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BOOK REVIEW

Historical Dictionary of the Cooperative Movement

By Jack Shaffer

John R. Dunn

Shaffer's book is an excellent general reference particularly useful to those requiring background information on international cooperative development. It provides a rich source of history, geographic cooperative overview, and cooperative typology.

The *Historical Dictionary* . . . is divided into five sections. In the first, Shaffer presents a chronology of the cooperative movement, beginning in the 1750s with the French cheese makers' cooperatives and the mutual fire protections societies in London and Philadelphia. The second section provides a detailed overview of cooperative concepts and applications and summarizes histories of cooperatives in different regions of the world. The third section, called "The Dictionary," is an extensive compendium of names, organizations, country summaries, and concepts, each with a short descriptive text. The fourth section is a set of tables providing basic data on the history and characteristics of the cooperative activities in each nation. The final section is an extensive bibliography, organized by various topics.

With any compendium, exclusion or inclusion of materials reflects the priorities and emphases of the author. It is where the author draws that line that determines the value or usefulness of such a work for a particular reader. In general, readers with a historical and global interest in the cooperative movement will find Shaffer's dictionary to be a useful reference. Students of the cooperative movement in the United States will find Shaffer's book to be an incomplete effort. Biographical references to such influential American contributors to the cooperative movement such as E.G. Nourse, Aaron Shapiro, the Farmer's Alliance, the Southern Alliance, or the American Society of Equity would have provided a more meaningful historic context for the cooperative movement in the nineteenth- and early twentieth-century United States. For those focusing on more contemporary cooperative trends or details of any particular nation's cooperative movement, the book provides only a surface presentation. The reader is left to consult the extensive bibliography for works providing more complete treatment of individual nations and topics. Such limitations are to be expected, given the anticipated role of Shaffer's book in a cooperative topics library.

Appendices 1-3 provide a set of basic data and information on the cooperative movement in each nation. This data includes the year cooperatives were first established, general types of cooperatives operating, date of first enacted cooperative law, numbers of cooperatives and cooperative members, and percentage of each nation's population that were members of cooperatives. Statistics for each nation were gathered through International Cooperative Alliance sources and generally present data from the 1980s and 1990s, whenever the most recent data could be obtained. Users of information provided in the appendices should be cautious about depending on the older data, particularly for nations that have experienced profound economic or political changes since the last reported date.

The bibliography focuses on books and published reports that provide more detail on the materials contained in the preceding sections. While extensive, the section is far from a complete bibliography of all significant writings relating to cooperation. Most visibly absent are seminal articles on cooperation from academic and professional journals. While including a complete set of such articles would expand the scope and length of the bibliography section to a perhaps unmanageable size, including a selected set of articles of enduring and historic value would have enhanced the bibliography's value. Books and reports referenced in the bibliography also tend to represent writings of the second half of the twentieth century. Books from earlier periods, like Powell's *Cooperation in Agriculture* (1921) or Ogata's *The Cooperative Movement in Japan* (1923), provide a more contemporary view of cooperation for the periods during which they were written, thus providing scholars of cooperative history with a richer perspective. One feature missing in the *Historical Dictionary* . . . is an index of included materials. An index would make locating references to topics, persons, and nations faster and would make the book easier to use.

In summary, Jack Shaffer's book represents a heroic attempt to synthesize and organize a vast amount and array of material on the cooperative movement over the past two centuries. Its omissions and areas in which incomplete treatment is given can be forgiven, for the book provides a valuable and unique service by cataloging historical information and by serving as an entry point for more in-depth study of individual aspects of the cooperative movement.

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Historical Dictionary of the Cooperative Movement. By Jack Shaffer, Lanham, Maryland: The Scarecrow Press, 1999, 610 pages (\$100.00 U.S.).