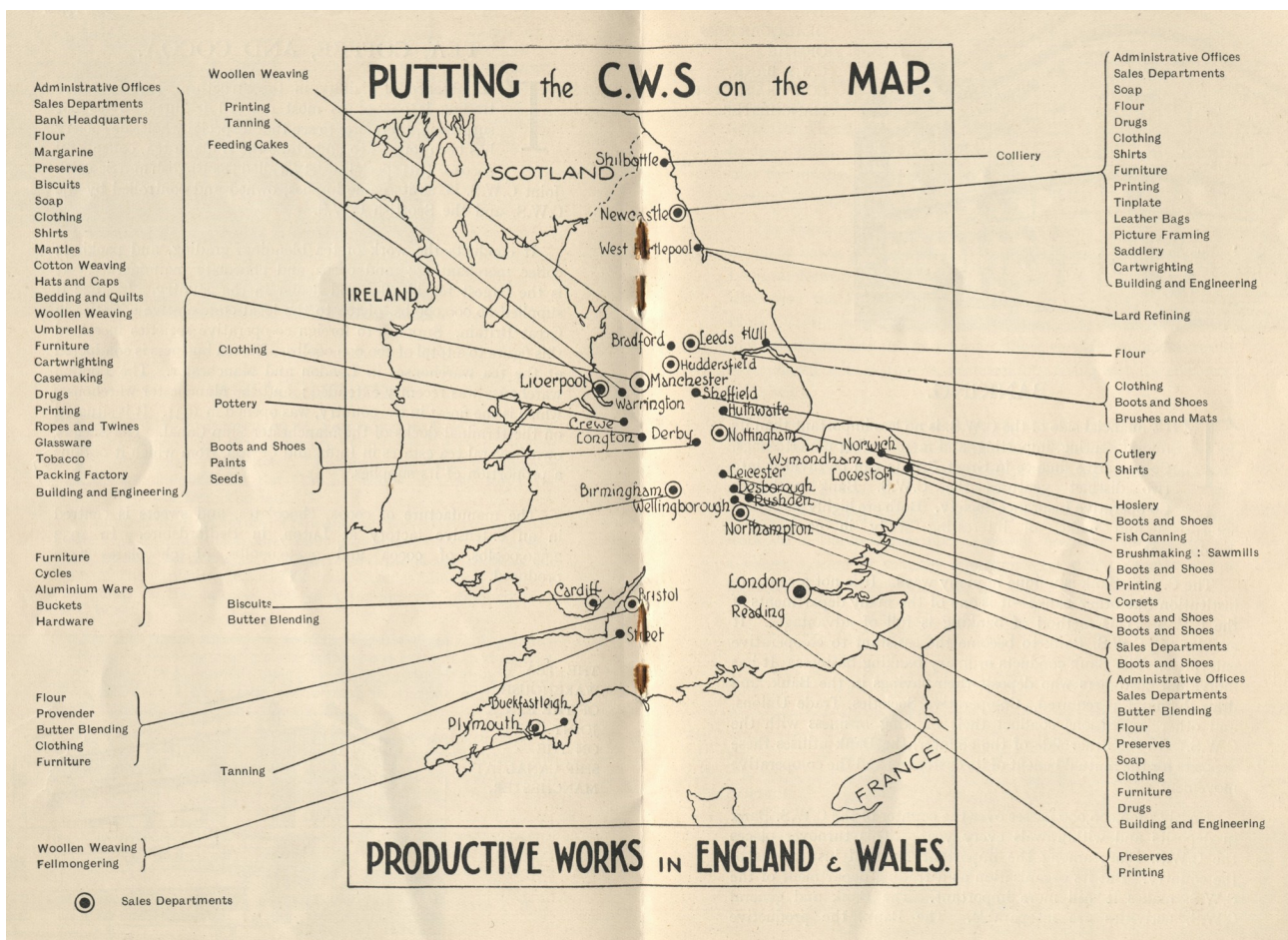


Principle FIVE

P5

June 2023



The Story of the CWS

There was a time when a co-operative commonwealth was an emerging possibility. The will was there in the Co-operative Wholesale Society (CWS). The map shows that manufacturing on a large scale can be owned co-operatively.

[Vertical Integration](#) ensured that the whole operation, production, manufacture, transport, retail were all owned and controlled by the co-operative. So that all of the benefits of the business went to the members and benefited the whole co-operative movement.

[Towards the Co-operative Commonwealth](#) by T. W. Mercer

Published in 1936 to commemorate the opening of Co-op Press, London premises.
This book is very helpful.

Has the world changed so much that it has become impossible to take back control from the profiteers?

Would this be a useful avenue of study?

How has the Co-operative Movement lost so much?

In 1927, Honora Enfield could write positively of Britain being transformed to a socially owned economy, a co-operative commonwealth. It began to happen, not as she envisaged, but in a more centralised way under the leadership of the Labour Government of 1945-51. This has all been lost. Why has this dream vanished?
(The Future of Co-operation. Published by Principle 5).

G. D. H. Cole wrote [Guild Socialism Re-stated](#) in 1920. This was another vision of a society run by and for everyone.

In the interwar years J.B. Priestley wrote many novels, plays and thoughtful non-fiction.

It was said that this contributed to a public readiness to welcome the [Beveridge Report](#) which proposed social insurance which paid for welfare, the National Health Service and the social benefits which have been lost in recent years.

The Report offered three guiding principles to its recommendations:

1. Proposals for the future should not be limited by "sectional interests". A "revolutionary moment in the world's history is a time for revolutions, not for patching".
2. Social insurance is only one part of a "comprehensive policy of social progress". The five giants on the road to reconstruction were Want, Disease, Ignorance, Squalor and Idleness.
3. Policies of social security "must be achieved by co-operation between the State and the individual", with the state securing the service and contributions. The state "should not stifle incentive, opportunity, responsibility; in establishing a national minimum, it should leave room and encouragement for voluntary action by each individual to provide more than that minimum for himself and his family".

Beveridge was opposed to "means-tested" benefits. His proposal was for a flat rate universal contribution in exchange for a flat rate universal benefit.

The Beveridge Report was implemented by the Post War Labour Government.

This safety net and the loss of civilised society has implications such as crime, drug dependence, violence and social unrest. This has added a huge cost to spending on Police and emergency services. An unequal society pays a huge cost in emergency services.

It is a valid question to ask 'is government able to enact a reversal to better times?' I think that the answer is not without social association on the lines of co-operation, or

even Guild Socialism. And in the localities 'Community Wealth Building' could be a way forward see:

[Paint Your Town Red](#). We have a copy in the Library.

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Additions to the Principle 5 Library

[The Life of Arnold Freeman: Philosopher, Teacher and Social Reformer](#)

Kenneth Gibson. Published 2023

What Went Wrong: The Fall of the Labour Government 1974 - 1979

ed. Ken Coates. Published 1979

Workers' Control. ed. Ken Coates and Tony Topham
Published 1970

[North-South :a Programme for Survival](#): Report of the Independent Commission on International Development Issues.

Chairman: Willy Brandt Former Chancellor of West Germany

Pamphlet: Democracy and Authority in the Co-operative Movement

Lecture given at the London School of Economics and Political Science

London Co-operative Societies' Joint Education Committee

G. D. H. Cole. Published 1952

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Look out for a new co-operative organisation in Sheffield, recently formed:

[Sheffield Community Land Trust](#)

Playground for the New Economy 2023 looks for ways to rebuild democracy

Stir to Action brought the event north for talks, workshops, music and networking opportunities, with contributors from across the co-op movement.

Stir to Action visited an urban setting for the 5th edition of its Playground for the New Economy festival, a programme of events which has previously been held in both fields and on screens.

This year's event, held on 19 and 20 May at Stretford Public Hall in Greater Manchester, featured talks, workshops, music and networking opportunities for those working on the ideas and action needed to drive us into the "new economy".

Read the full article: **[HERE](#)**

Report by **[Co-op News](#)**

Alice Toomer-McAlpine

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<https://www.thenews.coop/be-a-member/>

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[sheffield.coop](#) is a web directory of everything co-op, and features a directory of all the co-ops in Sheffield. If you spot anything that should be corrected, or if anything has been missed out, please let us know **steve@sheffield.coop**

Members are always welcome to visit the resource centre.

For appointment contact steve@sheffield.coop

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