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**Honours Dissertation**

**More than just the ‘fuddy-duddy Co-op’: the  
consumer co-operative movement in 1960s Great  
Britain**

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## **List of Abbreviations**

CND – Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament

CIC – Co-operative Independent Commission

CRS – Co-operative Retail Society

CWS – Co-operative Wholesale Society

CWG – Co-operative Women’s Guild

NHS – National Health Service

WCG – Women’s Co-operative Guild

# Introduction

In 1962, Eva Dodds, then a Co-operative Wholesale Society (CWS) Director, and later the second female president of the Co-operative Union, wrote that she was enthusiastic about the the co-operative movement's future in an article for *The Guardian*.<sup>1</sup> Gone were the days of 'the dowdy fat woman shopping at the fuddy-duddy Co-op'.<sup>2</sup> Instead, Dodds was optimistic about the new policies and initiatives that the movement had to offer, in order to modernise and regain its former popularity.

From humble beginnings, when the Rochdale Pioneers Equitable Society opened its first store on Toad Lane in Rochdale on 21 December 1844, the British consumer co-operative movement burgeoned to encompass the Co-operative Party, as well as insurance and banking.<sup>3</sup> All of these organisations were underpinned by the philosophy of co-operation, known as the 'Rochdale Principles'.<sup>4</sup> It grew to represent over 1,000 individual societies and in excess of eleven million members, with the central aim of promoting co-operation as a viable economic model to compete with capitalism.<sup>5</sup> Democracy was at the core of co-operation, and ensured that all members, regardless of gender or creed, had an individual vote, meaning that they were able to hold management to account.<sup>6</sup> Other initial principles included the distribution of profits of the organisation through a dividend to its members, as well as political and religious neutrality.<sup>7</sup> Whilst the Co-operative Party was established in 1917, effectively reversing the call for political neutrality within co-operative societies, many of the principles which formed the foundations of the

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<sup>1</sup> Jean Gaffin and David Thoms, *Caring & Sharing: The Centenary History of the Co-operative Women's Guild*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Manchester: Holyoake Books, 1993), p. 220.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, p. 220.

<sup>3</sup> John F. Wilson, Anthony Webster and Rachael Vorberg-Rugh, *Building Co-operation: A Business History of The Co-operative Group, 1863-2013* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 34-5; p. 37; p. 150.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, p. 69.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, p. 234; *Co-operative Independent Commission Report*, p. 52; Special Correspondent, 'Co-operative Party's Future Role', *The Times*, 5 March 1963, p. 11.

<sup>6</sup> Wilson, Webster and Vorberg-Rugh, *Building Co-operation*, pp. 37-8.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

movement remained throughout the twentieth century.<sup>8</sup> This dissertation will focus on retail consumption within the co-operative movement, through its local and national societies, as well as discussing the role of the Co-operative Party as a consumer representative. Although it will not discuss the banking and insurance sectors, they help to illustrate how wide-ranging the interests of the British co-operative movement were, and suggest that co-operators wanted to provide options for many different domains within society.

In existing literature, there has been a distinctive focus on the movement's economic struggles in the postwar period, without assessing the 1960s independently. Historians including Peter Gurney and Arnold Bonner have suggested that the decline in popularity and market share of local societies came as a result of the growth of multiple chain stores, as well as the development of the individualistic consumer society, which did no benefit the co-operative ethos.<sup>9</sup> In 2013, John Wilson, Anthony Webster and Rachel Vorberg-Rugh's *Building Co-operation* addressed the structural concerns of the movement. It discussed the Co-operative Independent Commission (CIC) Report of the late 1950s, and the ideological model of democratic business which underpinned the movement's operation.<sup>10</sup> This has been furthered by Corrado Secchi, who in 2017 added that attempts to alter the movement, particularly by the CIC Report, represented an affront to co-operative ideals as it limited the autonomy of local societies.<sup>11</sup> Others have concentrated on the involvement and actions of a particular group within the movement, for instance the Women's Co-operative Guild (WCG).<sup>12</sup> Whilst there are academics who focus on the co-operative movement, others have discussed it in relation to broader themes of consumption, as well as politics and

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<sup>8</sup> Wilson, Webster and Vorberg-Rugh, *Building Co-operation*, p. 150.

<sup>9</sup> Peter Gurney, 'The Battle of the Consumer in Postwar Britain', *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 77, No. 4 (December 2005), pp. 956-87; Arnold Bonner, *British Co-operation* (Manchester: Co-operative Union Ltd, 1970).

<sup>10</sup> Wilson, Webster and Vorberg-Rugh, *Building Co-operation*.

<sup>11</sup> Corrado Secchi, 'Affluence and Decline: Consumer Co-operatives in Postwar Britain', in Mary Hilson, Silke Neunsinger and Greg Patmore (eds.), *A Global History of Consumer Co-operation since 1850: Movements and Businesses* (Leiden: Brill, 2017), pp. 527-47.

<sup>12</sup> Gaffin and Thoms, *Caring & Sharing*.

gender.<sup>13</sup> There does not seem to have been a period where co-operative histories were particularly fashionable, which is perhaps reflective of the popular view of the co-operative movement as outmoded.

This dissertation aims to provide an alternative assessment of the position of the co-operative movement in the 1960s. Through focusing on some of its internally-published monthly periodicals between 1960 and 1967 – by which time all of these works had been terminated – new light will be shed on the co-operative movement’s economic and societal position in the 1960s. The periodicals in question are *Co-operative Consumer*, *Home Magazine*, which later became *Good Shopping*, and *Woman’s Outlook*. All of these publications were accessed at the National Co-operative Archive, at Holyoake House in Manchester, which is where many national and regional records for the co-operative movement are also located. Each periodical served a different purpose within the co-operative movement as they had varied intended readerships and concentrated on different issues, which affected co-operatives as well as society more generally. With the exception of *Woman’s Outlook*, it was difficult to research circulation figures for the periodicals which were useful to assess how popular the publications were, for they were not discussed in board meetings of the different publishers. Government documents including the 1962 ‘Report on the Committee of Consumer Protection’ and the 1967 *Abortion Act* have also been utilised to demonstrate that members of co-operatives were vocal outside of local societies, advocating wider consumer protection and progressive politics, contrasting the perception that it was an insular organisation.<sup>14</sup>

Chapter One concerns *Co-operative Consumer*, which informed its readership of the aforementioned economic and structural issues in the movement, as well as the Co-operative Party and its struggles under both Conservative and Labour governments in the 1960s.<sup>15</sup> It highlighted how

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<sup>13</sup> Matthew Hilton has written about the power of the female consumer in Matthew Hilton, ‘The Female Consumer and the Politics of Consumption in Twentieth Century Britain’, *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 45, No. 1 (March 2002), pp. 103-28.

<sup>14</sup> ‘Final Report of the Committee on Consumer Protection’, July 1962 (London: HMSO, 1962); *Abortion Act 1967*, (London: HMSO, 1967).

<sup>15</sup> The Co-operative Party was established in 1918, in response a growing desire within the movement for consumer representatives in Westminster. From 1927, the Co-operative Party stood joint candidates with the

active co-operators, regardless of age or gender, viewed the condition of the movement. *Home Magazine* and *Good Shopping*, which are the focus of Chapter Two, were magazines aimed at the domestic housewife and espoused co-operative consumption through advertising and encouraging the sales of CWS-produced products. Additionally, it also deliberated questions of gender roles, and how food culture influenced the co-operative movement to become a more progressive and inclusive organisation. The final chapter will consider *Woman's Outlook* – a periodical intended for the active female guildswoman. It spanned the widest range of discussion, including co-operative consumption, membership struggles and the establishment of co-operatives in newly-liberated countries to generate economic prosperity.

As a whole, this dissertation will provide greater understanding of the trials and tribulations of the co-operative movement in the 1960s, as well as its efforts to involve itself in a wide spectrum of activity: from informed consumption, to politics, to gender issues, and even humanitarian activism. It intends to prove that the co-operative movement represented far more than a mere local shop that happened to give its members a dividend in return for their loyalty.

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Labour Party. For more on the formation of the Co-operative Party, see Thomas F. Carbery, *Consumers in Politics: A history and general review of the Co-operative Party* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1969).

# Chapter One: *Co-operative Consumer*: Modernisation, Amalgamation and the Co-operative Party

Histories of the co-operative movement's postwar experience tend to focus on the economic struggles of the movement, and the model of democratic business which it continued to extol despite the decline in its retail influence. *Co-operative Consumer*, published by the League of Co-operators until 1967, is a useful source for illustrating how the economic and structural issues facing the movement affected its more active members.<sup>16</sup> *Co-operative Consumer* advocated co-operation in all domains of life: from consumption to society and politics.

Its layout differed from *Home Magazine*, *Good Shopping* and *Woman's Outlook*. *Co-operative Consumer* was significantly shorter than the other periodicals discussed in this dissertation, for it waived co-operative advertising and light-hearted articles which did not delve into pressing issues facing the movement. In *Co-operative Consumer*, there were recurring discussions about declining membership, democratic and administrative problems and increased competition with newly-established chain stores.<sup>17</sup> In the 1950s and 1960s, the federal structure of the movement was targeted by bodies such as the CIC, as societies were largely independent and were resistant to implement changes which sought to limit their autonomy.<sup>18</sup> There are instances of societies collaborating with one another; however, this was the exception rather than the rule.<sup>19</sup> The articles found in the *Co-operative Consumer* largely follow this trend, highlighting that the movement as a whole struggled economically, with exceptions of individual societies paving the way for progress.

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<sup>16</sup> 'East of Suez', *Co-operative Consumer* (May 1965), p. 1.

<sup>17</sup> Some examples include Stan Ford, 'The Democratic and Administrative Problems of Large Societies', *Co-operative Consumer* (February 1961), pp. 10-2; Jim Daly, 'Let's Get Weaving', *Co-operative Consumer* (August 1961), pp. 3-4.

<sup>18</sup> Wilson, Webster and Vorberg-Rugh, *Building Co-operation*, p. 221.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

## Modernisation

In 1958, the CIC published a report that drew greater attention to the overall stagnation of co-operatives. The committee tasked with formulating the document was largely comprised of members of the Labour Party, including Hugh Gaitskell and the Labour Party secretary, Anthony Crosland, which stoked divisions between local societies and national bodies, for the CIC attributed greater importance to the individual consumer rather than the community.<sup>20</sup> The CIC gave several reasons for the stagnation of the movement. These included the perceived declining quality of co-operative stores compared to their competitors, as well as the overlapping of competing societies and waste of resources, resulting in the need for takeovers by the Co-operative Retail Society (CRS).<sup>21</sup> The report also issued a series of recommendations, which intended to galvanise the movement. These included the proposal for an amalgamation survey, the rationalisation of resources in order to stem the haemorrhaging of funds within the co-operative movement, and the modernisation of stores. In 1960 and 1961 editions of *Co-operative Consumer*, writers discussed the sluggishness in implementing CIC recommendations, or the stubbornness of individual societies to modernise to ensure their futures, suggesting that *Co-operative Consumer* largely agreed with the report delivered by the CIC, regardless of its controversial reception.<sup>22</sup>

Co-operatives were concerned with the growth and quality of new chain stores. Whilst co-operatives helped to pave the way in Britain for the development of self-service, they lagged behind chain stores such as Sainsburys and Tesco, which had greatly expanded their self-service selection by the end of the 1960s.<sup>23</sup> Between 1960 and 1970, the number of self-service outlets increased from

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<sup>20</sup> John K. Walton, 'The post-war decline of the British retail co-operative movement: nature, causes and consequences' in Lawrence Black and Nicole Robertson, *Consumerism and the Co-operative movement in Modern British History* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009), p. 17; Secchi, 'Affluence and Decline', p. 533.

<sup>21</sup> *Co-operative Independent Commission Report*, p. 44; p. 38; p. 78.

<sup>22</sup> Articles relevant to the CIC Report of 1958 include Pilot, 'The Last Chance', *Co-operative Consumer* (May 1960), pp. 7-8; Ford, 'The Democratic and Administrative Problems of Large Societies', pp. 10-2; Daly, 'Let's Get Weaving', pp. 3-4; L. Charles, 'A National Society – the only way', *Co-operative Consumer* (December 1963), pp. 3-5.

<sup>23</sup> Wilson, Webster and Vorberg-Rugh, *Building Co-operation*, p. 221.

6,300 to over 28,000 and represented a change in the desires of consumers to a newly-established form of retail.<sup>24</sup> The growth of individual consumption, which began in the aftermath of the Second World War and continued into the 1960s, was facilitated by low levels of unemployment and inflation combined with better living conditions, resulting in reduced infant mortality rates and increased life expectancy.<sup>25</sup> As multiples became rich in capital as a result of being public companies with stocks and shares, they were able to re-equip and modernise their shops more frequently than co-operatives, whose modernisation was funded internally, by sales and memberships.<sup>26</sup> Some societies were able to rejuvenate their premises and build new locations to deal with customer demand.<sup>27</sup> However, in northern England and Scotland, many stores still operated counter-service and were externally 'clumsy and badly in need of a paint', whilst their interiors were 'frowsy and unattractive'.<sup>28</sup> As consumers had a greater variety of outlets from which to choose, the stores had to be of higher quality and in clean and modern premises – something that the movement struggled to take heed of despite the CIC Report's recommendations.<sup>29</sup>

Additionally, it recommended amalgamation and a decline in the number of societies from 1,000 to between 200 and 300, to reduce the waste of co-operative resources, whilst balancing the importance of democratic control of societies with managerial efficiency and ensuring the prosperity of the movement.<sup>30</sup> As co-operative societies were autonomous and had the capacity to make decisions based on the desires of their members, they were not bound to conform to the recommendations of the CIC. As such, many resisted amalgamation, despite the fact that over 750 societies still had fewer than fifteen shops each, signifying that they did not have the same level of

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<sup>24</sup> Andrew Alexander, Simon Phillips and Gareth Shaw, 'Retail innovation and shopping practices: consumers' reactions to self-service retailing', *Environment and Planning A*, Vol. 40, No. 9 (2008), p. 2205.

<sup>25</sup> Peter Howlett, 'The 'Golden Age', 1955-1973', in Paul Johnson (ed.), *20<sup>th</sup> Century Britain: Economic, Social and Cultural Change* (Harlow: Longman, 1994), pp. 320-1.

<sup>26</sup> Wilson, Webster and Vorberg-Rugh, *Building Co-operation*, p. 208.

<sup>27</sup> *Co-operative Independent Commission Report*, p. 45.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid*, p. 44.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid*, p. 52; Wilson, Webster and Vorberg-Rugh, *Building Co-operation*, p. 234.

purchasing power as they could have if they were a more significant consumer representative.<sup>31</sup> This, compounded by the inefficiencies of large societies, whose members were more apathetic about their own involvement in the affairs of the society, ensured that consumer co-operatives struggled into the 1960s, for they failed to adopt recommendations made by the CIC which were largely informed by the desires of the modern consumer.<sup>32</sup>

Moreover, some societies resisted the implementation of self-service stores, which were more common in the capital than elsewhere in the country, and refused to modernise their stores in spite of growing consumer desires for more convenient trading.<sup>33</sup> Co-operatives continued to rely heavily on the sale of foodstuffs, comprising 71.6 per cent of all co-operative trade in 1968.<sup>34</sup> Profits in the food sector were minor when compared to the higher profit items including clothing, homewares and dry goods as they were able to be sold for a higher price.<sup>35</sup> Smaller societies were unable to reconcile the shrinking profits from foodstuffs, and continued to be reluctant to implement change, and as such, they were deemed to have caused 'their own mess' when they failed or required rescuing by the CRS.<sup>36</sup> This difficult relationship between members, auxiliaries and management within the co-operative movement was termed as a 'dysfunctional federation' by Wilson, Webster and Vorberg-Rugh.<sup>37</sup> The differing priorities of local societies compared to management boards of the CWS and CRS hindered attempts to alleviate economic and structural pressures facing the co-operative movement, for there was no consensus about how to best resolve issues to appease members and managers alike.

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<sup>31</sup> Charles, 'A National Society', pp. 3-4.

<sup>32</sup> Ford, 'The Democratic and Administrative Problems of Large Societies', pp. 10-1.

<sup>33</sup> Wilson, Webster and Vorberg-Rugh, *Building Co-operation*, p. 221; Alexander, Phillips and Shaw, 'Retail innovation and shopping practices', p. 2210.

<sup>34</sup> Arnold Bonner, *British Co-operation* (Manchester: Co-operative Union, 1970), p. 255.

<sup>35</sup> Daly, 'Let's Get Weaving', p. 4.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid*, p. 3.

<sup>37</sup> Wilson, Webster and Vorberg-Rugh, *Building Co-operation*, p. 229.

## Membership

Declining membership presented the co-operative movement with one of its greatest concerns.

Membership was vital to generate income for the movement and allow co-operative manufacturing of products. However, its decline highlighted the fragility of the movement compared to its competitors, who offered lower prices and did not require any form of membership. Whilst *Woman's Outlook* discussed this occasionally in the 1960s, *Co-operative Consumer* paid greater attention to the wider causation of declining membership, which had a negative impact not only on the sales and market share of the movement, but also social and political power through its auxiliaries. Between 1960 and 1970, individual membership of local co-operative societies fell from 12.8 million to 11.5 million.<sup>38</sup> Although this figure does not seem initially troublesome, it fails to account for the population boom which took place following the end of the Second World War. By 1970, the population of the United Kingdom increased by 13 per cent, and those who were born between 1947 and 1949, the peak years for the postwar baby boom, came of age in the 1960s.<sup>39</sup> In theory, this increased potential market provided the means for the growth in co-operative consumption; however, the reality was that the baby boom generation was more motivated by individualistic and personal consumption.<sup>40</sup> Only 15 per cent of the WCG in 1960 was under the age of 40, highlighting that the majority of its membership was made up of an aging population and that younger generations were less likely to shop at co-operative stores.<sup>41</sup>

In the November 1964 edition of *Co-operative Consumer*, Geoffrey Ostergaard and Melville Currell published their findings from a survey taken of co-operators.<sup>42</sup> Ostergaard was a senior lecturer at the University of Birmingham, and was commissioned by the Co-operative College to undertake a survey about the membership of the co-operative movement.<sup>43</sup> In the survey, co-

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<sup>38</sup> Secchi, 'Affluence and Decline', p. 535.

<sup>39</sup> Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe since 1945* (London: Pimlico, 2007), p. 331.

<sup>40</sup> Alexander, Phillips and Shaw, 'Retail innovation and shopping practices', p. 2208.

<sup>41</sup> Brian Groombridge, 'Report on the Auxiliaries', *Co-operative Consumer* (October 1960), p. 22.

<sup>42</sup> Geoffrey Ostergaard and Melville Curry, 'The Active Minority: Part II', *Co-operative Consumer* (November 1964), pp. 3-8.

<sup>43</sup> Wilson, Webster and Vorberg-Rugh, *Building Co-operation*, p. 206.

operators were asked about their reasons for joining co-operative societies. The results provided a stark contrast between the apathetic consumer and the 'active, interested minority'.<sup>44</sup> 55 per cent of co-operative activists were motivated to join for ideological reasons, citing that the movement was 'working-class' and its 'profits go to the consumer, not the capitalist'.<sup>45</sup> This contrasted the reasons given by passive consumers, which included the dividend, as well as the quality of goods and services provided in co-operative stores.<sup>46</sup>

It also discussed the issue of apathy within the co-operative movement, as there were few co-operators involving themselves in voluntary organisations such as the auxiliaries of the WCG, National Men's Guild and British Federation of Young Co-operators.<sup>47</sup> In 1960, only 56,000 men and women were involved in the auxiliaries, which accounted for almost half of the 1938 figure of 103,000.<sup>48</sup> Compared to the figure of 12.8 million members of co-operative societies, only 0.43 per cent of co-operators were involved in auxiliary organisations. Auxiliaries were preoccupied with 'bingo drives, fish and chip suppers, and tombola' rather than involving themselves in 'the world of discussions, study projects, lecture courses and demonstrations', which would have resulted in greater commitment from members of the auxiliaries.<sup>49</sup> As a large proportion of the membership was older and more conservative, the auxiliaries could not adapt as their members prevented change from the status quo.<sup>50</sup> This, combined with the economic struggles already discussed in the chapter, help to explain some of the reasons that the co-operative movement stagnated in the 1960s.

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<sup>44</sup> Ostergarrd and Curry, 'The Active Minority', p. 4.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid*, p. 3.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>47</sup> Groombridge, 'Report on the Auxiliaries', p. 3.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid*, p. 21.

<sup>49</sup> Pioneer, 'The Challenge Before the Guilds', *Co-operative Consumer* (January 1961), p. 4.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 3-5.

## The Co-operative Party

In spite of its seemingly insignificant political influence, the British Co-operative Party was the largest single political party in the world in terms of numbers, with eleven million members in the 1960s.<sup>51</sup> This was because co-operative societies affiliated to the Party and individuals were unable to opt out, technically resulting in millions of members of the Party.<sup>52</sup> The Party believed that co-operatively-owned enterprises were a useful instrument in creating a socialist society, which contrasted the more dominant left-wing belief in the Labour Party and trade unions that nationalisation and state ownership were the ideal tools to achieve socialism.<sup>53</sup> These disagreements about the place of co-operation in politics led to disagreements on Co-operative Party affiliation to the Labour Party, as many worried that it became a minority element rather than a powerful voice.<sup>54</sup> Throughout the 1960s, subsequent governments under the Conservatives and Labour implemented policies which had a negative effect on the prosperity of the co-operative movement, including the 1966 Selective Employment Tax.<sup>55</sup>

In the August 1960 edition of *Co-operative Consumer*, an anonymous author asserted that whilst they were affiliated to the Labour Party, the Co-operative Party would not subscribe to a 'government of the elite, no[r] to a dictatorship of the proletariat', ensuring that its readers knew that they would not unquestionably submit to the wills of any other political party.<sup>56</sup> The Conservative Budget was delivered in the following February, and highlighted that the government had little desire to encourage the prosperity of co-operatives by implementing increased taxes on employers.<sup>57</sup> This would cost the movement over £4 million, at a time, when it was already struggling economically.<sup>58</sup> Moreover, they alluded to the social implications of other budget

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<sup>51</sup> Special Correspondent, 'Co-operative Party's Future Role', *The Times*, 5 March 1963, p. 11.

<sup>52</sup> Carbery, *Consumers in Politics*, p. 59.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid*, p. 162; 'This is what we stand for', *Co-operative Consumer* (August 1960), pp. 10-1.

<sup>54</sup> Carbery, *Consumers in Politics*, p. 124.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid*, p. 213.

<sup>56</sup> 'This is what we stand for', p. 10.

<sup>57</sup> 'The Tory Budget', *Co-operative Consumer* (April 1961), pp. 3-4.

<sup>58</sup> 'The Tory Budget', pp. 3-4.

proposals including the increased tax on fuel which they argued would negatively impact the elderly as well as poorer citizens as it included paraffin, which was one of the cheapest heat sources.<sup>59</sup> The article reiterated that the Co-operative Party therefore functioned as a steadfast representative and voice for consumers.

Following the 1964 General Election, there was significant optimism felt within the co-operative movement about the return of a Labour government. The political climate advanced by the Conservatives had impacted many of the poorest in society.<sup>60</sup> *Co-operative Consumer* focused on the fact that many citizens had a 'pathetically small amount of money' to keep them alive, apportioning blame for economic difficulties on the preceding government.<sup>61</sup> Whilst they were hopeful about the future under Labour, later articles in *Co-operative Consumer* reveal that active members criticised Labour's position, which was a 'slavish acceptance of mass individual consumerism' alongside nationalisation.<sup>62</sup> The 1966 Selective Employment Tax dealt a blow to the co-operative movement, as there were fears that it would lead to the failure of larger societies, due to the fact that societies would have to pay a weekly tax for their employees, resulting in lower profits and a decreased dividend to distribute to its members.<sup>63</sup> This, in addition to the taxation increases by the Conservative-led government earlier in the decade attacked co-operation and further degraded the relationship between the Labour and Co-operative parties.

*Co-operative Consumer* also provided an insight into the beliefs of active co-operators on an international scale. The periodical frequently published articles on nuclear disarmament, democracy and world peace, no doubt informed by the fact that many co-operators were also involved in

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid, p. 5.

<sup>60</sup> 'Our Congratulations to the Labour Party on its Electoral Success!', *Co-operative Consumer* (November 1964), p. 1.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Wilson, Webster and Vorberg-Rugh, *Building Co-operation*, p. 208; H. T. Woodbridge, 'Whatever Happened to New Britain?', *Co-operative Consumer* (August 1967), pp. 3-5.

<sup>63</sup> Woodbridge, 'Whatever Happened to New Britain?', p. 4; Carbery, *Consumers in Politics*, p. 216.

pacifist and anti-nuclear organisations.<sup>64</sup> Most of these articles take a critical tone of the government in office. Publications outline *Co-operative Consumer's* vision for nuclear disarmament and their belief in what the British government ought to do to deal with the problem, including taking the first step to offer to disarm, as well as calling an international conference to deal with global security.<sup>65</sup> Later articles highlight the lack of action taken nationally and internationally, and how it contributed to the apathy of campaigners, even into the later 1960s.<sup>66</sup> Foreign policy under Labour was also criticised. *Co-operative Consumer* maintained that the development of military bases and installation of puppet leaders served little purpose but to highlight the 'pathetic delusion of Britain's world role' following the Second World War.<sup>67</sup> *Co-operative Consumer's* role in informing its subscribers of the actions of the Co-operative Party as well as its own beliefs was vital in ensuring that its readers remained aware and vigilant of governments, whilst continuing to set out the co-operative vision for the future.

## Cessation

*Co-operative Consumer* provided a unique insight into the beliefs of the most ardent co-operators and their views of the movement's economic and political struggles in the 1960s. Although *Co-operative Consumer* ceased production in 1967, in the view of its final editor, it was a worthwhile venture, bringing news to members of the League of Co-operators and further afield.<sup>68</sup> It was unique to the movement as it differed from the other publications discussed in this dissertation, for its intended audience was not a certain age or gender, rather its purpose was to strengthen co-

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<sup>64</sup> For some examples of these themes, see John Hammond, 'A Six-Point Programme for World Peace', *Co-operative Consumer* (August 1960), pp. 3-4; Henry Osborne, 'Disarmament is bunk... or the hunting of a Snark', *Co-operative Consumer* (December 1962), pp. 3-5.

<sup>65</sup> Hammond, 'A Six-Point Programme for World Peace', pp. 3-4.

<sup>66</sup> Osborne, 'Disarmament is bunk', pp. 3-5; Aries, 'Why I March No Longer', *Co-operative Consumer* (October 1963), p. 15; Woodbridge, 'Whatever Happened to New Britain?', p. 3.

<sup>67</sup> 'East of Suez', p. 1; Woodbridge, 'Whatever Happened to New Britain?', p. 3.

<sup>68</sup> 'Editor's Swan Song', *Co-operative Consumer* (December 1967), p. 14.

operation so that members could go forward to promote co-operative ideals in their communities and through political institutions to bring about beneficial social change.

## Chapter Two: *Home Magazine* and *Good Shopping*:

### Consumption, Gender and Food Culture

Following the Second World War, the British co-operative movement faced inordinate difficulties despite optimism following Labour's 1945 General Election victory. Atlee's government failed to utilise co-operative ideals, instead focusing on trade unionism, which strained the relationship between the co-operative movement and the Labour Party.<sup>69</sup> This, followed by successive Conservative governments, hampered the prosperity of British co-operators into the 1960s, as their interests were largely ignored at a political level, mentioned in the preceding chapter.<sup>70</sup> The movement therefore had to focus its attention towards encouraging economic growth without clear political support, increasing marketing in order to encourage interest from a wider consumer demographic.

In 1953, the CWS attempted to address the company's slump in both market share and popularity by launching the periodical *Home Magazine*, later known as *Good Shopping*. It was a monthly magazine targeted at the stay-at-home housewife, predominantly advertising CWS products. These ranged from traditional wares, such as foodstuffs and kitchen products, to more luxurious items including fashionable clothing and popular white goods, as well as competitions.<sup>71</sup> Published from 1953 to 1967, *Home Magazine* and *Good Shopping* provided a microcosm of the wider co-operative movement's attempts to alleviate pressures by enticing a wider audience in the face of a rapidly changing consumer society.<sup>72</sup> Although most of its pieces focused on the propagation of co-operative consumption in all areas of society, co-operator Monica Dehn's weekly

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<sup>69</sup> Gurney, 'The Battle of the Consumer in Postwar Britain', p. 967.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> 'Housewives' Club', *Home Magazine* (March 1960), p. 10; 'Housewives' Club', *Home Magazine* (November 1960), p. 12; 'Housewives' Club', *Home Magazine* (March 1962), p. 7; 'Come Co-operative Shopping and win a fridge in time for summer!', *Good Shopping*, Vol. 1, No. 6 (May 1965), p. 3.

<sup>72</sup> 'Periodicals', *National Co-operative Archive*, available at: <http://www.archive.coop/collections/periodicals> (accessed 24 November 2017).

columns reveal more topical discussions of issues from consumption, to food culture and politics.<sup>73</sup>

Whilst there was a significant attempt to rouse co-operative ideals through advertising for over a decade, the CWS' endeavour ultimately failed to halt the decline of retail societies in the period.

## Consumption

*Home Magazine* was first established to promote co-operative consumption by increasing spending through local societies. It encouraged co-operative ideals to pervade every part of its consumers' lives, especially within the retail sector. CWS periodicals promoted co-operative consumption through advertising, in an attempt to assert the co-operative as affluent, in line with the increasingly affluent society of Britain in the 1960s. Labour politician Herbert Morrison was mocked for buying 'all of his clothes from the local co-op store', illustrating that public opinion deemed co-operative clothing as functional rather than fashionable, in spite of attempts to reverse this opinion.<sup>74</sup>

Matthew Hilton has asserted that the co-operative movement had 'few dynamic responses to consumer interests' in the postwar period to encourage greater consumer spending whilst other retailers progressed with new technologies and advertising campaigns.<sup>75</sup> Johnston Birchall has reiterated this notion, but placed greater emphasis on the old-fashioned nature of co-operatively-produced products, especially clothing, which failed to keep up with trends.<sup>76</sup> This was reflected in *Home Magazine* articles, where little adapted to suit consumer's changing interests – the exception being the encouragement to purchase white goods such as vacuum cleaners, pressure cookers and cabinet heaters.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Monica Dehn, 'Monica Dehn says "This society has a welcome idea"', *Good Shopping*, Vol. 2, No. 3 (March 1966), p. 6; Monica Dehn, 'Monica Dehn says "You may have to go abroad for fish and chips"', *Good Shopping*, Vol. 1, No. 5 (April 1965), p. 6.

<sup>74</sup> Gurney, 'The Battle of the Consumer in Postwar Britain', p. 958.

<sup>75</sup> Matthew Hilton, *Consumerism in 20<sup>th</sup>-Century Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 176.

<sup>76</sup> Johnston Birchall, *Co-op: the people's business* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994), p. 148.

<sup>77</sup> 'Housewives' Club', *Home Magazine* (February 1962), p. 9; 'Housewives' Club', *Home Magazine* (March 1962), p. 7.

*Good Shopping* used advertising to a greater extent than its predecessor, reflecting its acceptance that publicity was necessary to maintain and grow customer loyalty. ‘Housewives’ Club’ from *Home Magazine* listed various different items – including dish racks, clothes airers or ironing boards – on a single-page spread with descriptions of their uses underneath, a very utilitarian approach.<sup>78</sup> Comparatively, *Good Shopping* devoted whole pages to individual products – for instance, persuasively marketing storage containers as fashionable to encourage purchase.<sup>79</sup> Arthur Marwick has emphasised advertising’s importance in the 1960s, using quotations from powerful individuals including the Chairman of Unilever, who was unnamed but asserted that each ‘package is fighting for you against every other package directly or indirectly’ with the growth of self-service stores, where shop assistants no longer had the same level of power to sell products.<sup>80</sup> Laundry soap provided a useful comparison between CWS marketing and that of other retailers in the period. In *Good Shopping*’s June 1965 edition, ‘Spel’ laundry detergent was marketed using a whole-page spread; however, it was printed in black and white, which illustrated the functionality of co-operative products, and labelled it as ‘thrifty’ with ‘no gifts no gimmicks’.<sup>81</sup> Mark Tungate has asserted that English advertising ‘comes from the head’, which was reflected in co-operative products through their practicality, including the ‘Housewives’ Club’ articles.<sup>82</sup> In comparison to private retailers, the CWS was unable to compete with the amount spent on advertising. Persil detergent was advertised on television, expanding into new markets which the CWS could not afford.<sup>83</sup> This provided one reason why the company failed to maintain its market share, for it could not sustain customer loyalty in the face of technological advancements regarding marketing.

In addition to expanding advertising, sloganeering was also used by the movement to encourage greater customer loyalty and boost sales of CWS products. ‘Come Co-operative Shopping:

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<sup>78</sup> Examples exist for most months of its publication in the 1960s. For some specific examples see: Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> ‘April’s best Bargain! Set of 4 food storage containers’, *Good Shopping*, Vol. 1, No. 5 (April 1965), p. 3.

<sup>80</sup> Arthur Marwick, *British Society since 1945*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (London: Penguin, 2003), p. 87.

<sup>81</sup> ‘Thrifty Blue Spel’, *Good Shopping*, Vol. 1, No. 7 (June 1965), p. 3.

<sup>82</sup> Mark Tungate, *Adland: A global history of advertising*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London: Kogan Page, 2013), p. 115.

<sup>83</sup> ‘Persil Washes Whiter 1965 Vintage British TV Commercial’, available at YouTube [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n1B-wDe\\_3wI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n1B-wDe_3wI) (accessed 9 October 2017).

Where the profit comes back to you' frequently appeared in advertisements from the mid-1960s in an attempt to rebuild a basis of customer loyalty, whilst also highlighting the foundations of the movement.<sup>84</sup> In May 1965, *Good Shopping* used the slogan alongside a competition to win a refrigerator, reflecting consumer wishes in the 1960s.<sup>85</sup> The growth in sales of white goods burgeoned in the postwar period. For example, the consumption of refrigerators in households drastically increased from eight per cent in 1956 to 69 per cent by 1971.<sup>86</sup> Technological goods ownership grew in the period, reflecting increasingly affluent desires and abilities.

## Gender

*Good Shopping* was inherently gendered, targeted at its predominantly domestic female readership. However, it also recognised the importance of women as consumers. For much of the British co-operative movement's existence, working-class women have been involved in its development for they 'wielded the power of their purse strings in attempts to influence the way the "business" was organised'.<sup>87</sup> Whilst *Home Magazine* and *Good Shopping's* advertisements offered traditional items to domestic women, the market for luxury products was also growing. *Good Shopping* publicised coats made from calf, seal or faux-calf skin, and did not require a large budget to afford them, making them more accessible to its readership.<sup>88</sup> Fashion retailing was important for the movement and in the wider context of the sixties as it provided insight into consumer culture, which desired more luxurious goods in an age of affluence. Comparatively, the movement could not compete with retailers such as Marks & Spencer, who were widely popular in the period and further extended their market by increasing their selling space to over four million square feet.<sup>89</sup> This provided the

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<sup>84</sup> 'April's best Bargain!', p. 3; 'Thrifty Blue Spel', p. 3.

<sup>85</sup> 'Come Co-operative Shopping and win a fridge in time for summer!', p. 3.

<sup>86</sup> Marwick, *British Society since 1945*, p. 91.

<sup>87</sup> Lydia Martens, 'Feminism and the Critique of Consumer Culture, 1950-1970', in Stacy Gillis and Joanne Hollows (eds.), *Feminism, Domesticity and Popular Culture* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009), p. 35.

<sup>88</sup> 'Skin Deep in Luxury', *Good Shopping*, Vol. 1, No. 3 (February 1965), p. 11.

<sup>89</sup> Rachel Worth, *Fashion For the People: A History of Clothing at Marks & Spencer* (Oxford: Berg, 2007), pp. 72-4.

company with the capacity to cater to different tastes, ranging from functional double jersey pieces to progressively shorter skirts, indicating the different aspirations of its customers.<sup>90</sup>

Beauty pageants were also launched and marketed through *Good Shopping*, endorsing the importance of the visual beauty of women during a period of questioning prescribed gender roles. The decision by the CWS to launch its own beauty pageant highlighted the necessity to expand the reach of the publication to a younger market, as most other articles and editorials within the magazine were aimed at the well-established housewife.<sup>91</sup> Both competitions stated the need to send in photos of the reader, or their daughters, in a dress or swimsuit to be considered for entry.<sup>92</sup> The magazines made no mention of intellect, morality or activism by candidates, merely their physical appearance, which would suggest that the competition reflected gender attitudes in the 1960s and the pervading patriarchal values which dictated women's appearances as an important trait.<sup>93</sup> Rachel Ritchie noted that academics have viewed the concept of beauty as 'a patriarchal, racialized and class construct that oppresses women'.<sup>94</sup> Beauty pageants represented institutionalised female oppression, based on what judges felt was physically attractive, suggesting that *Good Shopping* was more inclined towards traditional views of gender, exhorting pageants as a way for women to succeed. Shelia Rowbotham's *The Past Is Before Us* argued that there was greater opposition from women's rights groups towards beauty contests in the later 1960s in Britain and in the United States.<sup>95</sup> However, this attitudinal change did not occur in *Good Shopping*, as it ceased production before the outset of second-wave feminism.

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> 'Win the title Miss Co-op', *Good Shopping*, Vol. 1, No. 8 (July 1965), p. 7; 'Be the new Miss Co-op', *Good Shopping*, Vol. 2, No. 7 (July 1966), p. 3.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> Rachel Ritchie, "Beauty isn't all a matter of looking glamorous': attitudes to glamour and beauty in 1950s women's magazines", *Women's History Review*, Vol. 23, No. 5 (2014), p. 725.

<sup>95</sup> Shelia Rowbotham, *The Past Is Before Us: Feminism in Action Since the 1960s* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1989), p. 248.

## Consumer Protection

As the introduction has stated, *Home Magazine* and *Good Shopping* were predominantly advertising publications. However, this did not leave them without merit, for there were sometimes discussions of topical issues which faced both co-operators and domestic women. In monthly publications of *Good Shopping*, Monica Dehn's column discussed a wide variety of topics from the Consumer Council, to social integration with migrant communities in Britain, a widely-discussed and controversial issue in the 1960s.<sup>96</sup>

Established in the early 1960s, the Consumer Council was founded to be the voice of consumers within the political sphere, marginalising the British co-operative movement from representing consumer interests to the same extent as before. Dehn's 'This Lady is not for Burning' and 'Look Twice at that Label in Future' both discussed the Consumer Council and its efforts to improve the lives of customers.<sup>97</sup> One of its earlier schemes was to ensure that children's nightdresses would be made out of inflammable materials, owing to issues regarding their clothes catching fire in previous years.<sup>98</sup>

Although the Consumer Council's pressure was not directly informed by the co-operative movement, Dehn related the article back to her *Good Shopping* readers by informing them on how to correctly clean the inflammable fabrics, especially in CWS Mill and Spel detergents which would not have degraded the fabric and was mentioned in the February 1965 edition as well, in reference to introducing new labels to make cleaning clearer.<sup>99</sup> This not only raised topical issues but once again encouraged co-operative consumption through purchasing CWS products. Whilst this may seem inconsequential, it highlighted that consumer interests were being taken on-board by the Consumer Council, rendering the Co-operative Party ineffectual as a unique voice of consumers.

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<sup>96</sup> Monica Dehn, 'Monica Dehn says 'Look Twice at that Label in Future'', *Good Shopping*, Vol. 1. No. 3 (February 1965), p. 6; Dehn, 'Monica Dehn says 'You may have to go abroad for fish and chips'', p. 6; Dehn, 'Monica Dehn says 'This society has a welcome idea'', p. 6.

<sup>97</sup> Monica Dehn, 'Monica Dehn says 'This Lady is not for Burning'', *Good Shopping*, Vol. 1, No. 13 (December 1965), p. 6; Dehn, 'Monica Dehn says 'Look Twice at that Label in Future'', p. 6.

<sup>98</sup> Dehn, 'Monica Dehn says 'This Lady is not for Burning'', p. 6.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid; Dehn, 'Monica Dehn says 'Look Twice at that Label in Future'', p. 6.

## Cultural Integration

Dehn's column also demonstrated the positive impact of ethnic and cultural diversity in Britain. In 'You may have to go abroad for fish and chips', Dehn discussed the growing popularity of foreign foods including curries and spaghetti Bolognese, suggesting to the reader that they 'may eventually have to go abroad to find our native dishes'.<sup>100</sup> The food culture of Britain was changing in the period, owing to increasing immigration from the Indian subcontinent and from areas of southern Europe including Italy. Immigrants travelled to Britain in search of work, going on to establish their own communities, particularly in large cities like London and Birmingham.<sup>101</sup> Judith Brown has argued that cuisine has been part of 'the domestic culture of diasporic communities worldwide', for it provided a link between new and old homelands.<sup>102</sup> The article exposed some of the issues surrounding immigration in the 1960s. The tone of the final sentence appeared jovial but underlined strains felt by British communities as a result of immigration and the establishment of increasing numbers of 'Indian' restaurants, despite the fact that most of these restaurants were run by people hailing from Pakistan and Bangladesh.<sup>103</sup> Elizabeth Buettner also noted that whilst migrants from the colonies were moving to Great Britain before their respective liberations, it became more noticeable following the independence of India and Pakistan in 1947, and coincided with the migration of people from the Caribbean who came to live work in Britain as its citizens.<sup>104</sup>

Immigrants from South Asia and the Caribbean were often discriminated against in employment and housing, not only due to language barriers, but also cultural traditions. Indians and Pakistanis were often told that they 'stank of curry', which was used as a justification to disallow them from renting from some private landlords.<sup>105</sup> Whilst it is clear that some people in Britain

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<sup>100</sup> Dehn, 'Monica Dehn says 'You may have to go abroad for fish and chips'', p. 6.

<sup>101</sup> Marwick, *British Society since 1945*, p. 132.

<sup>102</sup> Judith M. Brown, *Global South Asians: Introducing the Modern Diaspora* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 144.

<sup>103</sup> Elizabeth Buettner, "'Going for an Indian": South Asian Restaurants and the Limits of Multiculturalism in Britain', *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 84, No. 4 (December 2008), p. 869.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid*, p. 866.

<sup>105</sup> Buettner, "'Going for an Indian"', p. 876; Marwick, *British Society since 1945*, p. 133.

viewed integration as problematic and dangerous, owing to religious and cultural differences, Dehn's column, 'This society has a welcome idea', illustrated the positive aspects of social integration and how the co-operative movement was a positive social force.<sup>106</sup> South Asian women were encouraged to shop at and join the Gravesend Co-operative Society by writing signs in native languages to encourage inclusivity, contrasting a view by communities that migrants ostracised themselves by having little to no grasp of the English language.<sup>107</sup> Long after Dehn's column highlighted some of the positive aspects of cultural integration, and the termination of *Good Shopping*, many continued to argue that that migrants made no effort to assimilate into native British communities, instead remaining steadfast to their native cuisines and within 'a tightly closed circle of their own races'.<sup>108</sup>

## Cessation

*Home Magazine* and *Good Shopping* represented the concerns and desires of female co-operators who wished to reside within the domestic sphere. However, they struggled to remain fashionable when changing attitudes towards women's positions within society were becoming more prominent, and many more women were entering the workplace. Whilst many still desired to support traditionally female activities such as cooking, they were less willing to be treated as 'domestic functionaries', with their principal purposes being thrifty housekeeping and mending, which presumably aided the termination of *Good Shopping* in December 1966.<sup>109</sup> Women turned their attention to competing magazines, such as *Everywoman* which offered articles for all ages and marital statuses, rather than merely domestic housewives.<sup>110</sup> This chapter has emphasised that both *Home Magazine* and *Good Shopping* exhorted the importance of co-operative consumption throughout their publications in the 1960s, and are therefore useful sources for not only measuring

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<sup>106</sup> Dehn, 'Monica Dehn says 'This society has a welcome idea'', p. 6.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> Buettner, "'Going for an Indian'", p. 877.

<sup>109</sup> Callum G. Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain: Understanding secularisation, 1800-2000* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009), p. 177.

<sup>110</sup> Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain*, p. 177.

the importance of the co-operative movement's advertising and marketing within British business history, but also social history through discussion of social issues such as cultural integration.

## Chapter Three: *Woman's Outlook*: Consumer Protection, Activism and Humanitarianism

Founded in 1919, *Woman's Outlook* aimed to inform members of the WCG, known as the Co-operative Women's Guild (CWG) from 1963 onwards, of activities and initiatives, as well as encourage members to take part in wider co-operatively-endorsed proposals, whilst maintaining independence from direct Guild control of the publication.<sup>111</sup> In the 1960s, its attention focused on increasing activity and membership within co-operative circles and involving itself in society more widely: from campaigning against the impending threat of nuclear war to promoting humanitarian causes in African countries following their independence from European powers. In this respect, *Woman's Outlook* is particularly useful as a historical source for it provides a unique insight into social and cultural aspects of female co-operation, extending far further than the shopping basket.

### Co-operative Consumption and Ideals

*Woman's Outlook* was redeveloped during the 1950s with a new format launching in 1957, and average monthly sales around 47,000.<sup>112</sup> Its publishers, the Co-operative Press, deemed *Woman's Outlook* as an important magazine for advertising co-operatively manufactured items such as clothing, homewares and CWS-produced foods in order to encourage co-operation in all aspects of consumer life. These articles functioned in a similar way to those found in *Home Magazine* and *Good Shopping*, but were aimed at a more active demographic within the co-operative movement.

Co-operative Press reports have highlighted that the periodical was utilised to promote the sale of CWS products. In late 1963, 1,400 CWS skirts were sold through the magazine, in a joint

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<sup>111</sup> Gaffin and Thoms, *Caring & Sharing*, p. 240; p. 280.

<sup>112</sup> 'Minutes of Meeting held in Manchester on Saturday, 21<sup>st</sup> December 1957, at 9.30am', Manchester: PRES 1/1/20, p. 4.

fashion project between the CWS and WCG.<sup>113</sup> The project was successful, albeit short-lived.<sup>114</sup> This represented but one attempt to encourage greater consumer uptake of co-operative products, but despite this, little was successful in encouraging increased subscription to the periodical or greater consumer spending within local societies. Although other similar campaigns were launched in the early 1960s, Co-operative Press board minutes rarely mention them, as well as *Woman's Outlook* more generally. Instead the publishers concentrated on newspapers such as *Sunday Citizen* – a co-operatively published, Labour-influenced newspaper.<sup>115</sup> The credence given to other projects such as *Sunday Citizen* provide an insight into the continuing struggle of *Woman's Outlook* in the 1960s – with its eventual cessation in 1967.

### Economy of the Co-operative Movement

It was widely acknowledged that the co-operative movement faced numerous economic difficulties during the 1960s. Most critically, the business struggled to keep up with growing competition from chain stores, which reduced the proportion of co-operative supermarkets available to the consumer.<sup>116</sup> Although its trade increased by 2.1 per cent between 1961 and 1966, it was overshadowed by the 59.6 per cent growth of multiples in the same period.<sup>117</sup> Moreover, the majority of increased co-operative trade hailed from the food sector, leaving other departments such as dry goods lagging behind.<sup>118</sup>

One way in which the movement attempted to halt its declining position was through projects which sought to increase trade throughout different departments, most notably food and

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<sup>113</sup> 'Minutes of Meeting held in London on Saturday, March 30<sup>th</sup>, 1963, at 9am', Manchester: PRES 1/1/20, p. 6.

<sup>114</sup> 'Minutes of Meeting held in Manchester on Saturday, December 21<sup>st</sup> 1963, at 9.30am', Manchester: PRES 1/1/20, p. 5.

<sup>115</sup> Other projects which sought to increase subscriber spending within local co-operative societies ran in a similar manner. In June 1963, the CWS sold blouses through *Woman's Outlook*. However, Co-operative Press minutes do not determine how many of these were sold. See 'Woman's Outlook Blouse', *Woman's Outlook* (June 1963), p. 24. For reference to *Sunday Citizen*, see 'It's Our Paper', *Woman's Outlook* (October 1962), p. 4.

<sup>116</sup> Bonner, *British Co-operation*, pp. 248-9.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid*, p. 255.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid*.

clothing.<sup>119</sup> The ‘Come Co-operative Shopping’ Campaign, launched by the CWS in 1963, saw co-operative products advertised in magazines and on television, in the hope to drive and popularise the initiative.<sup>120</sup> The CWS shouldered the entire cost of advertising and allocated an extra £500,000 for each year of the scheme.<sup>121</sup> Other projects sought to improve stores and entice more custom. ‘Operation Facelift’ updated local co-operative societies throughout Great Britain, improving amenities in store to compete with supermarket chains.<sup>122</sup> Throughout the enactment of these schemes, members of the CWG were encouraged to shop co-operatively, and be vocal in the community about its benefits, in order to increase sales and lessen the burden on the movement.<sup>123</sup> Women were vital in generating economic prosperity for the movement, for between 61 and 70 per cent of society membership was filled by women, representing the consumer power they held, aiding the prosperity of the movement.<sup>124</sup>

The WCG was a well-established advocate for consumer protection throughout the twentieth century, but was overshadowed in the 1960s by the Consumer Council discussed in chapter two – formed in order to represent consumer interests under Howard Macmillan’s Conservative government.<sup>125</sup> The Final Report of the Committee on Consumer Protection, commonly known as the Molony Committee Report, was published in July 1963.<sup>126</sup> It was hoped that the report would enhance consumer protection and aid the position of co-operatives, especially as the Co-operative Union and women’s organisations were discussed in the final report in reference to their

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<sup>119</sup> Co-operative campaigns were commonly marketed through joint television advertising between the CWS and local societies. They promoted some of the most popular products to a wider demographic including ‘99’ tea, butter, cream and non-CWS foodstuffs such as Heinz-branded products. See Alan George Burton, *The British Consumer Co-operative Movement and film, 1890s – 1960s* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), p. 226; p. 228.

<sup>120</sup> ‘Come Co-operative Shopping’, available at National Library of Scotland <http://movingimage.nls.uk/film/0660> (accessed 29 January 2018).

<sup>121</sup> Burton, *The British Consumer Co-operative Movement and film*, p. 227.

<sup>122</sup> James Kinloch and John Butt, *History of the Scottish Co-operative Wholesale Society Limited* (Glasgow: Co-operative Wholesale Society Limited, 1981), p. 373.

<sup>123</sup> “‘Come Co-operative Shopping’ Campaign Gets Underway’, *Woman’s Outlook* (June 1963), p. 24.

<sup>124</sup> Gaffin and Thoms, *Caring & Sharing*, p. 185.

<sup>125</sup> Hilton, ‘The Female Consumer and the Politics of Consumption in Twentieth Century Britain’, p. 120.

<sup>126</sup> ‘Final Report of the Committee on Consumer Protection’, July 1962 (London: HMSO, 1962).

educational booklets, which were intended to inform consumers of their rights.<sup>127</sup> *Woman's Outlook* declared its disappointment with the report in September 1962, arguing that it did not actually improve the position of customers.<sup>128</sup> The Molony Committee Report established a Consumer Council, to draw attention to unfair trading practices and loopholes within legislation, and called for manufacturers to adapt their practices in the name of the consumer interest.<sup>129</sup> However, the Council had little power, acting only as an advisory body, as customer complaints continued to be sent to the citizen's advice bureau, rather than directly to the committee.<sup>130</sup> In spite of disapproval by *Woman's Outlook* and guildswomen, the Consumer Council was established whilst disregarding co-operation as a facilitator of consumer interests, worsening the situation faced by the co-operative movement in the coming years.

## Organisation and Membership

As previously mentioned, the co-operative movement struggled to halt the decline of its membership as it failed to entice younger generations into the co-operative fold, which was needed to increase membership and activity. *Woman's Outlook* specifically served the WCG; however, it pertained to the movement as a whole. Although average membership of co-operative societies increased between 1948 and 1968, the number of societies plummeted from 1,030 to 539, and represented the need to make efficiencies to maintain economic viability.<sup>131</sup> As societies acted independently, they were not compelled to function in the same way. Arnold Bonner gives the example of societies being lax, failing to keep up-to-date with membership records, as noted by the fact that there were people on the books who were no longer members – or were even deceased!<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> 'Final Report of the Committee on Consumer Protection', pp. 282-3.

<sup>128</sup> 'A Disappointing Report', *Woman's Outlook* (September 1962), p. 1.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid.

<sup>131</sup> Bonner, *British Co-operation*, pp. 250-1.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid, p. 250.

WCG membership between 1951 and 1963 fell from 61,037 to 38,380.<sup>133</sup> The decline in membership represented an immediate concern for the Guild, for fewer women were paying fees, thus reducing the income of the Guild. The WCG accepted the difficulties it faced but remained optimistic about the future, taking the initiative to increase subscriptions by one shilling per member per year, in order to raise more funds.<sup>134</sup> In order to halt the declining membership, the Guild took the decision to employ some part-time fieldworkers to undertake household visits for membership recruitment.<sup>135</sup>

In October 1962's edition of *Woman's Outlook*, Elsie Lawn authored an article discussing her experiences as a fieldworker for the WCG.<sup>136</sup> She discussed that most of her recruitments came from visits to housing estates where there were communities of women at home.<sup>137</sup> This contrasted with the lack of success in areas where women were largely at work, and notes were left through letterboxes, reflecting the increasing number of married women in employment during the 1960s, and not in the traditionally occupied domestic sphere.<sup>138</sup> As increasing numbers of women were employed, it became difficult for them to attend Guild meetings – traditionally held in afternoons – and represented another difficulty the CWG faced throughout the period.<sup>139</sup> The dramatic decline of the Guild in the 1950s, compounded by growing opportunities for women outside of the home, represented a sea change in the CWG's fortunes, and from the 1960s onwards, it would struggle to maintain its appeal in an increasingly competitive world.

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<sup>133</sup> Gaffin and Thoms, *Caring & Sharing*, p. 174.

<sup>134</sup> 'Wind of Change in the Guild', *Woman's Outlook* (August 1962), pp. 20-1.

<sup>135</sup> Elsie Lawn, 'Making New Members', *Woman's Outlook* (October 1962), p. 8.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid; Anthony Sutcliffe, *An Economic and Social History of Western Europe Since 1945* (London: Longman, 1996), p. 146.

<sup>139</sup> Gaffin and Thoms, *Caring & Sharing*, p. 174.

## Political Activism

Co-operators actively participated in demonstrations with other organisations, remaining morally steadfast to their principles in order to assert their political beliefs. *Woman's Outlook* provided an insight into some of the activities undertaken by the co-operative movement whilst focusing on WCG/CWG involvement.

In the early 1960s, nuclear disarmament was a widely contested issue as discussed in Chapter One. Debates took place throughout the United Kingdom, from the halls of Westminster, to the streets of towns and cities. Co-operative contribution in nuclear disarmament campaigns and demonstrations represented a prime example of what April Carter described as 'the most significant expression of moral concern and protest within the country since 1945'.<sup>140</sup> *Woman's Outlook* placed particular emphasis on the impending threat of nuclear war in the early 1960s, publishing periodicals and its members' letters in favour of direct action against nuclear testing, and for unilateral nuclear disarmament.<sup>141</sup> As an addition to a 1962 letter by J. Rutherford, *Woman's Outlook* published details of a Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) demonstration, to be held on 7 March.<sup>142</sup> CND's membership principally drew from middle-class radicals, socialists and students – including the likes of the essayist J. B. Priestley and activist Peggy Duff.<sup>143</sup> Co-operative involvement represented something different from the typical member of the organisation. As many guildswomen were middle-aged and/or housewives, their reasons behind supporting nuclear disarmament often differed from that of students. One of their principal motives was to preserve society for the sake of

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<sup>140</sup> April Carter, *Peace Movements: International Protest and World Politics since 1945* (London: Longman, 1992), p. 45. For more information on anti-nuclear demonstrations in Cold War culture see Holger Nehring, *Politics of Security: British and West German Protest Movements and the Early Cold War, 1945-1970* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

<sup>141</sup> Some examples of support for direct action in *Woman's Outlook* include J. Rutherford, 'Guildswomen should march against nuclear weapons', *Woman's Outlook* (March 1962), p. 16; M. E. Walter, 'Women against the bomb', *Woman's Outlook* (July 1962), p. 12; 'Women Against Nuclear Arms' *Woman's Outlook* (February 1963), pp. 8-9.

<sup>142</sup> Rutherford, 'Guildswomen should march against nuclear weapons', p. 16.

<sup>143</sup> Holger Nehring, 'The British and West German Protests against Nuclear Weapons and the Cultures of the Cold War, 1957-64', *Contemporary British History*, Vol. 19, No. 2 (June 2005), p. 226; Carter, *Peace Movements*, p. 47.

their children, often placing CND posters in windows, one of which stated that '[y]ou can't vaccinate children against nuclear tests'.<sup>144</sup> This highlighted how female co-operators perceived themselves, emphasising the importance of halting nuclear testing in order to improve society for future generations. However, they also stressed the importance of female unity against nuclear weapons, encouraging its members to join with other women's organisations and take part in marches to assert their opinions.<sup>145</sup> On matters of national importance, the WCG emphasised the significance of cooperation with external organisations in order to stimulate change.

In contrast, issues pertaining to the Guild remained within the organisation. During the early 1960s, one particularly contentious issue was raised – Rule 24. This stipulated that whilst members of political parties other than the Co-operative and Labour parties, for example the Conservative Party or the Communist Party of Great Britain, could become members of WCG branches, they were prohibited from running for office-holding positions within the Guild, or from serving as delegates at Congress.<sup>146</sup> Most controversial of all was the clause which specified that Communists could not serve as delegates under any circumstances, 'especially at the Guild's expense'.<sup>147</sup> Communists were ostracised by vast swathes of British society, especially after the horrors of Stalinism had been unearthed and denounced in 1956, and the increasing factionalism internationally between different branches of communism, which could be focused on by media outlets to stir hatred.<sup>148</sup>

However, the 1961 debate which would extend the right to serve as a delegate provoked arguments on both sides. W. M. Tamplin, a co-operator from Croydon, asserted that the right to serve as a delegate should be extended, as the WCG was not an auxiliary of the Co-operative Party, rather an educational body.<sup>149</sup> The WCG should have the right to insist on loyalty from its members,

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<sup>144</sup> Walter, 'Women against the bomb', p. 12.

<sup>145</sup> Walter, 'Women against the bomb', p. 12.

<sup>146</sup> Gaffin and Thoms, *Caring & Sharing*, p. 204.

<sup>147</sup> W. M. Tamplin, 'Political Rule: Rule 24', *Woman's Outlook* (February 1961), p. 17.

<sup>148</sup> Geoffrey Wakeford, 'Mao May Boycott Moscow', *Daily Mail*, 7 October 1960, p. 17; Jörg Baberowski, 'Criticism as Crisis, or Why the Soviet Union Still Collapsed', *Journal of Modern European History*, Vol. 9, No. 2 (2011), p. 151.

<sup>149</sup> Tamplin, 'Political Rule: Rule 24', p. 17.

but subscription to certain political parties ought not to exempt women from becoming more involved within Guild life.<sup>150</sup> Whilst some members agreed with Tamplin, others such as Joan Baker and Ada Hill published a report which argued that extending office holding capacities would mean that the Guild would not be 'nurtured and made to prosper by the dilution of [their] ideals' as members of other parties could try to change the opinions of co-operators.<sup>151</sup> Nothing changed as a result of the debate surrounding Rule 24, yet it continued to be deliberated in the coming years at annual conferences, reflecting how slowly issues were dealt with within the movement.

## Gender Politics

In a 1963 article for *Woman's Outlook*, 'Equality for women: How much have we really achieved?', Judith Cook assessed the progress made in the previous 30 years since women were enfranchised in the United Kingdom, both politically and socially.<sup>152</sup> Cook was not only a co-operator, but the founder of Voice of Women, an anti-nuclear organisation formed in response to the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962, and would go on to write as a columnist for *The Guardian's* women's page.<sup>153</sup> Although women were given the right to vote in previous decades, they faced significant struggles in the 1960s, and *Woman's Outlook* frequently addressed them through its articles and letters.

Female education had long been extolled as important within the co-operative movement, which allowed its female members to actively engage in society, particularly working as part of local authorities, in welfare and education, and on consultative committees of nationalised industries.<sup>154</sup> The WCG saw itself as a training centre for women's participation in communities, citing that the 25 ex-national Presidents of the Guild served on more than 60 co-operative, local and national

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<sup>150</sup> Ibid.

<sup>151</sup> Gaffin and Thoms, *Caring & Sharing*, p. 204.

<sup>152</sup> Judith Cook, 'Equality for women: How much have we really achieved?', *Woman's Outlook* (October 1963), p. 15.

<sup>153</sup> 'Women Against Nuclear Arms', pp. 8-9; Jean Stead, 'Obituary: Judith Cook', *The Guardian*, 15 May 2004.

<sup>154</sup> 'How Women Serve the Community', *Woman's Outlook* (January 1962), p. 1.

committees whilst continuing involvement in their Guild branches.<sup>155</sup> However, the movement maintained male-dominated executive positions, with women only taking up 20 per cent of managerial roles.<sup>156</sup> Reasons cited for this inequality in representation included insufficient numbers of women standing as candidates; a lower female turnout at elections compared to their male counterparts; and the belief that women preferred to vote for men because they were seen as better candidates.<sup>157</sup> Whilst the movement gave more opportunities for women to prosper in some forms of employment, distinctive inequalities were perpetuated owing to the continued belief in the difference between the capabilities of men and women in the highest positions.

*Woman's Outlook's* 'Talking Points' articles tackled equal pay within employment, particularly in response to governmental acceptance of the principle by 1966 and male opposition.<sup>158</sup> An example was given of a company where six semi-skilled female workers earned £15 a week, whilst its 500 unskilled male labourers earned £13 a week and complained that the women received a higher wage.<sup>159</sup> Instead of raising the wage of the male employees or justifying the pay difference, the company decided to sack the women.<sup>160</sup> This drew attention to the opposition these women faced despite the fact that they were in a more skilled role, and highlighted that it would be even more difficult for women to negotiate equal pay with an employer had they been of the same skill level as male counterparts. Even after the termination of *Woman's Outlook*, equal pay debates took place. Whilst the Equal Pay Act, which was due to come into force in 1975, seemed as though it would encourage equality in the workplace, its main legacy taught women that they would have to fight for their rights themselves, as governments were not able to successfully implement gender legislation.<sup>161</sup>

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<sup>155</sup> Ibid.

<sup>156</sup> Gaffin and Thoms, *Caring & Sharing*, p. 184.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid.

<sup>158</sup> 'Talking Points', *Woman's Outlook* (August 1966), p. 1.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid.

<sup>161</sup> Rowbotham, *The Past is Before Us*, pp. 167-8.

The CWG was also a strong advocate, along with other organisations such as the Abortion Law Reform Association, for changes to the Victorian abortion law which persisted in the United Kingdom until 1967. In the July 1966 edition of *Woman's Outlook*, the Bill was making its way through the House of Lords, with speeches in favour of reform, unsurprisingly from female peers.<sup>162</sup> However, the periodical also stated that 'some of the more reactionary Bishops and backwoodsmen' were strongly opposed to reform on religious grounds.<sup>163</sup> Women seeking abortions had three main options: they could try to have a termination on psychiatric grounds; source one from expensive private clinics; or seek backstreet abortions.<sup>164</sup> After the thalidomide tragedy of the late 1950s and the measles outbreak of 1962, the National Health Service (NHS) undertook more medical abortions to prevent serious birth defects in new-borns; however, many women continued to be 'slaughtered in dingy back streets' as abortions remained limited to life-threatening or psychologically traumatic conditions.<sup>165</sup> Whilst the 1967 Abortion Act legalised terminations by the NHS for medical reasons, it failed to permit them on economic grounds, which was cited as a valid reason for ending a pregnancy in the article, for it could impede a child's upbringing.<sup>166</sup> *Woman's Outlook's* articles in the 1960s took a progressive stance on social issues affecting women, as it was run by and for them and aimed to encourage change to create a more prosperous and equal society in the future.

## International Humanitarianism

Co-operatives did not limit themselves to advocating social progress in the United Kingdom, rather they involved themselves in international humanitarianism in conjunction with organisations such as

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<sup>162</sup> 'Talking Points', *Woman's Outlook* (July 1966), p. 1.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid.

<sup>164</sup> Marwick, *British Society since 1945*, p. 118; Emma L. Jones, 'Attitudes to Abortion in the Era of Reform: Evidence from the Abortion Law Reform Association correspondence', *Women's History Review*, Vol. 20, No. 2 (2011), p. 290.

<sup>165</sup> The thalidomide tragedy referred to a crisis in the NHS between 1958 and 1961, where a new drug was prescribed to pregnant women to ease morning sickness, but resulted in severe deformities in some babies. See Jones, 'Attitudes to Abortion in the Era of Reform', p. 290; 'Talking Points', *Woman's Outlook* (July 1966), p. 1.

<sup>166</sup> *Abortion Act 1967*, pp. 1-2; 'Talking Points', *Woman's Outlook* (July 1966), p. 1.

Oxfam and Save the Children to improve living conditions and life prospects worldwide. *Woman's Outlook* condemned the view that 'charity begins at home', which asserted that Westminster should not give foreign aid until all of its domestic problems were resolved.<sup>167</sup> Instead, the movement contributed to humanitarian works and assisted people worldwide, from providing relief to children in the West Indies, to establishing consumer co-operatives in newly-independent Botswana.<sup>168</sup> Described by Michael Barnett as 'alchemical humanitarianism', this form of aid provided tools necessary to remove the causes of suffering and poverty by providing tools such as co-operatives to generate economic prosperity.<sup>169</sup>

One of the most notable schemes was a joint venture between the British co-operative movement and Oxfam in Bechuanaland, later known as Botswana, to establish a self-sufficient consumer co-operative in the country following independence.<sup>170</sup> It was deemed an important cause for many within the movement, as 30,000 Botswanan men migrated to South Africa for employment and to send money back to their impoverished families, at a time when South Africa was under the apartheid system, which was opposed by many members.<sup>171</sup> By 1970, the programme had achieved its main objectives but had fallen short of the £30,000 they had promised to contribute to Oxfam, despite substantial donations by auxiliaries including the CWG, who had raised £7,000 by 1967.<sup>172</sup> The co-operative movement ultimately wanted the people of Botswana to help themselves through the establishment of co-operatives, so they would not have to resort to being subject to a repressive regime in order to survive.

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<sup>167</sup> 'To free the world from hunger', *Woman's Outlook* (June 1962), p. 1; 'Saving the World's Children', *Woman's Outlook* (April 1963), pp. 16-17.

<sup>168</sup> 'Saving the World's Children', pp. 16-17; E. Chatterton, 'A Year of Challenge', *Woman's Outlook* (October 1966), p. 19.

<sup>169</sup> Michael Barnett, *Empire of Humanity: a history of humanitarianism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2013), p. 22.

<sup>170</sup> Matthew Anderson, *A History of Fairtrade in Contemporary Britain: From Civil Society Campaigns to Corporate Compliance* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), p.79.

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>172</sup> *Ibid.*; Gaffin and Thoms, *Caring & Sharing*, p. 217.

A similar project occurred in the earlier 1960s, on the East African island of Zanzibar. The clove industry had been in decline, so female co-operators intervened to help establish co-operatives as an alternative source of income, donating £159 in 1963 to the project.<sup>173</sup> The Zanzibar Women's Co-operative utilised the cloves which were no longer as popular in food consumption as a moth repellent, turning them into moth-proof coat hangers for clothing.<sup>174</sup> This was not only important as it ensured an income for these women, but also taught them a skill which would ensure their long-term prosperity, reflecting the co-operative ideal of universal education.<sup>175</sup> The case studies discussed in this section provide examples of the ways in which the co-operative movement and particularly the WCG/CWG saw themselves, as far more than merely part of a business, being directly involved in providing assistance and encouraging self-sufficiency for future generations.

## Cessation

*Woman's Outlook* represented the voices of active female co-operators, which can explain the increasing struggles it faced following the cessation of the periodical, as their voices were overshadowed by the economics of the business, rather than the principles of the movement.<sup>176</sup> Members of the CWG continued to be informed of activities through the *Co-operative News* monthly bulletin when the periodical was terminated.<sup>177</sup> However, the loss of *Woman's Outlook* was devastating for the Guild as it took away the voices of many female co-operators who wrote articles, opinion pieces and letters which contributed to the wide variety of topics covered in the periodical.<sup>178</sup> *Woman's Outlook* provided an insight into the multi-faceted nature of co-operation and its involvement in everyday life: from shopping locally to international aid. Although the

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<sup>173</sup> 'Support for War on Want', p. 31; Gaffin and Thoms, *Caring & Sharing*, p. 217.

<sup>174</sup> Mabel Ridealgh, 'A Great Co-operative Year', *Woman's Outlook* (October 1963), p. 27.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid.

<sup>176</sup> Gaffin and Thoms, *Caring & Sharing*, p. 211.

<sup>177</sup> 'Our Last Issue', *Woman's Outlook* (June 1967), p. 1; 'Minutes of Meeting held in London, on Saturday, 6<sup>th</sup> May 1967, at 9.30am', Manchester: PRES 1/1/21-22, p. 2.

<sup>178</sup> Gaffin and Thoms, *Caring & Sharing*, p. 222.

publication ceased production in 1967, it represented the ideals of the co-operative movement as a whole, placing a great emphasis on unity, education and equality for all.

## Conclusion

Following the closure of the periodicals, the co-operative movement continued its economic decline without a medium through which to inform formerly-interested readerships. Whilst *Co-operative Consumer*, *Home Magazine*, *Good Shopping* and *Woman's Outlook* all informed their respective audiences of the obvious struggles the movement faced, they also published articles which acknowledged positive local and national initiatives. This provided their readers with a more optimistic view of the future, rather than a feeling of despondency, which would have been more prominent had there not been evidence of attempts to alleviate the movement's problems, both at a grassroots and board level. The only sources of news for co-operators from the movement itself now resided with *Co-operative News* – the major newspaper run by the British co-operative movement – which did not have the space to appeal to distinctive readerships ranging from the domestic housewife to the activist for nuclear disarmament.<sup>179</sup>

Economically, it is evident that the co-operative movement struggled in the 1960s, owing to changing patterns of consumption and ever-increasing competition. Articles from *Co-operative Consumer* and *Woman's Outlook* did not shy away from discussing the difficulties facing the movement. However, their function was often to respond to decisions made by other organisations such as the CIC or the Consumer Council. As such, their success was limited as they could offer few new ideas about how to rejuvenate the movement. Whilst this dissertation has not placed focus on the higher echelons of the movement, for example in the boards of management of the CWS, CRS or Co-operative Union, it has alluded to the sometimes-challenging relationships, which existed between members and management. The 'dysfunctional federation' referred to in *Building Co-operation* was certainly true regarding any desire to change the movement structurally, as mentioned in *Co-operative Consumer*. However, the endorsement of co-operative products through initiatives such as 'Come Co-operative Shopping', evident in both *Good Shopping* and *Woman's*

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<sup>179</sup> 'Our Last Issue', *Woman's Outlook* (June 1967), p. 1.

*Outlook*, highlighted that top-down initiatives which sought to ameliorate economic difficulties, through advertising and generating interest in local societies had the support of members at a grassroots level.

It has also placed the co-operative movement within the wider context of a rapidly-changing society in the 1960s. *Co-operative Consumer* provided examples of the co-operative movement's involvement in society through the work of the Co-operative Party, which functioned as opposition to subsequent governments working against the consumer interest. Despite its limited success, it represented consumers as a collective in a period of increasing individualism. Chapters Two and Three also highlighted the importance of the co-operative movement's place in 1960s society and how *Home Magazine* and *Good Shopping* contrasted the more progressive views championed in *Woman's Outlook*. Whilst the periodicals discussed in Chapter Two were intended for domestic female co-operators, whose power resided with the purse strings and subscribed to a more traditional view of women, chapter three highlighted that women were far more powerful than merely functioning as consumers. They advocated not only for the advancement of the female position through equality in the workplace and control over their own bodies, but also the progression of society by promoting unilateral nuclear disarmament and contributing to humanitarian works abroad – proving that the British co-operative movement worked on a local, national and international level to achieve its aims. However, articles in *Woman's Outlook* often only discussed female co-operation regarding activism. Without the articles from *Co-operative Consumer* which also demonstrated the involvement of male co-operators in activism such as that of nuclear disarmament, it would have seemed that these social issues were a female-dominated domain. These periodicals, taken as a group, both complement and contrast one another, and help to address questions about the breadth and activity of different demographics within the movement.

Overall, this dissertation has countered the widely-accepted view by historians that the co-operative movement's position in the 1960s was determined by the fiscal problems it encountered. These issues were undoubtedly important, for they were most frequently discussed, and were

notable in local societies. Nevertheless, the movement held a wider resonance within society through its political involvement, social activism and promotion of a multicultural society. Despite obstacles, the co-operative movement remained steadfast in the view of that the business, the political party and wider society could be improved through the realisation of the co-operative vision.

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