

# Principle FIVE

# P5

**Yorkshire Co-operative Resource Centre  
March 2025**

Progress is being made cataloguing the Principle 5 Collection of books, pamphlets and other documents. And of course this is uncovering some interesting material. For example, we have acquired a copy of **The Family Circle**, a pamphlet which was published in 1948 to communicate the establishment of the legislation which struck at the very roots of poverty and for the first time in history, provided for a minimum standard of living below which no one could fall.

The forward was written by the Prime Minister Clement Attlee.

The pamphlet can be read at the resource centre or the text of the pamphlet (without the pictures) **[HERE](#)**



Clement Attlee. Prime Minister 1945 - 1951



A new and proud chapter has been written in Britain's social history. Since 1945 a series of Acts have been put on the Statute Book which strike at the very roots of poverty and for the first time in our history provide for a minimum standard of living below which no one may fall.

This little book tells the human story of that legislation in a form which I am sure will make a profound impression on all who read it. For this is not merely a chronicle of Acts of Parliament. It is the story of a great victory over those blind economic forces which have for generations been the cause of so much suffering and want among our people, and which were first challenged on the floor of the House of Commons by Keir Hardie, and later in the remarkable works of Sidney and Beatrice Webb on the Poor Law.

Today the inspired dreams of our pioneers of social justice have been translated into the most advanced social legislation to be found in any part of the world, and I commend this book to all who have the cause of true freedom at heart. No more fitting testament to the power and determination of Britain's people, despite all adversities, could have been written.

*C. R. Attlee*

"Charity is a cold  
grey loveless thing.  
If a rich man wants  
to help the poor, he  
should pay his  
taxes gladly, not  
dole out money at  
a whim."

**Clement Attlee**



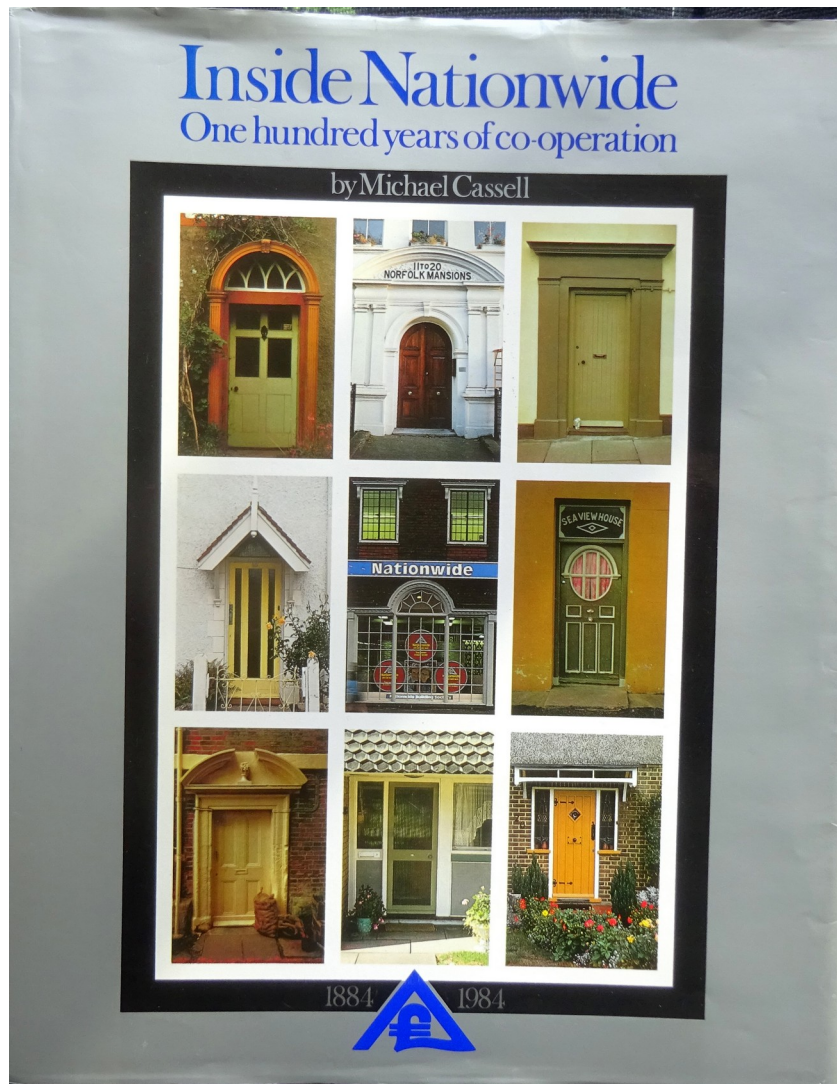
LEFT WING UK

You can read more about Charity and Socialism [HERE](#)

These achievements of the 1945 Labour Government were built upon the work of many people who worked tirelessly, including Sidney and Beatrice Webb, John Maynard Keynes, William Beveridge\* and [J. B. Priestley](#).

"[In place of fear](#), the title of Aneurin Bevan's book published on the 10th anniversary of the Beveridge Report, is synonymous with all that the welfare state stood for and what it sought to achieve. By 1952, a consensus had formed in Britain that it was possible to create a society where all could live without fear of going hungry, being poorly housed, or of living with (or dying in) great pain. Although there was still much to argue about, by a generation after the stock market crash of 1929, that consensus was one which regarded the possibilities of the future with optimism." [Danny Dorling](#).

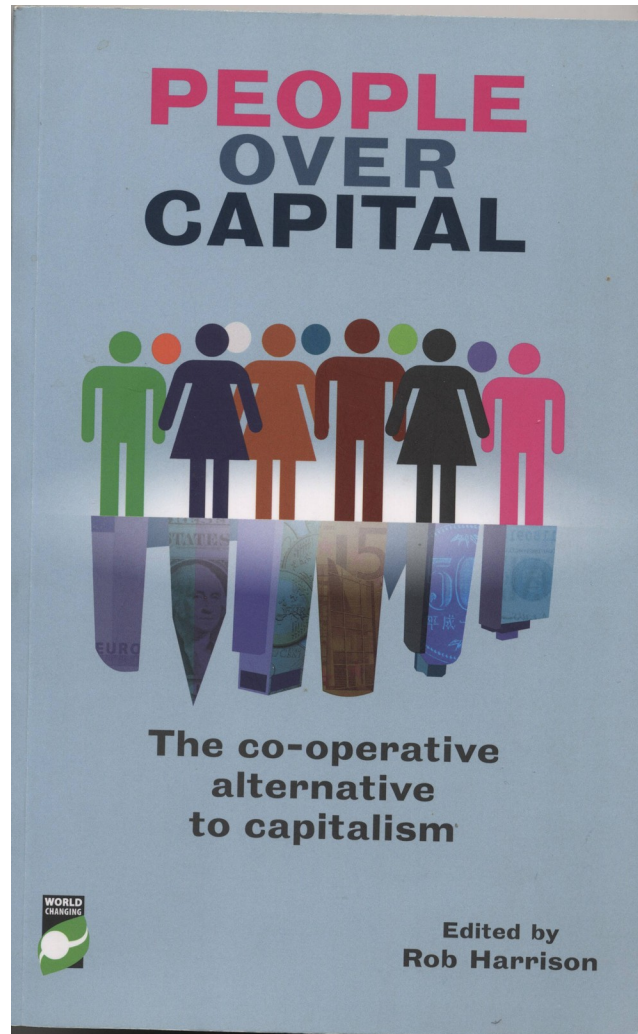
\*see the newsletter of June 2023: <https://www.principle5.coop/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/June-2023.pdf>



Many people (including myself) closed their bank account with the Co-operative Bank\* when it was lost to the Co-operative Group, and moved to Nationwide Building Society. We have this interesting book (pictured above) in the Resource Centre library which tells the story of Nationwide Building Society (previously called the Co-operative Permanent Building Society).

The P5 Library has many books like this which trace the co-operative story from the point of view of different co-operative and mutual societies.

\*The Co-operative Bank is now for the first time in its history, a mutual, as part of Coventry Building Society.



[People Over Capital](#) was published in 2013 by The New Internationalist in association with the Ethical Consumer (both co-operatives). This was the year before the International Year Of Co-operatives (2014). It's a collection of well written essays which address the question 'Is there a co-operative answer to capitalism?'

Daniel Crowe concludes his essay with these words. If they are not taken on board, co-operation is no more than a passing conversation which evaporates into the air. But if they are addressed, it means that a level of commitment is required which the co-operative movement has not seen for a long time.

**"We have to be open and honest and admit that, compared to the might of capitalism and the prerogative of the state, we might currently at best be marginal, but that we are the vanguard of a democratising wave that will wash over our**

**politics, our societies and our economies. We are a movement that seeks to put capital back into the hands and under the direction of the people, rather than defer responsibility to a remote bureaucracy, or leaving it to the profiteers with no allegiances other than Mammon.**

**We need to say no, this isn't a cuddly, wishy-washy, creed for liberal do-gooders or a synonym for state activity - this is a hands-on organisational model that is tough and robust, based on the notion that people and communities have to help themselves, that they shouldn't rely on the state to support them or keep allowing capitalist concerns to exploit them. We need to argue that instead of blaming, protesting, lamenting, and criticising, and relying on others to do things for us, we need to take action ourselves and get involved.**

**This is the alternative. No-one should expect things to be done for them: not by governments, not by private enterprise. This is our message: for too long people have withdrawn from meaningful political, economic, and social life, expecting things to be delivered for them, with little thought behind how things are made, how their consumer choices are influencing wider economic and social outcomes, and how political processes are conducted, decisions are made and resources allocated.**

**This needs to change - and co-operation provides the vehicle to do so. People need to take democratic ownership and control of their own lives - choosing voluntarily to associate and act in solidarity, equity, and equality to pool their power and resources and achieve more together than they can as individual citizens, producers, and consumers. This is our business model - yet its tough, but its also one that cares about other human beings, about the communities we live in and the world we inhabit.**

**It is a model and an ideology that seeks revolutionary social and economic change. It is this vision of a future co-operative society that so inspired the original architects, visionaries, and pioneering practitioners of the movement. They, like us today, know that our values and principles are timeless, and are of benefit to all humanity. But they are no use as words on a page. They need to be heard and acted upon.....”**

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**The Great chronicler of the Co-operative Movement, George Jacob Holyoake said:**

**...Co-operation asks no aid from the State; it petitions for no gift, disturbs no interests, attacks nobody's fortune, attempts no confiscation of existing gains, but clears its own ground, gathers in its own harvest, distributes the golden grain equitably among all the husbandmen. Without needing favours or incurring obligations, it establishes the industrious classes among the possessors of the fruits of the earth. As the power of self-existence in nature includes all other attributes, so self-help in the people includes all the conditions of progress. Co-operation is organised self-help—that is what the complexion of the future will be...**

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Suggestions for newsletter content are always welcome,  
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to visit the resource centre.

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