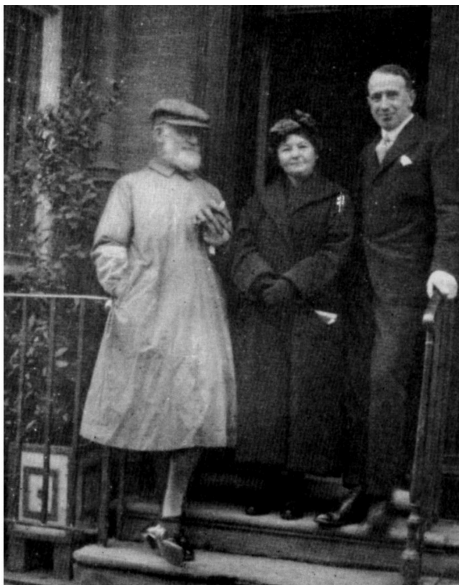


# Margaret Bondfield (1873-1953)



**Prominent trade unionist, women's rights activist, and politician who achieved several historical firsts.**

**By Sue Miller & Chris Pounds**



During the 1922 campaign both Bondfield and Shaw were hosted at 78 Derrgate by fellow Fabian and Labour supporter W.J. Bassett-Lowke.



**Margaret Bondfield campaigning in Northampton 1920**  
Courtesy Leeds Postcards

## Early Political Career

Margaret was a key figure in the labour movement, becoming the first woman to chair the General Council of the Trades Union Congress.

## Parliamentary Career

After two unsuccessful attempts in Northampton (1920 and 1922), she was elected as a Labour MP for Northampton in 1923. She was one of the first three women elected as Labour MPs, alongside Susan Lawrence and Dorothy Jewson. She served as Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Labour during the first minority Labour government in 1924.

## First Female Cabinet Minister

In the Labour government of 1929–31, she was appointed Minister of Labour, making her the first woman to hold a Cabinet post and the first woman to be a Privy Counsellor. Her time as Minister of Labour (1929–31) was marked by economic crises and controversy over her consideration of cuts to unemployment benefits, which alienated some in the Labour

movement. Bondfield did not join Ramsay MacDonald's National Government when the Labour government collapsed in 1931.

**Carry on! BONDFIELD.**

**Co-operative FACTS!** *Versus* **Tory & Liberal FICTION!**

**A PROOF OF RUSSIAN INTEGRITY.**

In 1919, the English C.W.S., Ltd. consigned to Russia, food stuff and other commodities to the value of £65,000. The "white army" financed by English Capital, and backed by Lloyd George and Winston Churchill, were at that time, endeavouring by military attack, to defeat the Russian people's Government. This army commandeered, or in other words stole these goods, and incidently forgot to pay for them. The "Centro Soyus" which is the all Russian Co-operative Society, and the trading agency for the Soviet Government, honorably accepted the liability, and has paid the C.W.S the £65,000, plus interest. So satisfied are the C.W.S. Directors, with their trading relations with Russia, that Goods to the value of £150,000 have recently been dispatched.

The Labour Government Treaty with Russia, would mean millions of pounds of productive work for the work people of this country.

We must make Ramsay Macdonald Premier again to continue his good work for the betterment of conditions at home, and pacification abroad.

All who desire friendship among nations, peace and prosperity at home, will vote for Margaret Bondfield.

**WILL ROGERS,**  
*President Northampton  
Co-operative Society.*

Printed and Published by Npres Printers, Ltd., 96, St. Mary's Street, Northampton.

In the early 1920's Margaret Bondfield challenged the British Government's military intervention in the Russian Civil War.



She visited the new Soviet Republic in April 1920. In addition to meeting many Russian citizens she shared an audience with Vladimir Lenin !



# Women's Co-operative Guild

29, Winchester Road, Hampstead, London, N.W. 3.

*General Secretary:* Miss A. HONORA ENFIELD

## To the Co-operative Women of Northampton.

WIVES and MOTHERS,

October 16th, 1924.

You are again being called upon after a very short notice to elect your representative to Parliament. The fight will be a very keen one and there will be all kinds of misrepresentation both through the press and from the platform.

Think well over this position.

To-day big business is coming out into the open in the political struggle. They are determined to frustrate every endeavour of the Workers' Party to prevent their profiteering on our food and homes.

You have the opportunity between now and October 29th to give an answer to that by working and voting for Miss Bondfield, the first Woman Minister of Great Britain.

Miss Bondfield has a splendid record of service given to women in the Trade Union Movement, and to wives and mothers, not only in our own country but also abroad. Her work on behalf of Education, Peace and all matters that have for their object the upliftment of the people is well known.

She has a wide experience of the trials and struggles of the workers, she has shared your difficulties and knows your needs. She has always stood up for the rights of yourselves and your children. Miss Bondfield stands for a People's Government pledged to seek Peace in Europe for the interest of all its people, and the restoration of trade, which alone can bring you work and prosperity. Her party is out to abolish taxes on your food, to bring you better health, better education and better homes within reach of the people.

What is your share going to be in this great achievement?

Work early, work late, for a glorious victory for Co-operation and Labour on October 29th.

Yours fraternally,

(Signed) A. HONORA ENFIELD.

Printed and Published by Xpress Printers, Ltd., 36, St Mary's Street, Northampton.

Campaign material produced by the Northampton Branch of the **Co-operative Wholesale Society** promoting the re-election of Margaret Bondfield MP in 1924. The CWS was the predecessor of the modern Cooperative Society and supplied products to Co-operative stores.

An appeal to the **Co-operative Women of Northampton** to support Bondfield from the General Secretary of the Women's Co-operative Guild.