

Editorial

This Autumn issue of the *Journal* starts with an interesting paper from Martin Spence, which explores co-operative purpose and principles associated with debates on co-operative production that exercised members at a number of Co-operative Union congresses during the 1880s and 1890s. The main protagonist in Spence's paper is Benjamin Jones who while arguing fervently against independent co-operatives in favour of federal or federated co-operative societies was also one of the founders of the Tenant Co-operators Ltd (TCL). This, Spence proposes, highlights a seeming fracture in Jones's arguments; however, when looked at through the lens of co-operation as social harmony and as bridging the co-operative divide, then a different picture emerges.

Spence describes how Jones became involved with TCL, with his connections with Toynbee Hall and links within the co-operative movement and with business and politicians, including an unlikely association with Beatrice Potter who became part of the management committee of TCL. It is in this venture of promoting what would effectively be small-scale, independent and partly philanthropic solution to housing problems that Spence suggests seems at odds with his stand on the 'productive problem' (p. 9). But this simplifies discussion into either/or and Jones, as described for us by Spence, was more concerned with what worked, where and in what circumstances. Another key player that Spence introduces us to is Pasco Fenwick (author of the pamphlet published in 1884 on houses for the working class). It was Fenwick's suburban solution that influences TCL's thinking. Spence outlines the ups and downs of the early years of TCL, some of which he suggests could be seen as akin to the independent producer co-operatives of the time, but TCL survived and became part of the wider co-operative movement in the 1930s.

The second paper looks at co-operatives in turbulent times from a different perspective. Lampros Lamprinakos utilises Polanyi's concept of embeddedness to explain the different outcomes of the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool (SWP, Canada) on the one hand, and Valio Ltd. (Finland) wholly owned by regional dairy co-operatives. The focus on SWP draws on empirical research as part of studies at University of Saskatchewan (Lang, 2006; Lamprinakos, 2008) and later research on Valio (Lamprinakos, 2012) — see paper reference list for details.

Lamprinakos provides a good level of detail on neoliberalism and embeddedness to support his analysis and argument that organisations such as co-operatives that organise and operate with a strong sense of community, place, and purpose (p. 16) increase their ability to ride the waves of turbulence. First, he considers co-operatives as inherently different from investor-owned corporations and in this difference, the possibility for increasing their capacity as socially embedded organisations. Further, exploring different interpretations of Polanyi's work provides the author with a framework to explore resilience in relation to co-operative purposes (which would include values and principles), place, and community and to consider their groundedness, localness, and socialness (p. 21). From this grounding, Lamprinakos examines the fateful outcome of SWP compared to Valio whose management faced similar challenges and who changed and adapted (became re-embedded) and remains a successful farmer-owned business.

The experiences and approaches that Lamprinakos describes are starkly different with dissociation of members from their co-operative in the case of SWP and for Valio — inclusion, dialogue and consideration of history, culture and the members (Table 2 highlights key contrasts). It is a study of managing responsible change and Lamprinakos makes the case for further consideration of the role of embeddedness.

The short paper included in this issue focuses on the contribution of co-operative values and principles in times of crisis. It takes as its backdrop the 2008 'credit crunch' but also finds some resonance in early co-operative responses to COVID-19. While many commentators point to the

first four principles as being indicative of co-operative identity, the paper highlights co-operation between co-operatives and care for community.

The book review takes us full circle in that we return to the issue of housing. The focus in our final contribution is on Żoliborz housing estate and the creation of Warsaw Housing Co-operative.

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Editor

References

Fenwick, P. (1884). *Better dwellings for the workmen of London: How to obtain them*. H. Simpkins (London).