manager of the Library and Information Unit of the C.W.S. Marketing Services, for this preparation.

#### 4. Other National Activities: Research

##### (a) CO-OPERATIVE COLLEGE ENDOWMENT FUND

The Education Executive was grateful for the advice of the Society about the disposition of this Fund.

Two projects have already been promoted from it:

- (i) A grant to Mr. T. E. Stephenson of the University of Leeds for his research into "Management in Regional Societies". An interim report of this was published in *Bulletin* No. 14 and forms the basis for one of the sessions at the 1972 Annual Conference.
- (ii) A senior research fellowship has been established at Loughborough University of Technology to undertake an investigation over two years from October, 1971 into the long-term problems of financing Co-operative retail societies in times of inflation. The Research Fellow is Mr. I. Kirkpatrick, B.Sc(HONS), and he has the advice of a steering committee whose membership includes Mr. K. A. Noble, President of the Society, and the Secretary and Treasurer.

##### (b) DIRECT PROMOTION BY THE SOCIETY

Following the discussion at the 1971 A.G.M. on the future of the Society and a review of this by the National Officers, two lines of action were agreed:

- (i) The commissioning of a document on "The Future of the Co-operative Movement in the Next Ten Years" by Mr. John Hughes, Vice-Principal of Ruskin: this will be the second discussion paper of the 1972 Conference.
- (ii) An offer to each Region of a grant of up to £40 to commission the preparation of a paper on some Co-operative topic of interest in the Region but also of general relevance. One or two Regions are hopeful of action on this line.

#### 5. Regional Developments

##### METROPOLITAN AND SOUTHERN

The branch continued to meet on a quarterly basis and the attendance at meetings remains disappointing. During the year two papers were submitted, one on Value Added Tax and the other on Business Ratios. Papers from other branches were occasionally submitted and discussed.

##### MIDLAND

The activities of the branch during 1972 have been concentrated on re-establishing itself after a dormant period. The success of this has been demonstrated by attendances at a series of meetings where the topic "Co-operation in the Midlands — the next decade" has been discussed under the sub-headings Democracy and Trade. Papers have been presented by Mrs. J. Stansfield and Mr. M. Gibson.

##### NORTHERN

The Branch met twice during 1971 when two subjects were usefully discussed. Clive Kent, Esq., B.Sc., Tutor Organiser of the Workers' Educational Association, introduced and explained the experiment in Joint Collaboration between the Co-operative Union and the W.E.A.

Later in the year a very interesting and informative discussion took place following the introduction by Mr. J. B. Lister of Monkwearmouth College of Further Education of the film the "Managerial Grid".

#### NORTH WEST

"A National Co-operative Society" continued to be the predominant theme at branch meetings during the year and provoked a wide diversity of views in discussion. The departure of Regional Secretary John Atkinson to London Society and delay in finding a successor caused a temporary lapse in branch activity but eventually Co-operative Union Librarian Roy Garratt became Acting Regional Secretary, and meetings were resumed in November when Desmond Hopwood, Lancaster University, lectured on French hypermarkets. Sessional theme for 1972 is "The Co-operative Movement: Prospects for Survival" which, it is envisaged, will be discussed by co-operative leaders from all sections of the Movement.

#### SCOTLAND

The Scottish Branch, apart from interest in a number of Extra-Mural Classes, and supporting meetings of P.A.C.E., held three Branch meetings during the year.

The first meeting was addressed by Mr. George Gay, D.L., J.P., who gave a "Review of the Co-operative Scene in Scotland".

The second meeting was addressed by Dr. J. Butt, Strathclyde University, on "Owen and Owenism in the Bi-Centenary Year". Of special interest was the indication of how Robert Owen may have regarded present day problems.

The third meeting was a very successful Open Meeting on "The Impact of Hypermarkets". Invitations were issued to City Councillors, Academics and Co-operators, resulting in an attendance of 60. Five speakers gave short introductory talks followed by ample discussion. This is probably the most worthwhile activity the Branch has undertaken to date.

#### WESTERN

There have been four Branch meetings during 1971 attended by a small but enthusiastic nucleus of members. Two new Joint Convenors have been appointed and areas of activity have included consideration of a paper 'Employee Involvement in the Co-operative Movement' (continuing); a Sectional Essay Competition, and assistance with the formation of the South Wales Library of Labour History.

#### YORKSHIRE AND HUMBERSIDE

The valuable weekly meeting of senior Co-operative officials from several West Riding societies continues at the University under the friendly and diligent care of Mr. T. Stephenson. The value of this course is now clearly proven, and its comradeship greatly appreciated by all who participate. The group has been discussing decision-making in Co-operative societies, with particular concern for the problems caused by the emergence of larger units. Mr. Stephenson's own research work based on experiences culled from the emergence of the North-Eastern Society now provides the society at this regional level with an area for fruitful work.

#### 6. Relations with Other Organisations

In general relations have been maintained with the British Section of the International Centre for Research and Information on Public/Co-operative Economy, the International Co-operative Scientific Forum, the Institut Français de la Coopération and the Association of Co-operative Educators in Chicago.

## 7. Finance

The Cash and Bank Account for the year ended 31st December, 1971, has been audited and compared with the Account for the previous year, is as follows:

	1970		1971	
	£	p	£	p
RECEIPTS				
Cash in hand brought forward .. ..		2·27		0·70
Cash at Bank brought forward .. ..	603·22		758·26	
Subscriptions .. .. .	570·10		628·00	
Fees—A.G.M. and Conference .. ..	76·00		126·65	
Fees—Seminar .. .. .	5·00		—	
Sales—Society <i>Bulletin</i> .. .. .	0·40		0·22	
Contribution to Printing—Society <i>Bulletin</i> ..	—		40·00	
Bank Interest .. .. .	3·41		4·35	
	£1,260·40		£1,558·18	
PAYMENTS				
	£	p	£	p
Printing—Society <i>Bulletin</i> .. .. .	295·00		323·50	
Stationery and Postage .. .. .	61·82		58·27	
Typewriting .. .. .	9·91		38·45	
Telephone .. .. .	1·33		3·07	
Annual General Meeting .. .. .	66·40		152·87	
Other Meetings .. .. .	59·20		17·50	
Subscriptions Refunded .. .. .	2·00		12·00	
Fees Refunded—Seminar .. .. .	5·00		—	
Cheque Books .. .. .	0·31		—	
Bank Commission .. .. .	0·47		0·75	
Cash in hand carried forward .. .. .	0·70		42·05	
Cash at Bank carried forward .. .. .	758·26		909·72	
	£1,260·40		£1,558·18	

The accumulation of cash — in hand and at Bank — continues and, no doubt, this offers its comfort. It also reflects our failure to expand the programme of the Society up to the limit of the resources that could reasonably be made available.

## 8. Rôle for the Future?

The Report of the National Officers last year analysed experience so far and raised quite pressingly the question whether the Society had found a distinctive and productive rôle which justified its continuing existence. There was agreement that a primary purpose was to increase the number of people in universities and colleges interested in the Movement, studying its problems and engaged in a useful dialogue with active Co-operators, and about service to that objective two general questions were raised or implied:

- (a) Do the resources devoted to the Society look like showing “cost effectiveness” in achieving the objective — either within the present framework of the Society or through some adaptation of it, *e.g.*, by taking as a basis universities or groups of universities throughout the country and by concentration on gathering in each of these staff and students with some degree of interest in the Movement?
- (b) Or should we give up the kind of separate organisation envisaged under (a) and let the educational agencies of the Movement, particularly the Education Department and College, resume responsibility for the functions which the Society was intended to carry forward — aided perhaps by a panel of active academic advisers on a national level?

In the discussion at the Annual General Meeting last year some satisfaction, but no complacency, was expressed about the progress of the Society so far: it was acknowledged that its progress was limited but so inevitably were its possibilities. Certain guidelines, particularly for the stimulation and discussion of research projects, were set out for attention in 1971/72. Now looking over the record since then we feel that the achievement on national level has been fairly well maintained but that there is still need for much more development within the Regions. The question of securing that would be a very useful focus point for discussions at the 1972 meeting.