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Collection Summary

Repository: Archives and Special Collections Library, Vassar College Libraries

Creator: Bondfield, Margaret, 1873-1953

Title: Margaret Grace Bondfield Papers

Inclusive Dates: 1854-1951

Bulk Dates: 1898-1951

Quantity: 14 cubic feet (14 boxes, 1 OV folder, and 17 books)

Abstract: Correspondence, clippings, speeches, publications, government documents, and other materials concerning Bondfield's work with labor and trade unions, primarily in Great Britain, but also Australia, Canada, the United States and other countries.

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Biographical Note

Margaret Bondfield, (1873-1953) trade union leader and first British woman cabinet minister, was born in humble circumstance near Chard, Somerset. "Maggie," as she was known all her life, went to work at age thirteen as a teacher in a state-aided school. Two years later she got work as a shop assistant. Low wages, long hours, and the living-in system sparked her interest in the National Union of Shop Assistants and led to her lifelong involvement with the British labor movement. The organizations with which she was involved included the Trades Union Congress, Women's Trade Union League, National Federation of Women Workers, and the International Labour Organization. On all these fronts she fought for the rights of women workers and for the recognition of women within the movement. As a socialist she opposed the limited bill for female emancipation and stood for adult suffrage.

Early in her career Bondfield joined the Independent Labour Party. In a six-year preliminary career, she served as secretary to the Ministry of Labour in the first Labour government and became the first woman cabinet member when she was appointed Minister of Labour in 1929. Upon retirement in 1939 she devoted much of her time to social-service groups. Her autobiography, entitled *A Life's Work* (1949), concerned mainly with the "radical" causes for which she worked.

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Scope and Content Note

Correspondence, clippings, speeches, publications, government documents, and other printed material concerning her involvement in the Labour Party and its election campaigns, 1919-1947; unemployment insurance, strikes, and juvenile employment, 1912-1931; political trip to Russia in 1920; political and labor concerns in Australia, 1929-1941; British immigration to Canada, 1924-1938; postwar affairs in Germany, 1946-1947; trips to America, 1910-1949; and various women's groups including the International Congress of Working Women, Women's Group on Public Welfare, National Institute of Houseworkers, the Shaw Training School, and the Women's Peace Crusade, 1921-1940. Correspondents include Helen Lockwood, Edith and Grace Abbott, Clement Atlee, Angelica Balabanoff, Martha Anderson, Mary Anderson, William H. Beveridge, Ernst Bevan, Edward Carpenter, Madame Joliet-Curie, Mary Dingman, David Lilienthal, J. Ramsey MacDonald, Violet Markham, Frieda S. Miller, Mrs. Vijaylaxmi Pandit, Frances Perkins, Eleanor Roosevelt, Rose Schneiderman, and Lillian Wald. Personal and travel diaries, 1898, 1908, 1910-1951. Correspondence with John Hilton and Percy Wallis concerning wage and price controls, 1932. Bondfield's articles, broadcasts, speeches, and related correspondence, 1902-1948, and clippings about her, 1898-1949.

Manuscripts of her books, *MY LEISURE*, 1947, and *A LIFE'S WORK*, 1948. Family correspondence, 1896-1948, three letters to her father William Bondfield from Samuel Blasdale in America, 1854-1861, and manuscript on local history by J.S. Bondfield, 1880. Miscellaneous memorabilia, photographs, bibliographies, and notes on the collections.

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Access and Use

Access

This collection is open for research according to the [regulations of the Vassar College Archives and Special Collections Library](#), without any additional restrictions.

Restrictions on Use

Permission to quote (publish) from unpublished or previously published material must be obtained as described in the [regulations of the Vassar College Archives and Special Collections Library](#).
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Subject Headings**Names:**

- Abbott, Edith, 1876-1957
- Abbott, Grace, 1878-1939
- Anderson, Martha
- Anderson, Mary, 1872-1964
- Atlee, C. R. (Clement Richard), 1883-1967
- Balabanoff, Angelica, 1878-1965
- Bevan, Ernst
- Beveridge, William Henry Beveridge, Baron, 1879-1963
- Blasdale, Samuel
- Bondfield family
- Bondfield, J.S.
- Bondfield, William
- Carpenter, Edward, 1844-1929
- Dingman, Mary Agnes, 1875-1961
- Hilton, John, 1880-1943
- Joliet-Curie, Irène, 1897-1956
- Lilienthal, David, 1899-1981
- Lockwood, Helen Drusilla, approximately 1891-1971
- MacDonald, James Ramsey, 1866-1937
- Markham, Violet R. (Violet Rosa)
- Miller, Frieda Segelke, 1889-1973
- Pandir, Vijaya Lakshmir, 1900-
- Perkins, Frances, 1882-1965
- Roosevelt, Eleanor, 1884-1962
- Schneiderman, Rose, 1882-
- Wald, Lillian D., 1867-1940
- Wallis, Percy

Organizations:

- International Congress of Working Women
- International Labour Organisation
- Labour Party (Great Britain)
- National Federation of Women Workers
- National Institute of Houseworkers
- Shaw Training School
- Trades Union Congress
- Women's Group on Public Welfare (England)
- Women's Peace Crusade
- Women's Trade Union League

Subjects:

- Children--Employment
- Civil rights--Great Britain
- Elections--Great Britain
- Feminists
- Insurance, Unemployment--Great Britain
- Labor and laboring classes--Australia
- Labor and laboring classes--Great Britain
- Strikes and lockouts--Great Britain
- Trade-unions--Great Britain--Societies, etc.
- Wage-price policy--Great Britain
- Women and peace
- Women in politics--Great Britain
- Women social reformers
- Women's rights--Great Britain
- Women--Great Britain--Diaries
- Women--Great Britain--Employment
- Women--Great Britain--Social conditions

- Women--Great Britain--Societies and clubs
- World War, 1939-1945--Germany

Places:

- Australia--Politics and government--1901-1945
- Canada--Emigration and immigration
- Germany--Economic conditions--1945-
- Germany--Social conditions--1945-
- Great Britain--Economic conditions--20th century
- Great Britain--Emigration and immigration
- Great Britain--Social conditions--20th century
- Soviet Union--Description and travel
- Soviet Union--Politics and government--1917-1936
- United States--Description and travel

Document Types:

- Diaries
- Photographs

VCL Categories

- Politics
- War and War Crimes
- Women's History

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Encoded by Elizabeth Clarke, November 2006.

[Top](#)**Administrative Information****Preferred Citation**

Margaret Grace Bondfield Papers, Archives and Special Collections Library, Vassar College Libraries.

Processing Information

Original processing date unknown.

Acquisition Information

Gift of Estate of Helen Lockwood, VC 1912.

[Top](#)**Series List**

[Series I. Biographical Material and Ephemera \(Boxes 1 and 12\)](#)

[Series II. Family Material \(Boxes 1-2\)](#)

[Series III. Labour Party and Election Campaigns \(Boxes 3-5\)](#)

[Series IV. Russia, 1920 \(Box 5A\)](#)

[Series V. Trips to America and Folders on Organizations \(Boxes 6, 6A and 7\)](#)[Series VI. Miscellaneous \(Boxes 7-11\)](#)[Series VII. Books and other Published Material](#)**Container List****Series I. Biographical Material and Ephemera**

Folder 1.1	Lists relating to the collection and notes about Helen Lockwood's acquaintance with Margaret Bondfield and her interest in editing the papers
Folder 1.2	Biographical information, including <i>The Intractable Million: Margaret Bondfield and Unemployment Insurance</i> , by Barbara Winkler, 1974
Folder 12.1	Diaries, 1898, 1908, 1910-1912
Folder 12.2	Diaries, 1913-1915
Folder 12.3	Diaries, 1916-1918
Folder 12.4	Diaries, 1919-1920
Folder 12.5	Diaries, 1921-1923
Folder 12.6	Diaries, 1924-1925
Folder 12.7	Diaries, 1926-1927
Folder 12.8	Diaries, 1928-1930
Folder 12.9	Diaries, 1932-1934
Folder 12.10	Diaries, 1935, 1937-1939
Folder 12.11	Diaries, 1940-1942
Folder 12.12	Diaries, 1943-1946
Folder 12.13	Diaries, 1947-1948
Folder 12.14	Diaries, 1949
Folder 12.15	Diaries, 1950-1951
Folder 12.16	Miscellaneous notebooks
Folder 12.17	Bondfield passports
Folder 12.18	Union membership cards
Folder 12.19	Bondfield business cards
Folder 12.20	Fragments of address books
Folder 12.21	Travel brochures
Folder 12.22	Road maps
Folder 12.23	Picture postcards
Folder 12.24	Clippings about Bondfield
Oversize Multi-Collection Box	Press clippings about Bondfield, 1938
Folder 12.25	American newspaper clippings, 1948-1949
Folder 12.26	Galley fragment Also, a folio of US. press cuttings, 1938

Series II. Family Material

Folder 1.3	A manuscript, "Glimpses of Local History," by J.S. Bondfield, 1880
Folder 1.4	William Bondfield [father of M.B.]. Includes 3 letters from Samuel Blasdale, a friend who came to America in 1853, 1854-1861
Folder 1.5	Rev. George Taylor [grandfather].
Folder 1.6	Annie [sister].
Folder 1.7	Katie [sister].
Folder 1.8	Frank [brother] and Rose
Folder 1.9	Rev. George Henry Bondfield [brother].
Folder 1.10	Harriet Taylor [aunt].
Folder 1.11	Bondfield family correspondence, 1896-1948
Folder 1.12	Stringfellow aeroplane

Folder 1.13	Programs, invitations, and public appeals.
Folder 1.14	Companion of Honor Congratulations, 1948
Folder 1.15	Passports
Folder 1.16	Pictures
Folder 1.17	Pictures
Folder 1.18	Communications from the Royal Family
Folder 1.19	Programs and news items, Silver Jubilee of George V, coronation of George VI, etc,
Folder 1.20	Biographical information on about 20 individuals, including Jane Assams, Keir Hardie, Margaret McDonald, and H.G. Wells.
Box 2	Correspondence with: Edith Abbott, Grace Abbott, Martha Anderson, Clement Atlee, Angelica Balbanoff, William H. Beveridge, Ernst Bevan, Edward Carpenter, Madam Joliet-Curie, Mary Dingman, David Lillienthal, Helen Lockwood, J. Ramsey MacDonald, Violet Markham, Frieda S. Miller, Mrs. Vijaylaxmi Pandit, Frances Perkins, Eleanor Roosevelt, Rose Schneiderman, and Lillian Wald.

Series III. Labour Party and election campaigns

Folder 3.1	Labour Party newspapers and campaign literature and M.B. campaign speeches, 1920-1947
Folder 3.2	Parliamentary candidature, Northampton, 1919-1932
Folder 3.3 -3.4	Correspondence and campaign literature Wallsend, including by-election, July 1926
Folder 3.5	Wallsend cases
Folder 3.6	Letters of congratulation on appointment as Minister of Labor, 1929
Folder 3.7	Letters regarding resignation and other correspondence on politics, 1931
Folder 3.8	General election followed by an album of clippings and pictures, 1935
Folder 3.9	Chard (Somerset)
Folder 3.10	Financial correspondence, reports and balance sheets, 1926-1935
Folder 3.11	Public-address equipment
Folder 3.12	Miscellaneous Labour Party publications
Folder 4.1	Insurance Bill, 1912
Folder 4.2-4.4	Unemployment insurance, including Special National Conference and the Blanesburgh Report, 1926-1927
Folder 4.5	General Strike, File of The British Worker, official strike news bulletin, 1926
Folder 4.6	Books for Children bill, 1928
Folder 4.7	Juvenile Employment
Folder 4.8	Minister of Labour
Folder 4.9	Miscellaneous white papers from government departments, 1930-1931
Folder 4.10	Rationalization, 1931
Folder 4.11	Cabinet crisis, 1931
Folder 4.12	Miscellaneous government publications
Folder 5.1	Correspondence with Australia and New Zealand, 1929-1941
Folder 5.2 -5.4	Canada and the British Overseas Settlement Delegation. Correspondence, reports, publications, and clippings, 1924
Folder 5.5	Canada. Resumption of British immigration and Page Croft-Dalgleish tour of British Colombia, 1938
Folder 5.6	Overseas Settlement Committee, 1931
Folder 5.7 -5.8	Germany. Control Commission for Germany. British Elementary Education Branch. Includes documents, briefings, reports, correspondence, and more. Also, a trip to Switzerland, 1946-1947

Series IV. Russia 1920

Folder 5A.1	"Russian Diary," 7-30 May 1920 (MS)
Folder 5A.2	"Russian Diary," 7-30 May 1920 (TS)
Folder 5A.3	"Russian Diary" - including Stockholm en route to Reval, 7-19 May 1920 (TS)
Folder 5A.4	"Russian Diary" 31 May - 16 Jul 1920 (TS)
Folder 5A.5-5A.9	Reports, correspondence
Folder 5A.10	Theatre bills
Folder 5A.11-5A.12	Publications
Folder 5A.13	The Woman Worker
Folder 5A.14	Speech of Smecalova

Series V. Trips to America and folders on organizations

Folder 6.1	"American Diary" - Notes and original drafts, [1938 - 1941]
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- Folder 6.2 "American Diary" - Original manuscript, Apr 1938 - Jan 1939
- Folder 6.3 My Leisure - ms - chapters 1-6 [includes "American Diary"], 1947
- Folder 6.4 My Leisure - ms - chapters 7-8 [includes "American Diary"], 1947
- Folder 6.5 My Leisure - copy 2 - chapters 1-5 [includes "American Diary"], 1947
- Folder 6.6 My Leisure - copy 2 - chapters 6-8 [includes "American Diary"], 1947
- Folder 6.7 Correspondence re: My Leisure, 1953, 1978
- Folder 6.8 Trips to U.S., 1910, 1919
- Folder 6.9 Trips to U.S. - snapshots, postcards, 1910, 1919
- Folder 6.10 International Labor Conference, Washington, DC, 1919
- Folder 6.11 Washington Maternity Convention, 1921
- Folder 6.12 Trip to U.S., 1926 - 1927
- Folder 6.13 U.S. notes, 1933
- Folder 6.14 U.S. press clippings, 1933
- Folder 6.15 Collected U.S. publications, 1933
- Folder 6.16 Collected U.S. government publications, 1933
- Folder 6.17 Notes and correspondence, 1938
- Folder 6.18 Collected U.S. press clippings, 1934 - 1943
- Folder 6A.1 "American Diary," 17 June 1938
- Folder 6A.2 "American Diary," 27 June 1938
- Folder 6A.3 "American Diary," 26 June - 7 July [1938]
- Folder 6A.4 "American Diary," 12 July - 6 Aug [1938]
- Folder 6A.5 "American Diary," 7-10 Aug [1938]
- Folder 6A.6 "American Diary," 1-11 Sept [1938]
- Folder 6A.7 "American Diary," 1-18 Sept [1938]
- Folder 6A.8 "American Diary," 1-22 Sept [1938]
- Folder 6A.9 "American Diary," 23 Sept - 30 Oct [1938]
- Folder 6A.10 "American Diary," 19 Sept - 9 Nov [1938]
- Folder 6A.11 "American Diary," 4 - 30 Nov [1938]
- Folder 6A.12 "American Diary" - Berea College, Kentucky, [n. d.]
- Folder 6A.13 "American Diary" - Chinsegut Hill Sanctuary, 24 May 1938
- Folder 6A.14 "American Diary" - Civilian Conservation Corps camps, [n. d.]
- Folder 6A.15 "American Diary" - Cincinnati, The City Charter Committee, [n. d.]
- Folder 6A.16 "American Diary" - Education and Housing, 15 Aug 1938
- Folder 6A.17 "American Diary" - Lessons I Have Learned in America, [n. d.]
- Folder 6A.18 "American Diary" - The Ministry of Labor and the Trade Unions, 20 Aug 1938
- Folder 6A.19 "American Diary" - President Cardenas and Petroleum, [n. d.]
- Folder 6A.20 "American Diary" - Ramon Beteta, 29 July 1938
- Folder 6A.21 "American Diary" - Interview with Trotsky, Aug 1938
- Folder 6A.22 "American Diary" - The TVA, [n. d.]
- Folder 6A.23 "American Diary" - Unemployment Service and Social Security, 31 May 1938
- Folder 7.1 Programs, speeches, and publications relating to American trips, 1938 and 1941-43, and undated American papers. Includes report on a trip to Mexico, 1938, 1938/1941-1943
- Folder 7.2 American trips, and undated American papers. Includes report on a trip to Mexico.
- Folder 7.3 American correspondence, 1942-1943
- Folder 7.3A Grand Coulee Dam, 1938
- Folder 7.3B Publications relating to social security, 1939
- Folder 7.4 American magazines and documents, 1940
- Folder 7.5 American magazines, 1943-1945
- Folder 7.6 Correspondence relating to American trip, 1948-1949

Series VI. Miscellaneous

- Folder 7.7 International Labour Conference and International Congress of Working Women, 1921
- Folder 7.8 Correspondence with John Hilton and Percy Wallis relating to wage and price levels, 1932
- Folder 7.9 Miscellaneous publications relating to labor unions and women workers.
- Folder 7.10 Women's Group on Public Welfare. Includes correspondence, programs, and publications.
- Folder 7.11 Central Committee on Women's Training and Employment
- Folder 7.12 National Institute of Houseworkers
- Folder 7.13 Residential College for Working Women

Folder 7.14	The Shaw Training School, 1939-1940
Folder 7.15	The Mary MacArthur Holiday Home
Folder 7.16	Church of England and Church of England Advisory Council of Empire Settlement
Folder 7.17	Women's International League, Women's Peace Crusade, etc.
Folder 7.18	Papers relating to action postponed or canceled because of declaration of war, and proposals made during the war, Sept. 1939
Folder 7.19	War memorials
Folder 7.20	Temperance
Folder 7.21	Over-Thirty Association
Folder 8.1-8.3	2 manuscript copies of autobiography, <i>A Life's Work</i> (London: Hutchinson, 1948); additional copies of some chapters and source materials, 1948
Folder 8.4	Press cuttings about <i>A Life's Work</i>
Folder 8.5	Correspondence relating to <i>A Life's Work</i>
Folder 8.6	Illustrations for <i>A Life's Work</i>
Folder 8.7	Manuscripts of poetry and stories by M.B.
Folder 8.8	Miscellaneous manuscripts
Folder 8.9	Miscellaneous notes
Folder 8.10	Essays by George Baker (mostly relating to international situation and World War II), late 1930's
Folder 8.11	Miscellaneous Labour Party pamphlets and Fabian tracts.
Folder 8.12	Miscellaneous publications and pamphlets relating to religion
Folder 8.13	Miscellaneous brochures, articles, and papers
Folder 9.1	Lists of articles published by M.B., 1909-1945
Folder 9.2	Articles, 1909-1922
Folder 9.3-9.9	Articles and correspondence, 1923-1945
Folder 9.10-9.13	Broadcasts and correspondence, 1928-1948
Folder 9.14	Speeches, 1916-1948
Boxes 10-11	Press cuttings, 1898-1948

Series VII. Books and other Published Material

- Atlee, Clement R. *The Labour Party Perspective*. London: V. Gollancz, 1937.
- British Broadcasting Corporation. *BBC Handbook 1940*. London, British Broadcasting Corporation, n.d.
- Church of England. *The Book of Common Prayer... Together with the Psalter...* London: Eyre and Spottiswoode.
- Henry, Alice. *Memoirs of Alice Henry*. Ed. with postscript by Nettie Palmer. Melbourne, 1944. 101p. Mimeographed, in binder
- Hilton, John. *Industrial Relations*. Cambridge: University Press, 1931. Pamphlet.
- Huxley, Julian. *What Dare I Think?* London: Chatto and Windus, 1931.
- K-H News-Letter Service. Vol. two, Letters 27-52 (Dec.30, 1936-June 16,1937). Bound.
- Mansbridge, Albert. *Margaret McMillan, Prophet and Pioneer* London and Toronto: M. Dent and Sons [1932].
- Manual of Procedure in the Public Business of the House of Commons*. 5th ed. London: His Majesty's Stationary Office, 1924.
- National Adult School Union, London. *Towards a Whole Society; a Scheme of Study for the Year 1946*. London, National Adult School Union [1945]
- The New Poetry; an Anthology*. Ed. by Harriet Monroe and Alice Corbin Henderson. New York: MacMillan, 1919.
- Plummer, Alfred. *Labour's Path to Power*. Foreword by Margaret Bondfield. London: Richards Press [1929?]
- Reed, John. *Ten Days That Shook the World*. New York: Boni and Liveright, 1919.
- Tangore, Rabindranath. *Sadhana*. London: MacMillan, 1917
- Wald, Lillian D. *Windows on Henry Street*. Boston: Little Brown, 1934. Autograph card pasted on flyleaf.
- Whitman, Walt. *Poems of Walt Whitman (from 'Leaves of Grass')*, with introduction by Ernest Rhys. London: Walter Scott, n.d. (The Canterbury poets).
- Williams, Francis. *Fifty Years March*. London: Odhams Press, n.d.

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