

FABIAN TRACT No. 205

CO-OPERATIVE EDUCATION

BY

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THE FABIAN SOCIETY,

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The Society is a constituent of the Labour Party and of the International Socialist Congress; but it takes part freely in all constitutional movements, social, economic and political, which can be guided towards its own objects. Its direct business is (a) the propaganda of Socialism in its application to current problems; (b) investigation and discovery in social, industrial, political and economic relations; (c) the working out of Socialist principles in legislation and administrative reconstruction; (d) the publication of the results of its investigations and their practical lessons.

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The Society includes:—

- I. Members, who must sign the Basis and be elected by the Committee. Their Subscriptions are not fixed; each is expected to subscribe annually according to his means. They control the Society through the Executive Committee (elected annually by ballot through a postal vote), and at its annual and other business meetings.
- II. Associates, who sign a form expressing only general sympathy with the objects of the Society and pay not less than 10s. a year. They can attend all except the exclusively members' meetings, but have no control over the Society and its policy.
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- (i.) Free lectures by its members and officers;
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Lists of Publications, Annual Report, Form of Application as Member or Associate, and any other information can be obtained on application personally or by letter to the Secretary at the above address.

Co-operative Education.

BY LILIAN A. DAWSON.

ALTHOUGH the Co-operative Movement started with the object of providing commodities for the workers at reasonable prices and freeing them from the adulteration and credit system of the little shopkeeper and the truck shop of the employer, the ultimate purpose which lay behind the mind of the twenty-eight flannel weavers of Rochdale was their emancipation from wage slavery by such a reorganization of industry as would enable them to provide themselves with employment and—to use their own words—“so to arrange the powers of production, distribution, education, and government as to create a self-supporting home colony.”

How far this ideal has been reached may be realized by the study of the Movement as it is to-day, with its individual membership of over four millions, and an organization which provides, in addition to wholesale production and retail distribution of material goods, educational services which include Scholarships and College facilities, Holiday Homes and Rest Houses, Camps and Travel Bureaux, Convalescent Homes and Sick Room Appliances, Summer Schools and Social Institutes, Men's and Women's Guilds, a Political Party, a Publishing Society, and two Churches. It is true that it has not been wholly successful in providing employment for its members, and it has not yet achieved that self-supporting Home Colony which it set out to create, but it has gone a long way towards laying its foundation; it is for the next generation to carry it forward.

The old pioneers recognized that to make people wealthier without making them wiser would merely perpetuate the evils of the society which they were out to destroy, and in all their schemes education played a large part. If the educational development of the Movement has not kept pace with its material side, still a great deal has been done; and to-day there are Co-operators who realize that it is along the educational line that ultimate success lies. A Movement which, except for a small minority, has never gone outside the working classes, and yet has built up such an organization as we see to-day, cannot be said to have failed in its higher ideals, whatever the obstacles may be to their full realization.

Whilst appreciating all the work which has been done by the Movement for the education and social welfare of co-operators, a criticism may be advanced, not belittling those efforts, but accentuating future possibilities of development.

It is a common error for people who only think of the Co-operative Movement as a trading concern to accuse it of being a capitalistic enterprise run on commercial lines, but they forget the difficulties with which it has to contend. As a group of idealists it must produce goods of the best quality and provide good conditions for its workers. As an ordinary competitor in the markets of the world it must keep its prices on a level with other competitors who do not pretend to be idealists, but merely businessmen. Its difficulties are further complicated by the psychology of its members, many of whom are not co-operators in the true sense of the word, but join societies for the material advantages they can obtain. They care nothing for education, conditions of the workers, or other social questions. The view of such members is obscured by dividends—if dividends are good, they think it is progress; if dividends are low or non-existent, they visualize the collapse of co-operation. In the larger questions of health, culture, and education they are not interested. If it is not quite as true to-day as it was in 1897, when, at the Jubilee Conference, the proposal for a halfpenny a month for knowledge was put forward, and a delegate stated, "We want no education, give us a bonus," there are still members who have not got beyond that stage of mentality; but if co-operators cannot see farther than this, then the Movement will lose its value as an educational influence, which influence should be one of its greatest assets.

It might be useful to revise the present method of returning dividends on purchases, and to consider the possibility of using a definite proportion of surplus or profit for educational purposes for the whole Movement; such a proceeding might eliminate a certain number of members who only understand co-operation through the dividend, but it would establish a solid band of real co-operators and enable them to organize an educational policy of great value.

There seems to be some difference of opinion among co-operators as to the type of education which should be provided. Should it be co-operation pure and simple, or co-operation supplemented by culture? The Co-operative Movement possesses a large and expensive machinery for the purpose of educating its members; is it being used to the best advantage and what is its aim?

Like the growth of national and international trade, provision for education has developed with the growth of the Movement, and in this way it has been uneven; in those societies which have had an educational conscience, it has progressed; in others it has remained stationary or non-existent. It is inevitable that there should be a lack of uniformity in a system which is the result of haphazard growth rather than preconceived policy. The result is that, while it is true that, nominally, education is accepted as part

of the work of all societies, actually it is only fully adopted by a comparatively small number.

The educational work is carried on through two main channels—the education committees of the local societies and the Central Education Committee of the Co-operative Union. In addition a certain amount of educational work is done voluntarily by the unofficial or auxiliary bodies, such as the Men's and Women's Guilds and the Co-operative Educational Fellowship. Outside the Co-operative Movement, yet in some cases closely allied to it, are such organizations as the Workers' Educational Association, the Working Men's College, the Adult Schools and the various classes carried on by Trade Unions and Socialist and Labour Parties.

Bound up with the educational work, and in fact one of its principal objects, is publicity and propoganda, working through the education committees, the auxiliary bodies, and the co-operative press.

The Education Committee of Local Societies.—A co-operative society acknowledges the advantages of education by setting up an education committee, elected by the members on the same principle as the Management Committee, but without any relationship to it.

In the early days of the Movement these committees, by providing classes, reading rooms and libraries, anticipated the work eventually undertaken by the Local Authorities under the Education and Free Libraries Acts.

It is a tradition that societies should allocate $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. of their annual surplus or "profits" to carry on this particular work.

"The aim of the education committee has been to provide:—

- (a) Such general provision for the further education of the members of the society, as the maintenance of a library and reading room for their free use;
- (b) The organisation of evening classes in literature, science and art;
- (c) Popular lectures and entertainments for the members and their wives and children;
- (d) Instruction in the 'principles of Co-operation' both for members and employees;
- (e) The technical training of the employees in accountancy and book-keeping, salesmanship, &c.;
- (f) Propagandist lectures and public meetings for spreading Co-operation and increasing the society's membership.

"In most societies, and particularly in the larger ones, revolving round the educational committee are 'social institutes' and all sorts and kinds of associations and clubs: debating societies, literary societies, choral societies, drill and dancing classes; chess societies, photographic societies, football and cricket clubs, field

clubs, rambling clubs, cycle clubs, 'summer schools' and 'holiday fellowships' for home and foreign travel."*

In order to co-ordinate the work of the local societies, the education committees have their Educational Associations, in each Section of the country—Northern, North-Western, Southern, &c.

The principal object of these Associations is to stimulate educational activities in the societies within the Sections, and to interest persons engaged in educational work outside the co-operative movement. They are composed of representatives from the Central Board of the Co-operative Union, from groups of societies, and, in some sections, from outside bodies such as the Working Men's College and the Co-operative Brotherhood Trust.

The Central Education Committee of the Co-operative Union.—The Central Committee is intended to direct and guide the educational activities of the societies. It is a committee of the Union, composed of representatives appointed by the Sectional Boards, the Sectional Educational Associations, and the English and Scottish Women's Guilds. In 1915, the Union appointed a Director of Studies, who draws up the syllabuses for the use of local committees.

Through its Adviser of Studies it promotes classes for teaching the history and principles of co-operation, book-keeping, management, and other allied subjects. It issues an annual programme and lecture list, provides lecturers and teachers for classes; it also awards scholarships, certificates, &c. Of late years, one of its most successful undertakings has been the organization of summer and week-end schools. As an outcome of these schools, small associations have been formed, such as the secretaries' association and the managers' association, for the purpose of a mutual exchange of views.

There is no compulsion on societies to accept the programme issued by the Central Education Committee, but many of them find it useful and base their studies upon it.

The Central Education Committee works in co-operation with other bodies, such as the Publications Committee, the Co-operative Party, the Workers' Educational Association, Ruskin College, the Young Men's Christian Association, Joint Universities Committee, the various University Joint Tutorial Classes Committees and the Society for the Advancement of Education in Industry and Commerce.

Through the Publications Committee, it issues an annual programme with sets of syllabuses for local education committees and publishes a bi-monthly journal, "The Co-operative Educator," the organ of the Co-operators' Educational Fellowship, an organization formed by the amalgamation of two former bodies—the Students' Fellowship and the College Herald Circle. The Fellowship

**The Consumers' Co-operative Movement*, p. 36. Sidney and Beatrice Webb.

seeks to gather to its membership all those co-operators who are interested in education ; it thus forms the nucleus from which to invite members to summer schools or educational conferences.

Part of the work of the Central Education Committee has been to interest societies and individual members in the establishment of a Co-operative College. This is no new vision, but has been in the minds of co-operative educationalists for many years. It is now coming within the realms of possibility, and the Central Board of the Co-operative Union has issued an appeal for £50,000, of which about £16,000 has been collected. In the meantime college work is being carried on at Holyoake House, Manchester, under the direction of Professor Hall, the Adviser of Studies.

Auxiliary Bodies.—A great deal of Educational work has been done by what may be called the unofficial bodies of the Movement, which have come into being as the outcome of certain necessities which arose as the Movement grew. Of these, the most important are the Women's Guilds—Scottish, Irish and English. It is sufficient to speak only of the English Women's Guild, since it is the model on which the others were formed, and has taken a very much greater part in local and national affairs than the others.

Its educational work among working women has been of enormous value both inside and outside the Movement. Formed in 1883, from a few co-operative women meeting together to do their needlework and discuss co-operative questions, it now has a membership of 46,000, and declares itself to be a "self-governing organization of women who work through co-operation for the welfare of the people seeking freedom for their own progress, and the equal fellowship of men and women in the Home, the Store, the Workshop and the State."

It depends for its income on contributions from its branches and two subsidies of a few hundreds a year from the Co-operative Wholesale Society and the Co-operative Union respectively. But it has never allowed this monetary assistance to interfere with its right to express an independent opinion on any subject for the advancement of women. By taking part in local politics it has influenced the educational policy of local authorities, but its activities have extended beyond this, its members have sat on Departmental Committees, and it may be said that of late years very little legislation dealing with women and children has been framed without consultation with the Women's Co-operative Guild. Its educational work includes lectures to the Branches on various subjects, such as the History of the Guild, the Place of Co-operation in the New Social Order, International Co-operative Trade, Co-operative Politics, the Workers' Press, and the National Care of Maternity.

It is now helping to build up an International Women's Co-operative Guild Movement, thus bringing it into line with other International bodies of the Co-operative Movement.

The National Co-operative Men's Guild.—The Men's Guild has never had the same influence as the Women's Guild, perhaps because men have had other opportunities for expressing themselves. Its numbers are smaller, only 5,320, and under present conditions its educational work is almost negligible. It depends for its finances upon the Central Education Committee, whose secretary performs its secretarial work. It has been responsible for a few week-end schools and has arranged conferences on educational subjects.

PRESS AND PUBLICATIONS.

The line of demarcation between education and publicity and propaganda is so thin, that, before dealing with criticisms and suggestions, it may be well to glance at the actual work which is being done in the Movement on this side. The machinery of the Press is essentially a part of education, and the Co-operative Movement, through its publications, has sought to educate its members in co-operative principles, and to attract the outside public to the advantages which co-operation offers.

It seeks to effect this by means of weekly newspapers, of which it maintains two—*The Co-operative News* and the *Scottish Co-operator*, formerly issued separately but now jointly,—six monthlies: the *Millgate Monthly*, *Woman's Outlook*, *Our Circle* for young persons, the *Co-operative Official* for secretaries and managers, the *Co-operative Monthly*, the *Wheatsheaf* and the *Producer*,—and a quarterly, *The Co-operative Educator*. Of these papers, three are published by the Co-operative Union, two by the English Co-operative Wholesale Society, and four by the National Co-operative Newspaper and Publishing Society.

In addition to the periodicals, there is a considerable output of other publications, including books for children, and technical works on co-operative administration. The English and Scottish Wholesale Societies have each published Histories and the English Co-operative Wholesale Society issues a People's Year Book.

Some local societies, in self-defence against the boycott of co-operative activities by the capitalistic Press, publish local papers of their own. Of these, the best known are the *Keighley Co-operative Bee*, the *Kettering Co-operative Magazine*, the *Cairncross and Ebley Co-operative Economist* and the *Paisley Provident Magazine*.

Ireland produces the *Irish Homestead*, a weekly paper brilliantly edited by G. Russell (Æ.) and the Irish Agricultural Wholesale Society *Bulletin*, issued by the Irish Agricultural Wholesale Society; also a quarterly magazine, *Better Business*, now called *The Irish*

Economist, issued from the Co-operative Library, Plunket House, Dublin.

Other publications are the monthly *International Co-operative Bulletin* of the International Co-operative Alliance, and the *New Dawn* (formerly the *Co-operative Employee*), the monthly publication of the National Union of Distributive and Allied Workers, also the Scottish Co-operative Wholesale Society *Magazine*, published by the employees of the Scottish Co-operative Wholesale Society.

THE PROBLEM OF EDUCATION AND ITS SOLUTION.

The question which confronts us is, are all these means of education being put to the best advantage ; if not, what are the alternative proposals ?

The great problem before co-operative educationalists to-day is the lack of interest which so many of the members have in education. In many societies, the tradition of the $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. of the annual surplus or " profits " allocated for educational work, has been entirely fictitious. In some cases, notably in the mining villages of the North, no grant is made at all ; in others, it has been very much less than $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. ; in only a few cases has it been realized that the claim of education is as important as the trading interest.

There are various reasons for this diversity ; in some societies of late years there has been little or no surplus, in others the majority of the members have not been sufficiently interested in education. The method by which the Movement has grown has prevented any clear policy of education from being developed. Each society, as it has been formed, has tended to be individual in its outlook, and to be jealous of its privileges. In this way societies have overlapped in their trading and educational activities, with the result that competition instead of stimulating interest has had the effect of producing a number of small societies, too feeble to do any real constructive work, and too selfish to federate under one Central Body which could direct the education for the district.

The aims of Education Committees have been as divergent as the ideas of the members who form the Management Committees and allot the grant. If one considers the membership of the Movement as a whole, only a very small number take education seriously, and, although a few societies have elaborate schemes for classes and scholarships, the majority limit their strictly tutorial work to book-keeping classes for their younger employees, while others do not go as far as this, but use their funds to provide entertainments, such as teas and whist drives, or in pushing the sale of the *Co-operative News* and paying delegates' fees to Conferences. There is a feeling among the more enlightened members of the Movement that a

great portion of the education grant is wasted on frivolous amusement, which, useful as it may be as a means to promote social intercourse among members, would be of greater value if it were employed in providing education, not only in co-operative ideals, but in general culture.

This brings us to the very important question—*What should the Co-operative Movement teach?*

In the days before the passing of the Education Act, there was little or no education for the working classes, and by providing reading rooms, libraries, and classes, the Co-operative Movement gave some educational facilities to those working men and women who cared to avail themselves of them. But with the State provision for free education and free libraries, there was no longer any necessity for the Co-operative Movement to undertake this work, and it turned its attention to the education of its members in co-operative principles.

No one, whether a co-operator or not, would to-day urge any other course. The State, and not the Movement, should supply a general education, and co-operative education, if it is to exist, must take as its subjects those which do not fall within the curriculum of a general education and which have some definite connection with the objects or principles of Co-operation. At the root of the ineffectiveness of the educational side of the Movement lies the fact that there is no general agreement, indeed very little appreciation of, the existence of this problem. In societies which vote money to an education committee, there is probably a vague idea that the society should do something to "educate" its members and that that education should be "co-operative"; but only too often, when the committee gets to work, it is helpless and the grant is frittered away, because neither the members of the society, nor of the Management Committee, nor of the Education Committee have any clear idea of what subjects or objects are included in "co-operative education."

It may be suggested that the first thing which the Movement requires to do is to educate its Education Committees. No Committee will ever do good work unless it has this clear idea of the subjects or knowledge which it is to offer to the rank and file of the society. There are two alternatives before a committee. Arguments can be found for confining co-operative education to subjects strictly connected with the work and organization of the Movement. Co-operation is a vast industrial system based upon certain economic and social principles or ideals. It is clear even from a cursory examination of the Movement that an immense amount of work might be done in (1) improving the technical organization and working of the Movement, and (2) in teaching the members what Co-operation, its principles and aims are. Such education, properly

so called (as distinguished from entertainments and social amenities) which the Movement offers to its members through the local committees and the educational organization of the Co-operative Union, is mainly confined to this strictly co-operative type. It consists of lectures or classes for the technical training of employees, instruction in the history and principles of Co-operation, and lectures and discussions of current co-operative problems. It would be absurd to underestimate the amount and value of this kind of educational work which has been and is being done in the Movement. On the other hand it is capable of immense extension. Development is required along several different lines. As was said above, the first necessity is to educate the Education Committees. Every society ought to have an Education Committee and every committee ought clearly to understand that it is its duty to give at least an opportunity to every member of the society of acquiring a knowledge of the history and principles of Co-operation and to every employee of acquiring technical knowledge. This is certainly not the case at the present time. In the vast majority of societies no organized or consistent effort is made to provide this kind of instruction or, if it is provided, to induce members to take advantage of it. The result is that nine out of ten co-operators remain in ignorance of the meaning of co-operation and of the possibilities in the Movement. The remedy must come both from the central organization of the Union and from the local committees. The central educational department of the Union should be in much closer touch than it is with the local committees, perpetually stimulating them to carry out this work and advising them with regard to difficulties. It should be said that the quality and quantity of the educational work of the Union has in recent years, owing to the appointment of an Adviser of Studies and other reasons, been greatly improved, but an immense amount of work remains to be done in the particular point under discussion.

Hitherto we have been discussing educational work in so far as it consists in the education of co-operators themselves in the history, theory, and technique of co-operation or co-operative industry. But education committees have always undertaken other functions which some people would call propaganda rather than education; they have attempted to put before persons who are not members the aims and advantages of co-operation. This is a work which obviously ought to be performed somewhere in the Movement and the societies, and it ought to be performed much more vigorously and effectively than it actually is. The question is whether it should be part of the province of the educational side of the Movement or should be entrusted to special propaganda organizations or departments. In a Movement like the Co-operative the partition between education and propaganda must in places be

very thin. The object of a society is not, like that of an ordinary shop, merely to get an extra customer ; its object is or should be to make a man or woman who is not a co-operator into an active believer in co-operation and an active member of the society. To do this effectively would require an organized, persistent, and strenuous effort to explain to non-members what co-operation means and stands for and what it has effected. Much of this effort would have to consist of strictly educational work performed among non-members, and it seems almost inevitable that it should be performed by the educational organization of the Movement. At the present moment it can scarcely be said to have begun in this country.

It may be suggested, with regard to these two functions, that the relations between the Union and local committees should be more closely and more consciously organized. No one who knows the Movement would suggest that the Central Education Committee should control the local committees ; what is wanted is that stimulus should be given to the backward committees and societies and advice and materials for educational work to the non-backward. To do this kind of work adequately the central organization would require a large and efficient staff of inspectors and organizers constantly in touch with Management and Education Committees of local societies.

So much for education in the narrowly co-operative sense. But there is a wider sense in which co-operative education has been understood and practised in the Movement. The Movement is an industrial system of a revolutionary kind when compared with the ordinary capitalist system. The Co-operative Commonwealth, which is its ultimate end, would imply a very drastic alteration in the whole constitution of society. The beliefs of the convinced co-operator, and his problems and the problems which in fact beset the Movement, wander very far afield and become entangled in questions which cannot possibly be included in a strict interpretation of "the history and principles of co-operation." If the Movement is to consist of members having the knowledge necessary for the understanding of these wider issues and problems—and if it does not, co-operation will become stagnant—it must give to its members the opportunity of acquiring such knowledge. Such education would touch not only political science, economics, sociology, but the whole science and art of citizenship, and must necessarily become involved in the dangerous ground of current controversial politics.

A certain amount of this wider education can be, and actually has been, given by the official organs of the Movement, the local education committees and the Co-operative Union. But there are real obstacles in the way of the official educational activities being

made too wide. The Movement would have quite enough on its hands, if it undertook the task of making co-operative education in the narrower sense really efficient. Moreover, where education touches upon highly controversial questions of a political or social nature, or where it is a question of exploring new methods or new ground within or without the Movement, an official organization with an open membership like the Co-operative Movement is necessarily chary of doing anything which may seem to identify itself with any particular side or party in the heated controversies. It is here that the unofficial organizations, like the Women's Co-operative Guild, have in the past performed, and should in the future perform, a very great work. The official Movement, if it were wise, would encourage such organizations to preserve their independence or autonomy and to undertake this education in the widest sense, and that task of exploration and innovation without which the Movement cannot remain living and progressive.

Finally, there is the relation between Co-operative education and the educational activities of other parts of the Labour Movement. At present, there is a tendency for each section of the Labour Movement to confine its educational work strictly within the limits of its own views, and this produces a limited outlook, some waste, and serious overlapping. There should be a much closer contact between all sections of the Labour Movement. Co-operation, Trade Unionism and the Political Labour Party are all bound together by their aims and ideals, and there should be some system of education which would embrace them all. By this means, much of the dissipation of energy which exists might be avoided.

A general educational Council with representatives from each section of the Labour Movement might evolve an educational policy which could be adopted by all and yet which would contain the essential elements of each. Such a policy would pave the way to the Labour University which every educationalist in the Labour Movement has in view as an ultimate achievement. There exist at present some nine Labour Colleges,* in addition to which the Workers' Educational Association, the Adult School Movement, and the Co-operative Movement give shorter or longer residential courses, and perform some of the functions of colleges. Each is inclined to be too narrow in its outlook, and there is not sufficient interchange of views between them.

It is, perhaps, natural that at this early stage there is an indisposition on the part of the co-operators, if not indeed on that of other sections of the Labour Movement, completely to merge themselves in one common Labour College. But that is no reason why a series of colleges should not exist, each financed and supported by the various sections and yet with a definite bond of association

* See Appendix.

between them. This association might at first take the form of interchange of students and lecturers and, where possible and desirable, joint courses. Eventually the colleges might be federated or affiliated in what would, in effect, be a Labour University.

CO-OPERATIVE PRESS AND PUBLISHING.

There can be no doubt that one of the most potent influences on education is wielded through the Press, and it is a weakness of the Labour and Co-operative Movements that, although a great deal of money has been spent on publications, it has never had an efficient newspaper. Considering the amount of printing and publishing that is done by the Co-operative Movement it is remarkable how little is known of its publications outside. The circulation of its newspapers among the general public is negligible, and the sale of its publications rarely extends further than to a minority of its own members. Perhaps the best known of its books is "Maternity," the work of the Women's Co-operative Guild, which has a widespread appreciation, and "Industrial Co-operation," by Catherine Webb, which is used as a text book by students of Industrial History.

There can be no complaint made of the number of publications issued. In 1920, 14 new books were published, in addition to an output of 74 leaflets, pamphlets, and posters. If one may make a criticism, which is accepted by Co-operators themselves, it is, that on the whole, the publications lack scientific and literary quality, and their make-up is not attractive. But it is in their distribution that the greatest need for criticism lies. The volumes remain almost unknown, alike to the public libraries and to the bookselling world, and they obtain scarcely any notice, not merely in the ordinary Press, but even in the economic reviews and the Trade Union and Labour journals. At Congress in 1920 the Central Board acknowledged that "the chief difficulty still to be overcome by the Publications Committee is that of distribution. . . . Little has yet been done to organize the demand for Co-operative Union publications." The total receipts from literature sales (including pamphlets and leaflets as well as books) were, in 1919, only £4,014, and in 1920, £6,237, in a Movement counting four million members.

Books and pamphlets, useful as they are, pre-suppose a certain amount of education on the part of the consumer for whom they are written. But for the education of the mass of the general public, the daily newspaper affords the most successful medium. At the present time very few of the general public have ever heard of the *Co-operative News*, and yet it is safe to say that there is scarcely a hamlet in the most remote part of the British Isles to which the *Daily Mail* has not penetrated. If we look at the circulation of the

various periodicals we can see that, even within the Movement, they reach only a fraction of the membership.

In 1921 the circulation of the *Co-operative News* was 120,000, the *Scottish Co-operator* 25,000, the *Millgate Monthly* 14,000, the *Woman's Outlook* 55,000, *Our Circle* 24,000, the *Co-operative Official* 3,000, the *Co-operative Monthly* 10,000, the *Wheatsheaf* 650,000, the *Producer* 25,000, the *Co-operative Educator* 6,000, making a total of 932,000, little more than 24 per cent. of the whole membership. But even this does not represent the exact proportion, since one member possibly subscribes to or receives more than one paper.

The question of a daily newspaper has been in the minds of Co-operators for some years. The *Co-operative News* and the *Scottish Co-operator*, both issued weekly and dealing with the same matter, have satisfied neither the outside public nor the inside Movement. The recent amalgamation of these two papers will lessen the overlapping and will be a saving in expenditure, but it does not fill the place of a daily paper, distributed in the ordinary way to the general public, and the question which divided co-operators at Congress was not whether there should be a co-operative daily paper, but whether it should be published by the Movement alone or in conjunction with the National Labour Party and Trade Union Congress.

A great deal of money is spent annually by the Labour Movement on sectional journals, many of which are never read. A combined pooling of funds would result in the amassing of sufficient capital necessary for running such a paper. The difficulty lies in the sectional interests, which prevent the Labour and Co-operative Movements from taking a wide view of the situation as a whole. There is, in theory, no reason why one daily Labour paper should not be the mouthpiece of the three wings of the Movement, and at the same time provide the general public with news.

In practice, however, there are some very real obstacles and difficulties and they have already had their effect. The question of the Co-operative Movement joining with the other sections of the Labour Movement, namely, the Trade Unions and Labour Party, in the financing and controlling of a common daily paper has actually arisen on the proposals with regard to the *Daily Herald*. The last Co-operative Congress decided against participation, and the present policy of the Movement is to aim at a strictly co-operative daily paper. The reasons for this decision are obvious. There is first the same difficulty which confronts the Movement when it is compelled or proposes to take political action. The fundamental principle of the Movement is open membership, and though its membership is overwhelmingly "Labour" in origin and sympathy, it necessarily and rightly includes minorities of every political and

social complexion. It cannot, if it is to maintain this principle, take action which would bar its doors to particular classes or persons. Such is the argument used against the proposal that the Movement shall officially join with the trade unions and Labour Party in financing a paper. But there is a further difficulty. In the Labour Movement itself there is a considerable cleavage of opinion between the Right and Left wings. It is not unnatural that there should be objection on the part of persons holding one set of opinions to the financing of a paper which really only represents the other. There is, however, one way in which, with a certain amount of toleration, this difficulty could be got over. No single daily paper can of course really cater for the whole country. A separate London and Northern edition is at least necessary, and a Labour press would not really begin to exist until there were separate Labour dailies or at least separate editions in the north, south, east, and west of the country. This, as has been suggested, would allow the various grades and shades of opinion to be represented in a common Labour press.

APPENDIX.

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PEOPLE.

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VAUGHAN MEMORIAL COLLEGE	..	Leicester.
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W.F.A. HOUSES.—HOLYBROOK HOUSE		Castle Street, Reading.
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