



# CO-OP

# Contact

UNITED HOUSING FOUNDATION • COMMUNITY SERVICES INC.

## LABOR — COOPERATIVE HOUSING ASSOCIATION ORGANIZED IN PHILADELPHIA

One hundred representatives from labor unions in the Philadelphia area met on May 24 and organized the Labor Cooperative Housing Association. This new organization will take the initiative in developing cooperative housing projects in Philadelphia.

Mayor Richardson Dillworth of Philadelphia, addressing the conference, said that, "Cooperative housing should be an integral part of the program of rebuilding this city." The co-chairmen of the conference were Norman Blumberg, manager of the Philadelphia Central Labor Union, and William Ross, manager of the Philadelphia Dress Joint Board, ILGWU. At the close of the meeting, trade union representatives pledged \$7000 as initial seed-capital for their new association.

The Philadelphia conference was an immediate outgrowth of the First National Conference on cooperative housing held in Washington this year. Trade union leaders who participated in that conference decided that the time was right for Philadelphia to emulate the success of cooperative housing which has been accomplished in New York City.

## NEW HOUSING BOOKLET DRAWS HIGH PRAISE

THIRTY YEARS OF AMALGAMATED HOUSING, a thirty-two page booklet by A. E. Kazan, published last month, has received high praise from public officials, cooperators, and labor leaders. Letters from former Senator Herbert H. Lehman, Senator John Sparkman, Boris Shishkin of the AFL-CIO, Commissioners Robert Moses, James Felt, and Lawrence M. Orton, and Jerry Voorhis, executive director of The Coöperative League, were among the many complimentary messages received.

The booklet tells the story of the three housing cooperatives sponsored by the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America. It is illustrated with photographs and color charts. Copies are available from the Warbasse Memorial Library for \$1.

## THE NEW HOUSING AUTHORITY

The City Housing Authority is the largest landlord in the City of New York. Over 100,000 families live in the projects it administers. The last session of the legislature approved the City's plans to reorganize the housing authority. Prior to May 1, the CHA was directed by a committee of five. Only its chairman was a paid employee. The committee consisted of Philip J. Cruise, chairman, Thomas J. Shanahan, vice chairman, Frank R. Crosswaith, William Wilson, and Abraham M. Lindenbaum. Mr. Cruise had served as chairman since September 1950.

The reorganized housing authority will be directed by three full-time commissioners. Many directors of the United Housing Foundation were among the 300 persons who attended the induction ceremonies of the new commissioners at City Hall on May 1.

Mayor Wagner appointed William Reid as chairman, Ira S. Robbins, and Francis V. Madigan to head CHA. Mr. Reid at one time was deputy mayor of the City of New York. Mr. Madigan was counsel for the New York regional office of the Federal Housing and Home Finance Agency. Mr. Robbins was the former head of the Citizens' Housing and Planning Council in the City of New York. Mr. Robbins brings to his new position long experience in the field of housing. He has long been a friend of cooperative housing and was president of Queensview, a 750-unit cooperative in Queens.

The directors of the City's Public Housing Authority have an important job to do and we wish them well in their new undertaking.



VOL. III  
No. 4

# COOPERATIVE EDUCATION

Cooperative education has always played an important, if not a major role, in the consumer-cooperative movement. The emphasis on education reflects the influence which Robert Owen had on the early pioneers. In Owen's view, a man was a product of his environment. If we wanted men who were cooperative, charitable, and united in purpose, then we had to build a society which encouraged these characteristics. The Rochdale pioneers set out to build such a society.

It must be remembered, however, that the birth of the self-help movement did not materialize overnight in Rochdale in 1844. Owen was born in New Lanark in 1771. Even before this time there were experiments in France and England in establishing cooperative communities. In 1816, Owen opened his Institution for the Formation of Character. In this school and in other communities which he planned, Owen's primary concern was for education. He and his associates did not envision cooperative stores as a method to build a cooperative society. Their aim was cooperative communities in which the members would live, work, study, and play together. They would pool their productive efforts and share the profits. Owen, a master at organizational detail, outlined minute plans for cooperative communities.

His self-help idea appealed to thousands. These ideas were modified by many groups and many local individual cooperative societies came into existence. Some cooperative stores were established, but in many instances, the primary function of the societies seemed to be to provide an opportunity for forums and debate. An account of the London Cooperative Society said, "It was formally commenced in October 1824. It occupied rooms in Burton Street. As Burton Street was too much out of the way for the convenience of large assemblages, the discussion commenced by the society there was transferred to the Crown and Rolls rooms in Chancery Lane. Here, overflowing audiences met to discuss the questions of the time. The London Cooperative Society held weekly debates."

In his history of cooperation, Holyoake says that the first journal "in the interest of cooperation" was the *ECONOMIST* of 1821. It died in 1822. In May, 1828, the first publication appeared entitled, *THE COOPERATOR*. The first cooperative congress was held in Manchester, England in May 1830. There were delegates from fifty-six societies representing three thousand members at that meeting.

From these few facts, it can be seen that the cooperative effort to improve the working man's living conditions existed long before the weavers of Rochdale started their store in Toad Lane in 1844.

Holyoake says, "At length, men of Rochdale took the stone (the cooperative idea) in hand. They invented an interest (the patronage refund) for everybody in pushing. They stopped up the debt bogs. They mainly established a Wholesale Supply Society, and made the provisions better. They got the law amended, and cleared out the knaves who hung about the till. They planned employment of their profits in productive manufactures, so that the store and workshop might grow. They proclaimed toleration of all opinions — religious and heretical alike — and recognized none. *They provided for the education of their members, so that every man knew what to push for and where to place his shoulder, and were the first men who landed the great stone at the top.*"

The success of Rochdale resurrected the cooperative movement from the dead. Education played an important role in its rebirth. Before a cooperative society was organized or started its business ventures, there were long periods of study. Groups would meet in the homes, halls, or stores to study the fundamentals and principles of cooperation. When central cooperative organizations were organized, they supplied leaflets, pamphlets, and books on all phases of cooperation. Speakers' bureaus would send well-known lecturers to speak at local societies. There were visits to other cooperatives, especially to Rochdale, to see how they functioned. All this took time, and many people became discouraged over the delay. However, upon this foundation of education, the cooperative movement was built.

## Purpose of Education

There are two primary objectives of cooperative education. The first is to acquaint the members with the philosophy, principles, and practices of his cooperative enterprise. The member of a cooperative is an owner of a business. As a member-owner, he should want to know how his cooperative operates. He should want to know what his obligations and his responsibilities to the organization are. When he learns these things, he should be a better member-owner.

As one of the purposes of cooperation is to build a better community and society, the second objective of cooperative education is to demonstrate how this can be accomplished.

Education did not stop once the enterprise was started. On the contrary, it was accelerated. Those who had been orientated became the missionaries to convert the new members. More literature was distributed, more study groups were organized, correspondence classes were established for members and employees. The printed word was used extensively.

*Continued on page 4*

# UHF DIRECTOR



MORRIS IUSHEWITZ

Morris Iushewitz, a member of the Board of the United Housing Foundation, is secretary-treasurer of the New York City CIO Council, a federation of all the CIO unions in the City. Seated at his desk in his offices at 71 West 47th, it is hard to imagine that this peaceable man was active in all the organizing drives and strikes conducted by the American Newspaper Guild in the New York City area during the early 30's. A veteran newspaper man and charter member of the Guild, Mr. Iushewitz is proud of the fact that all the employees in the editorial and business offices of every New York daily are members of the Guild. Occasionally, Guild responsibilities took him outside the New York Metropolitan area; he was instrumental in organizing the Guild local in Wilkes Barre, Pennsylvania, after a long and hard campaign.

As one of labor's foremost representatives in civic and political matters affecting New York, Mr. Iushewitz is known for his reasonable approach to controversy. Once when in a discussion with Governor Harriman, he threatened to scream long and loud unless the workingman's rights were protected. The Governor said, "Well anyway, Morris, if you scream, I know it will be in a most restrained manner."

Susan, the oldest of Mr. Iushewitz's three children, has inherited her father's interest in the labor movement. Next fall she starts as a student at New York State School of Industrial and Labor Relations at Cornell University. His son Gerald, 15, plans to be a lawyer, and Diane, 7, is currently concentrating all of her energies on growing up.

In connection with the up-coming merger of the AF of L and the CIO in New York City, Mr. Iushewitz has been working closely with another United Housing Foundation Board Member, Harry Van Arsdale, Jr., president of the AF of L Central Trades and Labor Council. The fact that relations are harmonious may, in part, be explained by the fact that the two men's friendship goes back twenty-four years to the time when Mr. Iushewitz edited the newspaper put out by Mr. Van Arsdale's union — Local 3, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers.

As secretary-treasurer of the New York City CIO Council, Mr. Iushewitz daily faces a host of human problems. Ques-

tions relating to voting, strikes, and housing are continuously coming his way. It is in an effort to help solve the myriad housing problems confronting working people that Mr. Iushewitz joined the United Housing Board.

UHF is only one of his numerous outside activities. He serves as a member of the New York City Youth Board, is vice-chairman of the Board of the Health Insurance Plan, member of the Board of the New York Urban League, co-chairman of the AFL-CIO Advisory Committee on Puerto Rican Affairs, member of the Board of the Greater New York Fund, and is a member of the Board of Trustees of the University of New York.

Once when asked why his presentations were so calm and factual as contrasted to so many other speakers on disputed matters, Mr. Iushewitz said, "As a newspaperman, I had to listen to so many impassioned speakers who got carried away by the sound of their own voices, that I decided never to emulate them!"

## PROGRESS REPORT

### SEWARD PARK

A great deal of pre-construction work is being accomplished in connection with this cooperative. The applications office reports that about 1400 of the 1728 apartments have been allocated. Within a few weeks, this job will be completed.

Rapid progress is also being achieved in the relocation work. Early in June, over 716 families had been moved from the site. Of the 764 families still on the site, several hundred will move into the new development. The New York Times ran a very favorable story on how well relocation is being handled in Seward Park.

The area is beginning to change considerably as the demolition work proceeds. Almost eighty old buildings have been demolished.

### WARBASSE HOUSES

It is more than likely that before this issue reaches the applicants for Warbasse Houses, they will have received a letter advising of some positive action regarding this development.

There has been a long delay in getting action on the plans for this large cooperative. Such delays are not unusual and applicants must be patient a little longer.

### ILGWU HOUSES, INC.

As this cooperative will be built as a Title I development, the plans must be approved by the Housing and Home Finance Agency of the Federal government. We are awaiting their approval now.

Applications for over 2500 apartments, which will be available, were closed when the 3600th application was received. The cooperative is being sponsored by the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union.

*Continued from page 2*

Most local societies published their own newspapers or bulletins as did all the central organizations. Today radio and television media are used for cooperative education. There is a wide selection of cooperative movies and other visual-aid material. In Great Britain and the Scandinavian countries, cooperative colleges were established on a national basis offering special courses for managers, directors, and interested members. An attempt to establish a similar institution in the United States was not successful although some of the regional cooperatives operate their own schools.

In most countries, Sweden being an important exception, the business and education functions have been divided at the national level. Hence, we have an organization for the commercial or business end of cooperatives, and a separate national organization for education. In the United States, these two organizations are National Cooperatives, Inc. and The Cooperative League of the USA, respectively. In Great Britain, they are Cooperative Wholesale Society, and the Cooperative Union. In Sweden, the education and business functions are combined in one organization, Kooperativa Forbundet. There are certain advantages and some disadvantages in having a separate organization for education. The disadvantages center around obtaining adequate financing for the educational work.

Prior to the age of bigness, cooperative organizations always started on a modest scale. In the case of grocery cooperatives, it was customary, after the period of initial study was completed, for the groups to start their cooperatives as buying clubs. Usually, the club was located in someone's basement or garage. Once or twice a week, the members would gather together and "play store". A number of successful cooperatives started in this way. Unfortunately, however, many never outgrew the buying club stage and most of the members became discouraged and quit. From sad experiences, it was learned that to have a successful cooperative grocery store, it had to be a "Main Street" operation from the start. It is apparent that the same tendency applies to housing cooperatives. Big developments are much more common now than a cooperative with 100 or 200 units.

Bigness, of course, presents problems. With a small group, close personal contact is possible. Individual participation and discussion can take place. When you plan a cooperative for 5,200 members, as the Warbasse Houses will be, it is not possible to have individual participation. The question then arises, what do you do? It is recognized that education is still important. If the members understand the principles of cooperation and how they are applied in a cooperative community, Warbasse Houses will be a better cooperative. Small discussion groups of ten to fifteen people would be the ideal method for educating future cooperators. If a group of ten to fifteen people met together for six sessions of two hours

each, you would have the opportunity to develop well-informed, intelligent members. But in groups of fifteen, it would take 347 groups to take care of the 5,200 applicants of the Warbasse Houses. It would take over a year to meet with each group just once. It would be an almost impossible task. Other methods, therefore, have to be adopted. In the case of the Warbasse cooperative, large group meetings are held. 800 or more applicants come together for a two-hour orientation session.

This publication is sent to each applicant with the hope that some educational material will be of value. Other publications are printed and distributed to cooperators and applicants. Speakers are available to meet with cooperative groups. In one cooperative, ILGWU Cooperative Village, closed-circuit television was used as a method of education.

Many cooperatives employ an educational director to carry out programs for new and old members. In cooperatives where there is not a staff-paid person doing this work, there are usually educational committees composed of the members. It may be indicative of the times, that many of these educational directors or committees are now known as public-relations directors or public-relations committees.

It may be drawing a fine line to distinguish between educational directors and public-relations directors. Nevertheless, the concept of cooperatives having their own educational director was to build strong cooperative societies based on education and from them, cooperative communities. This was to be done from within the cooperative. The modern approach has a different philosophy and a different objective. It is designed to cultivate a climate of public opinion favorable to the acceptance of cooperatives.

It has been demonstrated that wherever cooperatives fill the needs of consumers, they win the approval and the acceptance of the general public. It is performance, rather than publicity and public relations, which is important. The best performance is possible only when there is an educated and informed membership.

Writing in a cooperative magazine, the "Canadian Cooperative Digest", Dr. M. M. Coady says, "Even if it were true that our people in the present stage of their development are incapable of carrying out the program of economic cooperation here visualized, this should not stop us. Education has made the impossibilities of yesterday, the actualities of today. Through a program of adult education, all our people, from the most remote hamlet of the Arctic to the biggest metropolitan center, can be organized to get the scientific knowledge, the educational, social, and economic techniques that will fit them for this great task. Such a program will steady our people, quicken their social intelligence, and toughen their moral fibre in a way that nothing else can."

# NEWS FROM UNITED HOUSING FOUNDATION'S MEMBERS

## **AMALGAMATED DWELLINGS — 236 Units**

### **HILLMAN HOUSES, INC. — 807 Units**

Many of the members of these two cooperatives, together with members of the East River Housing Corporation, pooled their resources and own a large cooperative supermarket. In operation only twenty months, this store expects to pay its members a patronage refund at the end of its second fiscal year, June 30. Currently, the store is doing \$30,000 a week volume. Earlier this month, many of these cooperators, participating in a home-delivery milk cooperative, received patronage refund checks totaling \$1300. These are further examples of how consumers can benefit themselves when they work together.

## **AMALGAMATED HOUSING CORPORATION — 1435 Units**

In order to make it possible for all three cooperatives in the Van Cortlandt area — Amalgamated, Mutual, and Park Reservoir — to work together in developing the strongest possible program of community activities, a new corporation, Recreational Activities, Inc., was organized. The corporation is controlled by Committee members in the three co-ops. This organizational structure could be copied in any area where a number of cooperatives are together, and will enable the residents to enjoy a smoothly coordinated plan for day camps, nursery schools, dancing classes, music classes, and all the other activities which contribute to a rich and democratic community life.

## **BELL PARK GARDENS — 802 Units**

Concerned with the problems of meeting monthly payments if the breadwinner should die, the Community Council has worked out a plan whereby the cooperators can take out \$1000 of life insurance, with premiums payable along with the monthly charges. No physical examination is required and premium levels are guaranteed throughout the five-year period. Typical rates at age forty are 98¢ per month, at age fifty, \$1.89 per month. In order to make the plan effective, 75% of the cooperators must participate and a campaign to achieve this goal is currently going on.

## **EAST RIVER HOUSING CORPORATION — 1672 Units**

At the annual stockholders' meeting, held in the auditorium in the cooperative's shopping center, it was decided to have a special meeting of stockholders called to consider the adoption of a reserve fund for repurchase of apartments. The meeting was held on May 20, and over 1200 residents attended. After considerable discussion, it was voted to set aside 50¢ per room, per month for a five-year period for a special reserve fund. If a cooperator left, his contribution to the reserve fund would be returned. The maximum possible reserve over the five-year period would equal approximately 5% of the total equity investment or approximately 1% of the total cost of the cooperative.

A suggestion has been made by a member of the House Committee of Hillman Housing, an earlier, smaller cooperative neighbor of East River, that all the cooperatives in the neighborhood—Amalgamated Dwellings, Hillman, East River and, upon completion, Seward Park — join together under a common name of "Cooperative Village". This would mean that an entire region of New York City with 4400

families would reflect its cooperative origins and serve as a reminder of what can be done when people are given a chance to help themselves.

## **ELECTCHESTER — (1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Housing Corporations) — 2226 Units**

The Electchester Athletic Association, which covers the four corporations, sponsored a two-hour parade throughout the development to commemorate the opening of the softball season. Led by the Athletic Association's cheerleaders, nearly 1000 people marched to the strains of the band of St. Nicholas of Tolentine Church. Electchester's teams play throughout the season against other members of the Queens Little League.

On the cultural side, the Electchester Dance School presented a musical fantasy, "The Enchanted Flower" on May 23, in the auditorium of PS 200. Sixty-five children participated under the direction of Herta Payson.

## **HICKORY HILL — 32 (Single Family Homes)**

The cooperative completed a community swimming pool — 25 by 50 feet, a wading pool, a community tennis court, and a large playing field for its members. \$15,000 was invested to cover the expenses. There are annual dues charged by the cooperative for the upkeep of these facilities and for the lifeguard. At the end of the season, a Swim Meet is planned for all ages from four to sixty.

## **KINGSVIEW — 290 Units**

At a recent election, the Kingsview cooperators chose five non-residents to serve on the Board of Directors: Miss Clara Fox, and Messrs. Robert Blum, Otto Clitgord, Donald Monson, and Horace Westmen. Mr. Blum is vice president and secretary of Abraham and Straus, and has served on the Kingsview Board since 1952 along with Mr. Westmen, who is vice president of the National City Bank. Miss Fox is with the Play Schools Association and is the outstanding consultant in the field of recreational facilities for children in cooperative housing. Mr. Monson is a professional city planner and an author on cooperative housing. Dr. Clitgord is president of the Community College of Arts and Sciences in Brooklyn. The new officers and directors were installed on May 23 at a ceremony held at Long Island University — one of the four partners with Kingsview in the Fort Greene Title I Redevelopment project. Dr. Frank Horne of the Commission on Inter-group Relations was the principal speaker. Scrolls were presented to all outgoing Board Members, followed by a program of entertainment and dancing.

## **QUEENSVIEW — 728 Units**

Parents' Night was held on May 22 by the After School Activities Committee. This Committee is in charge of the all-year-round program offering classes in dancing, crafts, painting, dramatics, photography and music for children in the four to twelve age bracket. As in previous years, fifty children from neighborhood families joined with Queensview's children in the various classes. In addition, forty children from Queensview West go to the classes, making a total of 220 children participating. The feature of Parents' Night was an objective evaluation of the past year's program, by parents, the teachers employed in the program and the directors of the After School Activities Committee.

# COOPERATIVE HOUSING DENMARK, SWEDEN AND FRANCE\*

\*This article appears in a syllabus entitled, COOPERATION IN OTHER LANDS, published by the Cooperative Union of Great Britain. Lack of space has necessitated extensive editing.

## Early Experiments in Cooperative Housing

It was in Germany that some of the earliest experiments in the field of Cooperative housing were undertaken. As early as 1850 a scheme to provide houses on a non-profit basis for lower-income groups through so-called Home Building Societies was put forward; but these societies were founded and inspired by rich philanthropists who were appalled by the prevalent conditions. Their work had some success and eventually received the support of the authorities. A more interesting example from the Cooperator's point of view was the movement started by Victor Aime Huber in 1869. Under his guidance and persuasion, small-income workers, clerks, and civil servants jointly created cheap homes for themselves through home building Cooperative Societies. But it was not until 20 years later when a change in the law abolished the unlimited liability of Cooperative society members that any real progress was made.

The most significant early steps in Cooperative housing, however, took place in one of Germany's neighbouring countries, Denmark.

## Danish Housing Schemes

It was in the years just before the first World War that the most important development in Danish Cooperative housing started. The housing shortage was particularly acute as a result of wild housing speculation at the beginning of the century which started by over-production and was followed by a crash when the banks became unwilling, and in fact unable, to continue financing speculation in building. Widespread unemployment in the building trades followed.

In these circumstances, Cooperative and Trade Union leaders got together to seek a solution to the twin problems of unemployment and the housing shortage. In 1912, they established the Workers' Cooperative Housing Society and in the following year the Workers' Cooperative Building Society. The Workers' Cooperative Housing Society set the pattern for what is to-day the commonest form of Housing Society in Denmark. Members pay an entrance fee which goes to the Society's reserve fund and the Society itself is managed by elected representatives of members. In addition to their entrance fee, members take out shares to an amount proportionate to the size of the dwellings they require. This generally corresponds to 3% of the actual building cost, that is the part of the building cost not covered by loans. Annual rents are determined on the basis of the basic building and running costs of the premises. All repairs however must be paid for by members. The right to occupy a flat is heritable but not transferable without the consent of the society. This

provision prevents any profiteering and speculation in the transference of flats. The Society is organised according to the normal Rochdale principles, i.e., one member, one vote, etc. In the first 30 years of existence the Workers' Cooperative Building Society has constructed more than 5,000 flats and the Workers' Cooperative Housing Society over 6,000.

Another important development in Cooperative housing was the establishment in 1941 of a special society *Arbejderbo* on the joint initiative of *Det kooperative Faellesforbund* (Urban Cooperative Union), the Federation of Housing Societies, the Confederation of Danish Trade Unions, and the Labour Movement Economic Council. The aims of this society are to promote the establishment of new housing societies, to give advice on technical, economic, and administrative problems and, if necessary and desirable a measure of financial support.

## H. S. B. Societies in Sweden

Sweden, also, provides an excellent example of Cooperative housing development. The first significant step was taken in 1916 with the establishment of the Stockholm Cooperative Housing Society, but because the Society's activities were confined to the capital, and because earlier housing groups had failed to make any appreciable expansion, new approaches to the subject were made in the form of Tenants' Unions. The aim of the Unions was to prevent the exploitation of housing shortages by landlords, but it soon became clear that no permanent improvement could take place unless the Unions themselves entered the building field. The Tenants' Unions, therefore, sponsored a new organisation, the Tenants' Savings and Building Society, H.S.B.

The first H.S.B. society was set up in Stockholm in 1923 and several others followed in quick succession. In 1924 the societies joined together in the National Association of Savings and Building Societies. To-day, H.S.B. societies are active in practically every town in Sweden and during the last two years, they have been responsible for 12% to 13% of Sweden's total building activity. From the beginning, the H.S.B. Movement collected savings from members to supplement building credits which were not always easily obtainable and these savings to-day, deposited with H.S.B.'s own bank, are now in the neighbourhood of 20,000,000 Kronor. Though bank advances still form the main source of credit for financing H.S.B. building programmes the amount of money H.S.B. itself can advance means that at least a part of the capital needed will be at a lower rate of interest than that charged by commercial banks. Immediately H.S.B. societies complete a building programme they offer the dwellings as a security to obtain ordinary bank loans or mortgages and

repay the short-term construction credits which carry a higher rate of interest than they have been advanced. Thereafter, the proportion of these credits belonging to H.S.B. is used to finance new building programmes.

H.S.B.'s organisation is based on parent and daughter societies. The parent societies collect members' savings and obtain building sites, etc. When the houses are completed, the societies continue to exist and deal with such general administrative matters as book-keeping, supervision of sale of flats and the purchase of fuel and other necessary materials for their members. But the Cooperative Housing Societies have gone further. Like Consumer Societies, they have moved back into the field of wholesaling and production. On occasions, monopolistic practices and price rings have not only directly injured the consumer but have prevented the free flow of building materials to the Cooperative Societies. The Housing Cooperatives have overcome these difficulties in the characteristic Cooperative way.

The H.S.B. Movement has moved into the field of production. It owns a number of carpentry and joinery works, a marble quarry, brickyards, a pipe factory, all of which ensure high quality material at minimum prices. Since 1937, it has been building family houses produced from prefabricated sections produced in its own factory — another way incidentally of helping to reduce building costs by enabling the owner to assist in the construction of his house.

### Role of the State — France's Example

In other countries of Western Europe, where war damage is on a vaster scale, Governments have fallen back on Cooperative housing societies and other non-profit building concerns. France is a good example. Faced with the problem of reconstruction and a lack of initiative on the part of private enterprise, the Government in 1947 called in the low-rent housing societies and Cooperative housing societies to help solve the problem. Formerly active only in local units, the Cooperative housing societies to-day are functioning on a national scale. A law of 1952 provided special premiums and loans to finance their building operations and as a result the National Federation of Housing Cooperatives founded in 1908 has to-day 214 societies in membership. This federation helped to form the National Cooperative Housing Committee in which all branches of the Movement (producers, consumers, agricultural, and housing Cooperatives) are united to promote housing policy. It has set up special committees to study ways of reducing building costs as well as to help builders who are short of capital.

### Cooperative Letting

The granting of large State loans to finance Cooperative building has led to a modification of the traditional conception of individual ownership held by Cooperative Hous-

ing Societies. Renting combined with purchase was the normal method and under the scheme loans of up to 90% of the cost price approved by the State were repayable over 35 years at an interest rate of 2%. But the law of 1947 was designed to encourage the construction of dwellings for letting rather than selling. To take advantage of the provisions of this law, the societies evolved the idea of Cooperative letting. Dwellings are erected by the societies which benefit from loans repayable in 65 years at reduced rates of interest. The member takes out shares in the society to an amount at least equal to the part of the cost not borne by the State and the shares carry a right to a particular dwelling unit. The tenant pays an annual fixed rent while the Society remains the owner of the dwelling and manages it on behalf of the tenant. The tenant, however, has an unchallenged right to occupation of his flat giving him security of tenure for life.

### Combined Cooperative Action Needed

The best low cost housing in Europe between the wars was undoubtedly the work of the Cooperative Housing Organisations and it must be the responsibility of Cooperatives to demonstrate to governments that their best means of obtaining housing of the highest quality for the money they can afford to spend is to confide their money to federations of Cooperative Housing Societies.

But the whole responsibility should not fall upon the shoulders of Cooperative Housing Organisations alone. Consumer Wholesale Societies, Agricultural Supply Societies, Cooperative Banks, and Credit Institutions have their part to play. They can effect economies by buying or importing building materials and house equipment in bulk. They can not only reduce prices but circumvent the restrictive practices of suppliers' rings. A striking example of this occurred in Schleswig-Holstein shortly after the last war when 10,000 new flats were built. It was an important experiment in the use of new building materials, standardisation and mass production, but the main factor in reducing costs was the central ordering and supply of equipment such as doors, windows, drain pipes, etc. by the German Consumer Cooperative Wholesale Society which renounced all profits on the transaction. Financial support can be afforded to Cooperative Housing projects by Cooperative banking institutions while collaboration with contractors' societies such as those which exist in Denmark to undertake building projects and the repair and upkeep of dwellings can be effected. One might go further and suggest the establishment of Cooperative centres for the lend and lease of tools and machinery.

The Cooperative Movement has an educative mission in stimulating people to take an interest in design and planning and in furthering such welfare schemes as characterise Cooperative housing projects in Scandinavia. In short; great opportunities exist to enable people to create their own environment if only sufficient combined action by the different branches of the Cooperative Movement can take place.

### **QUEENSVIEW WEST — 364 Units**

On May 15, one week after the last cooperator moved into this 364-unit sister project to Queensview, the first stockholders' meeting was held. President George Halprin, a former Queensview cooperator, chaired the meeting which was attended by the majority of the shareholders as well as the five resident directors.

A group of cooperators who took a course on the fundamentals of cooperative housing, given by United Housing Foundation, are meeting regularly to plan a new middle-income cooperative for those hundreds of families who could not get into Queensview West.

### **RIDGEWOOD GARDENS — 372 Units**

For the third successive year, the Day Camp Committee of the Community Council is running a Summer Play School. It serves sixty children from the ages of three through ten with a professionally-led program five days a week between the hours of 9:30 and 4:30 during the months of July and

August. The fees range from \$75 to \$80 for the summer. Like three other members of the United Housing Foundation, this cooperative is affiliated with the Play Schools Association which gives consultation and supervision to the program. Activities include swimming at a nearby boys' club, trips to parks, beaches, and places of interest, athletics, and crafts. Highlighted events of the season include a carnival and an all-day picnic on Staten Island.

### **HARRY SILVER HOUSING COMPANY — 288 Units**

Now in its fifth year of operation, this cooperative has been able to maintain its original carrying charges of \$15.85 per room per month (or an average of \$69.60 for a two-bedroom apartment) including utilities. The secretary of the Board of Directors, Jerome Belson, in a recent report to the stockholders, points out that part of the reason for this record is the cooperative's success in increasing its revenue apart from charges for the apartment. Current budget figures show an increase of \$12,291 in receipts as compared with the first year of operation.

*Exclusively Serving*

*Cooperative Housing Communities  
and Related  
Cooperative Enterprises*

## **COMMUNITY SERVICES, INC. INSURANCE DEPARTMENT**

551 Grand Street  
New York 2, New York

SIDNEY VYORST, Mgr.  
SOMER ALBERG, Asst. Mgr.

CA 8-9750



**COMMUNITY SERVICES, INC.**  
530 Grand Street  
New York 2, New York

**Bulk Rate**  
U. S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
New York, N. Y.  
Permit No. 7115