

Women and the Co-operative Movement

CO-OPERATIVE WOMEN'S GUILD

SOME KEY DATES

by

KATHLEEN KEMPTON and

ANGELA HARDY

- 1883 "Women's Corner" started in Co-operative News by Mrs. Acland. Responses to the Corner by Mrs. Lawrenson of Woolwich led to plans for a womens organization - the "League". First branch formed at Hebden Bridge, Yorks.
- 1884 Change of name to Guild.
- 1886 First national conference of Guild and first grant - £10 from Co-op. Union.
- 1888 Beginnings of work with Women's Trade Union Association. First guildswoman elected to Co-op. Union Committee. First guildswoman attends French Co-op. Congress, beginning Guild's international links.
- 1889 Margaret Llewelyn Davies becomes General Secretary.
- 1890 Beginning of Scottish Co-operative Women's Guild.
- 1901 Guildswomen main promoters of Lancashire and Cheshire female textile workers

petition of 31,000 signatures in favour of women's suffrage, presented to Parliament. Miss Reddish, a Guild National president main organizer. This led to formation of Women's Social and Political Union for fight for vote. Guild campaign for old age pensions.

- 1902-3 Sunderland Project - Guild campaign to set up a Co-op. shop in a poor area, together with an adjoining "settlement" with a social worker. Though successful from a trading point of view, and not dispensing "charity" like the other settlements established at this time, the local Society decided to close the store and the project folded.
- 1904-5 Health of School Children campaign
- 1908 Campaign for Equal Pay
- 1909-15 Divorce Law Reform campaign - led to withdrawal of Co-op. Union grant for four years for fear of upsetting Catholics.
- 1915 "Maternity - Letters from Working Women" published.
- 1919 "Woman's Outlook" begins publication.
- 1921 Foundation of International Women's Guild.
- 1922 Margaret Llewelyn Davies first woman to chair Co-op. Union Congress.
- 1923 Guild Congress vote in favour of setting up birth control clinics.

- 1926      Guild raises £5,000 for Miners Strike Fund during General Strike.
- 1931      Publication of "Life as We Have Known It".
- 1934      Congress vote in favour of legalization of abortion.
- 1920s & 1930s      Guild Peace campaigns and the "White Poppy".
- 1936      Assistance to Spanish Civil War children and families.
- Second World War - Guild provides food in air raid shelters.
- Early/mid 1950's - "Cost of Living" campaign.
- Early 1960's - Campaigns for Comprehensive Education; Peace Caravan; Overseas Co-operation.