

Independent Co-operative Commissions

There have been three independent co-operative commissions.

1958, 2001 and the Greater Manchester Independent Co-operative Commission 2020

1958.

Set up by resolution at the Edinburgh Co-operative Congress of 1955, it was chaired by Hugh Gaitskell, and had Tony Crosland as secretary. The other members of the Commission, all selected as “suitable persons not engaged in Co-operative management or administration”, were Miss Margaret Digby, Professor D T Jack, Dr J B Jefferys, Lady Hall, Colonel S G L Hardie, Mr. J T Murray and Alderman F Pette.

The background to the Commission was the rapid changes which were taking place in retailing following, amongst other things, the end of rationing and the start of self-service. The Co-op was losing market share – but still had 30,000 shops and 250 factories. There were two separate Wholesale Societies, one for England & Wales and one for Scotland – and there were 967 Retail Societies, of which 166 operated only one shop, while 650 had fewer than ten. Those Societies were together paying dividends to customer members in excess of £40m per year – but this was often at the expense of retained income, and there were major concerns about the ability of the Co-op to fund its future development.

From the Report of the Co-operative Commission 2001

The 1958 report is available in the Resource Centre for reference

2001.

The Report of the Co-operative Commission January 2001 was titled ‘The Co-operative Advantage - Creating a successful family of Co-operative businesses’.

And can be downloaded [HERE](#)

The document is also available in the Resource Centre for reference.

2020.

The Greater Manchester Independent Co-operative Commission report can be downloaded [HERE](#)

study notes
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