

Introductory Notes to Pamphlet 3 'The Future of Co-operation' by Honora Enfield

Socialism cannot be legislated or enforced. The same can be said for Co-operation.

The word Socialism was first used by the 'Father' of Co-operation, Robert Owen. In the early days of the Movement, the two words were interchangeable.

If we are to be serious about the implication of these words, and the power implicit in them, understanding is essential.

Socialism/Co-operation, is a way of life. It's a way of thinking, aspiring, desiring, not by a few people, but by all people. A collective choice, the zeitgeist, the story of the people, a way in which we all live.

This cannot be imposed. It cannot be created by any kind of government, but the choice of government can reflect the socialism which is already established in the consciousness of the people. A government can only be supportive of what is already there. There is not an electoral route to socialism/co-operation.

Robert Blatchford said, 'make socialists and you will get socialism'. He got it the right way round. I have written something about Blatchford which you can read [**HERE**](#)

Alice Honora Enfield wrote 'The Future of Co-operation' in 1927. She was General Secretary of the

Women's Co-operative Guild from 1921 - 1926. The Guild was one of the many grass-roots organisations which formed the co-operative movement. The Movement was gradually transforming society, socialism/co-operation was being built in the only way that it can be, amongst people. It was an inclusive community which provided education, culture, recreation, employment, the development of skills, crafts and arts, trading, building, farming, finance, security, manufacturing. A Society of mutual benefit, no government could create this. It was a Society gradually being transformed, the transformation was far from complete. It would need a government which reflected the aspirations of the Movement to complete that transformation.

This was the background, in 1927, when Honora Enfield wrote 'The Future of Co-operation'. It makes valuable reading because it illustrates the progress made at that time towards an co-operative commonwealth, or socialist society.

But the old ways of competition and self-interest were still represented by the larger proportion of opinion in the Country.

Reading 'The Future of Co-operation' helps us to realise how close we were to a co-operative/socialist society in 1927. How can we build the co-operative commonwealth in 2023?

You can read 'The Future of Co-operation' [HERE](#)

Steve Thompson