

## Pamphlet

WOMEN'S CO-OPERATIVE GUILDANNUAL CONGRESS  
GREAT YARMOUTH

MAY 27th, 28th, 29th and 30th, 1940

## RESOLUTIONS

## War and Peace.

1. "This Congress, believing that no good results are ever achieved by war, strongly urges H.M. Government to explore every possible avenue towards the cessation of hostilities.

"It further urges that a World Peace Conference be then called immediately to:—

"1. Consider all urgent matters in dispute between belligerents.

"2. Abolish the private manufacture of armaments.

"3. Bring about national disarmament.

"4. Reorganise world economic policy on a more equitable basis.

"5. Set up suitable machinery for the full and effective co-operation between nations to eliminate war in the future."

—CENTRAL COMMITTEE.

2. "This Congress of the Women's Co-operative Guild, comprising 90,000 wives and mothers, urges H.M. Government to set up a permanent Ministry of Peace. It further urges this Government to repeal the 'Conscription Act' as soon as this war ceases, that never again in Peace time shall there be conscription in the United Kingdom and thus to lead the world away from military force and destruction to constructive goodwill to all men."—ALSTON (BIRMINGHAM); BOWES PARK; FAIR GREEN; TYSELEY BRANCHES.

3. "That this Congress urges the International Women's Guild to call an International Women's Conference in a neutral country, with a view to discussing a just Peace and bringing hostilities to an end."—HAMMERSMITH; BROOK GREEN; SOUTHEND BRANCHES.

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4. "This Congress realises that this Imperialist war is only being waged for profit, expansion, and world domination, and its only results can be mass murder, increased poverty and misery for the workers of all countries. It further declares the political truce must be ended immediately to enable the workers to conduct a struggle to defeat the National Government, replacing it with a People's Government that will negotiate for a World Peace Conference, in order that the war may be ended and a permanent Peace established."—WILLESDEN GREEN; HOLLOWAY; NORTH BATTERSEA; WELWYN GARDEN CITY; HOLBORN; CALEDONIAN ROAD; SOUTHALL CENTRAL; LETCHWORTH; ALLENBY ROAD, SOUTHALL; STREATHAM; SOUTH HARROW BRANCHES.

5. "This Congress of the Women's Co-operative Guild, believing that no good to the workers of this or any other country can come through war, and realising that the present war was caused through the bitterness of the Peace Terms signed in 1919, suggest that no final Peace Treaty shall be signed until a period of two years after hostilities have ceased."—SMALLTHORNE; BERMONDSEY BRANCHES.

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6. "This Congress calls upon the leadership of the Co-operative Movement to express complete opposition to the plans of the National Government to spread the 'war against Hitlerism' and to turn it into a war against the Soviet Union, the land of Socialism."—KENTISH TOWN; WILLESDEN GREEN; HOLLOWAY AND CALEDONIAN ROAD; KENTON; HAMMERSMITH BRANCHES.

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7. "That this Congress strongly protests against the suppression of Peace endeavours of the Peace Pledge Union. We urge all lovers of Peace to continue their efforts in their crusade for Peace. We earnestly appeal to Co-operative and Labour Members of Parliament to press upon the Government not to suppress the advocates of Peace."—GLOUCESTER BRANCH.

**Co-operative Trade.**

8. "This Congress, believing that the extension of the Co-operative Movement is the surest way way to secure economic freedom for the peoples of all nations, re-affirms its loyalty and determination to support Co-operative productions and Retail Co-operative Societies. It realises that this war is bringing tremendous difficulties and placing grave trading restrictions on the Movement, and only by the loyal efforts of individual members can its strength be maintained.

"We pledge ourselves, as Guildswomen with a vital part to play in the life of the community, and as housewives with purchasing power, to face with courage the sacrifices the Movement may demand from us, and to do everything possible to increase Co-operative trading operations."—CENTRAL COMMITTEE.

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**Guild Subjects.**

9. "This Congress demands the immediate resignation of the Central Committee and the Guild Office Staff on the grounds that the Central Committee should have consulted the rank-and-file members before removing the General Secretary from office, and that the members of the staff do not possess adequate qualifications for the rates of pay received. We contend that a Special Committee of Inquiry, if set up, would have avoided legal proceedings, involving unnecessary expenditure on the part of the Movement. We deprecate the attitude of the Central Committee in ignoring the many requests from rank-and-file membership for such an inquiry. We deplore the length of time which has elapsed without a General Secretary."—HAVERING PARK BRANCH.

10. "This Congress views with grave concern the position relating to Miss Rose Simpson. In view of the unsatisfactory replies received from Central Committee, we are desirous of further investigation and request Central Committee to meet her trade union representative and thoroughly thrash the matter out."—ELM PARK; HIGHAMS PARK; NORTH FINCHLEY; CUSTOM HOUSE; CANNING TOWN; HARLESDEN MUSWELL HILL; WILLESDEN BRANCHES.

11. "This Congress wishes to ask for a special session at Annual Conference to consider the case of Miss Simpson so that such discussion may not dominate Conference."—POTTERS BAR; KENTISH TOWN BRANCHES.

**Pensions.**

12. "This Congress protests strongly against the institution of the Means Test for Old Age Pensioners. It calls upon the Government to grant £1 per week to husband and wife upon reaching the age of 60, to be granted unconditionally."—SOUTHALL CENTRAL; LAMBETH; EDGWARE; MILL HILL; WIGMORE; ELM PARK; FAIR GREEN; ST. JOHN'S WOOD; GOLDERS GREEN; CLIFTON (BRISTOL); SPARKHILL; THORNABY; WHEELWRIGHT LANE; HOUNSLOW; WHETSTONE; BIDSTON (BIRKENHEAD); NEHELLS; HUDDERSFIELD; SOUTHEND-ON-SEA; DOVER; DOLLIS PARK; EAST HAM; KENTON; HANWELL; FORD (PLYMOUTH); STOCKPORT; NEWPORT (MON.); BERMONDSEY; BURNAGE; BARKING; ROTHERHITHE; SOUTH ELMSALL; GREENFORD; SOUTHALL; LOWESTOFT; KINGSTON; TWICKENHAM; BRENTHAM; WEST HAMPSTEAD; CRICKLEWOOD; LETCHWORTH; KETTERING; MASBRO'; ABERDARE; WOOD GREEN.

13. "This Congress demands £1 per week for all old age pensioners, no Means Test, and a revision of Widows' Pensions and dependent children's Allowances."—MITCHAM LANE; KETTERING; MOUNT GOLD; SOUTHEND-ON-SEA; WESTCLIFF; HESWALL BRANCHES.

14. "That this Congress is of the opinion that women should not be deprived of medical benefit when receiving pensions at 60."—LOWESTOFT BRANCH.

15. "This Congress strongly objects to the statement made by H.M. Government that if the Old Age Pensions Bill was not settled immediately it would be shelved for six months. We think that it is a dictatorial statement and should be withdrawn at once."—KETTERING; EAST SOUTHSEA BRANCHES.

16. "This Congress wishes to draw the attention of the Government to the unjust treatment of Royal Dockyard pensioners who have to forego their pension if they return to work in war-time. This has been contributed to by the men by a stoppage of part of wages from the time they are established. This procedure does not apply to Army, Navy and Air Force being recalled. We trust the Government will rectify this unfairness."—EAST SOUTHSEA BRANCH.

#### Cost of Living.

17. "This Congress of housewives deplors the privations imposed on the community by the rising cost of living.

"It demands strong action on the part of the Government in the controlling and equitable rationing of all food commodities likely to become scarce, and for simpler and more direct methods of convicting war profiteers.

"It emphasises that rising prices cannot be adequately compensated by the small wage increases granted in certain industries. It asserts that effective Government action to stabilise prices is the only acceptable method in a community which includes large numbers of dependants of men serving in H.M. Forces, unemployed, and Old Age Pensioners striving to exist on small allowances."—CENTRAL COMMITTEE.

#### Allowances.

18. "This Congress calls upon the National Government to improve the allowances made to H.M. Forces, and to their wives and families. It also considers that an immediate allowance should be granted to dependants without conditions, knowing that considerable hardship is being forced upon parents whose income has been depleted, we therefore ask Co-operative and Labour Members of Parliament to press for substantial increases immediately."—MITCHAM LANE; LEYTON; GREENFORD; ST. JOHN'S WOOD; EDGWARE; SOUTHALL CENTRAL; EAST GREENWICH; MILL HILL; CUBITT TOWN AND MILLWALL; HESWALL; WORTHING; HIGH STREET, STRATFORD; SOUTHALL; HANWELL; CROUCH END AND HORNSEY; NORRIS GREEN; BOLEYN; BIRKENHEAD CENTRAL; NEW MALDEN; THORNABY BRANCHES.

19. "This Congress is horrified at the forcing down of the standard of living of the mass of the people through the totally inadequate dependants allowances. It therefore demands an immediate increase to a minimum of 35s. for the wife, 5s. for each child subject to further increases according to the rising cost of living. We feel it is the duty of every Guildswoman to take an active part in the campaign to secure this demand."—NORTH FINCHLEY; WELWYN GARDEN CITY; POTTERS BAR; NEW BARNET; HAMPSTEAD GARDEN SUBURB BRANCHES.

20. "This Congress, representing 90,000 women, urges the Government to increase the Public Assistance Aid to the unemployed and their dependants as the present scale now operating is totally inadequate with the ever-increasing cost of living."—SURBITON BRANCH.

21. "This Congress urges that the dependants of men in the Fighting Forces receive a minimum scale of 30s. weekly for wives, 6s. weekly for children, 30s. weekly for mother whose sole support was her son, 30s. weekly for mother whose husband is unemployed, 30s. weekly for other dependants, where son was sole support."—SOUTHCHURCH BRANCH.

22. "That this Congress urges the Government to give free travelling facilities to all serving with the Forces, for all leaves, granted on all transport, and further urges the Government to grant cheap parcel postage for home and overseas service."—BOLEYN; WOODFORD BRANCHES.

#### Education and Evacuation.

23. "This Congress views with grave dissatisfaction the inadequacy of war-time education, particularly in the evacuated and neutral areas. This has its repercussions, not only in the elementary stages of child education, but what is of far more serious import has been the means of retarding the studies of those children who are at this period eligible to sit for junior scholarships—thus in the case of working-class children ruling out any possibility of further higher education. We call upon the Government to release those schools now being used for war purposes, provide the necessary shelters, and in the reception areas give adequate facilities for communal living and the normal period of hours in school."—NEW MALDEN; CHEETHAM HILL; SOUTH ISLINGTON; KILBURN; WHETSTONE; HAMPSTEAD; WEST HAMPSTEAD; HAMPSTEAD GARDEN SUBURB BRANCHES.

24. "Believing that the experience of the first months of war has shown that evacuation cannot be a success without further provision for education, health, and social life in the reception areas, this Congress calls on the Government to commence forthwith a considered plan for the erection of residential nursery schools and hostels, camp schools, and social centres, with the object of removing the

present intolerable hardships and providing a permanently valuable nucleus for improved social conditions after the war. Congress instructs the Central Committee to carry out an energetic campaign for these aims in all areas."—WELWYN GARDEN CITY; HAMPSTEAD; BATTERSEA; LAINDON; WOLVERHAMPTON; BALHAM; WICKFORD; SOUTH ISLINGTON; HOLBORN; NEWPORT (MON.); OLD OAK; ACTON VALE; WILLESDEN GREEN; WESTCLIFF; HAMPSTEAD GARDEN SUBURB BRANCHES.

25. "This Congress views with alarm the suggestion made that Nursery Schools be attached to factories to leave children while mothers work in Government factories.

"It urges the Government to establish fully equipped Nursery Schools under ideal conditions and proper supervision."—LAINDON; WICKFORD; LETCHWORTH; NEWPORT (MON.); HOLBORN BRANCHES.

26. "This Congress considers that the payment of 6s. for evacuated children, with its Means Test, should be abolished. The increase of 2s. on the billeting should apply to all evacuated children and not only to those of 14-16.

"The Government's present policy is not only inadequate, but shows complete lack of concern for the welfare of children and mothers and is further evidence that the burdens of this war are being thrust upon the working class."—OLD OAK; ACTON VALE; WOODFORD (LONDON); LETCHWORTH BRANCHES.

### Health.

27. NERVOUS DISEASES—"This Congress earnestly draws the attention to the necessity of Clinics being opened at all places for the treatment of Nervous Diseases on the same lines as those in operation for the treatment of consumptive diseases where the patient can have the advice and treatment of medical psychologists."—MASBRO' BRANCH.

28. "This Congress, realising the red tape ruling the hospitals of this country, urges that better methods of treating patients be adopted because if a patient enters hospital with one complaint it is impossible for this patient to be treated for any other condition beyond the one that was originally entered for treatment."—NEW MALDEN BRANCH.

29. "This Congress urges the Government to increase the rationing for the manual worker to the same amount as the men in H.M. Forces."—EAST SOUTHSEA BRANCH.

30. "This Congress urges railway companies that conveniences be on all trains."—BLACKSTOCK ROAD BRANCH.

### Unemployment.

31. "This Congress demands that the Government be asked to raise the Unemployment and National Health Benefits to correspond with the rise in the cost of living as the present scales are entirely inadequate to provide the necessaries of life."—WEST HAMPSTEAD; WALLASEY; CRICKLEWOOD BRANCHES.

### Political Truce.

32. "That this Congress deplors the policy of the Co-operative leaders in supporting the political truce, and urges them to use all their influence with the Labour Party to get joint candidates put forward at by-elections, and to work for the repeal of the Act suspending Local Government Elections."—SOUTH HARROW; MUSWELL HILL; GLOUCESTER; HAMPSTEAD GARDEN SUBURB BRANCHES.

### Personal Injuries (Emergency Provisions) Act, 1939.

33. "This Congress of Co-operative Women, representing 90,000 housewives, views with dismay the refusal of the Government to grant compensation to housewives, unless they are gainfully employed, who are injured through or by aerial bombardment, under the Personal Injuries (Emergency Provisions) Act, 1939. We demand that the grant allowed for the helper needed in such an emergency, be paid direct to the housewife concerned.

"Furthermore, we demand that pensions for children similarly permanently incapacitated be granted."—SUTTON BRIDGE; LEYTON; MITCHAM LANE; DARLINGTON; CROUCH END AND HORNSEY; DEVONSHIRE HILL; CHISWICK CENTRAL; WEST HENDON; HENDON CENTRAL; BURNT OAK BRANCHES.

### Children's Allowances.

34. "This Congress of Co-operative women demands a re-distribution of the national wealth and the abolition of poverty as a fundamental issue in the New Social Order. We therefore stress the fact that only by a system of Children Allowances can this be achieved. We urge, therefore, that a flat rate of 5s. per week, payable at birth until school-leaving age, is the urgent claim of this Congress."—ALSTON (BIRMINGHAM); MARCH BRANCHES.

### Military Tribunals.

35. "This Congress calls on the Government to give instructions immediately to the Military Tribunals to ensure the equal respect and treatment of political and religious objectors appealing under that part of the Act dealing with Conscientious Objection to Military Service."—FAIRFIELD (WARRINGTON) BRANCH.

### Compulsory Savings.

36. "This Congress places on record its total opposition to all schemes and forms of compulsory savings out of workers wages. It regards any such attempts as being a drive towards an increasingly lower standard of living and an attack on the principles of trade unionism. Congress believes that the interest and financing of wars is the business of the Capitalist class and they should be made to pay for it."—HOLLOWAY ; NORTH BATTERSEA ; CALEDONIAN ROAD BRANCHES.

### Blackout.

37. "This Congress views with alarm the increasing number of deaths and terrible accidents due to the black-out conditions imposed by the National Government. We demand a reasonable amount of street lighting next winter, also lighting for shopping purposes."—ALSTON (BIRMINGHAM) BRANCH.

### Unemployment Fund.

38. "That this Congress protests against any moneys being taken from the Unemployment Fund for investment in War Loan until the unemployed get a fair deal."—HOLBORN BRANCH.

### Victimisation of Conscientious Objectors.

39. "That this Congress of Women's Co-operative Guild views with alarm a tendency which is apparent on the part of some trade unionists to urge their fellow members not to work with Conscientious Objectors. This Congress is of the opinion that since legislation has provided for persons recognised by the appropriate Tribunals, as Conscientious Objectors to exercise their freedom, it is not desirable that trade unionists should override the law by taking action of the character here condemned."—CLOUDS HILL ; TOOTING JUNCTION ; CLIFTON (BRISTOL) ; BUSH HILL PARK BRANCHES.

### Special Allowances.

40. "This Congress recommends that the plight of women whose husbands are mentally deficient or incapable of work through illness or accident be considered with a view to granting an allowance on a par with a widow's by the Government."—NORTH BATTERSEA BRANCH.

### Industrial Registration.

41. "This Congress protests against the action of the Government in refusing to allow unemployed men in reserved occupations to take up work outside their Industrial Registration."—BATTERSEA BRANCH.

### Municipal Loans.

42. "This Congress calls upon the Government to sanction the reduction of rates of interest on Municipal loans of high interest bearing values, thus alleviating the rates, which are mostly payable

by the wage-earning classes. Following the lead of the Government in converting a portion of the national loans to a lower rate of interest with a consequent saving of £8,000,000 annually."—ERDINGTON BRANCH.

### Cultivation of Waste Land.

43. "In view of the shortage of food, and the need for ships bringing other commodities for the prosecution of the war, this Congress demands that the Government confiscate all suitable waste land, other than that used for grazing purposes, and that the cultivation of same be proceeded with immediately. In the event of labour not being available, or sufficiently near enough to carry this out, free transport to and from workers' homes, by rail and road, should be put into operation."—HARROW ROAD BRANCH.

### Civil Liberties.

44. "That this Congress protests against the unlimited powers given to the Government by the General Protection Act and the resulting curtailment of civil liberties."—CLIFTON (BRISTOL) BRANCH.

### Co-operative Parties.

45. "This Congress calls upon all Guild branches to affiliate to the Co-operative Party, local and national. When no Society Party exists, Guilds are urged to immediately table resolutions for Societies' meetings, that Society Parties be formed."—BENTLEY (DONCASTER) BRANCH.

### Women in Industry.

46. "This Congress protests at the danger of Winston Churchill's new Scheme for drawing millions of women into industry at low rates, through the starvation levels of dependants of men in H.M. Forces, who will be compelled to take jobs at low rates, and urges the Central Committee to send copies of this resolution to trade unions so that women may be recruited into the unions to safeguard the interests of all workers."—COLLIER ROW ; NEW MALDEN ; POTTERS BAR ; NEW BARNET ; NORTH FINCHLEY ; ST. JOHN'S WOOD ; LETCHWORTH ; SOUTH ISLINGTON ; SOUTHBEND-ON-SEA ; MUSWELL HILL ; LEYTON ; SOUTHALL CENTRAL ; HAMPSTEAD GARDEN SUBURB ; NORTH BATTERSEA ; CRANFORD BRANCHES.

47. "This Congress is concerned, that in supplementing the wages of employees by a War Bonus, such Bonuses are less for women than men, and calls upon the Co-operative Movement and the Trade Unions to seriously consider removing this anomaly."—LEYTON BRANCH.

**Guild Headquarters.**

48. "This Conference is of the opinion that in the interests of the efficient running of the Guild, headquarters should return to London."—HARROW ROAD ; DOLLIS PARK ; EDGWARE ; MILL HILL BRANCHES.

49. "This Congress disapproves of any part of the Guild Head Office premises (17 Prescott Street) being used as a dwelling-place."—DOLLIS PARK BRANCH.

**"Reynolds News."**

50. "That this Congress condemns the policy of "Reynolds News" as dangerous to our Movement and the interest of the workers generally. We consider, that for 'Reynolds News' to advocate war, is contrary to our principles, as we have always striven for peace. We therefore urge our paper to adopt a policy for Peace and the cessation of hostilities.

"We consider that its violent attack on the Soviet Union is against the international working class and should cease. That for a paper claiming to represent a large body of workers to advocate the adoption of deferred wages is acting against our interests. We deplore the ready assistance it has given the Government and demand that our one national newspaper voices the views of Co-operators."—SOUTHEND-ON-SEA ; BUSHEY BRANCHES.

**N.H. Insurance.**

\*51. "This Congress deplores the fact that in this time of distress, the unemployed and the National Health still have to serve a waiting period of three days, thereby causing increasing hardship, and call upon the Central Committee to do all in their power to help to have this remedied."—HIGHAM HILL BRANCH.

**Supply of Milk.**

\*52. "This Congress of Women's Co-operative Guild urges the Ministry of Health to make arrangements satisfactory to the Consumer and Distributor to implement the suggestions set out in Circular 1840, relative to the supply of milk at free and reduced prices to nursing and expectant mothers and to children under 5 years of age."—WEST HAMPSTEAD ; KILBURN BRANCHES.

**Public Health Service.**

\*53. "This Congress calls upon the Ministry of Health urging that power be given for the extension of the Public Health Services, with the provision of an understanding woman doctor, to meet the needs of the middle-aged woman, so that she can seek medical advice, and if she so desires obtain periodical examination."—HARBOURNE BRANCH.

**National Medical Service.**

\*54. "This Congress urges the Government to take steps immediately to institute a National Medical Service whereby all present hospitals, clinics (dental or otherwise) should come under a national medical scheme, so that all persons, independent of means, can have equal service and that their need should be the deciding factor and not wealth."—KENTON BRANCH.

**National Health Additional Benefits.**

\*55. "This Congress deplores the fact that Approved Societies have ceased to allow Additional Benefits to women under the National Health Insurance, and urges that their decision be revised."—VANGE AND PITSEA ; BENFLEET BRANCHES.

**Training for Blind.**

\*56. "This Congress urges the Government to take immediate steps to provide the necessary facilities whereby both civilian and war blinded will receive training fitting them to earn their own livelihood under trade union conditions."—KINGSTON ; TWICKENHAM BRANCHES.

**A.R.P.**

\*57. "This Congress demands deep bomb-proof shelters be built on the lines laid down by the Finsbury plan."—CHEETHAM HILL BRANCH.

**B.B.C.**

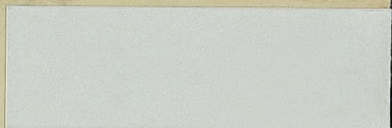
\*58. "This Congress representing 90,000 members, considers their organisation is not being fairly treated by the B.B.C. so far as other women's organisations are concerned.

"They call upon the Central Committee to take the necessary steps to approach the B.B.C. that they be asked to broadcast at least part or whole of the President's address, as given to the delegates at all Women's Co-operative Guild Congresses."—PETERBOROUGH BRANCH.

**Congress, 1941.**

59. "That the Congress be held in Watford (Herts) in 1941."—QUEENS ROAD WATFORD BRANCH.

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\*57. This Congress demands deep bond-proof shelters be built on the lines laid down by the Finbury plan.—CHERRAM HILL BRANCH.

B.B.C.

\*58. The Congress representing 50,000 members considers that the B.B.C. is not being fairly treated by the Government, so far as other women's organizations are concerned. They call upon the Central Committee to take the necessary steps to approach the B.B.C. if they be asked to broadcast at least part or whole of the President's address, as given to the delegates at all women's Co-operative Guild Congresses.—PATERSON BRANCH.

Co-operative Year

\*59. That the Congress be held in Waltham (Herts) in 1941.—QUEEN'S ROAD WATFORD BRANCH.

Co-operative Training Society.

\*60. The Congress urges the Government to take steps to ensure that the Co-operative Training Society is able to provide adequate training for all those who wish to become Co-operative workers.—QUEEN'S ROAD WATFORD BRANCH.

