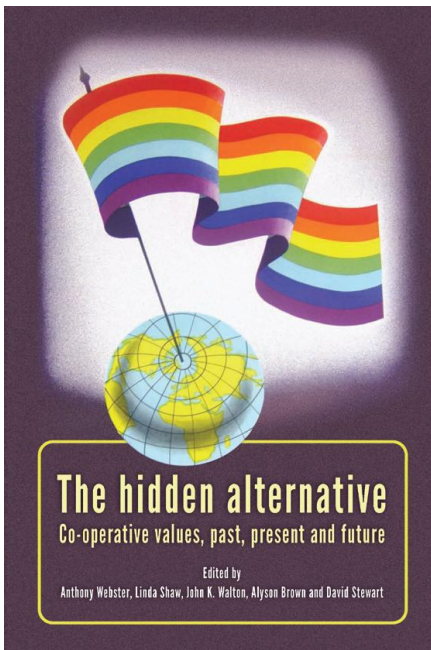




CONFERENCE - CALL FOR PAPERS & PRESENTATIONS

Mainstreaming Co-operation: An Alternative for the 21st Century?

3-5 July 2012 Manchester & Rochdale, UK



Following the spectacular success of the conference *Can Values Make a Difference? Co-operatives – moving from the Rochdale Pioneers to the 21st Century* in July 2009, we are pleased to announce another major international conference to celebrate the 2012 UN year of co-operatives. The proceedings of the 2009 conference have now been published as a major new book: *The Hidden Alternative: Co-operative Values, Past, Present and Future* (Manchester University Press and United Nations University Press 2011). We are hoping to do the same for this conference as well.

The United Nations has declared 2012 to be the International Year of Co-operatives. In celebration, this major international forum will discuss how co-operatives in every sphere of social, economic, political and cultural life can emerge globally in the coming century as a participatory, democratic alternative to prevailing

orthodoxies of competitive international capitalism driven solely by the maximisation of private profit.

The Co-operative College, Liverpool John Moores University, Liverpool University, Manchester Metropolitan University, Edge Hill University, University of the Basque Country and the University of Central Lancashire are organising this major interdisciplinary conference, with support from The Co-operative. It will be of interest to co-operative members and employees, interested members of the public, public sector professionals, the voluntary sector, community activists and educationalists as well as researchers and academics in business studies, community, economics, education, health, history, political science, and sociology.

The UN Year of Co-operatives is an important milestone in the recognition of co-operation as a global alternative to unfettered, profit-driven private capitalism. It represents a

remarkable upturn in the movement's fortunes in recent decades. After difficult decades in the 1970s and 1980s, co-operatives of all kinds have been enjoying a major revival in fortunes over the last twenty years or so; and their success in recent years has been in sharp contrast to the calamitous problems caused by investor-led capitalist firms during the recent global financial meltdown. Co-operatives have also been important in promoting ethical and equitable development in some of the poorest parts of the world, and the scope for extending this role will be a centrepiece of the UN Year of Co-operatives.

What would a renewed vision of co-operation for the 21st century, grounded in the

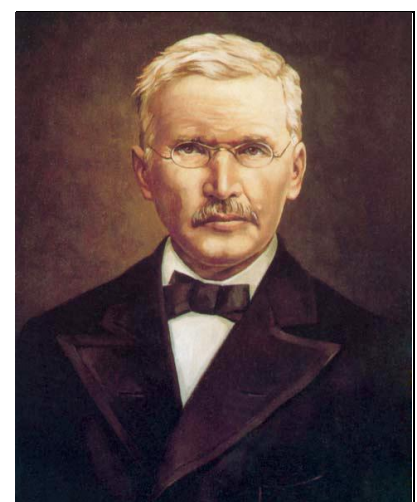
creativity, energy and hopes of the people for a better life, look like? Can it provide an alternative economic model to neo-liberal markets founded on competition and the accumulation of wealth and power in the hands of the few? Can it renew and enrich democratic practice locally, nationally and globally by grounding decision making in the voices of the many? And can it overcome the deep social, political and economic injustices within and between nations?



This conference will explore the major contributions that a renewed vision and practice of co-operative forms of organisation can make to people everywhere, in their everyday lives. To do this, we seek a dialogue informed from the multiplicity of perspectives and experiences of those involved and interested in co-operative practice, organisation, ideals, ethics and philosophy. We welcome the experiences, expertise and insights of academics, researchers, activists, co-operators, and other interested parties to this celebration both of the past

achievements and the renewed vision of the critical contributions that co-operation can make to create a better future for people in the 21st century.

There will also be an opportunity to look at the role of the co-operative pioneers of Europe such as F W Raiffeisen and the development of the Raiffeisen model co-operatives. The event will be held in association with international foundation of the DGRV – the German Raiffeisen National Federation.



Friedrich Wilhelm Raiffeisen – a co-operative pioneer



13 of the original 28 Rochdale Pioneers

Papers and presentations on all aspects of co-operation will be considered for inclusion in the programme, but ones which focus upon the themes below will be particularly welcome. The organising committee would like to invite papers or presentations from co-operative practitioners offering relevant case studies, as well as from academics:

- **Co-operation and Social Innovation – contributing to the European Commission’s research and development strategy for 2020**
- **Co-operation, democracy and education: local experiences, national and international perspectives**
- **Co-operation, community, and community services**
- **The history & heritage of co-operation: the rich variety of global co-operative traditions and development**
- **Mainstreaming the co-operative advantage?: governance and management of co-operatives and mutuals**
- **Co-operatives and the global challenges of poverty, inequality, and all forms of discrimination**
- **The politics of co-operation: local, national and global dimensions**
- **Selling co-operation?: co-operatives in culture and the media**
- **Gender, ethnicity and co-operation: perspectives from the global north and south**
- **Responding to market failure?: co-operatives and the recent global economic crisis**
- **There will also be a special session for postgraduate researchers and students to share their ideas and work in the field.**

The organisers recognise that many of these themes are inter-related, and presenters are encouraged to explore these intersections in their proposals. A number of leading figures connected with the global co-operative movement are being approached to lead keynote sessions on major themes. The organisers encourage proposals for full panels as well as single papers/presentations. It is anticipated that each paper/presentation will last about 20 minutes. Postgraduates are particularly encouraged to submit proposals, and organisers anticipate hosting an informal workshop for postgraduates interested in co-operatives, to foster ongoing research and collaboration.

To propose a paper, presentation or panel, please email the following materials:

- For each participant: name, institutional affiliation (if appropriate), postal address, and email contact.
- A proposed title and an abstract summary (500 words maximum) for each paper/presentation.

All proposals and queries regarding the conference should be sent to the following email: mainstreamingco-operation@co-op.ac.uk The closing date by which proposals should be received is **Friday, 14 January 2012**. Proposals should be submitted by attachment to email.



Organising Committee

- **Dr Anthony Webster (Chair)**, Head of History, Liverpool John Moores University
- **Dr Alyson Brown**, Reader in History, Edge Hill University
- **Professor Keri Facer**, Education and Social Research Institute, Manchester Metropolitan University
- **Dr Linda Shaw**, Vice-Principal and Head of Research & Development, The Co-operative College
- **Professor John Schostak**, Education and Social Research Institute, Manchester Metropolitan University
- **Dr David Stewart**, Senior Lecturer in History, University of Central Lancashire
- **Rachael Vorberg-Rugh**, Researcher, The Management School, Liverpool University
- **Professor John Walton**, IKERBASQUE Research Professor, Department of Contemporary History, University of the Basque Country
- **Professor John Wilson**, The Management School, Liverpool University