

Co-operatives and Peace: Why and How they Connect

by

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What is peace?

- Not just the absence of war
- Acknowledging and bridging differences
- Fostering inclusivity – religion, ethnicity, ideology, class, culture

What is it in the co-operative experience that indicates how co-operatives have contributed – and can contribute – to the peace process?

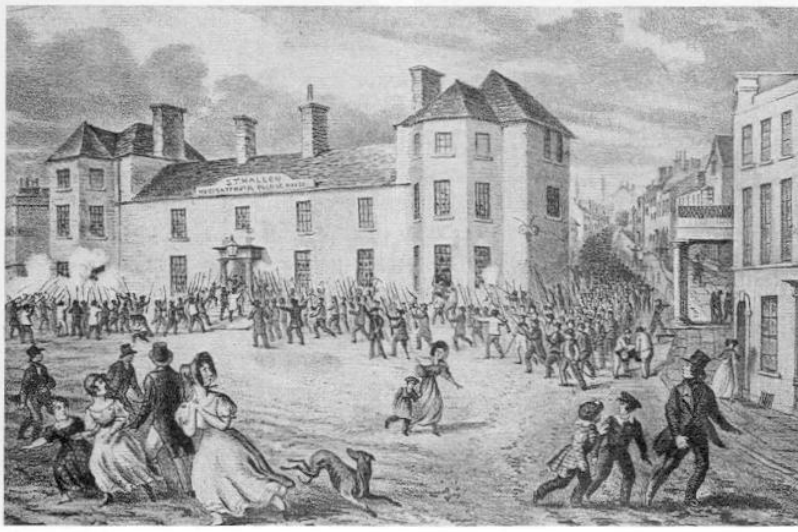
Human beings are co-operative too!!!

- The dominance of competitive visions of human beings
- The renewed interest in co-operative dimensions
- Peter Hammerstein (ed.), *Genetic and Cultural Evolution of Cooperation* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2003)

Perspectives from history

- Origins – the nineteenth century
- The 1840s and 1850s
- Concerns about social unrest and the class war
- Urban ghettos – poverty, bad food, bad housing, uncertain incomes → Rochdale + consumer co-ops, housing co-ops, financial co-ops, worker co-ops
- Religious and political neutrality
- Rural poverty – out migration, deepening poverty, market needs → marketing co-ops, rural co-op credit, supply and marketing co-ops
- Intentional communities → rich Ohio experience (Quakers, Owenites, Fourierists, Mormons)

Perspectives from History – Revolutions of 1848



THE BRIGHTER DAY.



"But crown her Queen,
And Equity shall usher in
For those who build,
And those who spin,
And those the grain who garner in,
A BRIGHTER DAY."

[From the
"Co-operative News."

The Co-operative Model

- *The practice of democracy through board elections, member communications, member consultations, and associational activities*
- *The principle of openness*
- *The distribution of surpluses in proportion to member use*
- *The transparent conduct of all business activities*
- *The sponsorship of co-operative educational activities*
- *The encouragement of members to invest in their co-operative*
- *Contributions to the sustainable development of their communities*
- *Collaboration with other co-operatives to meet common objectives*
- *The fostering of further co-operative development*
- *The equitable treatment of stakeholders (employees, business associates, community partners)*

Perspectives from History – Co-ops and International Peace

- The International Co-operative Alliance and the Search for Peace (1895 -1914)
- Co-operatives and World War One
- The Challenges of Totalitarianism

Perspectives from History

- Co-operatives and World War Two
- Co-operatives and relief (CARE)
- Co-operatives and Independence Movements
- Co-operatives and International Development

The three big themes

- Co-ops as a reaction to war, violence and social tensions
- Co-op movement and big issues of war and peace
- Impact of wars and violence on co-ops

The potential of co-operative networking

- Vision of international co-operative collaboration
- Insurance co-operatives
- Growmart
- Credit unions
- European integration
- Fair Trade

The responsibilities of size

- ICA → 1,000,000,000 members
 - top 300 = 20% more employees than multinationals
- United Nations → serves 3 billions people
- More than 300 different kinds of co-operatives
- If we all share responsibilities for helping to build a more peaceful world.....

Empowering communities

- Many of the causes of violence and tensions are rooted in poverty and inequalities
- Intentional communities, past and present, with deep commitments to peace issues: acceptance of diversity, food security, environmental sustainability, gender equality

Empowering women

- Roles of women in peace process demonstrably important
- Co-ops are effective in expanding women's influence and capacities

Bridging generations

- A common cause of social tensions
- Frequent source of unrest when youthful population is growing and opportunities are not keeping pace
- Co-operatives can extend opportunities to youth through existing co-ops or through co-ops for and run by youth

And....

- Examples of co-ops within communities that bridge ethnic, religious, and political differences
- e.g., urban cores of North American cities, hispanic and black peoples, impoverished and divided rural areas

{ Series on Co-operatives & Peace }
VOLUME ONE

CO-OPERATIVES

and the

PURSUIT



of

PEACE



Edited by

JOY EMMANUEL & IAN MACPHERSON

 NEW ROCSDALE PRESS 

You.....

- What examples come to mind?
- What issues do you see?

Thank you!!!!

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