

# Centre for the Study of Co-operatives

SEMINAR SERIES 2014–15

## The National Film Board of Canada and Co-op Films: A Historical Survey

### George Melnyk

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With a mandate to bring Canada to Canadians, the National Film Board (NFB) has been making documentaries on the co-operative movement in Canada since the 1940s. This presentation examines the history of these films from 1940 to 1990, a half-century of filmmaking that provides a unique window on the evolution of the movement in Canada. The lecture explores how each decade had a distinct co-operative focus relating to either the novelty or the importance of a particular sector. Because of wide distribution, NFB films on co-ops came to play a role in co-operative history itself. Professor Melnyk outlines the various sectors about which films were made, how the NFB approached co-ops during the period under discussion, the style of the films, and the role of the medium in promoting co-operative development in Canada. The seminar concludes with a discussion on the diminishing role of the NFB in co-op film production after the 1980s and the rise of independent co-op films tied more closely to co-op institutions themselves.



This presentation is part of a study into the history of co-operative films in Canada funded by the Centre for the Study of Co-operatives.

George Melnyk is associate professor, Film Studies and Canadian Studies, Department of Communication and Culture, University of Calgary. He is author or editor of more than twenty-five books on Canadian topics, including *The Search for Community*, a global study of the co-operative movement.

Wednesday, 29 October 2014, 3:30–4:30 pm  
Prairie Room, Diefenbaker Building, U of S Campus

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