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'A ROUGH KIND OF FEMINISM': THE FORMATION OF WORKING CLASS WOMEN'S POLITICAL IDENTITIES, CLYDESIDE, c1919-1936

BY

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Abstract :

Feminist historiography has generally focused on middle-class women and formal organisations taking the view the World War I heralded the decline of the feminist movement and thereby any forms of feminist activity in Britain. This thesis, by investigating Clydeside women's experiences between the wars, subverts that approach. It offers a wider interpretation of feminist aims, objectives and activities by examining the premise that 'sexual antagonism' can 'shape sexual solidarity', providing a conduct for the operation of 'a rough kind of feminism'.

During the inter-war years attempts were made, through discourse, to reformulate traditional gender identities. The proposed vision of womanhood sought to re-situate females in the 'private sphere', as exulted progenitors and guardians of the race. Correspondingly, these women were to be provided for, and protected by the 'new man' who would love and respect his wife, whilst recognising that their roles, although different, should be equal in status. A response to the potential liberation of women after World War I, concerns over the quality and quantity of the British race and the ruptures wrought by war, this world view was to permeate society. Despite the persuasiveness of this discourse, however, these ideals were not generally compatible with the extra-discursive realities and imaginative boundaries of working-class life between the wars on Clydeside, and more so those of men. The proposed 'new men' of the Clyde faced extreme social, economic and political transformations which impeded their subjectification of the ideal. In turn, this contributed to the extreme gender antagonism faced by women in the worlds of work, politics, community and play and in their relations with men.

Women's responses were complex and contradictory. Although they were divided materially and ideologically, sexual antagonism provided a basis for coalition on specific issues which affected these women as a group. Working-class women countered their potential for powerlessness formally and informally in a variety of ways. They formed gender-specific work-cultures, they exploited the dominant gender discourse of this period, they used kin and community networks, they combined to take advantage of community organisations and they used defiance as strategies to challenge male domination. Whilst these same forces could also create class and gender divisions amongst women, nevertheless, sexual antagonism on Clydeside acted as a catalyst for behaviour identifiable as a' rough kind of feminism'.

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CHAPTER ONE :

INTRODUCTION

In a recent review article on the now published thesis, *On Men : Masculinity In Crisis*, by Professor Anthony Clare, readers of *Scotland on Sunday* were rather flippantly warned, 'The Future is feminine. Men are history . . . Patriarchy is on the way out . . . Men are losing control and it is not a pretty sight . . . ' Masculinity is in crisis.[1] Quoting Clare, readers were informed,

> Look at the problems of contemporary society - crime and violence, cultural dislocation, suicide, depression, the decline of the family and you will see men, for the first time, forced to question their own natures, their identities, their role in society . . . [2]

Clare's hypothesis is disturbing. Apparently, the choices available to modern men to alleviate this crisis are few. They can attempt to masculinise women. Alternatively they can reject women's potential progress because it is a man's world and as such it has to be protected from women, or men can learn from women's comparatively greater mental and emotional well-being and at the same time subject their gender, as women did through the feminist movement, to critical and coruscating analysis. Clare, however, is sceptical that men will adopt the latter. He fears that men might be more apt to 'pollute women with their tyranny'.[3] They may well do. Men might respond, as they have done historically, by resorting to a backlash against women, because, contrary to Clare's assertions, and in line with his scepticism, this is not the first time men have had to question their 'natures, their identities, or their role in society'. In other words, a crisis in masculinity and the problems associated with it are not unique to contemporary society.

In fact, such a crisis apparently occurred between the wars in Britain. It seems not only did this crisis halt women's progress, but it might actually have reversed it. Kingsley Kent's re-evaluation of the feminist movement after the First World War argues that, 'the terrors of war problematised masculinity, fragmenting it, causing men to question their relationship to a universal maleness . . . ' so that towards the end of the war men perceived women to be emasculating them and began, at least rhetorically, to strike back. It would seem then that the

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[1] D. Farrell, Interview in Spectrum Magazine, *Scotland on Sunday*, 30th July 2000.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Ibid.

'misogyny' of the post-war period was a product of what Showalter identified as, 'men's quarrels with the feminine element in their own psyches, externalised as quarrels with women'. This, in combination with the 'disruption, wrought by war, of previously established relationships' was then represented as a sexual disorder and as such peace came to imply, 'a return to traditional gender relationships, the familiar and natural order of families, men in public roles, women at home and so on'.[4] The situation was exacerbated by the response of feminists to the ways in which war became synonymous with sexual antagonism. It was not merely the 'post-feminist attitudes of younger women, or the right-wing backlash' against feminism ; nor was it the social and ideological partisan differences amongst feminist which contributed to a lack of a 'distinct women's question' in the 1920s and 1930s,[5] rather feminists avoided and feared to acknowledge sexual antagonism. Thus they largely ceased to challenge the dominant discourses on sexuality, and adopted an ideology which emphasised equality for women based on sexual difference and separate spheres for women and men. In this way, they were often confused with anti-feminists. According to Kent, it was this which ensured that 'the movement could not sustain itself as a distinct political, social and economic movement and was soon swallowed up and disappeared along with many of the gains women had won'. [6] Fragmentation in other words was not inevitable.

In contrast to Kent's bleak depiction of the impact of masculinity in crisis, Riley in her quest to seek the conditions for any joint consciousness of women, forwarded the hypothesis that there is enough ground to suggest that, 'sexual antagonism can shape sexual solidarity' ; that 'assaults and counter-assaults, with all their irritations', can lead to 'a rough kind of feminism'.[7] By this definition, feminist behaviour need not be defined as a conscious

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[4] S. Kingsley Kent, *Making Peace The Reconstruction of Gender in Inter-War Britain*, New Jersey, 1993, pp.37-38, 70 and 237, and E. Showalter as quoted in S. Kingsley Kent, 'The Politics of Sexual Difference : World War I and the Demise of British Feminism', *Journal of British Studies*, Vol.27, 1988, p.252.

[5] N. Cott, 'Feminist Theory and Feminist Movements : the Past Before Us', J. Mitchell & A. Oakley, [eds.], *What is Feminism*, Oxford, 1986, pp.57-60.

[6] S. Kingsley Kent, *Making Peace*, pp.116-137. See also M. Pugh, 'Domesticity and the decline of feminism, 1930-1950', H.L. Smith, [ed.], *British Feminism in the Twentieth Century*, Aldershot, 1990, pp.144-166 and J. Hannam, 'Women and Politics', in J. Purvis, [ed.], *Women's History Britain, 1850-1945*, London, 1995, pp.217-246.

[7] D. Riley, *'Am I That Name?' Feminism and the Category of 'Women' in History*, London, 1988, p.10.

challenge to male domination. It can also be a response to an identity produced by the perceptions and actions of the generalised 'other'.

After the World War I, as Kent has shown, masculinity was in crisis in Britain. It would be contentious to assume that, like the feminist movement, ordinary women, who were the recipients of sexual antagonism in their daily lives, could or would ignore its effects. Many women experienced sexual antagonism between the wars. This may well have been a reflection of masculinity in crisis. But were women, as Kent implies, content to incur losses and be swamped by the power of categorisation? Certainly it seems that some were. One of the subjects of this study declared,

> A man was brought intae this world to be the breadwinner. No wife unless it's necessary should be out working. She should be at home attending tae him and the children. [8]

In a period of flux, which generated the potential for greater economic, social and political freedom for females, what factors congealed to influence inter-war women to embrace this apparently subordinate identity? Were these influences orchestrated, fixed and impregnable, and, if women did subjectify this vision of womanhood, did it guarantee subordination? These are questions about power and identity. They are also the central questions which this thesis will address by investigating the impact of the dominant gender discourses alongside the extra-discursive realities of working-class women's lives on Clydeside between the wars. It will do so by adopting Riley's hypothesis to highlight how many working-class women from this region did respond to sexual antagonism between the wars by using an 'assertion of the feminine' as a 'political tactic'. [9] These women did so in the political arena, the workplace, their neighbourhoods and in their personal relations with men, and in doing so they behaved

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[8] Interview with author, Mrs GE, born 1907 Gorbals, Glasgow.

[9] This idea is based on the feminist debates in M. Barrett and A. Phillips, 'Introduction', M. Barrett and A. Phillips, [eds.], *Destabilising Theory Contemporary Feminist Debates*, Cambridge, 1992, pp.1-9. See also N. Charles, 'Feminist Practices', N. Charles & F. Hughes-Free, [eds.], *Practising Feminism, Identity Difference Power*, London, 1996, pp.1-22.

in ways identifiable, if not identified, as 'a rough kind of feminism'. They were feminists in the respect that, 'a feminist is a woman who does not allow anyone to think in her place'.[10]

Clydeside women did not regard themselves as feminists. Most of these women did not identify themselves as having shared the aims and ideals of the formal feminist movement. Many women would have been affected by the 'negative threatening connotations' associated with feminism and feminists between the wars.[11] Nor were Clydeside's working-class women necessarily regarded as a potential constituency by the women's movement of this region. In actual fact, they continued to be largely neglected by the feminists of the locality, more so perhaps than was often the case in other regions of Britain. However, while the women of Clydeside's working classes were not feminists, and were ignored as a political constituency by the Clydeside feminist movement, many did, none the less, act in a feminist manner. This form of feminist behaviour was a 'politics of everyday life'. Savage and Miles maintain that, the 'routines of people's daily existence involve political choices, strategies and decisions'. Thus, 'personal relationships between husbands and wives . . . can be political as can the business of organising and participating in non-political activities'.[12] Hannam also notes that, 'it is through an understanding of the complex inter-relationship between different forms of politics that the process by which women became politicised' and the choices that they made become evident.[13] This complex inter-relationship between different forms of working class feminist behaviour will form the body of this work.

In recent years feminism and the women's movement has been re-appraised and this re-evaluation has demonstrated the diversity of participants, as well as their aims, objectives and strategies, which fused to cumulatively make up the first wave of feminism. Increasingly it is acknowledged that the broad divisions in ideology between those who sought 'equal rights' for

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[10] Michele Le Doeuff as quoted in, S. Kemp & J. Squires, 'Epistemologies Introduction', S. Kemp & J. Squires, [eds.], *Feminisms*, Oxford, 1997, p.142.
[11] See K. Borland, ' " That's Not What I Said" : Interpretative Conflict in Oral Narrative Research', S. Berger Gluck & D. Patai, [eds.], *Women's Words The Feminist Practice of Oral History*, London, 1991, p.71. Having interviewed and then identified her grandmother as a feminist, Borland was to discover that it was the connotations associated with feminism which was partly responsible for the rejection of this identity.
[12] As quoted by J. Hannam, 'Women and Politics', J. Purvis, [ed.], *Women's History*, pp.217-218.
[13] Ibid., p.218.

women and those who demanded 'special protection' for women, at this time, were not rigid. Offen identifies these two distinct historical traditions within feminism : 'two modes of argument which were not always analytically distinct'. These modes of feminism she labels 'individualistic' and 'relational'. Individualistic feminism, or, as it is also labelled 'equal rights' and 'old feminism' constituted demands for equality for women with men regardless of sexual difference. 'Relational' feminism, or as it is often referred to 'new' or 'welfare feminism', increasingly usurped individualistic feminism between the wars. Yet, according to Offen it continued to co-exist and compete with relational feminism, a feminism which emphasised the 'womanliness of women'. This form of feminism proposed a 'gender based but egalitarian vision of society'. Relational feminism featured 'a companionate, non-hierarchical, male-female couple as the basic unit of society and insisted on women's distinctive biological contribution to society', making demands for equality based on this. Relational feminism, Offen asserts, represented, in terms of time, place and ideology, 'the dominant form of feminist thought throughout Europe'.[14] Cott also emphasises how both ideals depended upon some level of 'conceptualisation of sexual "difference" to generate identification with the group "women" '. Thus, the main divisions amongst feminists between the wars stemmed from 'their priorities for social justice and social change', and from the diverging 'political and class loyalties' of feminists, although they were also determined by the particular views on 'women's nature and purpose' held by feminists at this time. However, she also highlights that these divisions were not the primary cause of the fragmentation of the feminist movement, stressing that, 'it would be a mistake to expect that women's interests are "normally" a unity'. 'Coalition building and common-ground sharing amongst women of different needs and politics' should not be regarded as "ordinary", the norm' because, 'as much as women have a common cause in gender issues, they are differentiated by political, cultural and sexual loyalties and by racial, class and ethnic identities which informs their experiences of gender itself'. In this context feminist mobilisation is difficult unless their is a 'predisposing ground for coalition'.[15] However,

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[14] K. Offen, 'Defining Feminism : A Comparative Historical Approach', *Signs*, No1, Vol.14, 1988, pp.119-157.
[15] N. Cott, 'Feminist Theory and Feminist Movements' , J. Mitchell & A. Oakley, [eds.], *What is Feminism*, Oxford, 1986,

this fails to explain why 'feminists avoided and feared to acknowledge sexual antagonism'. Sexual antagonism could have been a potential 'predisposing ground for coalition', one which would have provided the means by which feminists could identify 'women's socially constructed "difference" from men', whilst still acknowledging the 'multifaceted entity, "women" ', which Cott argues is an essential to any joint consciousness of women and the endurance of the feminist movement.[16] In fact, this thesis intends to highlight the ways in which sexual antagonism did act as a 'predisposing ground for coalition' for many working-class women between the wars on Clydeside allowing them to act in feminist ways.

Feminism takes, and has always taken, many forms. Contemporary feminists have identified this and the existence of a 'popular feminism', 'which does not name itself feminist'. It is a feminism which 'is found in the everyday' activities of women'.[17] Nor is there any reason to assume that popular feminism is a present day manifestation. In fact, because of the multiform nature of feminism Delmar stresses that the terms feminist and feminism need to be challenged because 'they are obstacles to an understanding of feminism in its diversity, in its differences, and in its specificity'. She has shown how these terms are associated with anything from 'codes of dress, looks and behaviour' to a perception of feminism as 'an active desire to change women's position in society'. More frequently, 'feminism and the women's movement have been assumed to be coterminous'. [18] Delmar, maintains that this kind of over-definition of feminism as an activity creates problems by 'disguising the ideas, aims and successes of feminist women'.[19] This is true of the women who behaved in what will be described in this study as a 'rough kind of feminism,' but it is also true of the inter-war 'feminists' of the Clydeside women's movement, whose 'feminist' ideas, aims and successes must be analysed in light of the particular class relations of the region.

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pp.54-60.
[16] Ibid., pp.59-60.
[17] S. Kemp & J. Squires, 'Introduction', S. Kemp & J. Squires, [eds.], *Feminisms*, p.5.
[18] R. Delmar, 'What is Feminism?', J. Mitchell & A. Oakley, [eds.], *What is Feminism*, pp.8-9, and p.13.
[19] Ibid., pp.23-24.

Class has been, and to some extent continues to be, regarded as having been an impediment to feminist unity in twentieth-century Britain. As an obstacle, it is presented in the form of working-class women's apathy to feminism. Where working-class women do feature, they tend to be depicted by historians studying feminism as the victims, or at best the beneficiaries of, middle-class feminist concerns.[20] The alternative picture is one of the adversity created by the 'male dominance of the labour movement', who 'retained an abiding suspicion of all women's organisations as inherently middle class and divisive'.[21] For the Clydeside region, Cairns argues that feminist organisations were hostile to the labour movement because of the latter's demonstration of 'patriarchy'.[22] Implicitly and explicitly a number of feminists histories of the labour movement also point in this direction. Hunt's analysis of the Social Democratic Federation, [SDF], whilst acknowledging the ways in which feminist thought and behaviour was accommodated within the party, nevertheless argues that the SDF, like other parties in the Second International viewed feminism as a movement to benefit bourgeois women. Thus for most SDFers feminism was a movement that had to be opposed because it could divide the working class.[23] Alberti is more direct. She states that, 'women's involvement in Labour politics helped strain feminist solidarity in the 1920s . . . and encouraged the leadership of the party to be hostile to feminists'.[24] Hannam concurs. It seems, 'class issues remained more central than the question of women's emancipation' to the labour movement, and this, 'hampered collaboration with single-sex feminist groups'.[25]

What is significant about these interpretations of the class divisions which developed in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century between the labour movement and feminist organisations is, that whilst many feminist historians identify class as gendered, they tend to

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[20] See for example, J. Lewis, *Women in England 1870-1950*, Sussex, 1984, pp. 90-97. For a criticism of this approach see, N. Charles, 'Feminist Practices', N. Charles & F. Hughes-Freeland, [eds.], *Practising Feminism*, p.2.

[21] M. Pugh, *Women and the Women's Movement in Britain*, 2nd ed., London, 2000, p.134. See also P. Graves, 'An Experiment in Women-Centred Socialism', H. Gruber, & P.Graves, [eds.], *Women And Socialism*, Oxford, 1998, p.200.

[22] D.Cairns, 'Women and the Clydeside labour movement', University of Strathclyde, M.Phil. Thesis, 1996, pp.116-118.

[23] K. Hunt, *Equivocal Feminists The Social Democratic Federation and the women question 1884-1911*, Cambridge, 1996, pp.5-53.

[24] As quoted in J. Hannam, 'Women and Politics', J. Purvis, [ed.], *Women's History*, p.238.

[25] Ibid.

neglect the possibility that divisive class relations on both sides did indeed strain the potential for unity between both movements. Thus studies tend to focus solely on the male-dominated labour movement and by association on the working classes when addressing divisions between the two bodies. This in turn neglects the class loyalties of the majority of feminists who were mainly middle class, and creates a one-dimensional analysis of the relationship between the labour movement and feminist organisations. Confronting that approach, this thesis will highlight how the problems created by class loyalties, class relations and political allegiances led to differences in ideas, aims and strategies between feminists. In particular it will look at the relationship between the labour movement and the Glasgow and West of Scotland Suffrage Society. Class as an impediment to feminist unity was not solely the preserve of a male-dominated labour movement. Many feminists on Clydeside were indeed bourgeois, even to the extent that a 'rough kind of feminism' amongst working-class women was more representative of feminism as it is generally understood than many of the concerns of the self-proclaimed 'feminists' of the Clyde's formal feminist organisations.

Contemporary feminists, spurred by the growing awareness of women's fragmented identities and the instability of the category 'women' itself, have sought ways in which to overcome, or at least accommodate differences. Offen, suggests that relational forms of feminism, by honouring women's own interpretation of 'difference' in its manifest complexity, offers a key to over-coming contemporary resistance to feminism.[26] By contrast, like Cott, Scott maintains that, 'equality is not the elimination of difference and difference does not preclude equality'.[27] Whilst accepting this premise it must be qualified : any investigation of the differences amongst women which continue to stereotype working-class women as apathetic to any forms of feminism or feminist behaviour is unlikely to honour women's own interpretation of difference. In actual fact, such studies contribute to working-class women's disavowal of, or resistance to feminism by shoring up the misperception that feminism has

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[26] K. Offen, 'Defining Feminism', *Signs*, 1988, pp.119-157.

[27] J. Scott as quoted by M. Barrett and A. Phillips, 'Introduction', M. Barrett and A. Phillips, [eds.], *Destabilising Theory*, p.8 and N. Cott, 'Feminist Theory', J. Mitchell & A. Oakley, [eds.], *What is Feminism*, pp.54-60.

had no value for working-class women. To search for the ways in which women differ from each other in their commitment to feminism in terms of class and how these differences might be transcended or accommodated requires an understanding of the historical and cultural forces which shaped those differences and the impact of class in the shaping of these forces. These have included the feminist movement's relative neglect of issues which appeal directly to the everyday lives of working-class women, as well as their neglect of these women as a potential constituency. Likewise, they include the ways in which feminists have attempted to secure demands which adversely impact on the lives of women from the working classes. This, as chapter three will highlight, was a situation which occurred between the wars on Clydeside. However, of equal significance are the ways in which working-class women, excepting some socialist women and a few exceptional individuals, were, and to some extent continue to be, portrayed by feminists and feminist historians as unresponsive to feminist activity in any sense. This is exacerbated when it is done without regard to how a 'feminist' agenda may have been detrimental to the interests of many working-class women. Thus there may seem to be few historical precedents for working class feminism or how working-class women might respond to their gender oppression in a 'feminist manner. However, if the actions of inter-war working-class women were in any sense compatible with a definition of feminism, and particularly if this was a response to sexual antagonism, then the re-evaluation of feminism itself needs to e re-appraised. This is critical in the light of Kingsley Kent's assertions regarding the effects of masculinity in crisis and its capacity not only to inhibit but to actually undermine women's progress.

Clydeside, in West Central Scotland, is a region where the myth of the existence of an extremely misogynist culture, has, and continues to prevail.[28] As a locality, Clydeside encompassed social locations in which 'the historical, geographical, cultural and imaginative boundaries constituted the politics of location and provided the ground for political definition

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[28] See for example, S. Hills and B. Littlewood as quoted in E. Breitenbach, A. Brown & F. Myres, 'Understanding Women in Scotland', *Feminist Review*, No.58, Spring 1998, pp.45-46.

and self-definition'.[29] It also shared an occupational structure in which heavy industry predominated and where employment opportunities for women were marginal at best.

On Clydeside male insecurity stemming from masculinity in crisis was possibly heightened, at least until rearmament in 1936, by economic conditions particular, but not exclusive, to the region. In this respect the inter-war Clyde proves a crucial locality in terms of space and time, to test the hypothesis that behaviour identifiable as feminist, even if the participants did not acknowledge it as such, might well have been a response to extreme sexual antagonism, possibly brought about by masculinity in crisis.

If, moreover, masculinity in crisis is to be measured, as it is today, by the level of crime and violence, cultural dislocation, depression, suicide and the disintegration of the family, then men from the west of Scotland might well have experienced such a crisis between the wars. On Clydeside, as will become evident, crime and violence, especially domestic violence, were extremely intense. This was a feature of everyday life. Furthermore, it was also widely propagated by the clergy and the state that a relative disintegration of the family was taking place at this time. The changing nature of work, housing tenure and leisure pursuits in combination with unprecedented high levels of unemployment and the reinvention of traditional gender identities also held the potential to cause cultural dislocation and undermine men's sense of masculinity. Men might well have had to question 'their natures their identities, their roles in society'. Scotland also had the highest relative population in her mental hospitals in Europe, except Portugal,[30] suggesting that high levels of depression and mental anxiety may well have permeated this region. Thus the conditions indicating masculinity in crisis potentially existed on the Clyde.

It is also significant to note that a dearth of gender studies relating to Scotland continues to be manifestly evident. British gender historiography has done little to alleviate this situation regardless of the impact of identity studies and thereby the heightened awareness of the

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29 As defined by C. Talpade Mohanty, 'Feminist Encounters Locating The Politics of Experience', in M. Barrett & A. Phillips, [eds.], *Destabilising Theory*, p74.

30 *Labour Women*, 15th September 1947.

need to seek out women's diverse experiences. This is partly a product of the way in which British historiography can often mean in reality English historiography. Breitenbach, Brown and Myres argue that, 'the frequent confusion of British with English serves to obscure the Scottish experience'.[31] Where this is not the case the primary focus and the principal sources used by historians tend to neglect peripheries such as Scotland. Purvis acknowledges this. She includes five texts in her bibliography for consultation regarding Scottish women's experiences. Three were either written by, or edited by Eleanor Gordon.[32] Quoting T.C.Smout who called this neglect, 'a historiographical disgrace', Rendall argues that 'the study of gender relations, should not focus only on England'. She maintains that,

> Very rich source material exists from which the history of women in Scotland might be written, yet the conservatism of academic establishments has meant that such materials are in the main left to be exploited by those with few resources, outside the institutions of higher education. For those working in such areas the process of recovery, of making visible, is still of vital political importance in all attempts to challenge a masculine establishment.[33]

Thus this thesis, although making comparisons with other regions of Britain, will explore the impact of sexual antagonism and the possibility that this reflected masculinity in crisis in a Scottish context. It will do so by looking at Clydeside, where, because it is regarded as having had a relatively misogynist male culture, theoretically at least, the impact of sexual antagonism might well have been greater.

In terms of class identity, inter-war Clydeside's working-class women are also of particular interest. Clydeside was a highly-populated region between the wars with a distinctly working-class constituency. This constituency was perceived to have been extremely conscious of their class position, at least between 1910-1922, a consciousness which apparently resulted

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[31] E. Breitenbach, A. Brown & F. Myres, 'Understanding Women in Scotland', *Feminist Review*, pp.44-65. See also, J. Stevenson, 'Writing Scotland's History in the Twentieth Century : Thoughts from across the Border', *The Scottish Historical Review*, Vol. LXXVI, No.201, April 1997, pp.103-114.

[32] J. Purvis, 'From "women worthies" to poststructuralism? Debates and controversy in women's history', in J. Purvis, [ed.], *Women's History*, pp.14 and 20.

[33] J. Rendall, 'Uneven development : women's history, feminist history and gender history in Great Britain', K. Offen, R. Roach Pierson & J. Rendall, [eds.], *Writing Women's History*, London, 1991, p.57. See also, S. Hills and B. Littlewood as quoted in E. Breitenbach, A. Brown & F. Myres, 'Understanding Women in Scotland', *Feminist Review*, pp.45-46.

in extreme militancy. The conflict has been at the centre of a debate over its 'revolutionary' potential. Whether it was in any sense revolutionary, this militancy did contribute, by 1922, to a significant Independent Labour Party [ILP] presence in the region. Throughout the inter-war period, unlike in the rest of Britain, the ILP was the most representative political force on the Clyde. It has been argued of the ILP, that it was more 'women-friendly', and that it considered the 'women question' much more than other political or socialist organisations. The women of the region were also, at least hypothetically, represented by their own branch of the Glasgow and the West of Scotland Suffrage Society, whilst the Co-operative Women's Guild was a significant force on Clydeside. The Guild has been presented as a relatively autonomous and effective female-centred body at least for the period before the First World War. Thus it would seem that Clydeside women had a number of representative bodies from which to express and attain their political demands between the wars. Yet increasingly feminist labour historians have challenged the perception of the ILP as a women-friendly party for the period prior to 1919,[34] especially the Glasgow ILP.[35] Likewise, the aims, objectives and strategies of the Co-operative Women's Guild have come under greater and less complimentary scrutiny for the period between the wars.[36] Furthermore, the Glasgow and West of Scotland Suffrage Society had disbanded by the 1930s in this region. Did this ensure that women had no representation on Clydeside? In chapter three, by looking at women's experiences within, and their attitudes towards the ILP, the Co-operative Women's Guild and the feminist movement, as well as at the ILP's relationship with the Glasgow and West of Scotland Suffrage Society, this thesis intends to explore this question. It will do so whilst acknowledging Giles' critique that,

> The tensions between the interests of gender and class in middle-class women's relations with their working-class counterparts, and in the identities available to poor

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[34] See for example K. Hunt, *Equivocal Feminists*, p.15 and J. Hannam, 'Women and Politics', J. Purvis [ed.], *Women's History*, pp.217-243.

[35] See J. Hannam, ' " In the Comradeship of the Sexes Lies Hope of Progress and Social Regeneration" : Women in the West Riding ILP, 1890-1914, J. Rendall, [ed.], *Equal or Different*, Oxford, 1987, pp. 214-238.

[36] G. Scott, *Feminism And The Politics of Working Women The Women's Co-operative Guild 1880 To The Second World War*, London, 1998.

> women, often reveals complete lack of knowledge of the day to day realities of working-class life . . . [37]

Thus, while some were,

> . . . genuinely concerned about working-class women, middle-class women tended nevertheless to encourage working-class women to adopt what they perceived as the normative behaviours of middle-class life while maintaining distance to sustain their own class interests.[38]

This will not only subvert the approach of Clydeside's labour historians who have relatively neglected the experiences of women in the region due to a fixation on 'male centred terms of reference', but it will highlight the relationship between the gendered nature of class, class relations and forms of feminism.

Coote and Patullo suggest that women were, and continue to be, reluctant to participate in formal politics or political activity. They believe that this is a product of a perception amongst women that 'politics is something out there, an intimidating, uncomfortable place where language is unintelligible and no one speaks to you, at least about anything familiar'. They also argue that women's apparent lack of political interest and activity has been seen as 'indicators of political inadequacy because women are compared against a male norm'. They state, 'the assumed normalcy of men' has become a benchmark for desirable political behaviour. They concur with the view that, 'this fails to question whether the political behaviour of men was normal and it fails to consider the political behaviour of women in their own right'. Coote and Patullo stress that women have different political priorities from men, but that it is in the nature of the dominant political culture to ignore what came to be labelled women's issues. This they contend is 'an argument at the core of the slur about women's incompetent citizenship'.[39] It was certainly one used between the wars against Clydeside women. It is also tacitly reflected in the historiography of Red Clydeside and replicated in the depictions of the apparent passivity of women between the wars. Thus it prevails that no

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[37] J. Giles, *Women, Identity and Private Life in Britain 1900-1950*, London, 1995, pp.114-115.
[38] Ibid.
[39] A. Coote and P. Patullo, *Power and Prejudice Women and Politics*, London, 1990, p.28.

legend is as strong in the history of the Scottish Labour Movement as that of Red Clydeside. The period from 1910 until around the 'General Strike' of 1926 has a privileged position in that history, representing the supposed high point of radical class politics in Scotland. Equally privileged in that history is the place of the radical labour men. The story is one conventionally told with a magnifying glass upon male members of the Glasgow working classes. The decline or failure of Red Clydeside is also a story in which men are traditionally privileged.

Clydeside men have been immortalised for their wartime radicalism in Gallacher's *Revolt On The Clyde.*[40] This was followed by a wealth of historiography analysing the 'Red Clyde'. From this historiography it is clear that between 1910-1926 working men on Clydeside were involved in fierce unrest in the industrial and political spheres, inspired by economic, social and political catalysts. Clydeside men engaged in numerous strikes, the most significant being the forty-hour strike of 1919, which resulted in a military presence being sent to George Square, Glasgow. The militancy was assisted, moreover, by networks of leadership, whom it seems were primarily male. It was also apparently conciliated by co-operation among trade unionists, and the Clyde Worker's Committee [CWC] - again males. These groups were co-ordinated by the ILP - the majority of whose members were men. Seemingly, male workers and their leaders opposed an incompetent and often 'repressive' state. Equally, Clydeside men were involved in 'Hands off Russia campaigns' and thereafter they helped send a substantial number of Labour MPs to Parliament in 1922. Lip service is paid to Clydeside women's contribution, but the literature principally magnifies the experiences of their male counterparts.[41] The same is true of the 1926 'General Strike' on Clydeside.[42] Similarly, studies of the consequences of the subsequent depression and structural unemployment primarily focus upon the experiences of men. Themes range from the 'rehabilitation of labour and

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40 W.Gallacher, *Revolt On The Clyde,* London, 1936. See also H.McShane and J.Smith, *Harry McShane No Mean Fighter,* Great Britain, 1978.

41 Exceptions include, J. Melling, 'The Glasgow Rent Strike and Clydeside Labour - some problems of interpretation', *Scottish Labour History Society Journal,* No.13, 1979, pp.39-44 and J.McHugh, 'The Clyde Rent Strike 1915', *Scottish Labour History Society Journal,* No.12 1978, pp.50-63.

42 I.MacDougall, 'Some Aspects of the General Strike in Scotland', I. MacDougall, [ed.], *Essays in Scottish Labour History : a tribute to W.H. Marwick,* Edinburgh, 1978, pp.170-206.

working-class alienation',[43] to the imagery of the 'hungry thirties' and the effect of unemployment upon a male work-force. The contrast is a concentration on the potential for informal forms of resistance such as work to rule, sabotage and restrictive practices among male workers,[44] or the idea that having failed to moderate capitalism at the point of production men turned to the political arena and the Labour Party to effect change. Thus, it seems that 'consciousness was born of men's struggles'.

Not only is the extension of the franchise in 1918 and again in 1928, which extended the vote to females, generally ignored, but so too is the participation of women in formal and informal workplace and community struggles. The historiography relating to Clydeside women tends to focus on an elite of female activists, emphasising the rent strikes of 1915 in this region as the apex of women's political activity, subservient to and an appendage of, a male-centred framework. The contrast is the portrayal of women as politically apathetic housewives embracing domesticity, and a largely middle-class feminist movement retarded because they accepted separate spheres while demanding equality based on sexual difference and hampered in their activities by the divisiveness caused by the male-dominance of the labour movement.

Correspondingly, the demise or failure of Red Clydeside has been seen primarily as the product of structural forces, and in particular, due to an adverse economic climate which provided Clydeside employers with the potential to 'rehabilitate' labour. On Clydeside, the post-war slump continued into the depression : unemployment peaked at 30% in Glasgow in 1932. On the eve of the war 15% of Glaswegians were registered unemployed. The statistics issued by Glasgow's Health and Welfare Department for the ordinary poor and able-bodied unemployed in receipt of outdoor relief highlight the extent and severity of unemployment in

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43 For a balanced interpretation which includes constraints to overt political action on the inter-war Clyde see : A. McIvor & H. Patterson, 'Combating the Left : Victimisation and Anti-Labour Activities on Clydeside 1900-1939', R. Duncan & A. McIvor, [eds.], *Militant Workers Labour and Class Conflict on the Clyde 1900-1950 Essays in honour of Harry McShane,* Edinburgh, 1992, pp.129-154.

44 See, J.Zeitlin & S.Tolliday, [eds.], *The Power To Manage? Employers and industrial relations in comparative - historical perspective,* London, 1991 and S. Wood, [ed.], *The Degradation of Work? Skill, deskilling and the labour process,* London, 1982.

the city. In November 1921 they paid out £84,362. By November 1925 there was an over-all improvement when the amount paid out fell to £78,851, falling again by May 1929 to £66,462. This respite was temporary. By May 1932 the level of relief payments had risen to £88,614, rising again by May 1934 to £138,110. By May 1936 relief cost the city £150,981. It was not until May 1940 that the cost of relief fell below the level reached in 1921. At this time it was £73,750.[45] These figures are more striking when consideration is taken of the inter-war deflationary policies, the level of benefit cutbacks at this time and the legislative reforms of the period which increased the number of people excluded from receipt of benefits.

This high level of unemployment apparently permitted Clydeside employers, noted for their draconianism, to oust militants and increase their control over workers, workers who are implicitly male. This analysis, however, reveals little about women's experiences of the economic climate or fundamentally how, as a result of these structural forces, men's political identity negatively influenced gender relations in the region. This is an oversight which this thesis intends to rectify.

It was not merely structural forces which impacted upon gender relations on Clydeside. After World War I rhetorically, through discourse, attempts were made to 'strike back at women' throughout Britain. Thus a social construction of the category 'women' was disseminated in the post-war years with the intent of producing an identity amongst women which would be acted upon and perceived as normative behaviour. This discourse, the rules and customs which were orchestrated to give meaning to the category 'women', was a reconstruction of the traditional vision of womanhood. It sought to re-situate females in the 'private sphere', as 'progenitors of the perfect race', and respectable Christian wives. A response to the socio-economic and political ruptures in society produced by war, masculinity in crisis and the pre-war potential of feminist groups, this characterisation was intended to

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45 M. Keating, *The City That Refused To Die Glasgow : the politics of urban regeneration*, Aberdeen, 1998, p.6 and, Statistical Appendix, Poor Law And Public Assistance Ordinary Poor And Able-Bodied Unemployment In Receipt Of Outdoor Relief, 1921 to 1948, Source Health and Welfare Department, Section 4,Table 156, in J. Cunnison, & J.B.Gilfillan, [eds.], *Third Statistical Account of Glasgow*, Glasgow, [1958], p.951.

limit women's demands for self-legitimisation. It was also supposed to inhibit access to resources and to the channels of opportunity opening to women which would have been inconsistent with this vision of womanhood. In as much as these opportunities existed, and to moderate resistance, concessions had to be conceded if women were to embrace this identity and act upon it. The compromises offered were enshrined in the elevation of women's roles as wives and mothers and the construction of a 'new man'. The new man was expected to love and respect his partner, whilst supposedly accepting that the different roles of the sexes, although different should be regarded as equal. Although this ideal might have provided benefits for men and women of the working classes, it had to compete with the structural forces affecting working-class life : the gender discourses of the inter-war period were largely incompatible with the economic realities and the imaginative boundaries of many working-class people's lives. In other words, 'social relations had a material existence and an extra-discursive reality'.[46]

None the less, it will be shown how these discourses on sexuality had a tremendous impact. It was not unusual for women on Clydeside to endeavour to identify with the idealised woman of the inter-war years as a means of self-legitimisation and to enhance their resources and thereby their access to power. This was not merely a response to the discursive environment of the inter-war years. For many women on the Clyde the lure of housewifery was a desire for economic security. Bourke, in her study of the changing nature of women's economic roles in Ireland, has shown how the contraction of employment, a feature of the inter-war Clyde, was a factor which impelled women to maximise their possible economic contribution by focusing their energies on familial domestic work as a means of increasing their bargaining power. By contrast, 'where paid opportunities were higher, few women depended for their livelihood on the performance of un-waged domestic labour'.[47] Yet, the

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[46] M. Barrett, 'Words and Things : Materialism and Method in Contemporary Feminist Analysis,' M. Barrett & A. Phillips, [eds.], *Destabilising Theory*, pp.201-219. See also N. Charles, 'Feminist Practices', N. Charles & F. Hughes-Freeland, [eds.], *Practising Feminism*, p12.

[47] J. Bourke, *Husbandry To Housewifery Women, Economic Change and Housework in Ireland 1890-1914*, Oxford, 1993, pp.201-206 and p.223.

inter-war period for women with husbands in secure employment was also a period of improved opportunities. For some of these women the performance of housework could have been perceived as 'a social virtue', enhanced by the domestic reforms of the period and the discourses of social reformers. Bourke maintains that economic growth released capital for investment in the household sector, including better housing, diet, standards of cleanliness and child-care. Reformers, and in particular housing reformers, integrated ideals of respectability into the design of housing, and for that matter in its allocation.

Whether women sought economic security, greater bargaining power or social status from the performance of housewifery, in the west of Scotland, as in Ireland, these factors did not alleviate the burden of housework. 'Housework does not decrease with technological sophistication'. In fact it increases because of 'the enlarged number of household tasks and the specialisation of the tasks undertaken'. This was exacerbated because the expectations placed on women to be 'good' housewives were also inflated. Improved standards of living and the 'material environment of the home', as such, affected not only housework, but also housewives.[48]

While economic and discursive forces contributed to the idealisation of womanhood embraced by many women between the wars many men were unable to aspire to the dominant world view on masculinity. In turn, this could contribute to an already vulnerable sense of masculinity amongst Clydeside men in the worlds of work, politics, neighbourhood, play and the home, exacerbating sexual antagonism. Thus a scenario existed whereby sexual antagonism might well have elicited a 'rough kind of feminism' on Clydeside.

Women nevertheless experienced sexual antagonism in diverse ways. Yet, in reality, regardless of diversity, these experiences were, to some degree, shared in this region. Most women were subject to discrimination in some form in the workplace and the political arena because of their gender. The majority were open to the threat or the reality of male dominance in the home and in their neighbourhoods. Hence this commonality of experience

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48 Ibid., pp.206-223.

held the capacity to facilitate coalition and resistance because feelings were an important part of knowing. Reagon looked at the obstacles for unity created by women's fragmented identities and concluded that survival rather than shared oppression might provide the grounds for coalition amongst women.[49] Working-class women experienced the threat and incidence of sexual antagonism and conflict in the spheres of work and politics and in their marriages ; they also had to survive it, even when they did not fully understand why or how it came about. These feelings thus facilitated convergence on specific issues by providing a 'predisposed common ground for coalition-building'. This capacity for coalition building, which Cott identified as 'the only political unity women have had or will have' because of their fragmented identities, may, moreover, be partly a product of the social construction of gender identities which permits women greater access to feelings which are a form of knowledge. Chodorow has argued that the 'experience of mothering shapes the female psyche to the extent that some level of "empathy" is built into women's definition of self'.[50] Whilst Chodorow has modified her somewhat overly-deterministic hypothesis, it is true that women have had privileged access to 'the realm of emotion'. Jagger demonstrates how, in modern western cultures, 'emotion has been associated with the irrational, the physical, the natural, the particular, the private and of course the feminine', often a synonym for female. Yet, the realm of emotion has also 'been considered potentially or actually subversive of knowledge'.[51] Thus, assertions of emotion can be regarded as subversive because by their nature they challenge the masculine, the 'rational', and 'dominant formulations of knowledge'. Jagger, maintains, 'it is necessary to rethink the relationship between emotion and knowledge because emotion has been historically and culturally associated with the irrational and the feminine and this has served to legitimate the silencing of those deemed irrational, especially women'. She also argues that emotion, whether defined as 'gut level awareness', intuition, or labelled 'empathy',

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49 Bernice Johnstone Reagon, as quoted in C. Talpade Monhanty, 'Locating the Politics of Experience', M. Barrett & A. Phillips, [eds.], *Destabilising Theory*, p. 84.

50 N. Chodorow, 'Feminism and Psychoanalytic Theory', in S.Kemp & J.Squires, [eds.], *Feminisms*, pp.179-188.

51 A. Jagger, 'Love and Knowledge : Emotion in Feminist Epistemology', in S. Kemp & J. Squires, [eds.], *Feminisms*, pp.188-193.

precedes consciousness and offers a medium to facilitate 'subversive observations that challenge dominant conceptions of the status quo'. [52] In this sense the expression of emotion can be a form of self-legitimisation and an assertion of the feminine which is a political tactic.

The feelings which emerged from the experiences of sexual antagonism on Clydeside were an important part of knowing. These feelings contributed to the feminist behaviour of Clydeside women. This was not a formal feminism. It was distinct, however, from a women's consciousness and survival strategies although, as will be shown, it did converge and at times was accommodated by the latter. Berger Gluck identifies a 'women's consciousness, as women conscious of themselves as a group ; aware of their own power and that of the collectivity, all of which is defined by their traditional roles'. She contrasts this with 'a consciousness about their own oppression which is a feminist consciousness'. [53] This is simplistic. Where women used collective power and exploited their traditional roles to challenge gender oppression - when they used an 'assertion of the feminine as a political tactic' - then the divide between a women's consciousness and feminist behaviour becomes blurred. Moreover, 'in certain circumstances and for very good reasons women choose oppression in preference to liberation because of the advantages associated with it'.[54] They may do so to gain access to resources which determine levels of power and which, according to Witz, have been 'systematically structured to give men advantages over women and to enable men to exclude women from avenues of power'.[55] Thus, where working-class women, individually or as a collective group, adopted survival strategies or used a women's consciousness to challenge male domination of resources, physical or psychological, or as a means of self-legitimisation, then they were in fact behaving in a feminist manner, even if they did not do so consciously. They were challenging the power of men and society to determine their identity. It is in this respect that an acceptance and identification by women with the

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52 Ibid.
53 S. Berger Gluck, ' Advocacy Oral History :Palestinian Women in Resistance', S. Berger Gluck & D. Patai, [eds.], *Women's Words,* p.218.
54 N. Charles, 'Feminist Practices', N. Charles & F. Hughes-Freeland, [eds.], *Practising Feminism,* p.23.
55 A. Witz as quoted by N Charles, 'Feminist Practices', N. Charles & F. Hughes-Freeland, [eds.], *Practising Feminism,* p.23.

dominant gender discourses of the inter-war years need not have negated forms of feminism or feminist behaviour by them. In fact, an endorsement of these discourses was used by women between the wars not merely as a medium to enhance women's claims to citizenship and the material benefits which such citizenship could confer, but to challenge male behaviour and men's access to power and resources. Moreover, this was a form of assertiveness, self-determination and a medium to increase women's bargaining power.

Not all women behaved in this manner. Women were not united against male privilege and power in the same ways and to the same degree. Some women on Clydeside used this 'assertion of the feminine' for other benefits. These benefits included status within the locality and, status in terms of class. Thus an 'assertion of the feminine', as will be shown in chapter four, could be as equally divisive for working-class women as it was for their 'sisters' in the feminist movement.

Women were active agents in the construction of their identities and gender relations. These gender relations, 'based on perceived differences between the sexes signified relationships of power in which women were subordinate', a subordination however, 'maintained against resistance'.[56] Yet, resistance there was. This work will highlight how an assertion of the feminine was used by working-class women as a political tactic for a multitude of different gains within the working-class neighbourhoods which formed Clydeside. In these localities, working-class women often shared, although not in identical ways, experiences which provided a foundation for an understanding of their shared oppression.[57] Clydeside women often had to endure the effects of their class position and gender oppression. Thus there was a need to survive, a need potentially heightened between the wars. This no doubt enhanced the basis for coalition between many women on the Clyde.

The dominant gender discourse which offered a model of womanhood and which working-class women on Clydeside exploited to gain meduims of power was defined through the

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[56] L. Gordon, 'A Response to Scott', *Signs*, Vol. 16, No.1, 1990, p.853.

[57] C. Talpade Mohanty, 'Feminist Encounters Locating The Politics of Experience', M. Barrett and A. Phillips, [eds.], *Destabilising Theory*, pp. 74-92.

ideals of 'respectability' and Christianity. Quoting, a Dr Watson, who addressed a Mothers' Union Meeting, a para-religious organisation, the *Glasgow Herald* reported that, the ideal homemaker was a glorified mother of the race, who became a 'good capable housewife and mother' when, 'her house became a home'. In the home, women were expected to ensure, that, 'there would be cleanliness, fresh air, order, thrift, refinement, and behind all that true religious and Christian devotion. They must co-operate with God when building their homes or they would build in vain'.[58] Here the overlaps between the discourses of the medical profession, the clergy, para-religious institutions and the media, which decided what was news worthy, are represented as one. This was used to entice females, regardless of any constraints, to perceive a woman's world as revolving around motherhood and the private sphere.

Attempts by the state, state agencies, the media, the clergy, para-religious organisations and many male-dominated institutions to determine women's behaviour were a response to the force of the pre-war feminist agenda and the liberating political, social, sexual and economic impact of World War I, and masculinity in crisis. Thus the traditional demonised model of the poor wife and mother, the 'slattern', was expanded between the wars to embrace the potentially liberated and single female. Women were either depicted as 'the future wives and mothers of tomorrow', or spinsters, lesbians, ' frigid wives' and 'flappers'. These models of womanhood were caricatured and denigrated as 'a danger to men, society and civilisation',[59] or depicted as so self-absorbed that they would only, 'make a good mother', when 'someone invented a combination cocktail-shaker and a cradle-rocker'.[60] So potent were such denunciations that Ellen Wilkinson, a Labour activist, lamented in the *Glasgow Herald* in 1927, 'I do wish someone would invent a few new arguments to stop the political progress of women'.[61] They did not. These were applied with force to the newly enfranchised 'flappers' in

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58 An address to the Scottish Mothers' Union, by Dr Watson, *Glasgow Herald*, 1st February 1928.

59 S. Jeffreys, 'Sex-reform and anti-feminism in the 1920s', London Feminist Group, [eds.], *The Sexual Dynamics of History Men's power, women's resistance*, London, 1983, pp.177-202.

60 *Govan Press*, 29th November 1929.

61 *Daily Record*, 1st December 1927.

1929, whom, it seems, only, 'turned out in strength to the polls - mainly it was feared, to see what voting was like'.[62]

Although this world view was embraced by a multiplicity of institutions and organisations for different purposes, and whilst such endeavours naturally had an impact on the formation of working-class women's identity on Clydeside, this discourse on womanhood did not necessarily ensure passivity or apathy. Scott highlights, 'experience is neither self evident nor straightforward ; it is always contested, always therefore political'.[63] In fact, where power exists so too does resistance, and women's resistance between the wars took a multiplicity of forms, overt and covert. Therefore, to assume that because inter-war women seemed to accept the idealisation of womanhood being disseminated, that they then were completely subordinate to men, ignores women's agency, neglects their experiences and, more importantly, fails to consider whether that experience was in any way feminist. This is not to romanticise working-class women's experiences. They continued to face oppression both because they were women and because of their class position, but it is to highlight that the oppression these women were subject to was resisted in a variety of informal ways and settings. This was distinct from the activities of the formal, mainly middle-class, feminism movement and from the women of the socialist and labour movement, whose tactics frequently mirrored those adopted and assumed normal by male standards. Yet, to ignore the actions of working-class women because it does not fall within this criteria would exacerbate already existing phallocentric discourses which make women such as those on Clydeside, and their interests, virtually unrepresentative. In other words, by assuming that because the feminist behaviour of working-class women was not 'formal' and that it was therefore somehow less worthy political behaviour, and to suggest that an assertion of the feminine is not an important political tactic is to undermine women's political agency.

Acts of self-legitimisation which challenged men's privilege and their advantaged access to resources and power were forms of resistance adopted by Clydeside women in the

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62 Ibid., 31st May 1929.
63 J. Scott, 'Experience', in J. Butler & W.J. Scott, [eds.], *Feminists Theorise the Political*, p.37.

workplace, the political arena, the neighbourhood and the home. It was a form of resistance, and therefore political by nature, and it also corresponded with the definition of politics as set out by Murray and McKenzie. Between them they maintain that political behaviour involves the 'employment of language . . . and a competitive exchange of symbols, through which values are shared and assigned and coexistence attained'.[64] It also entails, 'the cultivation of shared interests, shared space and channels of communication'.[65] Using these definitions this study will highlight how, in the 'politics of everyday life', women frequently employed this form of political behaviour. In this way many women enhanced their psychological and physical resources and increased their power, if relatively. This would have done little to alleviate men's sense of insecurity in the post-war years, where it existed.

Attempts to orchestrate self-definition, and thereby behaviour, were not limited to women. Expectations were placed on males and this impinged upon the collective mentalities of Clydeside men. Vovelle stresses that 'collective mentalities', embedded in popular culture do not necessarily move in line with economic and social change ; that they can blend tradition with innovation, positive and negative, to create overlaps between continuities and change.[66] Furthermore, he maintains that it is through popular culture that communities can adopt, counter or moderate prevailing world views and thereby attempts to orchestrate behaviour because popular culture,

> . . . is the most complex . . . but strongest expression of resistance to change as a process of acculturation imposed by elites . . . Such a culture can only be defined by a corpus of beliefs which are buried and lie underground but which are capable of re-emerging in unexpected forms . . . It contains a system of representations . . . all of which constitute a series of defensive and subversive mechanisms fighting against the mutilating and mystifying forces of acculturation.[67]

Male identity on Clydeside was equally complex, but relatively more institutionalised. It could encompass the interaction of masculinity, religion, work and class awareness, as well

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64 E. Murray, as quoted in W.J.M. MacKenzie, *Political Identity,* Manchester, 1978, p.111.
65 W.J.M. MacKenzie, *Political Identity,* pp.124-132.
66 M. Vovelle, *Ideologies and Mentalities,* Oxford, 1990, pp.164-172.
67 Ibid., p.171.

as aspects of work and community based popular culture. This culture often included public houses, workingmen's clubs, trade-union solidarity and involvement in political organisations. However, Clydeside experienced extreme levels of unemployment between the wars which undermined the links between work and work-related expressions of male identity, posing a significantly alienating threat with the potential to create or exacerbate masculine insecurity.

There were institutional avenues through which men might have responded to unemployment and its menace. These included the activities of the Communist Party and the National Unemployed Workers' Movement. Yet such responses tended to be embraced by the minority rather than the majority.[68] The alternative was to embark on informal resistance at the point of production, but the severity of unemployment, resulting in a large pool of surplus labour diminished this possibility, particularly when a closer and easily identifiable scapegoat was on offer. This 'scapegoat' was offered by a multitude of agencies. The industrial wing of the labour movement actively pursued the Restoration of Pre-War Practices Act, the removal of women from night work and sought to exclude mothers, and married women in general, from the work-place. More significantly, trade-union support for this legislation, coinciding with their exclusionary policies gave the perception that women were a threat to male employment. This was exacerbated because of the possible spread of monopoly capitalism between the wars. That 'deskilling' and standardisation had taken root in the south of England was no secret to the male leadership of the labour movement on Clydeside. Unemployment, and its threat, however, weakened the labour movement on Clydeside, and eroded the potential of workers in their struggle over the frontier of control at the point of production. The outcome of the 'General Strike' in 1926 demonstrated to workers the reformist nature of their leaders and at the same time demoralised and disillusioned the labour-force.

From 1919, however, it was the perception that female workers were the cause of men's misery which gained currency. State policies reinforced these perceptions, particularly those

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[68] See for example, G.Rawlinson, 'Mobilising the Unemployed : The National Unemployed Workers' Movement in the West of Scotland', R.Duncan & A.McIvor, [eds.], *Militant Workers*, pp.176-197.

aimed at returning women to their 'rightful employment' - 'women's work,' and especially domestic service - signifying that women workers had penetrated traditional male domains of employment. Similarly, the Anomalies Act, which barred married women from receiving benefits, symbolised the idea that women should be dependants of their spouses. This was also true of formal and informal marriage bars which were extended between the wars. Furthermore, these ideas were reinforced by the media who embarked upon a major campaign against the 'flappers', implying that the emancipated woman was a reality. Together these factors reinforced the idea that women were infiltrating male occupations. That this was more myth than reality left working women with few viable responses, particularly as the labour movement, and feminist organisations, rather than embracing a more egalitarian world view, frequently contributed by their complicity. They too idealised housewifery, motherhood and a 'private sphere' for women. Women were defined as 'wives or the wives of tomorrow'.

Male responses to the perception that women were usurping them were critical. Many men resorted to misogyny in the workplace, the political arena and particularly in the community where they exploited aspects of popular culture to entrench 'masculine republics'.[69] These 'masculine republics' enveloped the principal traditional male working-class leisure pursuits, 'the cornerstones of male working-class life'. On Clydeside, as in Manchester, Liverpool and London, these were mainly public houses, gambling and football.[70] Popular culture had the potential to reinforce and symbolise male identity on Clydeside, more so during a period when it was perceived by men that women were being liberated at the expense of masculinity. Sexual antagonism thus became an everyday reality if not an everyday experience for many working-class women of Clydeside regardless of their identification as the moral guardians of family and locality. Such insecurity from men, however, may well indicate the level of women's

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69 Masculine republics is a term used by Davies to define the public houses in Manchester between the wars, A. Davies, 'Leisure in the "Classic Slum" ', A. Davies and S. Fielding, [eds.], *Workers worlds Cultures and communities in Manchester and Salford, 1880-1939*, Manchester 1992, p.107.

70 See for example ibid., pp.102-131. For Liverpool see, P. Ayers and J. Lambertz, 'Marriage relations, money and domestic violence in working-class Liverpool 1919-39', J Lewis, [ed.], *Labour and Love Women's Experience of Home and Family Life 1850-1940*, London, 1986, pp.195-210 and for London see E. Ross, ' "Fierce Questions and Taunts" : Married Life in Working-Class London 1870-1914', *Feminist Studies* 8, 1982, pp.590-591.

progress. By implication then, Clydeside women were making progress in relation to men, or, at the very least, men assumed that they were. This contributed to the catalysts which caused antagonism and in turn underpinned the operation of a 'rough kind of feminism' on Clydeside.

Historians investigating the realities and experiences of everyday life during the inter-war period have access to the recollections, collective mentalities and life experiences of working people and this work is primarily an oral history of those experiences. There are many problems associated with the use of oral history, not least that people encode to memory the most significant aspects of their lives ; and that people's memories are re-contextualised and re-evaluated throughout their lives. Yet Lummis maintains that such problems can be overcome by confining oral history projects to specific localities and through methods of triangulation.[71] Hence although not unproblematic this methology can contribute immensely to any analysis of 'the politics of everyday life', just as it can to the manifestations of the culture and ideologies of a given locality and the signifiers for the symbolic arrangements of everyday life. In this sense, whilst conventional sources may provide a medium to elicit the ways in which attempts were made to direct people's behaviour and determine their identities, it is through the narratives of oral history that the level of subjectification or resistance, and the forces which shaped the latter, become manifestly evident. This then holds the potential to reveal the 'routines of people's daily existence which involved political choices, strategies and decisions' - the politics of everyday life, which provide an 'understanding of the complex inter-relationship between the different forms of politics which politicised women'.[72]

It has also been argued of oral history that, 'the objective of the historian working with personal testimony is to untangle the relationship between discourse and experience by exploring the way in which subjects mediated or transformed discourses in specific historical settings'.[73] Adding a corrective, Summerfield stresses that, 'subjectivities are rarely constituted through a single unified dominant discourse so that they have different social

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[71] T.Lummis, *Listening To History*, London, 1987, pp.11-15 & pp.117-140.
[72] J. Hannam, 'Women and Politics', J. Purvis, [ed.], *Women's History*, pp.217-218. Hannam did not suggest the use of oral history to elicit such interconnectedness.
[73] P. Summerfield, *Reconstructing Women's Wartime Lives*, Manchester, 1998, p.12.

meanings for different social groups, and in particular men and women : different discourses allow some opportunity for selection or rejection of the discursive understanding of themselves and their society'. [74] Whilst these insights also inform this thesis it might be noted that Summerfield's critique is time specific. She looks at women's experiences during and after World War II, when the category 'women' was destabilised offering females multiple and contradictory world views on womanhood from which to identify. Between the wars, however, the traditional female roles of housewifery, motherhood and household management were embedded, although in a variety of ways, in the dominant gender discourse on womanhood and in the contesting and multiple discourses available to inter-war women. Overlaps amongst these constructions existed in the discourses of feminists and political activists through to those disseminated by the state, the medical profession, the media, the clergy and para-religious organisations. Thus, the narratives of working-class people will be used to analyse the impact of the dominant gender ideals, not through deconstruction, but rather by presenting the past within the people of Clydeside's terms of reference. In this way I will endeavour to demonstrate the links between language, the production of knowledge, cultural representations and the material existence of working-class life between the wars and how these interconnections gave rise to sexual antagonism which in turn stimulated behaviour which was a 'rough kind of feminism'.

Summerfield has not only pointed out that 'the self that speaks', the respondent, 'does so from an identity drawn from multiple discourses', she also highlights that the subject is aware of the ideal construction of discourses and these factors impress upon the level of interiority, the exposure of 'inner-self rather than the 'social self'.[75] The interview process contributes to this because 'the researcher has a salient place in the construction of the narrative and their subjectivity becomes a necessary part of the study'. [76]

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[74] Ibid., pp.12-14.
[75] Ibid., pp.15-16.
[76] Ibid., p.1.

In my own interviews, through a process of 'admitting my own subjectivity' and by constructing a 'facilitating audience', I believe I promoted a relatively high level of 'composure' and, subsequently exposure of the 'inner self'. I had many positive forces working in my favour. I am working-class and I made no attempt to disguise this from my informants. I did not present myself as conventional academic. I was merely a working-class mature student doing a study of the region. I have also resided in localities throughout Clydeside. I speak with a Glaswegian accent and use the same dialectal constitutives as my interviewees. Furthermore, as a mature student and mother, I shared the experience of parenthood with my respondents as well as a relative understanding of their educational and occupational backgrounds, the nuances and symbolism embedded in their language, and a heritage of cultural values and collective mentalities. Thus I was in a position to conduct a 'non-hierarchical' dialogue and promote the perception of commonality between myself and the respondent.

The research project involved whole life interviews of seventy-five men and women from localities across Clydeside. These people, born between 1885-1920, worked and resided in the regions of Clydebank, Glasgow, Greenock, Lanarkshire, Port Glasgow and Paisley. Of those interviewed 45 were selected to represent the gender, occupational, marital, religious and political make-up of the constituencies which formed Clydeside between the wars. My own interviews were augmented by transcripts from the William Gallacher Memorial Library, the Old Paisley Society and the Workers' Educational Association.

The respondents were all residents or members of day-care centres and nursing homes throughout Clydeside and were approached and interviewed immediately on the basis of their age. None of the respondents had prior notification of the interview or its contents. This style was adopted to reduce the subjects' potential to create and present a 'social self'. The interviews themselves took place between 1996-1999 and involved a variety of questions, based loosely on a pre-set questionnaire, covering work experiences, politics, family life, the neighbourhood, religion and religious experiences, popular culture in general and the

respondents' perceptions of levels of continuity and change regarding life on Clydeside before and after the period between the wars.

Although there was some variation, I feel the level of 'exposure' of the inner self rather than the 'social self' achieved in my own interviews with the people of Clydeside was extensive. In other words I do not feel that they created a mythical past to accommodate their own sense of composure or to facilitate what they felt I wished to hear. That aside, this work does not profess to provide an objective 'truth' which details how every working-class man and women between the wars on Clydeside lived their lives or how every working-class women formed a political identity. I concur with Iacovetta that we 'cannot posses objective knowledge, but we can choose to try and write about others even if the final product is incomplete, uneven and filtered through us'. We may also have 'considerable power as producers of knowledge and no device or desire will ever make entirely egalitarian the relationship between the researcher and the subject . . . but the cost of the silence of scholars from minority or working-class backgrounds is complicity in the re-silencing of neglected and marginal groups'.[77] I do not intend to participate in that complicity. In fact, I intend to centre Clydeside working-class people's experiences as well as their self-definitions of that experience within this work.

Chapter Two will look at men and women in the world of work to explore the impact of the work-place, work cultures and working-class organisations in the development of women's political identity. It will focus upon the adverse economic climate and the changing nature of work on Clydeside as catalysts for much of this experience. These catalysts embedded pre-existing cultural representations of women as the usurpers of men in the workplace and were reflected in the construction of the docile apathetic ideal female employee - a construction often promoted and shared by employers, trade unions and male employees, but one frequently rejected by women workers in a variety of ways and settings through behaviour which was often 'a rough kind of feminism'. Chapter three will analyse the political scene on Clydeside, looking at the ILP, the Co-operative Women's Guild and the Glasgow and West of

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[77] F. Iacovetta, 'Post-Modern Ethnography, Historical Materialism, and Decentering the (Male) Authorial Voice : A Feminist Conversation', *Histoire Sociale/Social History*, Vol. 53., No.64, November 1999, pp.289-293.

Scotland Suffrage Society, the organisations which have been identified and who identified themselves as representatives of women. It will highlight that, while 'an assertion of the feminine' was used as a political tactic, a tactic which provided many gains for the women of the labour movement on Clydeside, masculine discourses remained largely powerful and inhibiting, but not necessarily insurmountable. In contrast to the feminist behaviour exhibited by women of the labour movement, this chapter will also show how the feminist movement was indeed bourgeois and how class relations in the region were a greater impediment to feminist unity than the gendered nature of class or the male dominance of the ILP. Chapter four will demonstrate how the dissemination of the dominant gender discourses resulted in female aspirations for a 'new man' who would love and respect her, treating her role as different from his, but equal in status. It will also highlight how this 'new man' remained more myth than reality as economic and imaginative boundaries obstructed male subjectification of the ideal which in turn exacerbated the catalysts of sexual antagonism and male insecurity. Male responses to this insecurity and women's solutions to those responses resulted in extreme gender antagonism in the region between the wars. Yet, this chapter will also show how the identification of women as 'moral guardians of the community and family' was appropriated as an assertion of the feminine by working-class women to challenge male power and privilege, and enhance, if relatively, women's physiological and physical resources at a time when sexual antagonism could have been a very debilitating and disempowering experience. In this way it will highlight the links between the exploitation of the gender discourses of inter-war Britain, survival strategies and the operation of a women's consciousness in the facilitation of a 'rough kind of feminist' behaviour in working-class localities. It will then demonstrate how an assertion of the feminine could also be used to shore up alternative identities. Thus the very forces which united women, could equally divide them, and this also held the capacity to impact negatively on gender unity and class awareness.

This thesis will conclude with the hypothesis that men used women to alleviate their own sense of social injustice when alternative avenues were obstructed. However, the construction of gendered identities and the way in which their legitimisation shaped experience was equally instrumental. Nevertheless, this legitimisation provided a means by which women could contest these extremely unequal power relations. They did so in a variety of ways, but regardless of the means, much of their behaviour, none the less, was a 'rough kind of feminism.'

CHAPTER TWO :

THE 'USURPERS', WOMEN, WORK AND POLITICAL IDENTITY

On Clydeside the period 1919 to 1936 witnessed a shift in attitudes towards women in the work-place. The Restoration of the Pre-War Practices Act enshrined the position of the state, employers and trade unions, whilst at the same time women were increasingly perceived and personified as the 'usurpers' of men. An extremely adverse economic climate, cultural traditions and political expediency combined with the structure of the labour market and the partially changing nature of work to conciliate the comparative re-establishment of pre-war occupational stratification. These cumulative forces had a dramatic impact on Clydeside's female labour force. Contrary to the perception that inter-war working women were apathetic and passive as measured by formal trade-union membership and strike activity and the discourses of employers, trade unionists and many working men, these forces did not necessarily negate political identity. A consciousness of class membership amongst the female workers of the Clyde, where it existed, continued to do so, whilst the experiences of work acted as a catalyst for the development of such an identity for others. Clydeside women often responded to the effects of capitalism at the point of production, formally and alongside men. Significantly, however, sexual oppression in the workplace also created levels of gender awareness amongst a large number of women workers. Thus, women also developed gender-specific strategies to combat class and sex oppression. These strategies, although varied and optional, did little to effectively challenge the strengthening structural, cultural and ideological barriers which inhibited women's progress in the world of work. However, they did empower many women at a time when it was not unusual for their male counter-parts to be experiencing levels of 'rehabilitation'.

The gendered nature of employment and women's experiences of work between the wars remain relatively neglected fields of study, especially in Scotland. There are a number of historians who have emphasised the effects of the changing nature of work or who highlight the institutional impediments women endured in the workplace at this time. On the whole, however, the imagery of the 'hungry thirties', the impact of the depression real or imagined, and the fortunes of the labour movement tend to take precedence. Alongside this are representations of women embracing a reconstructed domesticity. Thus much of British

labour historiography continues to ignore women's workplace experiences and gives priority to women's exclusion from the world of work. Humphries, noting this neglect, and the fact that much of the feminist analysis of women's work experiences is located in the period of the 'Industrial Revolution', felt compelled to suggest that :

> Historians of the history of women's paid work should revise their periodisation and their priorities. The historical key to women's inequality in the labour market lie not only in the Industrial Revolution but also in its aftermath : in the sluggish growth, relative industrial decline and persistently slack labour markets. [1]

She argues, 'it was in this context that protective labour relations brought employers and unions to agreements . . . and convinced women themselves that their identities were founded in being housewives and dependants'.[2]

From at least the nineteenth century, Clydeside was a region characterised by bouts of cyclical unemployment. It is also a region where a rigid sexual division of labour prevailed between the wars, largely unaltered by the changing nature of work, or the new industries and managerial strategies which emerged across Britain in this period. Hudson and Lee have highlighted that these changes held the potential,

> . . . to further the adoption of gender-specific restrictive practices and reinforce the sex-structuring of the workforce - conditions which possibly led to trade union fear of competition from women ensuring that they take the path of least resistance and prioritise the rights of male employees.[3]

On Clydeside, however, the penetration of new industries and alternative managerial strategies were weak between the wars. Nevertheless, where such conditions emerged they co-existed with cyclical and structural unemployment. Thus a combination of the sluggish growth, relative industrial decline and persistently slack labour markets which marked Clydeside and the new employment and managerial strategies which were emerging may

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[1] J. Humphries, 'Women and paid work', J. Purvis, [ed.], *Women's History*, p.100.
[2] Ibid.
[3] See for example, P. Hudson and W.R.Lee, [eds.], 'Introduction' *Women's work and the family economy in historical perspective*, Manchester, 1990, pp.2-48, especially pp.24-25 and 28.

have intensified the perceived need for protective labour relations which brought employers and unions to agreements 'to convince women that their identities were founded in being housewives and dependants'.

Between the wars in Britain, the North of England, Wales and industrial Scotland fared less favourably than the south of England and some agricultural pockets of the north of Britain. In 1947, the Labour activist, John Taylor, commenting on the Government White Papers on the Scottish economy recalled the inter-war years in Scotland thus :

> In those days she was the most depressed of depressed areas, with the highest unemployment percentages, with the highest infant and maternal mortality figures of any country in Europe except Portugal and with the highest relative population in her mental hospitals, T.B. sanatoria and infectious diseases hospitals. Malnutrition was the rule, not the exception and the whole country with the exception of some agricultural districts, was in a state of decay. [3]

He went on to point out that in the immediate years after the Second World War 'the whole country was classed as a development area'. Although the first development areas were established in 1934, he stated, 'factories to find new employment in new industries - light industries which were new to Scotland - were being planned'. He also noted how it would take more than a decade to abolish the 'terrible housing conditions' in Scotland which were the 'worst in Europe'.[5] Laybourn, challenging revisionist arguments that people's lives improved between the wars, confirms this picture of inter-war Scotland. He argues that although poverty was probably less marked during the inter-war years, in areas which suffered high cyclical or structural unemployment far too many people lived in acute poverty. Scotland, he states, was 'badly hit' by unemployment and the lives of the long-term unemployed were desperate, a situation exacerbated throughout the 1920s and 1930s as governments pursued deflationary policies. It seems that these conditions ensured that the economic fortunes of the working classes in regions so affected were less favourable than they had been prior to the First World War.[6] Thus, Scotland, and especially Clydeside, was badly affected by an adverse

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[3] *Labour Women*, 15th September 1947.
[5] Ibid.
[6] K. Laybourn, *Britain on the breadline : a social and political history of Britain between the wars*, London, 1990, chapter two and especially pp.11-14 and 65-66.

economic climate between the wars. West Central Scotland did suffer sluggish growth, relative industrial decline and persistently slack labour markets between the wars which might well have accommodated protective labour relations, bringing employers and unions to agreement, to convince women that their identities should be founded in being housewives and dependants,[7] maybe more so than in other regions of Britain. This situation, however, conflicted with the changing nature of work which favoured women, with the ruptures created by war which enhanced women's freedoms and with the need for many married women to find work because of the adverse economic climate. Combined, these forces created the image of a female usurper of male employment. The result was that sexual antagonism prevailed, and may well have intensified in the world of work, facilitating a 'rough kind of feminism' from Clydeside's female workforce.

Women Workers of the Clyde in context

The cultural reproductions which dictated that women should seek their identities from marriage and dependency on a breadwinner already existed on the Clyde well before 1914 and were entrenched by an extremely rigid sexual division of labour. Clark attributes this legacy largely to the Chartist movement. In the 1840s Glasgow and its environs were primarily textile regions characterised by a large pool of female labour, who, moreover, often competed, or had the capacity, due to lower wages, to substitute for male labour. On Clydeside, while men and women could co-operate when both were threatened by an external force, employment competition was more apt to create gender antagonism. Clark demonstrates how, in a bid to unite the very diverse groups which made up the working class, which included competing male and female employees, and, because of a combination of state repression and recalcitrance, the Chartist movement was to bequeath a 'narrow vision of class' based on gender divisions. For unity they offered compromise. Men were to be united through the status and identity of the breadwinner, thus securing their hegemony in the world of work, whilst women were to be excluded from work after marriage but granted security and protection, albeit at the cost of dependency on men. Apparently, on the Clyde these Chartist

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[7] J. Humphries, 'Women and paid work', J. Purvis, [ed.], *Women's History*, p.100.

ideals of domesticity and the sole male breadwinner were well established from at least the 1840s.[8] Certainly, Rose argues that by the late nineteenth century in Britain, 'custom supported by the emergence of domesticity, dictated women's wages and set the stage for capitalism's exploitation of women in their struggles with labour'.[9] Not only did this arouse gender antagonism, but it resulted from, and was resisted by men through 'exclusionary strategies producing sex segregated employment'.[10]

On the Clyde, where these forces existed, they were strengthened over time by two factors. Firstly, much of Clydeside's textile industry fell into relative decline and was replaced in significance by heavy industries, apparently more suited to the male physique. In turn, the penetration of heavy industry linked work, skill and masculinity to physical strength. Secondly, the Chartist rhetoric that men should be 'respectable breadwinners' earning sufficient wages to allow wives to remain at home may have become comparatively more significant for men over time, bonding notions of masculinity to employment and the maintenance of women in a 'private sphere'. In Govan and Partick, Glasgow - both areas noted for high levels of skilled workmen, only 2% of married women were registered as employed in the census of 1911.[11]

It was not merely the nature of work and the use of exclusionary policies which created the gendered nature of the labour markets on Clydeside. Trade unions prioritised male interests and neglected those of women workers, regardless of the sex-structuring of labour markets. They continued to do so when new technology and managerial strategies weakened the construction of 'skill', used by men and their organisations to justify male privilege in the workplace. These justifications were vindicated through cultural representations of women as docile, apathetic and acquiescent. Macdonald shows how, in Paisley between 1900-1908, 'conflict over wages, conditions and the dislocation of bonds of deference and patriarchy' resulted in the militancy of female mill workers. Yet women's experiences failed to find 'accommodation in the class-based rhetoric of the labour movement'. Consequently, the

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8 A. Clark, *The Struggle for the Breeches The Making of the British Working Class*, London, 1997, pp.233-247.
9 S.O.Rose, 'Gender antagonism and class conflict : exclusionary strategies of male trade unionists in nineteenth century Britain', *Social History*, Vol.13, No.2, 1988, p.197.
10 Ibid.
11 J. Smith, 'Labour Tradition in Glasgow and Liverpool', *History Workshop* Vol. 17, 1984, p.47.

labour movement proved 'powerless to politicise, in any meaningful manner, the conflicts of these years and thereby mobilise the women workers of Paisley to any appreciable degree'. By rejecting the labour movement, because of their policies and practices, it seems Paisley women were crushed by the increased 'authoritarianism of the mill owner', and thereafter they failed to exhibit behaviour which would demonstrate an awareness of class membership which would imply that they were an insignificant part of 'Red Clydeside' and the subsequent Labour electoral success.[12] Situations such as this held the potential to vindicate men's perceptions of the female worker as politically apathetic.

These conditions, however, varied regionally. From 1910 numerous strikes involving women on Clydeside permeated the pages of *Forward*. The strikes were mainly in the textile and distributive trades, which with the exception of domestic service, were the main occupations of Clydeside women in 1911.[13] Likewise, women increasingly joined trade unions, attempted to secure better wages and conditions, and fought for trade-union recognition and rights.[14] Stoppages included the Singer strike at Clydebank in March 1911 against new work practices.[15] Others were initiated to secure better pay and conditions. The latter included the women of the Glasgow Springfield Wire Works on strike in March 1910, and the Renfrewshire textile workers' dispute of August 1910.[16] Industrial action was also undertaken in April 1911 by female employees of the Bridgeton United Wire Weaving Company.[17] In December 1911 strikes involved women employed in the textile trades in Glasgow,[18] and females workers employed by the Caledonia bakery in Glasgow.[19] Often strike activity resulted in the establishment of a trade union presence, and in particular the

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12 C.M.M. Macdonald, 'The Radical Thread, Political Change in Scotland Paisley Politics 1885-1924', University of Strathclyde, Ph.D. Thesis, 1996, pp.135-138. See also, C.M.M. Macdonald, *The Radical Thread : political change in Scotland Paisley Politics*, Edinburgh, 2000.

13 C. Lee, *British Regional Employment Statistics 1841-1971*, Cambridge, 1979.

14 See, W.W.Knox and H. Corr, 'Striking Women Cotton Workers and Industrial Unrest 1907-1914', W. Kenefrick and A. McIvor, [eds.], *Roots of Red Clydeside 1910-1914 Labour Unrest and Industrial Relations in West Scotland*, Edinburgh, 1992, pp.107-128.

15 See, *Forward*, 28th March, 8th and 15th April 1911 and Glasgow History Workshop, 'A Clash of work regimes : "Americanisation" and the strike at the Singer Sewing Machine Company, 1911', W. Kenefrick & A. McIvor, [eds.], *Roots of Red Clydeside*, pp.193-213.

16 *Forward*, 25th March 1910 and 19th August 1910.

17 Ibid., 16th April 1911.

18 *Forward*, 30th December 1911.

19 Ibid.

Federation of Women Workers, as women joined trade unions during or immediately after a dispute. This occurred during the strike involving female workers from the United Turkey Red Company in February 1911. Notably the unionisation of females workers in this company encouraged demands by the male employees for trade-union rights.[20] Thus, it would seem that at times women could be more radical than their male counterparts. They were neither unconditionally docile or politically apathetic.

However, Gordon highlights that even in this context women continued to be obstructed by the labour movement's abiding acceptance of 'familial ideology'. Women, as 'a group to be mobilised in the class struggle were neglected'. By the eve of war, the 'definition of feminism and women's participation in the labour movement' at all levels, with the exception of the Socialist Labour Party, 'reflected and reinforced fragmentation'. The labour movement persisted to work within 'the parameters of an existing sexual division of labour'.[21] Such attitudes were possibly heightened during World War I when women became a real threat to male employment. In 1914 women replaced men in a Lanarkshire print works. The concern was not that wages had fallen from 20 - 28/- per week to 8s 3d, but that such work would 'brutalise women ; demoralise them' and make them 'unfit for motherhood and social life'.[22]

These attitudes and the war did little to moderate women's militancy. Foster demonstrates how females and unskilled workers were involved in almost as many days lost between 1915-1917 as skilled tradesmen.[23] Geary attributes war-time militancy to the comparative youth of new members and their relative inexperience of trade-union discipline which in turn created greater volatility.[24] Many of the workers were women, [25] young and old alike, who had been excluded from trade unions until they were drawn into munitions production. However, it is equally important to note that such employment was often characterised by large work-forces. The work was monotonous and repetitive. Along with long hours and the exhaustion of war

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20 Ibid., 8th February and 1st April 1911.
21 E. Gordon, 'Women and Working-class Politics in Scotland 1900-1914', H. Corr, & L.Jamieson, *State, Private Life and Political Change*, London, 1990, pp.224-242.
22 *Forward*, 16th May 1914.
23 J.Foster, 'Strike Action and working class Politics on Clydeside 1914-1919', *International Review of Social History*, Vol.33, 1998, p.40.
24 D. Geary, *European Labour Politics 1848-1939*, London 1987, pp.122-124.
25 See J. Cronin, 'Strikes and power in Britain 1870-1920', *International Review of Social History*, 32, 1987, p.152.

work, these were all catalysts with the potential to ignite industrial action. Nevertheless, the growing militancy of female employees, corresponding as it did with the penetration of women into hitherto male preserves, may well have heightened fears that women were becoming a very real threat to male dominance in the world of work.

World War I provided multiple employment opportunities for women beyond the narrow range of jobs classified as 'women's work'. These jobs were not limited to munitions work. Women of all ages substituted men in the perceived 'safer' occupations of retail, transport, commerce and general employment, anywhere in fact where the demand for labour existed. Thus many women worked alongside men throughout Clydeside and this might have contributed to greater confidence amongst women as well as a more militant spirit. My respondents stated that women substituted or joined their male colleagues in a range of occupations including factories, bakeries, shops and the post-office, street cleaning, lamp-lighting and policing. Tuckett notes, 'how, to the amazement and indeed shock of the old carters and officials', women had to be accepted as drivers of horse-drawn vehicles and motors.[26] Furthermore, women employed in metal trades on the Clyde rose from 3,758 in 1911 to 18,500 by 1916.[27] However, Liddington found that, by the end of 1916 there were only 6,196 female dilutees employed in the big engineering factories in Glasgow. [28] By contrast, in 1917 13,500 of the 15,000 workers in the munitions plant at Georgetown, Houston, on the edge of Paisley, were female,[29] and 81% of employees in the Babcock and Wilcox National Shell Factory were women. The majority of these munitions workers did not actually replace men. There were only 9,000 female dilutees directly substituting men on the Clyde by 1917, the peak of dilution.[30] Yet, the perception of a real threat may have been exacerbated because many of these women were not local or working-class women. Macdonald demonstrates how women from Glasgow and Lancashire were brought to Paisley's munitions plants to work. She also notes that concern was also voiced over the

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26 A. Tuckett, *The Scottish Carter*, London, 1967, p.130.
27 C.M.M. Macdonald, *The Radical Thread*, p.182.
28 J. Liddington, *The Long Road To Greenham Feminism & Anti-Militarism in Britain since 1820*, London, 1989, p.109.
29 C.M.M. Macdonald, *The Radical Thread*, pp.181-182.
30 J.Hinton, *The First Shop Stewards Movement*, London, 1973, p.63.

employment of reformatory boys from the Kibble Institute.[31] It seems that there was deep concern over the possibility of 'cheap labour', women and young unskilled male workers, usurping male domains. Yet, correspondingly, middle-class women responded to the call of duty and this was likely to exacerbate male hostility. Thus it was not merely the introduction of women, and therefore the potential to deskill work and subsequently depreciate wages, which was perceived as a threat to male employees. The introduction of non-locals, workers whom the 'breadwinner' had no 'legitimate' control over, and, who offered no monetary gains to the family unit might also have heightened antagonism, especially as the majority of women entered employment in shell and torpedo work, in factories built to accommodate this 'new' enterprise. These enterprises were sex-typed 'women's work' and often replicated work so classified. Mrs GH was one such employee. She stated,

> It wis, when you talk about munitions, it was sewing! There was a treadle on a table and there was a weighing machine there, like a sweetie machine, as if ye were selling sweets. And then the wimmen were sitting, maybe half a dozen wimmen to each, ye see at the machines, the weighting machines. And we measured it out, just as if you were weighing out sweets and they'd to be exact. It's cordite. And of course there was I, a wee lassie, well fourteen and a half nearly nearly fifteen . . . making munitions. [32]

Where women did infiltrate what had been regarded as male domains, however, expediency was often adopted rather than out-right antagonism. The Union of Shop Assistants were worried about replacing men with women because 'temporary expedients have a nasty knack of becoming permanent features'.[33] Men's identification with the way in which dilution, munitions work, and 'new industries' had developed prior to 1918 exacerbated these perceptions. Dilution schemes posed the threat of deskilling. Where new industries were labour intensive, cheap labour was preferred, invariably women and youths. Many of the large munitions factories were built to accommodate mass productions. Munitions works, like those in Houston, near Paisley, mirrored the employment strategy of Singers, in Clydebank. Singers, a 'new' enterprise, employed thousands of women. Thus, the engineers decided to

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31 C.M.M. Macdonald, *The Radical Thread*, p.182.
32 Interview with author, Mrs GH, born 1900 Kinning-Park, Glasgow.
33 *Forward*, 20th February 1915.

depend on the Amalgamated Society of Engineers and the National Federation of Women Workers to 'ensure that there would be no cheap labour', and to enforce 'the just claim of women for equality of treatment with men be made good' [34] - at least for the duration of the war! And for the duration of the war it largely was.

The perception that women might usurp men in the world of work by offering their services at a cheaper rate had penetrated the labour market long before the inter-war years. This was a perception which was to grow between the wars when the 'breadwinner ideal' was being reaffirmed and at the same time was vulnerable to high levels of unemployment and the very real threat from women's lower pay. It was a threat, moreover, which could well result in exclusionary policies designed to ensure the sexual segregation of employment and the exclusion of women from work. In fact, the inter-war feminist Eleanor Rathbone felt compelled to warn women that 'only when there is work for all is it relatively easy for men to be magnanimous'.[35]

Yet, exclusionary policies and the effects of the 'narrow vision of class bequeathed' to, and apparently embraced by the labour movement on Clydeside may not have ensured the 'dependency, powerlessness and a lack of defiance' from women, which Clark argues, replaced a 'militant domesticity' evident before the Chartist era. In fact she implicitly acknowledges this by demonstrating that Clydeside, in contrast to other regions of Britain, was distinguished after World War I by a broadened labour politics which considered the welfare state and the needs of women and children.[36] This suggests that women gained concessions, and not as Clark maintains because they were passive, dependent or powerless. This is in line with the findings of J.D.Young. He exposed a 'radical matriarchy' in Scottish society prior to World War I. It seems that this 'matriarchy' contributed to a wealth of female political activity, both formal and informal, related to the locality. None the less, Young concurs with Pugh who maintains that women, because they had a greater capacity to effect

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[34] Ibid., 18th December 1915.
[35] As quoted in B. Harrison, *Prudent Revolutionaries Portraits of British Feminist between the wars*, Oxford, 1987, p.314.
[36] A. Clark, *The Struggle for the Breeches*, p.270.

the ideal between the wars, embraced the re-constructed traditional gender world view which determined that a women's place was in the home as a dependant of her husband.[37]

Walby, by contrast, used dual labour market theory to analyse the inter-war period. She insists that British women were oppressed, although the extent of their oppression depended on the employment they undertook and balance of power between employers and the male-dominated trade unions of a given occupation. All, however, were to some extent oppressed. Walby alleges that this was a product of their peripheralisation in the formal labour market. She also infers that these conditions resulted in female dependency on a male breadwinner which in turn subjugated women socially. The subjugation of women, she states, accommodated both 'patriarchal and capitalist interests - two autonomous, but interrelated systems' which found common interests in women's low pay. In this vein, any progress women made was merely an accommodation of capitalist interests. Furthermore, Walby suggests that the state acted as mediator between the two systems, evidence of which is highlighted by legislation such as the Restoration of Pre-War Practices, the Anomalies Act and the structure of the Family Allowance. This was used to shore up women's dependence on a male breadwinner, whilst maintaining a supply of cheap and docile female labour.[38]

This picture of women's work experiences between the wars presented by Walby, Young and Pugh is overly-deterministic. All female employees are shown to be oppressed and temporary workers until marriage, after which they all become dependants of men. In point of fact these studies implicitly reinforce the cultural reproductions which identified women in the world of work as docile, apathetic and subservient workers. They ignore a number of significant factors. The emphasis on women's identification with the re-constructed traditional gender world view which determined that a women's place was in the home as a dependant of her husband should not detract from the experiences of young single females who worked before they married. The oppressive experiences of the workplace were frequently reacted

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37 J.D.Young, *Women and Popular Struggles : a history of Scottish and English working-class women 1500-1984*, Edinburgh, 1985, pp.147-154. See also, M. Pugh, 'Domesticity and the Decline of Feminism 1930-1950', H. L. Smith, [ed.], *British Feminism*, pp.144-166.

38 S. Walby, *Patriarchy at Work, patriarchal and capitalist relations in employment*, London, 1986, pp.2-3.

against in a variety of ways by women. Furthermore, many women, and in particular spinsters and widows, had to seek employment. It was not just unmarried women who worked. In Britain between the wars married women did not have equal access to the economic means to ensure that they could embrace the ideal that a women's place was in the home as a dependant of her spouse. To this we might add that an alternative, if marginal, family ideal was being disseminated, the dual-income family, an ideal which actively encouraged women to work. Although deceleration in fertility rates was far less marked in Scotland, the declining birth rate, 'linked to the changing relations of women, men and children to the socio-economic, political and cultural systems of a given locality' assisted this process.[39] The dual-income family ideal, and more frequently material impediments, ensured the entry of married women into the workplace formally and informally. Thus the ideal of separate spheres remained significantly an ideal for many women from Clydeside. Inadequate and insecure wages continued to compel married women to work, albeit generally in the informal economy. Men's employment was too insecure and vulnerable. Mrs GE recalled,

> Ma father was good at getting work. He was in the monumental trade. It wis jist, long ago, when things were bad ah remember ma mother saying, that wae the frost and the bad winters outside yer windae, you'd know that meant yer father miybe lost work wae the bad time. You'd tae be known in the shops as a regular to get food. They'd give you it and at the end of the week if yer father got a wage, whatever money ye paid it. You could always go back. [40]

Mr GA, was born out of wedlock in December 1905, because his unemployed father, a hewer, could not afford to marry his mother until he secured work. He related how his mother supplemented his father's earnings.

> She had a contract tae - wi', well wi' the rag trade. She got practically coppers fur it, but she was actually manufacturing dresses fur a fellow, the name o' Glass, ye know. She wis a seamstress. She wis a shirt machinist to trade and she was actually workin'

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[39] For an analysis on the relationship between attitudes to work, the availability of work for married women and family size, see, D. Gittins, *Fair Sex, Family size and structure, 1900-39*, London, 1982. These themes will be discussed in chapter four.

[40] Interview with author, Mrs GE, born 1907 Gorbals, Glasgow.

> wi' this in the house like. She hid her own machine. Ah think she got about three halfpence for a dozen dresses or something but . . . ah'd a family aboot nine. [41]

Chinn acknowledges that between the wars poor women worked out of necessity, but he maintains, that because of this, women were not interested in their jobs. In turn, this vindicated men's negative impressions of women workers and was used to justify low wages, even through 'women were compelled to work and could not afford the luxury of dissenting from employers opinions'.[42] While necessity might have ensured that many married women entered employment of some description between the wars on Clydeside, both in the informal and formal labour markets, women experienced and responded to discrimination as workers and as women. Furthermore, it will become clear that many women were interested in their jobs.

Much of the discrimination faced by women on Clydeside, however, was, as Walby argues, institutional. State policies limited women's employment potential after World War I. The Restoration of the Pre-War Practices Act was followed by a drive to re-situate unemployed females in 'women's work', primarily domestic service. Women who refused such work were denied benefits.[43] Moreover, the Anomalies Act barred married women from receiving unemployment benefit, and labour exchanges, established in 1908, exacerbated this. Labour exchanges only kept records of the unemployed who received benefits and most married women did not. Thus, when supplying prospective employers with workers, labour exchanges ultimately discriminated against the employment of married women not in receipt of benefits.[44] Not only were women directed towards what was deemed 'women's work', and denied the right to view themselves as unemployed or to expect state support when out of work, but as Humphries indicates, ' the marriage bars, introduced in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, became increasingly important in the depressed 1920s and 1930s when unemployment rates averaged 10%' [45] - a rate exceeded in Scotland.

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[41] Interview with author, MrGA, born 1905 Gorbals, Glasgow.

[42] C. Chinn, *They worked all their lives Women of the urban poor in England, 1880-1939*, Manchester, 1988, pp.87-88.

[43] J. Lewis, 'In Search Of A Real Equality : Women Between The Wars', F. Gloversmith, [ed.], *Class, Culture and Social Change A New View of the 1930s*, Sussex, 1980, p.213.

[44] M.Savage, 'Trade unionism, sex segregation, and the State : women's employment in new industries in inter-war Britain', *Social History*, Vol.13, No.2, 1988, pp.223-225.

[45] J. Humphries, 'Women and paid work', J. Purvis, [ed.], *Women's History*, p.100.

Nevertheless, Pugh and Roberts insist that working-class women chose to accept exclusion from the formal labour market during the inter-war years. Apparently, they acquiesced to domesticity and the marriage bar to maintain a family wage as a form of resistance to capitalist exploitation.[46] This credits women with a consciousness of class which was not necessarily mirrored in voting behaviour between the wars in many regions of Britain. At the same time, it completely neglects the impact of gender on workplace procedures. Bennett demonstrates how marriage bars were a frequent phenomena during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century which constrained many areas of women's paid employment. He also argues that they were not solely used to segregate employment and cut costs. He shows how they were also a reflection of the middle-class familial ideology which promoted a male breadwinner and the dependant wife and family.[47] Between the wars this ideal was reconstructed and forcefully disseminated so that it is more likely that women were expelled, or were conditioned to exclude themselves, from employment rather than actually acquiescing to expulsion to maintain a family wage, although as will become clear working-class women did support the ideal of a family wage, even though in reality this never existed.

Clydeside women were conditioned to leave their place of employment on marriage, but as will become evident many of these women sought other work to help maintain their families. It seems that women on Clydeside, including the wives of both skilled and unskilled male workers, rejected or were forced to reject the notion that married women should refrain from work, but they did not reject the ideal of a family wage. A family wage could secure the material means by which women might aspire to the ideal female identity. By contrast, many middle-class feminists between the wars challenged the idea of a family wage. They argued that it was designed to promote 'full employment for men'.[48] There is no doubt that this was an aspect of the ideal, but even within the labour movement the concept itself held multiple meanings and as chapter three will highlight some were more progressive than others. For

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46 M. Pugh, *Women and the Women's Movement in Britain 1914-1950*, 1st ed., London, 1995, p.81 and p.140. See also, E. Roberts, *A Woman's Place : An Oral History of Working-class Women 1890-1940*, Oxford 1984, p.10.
47 R. Bennett, 'Gendering Cultures in Business and Labour History : Marriage Bars in Clerical Employment', M. Walsh, [ed.], *Working Out Gender Perspectives from Labour History*, Aldershot, 1999, pp.191-209.
48 See for example, B. Harrison, *Prudent Revolutionaries*, p.125.

many married women of the working classes, however, the idea of a family wage, even where it did promote full employment for men, could be a form of empowerment. In its most basic form it offered working-class families greater resources, even if these resources, at source, were gendered. This should not be regarded as a form of apathy. Working-class women on Clydeside, as with women from working-class localities throughout Britain, generally controlled the family income and expenditure and, as such, the exemplification of a family wage armed them with an artillery of words in the combat for control of the family's finances. A family wage was not the wage of a 'breadwinner', it represented and recognised the family as a working unit. More significantly, because women were identified as household managers by the dominant gender discourse, and by the labour movement as the 'Chancellors of the Exchequer of the home', the idea of a family wage could also increase their domestic bargaining power and security. Hudson and Lee argue that,

> Although it is difficult to penetrate the dynamics of intra family relations historically, it seems clear that a mothers' position within the family as organiser of physical and financial resources was strong, at least in theory . . . The economic, political, and legal subordination of women has not been replicated in the domestic environment.[49]

While the idea of a family wage would accommodate those women who chose and were in a position to labour solely as wives and mothers, marriage bars imposed restrictions on women and were frequently condemned. MrsGE remembered, 'it was supposed tae be ye got married and bringing up a family and look after yer man and everyone - and it was silly ; it was foolish, because ye wur young and ye were able tae work'. Others postponed marriage to avoid the marriage bar. MrsGG recalled, Ah'd a very good job and as far as I was concerned my wages were so good and I was having such a wonderful life as it were that there was no point in rushing into getting married'. [50] Thus the family wage and marriage bars were separate issues.

Of more consequence, women's acquiescence to lower rates of pay, a family wage and separate spheres and the experiences of discrimination as workers and as women did not

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[49] P. Hudson and W.R.Lee, [eds.], 'Introduction', *Women's work and the family economy in historical perspective*, p.34.
[50] Interview with author, MrsGE, born 1907, Gorbals, Glasgow and MrsGG, born 1916, Townhead, Glasgow.

necessarily result in docility, apathy or subservience which might have vindicated men's impressions of women and justified women's lower wages. Work was a 'routine of people's daily existence' which, for women on the Clyde, did involve 'ostensibly non-political activities', that were political. These activities, part of a 'complex interrelationships between different forms of politics', moreover, 'politicised' many women in the world of work.[51] The adverse economic conditions between the wars and the dominant gender discourses which were disseminated contributed to that experience.

The female usurpers : myth and reality

After the First World War, women on Clydeside, and throughout Britain, were subjected to verbal and ideological assaults from the industrial wing of the male-dominated labour movement intended to undermine their contribution to industry as a means of condoning their expulsion from their war-time occupations. Cairns shows that, women were said to have a 'less developed sense of responsibility'. The manager of Glasgow's Tramway Department stated of his 430 female employees that they were 'more likely to have accidents, after which, owing to nervous breakdown they had to be relieved for the rest of the day'.[52] Apparently, although working men were defensive, they were so with the tacit support of many Clydeside employers. Defensiveness was the product of deep-rooted perceptions that women posed a threat to employment and wage levels by offering their services at a cheaper rate. This was heightened by the economic context and the possibility that 'monopoly' capitalism might emerge on the Clyde. Monopoly capitalism where it did not render skill defunct, posed the potential to do so through the use of standardisation and cheap labour, particularly women and young workers. Thus, where possible, women were quickly expelled from their wartime work.

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51 See J. Hannam, 'Women and Politics', J. Purvis, [ed.], *Women's History*, p.218.

52 For Clydeside see, D.Cairns, *Women and the Clydeside Labour Movement*, pp.38-41& passim. See also A.. McIvor, 'Women and Work in the Twentieth Century', A. Dickson & J.H.Treble, [eds.], *People and Society in Scotland* Vol.III, Edinburgh, 1992. For a British perspective see G.Braybon & P.Summerfield, *Out of the Cage Women's Experiences in Two World Wars*, London, 1987, especially pp.31-56 and pp.169-184 ; and S. Walby, *Patriarchy at Work, patriarchal and capitalist relations in employment*, especially pp.156-201.

Cairns, however maintains that women entered male occupational preserves during the war largely by invitation and that this explains their relative acquiescence to expulsion thereafter. This is contrary to J.D.Young's findings. He demonstrates that Clydeside women did challenge their expulsion from wartime occupations.[53] The situation was complex and contradictory. Many of the jobs where women had been employed were completely discontinued. Protest in this context was fruitless. At the same time, women in some occupations did contest their expulsion, whilst others were content to be expelled. Other women remained in the occupations they had secured during the war. Thus, women's experiences and attitudes to expulsion varied immensely. Like the female workers 'invited' into the world of work in the Second World War, women on Clydeside had to adjust to the ruptures created by war. In the immediate post-war years these women were torn between multiple and contradictory ideals of femininity, ranging from the wartime vision of the woman worker to post-war re-establishment of the traditional ideal on women.[54] Mrs GH was one such worker. She was distraught when she lost her job in munitions, but felt sympathy for men who lost their jobs to women.

> The jobs were all taken up before the boys came home. They never got their job back, right enough . . . Ma younger brother, it was a shame, The only job he could get, although he was working in an office when he joined the army, and he could hardly get a job. Needless to say women were scared. They didnae want tae give up their jobs. He was made a postman . . .that's how he finished up a postman. [55]

These ruptures affected men as well :

> Well see after war, 1919, the wimmen, the men were taken oot e' jobs and an awful lot of jobs were taken over bi' wimmen and that suited some of the bosses - cheaper labour. They could never get that back ; the men could never get their jobs back again . . . The wimmen were kept on. As a matter of fact practically every shop you went intae was always men that was serving, bakers 'n, you name it, grocers, but . . . aw these shop-keeping jobs it died out with regards a man working. [56]

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[53] D. Cairns, *Women and the Clydeside Labour Movement*, p.197 & J.D.Young, *Women and Popular Struggles*, p.147.
[54] See P. Summerfield, *Reconstructing Women's Wartime Lives*, especially chapter six.
[55] Interview with author, Mrs GH, born 1900 Kinning-Park, Glasgow.
[56] Interview with author, Mr GD, born 1900 Bridgeton, Glasgow.

The economic context and the changing nature of work on the Clyde fused to facilitate such impressions. On Clydeside, and in other regions characterised by staple industry, employers played a significant role in creating a sense of vulnerability. Staple industries in Britain had been faced by rising foreign competition before 1914. Armament contracts helped disguise the extent and force of surmounting foreign competition and at the same time assisted over-investment. The geographical concentration of over-commitment to staple industry was exacerbated by investment exploitation during the war as employers took advantage of the Excess Profit Duty. This tax began in 1915. It was intended to impede war profiteering by imposing a tax of 100% on all war profits, but it was evaded by the loophole which allowed these profits to be redirected into capital expenditure.

After the short post-war boom, however, the loss of markets, which war had disguised, became visibly apparent. Furthermore, Britain's return to the gold standard at pre-war parity causing the pound to be over-valued at a time when world prices were falling, adversely affected industry, especially those like the Clyde's which were export orientated. This, and the high interest rates and taxation used to maintain parity, impeded investment, a situation made worse on Clydeside by the effects of the regional specialisation. Although there was some introduction of 'new industries' which corresponded with technological progress and alternative managerial strategies, such as quasi-Taylorist methods, work processes remained relatively stagnant. In 1932, 626 factories were opened in London, 132 closed. In Scotland 20 were opened, 36 closed. By 1933 England's net gain was 69, Scotland's loss 15 although between 1932-1937, 3,217 factories opened in Britain, 127 in Scotland.[57] Thus for most of the inter-war years the 'Gospel of hard work' remained the predominant managerial strategy on Clydeside, because, 'indivisibility of plant' and the dearth of 'new' industries ensured that traditional practices were maintained.[58] Wages were cut and work intensified. Wages on Clydeside were substantially lower than other regions of Britain. By 1931 the wages of Scottish workers were estimated to be 5s 3d below those in England, although this varied.[59]

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[57] M. Keating, *The City That Refused To Die*, p.7.
[58] W.W.Knox, 'Class Work and Trade Unionism in Scotland', A. Dickson & J.H.Treble, [eds.], *People and Society*, p.114 and K.Burgess, *The Challenge of Labour*, London, 1980, pp.195-202.
[59] *Forward*, 2nd May 1931.

Average wages in wool textiles were 33s 3d in Scotland in contrast to 36s 10d in Britain.[60] However, when the cost of living was taken into account, it was estimated that Scottish working-men were 25% worse of than those in Lancashire, and 10% worse off than those in Yorkshire, Wales and London.[61]

Reducing labour overheads inhibited reconstruction by curtailing domestic demand and on Clydeside it also entailed a concerted attack on labour with unemployment assisting the employers' offensive by reducing the bargaining power of workers and trade unions. This commenced with the rooting out of militants. By 1922 John Browns' shipyard on the Clyde had no shop stewards. Foremen had their powers increased and gained the less than complimentary title, 'bastards in bowlers'.[62] McKinlay insists that the status, privileges and restrictive practices of skilled workers were extensively undermined during the inter-war years on Clydeside.[63]

In engineering, which employed a vast number of men on Clydeside, routinisation, mechanisation and work-related payment systems were introduced as a result of experimentation during World War I. Classified skilled workers in engineering in Scotland fell by 28% between the wars.[64] Even in the context of changes at the point of production and mass unemployment, however, trade unions continued to influence local and national government policy. In this they were often extremely sectional. They demanded the expulsion of women from engineering and the skilled workers' 'power base in the STUC guaranteed that even during the depression non-union shops were refused government contracts if they did not recognise nationally negotiated wage levels and conditions'.[65] The strength of a trade union determined labour's ability to resist management's encroachment at the point of production, the infiltration of female labour and Taylorist managerial strategies, the principal features of 'rehabilitation'. The number of women working in engineering in Scotland declined

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60 Ibid., 30th January 1932.
61 Ibid., 18th October 1932.
62 A. McKinlay & A. Hampton, 'Making Ships Making Men Working for John Brown's between the wars', *Oral History,* Vol.19, No.1, 1991, pp.24-25.
63 A. McKinlay, 'Work organisation and the dynamics of trade unionism', Conference Paper, Red Clydeside in the inter-war years, Glasgow Caledonia University, 14th November, 1998.
64 W.W. Knox, 'Class Work and Trade Unionism', A. Dickson & J.H. Treble, [eds.], *People and Society,* pp.115-118.
65 Ibid., pp.128-129.

from 11,290 in 1924 to 10,230 by 1933. In London, by contrast, a process of work degradation resulted in an increased female labour force in engineering. In 1924 41,170 females were employed in engineering in this region. By 1933 this had risen to 73,670.[66] The introduction of 'new' industries contributed to this rise, but on Clydeside, the relative absence of new industries, state policies and the political mobilisation of men may have offset the appeal of cheap female labour, particularly where an alternative source, namely youths, was in abundance, as it was in this region.

Yet, it was becoming visibly apparent that labour's bargaining position was weakening. Militants were first to experience unemployment, and solidarity among male workers was waning.

> The last strike that was, was 1922. It shouldn't have been a strike. They were out for a rise and the powers wouldnae give them it so at the meeting with the unions the men decided they'd go on strike. The unions warned them not to strike. 'Take our advice don't go on strike. This is a different strike altogether. You're only small branches. The Co-operative's not coming out. There's a bakery in McNeil Street that can feed the whole of the west of Scotland and they've a place in Clydebank that can do the very same'. So they were warned but they voted to strike. After six weeks they'd tae go back. [67]

Sectionalism was resurfacing on the Clyde, while male vulnerability ensuing from the possible effects of capitalism in transition, facilitated by structural unemployment, was spreading. These perceived threats, especially the idea that women were a menace to male jobs, therefore, took place in an environment which included intensification, rationalisation and substitution.

Those jobs characterised as men's, and particularly those associated with staple industries on Clydeside, were being undermined by unemployment or rendered defunct between the wars. Exacerbating the situation was the increasing resort to sectionalism and the economic climate which reduced the effectiveness of trade unions and industrial action. Combined with these factors was the prevailing gender discourse which glorified women's place in the private

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66 M.A. Hamilton, *A Brief Introduction to Trade Unionism for Women,* London, 1941, pp.136-137.
67 Interview with author, MrGD, born 1900 Bridgeton, Glasgow.

sphere as opposed to economic liberation from work. The state may have proposed this world view to resolve the notable decline in population, but it was also politically expedient. It was a means of reducing unemployment, which in turn would contribute to the maintenance of social stability. The discourse also appealed to male trade unionists. The industrial wing of the labour movement embraced this characterisation and used it against working women and the state as a means of furthering the interests of their male members, reflecting the prevailing 'sexist attitudes of the day'.[68] Images of women usurping men in the employment sphere penetrated the media and were enshrined by state schemes designed to re-situate females into what was deemed 'women's work'.[69] Not only were benefits refused to women who rejected domestic service when out of work, but schemes throughout Britain were designed to attract young females into this field of employment.[70] On Clydeside schemes were introduced to train young women in domestic service with the intention of encouraging them to emigrate to the dominions.[71] Thus, the trend which had witnessed a diminishing number of women employed in domestic service and waitressing in areas of Clydeside, such as Glasgow, was reversed. By 1931, in contrast to Edinburgh, where domestic service was the largest sector of female employment accounting for 30.3% of working women enumerated, in Glasgow it ranked fifth accounting for 23.6% of all women enumerated. However, between 1911 and 1921 the number of women occupied in domestic service and waitressing in Glasgow had fallen from 21,853 to 17,724 representing a decrease of 18.9%. Between 1921 and 1931 this trend was inverted. There was a 50% increase in the number of women employed in domestic service in Glasgow.[72] There was also 28% more women occupied in restaurants and tea rooms and 60% more employed in laundries and associated work.[73]

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68 A. McIvor, 'Gender Apartheid? : Women in Scottish Society', T.M. Devine & R.J. Finlay, [eds.], *Scotland in the 20th Century*, pp.203-204.
69 See D. Simonton, *A History of European Women's Work*, London, 1998, p.193.
70 G. Braybon & P.Summerfield, *Out of the Cage*, pp.135-140.
71 *Glasgow Herald*, 16th and 17th October 1928.
72 Census for Scotland 1921 and 1931.
73 Census for Scotland 1931.

Conditions on Clydeside, however, were not uniform. Change was as evident as continuity. As the table below indicates there was a trend, from at least 1911, marking a rise in the number of women employed in commerce, the service and retail sectors, employment in the production of food, drink and tobacco and to a lesser extent standardised production in 'new' industries. Textiles, the making of textile goods and domestic service, however, continued to employ significant numbers of women.

Table 2.1 : Strathclyde Employment Statistics, 1911-31

	Males			Females		
Occupations	1911	1921	1931	1911	1921	1931
Agriculture, forestry, fishing	31672	31604	32174	7625	6813	4402
Mining, quarrying	82406	90217	71622	1048	2201	983
Food, drink tobacco	13678	21951	24120	8775	18614	20948
Coal & petroleum products			844			147
Chemicals & allied industries	5495	8040	7866	1471	2424	2309
Metal manufacture	48748	68127	50214	150	1831	1396
Electrical engineering	4560	5027	5130	55	702	751
Shipbuilding & marine engineering	45314	95976	65884	268	2242	1230
Vehicles	6685	10000	19461	82	711	882
Metal goods not elsewhere specified	25784	10279	9337	1462	2460	2134
Textiles	20052	19779	19206	45082	42008	42366
Leather & leather goods & fur	2825	2476	2672	427	1058	1068
Clothing	15597	13279	10657	36894	26129	20040
Bricks, pottery, glass, cement ect.	6539	6311	9608	1497	1924	1902
Timber, furniture, ect.	14702	17825	19287	3292	3214	3504
Paper, printing, publishing ect.	8699	9728	12486	8711	8229	9163
Other manufacturing industries	2300	3322	5328	1690	2147	2646
Construction	52682	31783	48174	67	1374	1831
Gas, electricity, water	4885	10037	9703	7	589	374
Transport and communications	88441	81294	85012	7033	4755	8332
Distribution trades	52611	71386	100695	32086	62162	70677
Insurance, banking, finance/ business	10936	10298	12577	269	4350	3851
Professional/scientific services	17388	14407	20993	16497	13074	28505
Miscellaneous services	25427	23540	31066	68228	62254	73559
Public administration & defence	12713	43495	35551	543	21700	9278
Total Employed	716239	781802	772614	262505	300530	324094

Source C, Lee, *British Regional Employment Statistics*, Cambridge, 1979.

White-collar occupations; commercial employment as well as jobs in the 'new' industries were less susceptible to unemployment. Hence, whilst many male occupations, especially in heavy industries, were opened to the possible erosion of skill via new techniques or

managerial strategies and to the force of unemployment in the region, the new jobs were 'sheltered' and often labelled 'women's work'. Therefore, the changing nature of work held the potential to embed the idea of the female usurper. As the table below highlights, however, the number of married and unmarried women working increased only marginally on Clydeside between the wars.

Table 2.2 : Women enumerated as gainfully employed, Clydeside 1921-31.

	1921			1931		
Region	Total no. of women enumerated	No. of married women	% of married women	Total no. of women enumerated	No. of married women	% of married women
Clydebank	16424	4429	26.9	16739	5416	32.3
Glasgow	404888	146022	35.7	424857	165868	39
Greenock	29032	8701	29.9	28389	9548	33.6
Motherwell & Wishaw	23627	5364	22.7	22272	5904	26.5
Paisley	35292	15012	42.6	34884	14947	42.8
Port Glasgow	7347	2129	28.9	6679	2269	33.9

Source : Census for Scotland 1921 and 1931.
The school leaving age was raised from twelve to fourteen years of age between the Census of 1921 and that of 1931.

Thus, changes in the nature of work may have enlarged the scope of jobs open to females on Clydeside, but it did not provide more employment, whilst the expanding occupational opportunities were generally accompanied by a 'degrading' rather than a 'deskilling' of the job's classification, reflected in women's lower pay. Hamilton, a contemporary, stated, 'women who earned 50% of what men earned counted themselves lucky'.[74] Progress was severely curtailed and the notion of women as a threat to 'men's work' was largely a misperception.

For employers on Clydeside the appeal of standardisation and the subsequent substitution of skilled labour with women and youths would have been immense. However, many were not in a position to implement such changes. Many faced tremendous constraints. Employers were also divided over the benefits of such strategies. The coming of monopoly capitalism

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[74] M. Hamilton, *Trade Unionism for Women*, p.151. See also, D. Simonton, *European Women's Work*, p.254.

was a very gradual process in Britain, particularly in regions such as Clydeside which largely served a specialised demand incompatible with standardisation. 'Skill' remained vital to production. Gospel notes, 'transaction costs outweighed efficiency concerns when combined with market demand'.[75] A rejection of the high-wage strategy and the administration costs implicit in scientific management and standardisation, therefore, characterised Clydeside.

Yet, where cheap labour could be used to cut costs it was. However, even young employees were affected by the level of unemployment in the region.

Table 2.3 : Occupation of juveniles, Clydeside, 1931.

Region	Males	Females
Scotland	81.9	69.3
Clydebank	81.8	71.4
Glasgow	82	76.9
Greenock	81	66.9
Motherwell & Wishaw	77.1	58.7
Paisley	84.9	82.7
Port Glasgow	79.8	68.4

Source : Census for Scotland 1931

The number of juveniles employed in Scotland fell along with the number of workers in every age group. Despite this, there were changing patterns within this trend. While 59.8% of fourteen to fifteen year old males were occupied in 1921, this had declined to 56.% by 1931. By contrast, the number of young women in this group rose from 44.1 to 49.1%. The number of males aged sixteen to seventeen enumerated fell from 91% to 87%. Again the number of young female workers of the same age rose from 73.5% to 75.6%.[76] Thus, there was a shift towards the employment of young women because of the changing nature of work and their appeal as a source of cheap labour, albeit a relative shift which varied regionally. Young women fared more favourably in Paisley where textile employment was substantial. However, while Clydeside employers continued to employ comparatively larger numbers of young men,

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75 H.Gospel as quoted in A. McIvor, 'Were Clydeside Employers More Autocratic? Labour Management and the Labour Unrest', A. McIvor & W.Kenefick, [eds.], *Roots of Red Clydeside*, p.47.
76 Occupation of Juveniles 1931, Census for Scotland 1931.

in Clydebank, Glasgow, Paisley and Renfrew they were increasingly showing a greater propensity than was the average in Scotland to employ young women. Jessie Dreghorn, a young shop-assistant between the wars notes why, 'In those days bosses were all powerful and if they could get someone cheaper you were out'.[77]

Simonton argues that throughout Europe the rise of the tertiary sector and changes in merchandise were significant factors in this trend and as such this did not entail women substituting men. A combination of new forms of employment and the extension of work already sex-typed 'women's work' widened employment opportunities for females. The attractions of a perceived 'women's work culture' and the construction, by employers, of a discourse characterising the 'female' worker also became important features of women's employment possibilities. Employers identified women and their 'work culture' as 'docile, politically apathetic and easily managed'. Within this scheme young women were often preferred because increasingly the physical appearance of women was a consideration for their employment in offices and shops along with the price of their labour. Yet, Simonton also notes that women perceived such jobs as 'step-up'. Hamilton says that, 'women clung on to a certain class superiority to offset their miserable pay'.[78] In this respect, some women contributed to their own under-valuation as measured by remunerative rewards.

Nevertheless, regardless of low pay, women were unlikely to directly penetrate male sex-typed employment. Subsequently, they continued to be confined to employment characterised by low pay and less status with few if any promotional prospects. In Glasgow, in what would be termed a 'new' industry, the construction and repair of motor vehicles, men were much more likely to be employed. By 1931 female employees in vehicle construction and repair numbered 502, and male employees 6,143. The same is true of Motherwell where in 1911 only three women were so employed. This rose to 23 by 1931 as opposed to 1,089 men. Correspondingly, in the Gas, Electricity and Water services men gained the 'new' jobs. In

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77 GRA/ PA4/212, Workers Educational Association, Growing Up in Shettleston between the Wars, 1985, Interview with Jessie Dreghorn, born Dennistoun, Glasgow 1910.

78 D. Simonton, *European Women's Work*, pp.248-249 and M. Hamilton, *Trade Unionism for Women*, p. 142.

Glasgow male employees numbered 6,600 by 1921, women 384,[79] falling to 374 for the entire Strathclyde region by 1931.[80] What is more, males even dominated the sales of these goods. In Glasgow by 1931 there were 696 salesmen in the cycles, motors and other vehicles sectors, 211 women.[81] Employers on Clydeside had been hesitant to employ or substitute men with female labour during the war and there is little to suggest they altered their attitudes in the post-war context. Furthermore, mass unemployment may have reduced male labour costs and the tendency for a high turn-over of labour or strike action, moderating the requirement for a more compliant labour-force which women were often regarded. To compound matters, many of the 'new' occupations which emerged in the inter-war years grew out of older industries. These often had a tradition of male employment and male trade unionism which would favour exclusionary policies aimed at women.

On Clydeside, as was the situation across much of western Europe, women's apparent occupational progress then was not necessarily a threat to male sex-typed employment. The number of women employed in clerical occupations increased significantly between the wars, but the majority of females were employed as typists and message girls. Of the 15,802 Glaswegian women employed in commerce in 1921, 8,479 were typists.[82] Even in retail the situation was complex. Females did enter retail employment in greater numbers, but this was mainly due to the expansion of department stores, where, equal numbers of men gained employment. Between 1921 and 1931 those occupied in sales rose by 35%. [83] In 1911 there were 55 men and 99 women employed in multiple stores in Glasgow. The 1931 census offers no direct comparison, but by this time there were 5,701 men and 5,412 women engaged in department stores in this city. However, there prevailed an existing sexual division of labour in the retail trade with men dominating areas such as the meat and grocery trade, women confectionery and clothing. In 1911 there were 2,652 male butchers and 183 females

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79 Census for Scotland 1911, 1921 and 1931.
80 C. Lee, *British Regional Employment Statistics.*
81 Census for Scotland 1931.
82 Census for Scotland 1921.
83 Census for Scotland 1931.

employed in the retail of meat. By 1931 the numbers were 4,605 and 502 respectively.[84] The same was true of the bakery trade. MrGD was asked if men and women worked together. He responded, 'Oh no there was no women. Oh no not in a bread factory. Ye wouldnae get any women in a bread factory. You'll get them in a pastry, but not a bread. The work was too heavy'.[85]

This situation prevailed in professional occupations. There was an increase in the number of female teachers and nurses on Clydeside. In 1901 there were 2,573 women teaching in Glasgow. There were 4,642 by 1931. Simultaneously, the number of female nurses and invalid attendants rose from 1,768 in 1901 to 3,926 by 1931.[86] This apparent progress owed a great deal to the prior sex-typing of some areas of the teaching and the medical professions. The years between the wars also saw an increases in the school population and improvements in health-care and education, a phenomenon very much influenced by the labour movement's growing electoral support across Britain and by concerns for a healthier, and more productive, work-force due to growing foreign competition. Nevertheless, the number of female medical practitioners, a previously sex-typed male occupation, was a mere 71 in 1921. By 1931 there were 970 physicians and surgeons in Glasgow. Of these 154 were women.[87]

The expansion of 'women's work' may have appeared to be a form of 'opportunity, liberation and independence' for women. In actuality, on Clydeside, although there were regional variations, it was the product of 'different definitions of labouring activity', based on 'ascribed gender differences' which were generally accompanied by the 'degrading of work and wages'.[88] Moreover, these improved opportunities were largely to the benefit of the single women.

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84 Census for Scotland 1911 and 1931.
85 Interview with author, MrGD, born 1900 Bridgeton, Glasgow.
86 Census for Scotland 1911 and 1931.
87 Census for Scotland 1921 and 1931.
88 D. Simonton, *European Women's Work*, pp.2, 231-254 and 269.

Table 3.4 : Occupied married women on Clydeside 1921-1931.

Region	1921 Total number of married women	1921 No. of married women registered gainfully employed.	1921 Percent	1931 Total number of married women	1931 No. of married women registered gainfully employed	1931 Percent
Clydebank	8484	150	1.7	9016	278	3
Glasgow	181531	11103	6.1	201430	14843	7.3
Greenock	13693	278	2	14079	474	3.3
Motherwell & Wishaw	11919	160	1.3	12087	818	6.7
Paisley	14542	998	6.9	15720	1331	8.4

Source : Census for Scotland 1921 and 1931.

Married and single women in Paisley and Glasgow fared far more favourably than those from Motherwell, Greenock, Port Glasgow and Clydebank, albeit there was by far a greater over-all improvement in total number of married and single women working in the smaller peripheries of Clydeside with the number of women occupied rising by 5% in Clydebank and 5.4% in Port Glasgow. Regardless of the rising number of women recorded as gainfully employed, Motherwell still lagged significantly behind other regions of Clydeside, although this was slightly lower than the average for Lanarkshire, where the percentage of women in gainful employment rose from 25.7% in 1921 to 28.6% in 1931. What makes the figures for Motherwell more extreme is the fact that the number of married women in 'gainful' employment was comparatively high. Almost 7% of women working in Motherwell in 1931 were married, although the employment of just over 800 married women in the formal economy hardly constitutes dramatic progress, a situation reflected throughout Clydeside. The number of occupied married women in the formal economy in Scotland rose by 4.8 between 1911 and 1921 and again by 6.4 between 1921-1931. This was lower than the British average of 10% in 1931.[89] Furthermore, recorded female unemployment, most probably underestimated, stood at 11.3% by 1931 in Scotland. At the same time the number of widows employed in the formal economy fell, potentially releasing jobs. Widows in formal employment in Scotland fell from 21.4% to 18.1% between 1921 and 1931,[90] a percentage

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89 J. Lewis, 'In Search Of A Real Equality', F. Gloversmith, [ed.], *Class, Culture and Social Change,* p.210.
90 Census for Scotland 1921 and 1931.

below the British average of 25.62% in 1921 and 21.62% in 1931.[91] Lewis suggests that the declining number of widows employed in the formal economy was due to the introduction of widows' pensions in 1925 which allocated a widow 10s per week and a further 5s for the first and 3s for subsequent dependant children.[92] This may have contributed, but evidence from the families of widows in this study suggests that these sums of money were insufficient to maintain a family so that many were obliged to seek employment, although it tended to be in the informal economy. What may well have occurred was a change in the outlook towards the employment of widows. Having secured this state benefit any sympathy towards their need to seek employment due to the fact that they could not rely on a 'breadwinner' may have subsided and this could have pushed them into a similar position to that of married women, where employment in the informal economy was accepted, but work in the formal economy was less so. Thus, although the nature of work was in transition, the impact of this transformation did not result in women becoming a real threat to male employees between the wars on Clydeside. Work in the formal economy remained for the majority of women a temporary experience until marriage.

However, the inter-war period was one of intense unemployment for men and pragmatism may have mediated the hostility of some men towards the idea of married women working, particularly if their work was not in direct competition with that deemed 'masculine'. Correspondingly, the rapidity with which unemployment set in between the wars may have encouraged some women to remain in the jobs they had gained during the war, or to seek alternative employment. Yet it would seem that if this were the case, then men's pragmatism was limited primarily to an acceptance of casual work for married women rather than work in the formal economy and employment in 'women's work' for those who were unmarried. The census in no way indicates the real percentage of married women in work as they were often to be found in the informal sector of the economy.[93] Mass unemployment, the Anomalies Act

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91 J. Lewis, 'In Search of Real Equality', F. Gloversmith, [ed.], *Class, Culture and Social Change,* p.209.
92 Ibid.
93 For a critique of the census see J. Humphries, 'Women and paid work', J. Purvis, [ed.], *Women's History,* pp.86-98.

which effectively barred married women from receiving unemployment benefits, and the introduction of the means test would have intensified the need for married women to seek employment, formal or otherwise. Mrs GK stated her reasons for returning to work in the informal economy after marriage, 'ah know maself, perhaps ah would have been hungry many a time and ma children too, but ah went out tae work. Ah did house-cleaning'.[94]

Thus on Clydeside women's employment remained largely proscribed, and any potential progress in the opening sectors of commerce, retail and local authority employment was harnessed by the operation of formal and informal marriage bars, reinforcing horizontal segregation by denying women opportunities for training and promotion. Advancement was slight. The majority of Clydeside women remained narrowly confined to a small group of occupations associated with their gender. In all but Paisley, where textiles continued to absorb a large percentage of the female work-force, by 1931 domestic service was the main occupation of Clydeside women in the formal economy, and almost 50% of all females worked in either an office, a shop or in some domestic capacity with the majority of the others concentrated in textiles or the making of textile goods, and certain areas of the food and drinks sectors.[95] Women were not usurping men in the world of work, although their improved opportunities, if relative, may have contributed to just such a misperception.

The nature of women's work culture on Clydeside

Domestic service and the types of employment in which the 'new' women were occupied were not noted for their capacity to heighten consciousness of class. Savage and Miles argue that, in contrast to the expansion of blue-collar factory employment characterising the male work-force, the post-war increase of domestic servants, clerical workers and shop assistants, was work which was scattered, side-lined and in close proximity to employers. Due to the nature of this work it was seemingly subject to paternalistic influences and it could imbue in women a false sense of status which in turn were catalysts which constrained women's class

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94 Interview with author, MrsGK, born 1907 Anniesland, Glasgow.
95 See Table 1.1.

awareness. Savage and Miles maintain thus, that it was the community which was the locus from which women developed a class consciousness.[96] Even when women were not in close proximity to employers it is often assumed that they were acquiescent, a deferential class of workers, regardless of the fact that women's experiences of work could mirror those of their male counter-parts and were extremely diverse. Gordon identifies the forces behind the diversity of women's employment experiences. These forces include regional specialisation, local labour market conditions, the social hierarchy of a particular area, the power and desire of employers to overcome resistance to female labour, the availability of an alternative supply of labour, and the introduction of new technology as well as its applicability. All these criteria were important determinants in the composition of a particular work-force.[97] However, what is notable about women's work as the inter-war period progresses is the trend towards greater similarity in the occupational structure across Clydeside. Women, as already highlighted, were largely employed in an office, a shop or domestic service when they were not occupied in textiles or the making of textile goods or food and drinks production.

The women who worked in the staple industries of textiles or in textile related industries, were not, on the whole, sheltered from the impact of the adverse economic climate affecting the region. They endured unemployment, short time and intensification as well as the effects of the piece rate systems designed to speed-up work and undercut wages. For these women, like the men so affected, work, as will become evident, particularly experiences at the point of production, was often a catalyst for political activity, albeit mostly informal political activity. This, however, differed by degree.

Paisley had a largely female textile work-force for most of the inter-war years. Yet, as was the trend on Clydeside, the number of women recorded as either working in textiles or making textile goods in Paisley fell between the wars : there were 7,905 so employed in 1921, and 4,717 by 1931. By 1931 8% of those enumerated worked in an office, 12% were employed in

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96 M. Savage & A. Miles, [eds.], *The Remaking of the British Working-class 1840-1940*, London, 1994, pp.21-40.
97 E. Gordon, ' Work and Collective Action : Dundee Jute Workers 1870-1906', *Journal of Social History*, 21, 1987, pp.28-29 & p.32.

personal service, and a further 10% were working in commerce. This was reflected throughout Clydeside. 22% of the women enumerated in Greenock and 20% of Glasgow's female workers were occupied in textiles or the making of textile goods in 1931. Correspondingly, in Glasgow 16% of women workers were employed in commerce, 14% worked in offices and a further 19% in personal services. This was mirrored in Greenock were 20% of those recorded in the census were working in commerce, 22% in domestic service and 11% in offices. In Motherwell, by 1931 those women 'gainfully' employed were situated thus : 28% worked in commerce, 21% in personal service, 12% in an office and 11% in textiles or making textile goods.[98]

In recent years the historiography of women's work experiences in textiles has expanded dramatically. Paisley was monopolised by the Coats' thread firm, a large technologically advanced company which generated welfare policies, including the development of housing for senior staff.[99] This form of paternalism, to encourage workers to be loyal to the firm, seems to have been relatively successful. There were no real efforts to develop trade unions and very little strife occurred in the inter-war period, either in the Paisley mills or at their office in Glasgow. MrsGS recalled the reasons behind the comparative loyalty of the work-force.

> Well both the Coats and the Clarks were church people and the chairman at the time that it changed from the Coats, Mr Coats retired and a Mr Clark took over and Mr Clark told the directors to stick and if possible not to put any of the employees on the dole. And he did everything - there was a few people went out who were badly behaved and always grumbling, but we all managed and then when things got better. A lot of the men were put on pensions at 55 instead of 60, you see to take them off the wages. And when Mr. Clark came to retire that all remained in his favour and everybody when they got their salary that month - everybody was told give a shilling each no matter what their money was. They gathered it up and Mr. Clark got the money and we were a big staff and ah think it would be about £50. That was because he kept nearly everybody as far as he could out of unemployment and then you see they put the men over 55 on to - they let them retire instead of 60 and then when ever the war started and they needed staff they came back, he took them back on

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[98] Census for Scotland 1921 and 1931.

[99] M. Blair, *The Paisley Thread Industry and the men who created and developed it*, Paisley, 1907, pp.79-83. See also, C.M.M. Macdonald, *The Radical Thread* and W.W.Knox, *Hanging By A Thread. The Scottish Cotton Industry c1850-1914*, Preston, 1995.

> again. Well that was all remembered and we all gave a shilling. It didnae matter what your salary was, everybody gave a shilling. [100]

The firm also provided medical services, education, leisure facilities and a pension fund. They assumed that paternalism would ensure a cheap and deferential work-force. It seems to have been a very successful strategy. Mrs GS remembered,

> Coats had a way of their own. When the girls were 16 they took a 6d a week off their wages and gave them 10s a week 50 years later. Oh! the girls in Paisley were considered awful well off because maybe if there was two sisters and they were both retired with 10/- each - they were in the money. Ah hear folk talking now that there's such a distance between the rich and the poor - the poor were poor then. [101]

The effectiveness of a paternalist regime could have been made easier by exploiting kinship ties and because of the alternative employment available to Paisley men in engineering. These factors would have allowed Paisley employers to overlook domestic ideology and employ both married and unmarried female labour.[102] Hudson and Lee note that, 'gender wage differentials are a direct utility to industrial capitalism and employer labour strategies because low pay reinforces women's continued dependence on the family economy, while mimicking familial and domestic hierarchies'. This in turn, ' restricts women's political activity and encourages a self-definition and consciousness embedded in the private sphere in reproduction rather than production'.[103] However, it has also been noted how the employment of married women as a source of cheap labour could be accommodated within employment structures. A comparatively high percentage of married women worked in Paisley and this did not undermine familial hierarchies. They did not do so, however, in Coats. Therein the conditions identified by Lee and Hudson were manifest. MrsGQ, a Coats employee remembered, 'if you got married you left or you were dismissed'.[104]

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100 Interview with author, MrsGS, born 1885 Pollockshields, Glasgow.
101 Ibid.
102 E. Gordon, 'Work and Collective Action : Dundee Jute Workers 1870-1914', *Journal of Social History*, 21, 1987, pp.28-29 & p.32.
103 P. Hudson, and W.R.Lee, [eds.], 'Introduction', *Women's Work and the family economy*, p. 25.
104 Interview with author, MrsGS, born 1885 Pollockshields, Glasgow.

In Coats a prime factor underpinned paternalism in the firm was the relative youth of the female work-force, made worse by the lack of support they received from the male-dominated labour movement in the region. This ensured that it was difficult for Paisley's female work-force to formally express an awareness of their exploitative working conditions,[105] which might have contributed to a greater consciousness of class membership. This is not to suggest that every worker experienced these conditions in the same way. *Forward* reported that, during periods of industrial action female operatives in Paisley were more likely to financially assist those on strike than their male counter-parts.[106] Political activity and class awareness can take many forms. Similarly, employers strategies, given the relatively larger percentage of married women in employment in this locality, ultimately varied not only in by locality, but from industry to industry and even from firm to firm. This obviously had an impact on women's work experiences.

Paternalism was not the preferred managerial strategy of Paisley's Underwood Mill. Preferring weaving to munitions, Mary Neil returned to the Underwood Weaving Mill where she had taken employment in 1910. She worked a twelve hour day, operating one large loom and sometimes three to four small looms. There was no canteen and the toilets were just a board across a pit with running water underneath. Jessie Henderson did not take up employment with this mill until 1937. She too catalogued the poor conditions, particularly the 'wooden board' which acted as a toilet and the rats workers had to contend with. Alie Wright worked for the same mill, initially as a warehouse girl before moving on to the wages and despatch department. She recalled that if the weavers had a bad run of cloth their wages were cut, but they could get an advance on the next run. If they had too many bad runs and their work was behind they could get no more advances. Jessie McGregor did not enter the Underwood Mill until 1939. She worked five and a half days a week as a weaver's helper and received seven shillings a week.[107] Many textile firms during the inter-war period exchanged

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105 C.M.M. Macdonald, *The Radical Thread*, pp.135-138.

106 *Forward*, 18th July 1929.

107 Old Paisley Society Transcripts, Interviews with : Mary Neil, born 1898 Paisley, Renfrewshire ; Alie Wright, born 1919 Paisley, Renfrewshire and Jessie McGregor, born 1926 Paisley, Renfrewshire.

quality cloth for cheaper products to reduce running costs as a substitute, along with cheap labour and intensification, to capital investment. With its appalling conditions and, where an almost archaic fine system prevailed, it is possible that mills like this acted as the equivalent to the occupations undertaken by married women in the informal economy in other areas of Clydeside. Here many married women may have found employment because it is possible that younger women preferred, and had the opportunity, to seek better working conditions in company's like Coats. Married women's choices were more restricted. Paisley had the greatest number of women, single and married, recorded as gainfully employed between the wars and in 1921 almost half of all working women in this region were employed in textiles or textile related industries.[108]

While employment may have been relatively easier to secure in Paisley, work conditions were deteriorating along with wage levels in many of the mills. In Smith Brothers of Paisley, to maintain the company's 'competitiveness', wages were reduced and production speeded up.[109] Women's experiences of a particular industry, within a region, and even within a single company, could be very different. MrsPA recalled the situation in Paisley's shirt factory.

> Well the shirt factory was always coming out on strike. They were oot striking for piece work cause they could - the girls at the machine could run the shirts up quicker than the wimmen that did it by hand and they wanted piece-work ye see, because ah think they got 9d a shirt or something like that. But them that was only sewing on buttons, piece-work wasnea any good tae them, cause they couldnae sew enough buttons. Strikes wurnae, there wasnae a great lot of strikes. Strikes were just becoming fashionable then. They would say, 'Oh we're going oot on strike'. And of course ah don't know whether it was a company that owned it or not - miybe that had a lot to do with it. [110]

Like the male dominated heavy industries on the Clyde, and the economy in general, many female textile workers, suffered the effects of over-concentration and the re-emergence of foreign competition and responded to it in a variety of ways. In the east end of Glasgow,

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108 Census for Scotland 1921.
109 *Forward*, 31st January 1920.
110 Interview with author, MrsPA, born 1914 Paisley, Renfrewshire.

one female worker, a trade union member who thought it best to remain anonymous, detailed how piece rates were cut initially by 10% to speed up work and, when the workers increased productivity to try and maintain wage levels, their incomes were further decreased by 15%.[111] Ms GA recalled the piece-rate system in Templeton's Carpet Factory in Glasgow, 'Ah think piece work makes you selfish. It makes you greedy and sometimes your only tearing the life out of yourself'.[112] Mrs GC felt that, 'ye'd tae knock yer pan oot tae make a pound'. [113] Experiences of the piece rate system, however, could be very different. Mrs GM, a skilled lace maker, recalled how she earned more than her father.[114] Still, many women, were well aware that they were being exploited even if there was little they could practically do to overcome such exploitation. Ms GA recalled, ' the rotten bit about it was sometimes, see if your on piece you're goin' at it and you actually work yourself out a job. It doesnae matter where you work if you're on piece rates you've got to work dash hard'.[115] Of more consequence, working-class women, as will be shown, responded to the challenges of modern capitalism. This was often contrary to the behaviour of their male counter-parts who depended on trade unions to act as buffers, and who frequently displayed signs of occupational 'rehabilitation', those males whom, Savage and Miles argue displayed a 'sharpened class consciousness'.[116] MrGH was asked,

> Q : If you had a problem at work how did you deal with it?
> A : Ye jist hid tae deal with it? Ye'd nae option.
> Q : So can you tell me what the conditions were like?
> A : Oh conditions - pretty bad at that time : nothing but repairs and everything at that time. Oh it was pretty bad at that time. It depended on the foreman. Some of them were pretty bad and ye jist spoke back to them and you got yer books right away. Aye it was hard at that time.[117]

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111 *Forward*, 21st June 1919.
112 Interview with author, Ms GA, born 1908 Dennistoun, Glasgow.
113 Interview with author, Mrs GJ, born 1917 Cowcaddens, Glasgow.
114 interview with author, MrsGN, born 1909 Bridgeton, Glasgow.
115 Interview with author, MsGA, born 1908 Dennistoun, Glasgow.
116 M. Savage and A. Miles, [eds.], *The Remaking of the British Working-class*, pp.21-40.
117 Interview with author, MrGH, born 1901 Govan, Glasgow.

Mr.GE responded to the question,

> Q : What were the bosses like?
> A : Uch well the bosses at that time were bosses, but they had to make money and they made sure they got it, ye know it came oot o' your hide.
> Q : What were the foremen like?
> A : What they're always like - boots. Not all of them, but there was a very faint number o' wans that were really human. And then of course, you took the gaffer in to the pub at night and put up a drink for him. By the time you got that, your as well - you had very little money left.[118]

MrGD maintained :

> Ye hud tae be very careful what ye would say tae them in the place. Ye couldnae gie up cheek tae yer foreman or that or anything like that. See likes a noo if a man gave up cheek tae his foreman, ye'd get the sack and the workmen would be out on strike, but not then, not at that time. If you gave up cheek or that ye'd tae get yer jacket on. Oh you had tae be very careful.[119]

Mr CA noted the effects, 'the Queen Mary hid tae be built outside. Well it wus a very large ship and there wusnae a protection fur the workers - wet days n' that. In those days ye hud tae continue gettin' the job done rain, hail or snow for the sake of the firm and yerself'. [120] McKinlay and Hampton also highlight an apparent 'rehabilitation' of male workers, whom, it seems, experienced a loss of traditional practices and work autonomy, reflected in their acceptance of dangerous conditions in the work-place.[121] The *Glasgow Herald* in 1930 reported on the findings of the Standing Committee of the House of Commons : evidently extreme fatigue from over-work amongst drivers was worse in Scotland than England.[122] Perhaps this 'rehabilitation' was partly linked to men's perceptions of themselves as the family breadwinner. Being the breadwinner may have resulted in a heightened sense of responsibility and this might have moderated the potential for militancy, especially when militants were being victimised by employers, made unemployed. This could also apply to

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118 Interview with author, MrGE, born 1908 Partick, Glasgow.
119 Interview with author, MrGD, born 1900 Bridgeton, Glasgow.
120 Interview with author, Mr.CA, born 1920 Clydebank, Dumbartonshire.
121 A. McKinlay and A. Hampton, 'Making Ships Making Men' *Oral History*, 1991, pp.24-25.
122 *Glasgow Herald*, 4th April 1930. See also interview with author, MrGM, born 1900, Townhead, Glasgow. MrGM was a long distance driver between the wars and he catalogues the long gruelling hours worked.

women on whom the family unit was dependant. The secondary status generally applied to women's work, and the perception that their work was temporary until marriage, where upon they would embrace an identity as dependant wife and mother, however, could have contributed to a lesser degree of rehabilitation, as could the lack of promotional prospects which might have tied women to a ladder of opportunity. Thus women may have had a greater opportunity to reject the discourses which identified them as docile and which attempted to moderate their awareness of their exploitation. Women responded to their exploitative work environment, even in those occupations not noted for their capacity to politicise women in any form. Mrs GG recalled,

> Ah used tae think that ah got such an awful lot of work, ye know. This was just my idea as an office girl. The rain would be pelting down and the secretary would say, 'Just go out and get me some thing for ma lunch'. What I did, ah used tae go up to the toilet and have a good swear and come back out again quite relieved. . . [123]

Strategies and choices in employment varied. There were women who were not adverse to sabotage. MrsGRA remembered how she used to, 'muck up the orders and that sort of thing, and order things they didnae order and wurnae expected tae order and we sent them'. [124] Other women resorted to soldiering. 'They would watch him coming in and there'd be somebody watching for when he'd come out again. They were all tools down when he went to the toilet.' [125] And there was solidarity. Ms.GA not only risked her employment, but she diminished the rewards of her own labour in an attempt to safeguard the employment of a fellow worker, a Communist Party activist, who spent a great deal of her working day trying to convert co-employees. MsGA, it might be added disagreed with her colleagues political views. None the less she maintained that, 'she was so often away fae her machine and we wur expected to do a certain amount. Ah always knew ma rota and everything and stupid enough

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[123] Interview with author, Mrs GG, born 1916 Townhead, Glasgow.
[124] Interview with author, MrsGRA, born 1919 Greenock, Renfrewshire.
[125] Interview with author, Mrs GK, born 1907 Anniesland, Glasgow.

ah would go and do a lot of work for her'. [126] Women also challenged attempts by employers to subordinate them. MrsGM remembered,

> Ah started ah think wi' 8s a week and then went up to 12s at 14, but at the time ah finished ma time ah'd only £1.30. So the boss took a notion that he wouldnae give me that extra 4s after serving ma time. Ah went tae another printing firm during ma dinner hour, but the boss that ah was working fur, he had shares in that firm so he came in, in the afternoon and he says tae me, 'Ah heard,' he says, ' you wur at another firm.' Ah says, 'Yes so ah was fur that 4s extra in the week.' He says, ' Well I'm sacking you at the end of the week.' Ah says, Right you can sack me.' Ah was in lodgings and if ah'd lost that £1.30, ah was only having 15s a week off the Labour Exchange. So on the Friday night just before we finished work he came up and he says tae me, 'Ah'm sacking ye.' Ah says 'Ah'm taking the sack because ah'm never gonnae break anybody's wages. Ah'll live on nothing rather than let you away wi' it.' Ah didnae get the sack, ah got ma 4s a week. [127]

There was indirect confrontation. Mrs GH was a machinist. She too recalled being at the forefront of quasi-scientific management. She remembered,

> He was one of these rascals. He was a bugger to put it simple for output. You can imagine that. Well ah was singing from morning till night. Now by this time the firm was increasing and increasing, so they were opening a small factory. Mr Hamilton was a great one for getting slogans and putting them against the wall to help output. So this day him and I passed one another and just the usual he says, ' You'll have to stop your singing.' And under ma breath am saying to him, 'Am bloody sure ah don't.' Ah couldnae stop singing. [128]

Conflict against the introduction of quasi-Taylorist management and intensification was not always indirect.

> Q : Were you ever involved in a dispute of any kind . . . ?
> A : Yes well ah did. They put a, see the toilets were on the same department and the men's toilet was next door to the women's, so they put one o' the men in charge. If we went to the toilet he took the time we went tae the toilet and ah objected tae this and ah hud an argument wae him and ah went tae the boss. Ah said ah wasnae letting him take whit time ah went tae the toilet. So it was passed over, but that's whit they

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[126] Interview with author, MsGA, born 1908 Dennistoun, Glasgow.
[127] Interview with author, MrsGM, born 1911 Springburn, Glasgow.
[128] Interview with author, Mrs GH, born 1900 Kinning Park, Glasgow.

did. They wanted him tae take wur time in the morning going in - take it down in a sheet, when we went in, and ah said, am no' huvin' that either. [129]

Q : Was there any other ways that the boss would encourage you to work harder?
A : Oh just when at the time corks were just coming in and they were trying to bottle quicker and ah said to maself why are these bottles coming. Well ma father wis wan for bigger wages and that and aw the rest o' it and ah said the bottles were cracked and there were mare cuts than anythin' else. So ah spent ma day up in the Royal Infirmary wi' three people getting stitches. So this wan came the next day and they said, 'Speed the machine.' And ah said, 'If ye speed up the machine yer goinae huv mare cut fingers'. Ah said, 'Ah spent three hours in the Royal Infirmary. Ah'm no' here tae dae that. You'll need tae get a nurse in. So anyway they just got the quality control down to --- That's what they started.[130]

Women's responses to their working environment may have varied immensely, but they were not usually a reflection of their employers' discourses which determined that the ideal female employee was passive and docile and politically apathetic. Women frequently rejected the characterisation designed to ensure their manageability and political apathy. Yet, it was not merely the world view of employers that women workers on the Clyde had to contend with. Many trade unions and trade unionists contributed to this characterisation of the female worker.

Resistance and peripheralisation : women, trade unions and the 1926 General Strike, a case study

Women's rejection of their employers' idealisation of their work culture and work identities and trade union attitudes towards women workers are manifest in women's experiences of the 1926 General Strike. The strike demonstrates that women were indeed neglected as a political constituency by the Clydeside labour movement, but that they were more than capable of resisting exploitative work conditions. The discourses of employers, trade unions and their male counterparts is equally evident as are women's rejections of these.

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[129] Interview with author, Mrs GJ, born 1917 Cowcaddens, Glasgow.
[130] Interview with author, Mrs GC, born 1910 Bridgeton, Glasgow.

There has developed an extensive historiography regarding the 1926 'General Strike' in Britain, although Scotland has been ill-served.[131] This stands in no comparison to the invisibility of women's experience of the strike or its impact on their political identity. What makes this particularly notable in areas such as Clydeside is the acknowledgement that women actively participated in industrial action and formal and informal political activity leading up to the General Strike. The dispute has persistently been perceived and portrayed as a male strike. Notably it has been implied that many of the unions involved predominantly represented men and male sex-typed occupations. This is true of the most significant of these unions, the Miners' Federation of Great Britain. The miners' union and its members were at the forefront of the 1926 strike. The industrial action was taken principally as a result of sympathy for the miners whose wages and conditions had been threatened. There was also a realisation that in turn this might adversely affect the wages and working conditions of all workers. Apparently this created an unprecedented solidarity among workers. The same is not true of their leadership. The hierarchy of the TUC had never intended that a general strike would occur. Its potential to occur was used as a threat in a bargaining process to safeguard the miners, and workers in general, from the imposition of longer hours and lower pay. Unlike the government, therefore, the TUC failed to make preparations for the strike and sought to diffuse the situation. The end result of this situation was a great deal of confusion, particularly over which workers were to be called out on strike and this confusion affected both male and female workers. It was a situation exacerbated by the leadership's response to the government's propaganda, which, throughout the nine days of the strike insisted that this action was political as opposed to industrial in an attempt to undermine the dispute. This propaganda was forcefully refuted by the TUC. To avert conflict or the potential that the strike might become a political issue and to diffuse the government's propaganda, the TUC chose its strike force from unions who would follow orders and this did not include many of the

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[131] See for example, K. Laybourn, *Britain on the breadline*, especially pp.115-123, K. Laybourn The General Strike : day by day, Sutton, 1999 ; M. Morris, *The General Strike*, London, 1976, and G.A. Phillips, *The General Strike : the politics of industrial conflict*, London, 1976. For Scotland see, I. McDougall, 'Some Aspects of the General Strike in Scotland', I. McDougall, [ed.], *Essays in Scottish Labour History*, pp.170-206.

perceived more radical unions in industries like shipbuilding and metal works - male dominated unions. The TUC leadership also actively sought ways to call off the strike. After nine days they were presented with their first opportunity. Not only did they take this opportunity, but they did so without securing any gains or assurances for the workers involved. This resulted in the victimisation of many of the workers who had been involved in the strike, especially from the print and railway industries, whilst the miners were left to fight alone, suffering great hardship before finally capitulating to an employers' counter-attack. There was a great deal of disgust and disillusionment amongst workers directed at the trade-union leadership, as well as a shift in focus from the industrial to the political sphere as a means of effecting change. All of this, it seems, largely by-passed working and working-class women.

The strike and its consequences ensured that great sympathy and attention was generated towards the miners and it is their experiences which form the primary focus of much historiography relating to this strike. The experiences of workers in transport and the print trades have also been analysed resulting in the perception that this was a strike in which male workers supported their brothers in the mining industry. To some extent this is true. Yet the strike directly and indirectly involved female workers from a wide diversity of jobs, in part owing to 'the quite inadequate plans' of the TUC. [132] Confusion, as noted, reigned and workers from all types of industries were called out.

The railway industry and some areas of the print trade were dominated by male workers, as mining was. As late as 1930 the Home Office complained that there had been a decrease in women's employment in printing. They went on to argue that this was due to the actions of the related trade unions.[133] Male-dominated trade unions did inhibit women's employment opportunities, and some of the unions involved in the strike were male dominated, but a substantial number of working-class women were involved in the 1926 General Strike, in the community and in the work-place. Despite this, the activities of women from the working

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[132] E. Bevin, as quoted in, A. Tuckett, *The Scottish Carter,* p.173.
[133] *Glasgow Herald*, 11th March 1930.

classes during the 1926 'General Strike', where they have been depicted at all, have been portrayed as fundamentally supportive. The Glasgow Trades Council commended the No More War Movement for their provision of facilities to foster recreational amenities for strikers. They then went on to suggest that other women's groups, the Women's Co-operative Guild and the Women's Sections of the Labour Party in particular, should do likewise. These groups were extremely accommodating.[134] The Central Committee of the Women's Co-operative Guild recognised the need 'for cohesion among the working-class'. As 'leaders in the guild', they felt that they, 'must support the trade union leaders in their efforts and give to the wives of the workers every assistance', and they stressed that, 'all must make sacrifices in the fight'.[135] Yet, such assistance has been afforded scant attention. It would seem that few historians agree with Marion Phillips that, 'Women were deeply involved [in the General Strike]. The storm centre was the mining industry ; there, women were deeply involved as mothers, wives, sisters ; on them a heavy burden fell ; their courage and endurance were constantly behind their men'.[136] Nor has there been much acknowledgement of, the 'wonderful effort', the 'magnificent display of solidarity backed up by women folk', or the parcels of food and clothing sent to assist the families of miners before and after the strike.[137]

McLean is one historian who does highlight the extent and effectiveness of the support from women in Lanarkshire during the strike. He notes that it was they who set up soup kitchens in wash-houses and 'engendered and maintained a spirit of comradeship'. The same women played a prominent role during the miners subsequent lock-out.[138] The neighbourhoods, where kin and community networks continued to thrive on Clydeside, were

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134 MLG/97133/12, Glasgow Trades and Labour Council, Misc.Files and Papers [Strike] 1926, [Henceforth GTLC Misc. Files], Report of the Meeting called by the Trades Council, 5th May 1926.

135 GRA/CWS1/39/8, Scottish Co-operative Women's Guild [Henceforth SCWG], Central Council Minutes 1925 -1930, May 5th 1926.

136 M. Phillips, *The Story of the Women's Committee for the Relief of Miner's Wives and Children, The Labour Publishing Company*, Great Britain, 1927, p.IX.

137 CWS1/39/2.7, SCWG, 35th Annual Report and Statement for the year ending March 1927, [Henceforth SCWG A/R] President's Address, pp.9-10.

138 J.McLean, 'The 1926 Strike in Lanarkshire', *Our History*, CPGB Publication, Spring.1978, p.11.

well-suited to provide this form of support. MrsPA's recollections, however, demonstrate that this involved a great deal of sacrifice for women.

> It was the wives, the mothers that suffered most because they'd tae do without tae give tae their bairns, they'd tae do withoot tae give tae their men. Men took it for granted that women would go short tae give tae them. The wimmen had tae cut up their petticoats tae make pinnies fur their bairns many's a time, because there was nothing else tae get them. Ah mean a mother maybe had tae make a cold pot of porridge and give them it without milk because she hudnae any milk. Ah remember ah sat in the house many a time and ah hadnae a penny tae put in the gas. Ah couldnae put the light on. Ah'd tae keep the penny for the gas in the morning tae make porridge and ah used tae say, ' What's the point in it? What are we getting out of it?' ' Oh, it's goinae make a new world'. But ah sat many a night -ah dare say dozens of women had the same thing. Ah mean ah suppose that was just a way of life. We just took it for granted. Ah mean when ah look back women were very silly in they days. They just took everything as it came. [139]

Women's informal activity during the strike and their sacrifices, because it did not fall within male defined terms of reference, have been neglected, taken for granted and negated not merely to a secondary significance, but virtually disregarded. The informal contribution of women should not be ignored as it involved immense sacrifice on the part of women both in terms of time, energy and material privation and as such this 'politics of everyday life', not only merged with formal political activity in the form of 'men's struggles', but it also held the capacity to politicise women. Women often overlooked their own needs to feed their families in times of economic hardship, and it is debatable how far the men who were on strike, be that sons or husbands, could have prolonged industrial action without the positive input of these financial managers or their tacit support for the industrial action.

Whilst not intending to contribute to the peripheralisation of women's role in the community, I intend to demonstrate that this supportive role was only part of the overall picture of Clydeside women's activities during the strike. Sources, however, are extremely scarce. In itself, this has much to do with the perceptions of the industrial wing of the labour movement, reflected in the sources and subsequently the historiography of the strike, impressions which

139 Interview with author, Mrs PA, born 1914 Paisley, Renfrewshire. Women's networks will be the focus of chapter four.

categorised women as insignificant and unresponsive to the class struggle, but it is also an over-sight of male-centred history.

Women were not adverse to militancy or trade unionism. By contrast, they were neglected by trade unions on Clydeside. Even when women were admitted to trade unions they were generally assigned to secondary status by design. None the less by 1925 there were 78,470 female trade union members in Scotland, 15,487 in Glasgow.[140] Although many of these women were in general unions, and as such, mixed sex unions, Miss Mewhort of the Edinburgh Trades Council, felt the need to voice her concern that women had a natural distrust of male protection. Miss Brand of the National Union of Clerks, noted how 'some mixed unions neglected women'.[141] William Leonard, a Marxist who had tutored in John Maclean's economic classes, and who was Scottish Secretary of the Furnishing Trades went further, stating that in his experience women were more antagonistic to trade unions when they worked alongside men.[142] Leonard, however, was also the official who, in 1931 proposed that the STUC should discuss, 'whether in the present condition of industry and widespread unemployment, the unions should adopt any policy under which preference would be given to women workers who were solely dependant on their own earnings'.[143] In fact, the way in which prominent trade union activists articulated their perception of the benefits of trade unions for women was unlikely to imbue confidence from female trade unionists or prospective female members. In 1932 Ernest Bevin, then General Secretary of the Transport and General Workers' Union, addressed the readership of *Labour Women*. He stated :

> To nobody do the women owe more for their advancement and for the maintenance of standards of living, than to the Trade Union and Labour Movement. In every fight and dispute which the Movement has been engaged, our thoughts have always been of the home. It is not merely to advance the position of men that the Trade Union

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[140] STUC Annual Reports, 1920-1925, [Henceforth STUC/AR], 28th Annual Report 1925, Report on the Extent and Structure of Trade Union Movement in Scotland, pp.33-34.

[141] STUC/AR 1920-1925, 23rd Annual Report 1920, p.114 and STUC A/R 1926-1930, 31st Annual Report, p.83. respectively.

[142] STUC AR 1926-1930, 31st Annual Report 1928, Report of the Proceedings of the 2nd Annual Conference STUC Organisation of Women Committee, p.63.

[143] STUC Organisation of Women Committee Minutes, [Henceforth OWC Mins], Agenda for Secretary's Report, January 12th 1931.

> Movement defends wage standards ; it is in order that homes may be brighter ; that the task of the women may be made easier.[144]

These attitudes affected even the most prominent women of the labour movement. During the 1926 General Strike, women played no formal role on the Glasgow Strike Committee. All twenty-three officials were men.[145] This in itself is contentious. What is particularly notable is the multiplicity of able women on the executive of the Glasgow Trades Council who worked alongside Peter Kerrigan the co-ordinator of the Glasgow Strike Committee. In 1926, the executive of the Glasgow Trades Council consisted of six men and six women.[146] The women on the executive included Miss Black, Miss Pettigrew, Mrs Alcook, Mrs Auld, Mrs Laird and Mrs Ross. These women, and in particular Mrs Laird, Mrs Auld and Miss Pettigrew, were active in the Labour Party. They were, or had been, trade union activists and they had worked on a number of Trade Council committees investigating a wide gambit of issues from unemployment to housing. In fact, in 1909, Miss Pettigrew became the first female member of Trades Council. She was also an active ILP platform speaker. She married George Hardie, brother-in-law of Keir Hardie, and 'became known throughout Scotland as part of a band of pioneers'. She maintained her commitment to Labour politics after her marriage. She stood, and successfully won the seat of Springburn, Glasgow, after the death of the sitting candidate, her husband, George Hardie. Likewise, Mrs Auld was President of the Glasgow Labour Advisory Council and went on to become vice-president of the Scottish Council of the Labour Party.[147] More significantly, Mrs Laird was an active member of the Glasgow Trades Council, President of the Glasgow Women's Housing Association, and a member of the Glasgow Women's Labour League.[148] The Women's Labour League had had strong links with the Federation of Women Workers and other trade unions. At the 1915 Labour Conference it was noted that the Govanhill branch of the Glasgow Labour Women's League had collected

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144 *Labour Women*, 15th January 1932, pp. 8-9.
145 MLG/97133/6, Glasgow Trades and labour Council Executive Minutes [Henceforth GTLC Mins.] 1925-1927, May 3rd 1926.
146 GTLC Mins. 1925-1927, 4th, 11th, 16th and 19th February 1926.
147 See, *Forward*, 8th October 1921, *Labour Women*, July 1935, p.48 and W.W. Knox, *Scottish Labour Leaders, 1918-1939*, Edinburgh, 1984, p.51 & pp.136-7.
148 *Forward*, 9th and16th January 1915.

£80 for Kilbirnie women on strike and had 'played a prominent role in getting the shirtmakers and the women netmakers to join the Federation of Women Workers'. Furthermore, they had 'nursed the Glasgow branch of the Domestic Workers Union into vigorous and healthy organisation'.[149] Given this, inexperience can be ruled out as a factor in the exclusion of these women.

By contrast, the participation of rank-and-file women in the General Strike was arguably significant. As sources detailing women's activity during the strike are profoundly limited, the 1921 and 1931 census will be used to give some indication of the potential number of women involved in the industrial action. There are problems with using this source and not merely the lapse in time between the strike and the each census or the assumption that being employed in a specific field ensured that women would participate in strike activity. A major problem with the 1931 census is that it enumerates those 'out of work' where they indicated the occupation in which they had been 'gainfully' employed and expected to be again employed. Furthermore, both documents fail to register the mass of women who would have been employed in a domestic capacity on the trains, trams and buses as well as the print shops, many of whom were casual labour, including the women who, 'were cleaning tramcars oot tae aw hours in the morning'.[150] As well as these women, in 1931 there were 1,301 women recorded as working in the transport industries in Lanarkshire, 464 in Dumbartonshire, 770 in Renfrewshire and 2,880 in Glasgow. This is not to suggest that every one of these 5,421 women employed by the transport industry was involved in the General Strike, but many would have been. In Glasgow there were 310 women registered as employed on the Permanent Way, mainly as tram conductresses.[151] The Communist Party were very influential in the Municipal Employers Association, the trade union which covered these workers and this union, apparently supported the unionisation of women.[152] Moreover, had it not been for the

149 *Forward*, 31st January 1915.
150 Interview with author MrGE, born 1908 Partick, Glasgow. There was a number of casual workers employed in prints works in Glasgow. MLG/G331-881R/SSGLA, Printing and Kindred Trades Federation, Glasgow Branch Manuscript Minutes Book, October 1915-1943, 18th June 1925.
151 Census for Scotland 1931.
152 Interview with author, MrGA born 1905 Gorbals, Glasgow.

participation of students and members of the government's Organisation for the Maintenance of Supplies, the trams in Glasgow might have came to a stand-still. As it was, it was reported that a service of only 200 out of over a thousand trams usually running, was maintained.[153] The tram service was only one area of transport which employed women. There were also 760 women employed in the railway industry in Glasgow.[154] From 1915 the National Union of Railwaymen had accepted women as members of the unions. The rail strike was solid on Clydeside. Hence numerous women who worked in the transport services throughout Clydeside could have been directly involved in the strike. In addition there were 361 female domestic servants employed formally by the railway industry in Glasgow by 1921, albeit mainly in hotels.[155]

There were a reported 55,000 Railway Clerks out in Britain during the strike.[156] The Railway Clerks Association [RCA] was the strongest clerical union in Britain. Not only was it an all-grades union, but it accepted female members on equal terms with male members. By 1920 this union had secured, in conjunction with other bonuses, a wage of 30s per week for women over eighteen years of age, with incremental rises up to 60s.[157] Scotland had 10,000 railway clerical and supervisory workers in 1921. At this point in time, the Glasgow Southern Branch of the RCA had 792 members. It maintained that membership up to and beyond the 1926 strike.[158] Hamilton, however, indicates that, whilst the RCA was relatively progressive, only 6,350 of the 57,000 British members in 1939 were women. Yet, the Glasgow Southern Branch of the RCA frequently included at least two women amongst its collectors and auditors between 1921-1936 and this generally indicated a substantial number of female members.[159] Furthermore, women from this branch of the RCA were being appointed as trade union

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153 GTLC Misc. Files 1926, *Scottish Worker*, May, 10th 1926.
154 Census for Scotland 1931.
155 Census for Scotland 1921 and 1931.
156 GTLC Misc. Files, 1926, *Strike Bulletin*, May 7th 1926.
157 M. Hamilton, *Trade Unionism for Women*, pp.142-143.
158 Ibid. and MLG/3724.70RAI, Railway Clerks Association, [Henceforth RCA], Glasgow Southern Branch Manuscript Minute Books, 1920-1965, Book1, 2nd February and 9th March 1921 and Book 4, 4th May 1926. There were 752 members in May 1926.
159 RCA, Glasgow Southern Branch Manuscript Minute Books, 1920-1965, Books 1- 4.

delegates.[160] When women infiltrated the hierarchy of their unions this also usually denoted a significant number of female members. So too did this branch's report of a 'mass meeting' of women clerks, and significantly, in 1925, its acceptance of a proposal to set up a separate branch for its female members if the other Glasgow branches followed suit.[161]

The RCA and the NUR played 'particularly prominent roles throughout the nine days of the strike' on Clydeside. In the Greenock region only three out of one hundred black-legged the strike, whilst all 'men and women' in printing and its kindred trades came out'.[162] Furthermore, railwaymen in Scotland had difficulty getting paid because the clerks were on strike.[163] Wages clerks were frequently women. It has also been pointed out that many of the workers on strike were not trade-union members, but rather workers who willingly came out to support the industrial action or who were compelled to cease work because essential employees were on strike. Thus trade-union membership is not an indication of the number of women who participated in the General Strike.

In the mining industry women's formal participation in the strike would have been limited. 166 Glaswegian women, 50 women from Dumbartonshire and 765 women from Lanarkshire worked in the coal industry in 1921.[164] To these may be added the female clerks, domestic servants and dealers in coal who would have been affected directly and indirectly by the strike.

The most significant contribution of Clydeside women would have come from the printing industry. In some print-related jobs female employees out-numbered men three to one.[165] The historiography, however, tends to suggest that the print workers engaged in the strike were primarily male. In 1931, there were 9,163 women occupied in paper, printing, and publishing

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160 I would like to thank Audrey Canning of the William Gallacher Memorial Library for this information. See also, STUC AR 1926-1930, 33rd Annual Report, 1930, pp.77-78.

161 RCA, Glasgow Southern Branch Manuscript Minute Books 1920-1968, Book 4, 1st December 1926 and Book 2, 1st October 1925 to 1st January 1926 respectively.

162 GTLC Misc. Files, 1926, *Scottish Worker*, 10th May 1926. For Lanarkshire, see, J.McLean, 'The 1926 Strike in Lanarkshire', p.10.

163 GTLC Misc. Files, 1926, *Official Bulletin of the Partick Area Strike*, 11th May 1926.

164 Census for Scotland 1921.

165 See, MLG/331.88155NAT, National Union of Print, Bookbinders and Paper Workers, Scottish District Council Minutes, 19th March 1936.

in Strathclyde.[166] Glasgow had 7,647 women registered in 1931 as working in either in printing or a kindred trade ; Lanarkshire 1,073.[167] Many jobs in the printing and paper trades were dominated by women. The Glasgow Branch of the National Union of Print, Bookbinding and Paper Workers had 605 female members and 193 male members in 1936.[168] Another indication of the strength in numbers of female workers, and women's trade union membership was the appointment of women as delegates. In 1925, at a special meeting called by the Scottish Printing and Kindred Trades Federation, four women were appointed as delegates to represent the interests of female paper workers and bookbinders.[169] Workers from printing and its kindred trades were amongst the first to be called out in 1926. It was not merely printers who were on strike. Mrs GF was a bookbinder in the Mitchell Library. She remembered being called out in 1926.[170] Furthermore, the Glasgow Strike Committee refused J. Laird and Sons permission to continue printing paper bags.[171] Caldwell's Paper Mill was also called out.[172] Thus women workers from printing and its kindred trades directly participated in the General Strike. In fact, because of the inclusion of kindred trades, there may have been more women than men on strike from this particular trade. In 1931 of the 4,543 paper, cardboard workers and bookbinders in Glasgow, 3,423 were women.[173]

Nevertheless, many respondents, in line with the perceptions promoted by activists, subsequently reflected in the historiography of the General Strike, perceived this industrial action as a male preserve. By contrast MrGA, a tram worker, maintained when asked if women were involved in the General Strike, 'Oh aye there was a lot a women workers, ye know involved in various jobs'. [174] In Greenock MrGRA was a student and a strike breaker

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166 C. Lee, *British Regional Employment Statistics.*
167 Census for Scotland 1931. The Glasgow figures for 1921 are 6749 females and 6880 males, Census for Scotland 1921.
168 National Union of Print, Bookbinding and Paper Workers, Glasgow Minutes, 19th March 1936.
169 Printing and Kindred Trades Federation, Scottish District Council Minutes, 17th December 1925.
170 Interview with author, Mrs GF, born 1911 Anderson, Glasgow.
171 GTLC Misc. Files, 1926, Minutes of the Meeting of Building Groups, 7th May 1926. Of Glasgow's 4543 paper and cardboard workers and bookbinders in 1921, 1120 were men, 3423 women, Census for Scotland 1921.
172 GTLC Misc. Files, 1926, Report of the Meeting called by the Trades Council, 5th May 1926.
173 Census for Scotland 1931.
174 Interview with author, MrGA, born 1905 Gorbals, Glasgow.

during the strike. He too was asked of women's involvement and responded, 'Aye it was really everybody, whole tradesmen of all descriptions and all occupations'. [175] Other women were indirectly drawn into actual involvement. Mrs GC, who worked for Camp's Coffee Work in Bridgeton, Glasgow recalled :

> Ah mind o' that strike as if it was the day. Ah was sixteen and the General Strike was on, so some of them had joined a union on their own and the Labour Party and the ILP was in Bridgeton at the time. It was some of the men had joined it. And they didnae get back intae work . . . See when we opened up again - we hid tae go oun strike because we were aw oun strike. We were oot on the strike There were nae workers tae dae the machines and some o' the men didnae get back in. [176]

Thus many women were not only directly involved in the strike through membership of the unions which were called out, but others were drawn into the industrial action. These ranged from women such as MrsGC, involved in the production of food, through to Partick textile workers.[177] Laybourn, moreover, highlights how, owing to the confusion during this strike textile workers were often called out among the first wave of strikers contrary to 'the limited and haphazard plans which existed'.[178] Textiles, moreover, like many areas of the food and drinks industries on the Clyde, were sex-typed female occupations.

Other women were involved indirectly without a cessation of work. The Glasgow Branch of the Union of Post Office Workers were among workers who not only voted to voluntarily assist strikers financially, but who also threatened to come out in support.[179] There were 1,241 female Post Office workers in Glasgow registered in the 1931 census [180] - many of whom, like the women in print works, transport, textiles and food manufacturing, were made more aware of their class membership because of this strike.

Hence, it would seem that, given the significant number of women employed in transport, printing and its kindred trades in Strathclyde, along with the women indirectly drawn into the

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175 Interview with author, MrGRA, born 1906 Greenock, Renfrewshire.
176 Interview with author, Mrs GC, born 1910 Bridgeton, Glasgow.
177 GTLC Misc. Files, 1926, *Official Strike Bulletin of the Partick Area Strike*, 11th May 1926.
178 K. Laybourn, *Britain on the Breadline*, p. 118.
179 Ibid.
180 Census for Scotland 1931.

1926 General Strike from a wide range of occupations, then a vast number of women participated in this industrial action - action noted for its impact on consciousness of class. Thus the 'routines of women's daily existence' in the community and the workplace involved 'choices, strategies and decisions' which were political. This interrelationship between these different forms of politics, these choices, in turn politicised many women on the Clyde.'[181] It was not unusual for women to choose to reject the characterisations of the female employee as passive, docile and politically apathetic. It was reported that, 'a new form of picketing' had developed in the south side of Glasgow. Govan women wearing red rosettes are standing at the stopping places on the car routes and endeavouring to persuade members of the public not to use the cars'.[182] There were a 'considerable number of girls employed on motor buses' and trams in the west of Scotland, who were trade-union members.[183] Furthermore, in Glasgow and Airdrie working-class women were involved in violent episodes as they tried to ensure the stoppage of transport facilities.[184] Strife occurred in other regions of Clydeside. In Glasgow's east-end rioting and shop-breaking occurred on a relatively large scale. This involved both sexes.[185] As MrsGI remembered, ' Oh it wis terrible. Only ah wis young then, but ah mean it wis terrible. They were fighting in the streets and everything'.[186] MrGD corroborated this and stated, that because of the behaviour and brutality of the police, men and women who might otherwise have refrained from involvement in this 'riotous' behaviour were drawn into the hostility.[187] MrGRA recalled the situation in Greenock.

> Q : Was there much trouble?
> A : Not particularly in Greenock, no, ah don't think so in this area, as ah say things seemed to progress. Ah think they were misled. Ah mean a lot of communists had come into the town and ah think that communist influence affected a lot of the work people, people in the shipyards, sugar houses and Tate and Lyle, these sort of

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181 J. Hannam, 'Women and Politics', J. Purvis, [ed.], *Women's History*, p.218.
182 GTLC Misc. Files, 1926, *Emergency Press Special Edition*, May 12th 1926.
183 STUC AR 1926-1930, 31st Annual Report 1928, Report of Proceedings 2nd Annual Conference of the Organisation of Women Committee, 18th February 1928, p.77.
184 GTLC Misc. Files, 1926, *Scottish Worker*, 10th May 1926. See also, J. McLean, 'The 1926 Strike in Lanarkshire', *Our History*, 1976, p.13.
185 GTLC Misc. Files 1926, *Scottish Worker*, 10th May 1926.
186 Interview with author, MrsGI, born 1907 Dennistoun, Glasgow.
187 Interview with author, MrGD, born 1900 Bridgeton, Glasgow.

> places. All these firms were affected by the - they seemed tae make their way in wae the workers. They caused a lot of disturbance actually.[188]

Many working-class women in Greenock were employed by the sugar refineries. Women not only attended strike meetings, as MrsGF did,[189] they picketed, protested and supported their fellow workers even when they were not directly involved. MrsGZ stated, ' we all stuck by each other then. Everybody stuck by each other'.[190] Yet, regardless of women's formal participation in the strike, the *Scottish Worker* thanked them for their 'sympathetic action', for, 'facing privation and hunger with a smile on their face', and thereby providing 'encouragement to men'. [191]

Despite the evident marginalisation of women in this way, their participation during the General Strike was important. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that in the aftermath of the strike men and women were similarly affected. Relief that the strike was over was common, as was disillusionment, and to some extent the 'rehabilitation of labour' was strengthened. MrsGF believed, 'you got nowhere by striking' and MrsGC felt that, 'we got nothing oot it'. [192] MrsGG stated, 'Uch they felt disgusted, the actual hardship - any money that they had saved, it all disappeared. They had to use up every penny of savings that they had . . . they were poor souls'.[193] MrGH maintained, 'It was terrible. We just had to recover ourselves. Everyone was the same, you know'. [194] MrGE affirmed, 'the workers felt hopeless, pure antipathy. Could you imagine working your soul's guts oot and you wouldnae be able tae dae enough'. [195] And MrGZ stated emphatically,

> It's a wonder we didn't have a revolution. Well you can imagine your father and thousands and thousands of men coming home after fighting the war for five or six years, and they are supposed to be fighting for a land fit for heroes and when they

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188 Interview with author, MrGRA, born 1906 Greenock, Renfrewshire.
189 Interview with author, MrsGF, born 1911 Anderson, Glasgow.
190 Interview with author, MrsGZ, born 1917 Govan, Glasgow.
191 GTLC Misc. Files, 1926, *Scottish Worker*, May 10th 1926.
192 Interview with author, Mrs GC, born 1910 Bridgeton, Glasgow.
193 Interview with author, MrsGG, born 1916 Townhead, Glasgow.
194 Interview with author, MrGH, born 1901 Govan, Glasgow.
195 Interview with author, MrGE, born 1908 Partick Glasgow.

> get back they cannae get a job. It turned thousands into crooks, conmen and you couldn't blame them, not one little bit, they lost all respectability.[196]

MrsGE emphasised that, 'they took it badly, because it was a long, long time idle. It caused an awful lot wea the families, ye know poorer, because o' the strike wae no work'.[197] MrGA concurred. ' You'd nothing to live on, you just had to scourge as much as you could.'[198] Nor was this necessarily an overstatement. For those struggling from week to week to survive without savings, the loss of almost two weeks wages is a 'long long time' without sufficient funds. Many of the women involved did get strike pay but it was of a lesser value than their male counterparts because they paid less in union dues as a consequence to their lower wages. Furthermore, a number of the individuals who supported the strike were not members of trade unions, whilst other workers were compelled to participate because works could not function without essential employees. Many of these workers had no relief.

The victimisation which was experienced by many male workers in the aftermath of the strike affected women too, directly and indirectly. Members of the RCA and the NUR in Lanarkshire were compelled to accept the rigid enforcement of clauses 4 and 5 of the Terms of Agreement. Many lost their jobs, whilst others were demoted. Lifetime victimisation was inflicted via the denial of promotion.[199] Victimisation was not restricted to one occupation or any single trade union as was evident in the dismissal of male workers from the Camp's Coffee factory in Bridgeton. Print workers, many of whom were women, also endured victimisation. Equally important, the wives of those who lost their jobs, or failed to secure promotion, also suffered. Hence, it is probable that the politicising affects of the strike, which McLean suggests can be ascertained by looking at the 1926 municipal election results,[200] pertained to both men and women. Apparently, a number of working-class people on Clydeside did perceive the General Strike as class warfare because the government

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196 Interview with author, MrGZ, born 1915, Cardiff, Wales.
197 Interview with author, MrsGE, born 1907 Gorbals, Glasgow.
198 Interview with author, MrGA, born 1905 Gorbals, Glasgow.
199 J.McLean, 'The 1926 Strike in Lanarkshire', *Our History*, 1976, especially p.13.
200 Ibid., pp.13-16.

appeared to be in collusion with the employer class. MrLA stated of the strike, 'oh that was open war, oh it was a horrible time'.[201] Likewise, there was widespread disillusionment amongst workers towards the leadership of the industrial wing of the movement, as MrGC maintained, ' we felt we'd been sold out'.[202] These factors may well have fused resulting in a swing to the political wing of the labour movement. MrGE certainly believed that this was the case. He stated, 'ah think that's what brought, there wasnae so much labour - voting for Labour at that time. Labour wasnae - they wurnae in the counting with regards to getting into parliament, but after that things were different'. [203] In Lanarkshire, Labour secured four Municipal seats,[204] in Glasgow 21 of the 26 nominated labour movement candidates were successful with the ILP taking the extremely marginal seat of Kinning Park, where religious identity often displaced class awareness.[205]

The failure of the General Strike, however did not necessarily 'rehabilitate labour'. Many respondents were politicised by the strike and believed that direct action on the part of workers had been necessary. MrGE's response to the question, do you think the strike was necessary, although forceful, was not uncommon :

> Yes from the point of view of the proletariat, yes it always is. It's not advocated by people who have come through several strikes because they know its no' so great - they have the forces to close you down every way! Even the police are against you and you're supposed tae support and pay for. The army is even against ye and yer own son's serving in it ; you're own father in the navy, supporting that regime. In other words do we need the system at all or is it a certain class.[206]

However, rehabilitation was equally evident. MrsGG was asked,

> Q : Do you think the strike was necessary?
> A : Not really, no.
> Q : Can I ask you why not?

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201 Interview with author, Mr LA, born 1900 Croy, Lanarkshire.
202 Interview with author, MrGC, born 1909 Townhead, Glasgow.
203 Interview with author, MrGE, born 1908 Partick, Glasgow.
204 J.McLean, 'The 1926 Strike in Lanarkshire', *Our History*, 1976, pp.13-16.
205 *Forward*, 6th November 1926.
206 Interview with author, MrGE born 1908 Partick, Glasgow.

> A : Well what did it achieve, they were penniless and it really was the families that suffered more than anyone.[207]

The failure of the 1926 strike and the subsequent victimisation may have moderated the desire to use the strike as a weapon against employers, but only temporarily. Women were involved in a variety of the principal disputes catalogued by the Ministry of Labour. In May 1931 female textile workers from Paisley and Alexandria were among 1,800 workers participating in strike action. The following month they were followed by Glasgow lace workers who were among 2,200 workers on strike.[208] It is significant to note that these workers were likely to be trade union members whose funds have often been regarded as having been shielded from the depletion which resulted from involvement in the General Strike. It seems that the depletion of trade union funds amongst the unions involved in the General Strike inhibited industrial action for some time after 1926 rather than there being actual rehabilitation. Yet as already noted female textile workers were involved in the strike on Clydeside. Of more consequence, textile workers continued to be at the fore-front of quasi-Taylorist schemes and intensification and this was no doubt a significant influence in their capacity for militancy.

Working-class women's defiance of authority after the supposed 'rehabilitating' effects of the General Strike was not limited to textile works. It included women in occupations noted for their apparently de-radicalising tendencies. MrsGZ worked as a shop assistant. She remembered,

> Ah worked with a girl and she used to give you a row in front of customers and ah was never one for allowing that, and ah used to walk into the back shop and she'd come in after me and bang the door. She said don't you ever walk - and ah said don't you ever talk to me like that in front of customers. Ah just wouldn't take that. Ah mean ah would stand up to God almighty when ah knew ah was right. Ah mean she was all right in her own way but she was one that, ah'm the boss and ah'll let you know ah'm the boss. That just makes ma hackles rise. [210]

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207 Interview with author, MrsGG, born 1916, Townhead Glasgow.
208 HMSO, Ministry of Labour Gazette, Vol.37, No.12, December 1929, Vol.38, No.2, February 1930 and especially, Vol.39, No.5, May and No.7, June 1931. See also, *Forward*, 2nd May 1931 and 27th June 1931 respectively for the two strikes mentioned above.
210 Interview with author, MrsGZ, born 1917 Govan, Glasgow.

Women responded in a variety of ways to modern capitalism and were far from acquiescent. As with men, women were frequently politicised at the point of production and responded to this with direct and indirect action. Despite the fact that such protest existed there were also aspects of women's work which may have ensured that challenges at the point of production were difficult at best, so that the community may indeed have been more a more significant politicising influence especially in terms of the formation of working-class women's awareness of class membership.[211]

Impediments and set-backs : women and political consciousness

Much of work undertaken by working-class women on Clydeside was marked by its scattered or small-scale nature, characterised by close proximity to, and the paternalistic influences of employers. Seemingly, these forces held the capacity to inspire embourgeoisement and to induce apathy. Greenock and Motherwell were economies fundamentally based on heavy industry on a massive scale. In Greenock, women had few occupational choices and this was exacerbated by the decline in textile employment and the sugar refineries between the wars.[212] While more women were working in offices and shops, Greenock's economy continued to revolve significantly around textile mills, docks and sugar refineries, all severely hit by the inter-war depression. The *Glasgow Herald* reported that Greenock had a larger number of able-bodied unemployed in receipt of benefit than any other parish in Scotland and more importantly, the authorities did not think this was influenced by fraudulent claims.[213] Many of these people were women. Greenock had a 'terrific amount of women in the National Unemployed Workers Movement from the local mills and sugar refineries'. [214] For those unable to secure employment in retail or commerce there were few

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[211] M. Savage & A.. Miles, *The Remaking of the British Working-class*, pp.74-88.
[212] See, *Forward*, 13th October 1928.
[213] *Glasgow Herald*, 27th September 1927.
[214] Finlay Hart, as quoted in I.MacDougall, *Voices from the Hunger Marches : personal recollections by Scottish hunger marchers of the 1920s and 1930s*, Edinburgh, 1990, pp.165-173.

alternatives but to seek work as a domestic servant in Greenock's wealthier west-end and in the neighbouring and more affluent Gourock.

Yet the nature of work need not have moderated class awareness or induced apathy. Treble has analysed the Clydeside economy and the effects of regional specialisation with a focus on the militant period of 1911. His argument highlights that, prior to the period of unrest around 1910, two deep recessions and the subsequently high level of unemployment had an affect on the entire community. These conditions facilitated a greater awareness of 'hunger politics'. The depth of awareness, however, was due to the fact that ancillary employment, undertaken by both sexes, was affected by unemployment in the primary sectors, whilst the loss of the 'breadwinner's' income affected the entire family unit. Thus, the insecurity and empathy experienced by working-class people in localities when local economies were adversely affected by the trade cycle was widespread.[215] In regions such as Greenock, therefore, the effects of unemployment in the neighbourhoods could mediate any possible influences which close proximity to employers or paternalism might have induced. Furthermore, the potential for the development of a sense of relative deprivation in occupations such as domestic service may have mitigated the negative influences of this work for class awareness. At the same time, although the female labour-force was increasingly characterised by its close proximity to employers, employment was usually a transient experience and would have had to overcome primary socialisation and the continued intimacy with working-class neighbourhoods as well as the effects of relative deprivation and unrealised aspirations. In such conditions the community would become more significance for the development of women's class awareness than the work-place in the politicising process.

Like Greenock, Motherwell was extremely vulnerable to the effects of the inter-war depression. It was pointed out in *Labour Women* in 1932 that Lanarkshire was 'a black area for unemployment' because 'unemployment in the mining and steel industries' had been 'exceptionally high for years'.[216] Motherwell, and Airdrie for that matter, with their large

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[215] J.H.Treble, ' Unemployment in Glasgow 1903-10', *Scottish Labour History Society Journal*, No.25, 1990, pp.8&12.
[216] *Labour Women*, 15th May 1932, p.63.

numbers of miners, would have felt the impact in the community of the 1926 General Strike extensively. Motherwell was also a region of Clydeside where occupational choices for women were extremely proscribed. Motherwell women were born into an economy dependant on mining, metalwork and engineering with few employment opportunities for females out-with textiles, domestic service, office work and commercial occupations. Furthermore, Lanarkshire, and Motherwell in particular, had the lowest percentage of working women and even young women, potentially a source of cheap labour, fared less favourably than in other regions of Clydeside. As a percentage of all women enumerated, Motherwell also showed the greatest increased number of married women working, suggesting that the severity of unemployment may have compelled married women to seek employment in greater numbers. Yet, mining regions have also been noted for their demonstrations of overt gender discrimination against women in every area of life.[217] The Communist Party activist, Marion Henery felt that Lanarkshire was 'backward and depressing, especially for women'.[218]

Motherwell, and more so Greenock, also had the most visibly thriving Communist Party support between the wars. No doubt this was influenced by the high levels of unemployment in these regions, acting as a catalyst in the growth of working-class awareness. However, in these regions working-class women were relatively excluded from formal political participation, as they apparently were in Paisley. Seemingly, unemployment took primacy over issues of standards of living proper. In Greenock 'the Communist Party dominated the Labour Housing Association, the National Unemployed Workers Movement and the Trades and Labour Council until at least 1925' and there is 'little evidence of housing featuring in social agitation' as it did in Glasgow, a factor in women's political mobilisation in the region. In Greenock, housing issues were 'subordinate to unemployment'.[219] The Communist Party was equally guilty of accepting the prevailing sexual division of labour, but it did involve women in

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217 See for example S. McIntyre, *Little Moscows*, pp.131-142, London, 1980 ; N. Dennis, F. Henriques, and C. Slaughter, [eds.], *Coal Is Our Life An Analysis of a Yorkshire Mining Community*, London, 1971, pp.171-245.

218 Interviews with Joe and Marion Henery, William Gallagher Memorial Library, Glasgow Caledonian University, Tape 7.

219 For Paisley see, C.M.M. Macdonald, *The Radical Thread* and for Greenock see P.G.Clark, 'The Labour Movement And The General Strike', University of Strathclyde, Dissertation, 1986, pp.3&11.

protest against unemployment, as workers and wives. The Communist Party accepted the prevailing sexual division of labour, but failed to mobilise females on issues identified as feminine or to connect the effects of unemployment to their everyday concerns. This may have contributed to the loss of a potential constituency of married women, reflected in the party's inability to secure a victory at national level in either Greenock or Motherwell at this time, regardless of their relative popularity.

It would seem, then, that Glasgow was the region of Clydeside in which politics most openly reflected women's concerns. Glasgow also offered females the widest occupational choices, albeit within strict gender demarcations. Thus, whilst a vast number of women in Glasgow worked in personal service, offices and shops, Glaswegian women also had the greatest opportunity to work alongside men in large units noted for their contribution to greater militancy, in textiles, the making of textile goods, factories, print shops and warehouses. In 1921 of all warehouse workers and packers, 9,028 were men and 6,379 were female.[220] However, vertical and horizontal segregation prevailed throughout the work place, even when women were trade union members. In 1931 in the warehouse and storekeeping industries, there were 5,198 men occupied as warehousemen or storekeepers, 367 women. By contrast there were 4,392 female packers, wrappers and labellers, as opposed to 1,987 men so employed. In printing and its kindred trades a similar situation existed. There were 84 men and 1,080 women employed to make cardboard boxes, whilst 18 females and 1,359 males worked as compositors. Likewise there were 222 men and 962 women employed as machine assistants, whilst 2,432 men as oppose to 331 women worked producing newspapers and periodicals in 1931.[221] Trade-union segregation also predominated. The bookbinders continued to operate a sex-segregation dual union policy during the inter-war years.[222] There were also anomalies which were not addressed by the male dominated trade union movement.

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220 Census for Scotland 1921.
221 Census for Scotland 1931.
222 Interview with author, Mrs GF, born 1911 Anderson, Glasgow.

> In the print work we had a good union, they've always had a good union, but the part that ah worked, they paid us to stay out. We did, but the rest, the bookbinders and the compositors, they were in the union. There was only about six of us as the printer feeders, but they paid us 4s to stay out. They didn't want us in the union. But when ah left the printing trade, every job ah took after that ah went into the union.[223]

The printer feeders were generally young women. This may explain why, in what was largely a closed shop, such a situation was allowed to prevail.

Savage and Miles maintain that there was greater misogyny from the industrial wing of the labour movement between the wars, evident in a male backlash against women.[224] McIvor argues that the Scottish labour movement excluded women, and where they did not, they denied women representation and ignored women's issues with the effect that they contributed to the continuation of women's comparatively poor working conditions and wage rates.[225] In 1928, 70% of the 3,000,000 British workers who had their wages set by the Trades' Boards were women.[226] Sex oppression in the work-place was due to the combined attitudes of employers, trade unionists and working-class men. There exists no lack of evidence exposing the attitudes of the industrial wing of the Scottish labour movement towards women in employment. Women, married and single, continued to be seen as a source of cheap labour with the competitive potential to depress wages and so capture 'men's' employment.

> Q : Was there much work for women compared to men?
> A : Aye because women got poorly paid. Singers had thousands of women.[227]

Savage and Miles argue that because women began to penetrate the formal labour market in greater numbers, often infiltrating male preserves, men, and especially skilled tradesmen, became increasingly hostile towards women.[228] To resolve the fear of the female threat, men resorted to exclusionary policies. On Clydeside, before the First World War, women had been

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223 Interview with author, Mrs GM, born 1911 Springburn, Glasgow.
224 M.Savage and A. Miles, *The Remaking of the British working-class*, pp.74-87.
225 A. McIvor, 'Gender Apartheid?', T.M. Devine & R.J. Finlay, [eds.], *Scotland in the 20th Century*, pp.154-156.
226 *Forward*, 4th February 1928.
227 Interview with author, MrCA, born 1920 Clydebank, Dumbartonshire.
228 M. Savage & A. Miles, The *Remaking of the British Working-class*, p74.

employed in the food trades. Yet when unemployment set in due to the return of ex-servicemen and the post-war slump females were increasingly personified as the cause of distress. The Operative Bakers and Confectioners Union supported their male members when they placed strike notices demanding the removal of female employees. The women were not ousted without protest. They pointed out that the growth of firms in this sector had provided greater employment opportunities for both men and women. The women argued that because of men's exclusionary policies they would be unable to leave a job to further their prospects. Females would be forced to remain tied to their present employer, regardless of conditions, because length of service indicated that they were not encroaching upon male territory. These women were aware of the source of their exploitation. They pointed out that, 'men would not tolerate this! Trade unions are imposing restrictions which did not exist prior to the war'.[229] Nor were exclusionary policies confined to industrial occupations. In 1922, a conference was held by male schoolmasters. It was proposed that where possible the 9,000 female teachers presently occupied in boy's schools should be replaced by men.[230] The *Times* called the employment of 2,200 women in the War Office, most of whom were charring, 'a monstrous injustice'.[231] Likewise, this newspaper welcomed the refusal of out-of-work donations to ex-domestic servants when they declined the offer of such employment 'because it was not to their taste', stating that such women 'ought not to be paid out of the public purse and so enabled to live a life of idleness'.[232] Lewis maintains that, 'male attitudes towards women's work show clearly the pressures on all women to restrict themselves to appropriate women's work, and for married women not to work'.[233] Between the wars, however, what was appropriate 'women's work' was being redefined. It seems, therefore, that men's considerations were wider than the fear that women would infiltrate 'men's work' and devalue incomes. In the depressed economy of the Clyde, and no doubt in many regions of Britain,

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229 *Forward*, 13th November 1920 and 27th November 1920.
230 *Daily Record*, 3rd June 1922.
231 J. Lewis, 'In Search Of A Real Equality', F. Gloversmith, [ed.], *Class, Culture and Social Change*, pp.212-213.
232 Ibid., p.213.
233 Ibid., p.212.

men intended to safeguard, capture and label the fast growing sectors of employment, 'men's work' marginalising women from the industrial arena with the Restoration of Pre-War Practices Act a mechanism to enforce male domination over women in employment. Thus, they did not identify equal pay as a means of uniting the workers against the exploitative work environments of the inter-war Clyde.

> Q : Did men and women get paid the same money?
> A : Oh no ah don't think so. Ah don't think so. Miybe men doin' these big croppin' machines, it was much bigger, but of course the men, men would get more money. Men always do right enough, but --- There'd been a hue and cry if the women had been making the same money as the men. They'd have been goin' oot on strike.[234]

In fact, the inter-war feminist Eleanor Rathbone complained as late as 1936 that there was no progress on equal pay and opportunity for women because the, 'exceptional unemployment has intensified masculine jealousy'. She also identified the barriers of trade unions and professional exclusiveness' as contributory forces denying women equal pay and opportunities.[235] Certainly many unions either segregated women or neglected them completely. McIvor demonstrates how in Scotland, women were 'largely neglected by male dominated unions', who 'absorbed and reflected the sexist values of their day rather than championing the cause of gender equality'. He also shows that female trade-union membership was lower in Scotland than in England and that women's representation in the decision making positions and the hierarchy of unions was marginal.[236] In an article for *Labour Women*, Eleanor Stewart of the Transport and General Workers Union and chairman of the STUC's Women Organisation Committee on Clydeside argued that,

> Women are anxious to be accepted as fellow workers and to share in the responsibilities and difficulties of building up an organisation necessary to solve our economic troubles. We must not allow the presence of women in industry to develop into a sex war as that would be playing into the hands of employers.[237]

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234 Interview with author, Ms GA, born 1908 Dennistoun, Glasgow.
235 As quoted in, B. Harrison, *Prudent Revolutionaries*, p.314.
236 A. McIvor, 'Gender Apartheid ?', T.M. Devine & R.J. Finlay, [eds.], *Scotland in the 20th Century*, pp.203-204.
237 *Labour Women*, 15th April 1934, p.58.

As formidable as these sentiments were, the Organisation of Women Committee established by the STUC in 1926 to enlist members, to promote discussion on topics of interest to women, to accommodate co-ordination between female trade unionist, women of the Labour Party and females from the Co-operative Women's Guild, to facilitate propaganda, and to advance local activities, did little to alter the male-dominated structures of trade unionism in Scotland. By Stewart's own admission there were significantly fewer female officials in Scotland than in England.[238] In fact, arguably it would have needed a 'sex war' to alleviate women's peripheralisation in the trade-union movement on Clydeside and thereby their marginal positions in the world of work rather than mere accommodation as espoused by Stewart.

Lewenhak highlights the lack of women's involvement on the STUC General Council and at the highest levels of trade unionism in Scotland. 'Few were even present as delegates to the STUC annual conference and those who did attend retreated or were pushed into the background.' She also maintains that, although the STUC's Organisation of Women Committee was established in 1926 and successfully promoted women's trade union groups, its Conferences were ineffective in bringing women's issues into the mainstream of trade union policy making. The efforts of the Organisation of Women Committee were frustrated due to a lack of support from trade unions - officials and the rank-and-file members alike. Opposition to this organisation was rife.[239]

Women's experiences, however, differed by degree. Some trade unions were relatively more progressive, particularly those which had a majority of female members or where the sex-typing of occupations was mixed. These included textile, clerical and retail unions.[240] The trade unions affiliated to the STUC Organisation of Women Committee in 1929 represented 49,412 women. Of these 23,831 women were employed in textiles and clothing manufacturing. A further 12,037 were occupied in food and distributive trades and were largely employees of the Co-operative Society. 5,515 women worked in printing or a kindred

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238 *Labour Women*, 15th May 1934, p.75.
239 Lewenhak, as quoted in D. Cairns, *Women and the Clydeside Labour Movement*, p.56.
240 Ibid., p.29.

trade and 6,000 women were members of general unions.[241] At the same time, the nature of work in a given region and the composition of the labour force were determining factors on the level of women's trade union membership.

Table 2.5 Trade union membership on the Clyde 1923-1924.

Region	Female members	% of total employed	Male members	% of total employed
Scotland	78470	18.8	457962	37
Glasgow	15487	14.2	117212	41.4
Renfrewhire, Lanarkshire & Ayrshire	11710	13.7	117264	37.9

Source : Report on the extent and structure of the Trade Union Movement in Scotland, STUC AR 1925 pp33-34

As is evident, in Scotland, there were almost twice as many occupied males represented by a trade union than there were women. Yet in the Clydeside regions of Glasgow, Renfrewshire and Lanarkshire men were nearly three times more likely than women to be members of a trade union. If women were hostile to trade unions, then this would contradict Gordon's claim that the labour movement neglected women as a political constituency.[242] The oral evidence for the inter-war period favours Gordon's hypothesis. There was wide-spread ignorance of trade unionism, even among women who had male family members in positions of power in trade unions. Women were also made to feel that trade unions were mainly male preserves.

> Q : Before World War II do you think that trade unions represented men and women equally?
> A : No they didn't, because ah joined this union and at first they said they didnae have women. They didnae want women. No they didnae welcome women. [243]

> Before the war the men wouldnae let us in. They didnea want the wummen coming intae the union. When the war started and they were on fire watching duty they demanded that we'd tae take a turn o' fire watching duties. But they wouldnae let us in at the beginning and then when they thought they were getting done oot o' something they said the wummen hud tae join the union. We hud tae join.

[241] STUC AR 1926-1930, 32nd Annual Report 1929, Report of the Proceedings of the 3rd Annual Conference STUC Organisation of Women Committee, p.70.
[242] E. Gordon, 'Women and working-class politics 1900-1914', H. Corr and L. Jamieson, [eds.], *State, Private Life and Political Change,* London, 1990, p.224.
[243] Interview with author, Ms GA, born 1908 Dennistoun, Glasgow.

> Q : Would you have liked to have joined a union before that?
> A : Well aye ah thought that they helped the workers because ma grandfather was a great union man.[244]

Due to the labour movement's relative inattention of women, females had mixed feelings towards trade unions. They were seen by some as 'probably your only saviour'.[245] MrsGE was asked,

> Q : Did you join the union?
> A : Oh yes, ah paid ma union every week. That was the only thing that helped ye when anything happened. This is what's up today, there's no' so many union jobs now. The unemployment's a disgrace. Ma father would say he would never go tae a work that wasn't in a union, cause he says, 'They can pay you anything, where if you have a union you've got them tae fight fur ye. If yer in a union and pay up yer union.' We always seen to that, that was cleared up.[246]

Yet, many women had very ambivalent feelings towards trade unions, even the most 'socially progressive' trade unions. Mrs GRA recalled, 'ah wis in a trade union, but it never came tae anything. Ah was in the Shop Assistant's Trade Union . . . Ah jist thought it the best. Ah told ma father and he said aye jist tae join it. But they never did anything for me'. [247] Other women displayed complete apathy towards trade unions. Married women, in particular, had most to fear from the ultimate weapon of industrial action, the strike. Young women, trained for their future roles as wives and mothers, may have had a greater understanding and affinity with these concerns. Women's suffering and sacrifices tended to be greatest when money was tight. Ms GA was the daughter of a widow. She recalled ignoring grievances at work. 'Ah'd probably've been too scared to go and tell anything like that anyway in case ah'd get the sack. Ah mean an awful lot depends on your circumstances. If you feel, oh gosh ah'll get the sack for that, and ah'd've dreaded that.' [248]

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244 Interview with author, MrsGJ, born 1917 Cowcaddens, Glasgow.
245 Interview with author, Ms GA, born 1908 Dennistoun, Glasgow.
246 Interview with author, Mrs GE, born 1907 Gorbals, Glasgow.
247 Interview with author, MrsGRA, born 1919 Greenock, Renfrewshire.
248 Interview with author, MsGA, born 1908 Dennistoun, Glasgow.

Many women experienced forms of hardship associated with their class and gender, more so during periods of industrial action. The ILP activist, Kate Beaton stated, 'women and children in every case bore the real brunt of the battle'. [249] The majority of my respondents, male and female agreed.

> Q : . . . Who do you feel suffered during the strike?
> A : Oh ah think its the families, well especially people with children. Ah think they're the ones that are the sufferers, because a lot of men that go on strike, they've got themselves a few pound handy, but the wives don't get it. Ah don't know how it is now. [250]

> The person who suffers most in a strike is the housewife because she's the person nine times out of ten who deals with the money, so if she's no money coming in, the hardship's greater for her than her husband.[251]

> Wives and families suffered the most. The mothers, mothers had the worst job. Ah mean they were the ones that had tae, with any little money that came in, they were the ones that had to make do and mend and help get food for the children. Many a time ah suppose they went without themselves tae.[252]

> I was the oldest of seven and I had to look after them all. I had to be able to feed them cause Emma she was doing a wee bit of cleaning job. She had to. She went to the private houses and scrubbed steps 'n what have you for a loaf of bread. So it was the family, wives and families. [253]

Mr GE recalled the way in which male workers conducted themselves during a strike, 'oh go intae the pub and you could afford tae get it. See a pint cost ye 4d at that time'. [254]

Many women, however, were committed to the idea of trade unions and direct action even when they were hostile to the labour movement itself. Furthermore, women's opinions of what direct action should achieve were not significantly different from men's. McKay may be right to suggest that working-class men and women shared similar political concerns,[255] but the way

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249 Kate Beaton, ILP Councillor, as quoted in *Forward*, March 29th 1924.
250 Interview with author, Mr CA, born 1920 Clydebank, Dumbartonshire.
251 Interview with author, Ms GA, born 1908 Dennstoun, Glasgow.
252 Interview with author, MrsGZ, born 1917 Govan, Glasgow.
253 Interview with author, MrGZ, born 1915 Cardiff, Wales.
254 Interview with author, MrGE, born 1908 Partick, Glasgow.
255 J.McKay, 'Red Clydeside after 75 years : a Reply to Iain McLean', *Scottish Labour History Society Journal*, No.31, 1996, pp.85-94 p.91.

in which they formulated these concerns was determined by differing 'paths of proletarianization' born of diverging gender experiences.

Despite this, women's industrial action and their perceptions of the value of trade unions were not determined by the type of work they were employed in, or for that matter the proximity to employers. Mrs GK worked in an office and knew her employer. This was an occupation perceived to have a negative impact on class awareness, one which gave rise to aspirations of social mobility, and was therefore, likely to ensure acquiescence to employers or apathy towards trade unionism. She, however, felt that, 'well they needed someone at that particular time to fight, you know, for them. They really needed them, because the wages were very very low, ye know'. [256] MsGA sought a buffer state between herself and the bosses.

> Ah think in some cases that they'd have been - the bosses would've - they would have gone mad because they could've done anything without--- That's sometimes where the unions come in, because of miybe some worker being penalised for something the unions could step in and prevent anything serious happening. [257]

Mrs GC's answer not only demonstrated a concern over working conditions but solidarity with fellow workers.

> Q : Would you have joined a trade union?
> Ah think ah would've if they were fighting for bigger wages. The conditions we were in. We were jist 12s 6d and some of them were away in Auckinairn and they'd their fares tae pay and pieces to make up. It used tae be very hard on 12s 6d. [258]

Working women were driven by economic considerations and a desire for protection when they contemplated joining trade unions or participating in industrial action. Not only was this similar to men's considerations but these choices, strategies and decisions were related to the 'routines of daily existence'. Working-class people's material conditions determined the circumstances of their everyday lives. Hence they could connect economic well-being,

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256 Interview with author, Mrs GG, born 1916 Townhead, Glasgow.
257 Interview with author, MsGA, born 1908 Dennistoun, Glasgow.
258 Interview with author, Mrs GC, born 1910 Bridgeton, Glasgow.

general conditions and perceptions of powerlessness, all linked through the wage to the life they lived.

However, women generally paid less in union dues and received less strike pay during periods of industrial action and as the wives of men on strike they suffered most. Thus if women knew they had the least to gain during periods of industrial action, and had an affinity with the experiences of married women during strikes, yet still supported the idea of strikes and the collectively of trade unions then this suggests that there was a large and promising constituency of women who were persistently neglected throughout the inter-war years. Political work cultures and trade unions, generally male preserves, moreover, could impact upon consciousness of class.

> Q : Does Red Clydeside mean anything to you?
> A : That's when everything changed on the Clyde. The conditions that we were getting - men were being forced tae join unions tae make a better fight e' it. Then when there was any trouble or the men did strike they got an awful bad name. Somehow in Scotland they would fight for it. The likes of England they wouldnae. They were better off and they didnae need tae strike as much. That was jist the Labour getting intae - starting tae get intae force then. It was just a minor revolution, that was it. [259]

And 'consciousness' could be born of 'struggle'.

> There wis the big heavy men, that's people that would come up tae ye. 'That union's no' worth a bugger. Drop it ! Drop it!' And ah said, 'Naw'. 'Ah well then you'll suffer.' Ah presumed they would hit me. Ah saw labour as being the hounded mob in any strike, because the workers, they would rather take a shilling ouf their pay. They wouldnae gie the workers an extra shilling.
> Q: What did you hope to gain by the strike?
> A : A bit of power because they got more publicity of what the Labour workers done, and [at] the next election we went right intae a good majority. [260]

Mr GA, a transport worker, joined the Communist Party because, 'we had the finest conditions ootside o' Great Britain, ootside o' London. We had half a crown more than whit Birmingham or Manchester had and it wis due tae the - they can talk how they like till they're blue in the

259 Interview with author, Mr GD, born 1900 Bridgeton, Glasgow.
260 Interview with author, MrGB, born 1905 Townhead, Glasgow.

face, but the Communists was the greatest shop-stewards'.[261] Political cultures, trade unions and industrial action were catalysts of working-class political identity, catalysts which women were largely denied. This represented a loss to the labour movement on Clydeside and perhaps elsewhere, a loss which ultimately disempowered the working-class politics of the work-place, but it was a loss of the labour movement's own making.

Tactics and strategies : a rough kind of feminism in the workplace

With such attitudes emanating from men and their trade unions, it is hardly surprising that women, labelled unskilled and gaining low remunerative rewards, developed alternative strategies which frequently involved gender-specific personal relationships, but which were none the less political. These strategies replicated 'the business of organising and participating in ostensibly non-political activities'.[262] And they were strategies and choices which formed part of a process by which women became politicised.

The strategies which many working-class women adopted to moderate class and gender oppression in the workplace took the form of gender-specific work cultures. These work cultures, moreover, often facilitated a 'rough kind of feminist' behaviour. Brown and Stephenson highlight the operation of such cultures in Stirling.[263] A major feature of women's work cultures was the development of self-definition. Women rejected the discourses which characterised the female employee docile and apathetic. They did so in a variety of ways manifest in their conduct in the workplace. This is also evident from the way in which working women often rejected male definitions of skill and created their own. Mrs PA practised this form of self-legitimisation. She was an office worker, and while she may have been ranked at the lower end of this occupation by male standards, women so employed were regarded, and regarded themselves, as the aristocracy of female labour. She stated, 'when ah went tae the office, oh a thought it was wonderful because ye were mixing wi' a different class of

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261 Interview with author, Mr GA, born 1905 Gorbals, Glasgow.

262 Savage and Miles as quoted in J. Hannam, 'Women and Politics', J. Purvis, [ed.], *Women's History,* p.218.

263 C. Brown & J. Stephenson, 'The View from the Workplace : Stirling women and work 1890-1950', E. Gordon and E. Breitenbach, [eds.], *Out of Bounds Women in Scottish Society 1800-1945,* Edinburgh, 1992, pp.7-27.

people. People that worked in offices in ma day was kinda better educated. Maybe that was snobbish, but ah don't mean it snobbishly'. [264] Mrs GG was also worked in an office. She recalled,

> Well you were just supposed tae be that one wee bit above class in an office. It was just how you set off. That was how it was going to be, and one person told his wee daughter, the thing is, if ye don't study it means that you'll just have to go and work, whereas if you study you'll get into an office and get away with an awful lot of no' working. [265]

Women constructed 'skill', challenging the physiological aspects of their subordination. However, such behaviour did not place them in a position to use exclusionary policies so that the construction of skill was reflected in status and pay. They nevertheless displayed the pride in their work associated with skilled workers and at the same time legitimised their right to work, to status and to self-esteem. MrsGG recalled,

> It was all the office work they gave to you. Ah did treasury work, cash, ah did invoicing, ah did book-keeping. Ah really did, ah had a full round of office work ah could do. Ah mean it sounds awful smug saying ah could do anything in an office, but ah really did. That was the one thing ah loved, ah loved ma job. [266]

Women moreover employed a variety of strategies to achieve self-legitimisation in the world of work. Like the skilled worker in metal trades on Clydeside, many women used internal ladders to enhance their occupational status as Mrs GR did :

> Ah started as a wee message girl but . . . wi' the meal over - ah would ask the girls could ah get a wee shot at the machine. So ah learned that, picked it up and ah went tae the boss and ah said ah would like tae try a machine. He said, 'Fair enough'. Ah used tae dae that and ah loved it! Ah jist, ah've been happy all ma days. Ah loved ma work, aw the jobs. [267]

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264 Interview with author, Mrs PA, born 1914 Paisley, Renfrewshire.
265 Interview with author, Mrs GG, born 1916 Townhead, Glasgow.
266 Interview with author, Mrs GG, born 1916 Townhead, Glasgow.
267 Interview with author, MrsGR, born 1907 Calton, Glasgow.

Women, like men, used the construction of 'skill' to differentiate themselves from other workers thus this was also a form of empowerment, but one unlikely to provide predisposing grounds for coalition. Rebecca West worked for a tailoring firm. She remembered being promoted to the cutting room and, ' I thought I was the cat's whiskers because the cutting room was a wee bit above the factory girls'.[268]

If women could and did reject the characterisation of women as an unskilled and low status occupational group then the potential exists, given the right conditions, and more importantly the right leadership, that they might also have demanded equal pay for equal work. Yet what limited demands for equal pay feminists and socialists articulated tended to be for the elite of educated middle-class or upper working-class, 'respectable' female workers employed in the Civil Service, the teaching profession and clerical occupations. Thus the majority of women, whose political identity was influenced by the most negative of working conditions, were excluded. They had to develop their own forms of 'feminism', and this took the appearance of extending the psychological resource of self legitimisation through an assertion of the feminine as a political tactic.

This did not negate other forms of self-help. Survival strategies could merge with a women's consciousness in the work-place to facilitate forms of self-help which enabled women to extend their resources in times of need. *Forward* reported, how a piece rate system had broken the wages of the women in a Bridgeton mill to such an extent that one girl was left with a weekly wage of 3/6. Her distress resulted in a married female colleague, whose wages had also been reduced, sharing part of her wage with the distraught girl.[269]

These were not the only resources gained by women in paid employment. Women enjoyed their experiences of work. As with women in Stirling, Clydeside working women often spoke extensively of their time at work suggesting they too had gained a sense of freedom and purpose from their employment. Women relished the 'collectivity, camaraderie and

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268 GRA/ PA4/212, WEA, Growing Up in Shettleston between the Wars, 1985, Interview with Rebecca West, born 1909 Shettleston, Glasgow.
269 *Forward*, 30th December 1911.

companionship' of their colleagues. They moderated their sense of oppression through singing, games and traditions. MrsGI remembered, ' I loved packing! I really got to a very good stage in that and we had races and I really enjoyed that job. You made friends with the people you were working with'.[270] In this respect the operation of gender-specific work cultures was an assertion of the feminine, a political tactic. It was used to subvert attempts to ensure women would identify with docility and subservience and unskilled labour. These women thus were feminists because they would not allow anyone to think for them, but this feminism also depended on survival strategies and the operation of a women's consciousness.

> Q : What do you think was the best thing about your work?
> A : Ah think it was the companionship. Ah mean even although we were a family of five every one of us could come in, we could aw relate tae people who worked beside us who gave us some kind of talking point and it was probably a right auld gossip. [271]

Mrs GZ stated, 'it certainly wusnae the money that's for sure. Well we did have a certain amount of fun, fun wi' the customers'.[272] Much of this fun was based on tradition. MsGA remembered how workers behaved when one of the girls was getting married. 'In Templeton's where the looms were they used tae decorate the bride's loom or half the loom if she worked a wide loom. And they went to awful lengths.' [273] MrsGJ recalled,

> They dressed her up wi' a tablecloth . . . and walked about the street, up and doun the street and they hud a . . . chantey? They hud that in front of her and they filled it with confetti 'n everybody, the rest of the factory lined the streets.[274]

This culture was transplanted into the 'new' occupations opening between the wars. Mrs GG was an office-worker. She recalled,

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270 Interview with author, MrsGI, born 1907 Dennistoun, Glasgow.
271 Interview with author, Ms GA, born 1908 Dennistoun, Glasgow.
272 Interview with author, MrsGZ, born 1917 Govan, Glasgow.
273 Interview with author, MsGA, born 1908 Dennistoun, Glasgow.
274 Interview with author, Mrs GJ, born 1917 Cowcaddens, Glasgow.

> Ah always remember the treasurer, he was getting married - and it shows you the mentality we hud. At that time it was bowler hats they wore - ah always remember getting the glue and putting it round his hat, then putting confetti aw round. Oh and ah great carry-on dressing him up, carrying on. Some of them lost their temper wi' the banter and ah don't blame them, but that was the sort of stupid carry-on that we had. [275]

Popular culture thus was used as a form of resistance to acculturation', whether that acculturation was the impact of modern capitalism or the re-assertion of a more misogynist work environment, but it was a resistance based on gender awareness. Sexual harassment could heighten this awareness.

> Well there was one boss I COULD NOT TAKE TO! He used tae cuddle and beardy the girls so ah think he thought one more - ah'll see how she takes it. Ah said, 'Get off me!' Well him and I never spoke. Oh ah had an awful job all along for the years ah was there. Ah had an awful job not only tae keep ma job, but oh! he treated me very badly and he couldnae do enough harm tae try and get me the sack. [276]

Sexual harassment no doubt did divide working-class men and women. Yet sex segregation and the predilection, as expressed by my respondents, of many employers to delegate power to female overseers, labelled 'mistresses', along with kinship and community ties as a mechanism by which young women acquired employment moderated the potential for sexual harassment. Mrs GR's father's friend, a foreman, helped her find a position. She remembered, 'well we were aw right we'd an awful good foremen. He was an awful nice man - jist like a faither, aye he wis good'. [277]

Tempered, it may have been, but gender antagonism was a constant reality in the workplace. The feminist movement on Clydeside failed to exploit this situation. It seems the only female employees worthy of equal pay and promotional prospects were civil servants,[278] that is, where concern existed at all. Protective legislation would suffice for all others. Overall the Glasgow Society for Equal Citizenship failed to promote a feminist critique of women's

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275 Interview with author, Mrs GG, born 1916 Townhead, Glasgow.
276 Interview with author, Mrs GK, born 1907 Anniesland, Glasgow.
277 Interview with author, MrsGR, born 1907 Calton, Glasgow.
278 See, SR187/891036/1/7 Glasgow Society for Equal Citizenship Executive Mins, [Henceforth GSEC Exec. Mins.], 20th January 1930 and 25th April 1930.

conditions in paid work. In fact they largely neglected the majority of working women's experience which fell outside the dominant discursive construction of womanhood between the wars and their attitudes deviated little from those of Clydeside employers. In 1929 'to reduce expenditure' this organisation decided to 'appoint a younger clerk',[279] and when they demanded grants and training schemes for unemployed women it was to meet the needs of 'existing vacancies'[280] presumably 'women's work'. This neglect of the majority of working women was not limited to the formal economy or the feminist movement. Pennington and Westover show that, in contrast to the situation prior to World War I,

> The relative silence and absence of any signs of concerns over homework from any pressure group and in particular from the trade union movement during the inter-war period helps to created the impression that homework had all but disappeared.'[281]

Neither homework, or the appalling pay rates associated with it had disappeared on Clydeside. Nor did causal work, or the necessity to undertake it abate. 'Despite improved employment opportunities, mass unemployment and the Depression years . . . did much to erode women's industrial status. They were forced back into the lowest paid jobs.'[282] Unlike the feminist movement, pressure groups or trade-union representatives, who ignored this situation working women were alert to attempts to subordinate them and they responded to it. These responses were frequently informal, but not because women did not identify with formal organisation. The relationship was inverse. Working-class women were neither apathetic or acquiescent, but they were ignored or neglected by the industrial wing of the labour movement and the feminist movement. Therefore, the potential influence of work-place struggles, feminism and trade unions on women's political identity was relatively muted. Nevertheless, whilst muted, the effects of capitalism and gender discrimination were constantly challenged by women in a variety of ways, overtly and covertly. Ultimately, this

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279 Ibid. 16th September 1929.
280 Ibid. 18th May 1931.
281 S. Pennington & B. Westover, *A Hidden Workforce Homeworkers in England 1880-1985*, London, 1989, p.148 and passim.
282 Ibid., p.140.

provided a sense of class-gender awareness which facilitated rough forms of feminist behaviour. This was evident in the operation of women's gender-specific popular culture in the work-place which sustained self-legitimisation and allowed women to contest the discursive constructions of employers, trade unionists and male employees which deemed them docile, apathetic and subservient. Thus these work cultures allowed women pride, a sense of independence, self-definition, collectivity and camaraderie. They were feminists because 'a feminist is a woman who does not allow anyone to think in her place'.[283]

Conclusion

Women would and did respond to their oppression suggesting that men and the leadership of the industrial wing of the labour movement on Clydeside, male and female, along with the feminist movement contributed to the subordination of females in paid work. They did so by primarily upholding a discourse which identified women as temporary workers, often with the potential to usurp men, rather than regarding them as working women. The labour movement did so by internalising and advancing an archaic world view based upon the idea of women as competition, a view which had little basis in reality. In this way working-class men's defensiveness negated 'sustained broader militancy'. By focusing upon women and identifying them as a major source of men's potential subordination to capitalism the possibilities of unity with women were neglected. The feminist movement on Clydeside failed to exploit this situation. Conflict involving women, however, did not evaporate in the inter-war years. Nor were women 'rehabilitated' by gender and class oppression. Rather, the form of working-class women's militancy was inhibited and therefore re-directed into a traditional framework of informal action, which had been, and continued to be, a response to attempts by men and employers to undervalue women in the world of work. Women's groups did little to address the situation suggesting that they too perceived women's work in the formal economy to be largely temporary. Certainly many working-class women did. Thus, it was to the political

283 Michele Le Doeuff's definition of a feminist as quoted in, S. Kemp & J. Squires, 'Epistemologies Introduction', S. Kemp & J. Squires, [eds.], *Feminisms*, p.142.

arena that women of the labour movement and feminists looked to address the demands of a constituency who would principally be defined and define themselves as wives and mothers, or 'the wives and mothers of tomorrow'.

CHAPTER THREE :

'THE POLITICS OF THE KITCHEN' AND THE DISSENTING DOMESTICS : WOMEN, FEMINISM AND THE ILP

> To dismiss married women if their husbands work . . . if carried to its logical conclusion . . . will cloister all women after marriage. This is based on a stupid argument originating from male fears of feminine influence and enterprise.
>
> To reduce household drudgery to a minimum all new houses should be equipped with labour-saving applications . . . There should be established communal restaurants, laundries, bakeries . . . Only by adoption of this can wives obtain the leisure to enable them to take their proper share of the duties of citizenship. [1]

The immediate political context on Clydeside between the wars which women from the Labour Party, the ILP, the Women's Co-operative Guild and their constituents faced was extremely complex. This complexity offered the possibility for a 'new vision of class' to emerge, one which acknowledged women's political capabilities. In 1918 the franchise was broadened to include women over the age of thirty, who were themselves, or whose husbands were, on the municipal electoral role. Women, at least in relation to the political wing of the labour movement, could no longer be ignored, as 'a political constituency' as they had been prior to 1914.[2] Political parties did not know which direction the new electorate would take, and women in areas such as Clydeside, had a leadership and history of political activism which was relatively well developed. In this context, the ILP on Clydeside, like the party throughout Britain, promoted itself as the 'Real Women's Party'. They were the party who would 'reject imposed marriage bars', promote equal pay for equal work, the unionisation of female workers and full adult suffrage.[3] Thus, the pre-requisite existed for the labour movement to cast off a narrow 'vision of class' and accept women as a 'political constituency'. Yet, the conditions responsible for this potentiality corresponded and contributed to the fracturing of the pre-war constructions of 'womanhood'. Attempts to re-establish and orchestrate the behaviour of females through the categorisation of women as exulted housewives and mothers, confined to a 'private sphere', permeated politics and society. This was reflected and reinforced by the labour movement on Clydeside, through their endeavours to generate a female political

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1 *Forward*, 23rd April 1921 and 1st July 1922 respectively.
2 E.Gordon, 'Women and working-class politics in Scotland 1900-1914', H. Corr and L. Jamieson, [eds.], *State, Private Life and Political Change*, pp.224-242.
3 *Forward*, 7th December 1919.

constituency narrowly fenced within the social sphere of politics. They increasingly personified women's demands as 'personal', subservient to the 'public'.[4] This enclosure, the 'politics of the kitchen', was contested, and exploited by the intended, but dissenting domestics, women of the Clydeside labour movement. Many female activists from the ILP, the Labour Party and the Co-operative Women's Guild resolved to advance their programme, what they defined as 'expressions of our social commonsense'.[5]

Women and Clydeside labour politics in context

The historiography pertaining to women's political activity for the period before and between the wars is contradictory. There are a number of studies which suggest that the ILP, in comparison with other socialist organisations, was feminist from its inception. They imply that the organisation had strong links with the feminist movement and was more sympathetic to the women question. Hunt, in her critique of the gendered nature of the labour movement, identifies a number of historians who support the idea that the ILP was more women-friendly.[6] Sowerwine, although accepting that the socialist movement 'constituted a strongly masculine space', also compares the ILP favourably with continental socialist organisations and in a British context with the SDF and the Labour Party. He stresses that it was only the ILP who consistently supported women's suffrage on the same property grounds as men's and that, 'as the conscience of the Labour Party' the ILP were instrumental in the Labour Party's acceptance of this. Likewise, Liddington and Norris, maintain that, 'from the very start the ILP had a far better reputation for treating women as equals than other political groups', albeit they acknowledge that, there were women who 'found that they had to assert themselves if they were not to be treated just as women were in other political organisations, as unpaid canvassers, fund raisers and caterers. There was often a wide gap between equality in theory and equality in practice'.[7] Thus, Hannah Mitchell, an early ILP member remembered :

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4 See, R. Wodak, *Gender and Discourse*, p.112.

5 *Forward*, 29th March 1924. This was how Kate Beaton defined the ILP women's programme.

6 See K. Hunt, *Equivocal Feminists*, p.16. These include Olive Banks, Carolyn Steedman, Joseph Clayton, James Hinton and Jill Liddington and Jill Norris.

7 C. Sowerwine, 'Socialism, Feminism and the Socialist Women's Movement from the French Revolution to World War II'

> Even my Sunday leisure was gone . . . for I soon found that a lot of Socialist talk about freedom was only talk and these Socialist young men expected Sunday dinners and huge teas with home-made cakes, potted meats and pies, exactly like their reactionary fellows.[8]

Yet, the 'suffragette and rebel' Hannah Mitchell, whilst conceding that some of the ILP leaders were only lukewarm in their support of women, preferred the ILP to the Labour Party's Women's Sections which seemed a 'permanent Social Committee or official cake making' body. Selina Cooper, 'the respectable rebel', a suffragette and socialist, also acknowledged the ILP's 'ambivalent attitude to women's suffrage'. Nevertheless, she too compared the ILP favourably, identifying it as having a good record on feminist issues and as a party in which she could feel a sense of comfort. By contrast, she noted an 'anti-women spirit in the Labour Party' which she felt was 'disconcertingly vigorous'. [9]

For the period between the wars, Vincent asserts that the ILP 'enjoyed greater intellectual freedom and was more open to feminist thinking'.[10] Other historians have suggested there were regional variations in women's experiences within the ILP. Hannam argues that Scottish women fared unfavourably within the ILP in comparison with those in Yorkshire.[11] Cairns, studying the political wing of the labour movement on Clydeside between the wars, and directing his attention to women in the hierarchy of this organisation, concluded with an unfavourable portrayal. It seems that men in the political wing of the labour movement were little better than their industrial counterparts who side-lined women. Cairns, however, maintains that women contributed to this process by becoming divided. Women of the labour movement and feminists chose different paths to solve the problems facing women in society. It was this, it seems, which ensured that they failed to develop a united agenda to challenge

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' E.Bridenthal, S.M.Stuard and M.E.Wiesner, [eds.], *Becoming Visible Women in European History*, New York, 1998, p.375-377 and J. Liddington & J. Norris, *One Hand Tied Behind Us*, London, 1977, pp.44-46.

8 As quoted in J. Liddington & J. Norris, *One Hand Tied Behind Us*, p.46.

9 G. Mitchell, *The Hard Way Up The Autobiography of Hannah Mitchell Suffragette and Rebel*, London, 1977, p.178 and p.189 and J. Liddington, *The Life and Times of a Respectable Rebel Selina Cooper 1864-1946*, London, 1984, p.123, 159 &. 300 respectively.

10 D. Vincent, *Poor Citizens the state and the poor in twentieth century Britain*, London, 1991, p.65.

11 See, J. Hannam, ' " In the Comradeship of the Sexes Lies Hope of Progress and Social Regeneration" : Women in the West Riding ILP, 1890-1914', J. Rendall, [ed.],. *Equal or Different*, p. 214.

the 'patriarchal hegemony' of the labour movement. He also concurs with Burgess and Pugh who maintain that because of the 'welcome discovery' that women voted along class lines, political parties did not feel the need to accommodate their female constituency.[12] McKinlay's study of the ILP appears to support these assertions. He argues that between 1917-1920 women constituted approximately 20% of Glasgow's ILP members, but the 'local leadership made no effort to ensure that women's perspective on community issues was retained. Women, he states, 'were systematically under-represented on the Glasgow ILP policy-making body, accounting for less than 10% of delegates'.[13]

However, as Hannam and Hunt note, not only do British labour historians in general fail to integrate gender into their analysis of the labour movement and thereby neglect the ways in which the 'theory and practice' of socialist organisations was gendered, but studies of women and the labour movement often rely on evidence which is selective and based on the assertions of a few prominent male members. These are then taken to represent the entire views of the organisation. Due to this, they often fail to highlight that men and women in the labour movement, 'negotiated the gendered nature of socialist theory and practice across time, place and party'.[14]

This was certainly the case on Clydeside between the wars, particularly within the ILP where men could be very progressive, and at the same time female activists the complete antithesis. A multiplicity of perspectives on women and the women question created an environment in which there was scope for women to express and fulfil feminist aims, aims at times compatible with the municipal socialism being promoted by the ILP and at times in complete defiance of the dominant and frequently gendered party line.

A number of feminist historians have highlighted the gendered nature of socialist theory and practice for the period prior to World War I. This affected all labour movement

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[12] D.Cairns, *Women and the Clydeside Labour Movement*, p.197.
[13] A. McKinlay, 'Doubtful wisdom and uncertain promise', A. McKinlay & R.J Morris, [eds.], *The ILP on Clydeside 1893-1932 from foundations to disintegration*, Manchester, 1991, pp.138-139.
[14] J. Hannam and K. Hunt, 'Gendering the Stories of Socialism : An essay in Historical Criticism', in M. Walsh, [ed.], *Working Out Gender*, pp.15-16.

organisations, at least to a degree. This situation owed a great deal to the emphasis placed on economic theories of class which failed to take account of gender as a force in women's subordination.[15] Hannam and Hunt have not only questioned the 'received view', the 'stereotype of the ILP' which identifies the party as the only socialist friend of the women's movement, but Hunt has shown how the SDF 'equivocated over the women question' regarding it as a diversion from the class struggle which could be resolved after the 'revolution'. Nevertheless the party took the line that it should be regarded as a question of conscience. Thus individuals could and did, as a matter of conscience, embrace feminism. This in turn facilitated debate over the women question and brought the women question into the public and political domains.[16] Gordon, moreover, looking at the SDF in Scotland, argues that the party accommodated women more than the ILP. The SDF did so because they at least acknowledged women as workers to be mobilised in the class struggle, whilst the ILP continued to limit women's political activity because of their 'abiding acceptance of familial ideology'.[17] The Labour Party it seems were not much different. In line with contemporary criticism from prominent socialist women like Hannah Mitchell, Collette identified the Women's Labour League as an organisation formed merely to enlist the support of women to function as a finance raising and campaigning element of the party. Further support of the attitudes of male socialist are evident in the work of the contemporary socialist, Joseph Clayton. He claims that 'the Labour Party did not have any bones about women's suffrage', unlike the SDF who were more hostile. Yet, his own views highlight negative attitudes towards women and women's interests. He asserts that, the 'Votes for women' movement was one which 'deflected the minds of the people from socialist propaganda and socialist activities and one

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[15] See for example J. Hannam, ' Women in the West Riding ILP' J. Rendall, [ed.], *Equal or Different*, pp.214-238, J. Hannam, 'Women and politics', J. Purvis, [ed.], *Women's History*, pp.217-243, K. Hunt, *Equivocal Feminists* and for Scotland, E.Gordon, *Women and the Labour Movement Scotland*, Oxford, 1991, especially chapter seven.

[16] J. Hannam & K. Hunt, 'Gendering the Stories of Socialism', M. Walsh, [ed.], *Working Out Gender*, pp.102 and K. Hunt, *Equivocal Feminists*, especially pp.55-56 and 251.

[17] E.Gordon, 'Women and working-class politics in Scotland 1900-1914', H. Corr and L. Jamieson, [eds.], *State, Private Life and Political Change*, p.224 and p.242.

which 'drew away women', rather than men, from the socialist movement' to its perpetual loss.[18]

In contrast to this picture of the Labour Party and the SDF, Hannam, Sowerwine and Rowan present a more positive analysis of the labour movement's relationship with its female members and their feminist concerns. Sowerwine argues that the British socialist movement provided a strategy for equality between socialist men and women. They did so by welcoming economic independence, however painful it was at the time, and by providing a platform for women to act effectively in politics when other parties did not admit women. Furthermore, he maintains that women's separate organisations within the movement allowed them to articulate their distinct concerns. Hannam suggests that the SDF, the Fabian Society and the ILP were unusual because they opened their membership to women on the same basis as men. Like Sowerwine, she also stresses that at least rhetorically, the ILP had greater sympathy towards 'sex equality', although Hannam also notes how the ILP, like the SDF, prioritised economic questions. The ILP was especially concerned with 'unemployment and building links with trade unions to forward labour politics'. [19]

Although these wide and varied interpretations of women's experiences of the labour movement seem contradictory this was not necessarily the case. Hannam and Hunt offer an explanation for this. They highlight how the focus of a particular historical study can give rise to a particular perspective because women's experiences within the labour movement were determined by factors which included party, time, place and class. They were situational. Thus diverging experiences are to be expected. However, Hannam and Hunt also demonstrate that even where the socialist movement did 'constitute a strongly masculine

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[18] C. Collette, *For Labour and for Women : The Women's Labour League, 1906-1918*, Manchester, 1989 and J. Clayton, *The Rise and Decline of Socialism in Great Britain 1884-1926*, London, 1926, pp.154-158.
[19] C. Sowerwine, 'Socialism, Feminism and the Socialist Women's Movement', E.Bridenthal, S.M.Stuard and M.E.Wiesner, [eds.], *Becoming Visible*, pp.383-384 ; J. Hannam, ' In the Comradeship of the Sexes', J. Rendall, [ed.], *Equal or Different*, pp. 214-238 ; C. Rowan, 'Women in the Labour Party, 1906-1920', *Feminist Review*, 12, 1982, pp.74-91 and J. Hannam, 'Women and politics', J. Purvis, [ed.], *Women's History*, p.230.

space', feminism was not always contained. There were also socialist women who were more than capable of maintaining feminist interests and activities.[20]

While party, time, place and class could give rise to diverse experiences, Cowman demonstrates how feminism could provide a link between groups who were divided by party and place. She compares the Women's Labour League [WLL] and the Co-operative Women's Guild. She notes that, while for women of the Guild it was a more straightforward process to assert demands for civil rights for women, they did so with the support of the WLL. The League then took these ideas and presented them to male members of the labour movement with whom they had closer links.[21] The demands of these women were wide and varied. Hunt has shown how the feminism of the SDF often sought equal rights with men, particularly with regards to sexual equality.[22] Hannam, on the other hand, also points out that socialist women, where they were feminist, shared with non-feminist women, a belief in the special qualities of women which stemmed from their maternal and domestic role, but that prior to 1914 they did not seek to confine women to the home. None the less, her analysis of the ILP in West Yorkshire, although highlighting how a spirit of 'comradeship between the sexes' existed, also illustrates how the ILP failed to contest women's unequal positions in the workplace and the home. Hannam attributes this to 'the dominance of trade unions in the ILP, the weakness of female workers and the deeply rooted commitment to family life in which women were at the centre'. However, she also argues that the women's movement, by emphasising political equality as a key to women's emancipation, played a role in allowing the ILP to support women in the fight to take part in public life, albeit this did not necessitate any challenge to the sexual division of labour. It did, nevertheless, provide a means by which working-class women became of 'political account'.[23]

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[20] J. Hannam, and K. Hunt, 'Gendering the Stories of Socialism', M. Walsh, [ed.], *Working Out Gender*, pp. 102-118.
[21] K. Cowman, ' "Giving then Something to Do" ': How the Early ILP Appealed to Women', M. Walsh, [ed.], *Working Out Gender*, pp. 119-134.
[22] K. Hunt, *Equivocal Feminists*, especially pp.105-110 and 118-132.
[23] J. Hannam, 'Women and politics', J. Purvis, [ed.], *Women's History*, pp.217-246.

Yet, Glasgow, like Scotland in general, had a much weaker trade-union base and this helped ensure that the ILP in this region, and throughout Clydeside, acted as an umbrella organisation from the late-nineteenth to the early twentieth-century, accommodating a wealth of political activists, organisations, ideologies and political activities. In fact the ILP was the key working-class organisation on Clydeside prior to its disaffiliation from the Labour Party in 1932, and its publication *Forward*, the most widely read working-class newspaper. It was the ILP's members who were in touch with local problems. The organisation had intrinsic links with both the industrial wing of the movement and community organisations, and its members were often activists who held membership of multiple working-class and socialist bodies.[24] These fraternities included the Co-operative and the Co-operative Guild Women's Guild, feminist organisations, housing associations and the Clyde Workers Committee as well as the trades councils which were affiliated to the Labour Party. Unlike the TUC, the STUC encouraged these links. Furthermore, the trades councils in Scotland were noted for their support of unskilled male workers, frequently at the expense of the skilled elite of the Clyde.[25] However, the trades councils also supported female workers and worked closely with the Federation of Women Workers on Clydeside. The Glasgow Trades and Labour Council had no less than seven female delegates between 1911-1914.[26] Trades councils gave 'moral and financial support' to women who formed trade unions and participated in industrial action and they provided a forum for the organisation of women workers through the Women Workers Organisation of the Glasgow Trades Council.[27] Nevertheless, Smyth, implicitly concurs with Gordon, suggesting that the labour movement did not see women as a political constituency.[28] This, in relation to the ILP on Clydeside, is contentious.

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24 See A. McKinlay & R.J. Morris, 'The ILP on Clydeside 1893-1932 : Introduction', A. McKinlay & R.J. Morris, [eds.], *The ILP on Clydeside*, pp.1-19.
25 W.H. Fraser, 'Trades Councils in the Labour Movement in Nineteenth Century Scotland', I. MacDougall, [ed.], *Essays in Scottish Labour History*, pp.6-21.
26 D. Cairns, *Women and the Clydeside Labour Movement*, p.25.
27 *Forward*, 19th August 1911 and 11th March 1910.
28 J.J. Smyth, 'From Industrial Unrest to Industrial Debacle? The Labour Left to Industrial Militancy 1910-1914', W. Kenefrick & A. McIvor, [eds.], *Roots of Red Clydeside*, pp.246-255.

Women and 'women's interests' were taken into account for two fundamental reasons. Firstly, from at least 1910 there was an increasing awareness on Clydeside of the potential impact of women's enfranchisement. By 1910 Jessie Baker was contesting the way women had 'been convinced' by male family members that 'politics was none of their business'. It is true that she did not reject the sexual division of labour, but she did demand that there be, 'mutual respect for each and each others work'.[29] This was the 'different but equal' status of men and women's roles which women of the labour movement sought throughout Britain within the labour and feminist movements, demands which were reinforced in the post-war period. Moreover, women's demands penetrated the industrial and political wings of the Clydeside labour movement. At a Trades Council meeting to discuss the Women's Conciliation Bill in 1910, fifty-three to seventeen trade union delegates voted to support the enfranchisement of women. The representative of the Steel and Iron Workers Union, a male-dominated trade union, 'marvelled at the men who voted for equal pay for equal work but rejected equal political representation for women'.[30] It would seem then that even amongst trade unionists attitudes towards women were extremely diverse and that some were more progressive than others, accepting both equal pay for equal work and equal political representation at least prior to the inter-war years.

Also indicative of the importance attributed to the potential female electorate was the appearance and maintenance of a weekly 'Suffrage Column' in *Forward* from 1912 until the out break of hostilities in 1914. This signified the importance afforded the potential of an extended female franchise to the labour movement on Clydeside, but it also corresponded with the period identified by Sowerwine as one in which the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies and the Women's Freedom League joined forces with the Labour Party, in part because they had finally accepted the line of the ILP which supported women's right to the franchise on the same property basis as men.[31] No other women's issue was given such

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[29] *Forward*, 20th August 1910.
[30] *Forward*, 24th September 1910.
[31] This column commenced in *Forward*, 4th October 1912 and ran to August 1914. It was written by Janie Allen, a Glasgow suffragette and social worker. C. Sowerwine, 'Socialism, Feminism and the Socialist Women's Movement ',

attention in *Forward* throughout the period 1910-1936. Rowan also argues that the ILP were more conscious of the suffrage question because of the influence of their radical suffrage members including Ada Neild Chew, Selina Cooper and Eva Gore-Booth.[32] The Clydeside ILP was also so influenced by radical suffrage members who included Janie Allen, Helen Crawfurd, Jessie Stephen and Agnes Dollan.

Of equal, if not of more significance to the question of women's suffrage was the second factor, the political wing of the labour movement were actively attempting to secure municipal representation. It was noted by the Glasgow Women's Labour League that women held sufficient voting power in two-thirds of Glasgow's municipal constituencies to alter the fortunes of the labour movement.[33] Female votes already represented a force which could alter the fortunes of the ILP. Women not only had voting power at municipal level, but having contested the bourgeois ideology of the 'angel in the home' by embracing the moral causes of philanthropy, they had penetrated the 'social' area of politics. Ethical politics complemented the ILP's heritage of radical liberalism and its focus on social reform,[34] providing scope for working-class women to enter the formal world of Labour politics. Hence tradition and both sexes facilitated a definition of 'women's politics' whereby the ethics of the home would filter into politics once the franchise was conceded. By 1911, Regan, the municipal candidate for Rutherglen, made an 'appeal to the women', in which he stated that he would fight for, 'fair rents, reduced rates, improved public health, healthy homes and recreational grounds for children' - all aspects of women's demands in this period. He also asserted, 'I am a total abstainer and I will fight for a sober Rutherglen'.[35] This was often of importance to women, especially those subjected to male abuses of the wage. Agnew, the candidate for Coatbridge

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E.Bridenthal, S.M.Stuard and M.E.Wiesner, [eds.], *Becoming Visible*, pp.377-383.

[32] C. Rowan, 'Women in the Labour Party, 1906-1920', pp.77-78. See also J. Liddington, *Selina Cooper*, pp.159-180.

[33] *Forward*, 16th January 1915.

[34] For the links between radical liberalism and labourism see, R.J. Finlay, 'Continuity and change : Scottish Politics 1900-45', T.M. Devine & R.J. Finlay, [eds.], *Scotland In The 20th Century*, pp.73-75 and J.F. McCaffrey, 'Political issues and developments', W.H. Fraser & I. Maver, [eds.], *Glasgow vol.II*, Manchester, 1996, pp.186-226. Turnbull has also demonstrated that prior involvement in philanthropy characterised the backgrounds of the women who were elected to London's School Boards between 1870-1904. A. Turnbull, ' "So extremely like parliament " : women members of the London School Board, 1870-1904', London Feminist History Group, [eds.], *Sexual Dynamics*, p.123.

[35] *Forward*, 18th November 1911.

also revolved his address around the housing question, while Taylor, the candidate for Govan stressed open spaces for children's recreation and Temperance.[36] Housing as a political issue was combined with the price of food and fuel. In 1915 thirty branches of the ILP put forward a resolution to Glasgow City Council directing their attention to the 'big increases in the price of food, fuel and housing'.[37]

Working-class women used this currency to make their presence felt. By 1910 Agnes Hardie, who would later represent the Labour Party as a national MP for Springburn, Glasgow, was elected to the school board, as was Miss Pemberton of the Trades Council.[38] Other prominent socialist and labour movement women who were politically active locally included Helen Crawfurd, Agnes Dollan and Mary Barbour. These women were leaders of the rent strikes on the Clyde in 1915. They were suffragettes as well as socialist, ILP and Labour activists, who worked in unison with the communist Labour Housing Association, the Women's Peace Crusade, the ILP and other labour movement organisations.[39] So was Jessie Stephen, a suffragette, who was a member of the ILP and the Domestic Women's Federation.[40]

Housing, which these women claimed to be a 'women's issue',[41] began to penetrate the politics of the labour movement with increasing force, promoted by eminent socialists including these women and the Marxist, John Maclean.[42] Other issues which were introduced by women were also given significance. Thus the links between poverty and the life chances of children were increasingly advanced by women.[43] The Govanhill branch of the Women's Labour League brought attention to 'the necessity of baby clinics and decent housing'. Rowan states that Labour women's feminism appealed directly to working-class women. 'By asserting

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36 *Forward,* 25th November 1912.
37 *Forward,* 28th January 1915.
38 *Forward,* 5th March 1910. See also, 24th September 1910.
39 C. Harvie, 'Before the Breakthrough 1888-1922', C. Harvie, I Donnachie, S.I. Wood, [eds.], *Forward! Labour Politics in Scotland 1888-1988,* Edinburgh, 1989, p.28.
40 J. Liddington, *The Long Road To Greenham,* London, 1989, p.112.
41 *Forward,* 31st January 1913.
42 John Maclean 'The Great Housing Scandal in Greenock', *Forward,* 5th March 1910.
43 See, *Forward,* 27th May 1910.

the value of their work in the home, they gave women houseworkers a sense of their own worth and value to the community.'[44] In this way working-class women on Clydeside came to be the subjects of, and to participate in, a revolution of ideas in which there was an increasing recognition that, it was, '. . . selfish to fight for more leisure, more pay and better working conditions for working men if the wives and mothers of the working class are to linger on forever under a system of bondage to which most of them are at present subjected'. [45] However, these women were also pragmatic. They understood the need for separate organisations for women, maintaining that, although 'theoretically the ILP had always welcomed women' there existed a requirement for separate organisations to facilitate the "specialised work" of women'.[46]

Thus to perceive the ILP on Clydeside between the wars as an organisation which neglected women as a political constituency is contentious. This dismisses the contribution to the party's electoral success linked to the mobilisation of women, and the service of women in the ILP, Labour Party, Co-operative Women's Guild and other socialist organisations not only to that mobilisation, but to the promotion of policies which were of major concern to their constituents, and in particular working-class women.[47] These policies were enshrined in a multiplicity of demands by female activists, but especially in those for a social wage, decent housing, education and health. Kate Beaton stated, 'our demands are but an expression of our social commonsense'.[48] In this, Clydeside women were little different from female activists in the labour movement throughout Britain before World War I.[49]

Apparently by the inter-wars years, however, the progress of women within the labour movement was subverted. Selina Cooper certainly complained that after World War I, a radical suffragette background, an anti-war position and the 'preference for selecting men

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44 C. Rowan, 'Women in the Labour Party, 1906-1920', *Feminist Review*, 1982, p.90.
45 *Forward*, 1st June 1911.
46 Ibid., 31st January 1915.
47 M.Savage, 'Urban Politics and the Rise of the Labour Party', H. Corr, & L. Jamieson, [eds.], *State, Private Life and Political Change*, pp.211-221.
48 *Forward*, 29th March 1924.
49 P. Graves, *Labour Women Women in British Working-class Politics 1918-1939*, Cambridge, 1994, pp.46-57.

from powerful trade unions' were impediments against the entry of women into politics, even local politics. It also seems that in the post-war years women's demands within the confines of the Labour Party were more likely to be contained within the terms of the sexual division of labour ideology.[50] Hannam qualifies this. She notes that, although there were competing notions of feminism and that these competed with anti-feminist ideas, most female activists within the labour movement were feminist in some form or another.[51] There were women on Clydeside, like many of the female activists of the labour movement throughout Britain, who did indeed act in feminist ways between the wars.

The ideals and aims of, and the obstacles to feminism in the labour movement

The dominant feminist ideal shared by many women of the labour movement on Clydeside was an assertion of the feminine, a demand that although women had different roles and political concerns, they should nevertheless, be treated as equals, their roles and political aims complimentary to those of men's. Such 'prudence' may have been to their benefit. Savage's comparative study highlights that on Clydeside, as opposed to regions in England such as Preston, there was a more positive correlation between the advancement of working-class political consciousness because community issues were acknowledged, and women enlisted to secure these. However, party was as important as region in determining women's experiences. Selina Cooper, as highlighted, complained that the anti-war position adopted by many socialist-feminists contributed to their inability to secure selection as labour movement candidates after the World War I, even at the level of local government. As will become evident, this was not an impediment to women on Clydeside, where, females were actively encouraged and selected to stand as municipal candidates. Many of these women were feminists who had adopted an anti-war position, conspicuous in ILP circles. A number of these women were also successfully elected. In fact, by contrast to the situation in the north

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50 J. Liddington, *Selina Cooper*, p.297 and C. Rowan, ' "Mothers, Vote Labour!", R. Brunt & C. Rowan, [eds.], *Feminism Culture and Politics*, pp.59-84 respectively. See also C. Collette, *For Labour and for Women.*

51 J. Hannam, 'Women and Politics', J. Purvis, [ed.], *Women's History*, p.237.

of England, the anti-war stance of ILP members acted as a positive force in their post-war electoral success because war- weariness and the impact of a relatively high death toll was more evident than patriotic sentiments in Scotland.[52] Thus party and place proved forces which contributed to Clydeside women's greater ease of entry into the political world, especially at the level of local government.

These factors, and the positive correlation between a community perspective in the politics of the ILP and women's political enlistment to secure the latter allowed women of the labour movement to develop an agenda which was wide. This included demands for the recognition of housewifery and motherhood, women's roles, and the contribution these roles made to society. These activists also advanced demands to secure economic freedom for married women in the form of an endowment and they sought equal citizenship, equal pay for equal work, and significantly, a women's right to control her fertility. They went beyond this. Women of the ILP argued for direct labour schemes for women to assist those who wished to work in the formal economy, whilst liberating those who desired the roles of wife and mother. Women of the labour movement also demanded that marriage bars be removed. This was a programme, therefore, which was channelled against the male domination of their movement through a contesting world view, and not an agenda entirely framed within the existing sexual division of labour.

Rowan suggests that World War I acted as a catalyst which ensured that within the labour movement the sexual division of labour was not challenged by female activists. She maintains that it was not just pressure from male trade unionists which had a negative effect on attitudes towards women's emancipation. Women activists were affected by the harsh realities of war work. This, in combination with the realisation that women were a genuine threat to male employment, because of dilution and their lower rates of pay, combined to ensure

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[52] M. Savage, 'Urban Politics and the Rise of the Labour Party', H. Corr, & L. Jamieson, [eds.], *State, Private Life and Political Change*, pp.209-222 ; J. Liddington, *Selina Cooper*, p.297 and for the anti-war stance of the ILP and the benefits accrued from this see, J. Liddington, *The Long Road to Greenham*, pp.29-41, C. Harvie, as quoted in I. Mclean, *The Legend of Red Clydeside*, p.22 and J. Melling, *Rent Strikes People's Struggle for Housing in West Scotland 1890-1916*, Edinburgh,1983, p.39.

retrenchment. This, she states, was also highlighted by what might be regarded as Labour's post-war manifesto for women, *Women and the Labour Party*. The manifesto called for the expulsion of women from war work, and opposed a family endowment of cash, shoring up the ideal of the breadwinner. These forces moderated a challenge to the sexual division of labour.[53] Graves, concurs with Rowan on the issue of retrenchment although she suggests that this was a product of the combined forces of the domination of men in British politics, and an adverse economic climate. The latter contributed to a declining membership of women's labour movement organisations in depressed areas which corresponded with a rise of young better educated females who saw poverty from a distance and who disliked feminism. Compounding this situation was the way in which women of the labour movement under-estimated the power of women's votes and this was exacerbated because women of the labour movement were torn between their loyalties to their class and gender. Women's class awareness increasingly took precedence over their gender concerns, it seems, when the Conservative government, 'set out to punish the unions for their temerity in calling the General Strike', and when both sexes felt compelled to support their class in the struggle against 'reactionary government and fascism in the later 1930s'.[54] Thus after a rare period of unity, strength and optimism between 1917-1920, women were unable to mount a challenge against the male dominance of the Labour party, particularly at national level, although less so locally.[55] By 1933 the relationship between the Labour Party and women had collapsed.[56] Scott suggests that the women of the Co-operative Women's Guild also lost their radical and feminist edge by the 1930s. She attributes this to various factors, but primarily she believes socio-political changes and changes in the Guild's leadership ensured that the Guild lost its independence and autonomy. By the 1930s under the new secretary Eleanor Barton and her circle, those perceived as undesirable, that is women who did not sympathise with the Labour

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53 C. Rowan, 'Mothers, Vote Labour!' R. Brunt & C. Rowan, [eds.], *Feminism Culture and Politics*, pp.80-82.
54 P. Graves, *Labour Women*, p.10 and P. Graves, ' An Experiment in Women-Centred Socialism', H. Gruber & P. Graves, [eds.], *Women and Socialism*, pp.181-214.
55 P. Graves, *Labour Women*, p.5.
56 P. Graves, ' An Experiment in Women-Centred Socialism', H. Gruber & P. Graves, [eds.], *Women and Socialism*, p.181.

Party, including Communist Party members, were ousted. Moreover, the Guild itself, following the Labour Party line, began to subscribe to conventional notions of working-class womanhood and women's role in the family rather than promoting women as citizens as they had done up until the 1930s. Harrison implicitly concurs. He states, the Co-operative Women's Guild 'kept aloof from feminist bodies' between the wars.[57]

Thane is much more positive in her analysis of women in the Labour Party. Thane argues that it was women who were responsible for placing welfare on the Labour Party's agenda and that this contributed to the improvement in health care between the wars. Thane does concede that the gains these women accrued fell far short of their aims. Nevertheless, these aims were both extensive and for that matter, feminist in nature. Labour women between the wars, while not explicitly, developed , 'a critique of the sexual division of labour, and the role of the state and the labour market in constructing and reinforcing the sexual division of labour'. She maintains that this was achieved by seeking 'a politics which valued, rather than devalued, the home' and women's experiences therein, and that this was done without simultaneously devaluing women's paid work. She states that these women 'sought to develop a state and a society in which the marriage relationship and male earnings need not necessarily subordinate and silence women'. Labour women hoped to achieve, 'compatibility between gender equality and gender difference',[58] what Gordon claimed was not 'incompatible but difficult : complementary gender roles along with equality of the sexes'.[59] These women thus promoted the 'companionate marriage', and advanced policies to improve and enhance the value of women's roles. Policies ranged from separation allowances and family endowment to opposition to marriage bars and the promotion of training schemes for working women.[60] Hannam, while reluctant to generalise, concurs that there was a great

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57 G. Scott, *Feminism And The Politics of Working Women The Women's Co-operative Guild 1880s To The Second World War*, Sussex, 1998 and B. Harrison, *Prudent Revolutionaries*, p.147.

58 P Thane, 'Visions of gender in the making of the British welfare state : the case of women in the British Labour Party and social policy 1906-1945, G. Bock & P. Thane, [eds.], *Maternity and Gender Policies Women and the Rise of the European States 1880s-1950s*, London, 1991, pp. 95-97.

59 E. Gordon, 'Women and working-class politics', H. Corr and L. Jamieson, [eds.], *State, Private Life and Political Change*, p.234.

60 P Thane, 'Visions of gender', G. Bock & P. Thane, [eds.], *Maternity and Gender*, pp. 98-99. See also P. Thane, 'The

variety of perspectives on feminism within the labour movement, and this did allow women to make gains. However, she too acknowledges that class issues remained more central than questions relating to women's emancipation. It seems that this 'hampered', although it did not entirely negate, 'collaboration with single-sex feminist organisations'.[61]

On Clydeside many of the conditions which these historians identify as impediments to women's political progress existed between the wars. However, on Clydeside the dominant political force was not the Labour party, but the ILP, identified as the 'social conscience' of the Labour Party. This may have influenced women's experiences of the labour movement in this region, and, moreover, the attitudes of women in the Co-operative Women's Guild's with whom it had links. However, like numerous women of the Labour Party in many regions of Britain, women of the ILP were initially encouraged to forward 'women's interests' and they continued to do so throughout the 1920s and early 1930s. They did so by exploiting the ILP's promotion of municipal socialism which overlapped with 'women's issues'. Nevertheless, ILP women in the region were hampered by the peripheralisation of the party from the centre of power, by the male dominance of the movement, and by severe economic conditions. Class also fragmented alliances with single-sex feminists organisations in the region, but class loyalties were not exclusive to the men and women of the labour movement. At times the feminist organisations of the Clyde and women, and for that matter some men, from the ILP, women from the Labour Party and from the Co-operative Women's Guild did combine their efforts to promote 'women's issues', but as will become evident, Clydeside's feminists were overtly middle-class and their interests reflected this. Even in this context, though, many women of the labour movement did promote a variety of feminist issues.

The aims of the women of the labour movement in general were not equality of the sexes, nor were they equal status for each sex. It was a combination of both. In contrast to Feurer's claim that there were 'two different notions of sisterhood',[62] one shared by women of the

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Women of the British Labour Party and Feminism 1906-1945', H.L.Smith, [ed.], *British Feminism*, pp. 124-143.

61 J. Hannam, 'Women and Politics', J. Purvis, [ed.], *Women's History*, p.238.

62 As quoted in D.Cairns, *Women and the Clydeside Labour movement*, p.117.

labour movement and quite another by the feminist movement, working-class women's feminism was little different from the 'relational' or 'new' feminism of the inter-war years in its assertion of the feminine. The feminism of the women of the labour movement stemmed from the legacy of the suffrage campaigns. It was also, however, a product of the experiences of being a women as well as a response to the ruptures created by war, votes for women and the post-war economic and political climate. Thus they promoted, 'what was not incompatible but difficult : complementary gender roles along with equality of the sexes'. These women operated from a gender consciousness pre-ordained as subordinate and, as such, their main aim was a desire for the emancipation of women as women. In this vein their politics revolved around demands for liberation, but one which recognised women's most under-valued roles, their biological roles and their roles within the family, the positive and significant societal functions of women as housewives and mothers which had hitherto been negated. The level of political progress achieved from the contradictory politics of equality demands based on different but equal gender status was determined by three major factors. Perhaps the most positive factor initially operating in women's favour was their political 'unpredictability'. Thus, concessions had to be offered, at least in the short-term. In the longer-term what would determine the level of women's political potency within the labour movement was undoubtedly the way in which working-class women challenged the supremacy of male interests and the level of compatibility between the two competing ideals of womanhood from which labour women drew. On Clydeside, this was significantly impressed upon by a combination of structural, ideological and economic forces which fused to disarm the political influence of working-class women and favoured men.

The discourse which promoted the traditional women's role, its language and symbolism which linked 'women' and the 'social', was combined with the image of the liberated women to give meanings to the agenda of many labour movement women and used to unite different women's groups. Yet, this was internalised by men and women of the ILP, the Labour Party and the Co-operative Women's Guild in different ways, narrowing the possible scope of

'women's politics'. Thus, whilst men and women of the labour movement, even men and women of the same party, may have used the same language and symbols to formulate policies, they often came to very different interpretations of what those policies actually meant and more significantly what they should achieve. This proved a major obstacle to women of the labour movement. As problematic was the need to accommodate a very diverse constituency of women, whilst at the same time challenging men's attempts to undermine women's demands by categorising them as merely 'special interests'. This was exacerbated because female activists had to advance their world view in an adverse economic climate in which the onset of mass unemployment and the threat of job losses caused extreme male insecurity and defensiveness. Working-class men's vulnerability and their resistance to 'feminine influence' in politics was enshrined by the male dominated labour movement's increasing emphasis on unemployment as the primary source of political propaganda. Unemployment was presented as a male affliction and one of public concern, as opposed to the personified 'personal' nature of women's demands. Highlighting unemployment resulted in 'women's reforms' being side-lined. Therefore women had to develop an agenda with many signifiers to appeal to the diversity of their constituents, and at the same time challenge both class and broadening gender discrimination. Many women did develop such a programme. They were hampered, however, by the necessary complexity of their world view, combined with the increasing force with which the male agenda was forwarded. And, it was this which determined the level of continuity and change with regards to working-class women's political progress in the post-war period.

Exasperating the power of these forces was the fact that the majority of working-class women between the wars had neither the material, social or political resources for participation in formal politics. Even female members of political organisations often faced the impediments of shortage of time, money and child-care. Nevertheless, the extension of the franchise and therefore access to the ballot box, offered an accessible form of political expression to many women hitherto barred from exercising formal political consciousness.

The results were ambiguous. The shift towards formal politics incurred a movement away from community based politics, a central aspect of ILP mobilisation of women prior to World War I. Divorcing working-class women from a relatively accessible form of political expression, this, none the less, offered a medium for working-class women to forward their political 'speciality'. The 'speciality' of female activists had taken the form of pressure politics allowing them flexibility and fluidity in a wide range of questions which concerned women. This may explain why there exists little evidence to suggest that women felt themselves excluded from the ILP's power structures. It also implies that women's pressure politics were effective. Indeed the evidence indicates that unlike the experiences of feminist activists in the north of England, in Scotland it was men within the labour movement who, at least initially, perceived benefits from enlisting the support of working-class women, although they accepted that this support could no longer be unconditional. In 1922 the ILP appealed directly to working-class women to stand for election for the Education Boards, stating, 'women are especially required . . . as the work of education administration will never be adequately or efficiently under-taken . . . until there is a considerable proportion of women'. [63] Arguably, these elections were of less importance than general elections in the wider political agenda, and, where the party fared least well on Clydeside at this time. Yet, the labour movement was in financial difficulty because of the extent of unemployment on Clydeside. In 1922 the ILP had to double up candidates at local and national elections to limit overheads.[64] Municipalisation formed a major plank of the ILP's policy and prominent male members of the party, including James Maxton, MP for Bridgeton, stood as candidates for the Education Boards. What is more, the remit of the Education Boards included overseeing the clothing, feeding and medical care of children in need. It was the Education Boards who determined whether books would be free or otherwise. They could advocate the introduction of spray baths. These were major concerns in a city like Glasgow which, by 1921, had 70,000 registered unemployed, estimated to be responsible for 100,000 dependants, so that almost one in six of the population was

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[63] *Forward*, 25th February 1922.
[64] *Glasgow Evening Times*, 2nd November 1922.

affected by unemployment.[65] By February 1922 those unemployed had risen to 86,000.[66] Thus those out of work, not to mention those on short time, perhaps accurately account for the quarter of the populace of Glasgow whom Patrick Dollan, leader of the ILP group in Glasgow City Council referred to as living in destitution.[67] Many of these people lived on the margins in overcrowded housing conditions lacking sanitary facilities. Overcrowding and poor sanitation contributed to the high incidence of infant mortality and disease. Greenock, Motherwell and Paisley fared no better. Paisley had a poor record in public health and a reputation as the dirtiest and most unhealthy town in Scotland. It was not until 1923 that a drainage system was installed in Paisley.[68] In Lanarkshire, a medical inspection of 74,818 children was undertaken in 1931. It found that 36.6% had some disability and 70% required dental treatment.[69] Greenock, as already highlighted, had the highest levels of unemployment on Clydeside. *Forward* issued an article in April 1932 which highlighted how the poor lived in Greenock : 'thirty six people share one lavatory. The houses are rat infested. There is one wash-house for forty-eight households and up to eleven of a family residing in single apartments. Sewage runs from the upstairs flats into the homes below'.[70] Mr GRA recollected that,

> When I started in the school in 1929 there was a great deal of poverty. In fact the school where I was at the beginning, the school children were coming into the school in their bare feet - they'd no boots. One of the earliest jobs I had to do was to arrange for them to be measured for boots and supplied with the boots by the local school boards . . . And you see some of the children . . . used tae be sewn in for the winter. Can you imagine what that was like? Sewn in for the winter. [71]

By the ILP's own admission it was working-class women who placed these concerns on the political agenda. *Forward* reported thus,

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65 *Forward*, 21st April 1921.
66 *Forward*, 4th February and 25th February 1922 ; 15th July 1922 and 2nd September 1922.
67 P.Dollan, as quoted in *Forward*, 11th February 1922.
68 See, C.M.M. Macdonald, *The Radical Thread*, p.109.
69 *Forward*, 18th April 1931.
70 *Forward*, 2nd April 1932.
71 Interview with author, MrGRA, born 1906 Greenock, Renfrewshire.

> The growing political power of women and their intense desire for better home conditions will be a great aid in effecting the peaceful revolution in civic administration. Women are practical and more concerned about securing a fuller life for their children . . . We are on the threshold of tremendous developments. Politics are being rapidly domesticated. [72]

These were to be concerns which remained instrumental in ILP policy throughout the inter-war period, although moderated and increasingly subservient to concerns over, primarily male unemployment.

On Clydeside there are also indications that the ILP was more 'women-friendly' than other socialist organisations. 'Glasgow had a strong tradition of women activists from the ILP'. In fact, Cairns states, 'regardless of the number of women in the Labour Party sections in Glasgow it was certainly the case that most of the grass roots activities of women were under the auspices of the ILP' which had its own Women's groups and a Women's Advisory Council. It also had a Scottish ILP Women's Advisory Council, which was in addition 'a forum for education classes'. In the 1920s the ILP made deliberate attempts to attract and involve more women. By the 1925 ILP Conference it was reported that, 'women delegates were numerous and capable' and that women were gaining 'more confidence', and as Cairns shows, 1925 was also the year when the ILP's membership reached its highest level in Scotland suggesting that 'it is likely that this was a reflection of the number of women members'. Some areas of the city were very successful : 25% of Partick's membership were women.[73]

Yet although membership was rising the evidence regarding the selection of female candidates for local and national government is more complex. The selection of women for national elections was marginal at best. However, the region had two female MPs, Agnes Hardie and Jennie Lee and Jean Mann unsuccessfully contested West Renfrewshire. By comparison, the Co-operative Women's Guild who claimed to be making successful in-roads

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72 *Forward,* 7th November 1922.
73 D. Cairns, *Women and the Clydeside Labour Movement,* p.113.

in Parish and Town Council elections lamented in 1931 on their inability to gain a seat in the national elections.[74]

The selection of women for local elections, however, was more progressive. In 1920 eight female labour movement candidates were elected to Glasgow City Council. By 1925, 24% of the council's labour representatives were women. These figures whilst not remarkable, none the less compare favourably with the post-World War II situation in the London Labour run County Council where, by 1952, 25% of the councillors were women. London, admittedly was behind Northumberland and Newcastle Upon Tyne where 29% of councillors were women, but in many regions of England the figures remained between five and ten percent.[75] Moreover, it was the ILP which was most likely to sponsor working-class women as candidates in municipal elections on Clydeside. The ILP on Clydeside continued to forward the same candidates. For a party with limited resources, exacerbated by rising unemployment, the prior experience, reputation and recognition of a candidate was important, and these candidates included the prominent socialist women of the 1915 Rent Strikes, Mary Barbour, Helen Crawfurd and Agnes Dollan who stood in various electoral campaigns. They also included Agnes Hardie, who took the Springburn seat after the death of her husband and Jean Mann who unsuccessfully contested the West Renfrewshire parliamentary seat in 1931 and again in 1935. Jean Mann had been active in the ILP. She became a baillie of Glasgow Council in 1934 and was Convenor of the Housing Committee between 1935 and 1938. These women were joined by a younger generation of activists including Jennie Lee, the left-wing MP for north Lanarkshire. In addition to these women there was the trade union activist and local councillor Eleanor Stewart. There was also the suffragette and Domestic Servants Friendly Society organiser Elizabeth Maclean and Kate Beaton, who became a National executive of the Labour Party as well as Helen Gault, a local councillor and ILP propagandist

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[74] *Glasgow Herald* 17th May 1931. Women of all political persuasions made little headway as candidates in Britain. In 1924, female Labour MPs as a percentage of all women MPs was 25%. By 1929 female Labour MPs as a percentage of all women MPs had risen to 69.2%, rising again in 1945 to 87.5. H. Palmer, *The Longman Companion To The Labour Party 1900-1998*, London, 1999, p.180

[75] D. Cairns, *Women and the Clydeside Labour Movement*, p.106 and *Labour Women*, January 1952.

propagandist who wrote a 'women's column' for *Forward*. Other distinguished labour movement activists elected to Glasgow City Council were Laura Maclean, wife of John Maclean, the ILP MP for Govan Glasgow. She was a local councillor for Kingston along with Jean Roberts, and Mrs Hay, wife of the ex-ILP MP for Cathcart. They were joined by Agnes Lauder, Alice Cullen, Christine Moody, Christine Muir and Mrs Morrison. There were also eighteen unsuccessful female candidates who stood between the wars in Glasgow. This list is not exhaustive, but other women who gained 'national recognition' were Clarice McNab, who married William Shaw, secretary of the Glasgow trades council. She became president of the Scottish Labour Party executive committee as early as 1918. There was also Stephanie McGill, the ILP Women's Sections organiser and Mary Shannon of the National Executive of the ILP. [76] Most of these Clydeside women successfully represented the labour movement as candidates in national and local elections or as leading figures in the movement. Women from the ILP, the Labour Party and the Co-operative Women's Guild also actively supported male candidates and no doubt influenced the labour movement's agenda. Support is rarely unconditional. Women may have been on the periphery of the power structures of the political wing of the labour movement, but they were never completely marginalised. They continued to find ways, as this chapter will demonstrate, to 'express their commonsense demands', working within the bounds of limited social, economic and cultural resources. they often did so, moreover, without the support of the women who proclaimed themselves 'feminists'.

'Sisters divided': the ILP and Clydeside 'feminists'

The obstacles faced by women of the labour movement on Clydeside were intensified because of class relations in the region. It is a commonly held view that the labour movement became increasingly hostile to the women's movement in the post-war period. Pugh maintains that 'some workingmen retained an abiding suspicion of all women's organisations as

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[76] FWS Craig, *British Parliamentary Election Results 1918-1949*, Surrey, 1983, pp.571-634. See also, W.W.Knox, *Scottish Labour Leaders*, pp.51, 136-137, 197-199 & 254 and D. Cairns, *Women and the Clydeside Labour Movement*, pp.96-116.

inherently middle class and divisive. Thus women of the labour movement were warned throughout the 1920s that separate sex organisations are fundamentally undemocratic and wholly reactionary'. He further asserts, 'this desire to inoculate Labour against the contagion of feminism was rather counter-productive in that it merely had the effect of gradually reducing the traffic between the two movements which had been to the party's advantage during the war and post-war years'. Alberti concurs, arguing that 'women's involvement in labour politics helped strain feminist solidarity in the 1920s . . . and encouraged the leadership of the party to be hostile to feminists'. For the Clydeside region, Cairns, has attributed the lack of support for female labour movement candidates from feminist organisations to the labour movement's demonstration of 'patriarchy'.[77]

What is significant about these interpretations of the divisions which developed in the 1920s between the labour movement and feminist organisations is, that whilst many identify class as a factor, they do so only in relation to the labour movement. It seems that because 'class issues remained more central then the question of women's emancipation' in the labour movement, this, 'hampered collaboration with single-sex feminist groups'.[78] However, the inverse may be equally true. Certainly Hannah Mitchell a contemporary suffragette and ILP member condemned feminists from the Women's Social and Political Union for adopting a policy of attacking all political party leaders when the 'ILP leadership's support for their cause had never wavered'. As a suffragette she maintained, 'perhaps we owed most gratitude to the ILP for even when they strongly disapproved of militancy, they would lend us their platforms and stand by to protect us from the hooligans'.[79] Yet, Sowerwine also highlights that in Britain the bourgeois feminist movement undertook direct action and mobilised the support of working-class women. He stresses that British feminist did so because they had no fear of

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77 M. Pugh, *Women and the Women's Movement in Britain*, 2nd Ed., p.134, D.Cairns, *Women and the Clydeside labour movement*, pp.116-118 and Alberti as quoted in J. Hannam, 'Women and Politics', J. Purvis, [ed.], *Women's History*, p.238. See also P. Graves, ' An Experiment in Women-Centred Socialism', H. Gruber & P. Graves, [eds.], *Women and Socialism*, p.200. and S. Pedersen, 'The Failure of Feminism In The Making of the British Welfare State', *Radical History Review*, 43, 1987, pp. 86-110 for the problems caused by the divisions between 'equality' and 'welfare' feminists'.
78 J. Hannam, 'Women and Politics', J. Purvis, [ed.], *Women's History*, p.238.
79 G. Mitchell, *Hannah Mitchell Suffragette and Rebel*, p.177.

endangering the existing social order unlike their counterparts in continental Europe who feared to take such a course of action because of their experience of many revolts and wars.[80] Thus extreme forms of working-class militancy and the subsequent impact on the perceptions of the bourgeoisie towards working-class people could be an instrumental impediment to class alliances. Due to this, feminist alliances with the labour movement in Britain may not have been as uniform as Sowerwine's argument suggests. From 1910 class relations had been increasingly strained by working-class militancy on Clydeside. This conflict, workplace and community based, continued throughout the war years and beyond, and moreover, was perceived by Clydeside's civic society as political in nature. The feminist movement on Clydeside was largely middle-class and arguably these 'feminists' reacted negatively to this militancy and the rise of the party associated with its mobilisation, the ILP on the Clyde, increasingly so, as the inter-war period progressed along with the party's political progress at national and local level. Certainly, Dollan of the ILP, who supported some feminist issues, none the less condemned feminists for their refusal to support the female candidates put forward by the labour movement.[81] The Glasgow and West of Scotland Women's Suffrage Society nominated, and financially and physically supported, female Liberal and Unionist candidates, but none from the Labour Party, the ILP or even the more women-centred Co-operative Women's Guild. These 'feminist' candidates stood in mainly middle-class wards, which included the Kelvinside, Pollock, Cathcart, Sandyford and Park wards of Glasgow. The executive of the Glasgow and West of Scotland Women's Suffrage Society, were associated with the hierarchy of the Unionist Party. In 1920 Miss Alexander resigned her membership on the executive to take up the post as Organiser to the Unionist Association.[82] This party was not noted for its feminist sympathies, albeit it was a party

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80. C. Sowerwine, 'Socialism, Feminism and the Socialist Women's Movement', E.Bridenthal, S.M.Stuard and M.E.Wiesner, [eds.], *Becoming Visible*, p.376.

81 *Forward*, 13th November 1920.

82 MLG/SR157/891036/3, Glasgow and West of Scotland Women's Suffrage Society Manuscript Minutes [Henceforth GWSS Man. Mins], especially 17th January 1921, 7th February 1921, 3rd March 1921, 7th November, 27th February 1222, 20th November 1922, 4th September 1922, 2nd and 16th October 1922, 6th November 1922 and 18th December 1922. This organisations changed its name to Glasgow Society for Equal Citizenship [GSEC Exec. Mins.].

in which women played an active political role. At this time, as with current images of the female voter, it was believed that women were more inclined to vote Conservative. Putting Unionists candidates forward, then, could have been a political strategy by this organisation. Unquestionably, as will be highlighted, there was a greater predilection amongst women to vote for a Conservative, and to a lesser extent, a Liberal candidates in a number of Clydeside constituencies. Campbell insists that the forces of gender, age and religion and the promotion of issues which strengthen the family, along with the creation, by the party, of a culture which embraced women, but 'celebrated their subordination' were among the factors which have ensured that 'a political tradition so little associated with the emancipation of women was so strongly rooted among women'. Yet, like Thane, she does not believe women are naturally Conservative voters. Thane demonstrates that although 'it is generally assumed by political sociologists that women have a natural inclination to vote Conservative there is little hard evidence for this'. She also highlights that where studies of women's voting behaviour do exist it is middle-class women who tend to be so inclined. Furthermore, where women do turn from the Labour Party they do not automatically support the Conservative Party.

In relation to the Liberal Party, which many Clydeside feminist also allied themselves to, Stanley Holton has shown that this party's position on the 'women's question' had exasperated many feminist to such an extent that they turned from the party and this contributed to the fragmentation and subsequent decline of the party between the wars. However, as noted, feminists from the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies had already allied themselves to the Labour Party and by 1912 they had established an 'Election Fighting Fund'.[83] Clydeside feminists do not seem to have observed the national policy.

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[83] B. Campbell, *The Iron Ladies Why do women vote Tory*, London, 1987, pp.3-7 & pp.34-112 ; P. Thane, 'Women since 1945', P. Johnson, [ed.], *20th Century Britain Economic Social and Cultural Change*, London, 1994, p.404 and S. Stanley Holton, *Feminism and Democracy Women's Suffrage and Reform Politics in Britain*, Cambridge, 1986, especially pp.149-155. For women and the Conservative vote see also, M. Pugh 'Popular Conservatism in Britain Continuity and Change', *Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 27, 1988, pp.264-268.

to many of the concessions gained by women in the early inter-war years. It is unlikely that the feminist movement would have been any more certain that women would be inclined to vote for either a Conservative or Liberal candidates on Clydeside. Neither of these parties held the mantle of championing women's causes in the region. Thus, it seems that class alliances were more important after 1918 for many feminist of the Clyde than feminist unity itself.

By the 1930s any uncertainty about women and their voting preferences would have been diminished, and on Clydeside at least, the ILP did enjoy immense support in many working-class localities, and as highlighted, among women. Yet at the local elections in 1930 no 'feminist' candidates stood in Hutchesontown, Cowlairs, Gorbals, or Cowcaddens, predominantly working-class localities in which labour movement candidates were favoured. Nor did they promote or finance a women from the labour movement in any of these constituencies. Moreover, even where this organisation did attempt to put forward female candidates in working-class wards in 1930 the political allegiance to the Liberal and Unionist parties remained unaltered. Their lack of success in working-class wards was summed up by one of their prominent activists, Helen Blair. She point blank refused to stand in the ILP constituency of Springburn stating that she would not stand again unless a more hopeful seat became available. Perhaps it was not the seats selected which needed to be addressed. By 1933 the organisation was disbanded. Pugh notes how they blamed the 'depression, competition from other women's organisations and an underlying lack of purpose for their demise'.[84] The 'feminism' they projected, and to some extent the political loyalties of the self-proclaimed 'feminist' of the Clyde, however, arguably fused to guarantee that support from working-class women was not forthcoming. Sowerwine certainly stresses that 'even in countries where the socialist movement was weakest it reached more women than the bourgeois feminists ever hoped to reach . . . Feminists were held back by their class

[84] GSEC Exec. Mins. 20th October and 15th September 1930 respectively and M. Pugh, 'Domesticity and the Decline of Feminism', H.L. Smith, [ed.], *British Feminism*, pp.147-148.

backgrounds and found themselves unable to make contact with working-class women'.[85] This seems to have been the case on the Clyde, if not throughout Britain.

Initially the ILP, the 'women's party', and feminists shared compatible aims, ideals and strategies. In 1920 Miss Murray of the Glasgow Women's Voters Council asked for the support of ILP members on the Glasgow Council to reject the recommendations of a Special Committee on Wage Conditions of Service. She objected to the increase in war advances to certain sections of the Tramway employees on the account of the differentiation made between male and female workers. She gained the support of prominent ILP men, including Dollan and George Buchanan, MP for the Gorbals constituency. However, on the issue of women's employment while pregnant and after the birth of the child views were more mixed. Because some ILPers, male and female, supported a women's right to work while pregnant and her right to return to work after child-birth, whilst others did not, Dollan stated that the ILP executive would confer with its female membership before setting out its policy on the latter.[86]

In 1922 the ILP and the Glasgow and West of Scotland Suffrage Society also jointly protested against the proposed expulsion of married women from local authority employment. In addition members of this organisation worked with male and female ILPers, on a variety of issues in the early 1920s. These included equal pay for equal work, the right to work, and the promotion of women's welfare and birth control.

After the extension of the franchise in 1928, granting the right to vote to women over twenty-one years, however, the feminist movement split more rigidly into distinct camps, the 'welfare feminism' of the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship, who followed Eleanor Rathbone, and the more peripheral 'equal rights' feminism of organisations like the Six Points Group and the Women's Freedom League.[87] This should have assisted alliances between women of the labour movement and those of the Glasgow Society for Equal

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85 C. Sowerwine, 'Socialism, Feminism and the Socialist Women's Movement', E.Bridenthal, S.M.Stuard and M.E.Wiesner, [eds.], *Becoming Visible*, p.383.
86 *Forward*, 24th April 1920.
87 GWSS Man. Mins 20th December 1920 and 7th November 1921, p.3. See also, *Govan Press,* 22nd October 1926. For feminists divisions, M. Pugh, 'Domesticity and the Decline of Feminism', H.L.Smith, [ed.], *British Feminism*, pp.146-147.

Citizenship, formally the Glasgow and West of Scotland Suffrage Society, because both were committed, at least theoretically, to 'welfare feminism.' In fact women of the labour movement and the Glasgow Society for Equal Citizenship did converge on issues, but outside the formal structures of both organisations, as they did over the issue of information on birth control in the later 1920s. This was an issues which served the interests of middle-class women and therefore was easily supported by middle-class feminists, but, as will become clear, while it also benefited working-class women it strained the class loyalties of women from the labour movement. It seems that where alliances were formed it tended to be when they were to the benefit of middle-class women. The relationship, as this chapter will highlight, was not inverse.

This is evident in Helen Fraser's 1922 electoral campaign for the parliamentary seat of Govan. A prominent member of the Glasgow Suffrage Society, she maintained that she felt aggrieved at what she referred to as 'the labour movement's appropriation of our feminist ideals and policies', namely demands for a Widow's Pension. This was merely propaganda, not from a feminist candidate, but a feminist standing as a Liberal candidate. In addition it was aimed at Neil McLean, who significantly, by their own admission, was the only man to sign the memorial for an equal franchise for women sent out by Glasgow and West of Scotland Suffrage Society. Fraser, although exceptional in that she contested a largely working-class seat, Govan, Glasgow, nevertheless was avowedly middle-class.[88] She gained little support in this constituency. The seat was taken by the ILPer Neil Maclean.

Working-class women might have supported feminism and being identified with feminism was not an impediment to electoral success in working-class localities on Clydeside. The feminist councillor, Mary Barbour represented the Govan constituency for most of the inter-war period. Moreover, the Glasgow and West of Scotland Suffrage Society had nearly 200 members in the Gorbals area of Glasgow, and almost 100 members in Possil, predominantly working-class localities. These figures do not, as will be seen, compare unfavourably with

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88 *Govan Press*, 3rd November 1922 and GWSS Man. Mins, especially 4th September 1922.

membership of labour movement organisations, especially the more popular Co-operative Women's Guild. Furthermore, in 1932 the Govan and Tradeston division of the Glasgow Society for Equal Citizenship was able to host a Burn's night for its 'many members'.[89]

However, while women of both classes could come together on a feminist issue, and although they may have shared the concerns of their gender subjugation, women on Clydeside were divided by material conditions, by their class awareness and over the best means of resolving women's subjugation. Evidence of this is found in the way that the political persuasion of women of the ILP, the Labour Party and the Co-operative Women's Guild was perceived as problematic by members of the women's movement on Clydeside. Mrs Bryson, Mrs Tucker and Miss Morrison of the executive of the Glasgow Society for Equal Citizenship were appointed to write, on behalf of the organisation, to the *Women's Leader* in 1930 complaining that it had become 'too socialist' in it 'tendencies'.[90]

On Clydeside, although not exclusively, the early 1920s were years of greater overt working-class militancy, possibly pushing middle-class feminists into class retrenchment as the working-classes sought a re-ordering of society contrary to their interests. There is no evidence of middle-class feminists supporting housing issues and in particular the rent strikes against excessively high rents for homes which were frequently ill maintained and of appalling condition. Housing was clearly an issue which concerned working-class women and for that matter many 'welfare feminists' whose aims, theoretically the Glasgow Society for Equal Citizenship should have shared because this was the strategy adopted by the national body, the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship. It was also an instrumental aspect of labour women's 'welfare feminism'. Rowan demonstrates that because the women of the Labour party gave women 'houseworkers a sense of their own worth and value to the community' by identifying the home as the workshop of the housewife 'this laid the basis for further campaigns on housing', issues which might never have been political, or for that

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89 GWSS Man Mins., 7th February 1921 and *Govan Press*, 29th January 1932 respectively.
90 GSEC Exec. Mins. 15th December 1930.

matter feminist.[91] Housing, thus, at least for many working-class women was seen as a feminist issue and where it was not it was none the less a political priority.

Feminist organisations, as noted, were also interested in improving the working environment of housewives. The Women's Constitutional Association proposed to 'urge the government to give rent rebates when the family's income did not exceed £3 per week or 10s per head'. Yet the Glasgow Society for Equal Citizenship opposed this proposal.[92] In March 1931 they also contested policies to improve the living environment, the 'workshop' of working-class women, stating, 'due to the level of taxation and the large number of unlet houses the building of Corporation housing should cease except for slum clearance'. This is contrary to the behaviour of feminists in Manchester.[93] The 'tax burden' for Clydeside's 'feminists' seems to be a more significant consideration than 'welfare feminism', one which replicated concerns amongst employers and the reactionary Conservative government of the 1930s which the labour movement challenged. In March 1930 expenditure on social services, which included, at this time, maternity care, child welfare schemes and nurseries, all regarded as feminist issues by the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship was discussed. Mrs Tucker of the executive of the Glasgow Society for Equal Citízenship, nevertheless proposed that,

> In view of the present financial condition of the Country and the great increase in unemployment we do not feel that it is the time to urge for any increases in social services which will mean increased taxation and a further burden on industry.[94]

It is doubtful whether such organisations had any real understanding of the conditions of life endured by the majority of working-class women in Scotland. The Women's Citizens Association, affiliated to the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship, was expected to 'educate women as citizens, foster social contact between them, and promote the skills and

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91 M. Pugh, 'Domesticity and the Decline of Feminism', H.L.Smith, [ed.], *British Feminism*, p.146 and C. Rowan, 'Women in the Labour Party, 1906-1920', *Feminist Review*, 1982, p.90.
92 GSEC Exec.Mins, 19th May 1930.
93 Ibid., 2nd March and 18th May 1931. See also A. Hughes and K. Hunt, ' A culture transformed? Women's lives in Wythenshawe in the 1930s, A. Davies & S. Fielding, [eds.], *Workers' Worlds*, pp.74-101.
94 GSEC Exec. Mins., 17th March 1931. .

interests of women as housewives'. Yet, at the Annual Conference in 1927 of the Scottish Council of Women's Citizens Association, the view was expressed that, 'new modern conditions tend to make homes more habitable and healthy and make the lives of the women who live in them less of a drudgery'.[95] However, while middle-class women had begun to enjoy the benefits of 'new modern conditions', particularly the technological revolution in household goods, few working-class women had access these. For working-class women, in general, life, as a 'home-maker', continued to be nothing short of drudgery.

Working-class women were to receive little assistance in their role as mothers either. The Glasgow and West of Scotland Society for Equal Citizenship rejected any proposals to urge the council to establish nursery schools in congested areas under the education system because of the 'financial situation'.[96] In fact, Titmuss accused the women's movement of giving 'little attention to the problem of continuous child bearing with all its attendant evils of chronic ill-health and premature ageing'.[97] This was certainly the case on the Clyde.

Equally indicative of the attitudes and lack of understanding of working-class women amongst 'feminists', and, arguably, not in the least feminist in any way, was their proposal to reduce benefits and employ unemployed men in receipt of benefits 'installing efficient sanitation facilities'. Their proposals for working women were little better. Working-class women were to be trained to fill 'existing vacancies' and, almost certainly, domestic service would have been high on this list.[98] The decline of domestic servants has been identified as a concern of middle-class women. Domestic servants had been one source of their increasing freedom and this concern to train women to fill existing vacancies, thus, might well have been less than altruistic. Furthermore, at no point in the 1930s had the Glasgow and West of Scotland Society for Equal Citizenship a policy on Family Allowances, contrary to the emphasis on social welfare, a strategy promoted by the 'welfare feminism' of Eleanor

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95 *Glasgow Herald*, 23rd May 1927. For the role of the organisation see, M. Pugh, 'Domesticity and the Decline of Feminism', H.L. Smith, [ed.], *British Feminism*, p.147.
96 Ibid. 20th January and 21st October 1930.
97 R.M.Titmuss, *Essays on the Welfare State*, 3rd ed., London, 1976, p.97.
98 GSEC Exec. Mins., 2nd March and 18th May 1931.

Rathbone and the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship. In actual fact, rather than promoting issues which would benefit women and so attract working-class women to the organisation, as was the intended aim of the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship, local action indicates that this branch of the movement seemed more concerned with the condition of hockey pitch at Rouken Glen, a distinctly middle-class region of Clydeside and the condition, not of worn out women, but of worn out horses.[99]

In as much as the feminists of Clydeside ignored issues which related directly to working women and women of the working-classes, and at times directly opposed their interests, this suggests that class did divide women, but when it did it was not wholly, or even largely, attributable to the labour movement. Middle-class activists throughout Britain progressively perceived legislative reforms as the means to effect the emancipation of their poorer sisters. The desire to initiate welfare reforms, where they existed, arose from a women's consciousness, a universal gender affinity, but the route chosen by middle-class activists was often in sharp contrast to the interests of many working-class women. The attitudes of some 'feminists' towards working women could compound this situation. At the Scottish Equal Citizenship Association's Summer School, Mrs White, gave a talk on the 'Women Workers'. She stated,

> Women's work is monotonous and unintelligent as well as badly paid . . . They gain such employment because no man will do it. Such employment makes them stupid. They wear too much make-up and only think of clothes and boys, not real men. They need stimulation.[100]

It could be suggested that working women, having read this, were no doubt stimulated to perceive feminism in a less than positive light. This divisiveness did not benefit women of any class on Clydeside, an area where male-dominance may have been stronger in some social spaces than it was in other regions of Britain. Endeavours by men to domination in Scotland

99 Ibid,16th September 1929. See also, M. Pugh, 'domesticity and the Decline of feminism', H.L.Smith, [ed.], *British Feminism*, pp.146-147.
100 *Glasgow Herald*, 7th September 1928.

permeated politics, the work-place and society. To some extent these attempts to subvert women were successful, evident in the continued campaign by the Glasgow and West of Scotland Association for Women's Suffrage for the Married Women's Property Act to be introduced in Scotland : that, 'the profits of a married women living with her husband deemed the property of her husband' be removed from the statute books,[101] as it had been in England. Middle-class women had most to gain from such a policy and this might explain why this issue was raised while no account was taken of the fact that the number of married women working in Scotland remained two-thirds that of England until well after 1945.[102] Attitudes towards birth control also lagged behind in the Scottish labour movement and among the Scottish clergy.[103] But knowledge of and access to birth control was also an issue which would emancipate middle-class as well as working-class women and, one therefore, which gained feminist recognition as a feminist issue on Clydeside. Domestic violence did not. Neither the feminists of the Glasgow and West of Scotland Society for Equal Citizenship, nor the women of the labour movement raised the issue. Thus it would seem that not only could women be divided by what they regarded as a 'feminist issue', and by class, but they were also increasingly constrained in terms of what issues they could or would raise. By the 1930s an era of 'shrinking economic opportunities' male tolerance to female aspirations had diminished and hostility to feminism and feminist objectives had increased, exacerbating the divisions created by class.[104]

The 'housewife dilemma' : leadership and constituents

Class divisions were not the only impediment to the women of the labour movement. According to Harry McShane, a contemporary socialist, housewives made up the greatest proportion of active socialist women on the Clyde and these housewives it seems never

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101 GWSS Man. Mins., 7th November 1921.
102 D. McCrone, 'We're A' Jock Tamson's Bairns' T.M. Devine and R.J. Finlay, [eds.], *Scotland in the 20th Century*, p.109.
103 See, J.D.Young, *Women and Popular Struggles*, pp.142 and 164.
104 M. Pugh, 'Domesticity and the Decline of feminism', H.L.Smith, [ed.], *British Feminism*, p.147.

challenged the sexual division of labour.[105] Their politics was pragmatic, determined by the concerns of their everyday lives, fuelled by pre-war social conditions, especially housing and 'hunger politics'. The repercussions of the war at the point of consumption, and to a lesser extent production, no doubt heightened class awareness for many women of the Clyde. Numerous married women entered the world of work during World War I. Many factors, however, may have mitigated the potential for housewives to be radicalised at the point of production. These included the recruitment policies of munitions works. In England females recruited for munitions work were domestic servants and to a much lesser extent textile workers and housewives.[106] Moreover, women often substituted for males in 'safer' occupations including shops and offices, small units in close proximity to employers, which were seemingly less radicalising. The traditional hostility of skilled workmen to their wives taking up work may have continued to act as an obstacle to the employment of many married women. This was probably not the case for the wives of the unskilled who supplemented their spouses incomes to a greater extent and whose political identity was, therefore, already influenced by experiences of work. Yet, many women were 'invited' to join trade unions and labour movement organisations and a number of them participated in industrial strife. This was often a consciousness raising experience. On the other hand, those women who remained at home were at the forefront of the effects of war at the point of consumption. It was they who primarily gained the vote in 1918. The extension of the franchise excluded all women under the age of thirty, but women of all ages who were not householders or did not own the furniture in the room they resided in were also excluded. Many poorer women were also barred from voting because the franchise remained tied to a municipal vote determined by a household rateable value of £10 and over. Thus, the women who were most likely to have been radicalised by work-place experiences and who had perhaps enjoyed greater freedom and rising expectations during World War I, were also those least likely to have been

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105 H. McShane & J. Smith, *No Mean Fighter*, London, 1978 , pp.33-35.
106 G. Braybon & P. Summerfield, *Out of the Cage* , pp.38-39.

granted the franchise. This was particularly applicable to the younger women ousted from wartime work to return to the home or 'pin money' incomes associated with women's work.[107]

Inflation, overcrowding, scarcity and the manifest inequality of sacrifice during World War I, by contrast, meant that it was more probable that the enfranchised housewife's political identity was influenced by home and community experiences, as suggested by women's agitation over the price of rent, fuel and food. Hence, this all but guaranteed that the new female electorate's greatest concerns originated from the point of consumption and the community where women had been subject to 'habituation and socialisation into sex stereotyped roles'.[108] This socialisation commenced at an early age and prevailed into the inter-war period. The majority of my female respondents, when children, had looked after younger siblings or elderly relatives. Most were trained in housewifery at school and in the home. Mrs GB remembered school, 'ah wasnea very often at it owing to ma mother's health. Ah was the third eldest in the family, the first girl'. Mrs GC recalled that, 'ma granny wasnae too well and ah was aboot thirteen at the time. Ah used tae go and make her dinner and then run back to school'.[109] Mrs GD recollected that, 'after school ah'd tae go hame cause ma maw had a crowd. Ah'd tae go messages and there were the younger wans tae look efter'. [110]

Secondary socialisation was equally intense. Women were well acquainted with the idea that, 'men were looked down on if they allowed their wives to go out to work'.[111] Correspondingly, women were moulded for their future roles.

> Ma mother had three girls and each one as they left school - you weren't asked to go and look for work - you had to stay in the house for at least two years to give you a knowledge of what your true work would be. You worked in the house. You learned everything there was to be done. [112]

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107 See, interview with author, Mrs GH, born 1900 Kinning Park, Glasgow. A munitions worker, this woman experienced a dramatic decrease in her wage levels in the post-war period.
108 A. McIvor, 'Gender Apartheid?', T.M. Devine, & R.J. Finlay, [eds.], *Scotland in the 20th Century,* p.192.
109 Interview with author, Mrs GB, born 1907 Calton, Glasgow and MrsGC, born 1910 Bridgeton, Glasgow.
110 Interview with author, Mrs GD, born 1912 Govan, Glasgow.
111 Interview with author, Mrs GH, born 1900 Kinning Park, Glasgow.
112 Interview with author, Mrs GI, born 1907 Dennistoun, Glasgow.

The force of this socialisation and the lack of innovation in the number of married women gaining employment in the formal economy between the wars was unlikely to result in housewives, in or out of the labour movement, and in the midst of rising unemployment, calling for emancipation of women to compete on equal terms with their spouses, especially if this entailed liberation which might affect a husband's already vulnerable employment. This was more so because most women expected to marry. Rebecca West recollected, 'Engagements were lucky and you took your ring into work and all the girls took a wish off it by turning it on their finger three times, and I suppose hoping for their turn to come'.[113] These women sought marriage and motherhood and expected to leave their place of employment in the formal economy for some time, either on marriage or at least when children arrived.

Working-class mothers also generally controlled the family income and children, until they themselves married, and regardless of their sex, contributed significantly to the family economy. Nor did young men necessarily have the potential to display conspicuous consumption related to their higher wages, something which might have imbued women with either a sense of relative deprivation or an awareness of gender discrimination. MrGD recalled that,

> In these days yer mother was glad tae get you out for tae earn a wee bit shilling or two for wages : ma father's wages they wurnae big. Ah think they were only about 25s a week. Ah left school and got a job as a van boy in a bakery. Ah think it was 6s a week ah got then. That was a God send to ma maw. [114]

MrGZ stated that his wife was, 'lucky, she was well off'. His reason for this was, on starting work at fourteen he earned ten shillings, his wife eight shillings, yet his wife was fortunate, she, 'got a 1s pocket money at the weekend'.[115] The image of young men receiving preferential treatment in terms of higher 'pocket-money' often had little basis in reality. The distribution of 'pocket money' was determined by family circumstances. Therefore, the

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113 GRA/ PA4/212, WEA, Growing Up in Shettleston between the Wars, 1985, Interview with Rebecca West, born Shettleston, Glasgow 1918.
114 Interview with author, MrGD, born 1900 Bridgeton, Glasgow.
115 Interview with author, MrGZ, born 1915, Cardiff, Wales.

potential for conspicuous consumption by young men, related to higher wages, was often mediated on Clydeside and no doubt in other British regions too. This may have reduced women's potential to recognise discrimination and act against it by calling for equal pay for equal work and the lifting of institutional restrictions to equal opportunity in the world of work.

The age and gender related wage scales widely used in most occupations also helped diminish working-class women's recognition of overt gender discrimination as expressed in wage levels, particularly as young employees were increasingly favoured as a means of reducing overheads. As MrsGZ noted, 'when we were fourteen you didn't pay a stamp or anything, but as soon as you came to sixteen you paid a stamp and nine out of ten employers sacked you and got another fourteen year old in'. [116] The *Govan Press* described these jobs as 'Govan's juvenile problem' and as 'the preponderance of blind alley jobs'. [117] Exploitation of young workers was not limited to Clydeside. MrGZ was brought up in Cardiff. 'Ah got the first job of ma life as a message boy for ten shillings a week. Ah worked for Lipton's. Ah stuck that for a couple of years until I was 16, when I had to pay ma stamp and they sacked you so they could start another 14 year old, so he got two years work out of me'.[118] Many females, were also unaware of the wages their male colleagues received. This is hardly a surprise as many wives were equally oblivious of their husband's rate of pay. Other women, however felt that, 'Men should've got a wee bit better because they've got a family to keep. Women should get better paid, but ah think the man should get a wee bit extra'.[119] Hence, many women of the labour movement, with the endorsement of working-class women, came to support and advance the so-called family wage, a 'living wage', as the ILP, its Women's Sections and the Women's Co-operative Guild expounded.[120] They did so, whilst rejecting the marriage bar, demanding better wages for women's trades and equal pay for equal work where women laboured alongside men. At the same time they sought assistance to ease the unemployment

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116 Interview with author, MrsGZ, born 1917, Govan, Glasgow.
117 *Govan Press*, 8th April 1932.
118 Interview with author, MrGZ, born 1915 Cardiff, Wales.
119 Interview with author, Mrs GC, born 1910 Bridgeton, Glasgow.
120 GRA/CWS1/39/6//1.17, SCWG 32nd A/R for the year ending March 1924, p16 and GRA/TD956/23/7, ILP, Barhead Women's Section Manuscript Minutes, 1925-1931, [Henceforth ILP Women's Section Mins.], 19th October 1925.

affecting women. Mrs Laird also demanded of the Glasgow Trades Council that women should be able to choose whatever they felt to be appropriate employment training, rather than having training foisted upon them.[121] Women of the ILP went on to propose direct labour schemes for women, schemes which were intended to benefit both single and married women alike. They argued that household drudgery should be eliminated through the establishment, in all new houses, of labour-saving applications. Likewise communal restaurants, laundries, bakeries and nurseries, whilst creating women's work, would release women from the burdens of housewifery and mothering, enabling them to take their 'proper share of the duties of citizenship'.[122] Furthermore, although this employment would entrench the sexual division of labour, men were unlikely to oust women from these sex-typed occupations as they were endeavouring to do in jobs which had fluid labels. Therefore, these were not necessarily conflicting demands. By contrast they were a challenge to men's dominance of the employment sphere and the signification that unemployment was a male affliction. At the same time this was also a pragmatic attempt to accommodate a diverse constituency, and demand that women have a choice of roles in life, either as employees or as wives and mothers. It was an expression of demands for gender equality to co-exist with separate but equal status for the roles of each sex.

Nevertheless, Cairn's posits the view that this 'living wage' as espoused by the ILP in the document *Socialism For Our Time*, and which was well received by the Mosspark ILP's female membership, 'had utterly no relevance for working women'. [123] This is true of working women, but Cairns neglects a number of important points. Firstly, most women expected to marry and give up their employment, thereafter they would be beneficiaries of the 'living wage'. Many of the women who attended the ILP meeting were married women. The living wage had immense significance for these women. In fact, it was married women who formed the majority of Clydeside's adult female population, incorporating the ILP's female activists as

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[121] GTLC Executive Minutes, 4th February 1926.
[122] See *Forward*, 1st July 1922 and ILP, Women's Sections Mins., 6th September 1926.
[123] D.Cairns, *Women and the Clydeside Labour Movement*, p.115.

well as its potential female political constituency. The 'living wage' which the ILP promoted embodied a monetary family allowance for women.[124] Of equal significance, the 'concept of a 'family wage' had different meanings in different settings'.

> The lack of work for women, high levels of unemployment, wages which were seldom high enough to maintain a family with dependant children above the poverty line, low levels of unionisation in most industries, and state polices which did little to ameliorate the inadequacies of the wage system for the support of families all channelled the choices of workers. [125]

Most of these conditions listed could or did affect Clydeside women at some time or another between the wars and as such, for women, and married women in particular, there were realistic benefits to be gained from supporting a 'living wage'. Therefore, although equal pay for equal work was propagated by feminists within working-class organisations, it co-existed with demands for a living wage, one which would reinforce the breadwinner ideal, but one which also acknowledged women's right to economic independence. This was no less 'prudent' than the behaviour of some of Glasgow's feminists. Discussing whether to put forward a proposal to their membership for a campaign against the expulsion of married women from work, the executive of the Glasgow and West of Scotland Women's Suffrage Society felt that, 'although the question itself had nothing to do with unemployment, the present serious state of unemployment might militate against a favourable vote - it might be in-expedient to take further action'. Thus, while Eleanor Rathbone warned women to 'look at the motives of their male allies', many feminists, including women of the labour movement, decided to be more 'prudent'. According to Harrison, many perceived benefits from advancing women's interests within the confines of an organisation which took 'a less individualist and less sex-segregated view of women's interests than many feminist organisations'.[126]

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124 P. Graves, ' An Experiment in Women-Centred Socialism', H. Gruber & P. Graves, [eds.], *Women and Socialism*, pp.197-198.
125 C. Creighton, 'The Rise of the Male Breadwinner Family : A Reappraisal', *Comparative_Studies in Society and History*, Vol.38, No.2, 1996, pp.330-334.
126 GWSS Mins, April 24th 1922 and B. Harrison, *Prudent Revolutionaries*, p.314 and pp.125-146.

A number of female activists may have done so not because they underestimated women's voting potential, but because they faced the problem of the relative ignorance of working-class women regarding political matters. Even women with male relatives who were deeply involved in the labour movement did not necessarily gain the education and socialisation to absorb political concepts. Mrs GB's father was a signatory of a trade union in John Brown's shipyard. She left school at the age of ten to take over the running of the household from her ailing mother. Although she stressed that she had been sent to the 'ILP Sunday school', Mrs GB was, 'ashamed to say it', but she did not understand Socialism' or what issues the ILP had been interested in because, 'ah might read something but a hundred times to one ah don't know what they mean'.[127] This was an issue raised by the National Union of Tailors and Garment Workers. They maintained that it was 'difficult to organise girls and women' because of, 'the apparent indifference of trade union fathers to impart the knowledge, of why trade unionism is so important'.[128] Correspondingly, formal politics was often perceived as a male domain.

> Q : Can you tell me what the Clydeside MPs were like?
> A : The wimmen really had nothing tae dae wi' it. It wis mare the men, ye understaun. They were the masters and we took a back seat. [129]

Mrs GJ believed that, 'the wimmen wurnea interested. Ah don't think wummen were interested in politics because it didnae help them. They had too much to worry about trying to scrap tae the end of the week fur their wages'. [130] This does not imply apathy, but rather a logical view originating from gender neglect. It is political in itself to reject a system from which you perceive yourself alienated, as Mrs GJ recollections imply. 'They came roun the doors wi' leaflets or if ye hud kids they used tae make a fuss e' it. They didnae mean it either. They were a lot of two-faced baskets.' [131] Mrs GC recalled, ' they were ei' roon the door. You never

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127 Interview with author, Mrs GB, born 1907 Calton, Glasgow.
128 STUC, OWC Mins., 27th December 1934.
129 Interview with author, Mrs GD, born 1912 Govan, Glasgow.
130 Interview with author, Mrs GJ, born 1917 Cowcaddens, Glasgow.
131 Ibid.

saw them in yer life and then they were coming and chappin' yer door wantin' yer vote'. [132] Thus, many working-class women's political identity derived in part from the way they identified with the characteristics of the traditional vision of womanhood which the male dominated labour movement actively promoted, and, in part, from working-class women's awareness that they would have to challenge more than the 'system'. 'They didnae bother, because when we were young, and more so for females, unless you happened to be in a job that would benefit them. Ah don't think they were ever round a lot, you know trying to get members, things like that.' [133] This woman voted for the Conservative Party indicating this was not confined to the politics of the labour movement.

Seemingly women had expectations from politics and of politicians which differed from their male counterparts. The community politics of the 1915 Rent Strike co-ordinated by the ILP was clearly one best suited to the political requirements of women. Laura McLean and Jean Roberts won the Kingston municipal seats for the ILP in 1929. Roberts attributed her success to the back-court meetings, of which she held fifty in the last week of her campaign. [134]

Pugh, however, argues that women between the wars tended to be more inclined to support the Conservative or Liberal parties.[135] Apparently, the Labour Party was impeded from winning the support of working-class women because of their links to trade unionism, and their concentration on unemployment as an issue. Women were less concerned with these issues because of their marginalisation from trade unions and unemployment, at least directly, after marriage.[136] This, however, is a generalisation. It has also been highlighted how women could support the ILP because the its emphasis on municipal socialism which linked the home, health and standards of living to the sphere of work via the effects of poor wages and unemployment. Furthermoe, the impressionistic data on the table below does not entirely support Pugh's analysis.

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[132] Interview with author, Mrs GC, born 1910 Bridgeton, Glasgow.
[133] Interview with author, Mrs GG, born 1916 Townhead, Glasgow.
[134] *Govan Press*, 29th November 1929.
[135] M. Pugh, *Women And The Women's Movement In Britain*, 2nd ed. pp.150-153. See also M. Pugh, *The Making of Modern British Politics 1867-1939*, 2nd ed., Oxford, 1993, pp.249-252.
[136] Ibid., pp.130-139.

Table 3.1 : The new vote, 1929 Clydeside Election Results

Constituency	No. of new female votes	Increased no. of votes cast	Potential % of new votes cast	% swing of votes to labour movement
Bridgeton	7637	3599	47%	116%
Camlachie	7207	4792	66%	66%
Gorbals	8576	4019	47%	140%
Govan	6511	6173	95%	36%
Greenock	8695	8193	94%	40%
Maryhill	7994	6781	85%	64%
Motherwell	6151	4141	67%	116%
Paisley	10157	8273	81%	65%
Partick	5485	6007	100%	58%
Shettleston	7608	7666	100%	90%
Springburn	7646	4511	59%	121%
Tradeston	6744	5715	85%	66%
St Rollox	7367	3146	43%	119%

W.F.S Craig, British parlaimenary Election Results ; Glasgow Herald 2nd, 10th & 15th May 1929.

In all constituencies over 50% of the potential female vote went to the labour movement except in Govan, where there was a debacle over candidate selection and in Greenock were the Communist and Labour Party candidates split the vote. However, it also seems, that the more likely women were to turn out to the polls, the less well the labour movement did. Even before the extended franchise Mary Sutherland, warned the female electorate that, 'it is you as a *woman* who will be blamed. It is your affairs because as a rule it is your job to run a house, see your family is fed and clothed . . . When unemployment comes the kind of men *you* send to the Parish Council will decide if the kids are fed'. [137] On Clydeside, at least, as chapter four will show, factors other than gender were equally instrumental in the voting behaviour of both sexes. Religious affiliation was an important force determining voting behaviour. Suffice to say that in those constituencies where the labour movement did best there were large Catholic populations, and Catholics, regardless of gender on Clydeside were more likely to vote for a Labour candidate. Yet it is also significant that in the constituencies

[137] *Forward,* 24th October 1924. Her italics.

were the labour movement made its greatest gains it was the ILP, rather than the Labour Party, which was the dominant political organisation, a dominance largely unbroken even after the ILP disaffiliated from the Labour Party in 1932. Furthermore, where the ILP did dominate, women's support was actively sought. Springburn had two ILP Women's Sections who worked tirelessly for Wheatley.[138] St Rollox was the heartland of the Women's Co-operative Guild and the organisation worked closely with the male ILPer, Stewart.[139] Male ILP candidates also benefited from their popularity among women. The 'women's role in the 1929 campaigns in Bridgeton', it seems, 'was to hero worship Maxton'.[140] Buchanan was equally worshipped in the Gorbals, where the Secretary of State for Scotland was heckled during the 1929 General Election campaign by women who sung the Red Flag and shouted 'we want Buchanan'.[141]

While the fortunes of the labour movement varied relatively throughout Clydeside, by the inter-war years propaganda and political activity on the ground was increasingly directed towards electioneering with the focus significantly male orientated, albeit the ILP did link these issues to home and family life. Women of the labour movement were often regarded as the party's fund-raisers. In 1936 Mary Sutherland expressed concern about this situation.

> We have had women's sections for eighteen years and we still find hostility in some places to the formation of a women's section often from Local Party Officers and Executives. We must kill the view that the only function of women in the Party is to raise money. . . [142]

In this Clydeside's ILP seem to have been little different from their counterparts throughout the labour movement.[143] This ultimately had an opportunity cost for women in terms of promoting or involving themselves in alternative political issues. However, Sutherland aside, there seems to have been little objection to this from the women of the labour movement,

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138 *Forward*, 30th April 1921.
139 Ibid.
140 *Glasgow Herald*, 20th May 1929.
141 *Glasgow Evening Times*, 22nd May 1929.
142 *Labour Women*, October 1936, p.153.
143 ILP, Women's Sections Mins., 6th September 1926.

even in the early 1920s when they were apparently in a better position to assert their autonomy. Thus women of the labour movement may not have seen this as a major obstacle in the advancement of their political ideals. In fact canvassing and fund-raising allowed these women direct access to their constituents and therefore the capacity to advance ideas within the party which reflected the demands of prospective and actual voters, many of them housewives who shared their aims and ideals. In other words this role could provide a vindication of the promotion of the policies women wished to raise by providing a source, the voters demands, as evidence of the popularity of women's proposals. Nevertheless it was an impediment.

The economic climate and its impact on membership

The effects of depression also acted as an obstacle to women of the labour movement in many ways. Economic hardship contributed to the declining membership of various labour movement organisations. The Co-operative Women's Guild on Clydeside experienced a substantial loss of members between the wars in many depressed areas. This organisation, throughout the period 1920-1930, never had less than 25,000 members in Scotland. In 1921 there were 230 members in Greenock Central, 302 in Hutchesontown and Laureston, Glasgow, 310 in Govan and 460 in Paisley. By 1927 there were 105, 82, 135, and 286 respectively.[144] Nevertheless, membership of the Co-operative Women's Guild did increase between the wars, although it tended to in hitherto neglected localities : in 1930 there was an increased membership of 1047 in Scotland with 14 new branches opening in 1929. This took Scottish membership up to 27,380. [145] Where women's membership of the ILP expanded in the 1920s, female membership of the Labour Party increased in the later 1930s. This, though, was more diverse than the rise in members of the Co-operative Women's Guild. A membership drive began in the 1930s to recruit women into the Labour Party. On Clydeside, regions which had been relatively neglected, such as Greenock attracted a great

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144 GRA/CWS1/39/1.14, SCWG 29th A/R, 1921, p.23 and GRA/CWS139/2.0, SCWG 35th A/R, 1927 p.23. Membership figures by district end in 1929. These show that the heights reached in 1921 were not repeated.
145 *Glasgow Herald*, 17th May 1930.

deal of attention. Greenock, by 1932, had acquired its first two female Labour councillors, Mrs McDonald and Mrs McLeod.[146] In 1935 four women's sections of the Labour Party were set up in this region and a Central Committee formed under the secretaryship of Mrs O'Neil.[147] Membership drives also took place in strongholds including the Glasgow constituencies of Bridgeton, Camlachie, Gorbals and Shettleston with relative success.[148] By 1932, Scottish Labour Women's membership had increased by 10,000 and at the same time delegates to the Scottish Labour Women's Annual Conference rose from its base of around 200 between 1930-1932 to 350 by 1934.[149] In 1934 there were 180 women representing the Labour party, 150 from the Co-operative Women's Guild and a mere 20 from the Trade Unions.[150]

Graves, however, suggests that the composition of membership of the Labour Party altered to such an extent that it moderated the feminism evident of an earlier generation of activists. The new women were drawn from professional and white collar employment and disliked feminism and single-sex groups.[151] This is contrary to the perceptions of Mary Sutherland. In an article in *Labour Women* she asked her colleagues,

> How can we appeal more effectively to the women wage-earner ; attract a larger number of young married women . . . It is generally true that the great majority of our members, at least those who attend meetings and carry on the work of the Party are not so young.[152]

It seems then, that it is likely that while younger women were less interested in single-sex labour movement organisations, feminism and a critique of poverty based on experience, they had as yet to make their presence felt within the structures and the hierarchy of the labour movement. Thus on Clydeside the views of an older generation were more likely to dominate, more so given the relative difficulty in securing and maintaining membership, due to diminished finances, until the late 1930s when the depression began to lift and membership

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146 *Forward*, 10th December and 8th October 1932 respectively.
147 *Labour Women*, January, 1935, p.16.
148 *Labour Women*, July 1935, p.80.
149 *Forward*, 10th December 1932 and *Labour Women*, January 1934, p.16.
150 *Labour Women*, January 1934, p.16.
151 P. Graves, *Labour Women*, pp. 43-53.
152 *Labour Women*, October, 1935, p.153.

drives commenced. In fact, the problems were so immense in Scotland that the Women's Sections of the Labour Party were unable to send delegates to the national Labour Women's Conference in 1932.[153] In this respect the fluidity of membership and shared ideas which had been a vital element of ILP vitality, and which had included women's groups, may have prevailed on Clydeside at least until the later 1930s. Certainly, contrary to the assertions of Scott, who maintained that undesirables, including Communist Party members, were ousted from the Co-operative Women's Guild,[154] many women, like Mrs Glover, were members of the Communist Party, the Co-operative Women's Guild and through this, affiliated to the Labour Party. In fact, Mrs Glover, was introduced to the Guild by another Communist Party member and she expressed the view that these organisations worked together between the wars on Clydeside, because 'we all had the same aims'.[155] Mrs GM was also a member of the Women's Co-operative Guild, a Communist Party activist and a member of the National Unemployed Workers' Movement. She saw no contradiction in this. Neither women were ousted or discriminated against within the Co-operative Women's Guild because of her other political interests.[156] Furthermore, one of Greenock's first female Labour councillors, Mrs McLeod was married to a local Communist Party activist and councillor. Likewise, Mrs Stone, a local councillor for Govan, was so connected.[157] Nor as the inter-war progressed was such unity, regardless of labour movement allegiance, necessarily limited to Clydeside. The 'respectable rebel', Selina Cooper, although a Labour Party activist, also found herself increasingly working with members of the ILP and the CP between the wars, sympathising with some of their criticisms of her own party.[158]

Sharing aims, the women of the ILP, the Co-operative Women's Guild, the Labour Party, and to some extent the Communist Party, disseminated propaganda throughout the

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153 *Labour Women*, June, 1932, p.87.
154 G. Scott, *Feminism And The Politics of Working Women The Women's Co-operative Guild 1880s To The Second World War*, pp.12-23.
155 Interview with author, Mrs Glover, born, Govan, Glasgow 1919
156 Interview with author, MrsGM, born Springburn, Glasgow 1911.
157 *Labour Women*, June, 1936, pp.192-193.
158 J. Liddington, *Selina Cooper*, p.372.

neighbourhoods of Clydeside and the one thing many of these women shared was a belief that women influenced the political views of their children. In fact Mr GE maintained that,

> Ah didnea know anything aboot political things ootside ma family. Each family had there own form of political ideas although they couldnae talk a political idea if it walked in that door. So there it went on, it was only a nebulous idea. They didnae know. [159]

Indeed, women were often the primary agents of socialisation for the next generation, the generation, moreover, who contributed to the Labour Party's sweeping victory of 1945.

The dominant male discourse, women's muted language and female marginality

The ILP conceded that women were the principle agents of socialisation for the children of the 'brave new world', that women were 'guardians of the race', [160] and the 'shrines of human life'.[161] Acknowledging the role of women in the political education of the future socialists of Clydeside did not deter the ILP from promoting a vision of class which contained its female constituency. Not only did the ILP increasingly side-line women's issues, but it continued a tradition of protest involving women, whilst simultaneously promoting the existing sexual division of labour. The political wing of the labour movement, and the ILP in particular, did so by exploiting the community, its environs and the traditional ideal of family. This did elicit some protest. In a letter to the editor, signed 'a working-class mother', one woman objected to the ILP's vision of socialism. It was a vision which implied that 'women would be forced into industry' because, under socialism, 'there would be cheap electricity meaning labour saving devices' and 'education authorities would provide nurseries and schools,' leaving women with 'too much leisure', a situation which would be detrimental to society. This 'working-class mother' stated, 'I had no idea that the ILP had such a low opinion of women'.[162] Nevertheless, protest was marginal. When discussing the benefits of women-only forums, Mrs Mann, a

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[159] Interview with author, Mr GE, born 1908 Partick, Glasgow.
[160] *Forward*, 11th May 1922.
[161] *Forward*, 22nd July 1922.
[162] *Forward*, 20th October 1928.

prominent ILPer carried the vote when she maintained that 'women should be socialist first, women second'.[163] Such attitudes helped to permit the ILP to transcend gender differences and incorporate the idea of a gradual emancipation of women within the community, but one grounded in the ideology of separate spheres. This was just as evident in the politics of the labour movement at local level as it was at national level.

Smith studying the politics of this period on Clydeside, argues that the centre of political activity was the locality until the later 1920s and early 1930s. It was only then that the politics of the labour movement took on a national style.[164] Gyford, moreover, maintains that for a third party local politics was best choice to promote socialism.[165] Melling concurs. He also states, it was only within the community that common values could transcend gender differences - manifestly evident in the sphere of employment - allowing greater class unity.[166] The community was the arena in which practical examples could be seen to be effective ; where an alternative socialist agenda could be disseminated using the environment as a concrete example of the ill-effects of the capitalist system. By using the locality to provide examples of the 'evils of capitalism', moreover, the ILP could reach those not versed in politics. This was a power base which had been exploited by both women and the political wing of the labour movement from at least 1880.[167] Thus, many women, before the extension of the franchise in 1918, had internalised and utilised an oppositional class rhetoric, but one which at times complemented and at times competed with their gender consciousness.

Highlighting the poverty, deprivation and degradation of the locality was to provide the ILP with a greater constituency to take advantage of. They did not do so in an overt sense as the coalitionists did by asking women to vote for them to 'please their husbands' and by appealing

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[163] *Forward*, 16th January 1926.
[164] J. Smith, 'Labour Traditions in Glasgow and Liverpool' *History Workshop*, 17, Sp. 1984, p.44.
[165] J. Gyford, *The Politics of Local Socialism*, London, 1983, p.3.
[166] J. Melling, *Rent Strikes*, pp.110-112.
[167] Ibid., pp.30-35. For Greenock see P.G. Clark, *The Greenock Labour Movement and the General Strike*. Clark demonstrates the political success of the Communist Party in Greenock was linked their community role - one akin to that of the ILP in Glasgow and the Communist Party/ILP activity in Lanarkshire noted by Joe Henery. Interviews with Joe and Marion Henery, William Gallacher Memorial Library, Glasgow Caledonian University, Tape 7.

to the budgeting role of the housewife who would understand the need for 'strict economy'.[168] Many working-class women were already too familiar with strict economy. Instead they directed their attention to the concerns of the community, largely the domain of women, but also of general consideration to most working-class men. Mr GE recalled, inter-war socialism meant.

> You wanted a better way of living, a better return for yer efforts, and a better schooling for yer weans. And they could go to school reasonably dressed without needing to be sneered at, and not from the Parish numskull [who] was probably bleeding somebody else tae get the fancy suits tae send them to Hyndland school or Hamilton Crescent. [Fee-paying schools].[169]

It was a route which permitted the ILP to promote a plebeian discourse, but one which was far from unifying. It was not a coherent vision of class because it re-reinforced pre-existing stratification within the working-class founded on gender inequalities. The ILP, none the less could call on all members of the working-class to help the miners or railwaymen in their strikes appealing to the paternal instincts and common values of this class whilst neglecting divisions within it. Hence men and women were to support workers who fought for the community against general wage depression and were to help avoid the miners being crushed where they were most vulnerable. They were to help 'feed the bairns'.[170]

Graves demonstrated how British working-class women tended to support moral issues related to their practical everyday concerns.[171] Maintaining their children was a large part of this struggle, especially in periods of unemployment. Clydeside was a region characterised by insecurity and persistent spells of unemployment associated with the effects of the trade cycle prior to the inter-war period. Thereafter it was badly affected by structural unemployment until re-armament in the late 1930s. The ILP noted that, 'women suffer most in unemployment in the unequal combat between poverty and necessity'.[172] Whilst acknowledging this,

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168 *Glasgow Evening Times,* 9th November 1922.
169 Interview with author, Mr GE, born 1908 Partick, Glasgow.
170 *Forward,* 11th March 1922.
171 P. Graves, *Labour Women,* pp.46-57.
172 *Forward,* 11th March 1922.

unemployment proper was primarily seen as a male distress, and although the ILP was rhetorically committed to equal pay for equal work for women the emphasis was on the widow or single women without the support of a 'breadwinner'. This was the issue Stewart, the ILP candidate for St Rollox, choose to promote in the run up to the 1922 election.[173]

The ILP proposed to alleviate unemployment by introducing direct labour schemes, mainly house building, a male occupation. In 1929, Dollan proposed that the Glasgow Corporation spend £3,000,000 to help the unemployed. The programme aimed to employ 4,000 men, for four years, to build roads and houses.[174] House building, in a region with dire housing conditions, however, could and was promoted as a women's concern and as a medium to offer women political power. Women's committees would oversee housing. Women councillors had proved 'capable'. Their 'speciality was domestic reform' and any improvements in the housing situation was 'indebted to them'.[175] Hence it was a political rhetoric accommodating many signifiers. Unemployed women had less to thank many ILP men for. When ILP women proposed direct labour scheme which would benefit all women, this induced male derision.[176] Yet, to a lesser or greater extent both policies would have guaranteed that the emancipation of the housewife from the drudgery of daily toil allowing her to enjoy 'full citizenship' was to be accommodated by provisions which entrenched the sexual division of labour. This highlights the ways in which women's language was muted : how they were 'unable to find a language to express their vision of the world which did not mimic that of their oppressors'.[178]

McShane discussed a further ambiguity, the socialist movement's attitude towards women, the family and birth control. He claimed that, 'the concentration on parliamentary strategies meant that many socialists were prominent in the struggle for women to have the vote' and no doubt thereafter to exercise it to the benefit of the labour movement. He also affirmed, that

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173 *Glasgow Evening Times*, 9th November 1922.

174 *Govan Press*, 9th August 1929.

175 *Forward*, 19th March 1922.

176 *Forward*, 21st June 1919 and *Govan Press*, 9th August 1929.

178 The idea of 'muted language' is taken from B. Littlewood, 'Review : S. Reynolds, "Britannia's Typesetters : Women Compositors"', *Scottish Labour History Society Journal*, No.25, 1990, p.112.

nearly all the outstanding socialist women were in the ILP and that most were housewives, who accepted the prevailing sexual division of labour just as their male counterparts did. Neither sought the 'abolition of family' and their attitude to sex was 'bourgeois'. [178] Promoting women as a political constituency whilst entrenching the existing sexual division of labour could create some very complex attitudes. The ILP noted the increase in prostitution in post-war Glasgow and linked this to the spread of venereal disease. It was not the fallen woman who was condemned but rather her lack of 'economic independence'. They also rejected the inequality of the law which condoned men's behaviour but censured women. Nevertheless, the ILP's proposal to deal with this 'evil' was to institutionalise prostitutes and train them for domestic service. [179]

The issue of birth control had major political ramifications for the ILP. The Scottish labour movement was more hostile to the issue of birth control than its English counterpart, but this was not a united hostility. In 1924 a number of prominent women of the labour movement sent a deputation to Wheatley, then Labour Minister for Health, to state the case for information on birth control to be made accessible to working-class women at clinics set up by local authorities. Wheatley rejected this and justified his objections thus, 'you might as well ask me why I don't eat beef on Fridays'.[180] Wheatley rejected birth control on religious grounds, but he was not unique in his hostility towards birth control. It was not until 1926 that *Forward* began to publicise the debate over birth control. At this time an article by Walton Newbold attacked the Clydeside MP, Rev. James Barr for his,

> . . . superstitious and obscure speech on birth control, which, deliberately closed the book of knowledge and forbade its opening . . . by appealing to religious prejudices, even though the women of the labour movement had by majorities more overwhelming than they had shown on any other issue of a controversial character . . . declared time and again in their conferences for legislation. . . [181]

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[178] H. McShane & J. Smith , *No Mean Fighter*, London, 1978, pp.33-35.
[179] *Forward*, 18th July 1922.
[180] *Forward*, 29th March 1924 and *Forward*, April 17th 1926.
[181] *Forward*, 13th March 1926.

These are hardly the women, McShane's depicts. And they had more to challenge than Barr's 'superstition'. Wheatley argued that providing information on birth control was far too revolutionary.[182] Not one of the 'revolutionary' Red Clydeside MPs voted for the Birth Control Enabling Bill which would merely have made the dissemination of knowledge permissible.[183] There were various reasons for this. Cairns, providing a wealth of evidence, argues that male animosity to the issue of birth control was principally an accommodation of the Catholic Church. This was not exclusive to Clydeside or men of the labour movement. The English activist, Ellen Wilkinson, for whom the Women's Freedom League campaigned in 1924 to secure her Middlesborough East parliamentary seat, was also hostile to the issue of information on birth control. She felt it was not a class issue, but the Catholic vote in her constituency has also been identified as a factor contributing to this position.[184] Consideration of the Catholic vote permeated Clydeside politics. A Paisley Catholic priest, with the support of the Bishop of Glasgow, organised opposition to a women's welfare clinic which issued birth control in the region. What ensued involved the labour movement. The Co-operative Society, the landlord, regardless of the support given to this issue by the females of the Women Co-operative Guild, asked the Scottish Federation of Mothers' Welfare Clinics to seek alternative accommodation.[185] Yet, opposition to birth control was not the preserve of the Catholic clergy. Barr, a United Free Church minister, was one its most hostile critics. In fact, ministers from the Church of Scotland, unlike the Church of England,[186] proposed to 'repudiate the countenance of methods of birth control' because they felt it to be a 'mortal sin'.[187] Perhaps it was not merely the clergy who perceived birth control as a 'mortal sin'. J.D.Young, felt that ILP's opposition to birth control owed something to the socialist movement's adherence to 'Knoxian

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182 *Forward*, 1st April 1926.

183 Ibid.

184 D. Cairns, *Women and the Clydeside Labour Movement*, pp.43,68,72& 197. Cairns provides a wealth of examples of this accommodation. For Ellen Wilkinson, see, B. Harrison, *Prudent Revolutionaries*, p.146.

185 GRA/HB77/1/1, Scottish Federation of Mothers' Welfare Clinics Minute Book 1925-1938, 28th February 1938. For further evidence of the labour movement's accommodation of the Catholic clergy's see, *Forward*, 12th November 1927 and 25th May 1929.

186 For the Church of England see, J. Lewis, 'Public Institutions and Private Relationship - Marriage and Marriage Guidance 1920-1968', *Twentieth Century British History*, Vol.1, No.3., 1990, pp.233-265.

187 *Glasgow Herald*, 22nd September 1930.

theology and obsessive Puritanism'.[188] The ILP practised an ethical socialism to the extent that *Forward* often reads like a biblical tract. They maintained Sunday Readings and advanced the socialist cause in biblical terms throughout the period. Knox labelled their style one of 'burning morality'.[189] The birth control controversy, however, also suffered from the growing schisms and power struggles taking place within the labour movement itself. Not only did the issue of birth control follow the debacle of the first Labour government in 1924, but it was vanquished beneath the political upheaval of the 1926 General Strike. Thereafter, the combination of unity in the face of the reactionary forces in government in the 1930s and further splits within the labour movement itself compounded matters.[190] These schisms were clearly causing problems, initially between the Labour Party and the Communist Party. The rift between the ILP and the Labour Party, however, was progressing at a phenomenal rate. The rupture between the Labour Party and the ILP centred upon the Labour Party's acceptance of gradual reform in contrast to growing demands from the ILP's left wing for the immediate introduction of socialism whose ideological premise was the idea that capitalism was the source of poverty. The ILP, when promoting municipalisation, consistently argued that poverty, poor living conditions, infant mortality and disease were by-products of the capitalist system. Large families were not the problem, capitalism was. Birth control and smaller families, therefore, threatened the very premise of ILP propaganda and divided not only ILP men and women, but women themselves. Ultimately this further limited women's potential to introduce such revolutionary change. There were ILP women who feared that if birth control did not avert pregnancy women would be held responsible.[191] The religious beliefs of working-class women were also a factor. This aside, it was a revolutionary agenda, as some of the female ILP activists argued, with intense political possibilities which might have 'politicised women', by united them on a common issue regardless of religion. There was certainly

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188 J.D.Young, *Women and Popular Struggles*, pp.161-164.
189 W.W.Knox, 'Introduction', W.W Knox, [ed.], *Scottish Labour Leaders*, p26.
190 See P. Graves, 'An Experiment in Women-Centred Socialism', H. Gruber & P. Graves,[eds.], *Women and Socialism*, p.189.
191 *Forward*, 3rd April 1926.

opposition to the stance taken by the Clydeside MPs. In March 1926 a meeting of 600 voters took place in Motherwell. Only two people dissented from the resolution passed to protest against Barr's decision not to support the Birth Control Enabling Act and to request that he, 'reconsider his decision'.[192] And, although there were women with strong Catholic beliefs who opposed contraception, many Catholic women did not adopt this attitude, whilst others might have come to support the introduction of birth control.

> Q : Do you think working-class women should have known about birth control?
> A : Ah think there's only one contraceptive and its the word no! Ah didnae approve. Ah mean we wurnae supposed tae have contraceptives - the religion. It wis aw right fur them, they wurnae bringing up half a dozen kids oun ten bob a week.[193]

There were ordinary working-class women, and for that matter men, regardless of the influence of religion, who thought women should have known about birth control and that it should have been made available to them. Over three hundred people in Wishaw and four hundred women in Motherwell endorsed the cause of the women of the labour movement.[194] My respondents views mirrored these sentiments. Catholic and Protestant women expressed the view that knowledge about birth control should have been available to them. This they expressed personally and by way of the collective term 'women'. Nor was this necessarily re-contextualised memory because their attitudes towards divorce and separation, sex before marriage, 'living in sin' and abortion, issues which have also gained much greater acceptance in contemporary society, remained relatively fixed and negative. By contrast, MsGA, a Protestant, maintained, 'ah think women they were never getting a chance. Ah mean ah'm goin' by ma mother . . . ma mother never got a chance till after ma father died. A wummen that had eleven and twelve children must have been completely worn out'.[195] MrsGD, a Catholic, stated, 'they should've, but we - nane o' us knew it hen. Ah'm sitting here and ah'm telling you, ah didnae know were ma wean wis coming fae'.[196] MrsGC, also a Catholic,

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[192] *Forward*, 27th March 1926.
[193] Interview with author, Mrs GJ, born 1917 Cowcaddens, Glasgow.
[194] *Forward*, 27th March 1926. See also, P.Graves, *Labour Women*, p.46, pp. 53-57, pp. 67-70 and p.87.
[195] Interview with author, Ms GA, born 1908 Dennistoun, Glasgow.
[196] Interview with author, Mrs GD, born 1912 Govan, Glasgow.

declared, 'ye couldnae find oot cause we were too ignorant then. They hudnae money. There were dispensaries if ye wur sick but no' fur birth control'.[197] Likewise, MrsPA, a Protestant affirmed, 'of course they should've. If ah had known ah wouldnae've had six, lets put it that way. Ah got married and ah'd never heard of condoms or French Letters or anything like that. When ah didnae want tae have anymore ah jist didnae have any fun, lets put it that way'. [198] And MrsGL, a Protestant, and an active member of the Co-operative Women's Guild believed, 'well ah mean you were having a lot of children and it keeps you back and everything. We were seven of a family and that wisnae bad then'.[199] MrsGM, a Catholic, was also a member of the Co-operative Women's Guild. She declared, 'well it's a case of this, a women having a big family is a slave from morning tae night. They had nobody to help them. They were working, looking after children, cooking, cleaning, and the men in those days never helped them. It wisnae a man's place'. [200] As Dora Russell noted of the Clydeside MPs,

> Women find our reactionary leaders shirking this . . . opposing it in defiance of decisions of the Women's conference . . . Our champions, profiting by women's votes condemn women to suffering and ignorance as if they were a slave class. [201]

Notably, though, the ILP, in line with the Labour Party and Ramsay Macdonald, continued to consider the issue of birth control to have no 'economic or social value, whatever its individual and family virtues!' [202] In this they appear to have been out of touch with ordinary working-class women and men. They argued anti-Malthusian ideals and affirmed that given the debate over birth control women obviously already knew about it, thus, there was no need to take up such a potentially explosive and ideologically detrimental question.[203] Not that this went without challenge. In an unsigned letter to Dollan it was pointed out that infant mortality

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197 Interview with author, Mrs GC, born 1910 Bridgeton, Glasgow.
198 Interview with author, Mrs PA, born 1914, Paisley, Renfrewshire.
199 Interview with author, MrsGL, born 1907 Dennistoun, Glasgow.
200 Interview with author, MrsGM, born 1911 Springburn, Glasgow.
201 *Forward*, 27th March 1926.
202 Ramsay MacDonald, as quoted in *Forward*, 1st October 1927.
203 *Forward*, 3rd April, 1st May and 25th September 1926.

was lower in middle-class families because they knew of and used contraceptives and, more significantly, 'that the working-class did not have large families out of choice'. [204]

Due to the fact that working-class women were relatively ignorant of the availability of birth control, neglecting it as a medium of political leverage was unlikely to prove politically explosive, even if it was a missed opportunity to unite women and gain a wider political constituency. Thus, the ILP persisted in promoting socialism in archaic ideological terms, a politics which was intended to emancipate the housewife from the evils of capitalism, within the existing sexual division of labour. For the majority of women, 'the Chancellors of the Exchequer of the home', women's committees were to be established 'to do for [them] what the work-shops [were] meant to do for industrial workers'. The home was to be their 'workshop', and, 'the centre and pivot of human life . . . the nursery of the child ; the training ground of tomorrow's men and women ; the cradle of the race . . .' were women would produce citizens. [205] And Dollan could state with comparative impunity that it was a 'terrible reflection on Glasgow politics that birth control was more important in the 1927 municipal elections than the introduction of direct labour'.[206] Certainly the Catholic clergy attempted to ensure that councillors and MPs, from areas where there was a high Catholic population, would not support birth control, but this aside, the issue of birth control was a great deal less significant than Dollan's hyperbole suggests. Not one of my respondents was aware that birth control had been a political issue between the wars. In fact, arguably Dollan's assertion was a strategy to undermine any possibility that the issue would displace, or detract from, the issue of unemployment, a public rather than a 'personal' political issue.

Dollan's protestations are representative of the shift in ILP policy, particularly noticeable as the 1920s progressed, to an emphasis on unemployment, a pre-war strand of ILP propaganda, but one which was linked to municipalisation. Poor environment and limited life chances were expressed through inability to procure a decent standard of living due to

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204 *Forward*, 21st January 1925.
205 *Forward*, 14th October 1922.
206 P.Dollan, as quoted in *Forward*, 5th November 1927. See also *Forward*, 1st June 1929 and 16th May 1932 for the attitudes of the Catholic clergy.

capitalist exploitation of the 'breadwinner'. The Clydeside MPs were noted for their concern and agitation in relation to unemployment and its effects on family life in Parliament and political circles. Yet, this shift also symbolised the inherent gendered context of the Clydeside labour movement's world view and the impediments against mediation faced by working-class women. Women's issues were conceptualised as 'personal', subservient to the 'greater public concern', unemployment, signified as a masculine affliction through the image of direct labour schemes. However, women of the labour movement were also inhibited by their 'muted language' and thus their failure to express their vision of the world which did not mimic that of the male-dominated labour movement.

The politics of the kitchen and the dissenting 'domestics'

Ironically, it was through the unemployment movement that the socialist movement came closest to women in the 1920s and 1930s. Unemployment had a direct and indirect affect on women. In 1932, as already highlighted, *Forward* contrasted wages, food prices and rents and found 'Scottish workingmen' to be 25% worse off than those in Lancashire and 10% worse of then those in Yorkshire, Wales and London.[209] Furthermore, unemployment in the shipbuilding and repair industry by 1931 stood at 53.1% in Glasgow, while the maximum poor relief in the city was £2. This, however, exceeded the rate in Greenock which stood at £1 17s 6d. In Motherwell it was £1 15s.[208] Women as mothers and household managers were no doubt politicised by such unemployment, if indirectly. Glasgow Corporation heard three deputations protesting against the means test, one led by Mrs Thompson on behalf of working-class women, the others from the shipbuilding trade and the National Unemployed Workers' Movement.[214] By 1932 working-class women were demonstrating on the streets over the means test. They approached Glasgow Corporation again asking them to petition the government to abolish the means test, concurring with James McBride, 'that it was not so much a 'means test as a Destitution Test'. Jean Roberts took up the case of working-class

209 *Forward*, 18th October 1932.
208 *Forward*, 10th January 1931 and 14th November 1931 respectively.
214 Ibid., 18th June 1930.

women on Glasgow Council.[215] Working-class women on Clydeside continued to protest against housing conditions and the price of rents. In January 1926 the Glasgow Property Owners and Factors Association apparently 'dubbed' Clydebank the 'spiritual home of anarchy'.[216] They had good cause. By mid August 1927 rent strikes had commenced again in Clydebank.[217] In February 1932 at a mass meeting in Govan favouring rent strikes, 'thousands rushed the doors and hundreds had to remain outside',[218] whilst in Greenock, ' there was a rent strike up our way in the new houses. They aw went on strike one year and oh it was terrible. They went up and down the road shouting and singing at night. Ye couldnae get tae sleep'.[219] This obviously had an impact. In June 1932, the National Federation of Property Owners' and Factors of Scotland, and the Factors Association of Glasgow Ltd., presented a memorial to the Prime Minister, the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Secretary of State for Scotland asking for the adoption of the English rating system and valuation system. They hoped that this system would reduce rents, ensure that occupiers knew definitively what the cost of services were, and that thereby friction between factor and tenant would be removed.[220] In Dundee unemployment was also a force which motivated women to become involved in demonstrations to the town hall as well as riots and looting in 1921, 1923 and again in 1931. It seems they were 'desperate for the bairns to get food and that'. When women mobilised, or were mobilised in this way, it tended to be to for the protection of the family, or the family's income, which was increasingly under threat from male unemployment, declining wages and the means test, although perhaps women had also recognised that exploiting this discourse was more productive than utilising an oppositional class rhetoric. The women involved in protests in Dundee were working women from the jute mills whose husbands were the workers experiencing unemployment rather than the women

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215 *Govan Press*, 1st July 1932.
216 Ibid., 29th January 1926.
217 *Forward*, 17th August 1927.
218 *Govan Press*, 29th February 1932.
219 Interview with author, Mrs GRA, born 1919 Greenock, Renfrewshire.
220 *Govan Press*, 17th June 1932.

themselves. [208] That working-class women were prepared to respond politically, as they had done during the rent strikes of 1915, suggests that the ILP did indeed fail to exploit a political consciousness to the benefit of class awareness, a consciousness influenced by gender, born of experience and heightened by struggle.

This consciousness was not confined to married women whose husbands were out of work. Many women were affected directly by unemployment. The contemporary activist, Harry McShane noted, ' A lot of women could not get relief and many widows and single girls dealt with the Parish Council who treated the single women very badly'. Thus, 'women were directly involved the fight against the Parish Council's unemployment cuts. They threatened councillors with violence and pushed hesitant men into action'. [207] Yet, women who were unemployed fared least well, although they did enlist some support. Kirkwood, put forth an impassioned plea to Margaret Bondfield, Minister for Labour, and architect of the Anomalies Act . He asked her to,

> Remember the women, thousands of them, who are sitting at home breaking their hearts because they are cut away from the Employment Exchange without a friend in the world. Thousands are looking to you to relieve them of this terrible nightmare.[211]

Kirkwood's plea had little real impact. In 1932 Mrs Brand of the Transport and General Workers Union catalogued how the government was 'penalising the women worker'. Married women were being denied the right to benefits while unmarried women's benefits were being substantially reduced.[212] At the Scottish Labour Women's Conference in Hamilton female activists condemned the government and local authorities claiming they were less concerned to find ways to alleviate women's unemployment. Although these women did put forward a

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208 G.Smith, 'Motherhood Health and Welfare in a Women's Town c1911-1931', *Oral History*, Vol.23, No.1, 1995, pp.67-69.

207 J.Smith & H.McShane, *No Mean Fighter*, pp.131-133. The way working-class women on Clydeside responded to unemployment and the mean's test in the community will be developed in chapter four.

211 *Forward*, 20th July1929.

212 Ibid., 14th May 1932.

gendered critique of unemployment their criticism did little to effectively alleviate the problem,[213] a problem essentially conceptualised as masculine.

The same cannot be said of the ILP's concept, the 'politics of the kitchen'. This concept, was appropriated by both male and female members to different ends. For women in the party it was used to forward their demands for domestic reforms. By contrast, it was exploited by the male-dominated labour movement who attempted to use this ideal to orchestrate women's political identity through a discursive construction which promoted a characterisation of their female constituency as essentially an 'interest group', fenced within the realm of domestic issues. Even in 1929 this idea was promoted when the single enfranchised women was asked to think of her future as a wife and to consider the price of pans and crockery.[221]

Although, such a world view increasingly ensured that women's political demands were deemed secondary, particularly to unemployment, with the capacity to narrow women's scope for equality with men, it also provided a foundation from which to mount a challenge to the male supremacy of the labour movement. This is what the women of the labour movement did. They were under no illusion that their organisation was egalitarian. Helen Gault stressed that, 'among socialists the belief in equality is only skin deep'.[222] So aware were some female activists that they openly confronted the male dominance of the labour movement. Kate Beaton stated,

> Some so called labour representatives are content to idle away their opportunities and sun themselves in the petty honours and privileges which the real workers have placed in their grasp. Scrap these duds and replace them with females. Let us stand for the voicing and enforcing of demands which affect our homes and makes our domestic economies such a physical and mental burden. Let us have a federation of working females.[223]

It was in this respect that women of the labour movement used their 'speciality' and exploited concerns about the 'race' whether state initiated or emitting from the labour

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213 *Forward,* 5th March 1932.
221 *Forward,* 18th May 1929 and 1st June 1929.
222 *Forward,* 28th February 1925.
223 *Forward,* 29th March 1924.

movement to forward policies which would benefit women within the household and the community. They did this formally and informally, working with women out-with the labour movement, and at times in complete defiance to the attitudes of many their male colleagues. These actions were to promote the moral politics of 'commonsense demands', the 'politics of the kitchen' favoured by women.[224]

Savage has highlighted the way in which, having gained the extended franchise, the working classes sought to forward their interests, increasingly those related to their everyday concerns. If the Labour Party supported them, then there was a favourable correlation in voting behaviour.[225] The women of the labour movement on Clydeside contributed to the extent to which the labour movement gained working-class women's support, and to the formation of the enfranchised women's political consciousness because their 'commonsense demands' reflected the needs of the women, and the men for that matter, which they represented.

Women and for that matter some men of the ILP, Labour Party and the Women's Co-operative Guild, desired to see working-class women's roles in the family elevated to the status of the male breadwinner. Thus they demanded recognition for women as guardians of the home, that 'sacred place'.[226] They promoted motherhood and housewifery as occupations deserving recognition and improved conditions. The belief that married working-class women should have the same privileges as the 'rich', the right to control their fertility, permeated the women's sections of the ILP, the Labour Party and the Co-operative Women's Guild, as did demands for improved maternity care. Maternity care was a major concern of these women. The Women's Co-operative Guild established a Committee in 1931 to investigate the extent and causes of maternal mortality in Scotland and this they linked to birth control. When the issue of whether they should support the dissemination of the 'instruction of constructive' birth control methods was put before Scottish members, it was noted that the use of contraception

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224 P. Graves, *Labour Women*, p.57 and passim.
225 M.Savage, 'Urban Politics and the rise the Labour Party', H. Corr, & L. Jamieson, [eds.], *State, Private Life and Political Change*, pp.204-15.
226 GRA/CWS1/39/6/1.19, SCWG, 34th Annual Report, 1926, p.10.

would contribute to a falling incidence in maternal mortality. The majority of the Guild's members voted in favour of birth control.[227] Certainly this was not the dominant Labour Party line or a reflection of the Labour Party's vision of womanhood. Thus, the use of the language of their oppressors to legitimise demands does not necessarily imply that working-class women accepted the existing structures of society. This was a form of challenge and one not unique to women of the labour movement. The National Birth Control Association changed its name to the Federation of Mother's Welfare Clinics to 'convey a more constructive purpose'.[228] The politics of the kitchen was an inter-discursive process in which, 'there was no single truth, but endless perspectives on the truth and where each theory constructed its own reality'.[229] The reality which the women of the labour movement wanted was much more than recognition of women as wives and mothers. In this they were feminist. Without diminishing the status of married women, but in fact attempting to elevate it, they did indeed endeavour to promote the right of all women to control their lives through access to choices. Yet the route they embraced was delimiting, particularly because of structural and cultural impediments. Clydeside had one of the highest levels of inter-war social deprivation in Scotland. In an era when the majority of working-class homes in Scotland did not have electricity let alone household appliances to be a housewife and an employee was a double-burden of drudgery and sheer exploitation.[230] Women were also aware of the effects of men's labour. Long hours, exhausting work and dangerous conditions were hardly likely to be compatible with a 'caring sharing' husband who helped around the home, even in an environment in which this ideal was being promoted. These factors combined with the structure and traditions of the labour market to make it difficult to overtly challenge the sexual division of labour. In this sense women of the labour movement were pragmatic or 'prudent' when they maintained that women who desired marriage and motherhood as an occupation should be entitled to a 'living

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227 Ibid. and SCWG, Central Council Minutes, 7th January 1931 and 4th February 1931. See also, ILP Women's Section, Mins., 8th February, 6th September and 6th November 1926.
228 Scottish Federation Of Mother's Welfare Clinics Manuscript Minutes Book, 19th October 1925.
229 J.Weeks, 'Foucault for Historians', pp.106-118, *History Work-shop*, No.14, 1984, p.109.
230 See, A.McIvor, 'Gender Apartheid?', T.M. Devine, & R.J. Finlay, [eds.], *Scotland in the Twentieth Century*, p.193.

wage', an income recognising the entire family unit as well as a women's right to economic independence in the form of an endowment of motherhood. Equally, these activists recognised that the burdens of housewifery and child-care not only inhibited women's freedom, and absorbed a vast amount of their time and energy, but that it was detrimental to their health and well-being as well. They sought to relieve these burdens. Furthermore, most working-class women were in no material position to partake of the benefits of the emerging 'technological revolution' in household goods, thus the demands for communal services was a form of practical feminism. However, this was framed in a class rhetoric, as a form of municipal socialism which would, 'combat the exploitation of women by capitalism'.[231] In addition, women of the ILP and the Co-operative Women's Guild often argued against the imposition of marriage bars. They agitated to ensure that those women who chose employment in the formal labour market should be entitled to equal pay for equal work and the right to choose the employment training they felt applicable so as to provide opportunities for women to expand their occupational choices.[232] Annie Maxton, of the Barrhead Women's Section of the ILP, felt that it was the low level of wages received by husbands which drove married women into the workplace. Whilst she understood the hardship of the double burden she also recognised and supported women who choose to work in the formal labour market arguing that they deserved equal pay for equal work. Like the feminist who argued for this right, women of the labour movement understood that women faced male antagonism or support from male trade unionists designed to oust them from work, that women endured male hostility and the barriers of trade unions and professional exclusiveness.[233] Thus the feminist politics advanced by many women of the labour movement had a price. Equality of the sexes and the promotion of roles for men and women which would be different but regarded as having equal value to society were to remain incompatible. It limited women to either the home or the workplace. The continued necessity of married women's contribution to

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231 ILP Women's Section, Mins., 2nd March 1925.
232 GTLC Executive Minutes, 4th February 1926.
233 Ibid., 19th October 1925 and B. Harrison, *Prudent Revolutionaries*, pp.112 and 314.

the family economy ensured that not only did they endure the double burden, but the very organisations which claimed to represent them contributed to a discursive construction of womanhood which deemed their economic activity inappropriate, ultimately adding to their marginalised position in the work-place and the political sphere.

Nevertheless the aims of many of these women of the labour movement, both the more 'orthodox and prudent revolutionaries' and the 'welfare feminists' were fundamentally a 'feminist' recognition of the importance of working-class women's biological, economic and social roles in society. But more significantly this was also a practical acknowledgement of the way in which these roles inhibited females. They absorbed their time and energy and affected their health. Hence by challenging these constraints many women from the labour movement did indeed contest the sexual division of labour.

These women were also vocal in their demands for Widows Pensions as a safeguard against the double-burden.[234] Both Family Allowance and the extension of Widow's Pensions would eventually take root in Labour Party policy. Women of the ILP and the Labour Party advocated the idea that housewives had a right to economic security through their demands for Family Endowment from at least 1920 on Clydeside. Lewis argues that women of the labour movement, to gain assistance for their constituents, and provide them with economic independence, in kind or in the form of an endowment, emphasised the link between the welfare of the child and the future of the race. Intervention by the state on the part of the child had a longer tradition and raised fewer fears of subverting the male breadwinner's responsibility than intervention on behalf of wives.[235] Brookes also suggests that this agenda was influenced by the number of deaths caused by women's need to resort to illegal abortions.[236] Recognising their constituents needs, in part, a product of inquiries carried out by these women, may well have made this a consideration. The Co-operative Women's Guild and the Women's sections of the ILP on Clydeside, consistently featured birth control and

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234 See, CWS1/39/1.12, SCWG 27th A/R, March 1919, pp.15-16 and CWS1/39/1.18, SCWG 33rd A/R 1925, p. 18.
235 J. Lewis, *The Politics of Motherhood : Child and Maternal Welfare in England 1900-1939*, London, 1980, pp.165-190.
236 B. Brookes, 'The illegal operation', London Feminist History Group, [eds.], *Sexual Dynamics*, pp.171-172.

maternity care as ways in which the conditions of the 'trades of motherhood and housewifery' could be addressed.[237] Although they too framed their demands in terms of the future of the race on the issues of maternity care and birth control, they did not do so in relation to demands for an endowment for women. For women of the ILP on Clydeside, a family endowment was to provide the housewife with economic freedom and security'.[238] It was to do so, moreover, as Annie Maxton stressed, within a 'reconstructed social order'.[239] Thus gender and class demands were framed in such a way so as to complement each other. Yet, subverting the breadwinner's economic responsibility for the family was far from being the dominant perspective of the labour movement. Although demands had been put forth from 1920 at the STUC Annual Conference for family endowment, maternity and child welfare schemes and widows pensions these demands were issued primarily by unions with female members, or those representing unskilled labour.[240] It was not until 1930, however, that the STUC's Organisation of Women Committee showed support for family allowance. At the 1930 STUC's Organisation of Women Committee Conference, Eleanor Stewart proposed that female trade unionists should support family allowance if it kept married women out of the labour market. This line was not out of the ordinary in trade-union circles. Trade-union hostility, moreover, prevailed, justified by the view that such an endowment would have a downward effect on wages.[241] The Labour Party, unlike the general opinions expressed in ILP circles, tended to concur.

Nevertheless, while trade unions and the Labour Party remained relatively hostile, the ILP as already noted was more progressive in its support for family endowment, as was the Women's Co-operative Guild. By contrast in trade union circles, and in the Labour Party, opinions on Widows Pensions were more favourable because any assistance received by widows did not undermine the breadwinner ideal. In 1929 the Labour Party extended the

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237 SCWG, Central Council Minutes, 7th January and 4th February 1931. See also, ILP Women's Section Mins., 8th February, 6th September and 6th November 1926.
238 ILP Women's Section Mins., 2nd March 1925 and 6th September 1926.
239 Ibid., 19th October 1925.
240 See STUC AR 1920-1926, 23rd AR, 1920, pp.93-93.
241 See STUC AR 1926-1930, and 33rd Annual Report 1930 p87.

scope of the 1925 Old Age and Widows Pensions Contributory Act. Widows of those men insured prior to the enactment of the Widow's Pension Act of 1925 were granted this benefit by the Labour government of 1929. However, the payment remained at 10s for widows, 5s for the first dependant and 3s for all other dependants.[242] Family endowment was side-lined both by the first and second Labour governments. *Forward*, by contrast, reported in April 1929 that the Scottish Advisory Council of the ILP had already adopted a resolution in favour of Family Allowance for school children to be given to mothers or guardians. This was to be paid for through the taxation of the wealthy. The only critic was the President of the Building Trades whom, it seems, continued to express the orthodox trade union objection that this would interfere with wages.[243] By 1930 under pressure from the ILP, the Labour Party also added family endowment to their programme.[244] Family Allowances finally came into effect in 1945, introduced by the coalition government.

The concept of family endowment, however, is also a useful medium which highlights how women of the labour movement's demands were subverted between the wars on Clydeside, and throughout Britain. Whilst the Scottish ILP and the Labour Party had accepted the idea of Family Allowance by 1930, it generally had very different meanings for the men and women of the labour movement. What the feminist women of the labour movement, and in particular those of the ILP and Co-operative Women's Guild, sought when they advocated an endowment for married women was based on traditional arguments put forward by pre-war feminists and by the Family Endowment Society. This was a payment to women to provide them with economic freedom and to enhance their status not only as wives, but as 'home workers'. The vast majority of the men in movement, by contrast, tended to oppose the introduction of a monetary family endowment based on the perception that such a benefit was a wage subsidy. Certainly, Thane, has shown that employers, Liberals and some Conservatives, by the 1930s, had come to support the idea of Family Allowance because in

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242 P. Thane, *The Foundations of the Welfare State Social Policy in Modern Britain*, New York, 1982, pp.197-199.
243 *Forward*, 12th April 1929.
244 See P. Graves, 'An Experiment in Women-Centred Socialism', H. Gruber & P. Graves, *Women and Socialism*, p.196.

the economic climate of the inter-war years such a state payment would help maintain a low wage strategy which it was believed would invigorate the economy. Likewise, it would enhance social stability and contribute to 'national efficiency' by improving the stock of 'human capital'.[245] Support from employers increased male hostility and encouraged the labour movement to support a family endowment which took the form of feeding and maintaining school children so that the school leaving age might be raised. This, it was expected would alleviate unemployment, by reducing the pool of cheap labour. Thus, although not confined to the Labour Party, the civic need and the meanings attached to the demands of women, guaranteed that a policy intended to emancipate women was frustrated. When family allowance was finally established, as a number of historians have highlighted, it had little to do with feminist aims and objectives and thus the purpose and effects of this benefit for women were far from liberating. In fact, as Macnicol demonstrates that the establishment of family allowance had more to do with the arguments promoted by advocates of pronatalism, imperialism, and 'national defence' and as an alternative to a statutory minimum wage rather than as a response to the demands of feminists of any persuasion. Harrison is less critical. He believes that feminist debates, and in particular the contribution of Eleanor Rathbone, should not be neglected because through their demands feminists 'educated public opinion on the issue'. [246]

Labour Party women, women of the ILP and those of the Co-operative Women's Guild, like many inter-war feminists, tended to be more successful when they exploited concerns over the quantity and quality of the race. This no doubt contributed to the extension of maternal and child welfare schemes. These were vital on Clydeside, where, incapacity and debility caused by multiple pregnancies was rife. The admission records of Redlands Hospital for Women for 1925 show that pregnancy related illness and debility account for almost

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[245] P. Thane, *The Foundations of the Welfare State*, pp.150, 216-217 & 241-242.

[246] See, J. Lewis, 'Gender, the family and women's agency in the building of welfare states : the British case', *Social History*, Vol.19 1994, pp.37-55 ; J. MacNicol, *The Movement for Family Allowances*, London, 1980, pp.138-160 and B. Harrison, *Prudent Revolutionaries*, pp.110-111.

50% of all cases of hospitalisation in that year.[247] Unquestionably this activated Barbour, Glasgow's first female baillie, and an ILP councillor for Govan. In 1926 the Corporation built new premises for the West Govan Child Welfare Association and agreed to contribute 50% of the maintenance cost. At its opening it was acknowledged that Barbour's influence on the Corporation had been instrumental in the decision to support the extension of child welfare. Furthermore, Barbour took the opportunity at its opening to challenge Govan men. She stated that the new clinic, 'was not merely a child welfare clinic, but an institution for mother-craft and father-craft too'. She also let it be known that the clinic, ' would see its first meeting for fathers', asking 'health visitors to turn out' to make sure that the meeting was a success.[248]

Barbour was also linked to the Govan's Welfare and Advisory Clinic. In 1926 they expressed the view that, 'we feel it is of the utmost importance that this knowledge which has been in the hands of the rich should be given to the poor for their benefit and well being'.[249]

As far as birth control is concerned there appears to have been a quiet revolution on Clydeside, which corresponded with the activity of female activists in formal political circles. Moreover, it should remembered that these activists were part of the many neighbourhoods on Clydeside, characterised by the continued significance of kin and community networks, so that the influence of these organisations probably far exceeded membership. And significantly, the Women's sections of the ILP and the Co-operative Women's Guild also took their educating and propaganda work seriously. Marion Henery, a contemporary recalled, how she and other members of the Communist Party were aware of the Glasgow birth control clinic, but that it was 'very unusual' and a 'kind of keep quiet thing'. However, she attempted to interest, amongst other women in Lanarkshire, the wife of a Communist Party leader in birth control, whom, it might be noted, was horrified at the thought of using contraception.[250]

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[247] M. Spring Rice, *Working-class Wives Their Health and Condition*, London, 1987, especially pp.21-27. This details the findings of the Women's Health Committee which included women from all political persuasions. See also, GRA/HB10/4/3, Redlands Hospital for Women, Medical Journal 1907-1935, Admissions Records, 1925.

[248] *Govan Press*, 26th November 1926.

[249] *Govan Press*, 13th August 1926. Note the Ministry of Health refused to provide a grant for this organisation therefore it had to charge fees.

[250] Interview with Joe and Marion Henery, William Gallagher Memorial Library, Glasgow Caledonian University, Tape 7.

Ignorance prevailed in Lanarkshire, as it did on Clydeside, while limited incomes inhibited the use of contraceptives.[251] Male hostility also prevailed. One week before it became permissible to provide knowledge on the availability of birth control to married women, George Buchanan, the ILP MP for the Gorbals, Glasgow was still insisting that birth control was a middle-class ideal.[252] Nevertheless, women's political networks diffused knowledge of the availability of birth control and slowly helped to disseminate the idea that the 'poor should be no different to the rich' in their ability to reduce family size. In turn, the idea that greater freedom, better lifestyles and improved health would be amongst the benefits of using birth control took root.

Furthermore, whilst most of the male leadership refused to consider promoting birth control there were ILP women who simply defied the party line. The ILP activist Mrs Auld presided over the public opening of Govan's branch of the Glasgow Women's Welfare and Advisory Clinic and Mary Barbour was one of the main speakers. She wished the organisers every success, and she referred to the great Labour involvement in obtaining the objective for the establishment of the clinic. She was also quite happy to work with the Moderate councillor, Mrs Bell, to establish her objectives.[253] By the late 1930s the Glasgow branch of the Scottish Federation of Mothers' Welfare Clinics was having to turn women away, gaining as many as thirty new members each week. Attendance was also increasing in Paisley. Many of these clinics throughout Scotland were aided by donations from town councils. Branches of the Mothers' Welfare Clinics at Edinburgh, Johnstone, Paisley and Renfrew all received council grants, whilst medical officers employed by the councils often sent women to such clinics.[254] Local government was one arena of politics in which women were increasingly influential numerically, as well as vocally. At the Scottish Co-operative Women's Guild Annual Conference in May 1930 it was noted how 'women through their training in the Guild were

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[251] SRA/HB77/1/1/1, Scottish Federation of Mother's Welfare Clinics Minute Book,1937-1938, 27th Sept.1927. This organisation stated that a principle cause of women failing to return to the clinics was inability to pay fees for consultation and contraceptives.

[252] *Forward*, May 3rd and May 9th 1930.

[253] *Govan Press*, 13th August 1926.

[254] Scottish Federation of Women's Welfare Clinics Minute Book, 1925-1938, 28th February 1938. The Greenock branch was experiencing difficulties although this was attributed in part to its meeting on the same night and in the same place as the Venereal Disease clinic.

making very efficient Town Council members' and that they would soon see a member of the Guild in Parliament. [255] Seemingly the councils were viewed as training grounds. By 1930 there were 164 women on the ward committees of Glasgow.[256] In the same year the Labour Women's Advisory Council claimed to have held a 'record number of education conferences and one day schools'.[257]

Women of the labour movement had a positive influence on many working-class women's political identity as well as their everyday lives. They educated women in politics, raising their awareness of class and gender. They promoted public speaking and encouraged women to stand as candidates in political campaigns. Furthermore, they used a variety of means at their disposal to promote their demands and improve the lives of working-class women, whilst implicitly challenging the sexual division of labour. These women manipulated concerns over the race and exploited the dominant languages of inter-war Britain to these ends. By working covertly, often with other women's groups, and men of the labour movement, feminist activists from the ILP, Labour Party and Co-operative Women's Guild forwarded the cause of the 'unpredictable electorate'. Like their counterparts throughout Britain these women seemed to be most successful at local level,[258] yet some were more successful than others. In Scotland, and mainly west central Scotland by 1931 fifty day nurseries and child gardens were being maintained under maternal and child welfare schemes, although there were indications that these benefits were being retracted with the closure of Milton and Hutchesontown Day Nurseries in 1932.[259] However, when Mrs McNab Shaw, at the behest of the ILP, fought for an 'experimental nursery in Ayrshire costing £1000, the County Council refused to consider it'.[260] Similar conditions prevailed with regards to housing policy. There were great achievements in Kilsyth, where the majority of councillors were Labour Party representatives.

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255 *Glasgow Herald*, 17th May 1930.
256 GWSS Exec. Mins., 20th October 1930.
257 *Glasgow Herald*, 17th November 1930.
258 See, P. Graves, 'An Experiment in Women-Centred Socialism', H. Gruber & P. Graves, [eds.], *Women and Socialism*, p.182.
259 *Forward*, 21st February 1931 and 8th October 1932.
260 Ibid., 4th April 1931.

Nearly 50% of the population lived in council houses fitted with beds, lighting, bathrooms with heated water, washing machines and stoves. Rents were set at a price working-class people could afford Consideration was also made on ability to pay rents when residents were ill or unemployed.[261] Glasgow Council built 50,000 homes between the wars, many of these for the purpose of slum clearance. Therein, however, the residents 'attracted social stigma from the onset'.[262] This co-existed with the persistent rent strikes in Govan, Glasgow led by the ILP activist Mary Barbour,[263] and those which took place throughout Clydeside. For the majority of Glasgow's populace appalling housing and high rents were the norm, rather than the more progressive situation in Kilsyth. It seems that women of the labour movement were restricted in their feminist aims and ideals and in the strategies they could use to achieve the latter.

Graves argues that this was heightened between 1932 and 1936. Apparently, the impact of fascism and the reactionary government ensured that women's interests were completely negated. Class unity took precedence over gender concerns.[264] On Clydeside this might have been compounded by the ILP's disaffiliation from the Labour Party in 1932. Certainly it is significant that, in contrast to the 25% ratio of women to men who were Glasgow councillors in 1925 - the year the ILP's membership had reached its highest level in Scotland - the proportion of women to men who were Labour councillors declined immediately following Labour's victory in 1933 and only rose above 10% in 1938.[265] The ILP had acted as a think tank and a propaganda body for the Labour Party, linking the social to the political through its aims to effect municipal socialism and this facilitated a space for women to advance their 'special interests'. This may explain why it was 'under the auspices of the ILP that most of women's grass root activity took place'. Yet, it was also the ILP which challenged the trade-union and male-dominated Labour Party on issues relating to women, most notably over family endowment. Male ILP activists on Clydeside, moreover, had promoted 'women's

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261 *Labour Women*, November 1935, p.169
262 M. Keating, *The City That Refused To Die*, p.17.
263 *Forward*, 14th May 1932.
264 P. Graves, 'An Experiment in Women-Centred Socialism', H. Gruber & P. Graves, [eds.], *Women and Socialism*, pp.182-187.
265 D. Cairns, *Women and the Clydeside Labour Movement*, p.106

issues' and these were not always strictly contained within the existing sexual division of labour. Dollan and Buchanan had contested married women's expulsion from work and advocated equal pay for equal work. Newbold supported the women of the party when they called for information on birth control to be made available to working-class women, as did Woodburn, Secretary of the Scottish Labour College.[266] Likewise, it was Kirkwood who contested the Anomalies Act and its impact on working-class women. This provided scope for women of the ILP, the Labour Party and the Co-operative Women's Guild to work within a political framework which had a tradition of accommodating diversity. It also allowed them to exploit the broad ideals of municipal socialism in feminist ways. This many did, overtly and covertly, and at times in direct defiance of the attitudes of many of the men of the labour movement on Clydeside. However, not all women acted in this way. Mary Sutherland and Eleanor Stewart were more accommodative of the dominant party line. This may have owed something to their greater links with the more male dominated areas of the labour movement as oppose to the ILP, the Labour Party in the case of Sutherland and the trade union movement in the case of Stewart.

None the less, women of the labour movement, in general, had captured the social agenda of politics on Clydeside and used the voting power of their constituents to advance gender-specific interests especially at local level. The ILP was extremely successful on Clydeside, suggesting that there was a positive relationship between the politics of the community, women's predominance in such concerns and voting behaviour. Whilst it may be perceived as passive that such women accepted these gains within the existing division of labour, not only were the terms of the sexual division of labour challenged, but limited resources and pragmatism diminished what was obviously at times a very feminist agenda. More significantly, women were constrained by the meanings and symbolism attached to the language of their oppressors. None the less it was working-class women who had most to gain from the social wage which women of the labour movement promoted and helped place

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266 *Forward*, 25th September 1926.

on the political agenda.[267] The social wage, a redistribution of income from tax-payer to non-tax-payers, was an equalisation process, both in terms of class and gender. Women, after marriage, were invariably non-tax-paying citizens, men, by contrast were tax-paying citizens. Thus a social wage which would equalise access to health services and redistribute income to women in the form of family endowment and maternity benefits challenged men's domination of economic resources.

Demands for a social wage stemmed from an experiential consciousness, both class and gender based, but in the longer term, these demands proved narrowly restrictive, more so for the women of the ILP after 1932 when the hegemony of the Labour Party was sealed. In fact, given the dominance of trade unions in the Labour Party, the loss of the ILP's emphasis on standards of living, which had offered a platform to women, may have been a formidable set-back to women of the labour movement in the 1930s, the period identified by Graves as one in which the relationship between the Labour Party and women broke down.[268]

Despite this, women of the ILP, the Labour Party and the Co-operative Women's Guild were in many ways more feminist than the movement on Clydeside which promoted itself as feminist, the Glasgow and West of Scotland Society for Equal Citizenship, formally the West of Scotland Suffrage Society, whose class retrenchment and political alliances were a huge impediment to 'feminist' unity on the Clyde. In contrast to this organisation's emphasis on national cost efficiency, female activists from the labour movement consistently sought the greater freedom that the technological revolution in household goods, the expansion of nurseries and the contraceptive pill would eventually provide for women. This 'freedom', a post-Second World War development, proved to be, for many working-class women, far from liberating. It merely facilitated the double burden, a situation, which ironically, inter-war activists had endeavoured to alleviate. They did so by proposing pragmatic policies such as direct labour schemes which would release working-class from the burdens of housewifery

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[267] M.Savage, 'Capitalism and patriarchal relations at work : Preston cotton weavers, 1890- 1940', M. Savage et al, [eds.], *Localities, class and gender*, London, 1995, pp.195-207.
[268] See P. Graves. 'An Experiment in Women-Centred Socialism', H. Gruber & P. Graves, [eds.], *Women and Socialism*, pp. 198-214.

and motherhood. These schemes were designed so that working-class women might enjoy leisure and the benefits of citizenship, but they were also intended to provide employment for the mass of women out of work on Clydeside which could not be appropriated by men and their organisations and labelled 'men's work'. These women also consistently promoted the ideal that working-class women should be in position to control their fertility. Furthermore, they disseminated knowledge of contraception and helped initiate schemes whereby working-class women could get access to contraception, often in defiance of their male colleagues in the labour movement. They also demanded communal child-care centres run by local authorities, whilst working towards the establishment of a safe environment in which women could give birth. Health provisions for women, who were all but denied them, were also unwaveringly demanded. These demands were instrumental to the aims of women from the ILP, Labour Party and the Co-operative Women's Guild, aims to see the roles of the housewife and mother recognised, socially and economically, and rewarded as such. Thus they argued for a family endowment to provide this recognition and economic independence for married women. Simultaneously, they called for the abolition of marriage bars, equal pay for equal work, and argued that women should have a choice in the employment training they received. That these women failed to see many of their aspirations fulfilled makes them no less revolutionary and certainly no less feminist : these women were a 'subordinate group' who attempted to transform the social foundations of political power.[268]

Conclusion

Equality of the sexes was to remain comparatively incompatible with demands for different but equal status for the roles of each sex when many men felt insecure and relatively defenceless. These difficulties, although not insurmountable, were exacerbated by the attitudes and actions of the male-dominated industrial wing of the labour movement and by the links the Labour Party maintained with this wing ensuring that to a great extent women continued to be neglected as a political constituency. Relative emancipation in the form of a

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[268] This is a definition of revolution offered by M. S Kimmel, 'What is Revolution?', A. Giddens, [ed.], *Human Societies A Reader*, Cambridge, 1992, p.325.

redistribution of the social wage, however, not only dispersed power but opened avenues which, because of the fixed gender roles, could be appropriated by women without direct confrontation and competition with male members who had greater resources and a tradition of activism to draw from. Despite this, women's practical politics, their 'muted language' and the symbolism of the 'personal', rather than the 'public', attached to working-class women's political agenda allowed it to be subverted and to some extent submerged beneath a politics personified as masculine. In turn, this diminished the possibilities of a more egalitarian political world view. It is also very possible that with the declining influence of the ILP and its emphasis on the social aspects of the political as a significant area of concern, working-class women were further inhibited in their aims to improve women's lives. Thus the archaic vision of class advanced by the labour movement was increasingly used to side-line women's concerns and to avoid issues, including the sexual division of labour, birth control and female dependency. Economic conditions, social pessimism and power vying combined to make this situation worse. Women from the ILP, the Labour Party and the Co-operative Women's Guild, in this context, were increasingly ill-equipped to generate a discourse on plebeian unity with a multiplicity of symbols and meanings from which working-class women could identify and which would have allowed them to transcend the growing diversity of working-class popular culture and the escalating divisiveness of gender relations on Clydeside.

CHAPTER FOUR :

AN ASSERTION OF THE FEMININE : CONFLICT, RESISTANCE AND FRAGMENTED IDENTITIES

> The dogma of women's complete historical subjection to man must be rated as one of the most fantastic myths ever created by the human mind. [1]

The construction of a world view in which females were subservient to men, content to confine themselves to the private sphere, glorified in the roles of exulted mother, house-keeper, and dependant wife, held the capacity to, but did not in reality, fulfil this 'fantastic myth'. To induce women to identify with these characterisations her role, although different from her husbands, was to be elevated so that it was equal in status to her partners. The ideal women was to be loved and respected as well as provided for and protected.[2] Motherhood was glorified with 'successful womanhood becoming synonymous with successful motherhood'. The role of motherhood itself, in Britain, as in much of Europe, was being re-invented from around 1900. The recognition of the need for an efficient work-force and military and anxiety over the falling birth rate contributed to the re-invention of motherhood being accelerated after the First World War. This may also have been a reflection of societies in crisis in the post-war period, a product of the realities and ruptures of war. Motherhood was to be more scientific, embracing the physical and psychological needs of the child, and therefore more of the mother's time and energy.[3]

The idealisation of marriage and motherhood, however, competed with the reality of many marriages. Marriages of conflict continued to mark many working-class neighbourhoods between the wars. Such unions were characterised by each sex having very different economic and social priorities and by a subsequent struggle to command control of resources to effect these priorities. This struggle, however, to control the family resources frequently resulted in high levels of gender antagonism and family violence. These were also conditions unlikely to inspire women, many of whom had gained new freedoms during World War I, to

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[1] Mary Ritter Beard, as quoted in H. Exley, *The Best of Women's Quotations*, New York, 1993, p.38.

[2] J. Lewis, 'Marriage Guidance', *Twentieth Century British History*, Vol.,1 No.3., 1990, pp. 238 - 241 and D. Gittins, *Fair Sex*, p.51 respectively.

[3] R. Bridenthal, 'Something Old, Something New : Women Between the Two World Wars', R. Bridenthal, C. Koonz & S. Stuard, [eds.], *Becoming Visible Women in European History*, Boston, 1987. Notably this discourse on motherhood permeated Europe, stemming from the same phenomena, pp.488-490.

embrace marriage and motherhood, thus the dissemination of the ideal of a 'new man' who would love and respect his partner and treat her role as different from, but of equal value to his role as breadwinner and protector. Finch and Summerfield acknowledge that this marital ideal was around from the 1920s, but argue that it was not until after World War II that attempts to advance the companionate marriage were widely disseminated. They identify anxiety over the falling birth rate, endeavours to remove mothers from full-time employment and concern over juvenile delinquency, attributed to family breakdown, as the forces which enhanced the promotion of the sexually fulfilling companionate marriage. Efforts to disseminate this ideal may well accelerated because of the impact of a second war, but many of the concerns from which the ideal stemmed were equally manifest between the wars. 'Poor housing conditions considered a deterrent to parenthood' and 'pronatalist concerns with improving the material conditions of motherhood in order to promote it as a function' were similarly evident. Finch and Summerfield also emphasis that the falling birth rate was attributed to the 'movement for equality of the sexes', and stress how this contributed to promotion of this ideal. Yet, arguably, after 1945 the movement for equality of the sexes was seen as less of a threat than it was in the 1920s, when feminism, and thereby the potential for women's emancipation, was more novel and influential, and moreover, a contributing factor to the promotion of this ideal.

The contradictions inherent in the companionate marital ideal also existed between the wars. Finch and Summerfield highlight how, 'it was feared that a considerate husband' might not wish to put his wife through the 'hardship and danger of unrestricted childbearing so that the ideal might be contrary to its intended aims'. A number of my male respondents expressed this view. Likewise some of the women interviewed refused to put themselves in this position, obviously with the tacit support of their partners, suggesting that the ideal did have some impact on working-class mentalities. What the two periods also have in common is that the concept of the companionate marriage was 'only superficially in women's interests. It placed extra demands on them without necessarily proving extra rewards'. In addition, before

and after 1945, both sexes had different expectations of the companionate marriage, but in general 'relatively few men were interested in fulfilling women's expectations'. Few men were 'understanding' or 'prepared to share domestic tasks'. In fact during the inter-war years, and in the post-1945 period, many men resented the pressure their wives put them under to achieve the ideal marriage'.[4]

This was evident on Clydeside between the wars, where marriages of conflict continued to mark the region. The new marital and mothering ideals remained principally just that, ideals, because they were largely inconsistent with the realities of working-class life in the region. Like any attempts to orchestrate behaviour, however, they had an impact. Many working-class women sought to identify with the characteristics of the new discourses on marriage, motherhood and femininity, ideals which elevated their roles and enshrined their command of the family and the neighbourhood. Women, because they were to be idealised as the moral guardians of family and social life, had conferred upon them, theoretically, a certain degree of autonomy and power. Working-class men, by contrast, were often unable or unwilling to aspire to the reconstructed ideal of masculinity, the 'new man'. Thus the conflict, which had marked gender relations on the Clyde before 1919, continued to characterise the region during the flux of inter-war years. This was manifest in extreme gender antagonism and a high incidence of domestic violence. Yet, although numerous working-class women endured these conditions, many women continued to assert their autonomy and some level of control over their lives, contesting male privilege and power. Working-class women's relative identification with the characteristics of the dominant world view on womanhood did not necessarily ensure passivity, whilst their complete subjectification of the ideal woman was inhibited by the extra discursive realities of their lives. Of more consequence, the idealisation of women's roles, in combination with men's defensive interpretation of masculinity fused to cause greater sexual antagonism and provided the foundations for a 'rough kind of feminism' on Clydeside. Thus

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[4] J. Finch & P. Summerfield, 'Social reconstruction and the emergence of companionate marriage 1945-59', D. Clark, [ed.], *Marriage, Domestic Life and Social Change : writings for Jacqueline Burgoyne [1944-1988]*, Routledge, London, 1991, pp.7-32.

women resisted sexual antagonism. They exploited the new ideals of marriage and motherhood and the support of traditional kin and community networks which prevailed in this region throughout the inter-war years, exhibiting an assertion of the feminine as a political tactic.

A 'rough kind of feminism' armed women on Clydeside against the potential powerlessness which ideological and structural constraints and their relations with men might have produced. This provided many benefits, most significantly, the capacity for self-legitimisation and autonomy, meduims which granted access to power, status and pride. However, there were divisions amongst women that were not merely economic in their basis. As guardians of the community women were exposed and vulnerable to the influences of civic society and the ideological strains which permeated community life. Thus, the very ideals which women used in their artillery to combat their subordination could also be the source of their disunity. This was particularly so with reference to the concept of 'respectability' which was intrinsically linked to religious denomination and place of residence on Clydeside. These features of community life gave rise to a stratification system which often induced particular images of class capable of dividing women as much as sexual antagonism united in their attempts to control their lives. Fragmented identities, as such, moderated women's capacity to converge on issues which affected them as a group. It moderated their recognition of gender oppression and mediated, but it did not erode a 'rough kind of feminism'.

Working-class communities in transition : The Clyde in context

The inter-war years were distinguished by marked changes which affected many working-class men and women's lives and the immediate localities in which they resided. These changes would prove to have positive and negative implications for working-class women. New employment opportunities extended the breadth of jobs open to women, whilst the commercialisation of leisure expanded the possibilities of pleasure, particularly for young women. Visiting cinemas, cafes, swimming pools and dance halls or enjoying a greater range

of reading material were amongst the pursuits young women could and did indulge in. Information on birth control and the greater ease of availability of contraceptives also offered a better potential to postpone marriage and reduce family size. Yet, the new employment opportunities did little to alter the 'pin money' wages of women and women's economic dependency on marriage. Marriage was still seen as an attractive alternative to employment in the longer term.[5] Marriage and motherhood, moreover, were actively promoted as the natural and fulfilling aspirations for women by the state, para-state agencies, the clergy, para-religious institutions and the media. Adding to the appeal was the ideal of the 'companionate marriage' in which husbands were expected to share chores, child-care, leisure and provide love and companionship. It seems that this was a 'fairly normative' aspiration amongst many sectors of the working-class between the wars,[6] at least amongst women.

The re-affirmation of gender identity, based on the anticipation of creating women who would behave as ancillaries to men rather than liberated citizens, was very much the result of the state's entrenched fears over the quality and quantity of Britain's population. Intrinsically linked to growing foreign competition, and thus the efficiency of the work-force, these fears were also tied to anxiety over the defence of the realm. An added concern was that middle-class family size was falling faster than those of the working class. The middle-class were the class perceived as the progenitors of Britain's leadership. Thus the great concern of the inter-war years was over-all population decline. Yet, correspondingly, there was a growing acceptance, availability and use of contraceptives. Smaller families placed women in a better position to take advantage of new opportunities opening to them. This may have been heightened because many females had escaped isolation and male dependency during World War I . In the post-war period perhaps women had to be persuaded to reabsorb the idea of themselves as a 'weaker sex' in need of a male 'protector and provider', more so, because, regardless of prevailing attitudes, family size continued to decline.

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[5] D. Gittins, *Fair Sex*, p.123.
[6] Ibid., p.145.

The concerns over the fall in the birth-rate was compounded by the public debate between sexologists and psychoanalysts. This debate centred upon women's capacity for sexual pleasure.[7] These factors combined with the perceived loosening of controls over female sexuality to give rise to the dissemination of the idea that a permissive society was developing. Bourke highlights that, 'the family was portrayed as disintegrating under the strain of sex obsession, delayed marriages and thwarted childbearing instincts. The declining birth rate was seen to be threatening the survival of the white race'.[8] This resulted in a proposed compromise. The clergy, politicians and the medical profession began to expound an idealised 'companionate marriage'.[9] This was an elevation of women's traditional role. Women were directed towards the private sphere, good housekeeping skills were exulted, marriage reaffirmed and motherhood glorified. All were to act as a trade-off to diffuse the appeal of relative emancipation. Wives were to be provided for, protected and treated as equals in the private sphere, with love, understanding, and respect.[10] In return, women were to accept dependency on a breadwinner and isolation.

Gareth Stedman Jones suggests that discourse is 'a pre-existing need or demand, motivated to create and then orchestrate such a demand to change the self-definition and behaviour of those addressed'.[11] And it would seem that these conditions applied to the inter-war gender world view which gained ascendancy. The challenge to male-domination posed by the 'new' women of the inter-war years was diffused. Partly a product of the concern about the declining birth-rate and the 'state of the nation' debate, this discourse also vindicated the assimilation of the institutions of marriage and the family under a public rather than a private relationship with the state.[12] Persuasive evidence of this is reflected in the framing of legislation affecting women and also in the way that women were overseen and 'advised' by a multiplicity of agencies, who whilst reducing the personal role of the patriarchal father,

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[7] J.Lewis, 'Marriage Guidance', *Twentieth Century British History*, Vol.1 No.3. 1990 pp. 238 - 241.
[8] J. Bourke, *Working- Class Cultures in Britain, 1890-1960*, London, 1994, p28.
[9] J. Lewis, 'Marriage Guidance', *Twentieth Century British History*, Vol.1 No.3. 1990, pp.238-241.
[10] Ibid.
[11] G. Stedman-Jones, *Languages of Class*, London, 1983, p.24.
[12] J.Lewis, 'Marriage Guidance', *Twentieth Century British History*, Vol.1 No.3. 1990 pp. 238-241.

increased the paternal control of the state over women. This was manifest in events such as 'Baby Week', when, 'all manner of societies and individuals engaged in teaching working-class mothers drew together for mutual encouragement and the work they saw as of national importance'.[13] The state's increasing role in family life is also evident in the rising number of welfare clinics across Britain throughout the inter-war years. There were 2054 welfare clinics in Britain in 1920, 1061 run by local authorities. By 1938 there were 4585, 2752 of which were run by local authorities.[14] Brookes argues that these attitudes were enshrined in the legal and medical strictures on abortion which were, of course, incompatible with the state's intention that the population should increase. Women who wished to terminate a pregnancy, were viewed as selfish and irresponsible. Mr Justice Darling, at the trail of a criminal abortionist, stated, 'a country which permits its population to be dealt with in this way is bound to decay. Those who have as many enemies as the British Empire, must, for their own safety have plenty of children to meet those enemies at the gate'.[15] A response to the potential emancipation of women, the declining birth rate, and as a means to improve the quality of the population, this also, it seems, eroded women's social and mutual support networks as women became dependant on medical professionals.

Whilst the state, and para-state agencies feared for the quality and quantity of the British race, their was disquiet among religious bodies over a perceived secularisation. On Clydeside, partly as a result of the escalating sectarianism in the region, there was the additional fear, that on marriage their 'flock', might convert to Catholicism or Protestantism, an alternative denomination.[16] Thus the Churches targeted women as the guardians of family values and emphasised the virtues of motherhood. As noted, women were expected to 'co-operate with God when building their homes or they would built in vain' and 'a good capable housewife and mother' became an ideal wife when she practised, 'cleanliness, order, thrift,

[13] E. Rathbone, *The Disinherited Family*, London, 1927, p.102.
[14] D. Gittins, *Fair Sex*, p.51.
[15] B. Brooker, 'The illegal operation', London Feminist History Group, [eds.], *Sexual dynamics*, p.170.
[16] See T. Gallacher, *Glasgow The Uneasy Peace Religious Tension in modern Scotland*, Manchester, 1987, pp.47 and 121.

refinement, and Christian devotion'.[17] Bourke also highlights how the media contributed to this ideal. The *Glasgow Herald* identified the entire home as a woman's domain. It was, 'more a monument to the industry of the housewife than a comfortable place to live. The housewife was the Home Ruler'.[18]

To encourage women to identify with the conventional image of womanhood and thereby promote motherhood, the demonisation of the traditional gender discourse was also extended to envelop the liberated women of the post-war period. Thus, while married women were warned by the *Glasgow Herald* in their daily feature, 'Helpmates - Women's Topics', that 'sometimes the wife fails, and debts, bad housekeeping, neglect of the home for outside pleasure brings the marriage to disaster',[19] liberated women were enshrined in the flapper imagery and characterised as future slatterns, poor wives and 'unfit' mothers. Alternatively, they were seen as potential 'spinsters', frigid women and lesbians who would be 'a danger to society, men and civilisation'.[20] As with American women, the British 'flappers', who signified liberation and women's greater freedom through codes of dress, in their hair styles and in their demand for 'fun and frivolity', were depicted as 'irresponsible, fun-loving party animals'.[21]

The ensuing subjectification process revolving around these polar images of womanhood had a dramatic impact upon the collective mentalities of the working classes on Clydeside. Principally, the re-assertion of traditional gender identities based upon the male breadwinner and his ancillary the wife and mother to his children, restricted to a private sphere, gained ascendancy. Nash has implied that it did so in America because the 'flapper' no longer suited as a role model by the 1930s. The impact of the depression ensured that people were desperately trying to survive. Apparently an insecure age found it far more comforting to visualise women as motherly figures. Thus, 'the social and psychological conditions of the

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17 *Glasgow Herald*, 1st February 1928. See also A. Hughes, 'Popular Pastimes And Wife Assault In Inter-War Glasgow', University of Strathclyde Dissertation, [1996], pp.41-42 and especially p.43.
18 J. Bourke, *Working-Class Cultures in Britain*, p.66
19 *Glasgow Herald*, 18th May 1932.
20 J. Hearns, ' State Organisation and Men's Sexuality in the Public Domain', H. Corr & L. Jamieson, [eds.], *State, private life and political change*, pp.50-72 and B. Brookes, 'The illegal operation', London Feminist History Group, [eds.], *Sexual dynamics*, pp. 165-176 respectively.
21 G.D. Nash, *The Crucial Era The Great Depression and World War II 1929-1945*, New York, 1992, p.77.

depression were reflected in social trends'.[22] Economic conditions had deteriorated severely by the 1920s in some regions of Britain and perhaps this contributed to the promotion of the gender discourse glorifying the home and 'motherly figures'. Yet, it is also likely that political expediency was more central to the onslaught against the liberated female in Europe. Attempts to orchestrate the behaviour of women was extremely appealing to a wide range of male-dominated institutions who identified the flapper, and thus women's liberation, as a potential danger to society. Pervading the 'public', this notion was advanced by the state, state bodies, the churches, the medical profession, politicians, the labour movement and the media.

From World War I the reality of women in the labour market and trade unions created the perception that women were a threat to employment, masculinity and male respectability. In the post-war period the 'provider ideal' was extensively reasserted. As such the industrial wing of the labour movement on Clydeside supported better accommodation for working-class people and demanded that the government deal with the problem because the housing situation, 'was a hindrance to marriage . . . and a serious danger to the social welfare of the community'.[23] Thus trade-union support for what was regarded as a women's issue could in reality prove an appropriation by the male-dominated movement to undermine the economic independence of women. It was also a reflection of the foundations of the ideal companionate marriage which emphasised poor housing conditions as a deterrent to parenthood. Equally many trade unionists believed that widows should receive a 'Mother's Pension', because 'It is scandalous that widows of the working class and their families when bereft of a breadwinner, should have to rely on Poor Law',[24] or arguably employment which might threaten the position of men in the world of work. The trade-union movement also demanded that night work for women be abolished and mothers be removed from industry.[25] This characterisation of women in need of protection and provision, a strategy to ensure that they were, was also

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22 Ibid.
23 *STUC AR 1920-1925*, 24th Annual Report 1921, Resolution Proposed by William Shaw, p.77.
24 *STUC AR 1920-1925*, *23rd Annual Report* 1920, p.94.
25 *STUC AR 1920-1925*, 28th Annual Report 1925, Report on Women in Industry, p.103.

expounded by the political wing of the labour movement who attempted to circumscribe working-class women's political influence and identify their female constituency as wives or, 'the wives of tomorrow'. [26] Nevertheless, they were aware that they had to make concessions. Male ILPers were not above holding the voters' babies or wielding the dummy teat.[27] The 'politics of motherhood', therefore, was adopted by many working men to their own ends and ran through the debates on the breadwinner wage and the suitability of women in the labour market.

Ensuring the relative hegemony of this world view was the way it saturated the pages of the press on Clydeside. The ideal of the glorified mother was celebrated in contrast to the derogatory portrayals of 'flappers'. The 'liberated' female, was so self-absorbed, that she was even incapable of taking her constitutional rights seriously. The *Daily Record* caricatured these voters thus,

> Mary had a little vote she got it from the Tories . . .
> She did not vote for MrB . . . he was middle-aged and married...
> A Labour speaker nearly swayed her mind in his direction
> But Mary found the Red Flag's shade would clash with her complexion. . . [28]

Perhaps this was why the *Govan Press* felt cause to report on the same day that,

> The flappers did not show the same enthusiasm as is usually envisaged by ladies with something new fangled. Some people had expected to witness scenes reminiscent of a hat sale but evidently the lure of the poll was insufficient to arouse them to such heights of enthusiasm.[29]

Those 'flappers' who could secure the excitement of a car ride or acquire a male escort whose arm would guide them to the polling station on the other hand presented themselves at the polls.[27] Thus the press felt they had to provide 'advice to flappers'.[30]

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26 *Forward*, 18th May 1929.
27 *Forward*, 9th December 1921.
28 *Daily Record*, 31st May 1929.
29 *Govan Press*, May 31st 1929.
27 Ibid., 31st May 1929.
30 Ibid., May 3rd 1929.

Change, however, was not merely ideological, although the material could overlap with the ideological. The building of 'homes fit for heroes' was tied up with ideals of the companionate marriage, as well as maternalism, privacy, respectable domesticity and male home-centredness, all of which held the capacity to reduce women's autonomy and access to support from traditional working-class kin and community networks.

Between the wars in England and Wales local authorities built more than one million houses, although, 'the separation of families increased so that housing shortages actually increased'.[31] Nevertheless, throughout Britain, between council housing projects and private builders, over four million dwellings were built, a quarter of which were for slum clearance.[32] Acquiring a new home was seen by many working-class women as a form of opportunity. Hughes and Hunt argue that, although 'it is important to recognise the poverty, ill health and overcrowding which existed between the wars', the expansion of house building, especially by local authorities, 'transformed' housing accommodation and to some extent the neighbourhood culture of the working-classes who moved to the new estates. They looked at the new Wythenshawe estate of inter-war Manchester. This estate was part of a development which saw 30,000 new homes being built in Manchester by 1939, with local authority housing accounting for around 10% of all stock by 1938. Hughes and Hunt maintain that this 'new housing both reflected and intensified the increasing differentiation within the working class and crystallised gender divisions within working-class families'. Municipal housing was not for the very poor. However, for those deemed 'worthy' of the new homes, and in particular the women who resided in the new cottages, the 'garden suburbs', there were both gains and losses. Women were instrumental in the design and allocation of the new houses. This ensured the building of accommodation which women felt suited to their needs. However, the latter was restricted to the actual home rather than the environment in general and this proved to be problematic because the new estates lacked many of the amenities of the older localities. But, while Hunt and Hughes refrain from suggesting that one type of neighbourhood

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31 D. Gittins, *Fair Sex*, p.40.
32 J. Bourke, *Working-Class Cultures in Britain*, p.15.

was preferable to another, they do highlight that on the whole most of the women who became residents preferred the isolation and lack of facilities in the new estates to the poor conditions they had left behind. The perceived advantages accrued from decent housing outweighed the disadvantages including the loss of the support networks women had enjoyed in the neighbourhoods from which they had moved. In other words, whilst working-class women faced inconveniences on the new estates, these obstacles were transcended by their ability to effect privacy and respectable domesticity, which corresponded with an increased emphasis on the 'respectable family as an intense domestic unit enclosed from the wider world'.[34] For many men too, changes in residence brought transformations in the form of the greater separation of work and home and the increasing emphasis on home-centred leisure, which, moreover, was compatible with the ideal of the companionate marriage.

Male home-centredness, the companionate marriage and maternalism, however, did not necessarily raise the status of working-class women between the wars. In fact, these changes may actually have undermined women's autonomy. As noted, maternalism arguably gave rise to a diminishing of the significance of women's support networks and the erosion of female autonomy. It also seems that, 'changes in occupational experience, leisure pursuits, residence and community patterns ensured a weakening of the working-class community as a primary source of recreation, solidarity, information and assistance'.[35] Many of these benefits were enjoyed and promoted by working-class women through support networks. These networks, which marked the older working-class neighbourhoods, however, also had negative aspects, 'policing, isolating and penalising individuals' who did not comply with 'the local standards set by women themselves'. But, they could equally be 'mutually supportive and empowering'.[36] D' Cruze maintains that the erosion of these networks, in part due to the expansion of municipal housing, may have reduced women's autonomy. ' Overcrowded living

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34 A Hughes and K. Hunt, ' A culture transformed? Women's lives in Wythenshawe in the 1930s, A. Davies & S. Fielding, [eds.], *Workers' Worlds*, pp.74-101.
35 D. Gittins, *Fair Sex*, p.57.
36 A. Hughes and K. Hunt, 'Women's lives in Wythenshawe', A. Davies & S. Fielding, [eds.], *Workers' Worlds,* pp.91-92..

space meant the neighbourhood was a site of play, gossip and social interaction which cemented social relations and consolidated vital support networks.'[37] Potentially, this was lost in the transformation of housing and neighbourhood culture between the wars. The changing environment of the inter-war years, therefore, held the capacity to heighten women's subordination within the family and the neighbourhood regardless of the characterisation which glorified them as moral guardians of these arenas.

The existence of women's autonomy, however, has also been challenged. Ross highlights how the working-class women of London were compelled to shoulder the burden of domestic responsibility. This was not a source of autonomy and empowerment, it was imposition which entailed great struggle, sacrifice and continued conflict with men for scarce resources, a situation which frequently resulted in domestic violence. Ross, however, also demonstrated that, prior to 1914, although not without the 'tensions and conflict characteristic of all forms of intimacy', working-class women used the locality to develop networks of kin and community. These networks were principally gender-specific, based upon 'reciprocity and sympathy', but more significantly, they were born from the everyday realities of working-class women's lives. They were 'survival strategies', operating to moderate the worst excesses of male abuse, particularly domestic violence and men's excessive expenditure of family incomes.[38] This is in contrast to the analysis of women's lives in Liverpool between the wars presented by Ayers and Lambetz. These historians suggest that women were much more subordinate to men and less likely to contest this subordination, especially male abuses of scarce resources.[39] Tebbutt's investigation of pawnbroking supports this argument by highlighting how some women needed to resort to the secret pawning of men's goods to provide the appearance of good housekeeping skills to accommodate the 'master' of the home and avoid domestic violence.[40] However, Ayers later modified her analysis of married life in Liverpool by

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[37] S.D'Cruze, 'Women and the Family', J. Purvis, [ed.], ed.], *Women's History*, pp.69-70.

[38] E. Ross, 'Survival Networks : Women's Neighbourhood Sharing in London Before World War 1', *History Workshop*, Issue 15, Sp.1983, pp.6-14.

[39] P. Ayers and J. Lambertz, 'Marriage relations', J. Lewis, [ed.], *Labour and Love:*, Oxford, 1986, pp.195-210.

[40] M. Tebbutt, *Making Ends Meet : Pawnbroking And Working-Class Credit*, Leicester, 1983, pp.38-49.

presenting evidence of the alternative masculinities evident in this region between the wars which contrasted and co-existed with the tyrannical and confrontational marriages of the earlier study.[41]

A direct comparison to the presentation of women as subordinate to men and lacking power and autonomy is manifest in Roberts study of inter-war Lancashire. There women were apparently empowered because of the centrality of their roles in the family and the neighbourhood. More significantly, the acceptance of the dual income family which 'presaged the companionate marriage' evident after 1945, seemingly placed a break on domestic violence. 'Women were not downtrodden, bullied or dependant', but rather, 'respected and highly regarded financial and household managers' and 'arbiters of familial' and indeed neighbourhood standards'. [42] Chinn is more assertive. He acknowledges that women of the urban poor in England endured marriages of conflict, but stresses that these women were determined not to be subservient. 'Not all women accepted the almighty male with subservience and tears . . . Not all of them called their husbands master'.[43] For Chinn, the 'hidden matriarchy and women's relative economic contribution to the family economy combined with the strength and power they asserted and drew from the family and the neighbourhood to ensure that, like the women Ross depicted, 'they were neither lady-like or deferential to men'.[44] Bourke to some extent has qualified the apparent divergence of the contrasting presentations of women's lives between the wars. She argues that 'although women attempted to improve their position in the home and resist unlawful power over them', and that while,'they saw marriage as something worth striving for - as a way of increasing their power', this had to be negotiated by women. Women gave up independence but made men dependant upon them.[45]

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[41] P.Ayers, ' The Making of Men : Masculinities in Interwar Liverpool', M. Walsh, [ed.], *Working Out Gender*, pp.66-83.
[42] E. Roberts, *A Women's Place*, pp.82-122.
[43] C. Chinn, *They worked all their lives*, pp.156-165, especially, p.164.
[44] Ibid., p.165.
[45] J. Bourke, *Working-Class Cultures in Britain*, pp. 63-66.

These studies of women in the family suggest that females were affected by the discursive context and material changes taking place between the wars in a multiplicity of ways and that their responses to these changes may have differed widely. On Clydeside what determined the level of change and the subjectification of the discourses available to women was their ability to gain access to the material realities to effect change and internalise a given discourse. Much of this was determined by place of residence and the economic impact of the inter-war in a given neighbourhood and even in an individual home.

Continuity and change on the Clyde between the wars

On Clydeside continuity was as evident, if not more pervasive, than change between the wars and this ensured that there were women who experience immense oppression in marriages marked by conflict. However, there were also women who were far from lady-like or deferential to men and others who embraced the new marital, residential and cultural ideals. This reflected and intensified, not only class, but gender differentiation.

As already highlighted the penetration of new industries on the Clyde was less marked than it was in other regions of Britain. Male employment in heavy industries continued to predominate, although greater changes did occur in women's employment. However, the employment profile of men and women on the Clyde might have inhibited the subjectification of the companionate marital ideal and contributed to the relatively high fertility rates in Scotland as oppose to other regions of Britain. Relative isolation was a principle feature of many of the new jobs which women undertook on the Clyde as was their expulsion and lack of employment opportunities after marriage. Gittins' analysis of fertility rates shows how a high fertility rate often corresponds with limitations placed on married women's employment. The isolated nature of women's in combination with the types of employment undertaken by their husbands could have proved a deterrent against the subjectification of the companionate marital ideal. She suggests that when men work in heavy industry and women's employment is of an isolated nature then there tended to be less sharing of leisure, child care, ideals, norms and values. Women so employed, in contrast to those in other occupations, had less

access to new ideas, the spread of contraception and new ideas on marriage. Couples in such households tended to replicate the traditional normative family ideal as defined by their parents and their peers. These relationships were also those most likely to be characterised by the absence of a glorification of domesticity. In fact men and women tended to participate in separate tight knit social groups.[46] Moreover it was often within such segregated marriages that there was an atmosphere of undeclared warfare between couples. In addition, such unions were also those in which women were more likely to face real cruelty. On Clydeside, these employment structures, fertility rates and the features of married life listed above marked many localities between the wars.

The persistence of traditional neighbourhood cultures which contributed to marriages of conflict may also have been sustained by relative continuities in housing tenure on the Clyde. 230,000 houses were built in Scotland by local authorities between the wars, 50,000 in Glasgow. Although this was an impressive number of homes 'housing needs were far greater and conditions far worse' in Scotland. Home ownership was also impeded by structural factors on Clydeside. Disincentives to private building included high levels of unemployment and the effects of the Rent Restriction Act. In 1911 house ownership on the Clyde represented two percent of total housing tenure and house ownership in Scotland remained lower than the British average throughout the inter-war years and beyond.[47] Intensifying these obstacles was the sharp fall in wages which occurred in the immediate post-war years.[48] Although wages generally stabilised, high levels of unemployment continued to mark the Clyde throughout the 1930s. Pre-existing rent arrears acted as an additional obstacle to housing mobility and they were not uncommon : in Clydebank, 'there were God knows how many people were put out. That was a common sight, people getting evicted'. Ironically, the rent arrears which impeded working-class people from gaining a council housing affected

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46 D. Gittins, *Fair Sex*, pp. 79-80 and 141-143.
47 For data on local authority housing in Glasgow, see M. Keating, *The City That Refused To Die*, p.17. For Scotland see, S. Pollard, *The Development of the British Economy 1914-1967*, p.260, and for private building see, J. Butt, 'Working-class Housing in Glasgow 1900-1939', I. MacDougall, [ed.], *Essays in Scottish Labour History*, pp.143-169.
48 *Glasgow Herald*, 11th October 1922.

many of the women who had participated in the rent strikes of 1915 and 1921. Tenants in Clydebank failed to put aside their rent during the strikes and fell into rent arrears. Subsequently, the council denied them access to new housing between the wars. In addition, apparently, some women from Govan, Glasgow participated in the rent strikes because they provided a strategy through which women could avoid rent payments that they could not at that time afford.[49]

Inability to procure such housing moderated access to the ideals of privacy, domestic respectability and home-centred leisure. For the majority of working-class families the price of municipal housing was also prohibitive. By 1922 many were already unable to afford the relatively low rents of the poorer private accommodation. A demonstration took place in October 1922 to urge Glasgow City Council to petition Parliament to prohibit evictions. It was 300 strong with women accompanied at the rear by unemployed men. 2168 cases of rent arrears had been brought before the Summary Ejectment Court in February 1922.[50] By October 1922, unpaid rent in the city stood at £250,000. That same month, Mrs Mossman, of the Unemployed Committee was given an assurance by the Council that unemployed tenants would not be evicted, an assurance which was broken when hundreds of families were ejected from their homes.[51] Tebbutt provides an indication of the levels of acute poverty experienced on Clydeside. She demonstrates that the high point of pawnbroking in Britain was between 1900-1913 with the exception of London and Glasgow, where, by 1938, licence figures exceeded those for 1903 and 1913/14. Furthermore, while clothing declined in significance as pledge items in Britain, indicating growing prosperity, clothing as a pledge continued to be used more frequently in the North, where low value pledges were of greater relative importance. She states, 'chronic unemployment brought grinding pressures which many families had rarely experienced before'.[52] Thus, where municipal housing became

49 Interview with author MrsGD, born 1912 Govan, Glasgow and MrCA, born 1920, Clydebank, Dumbartonshire. With regards to the Clydebank rent strikes, while presenting a lecture for the Clydebank Workers' Educational Association in April 2000, some of the women who attended raised this point.
50 *Glasgow Herald*, 11th October and 5th February 1922.
51 Ibid., 11th and 21st October 1922.
52 M. Tebbutt, *Making Ends Meet*, pp.137,151 and 195.

available in the 1920s in Glasgow it was let primarily to people employed as teachers, draughtsmen and foremen.[53] Yet, even teachers could find the new housing estates out of their reach in some regions of Clydeside. MrGRA, a teacher declared that he was unable to afford a council house in Greenock in the 1930s.[54]

However, although access to municipal housing, a contributory to male home-centredness was, at least initially, severely restricted by poverty and unemployment for the majority of working-class people on Clydeside, government housing policy in the 1930s ensured that slum clearance took precedence over general house building. This permitted some mobility and improved living conditions for working-class families. Yet, slum clearance did not necessarily give rise to transformations of culture in all new working-class neighbourhoods. The Glasgow Housing and General Town Improvement Committee agreed to the erection of Possil in Glasgow to clear a nearby slum.[55] Houses were erected, as they were in Possil, to transplant entire neighbourhoods into what were often a reproduction of the tenements they replaced rather than 'garden suburbs' which facilitated distance, thus privacy, by way of garden fences and such like. In fact, Mrs Laird, President of the Glasgow Labour Party Housing Association, complained that 'Scotland should not be content with a lower standard of housing than that aimed at in England where demand for cottages were common'.[56] But it was not just building structure which guaranteed that neighbourhood cultures would be transplanted into the new estates. The policy of a given council and the attitudes towards the people re-housed could contribute. In 1932, at a Conference on Housing and Town Planning, it was noted by women of the Labour Party that there was a need, ' to co-opt women on to housing sub-committees because it is evident that men do not understand . . . that when slum clearing, the people should be scattered, so that they really get away from their old associations'. [57]

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53 Ibid., 11th October 1922.
54 Interview with author, MrGRA, born 1904, Greenock Renfrewshire.
55 *Glasgow Herald*, 27th March 1922.
56 Ibid., 23rd March 1922.
57 *Labour Women*, June 1932, p.94.

These conditions held the potential to mediate access the ideals of respectable domesticity, privacy and home-centred leisure. Where this occurred, pre-existing forms of the gender division of leisure which often contributed to marital tensions prevailed. Davies has shown, how, in Manchester and Salford between the wars, access to leisure was organised on the basis of gender and poverty, governing access to what he labelled, 'masculine republics', the main working-class male pursuits of alcohol consumption in public houses and gambling. Although regulated by poverty, tensions were provoked by the level of male expenditure on their pleasures. Spending could push a family below the poverty line and this created conflict between couples which frequently erupted into domestic violence.[58] However, arguably these tensions were not merely the product of the poverty of the inter-war years. Studies of the impact of poverty fail to consider the effects on women whose expectations were rising due to the potential for better standards of living between the wars, those whose spouses were in secure and sheltered employment which was relatively well paid. Governments were committed to deflationary policies between the wars and this pushed down the price of food, home ownership and consumer goods. A secure wage could provide access to improved standards of living and the better housing accommodation which was expanding between the wars. This allowed women, and men, privacy, dignity, and enhanced life chances. Economic security was also vital in providing greater access to the ideals of respectable domesticity and companionate marriages. Thus expenditure on male pursuits, especially gambling and drinking, could prove detrimental to both the poorer and more affluent families on the Clyde and elsewhere in Britain, causing tension in homes across a wide spectrum of income groups.

These tensions were evident on Clydeside. Leisure remained gendered and male leisure was rarely home-centred. There is little indication that the companionate marital ideal gave rise to shared leisure pursuits. Furthermore, poverty did not necessarily regulate men's access to spending on leisure. Access to leisure on Clydeside as will become evident was

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[58] A. Davies, ' Leisure in the "classic slum" 1900-1939', A. Davies and S. Fielding, [eds.], *Workers' Worlds*, pp.102-131.

very much determined by gender in many working-class neighbourhoods, creating conflict between couples and contributing to an extremely high incidence of domestic violence.

Efforts to advance the new marital and mothering ideals, along with models of privacy, respectability and home-centredness in this context of relative continuity corresponded with the impression among male workers that females were an economic and social threat to their masculinity. It did so, moreover, at a time when men themselves were on the defensive because of structural unemployment, an accelerating rate of deskilling, and an employer's counter-attack. Bourke notes, between the 1870s and World War I, the masculinity of an individual could be based on waged labour. After the 1920s this was a fragile basis for masculinity because of unemployment and the rise in desk jobs.[59] These conditions acted as structural and ideological impediments which often inhibited a masculine identity based upon the breadwinner ideal and an acknowledgement that men and women's roles should be different in function but equal in status. Even where women did embrace the re-affirmed idea of womanhood, therefore, this strained gender relations by exacerbating male guilt because of male inability to aspire to this image of masculinity as determined by men's ability to 'provide'. Alternatively, where women rejected or were impeded from absorbing the characteristics of the dominant discourse which maintained that they refrained from employment after marriage, and instead either sought greater economic freedom, or were forced to supplement men's incomes, they reinforced the notion that women were challenging masculinity, when men on Clydeside were very insecure. The third route, and the one which was adopted by many working-class women on Clydeside, was to merge innovation with tradition. They could never be 'liberated citizens'. Custom and culture ensured the prevalence of 'pin money' wages and guaranteed that, 'every girl was looking for a husband! The real working-class were awful poor and glad to say they were married. They felt ashamed that they hadnae a man'. [60]

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59 J.Bourke, *Working-Class Cultures in Britain*, pp.41-42.
60 Interview with author, MrsGS, born 1895 Pollockshields, Glasgow.

Many of these women desperate for a sense of identity from marriage and motherhood could never wholly embrace the dominant ideal of womanhood either because they were in no material position to do so, while it was increasingly unlikely that working-class men would view their roles as equal to their own. Instead working-class women modified the ideal which exalted them as wives and mothers to enshrine their command of the home and the neighbourhood. This allowed many women access to some level of self-legitimisation, to autonomy and power and thus facilitated a challenge of their undervaluation. By doing this, women were seen to be usurping men and at the same time they intensified men's sense of inadequacy when males were already vulnerable. In turn, men's perceptions of women as a threat to their dominance and the subsequent masculine insecurity may have amplified gender antagonism on Clydeside, and very possibly other regions of Britain too. And even where it did not, the family and the locality remained spaces in which the struggle for control between working-class men and women was most marked.

Giles argues that 'attempts to recreate the private sphere as a space where women's values predominate and oppose the aggressive and competitive world of men fail to confront the ways in which private life sanctions different forms of aggression, anger and conflict that take place in the home'. She maintains that 'women experienced both power and powerlessness', and that 'social relations in the home legitimised some women's subordination and offered others opportunities for dominance and submission'.[61] Yet, 'gendered identities are maintained and recreated through social practices . . . and individuals are active producers of these practices rather than passive reproducers of socialised gender behaviour'.[62] Because social practices, and thus gender identities, are time and place specific the impact of signifying the home and the neighbourhood as spaces in which women's values were to predominate, as the dominant gender discourses of this period did, will vary over time and place. On Clydeside this situation might actually have contributed to gender conflict. It may well have done so because where women identified with this ideal they would attempt to

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61 J. Giles, *Women, Identity and Private Life*, pp.12-17.
62 R.Wodak, [ed.], *Gender and Discourse*, p.82.

impose expectations and norms and values of behaviour on men within these spaces at a time when men felt insecure and bereft of control.

By the inter-war years, however, any power bestowed on women from kin and community networks within the neighbourhood was becoming time and place specific due to the changes occurring in working-class neighbourhoods. The 'cult of privacy' and the alleviation of absolute poverty along with the diminishing of kinship groups due to greater mobility reduced the geographical magnitude of women's kinship networks. Yet, at this time on the Clyde, the conditions which facilitated 'survival networks' prevailed to a greater extent and because of this their decline was more drawn out. These conditions included high levels of poverty and limited social segregation. Labour market fluctuations had acted as an impediment to economic security and home ownership before World War I. Mobility on the Clyde as such was restricted even before the inter-war depression. Between the wars the close proximity of tenement life largely prevailed. Recession and the structural weaknesses of the Clydeside economy did little to alleviate poverty and close proximity. Hence working-class women continued to operate such networks. What changed, however, was the ideological context in which they operated. The identification of women with the home and the community provided a means whereby women could command respect and greater control of the neighbourhood and the family unit. In this context women could accept separate spheres, but extend its boundaries into the 'public', using the symbolism of 'moral guardianship' to their own ends to combat gender antagonism. Therefore, if attempts to ascribe gender identity is to be seen as detrimental to women, it would have had to have been fully subjectified, or if contested, with limited impact. In addition, the proposed characterisation itself, to have had a significant effect would have had to have been at least marginally compatible with the everyday realities of working-class women's lives. This, however, was a difficult aspiration for many women. Some entered employment to effect social mobility through dual incomes. Many more were compelled to enter work because of poverty and this made the struggle to be a 'good housekeeper' and so maintain family respectability and preservation a constant battle. The

tradition of supplementing the breadwinner's income remained as vital during the inter-war years as it had been prior to 1914. Working-class women had to work and the majority of my female respondents did so at some point in their married lives. Therefore, although women embraced aspects of the dominant discourse on womanhood this was merged with the realities of their lives and impacted upon their perceptions of separate spheres and glorified motherhood. Fundamentally, the risk and reality of poverty and overcrowding combined with the effects of male privilege and power to determine many working-class women's definitions of the ideal woman. These forces also impacted upon their responses to sexual antagonism.

It has been shown that gender antagonism could result in the expressed a women's consciousness channelled through what Smith Rosenberg labelled a 'women's culture'. This 'culture', she maintains, had its own 'autonomous values, identities, symbolic systems and modes of communication'. It was 'women's redefinition of themselves in their own terms', implying an assertion of equality, an awareness of sisterhood, and the commonality of women'.[63] Although this could 'lead to a movement', as it did, particularly amongst middle-class women, it is primarily and initially a 'consciousness' which allowed women to converge on issues which affected them as a women, 'the perception of collective wrongs'. Giles, by contrast, argues against the image of a 'supportive and empowering sisterhood', suggesting that where women combined they did so focusing on the needs of the entire family, men included. Women, it seems, united in networks, to gain, through negotiation, 'a sense of belonging and safety against those who might wield power', whether that power was in terms of resources or knowledge, and also to, 'sustain behaviours expected and necessary for them to be identified as a good women'.[64] Whilst these conditions are equally true of the networks on Clydeside, what Giles fails to recognise is that where sexual antagonism is manifestly evident, those who wield power, although part of the family unit, also become signified as 'other' in the negotiations which mark the differentiation between those regarded as 'them and

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[63] C. Smith Rosenberg, in Smith-Rosenberg, C., Dubois, E., Buhle, M.L.., Kaplan, T., and Lerner, G., 'Politics and Culture in Women's History : A Symposium.' *Feminist Studies*, No,1, 1980, p.58.

[64] J. Giles, *Women, Identity and Private Life*, p.116.

us'. This did not result in an 'empowering sisterhood', but it did have the capacity to make women conscious of themselves as a group who had to 'survive' sexual antagonism by converging on specific issues. Moreover, the behaviour which stemmed from such convergence was often transformed because of the context in which it took place, one of extreme sexual antagonism. It was in this way that a 'rough kind of feminism' marked many working-class neighbourhoods on the Clyde.

Conflicting world views : masculinity in crisis and domestic violence on the Clyde

Clydeside women may have identified with the ideals of glorified domesticity and motherhood, but it seems that men, on the whole, were unable to live up to the image of the 'new man' so that women's expectations were frequently disappointed. Evidence from oral history indicates that women's expectations of a 'good husband,' although remaining mainly in terms of a provider, increasingly included demands for 'a caring sharing husband', not one who abused the wage or his wife. They wanted help with child-care and shared leisure, a companion, not merely a provider. Mrs GRA stated, 'ah'd say a good husband was a man that didnae drink and considered his wife and family'.[65] Mrs GL sought, 'a man that looked after his wife and family and took his wife out' and MrsGJ defined a 'good man' as 'someone that handed in the pay-packet, took them to the pictures on a Saturday night'. [66]

Men were equally aware of what was expected of the ideal husband. To be a good husband, 'you'd have to be loyal first of all and true and loving and caring. Ma wife used one word, we always had together, we were always together. Togetherness was our motto right through our lives'. Mr GJ defined the 'caring sharing husband'. 'Well a good husband was a man that gave his wife a good allowance, took her out to the theatre or the music hall now n' again and gave her a holiday.' These particular men had the financial security to aspire to the ideal companionate husband. For many women, however, the ideal was not necessarily the

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65 Interview with author, MrsGRA, born 1919 Greenock, Renfrewshire.

66 Interview with author, MrsGL, born 1907 Dennistoun, Glasgow and Mrs GJ, born 1917 Cowcaddens, Glasgow, respectively.

reality. MrGD felt that a good husband was, 'a bloke that's doing the best he can to keep the hoose thegither, keep the family thegither. Ah don't see how you could look for anything better'. MrLA stated, ' oh there was plenty of good husbands. Them that didnae abuse there wives was always good husbands. There wurnea many of them'.[67]

Fundamental to the unfulfilled promise of a companionate husband was male inability to aspire to the ideal of masculinity, materially and ideologically. For many working-class men, work, masculinity and respectability were interwoven with the 'breadwinner' ideal and the notion of men's ability to 'provide'. This placed an immense burden on them.[68] The burden of respectability was not a male preserve. Women were increasingly responsible for keeping up the image of a respectable home life. Such a situation ensured that the economic and social priorities of both sexes could converge. It also guaranteed, however, that under particular economic circumstances, especially when men's ability to provide was undermined or vulnerable, as it often was during the inter-war years, that male identity could become fragile. Such a situation would be exacerbated because it was then that working-class wives were most likely to become a 'reserve army of labour'. When they did, women competed with male labour and this held the potential for all wages to be depreciated. This threatened masculinity bound to the 'provider ideal', and at the same time impinged upon male respectability linked to maintaining women in the home. Hence such conditions could place male identity in crisis and strengthen the sense of male inability to combat social injustice because 'respectability', contrary to Crossick's assertion, in these conditions could not act as an alternative to wealth.[69]

Structural impediments inhibited the potential for men to completely act as providers and thus many men experienced vulnerability and guilt. Clydeside men often found the modified, but none the less traditional marital ideal, a difficult aspiration because it reinforced the

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67 Interview with author, Interview with author, MrGRA, born 1906 Greenock, Renfrewshire, MrGJ, born 1899 Townhead, Glasgow, MrGD, born 1900 Bridgeton, Glasgow and MrLA, born 1900 Croy, Lanarkshire, respectively.
68 G. Stedman Jones as quoted in S.O. Rose, 'Gender antagonism and class conflict : exclusionary strategies of male trade unionists in nineteenth century Britain', *Social History* Vol.13, No.2, 1988, p.205.
69 As quoted in S.O. Rose, 'Gender Antagonism', *Social History*, 1988, p.205.

symbolism of protector and provider in a period of adverse economic conditions. Work and its associated privileges were being challenged by unemployment, real and potential, deskilling and structural change. Peterson insists that during the 1960's in America, women were seen to be 'usurping male privilege' with the result that paternalistic sentiment towards women declined, a factor in the high level of wife beating at this time.[70] Paternalistic sentiment towards women on Clydeside, where the perception that women were a threat to men, may also have abated for similar reasons. The possibility exists that this resulted in attempts by a number of men to reassert masculinity in alternative ways. This could be achieved by using popular culture as a defensive strategy against a 'process of acculturation' and through an assertion of control over the resources of the family unit. Impressionistic evidence suggests that this did occur between the wars. Many of my respondents compared their husbands unfavourably with their fathers when discussing knowledge of men's wage levels, the handing over of unbroken pay packets, levels of male pocket money, abusive expenditure of family resources and levels of domestic violence.

Thus it seems that many working-class men resisted the re-formulated gender ideals by resorting to their 'corpus of beliefs, their systems of representations and through defensive and subversive mechanisms'. Winnifred Holtby, a contemporary, perceived this period to have borne, 'a generation of fatalists', whose 'individual wills seemed unimportant, their personalities dwarfed . . . content to be passive passengers in a vehicle they could not steer . . . falling upon tradition, instinct and orthodoxy'.[71] Working-class men's resort into 'tradition, instinct and orthodoxy' may have been a pragmatic narcotic in the face of a lost opportunity, engendered by the prevailing 'rehabilitation of labour' and the possibility that monopoly capitalism might penetrate the Clyde further undermining their position in the work-place. What many of them could not, or were not prepared to accept, however, was the vulnerability of a male-dominance compelled to accommodate and concede compromises to women. And

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[70] D. Peterson, 'Wife-Beating : An American Tradition', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 23, 1992, pp.97-118.
[71] W. Holtby, 'Women and a changing civilisation', [London 1934], Bell & Offen [eds.], *Women, The Family and Freedom, Vol. Two 1880-1950 The Debate In the Documents*, California, 1983, p.370.

these forces ensured that the construction of a working-class society centred on gender conflict permeated the Clyde during the inter-war years. There existed a clear sexual division of labour and leisure and little demonstration of compromise or the companionate marriage. The majority of the men interviewed perceived their wives not as exalted mothers and homemaker, but as a jailer who would, 'keep a good clean home and look after ye and ge ye proper food'. Home comforts were an expectation. MrGE lamented, 'she didnae like housework. Ah said, you're late in the day telling me that now. That's what you're supposed tae be isn't it, to be a real one'. [72]

Women's definition although similar, differed in complexion. A good wife was, 'a person that kept the house clean, looked after the food, looked after the children, and looked after the money, because she was always the poor soul that was left with the money'. Yet a good wife was also a woman who 'took fun and took their earnest working and made friends with the neighbours and things like that'. [73]

To fulfil their own roles, and command respect, women needed to control the family income. Thus were men failed to live up to women's expectations, and this seems to have been fairly normative, the struggle for control of the family, and family finances, marked gender relations.

This was not the first time that Clydeside women had experienced radical change in their relations with men. Eighteenth-century Clydeside witnessed a period of industrial transition for male employees, one in which competition for employment between the sexes was framed in the usurper imagery, the 'struggle for the breeches'. This period was impressed by marriages of conflict in which there was 'sexual crisis not family harmony'.[74] The sexual crisis was the result of gender-specific 'social and economic priorities' which resulted in high levels of domestic violence. Such marriages came under increasing criticism from the newly emerging middle class who defined and differentiated themselves from plebeian culture, not only

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[72] Interview with author, MrLA, born 1900 Croy, Lanarkshire and MrGD, born 1900 Bridgeton, Glasgow, respectively.
[73] Interview with author, Mrs GG, born 1916 Townhead, and MrsGI, born 1907 Dennistoun, Glasgow, respectively.
[74] See A.Clark, *The struggle for the breeches*, pp.3-7, 18 and passim.

materially, but ideologically. Principal features of this differentiation were the ideas of domesticity, the 'angel in the home' and her concomitant, the male provider, and the concept of respectability. Under challenge, however, from the growth of feminist thought physical conflict between spouses was increasingly condemned and associated with the 'animality' of the lower orders. This also proved a convenient political expedient to deny working-class men political representation. However, some level of 'correcting' fractious wives was perceived as acceptable, and thus women who were victims of such abuse came to be stigmatised by the concepts of 'recalcitrance and animality' Where this did not place a break on domestic violence, it led to invisible crime.[75]

Naturally working-class men were expected to emulate these ideals, but they were not necessarily in a position to do so. Over time, however, some groups of workers on Clydeside may have embraced the paternalist ideal, if not the reality. Yet, the ideological and socio-economic environment of pre-war Clydeside did little to encourage the emulation of these ideals, structurally or ideologically. Working men in general, subject to the insecurity wrought by the trade cycle, were materially inhibited from absorbing this masculine identity. This was exacerbated between the wars. These forces were strengthened because many working-class women entered employment during World War I and a good number of them participated in the struggles of the militant period between 1910-1919, labelled 'Red Clydeside'. Thus many women gained greater social freedoms and a heightening of their political identity. MsGS stated, 'ah'll tell you what changed lives more in my lifetime than any other thing was the first war. Women came out of the kitchen then'.[76] These conditions, corresponded with the growth of jobs classified as 'women's work' and an economic climate

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[75] See for example, P.Haag, 'The Ill-Use of A Wife : Patterns of working-class Violence in Domestic And Public New York City, 1860-1880', *Journal of Social History*, 25, 1992, pp.447-477 ; M.Hunt, 'Wife-Beating, Domesticity And Women's Independence in the 18th Century Victorian England', *Gender And History*, 3, 1991, pp.10-33 ; J.Hammerton, 'The Targets of Rough Music : Respectability and Domestic Violence in Victorian England', *Gender And History*, 3, 1991, pp.23-44 ; A.Clark, 'Humanity or Justice', C. Smart, [ed.], *Regulating Womanhood : Historical Essays on Marriage, Motherhood and Sexuality*, London, 1992, pp.187-206 ; C. Bauer & L. Ritt, 'A Husband is a Beating Animal. Francis Power Cobbe confronts the wife abuse problem in Victorian England', *International Journal of Women's Studies*, 1983, pp.99-118 ; C. Bauer & L. Ritt, 'Wife-abuse, late Victorian English Feminists, and the legacy of Francis Power Cobbe', *International Journal of Women's Studies*, 6, pp.195-207.

[76] Interview with author, MrGS, born 1895 Pollockshields, Glasgow.

compelling women to work, at a time when the employment of the 'breadwinner' was precarious. Combined, this was unlikely to stimulate aspirations to be a 'new man'.

Nor was the struggle for control of scarce resources confined to Clydeside. In Liverpool gender conflict apparently revolved around a wife's 'good housekeeping skills' and a husband's 'stinginess to pursue leisure'.[77] It seems wives did not contest this. But they did not have to, to ensure antagonism. Inability to cope was perceived as sufficient grounds for antagonism, just as objecting to male expenditure in Manchester was regarded as 'recalcitrance'.[78] Ross also demonstrates that it was not until after 1914 that London's pub culture became 'poisonously misogynist',[79] denying working-class women shared leisure with their partners. By contrast, in Lancashire where a culture of two income families existed wives shared their spouses leisure. Apparently, marriages of conflict were less common in this region.[80]

It seems that the pursuit of particular forms of leisure, recreations from which women were culturally excluded, remained of immense consequence to many British males between the wars. While Davies has shown how poverty and unemployment regulated men's access to leisure, he also indicates that it is difficult to measure how much money was spent in this way. This was the case because men's expenditure created conflict within working-class marriages and thus spending was kept hidden. The amount of money spent was 'a jealously guarded secret from wives'.[81] This was consistent with tradition rather than the ideals embedded in the companionship marriage.

Male pastimes had long been used as a retreat to mediate challenges to male domination. Clark highlights how, because of a perceived threat from women and children in the eighteenth century, male bonding through combination in leisure and work and control of

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77 P. Ayers & J.Lambertz, 'Marriage relations', J.Lewis, [ed.], *Labour And Love,* pp.195-210.
78 M.Tebbutt, 'Women's Talk? Gossip and women's words in working-class communities 1880-1939', A. Davies & J. Fielding, [eds.] *Workers' Worlds*, p53.
79 E. Ross, ' Fierce Questions and Taunts" : Married Life in Working-class London 1970-1914', *Feminist Studies* 8, 1982, p.596.
80 E.Roberts, *A Women's Place*, pp. 82-122, and especially 110-121.
81 A. Davies, 'Leisure in the "Classic Slum"', in A. Davies & J. Fielding, [eds.] *Workers' Worlds*, p.105.

money strengthened the power of males in the family.[82] Men's expenditure on leisure continued to be an expression of masculinity, and between the wars when the foundations of masculinity became insecure, might well have become more significant, symbolically, if not quantitatively. Yet, this impinged upon women's gender roles as household managers and guardians of the family, and therefore such expenditure had to be contested because it de-powered women and inhibited their ideal self-image.

This was the basic economic and recreational structure which caused conflict on Clydeside in the 1920s and 1930s. Inability to aspire to the new ideal man, when the foundations of that masculinity were precarious, combined with economic insecurity and the perceived challenge from women to create intense sexual antagonism, ensuring that, 'it was a normal thing for a man to abuse his wife'. On Clydeside, 'there really wis a lot of wife-battering'. [83] So common was sexual antagonism in the 1920s and 1930s that such experiences were openly discussed by my respondents in the 1990s and often without resort to direct questioning. Apparently, wife assault was an everyday fact of life. Mrs GN's recollections of Springburn's neighbourliness indicate as much. 'All the people'd have a sing-song. There were many people that fought and men that were bad to their wives. One man, he was awful bad to his wife. He'd take this stick and near kill her. That didnae make any difference to us. We'd take her in and watched her.' [84] Moreover :

> Some of them just went a wee bit too far. We didnae see anybody smoking in our days. If you smoked in the street you were a tart, and sometimes, maybe the women were smoking and the men didnae like it and then there'd be a barnie. Oh there were plenty of barnies but we never ever interfered. The next day if you'd have seen the two of them together you'd never have known they'd been having a fight. You knew there was some right fights going on about men coming in drunk and different things - spending money - most of it 'd be money ah suppose. [85]

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[82] A. Clark, *The Struggle for the Breeches*, pp.29-30.
[83] Interview with author, MrsGM, born 1911 Springburn, & MrsGJ, born 1917 Cowcaddens, Glasgow, respectively.
[84] Interview with author, Mrs GN, born 1909 Bridgeton, Glasgow.
[85] Ibid.

Apparently, poverty and sexual conflicts, the product of diverging gender-specific priorities, manifest itself in a high incidence of wife-beating. If unsavoury, this it seems was an accepted aspect of family life. [86] The recollections of MrsGZ support this.

> Ma mum had a next door neighbour and he used to knock hell out his wife. He used to knock the blazes oot her and she accepted that. Ma father didnae do it but then that's what they did and people, never bothered about it. If she'd been getting really murdered people would've interfered. [87]

As with women in other regions of Britain, dependence on a male breadwinner, necessity and the power of religion fused to ensure that few women on the Clyde were ideologically equipped to leave an abusive relationship.[88]

Lest such behaviour should be regarded as unrepresentative, Glasgow wives are cited in inter-war publications highlighting poverty, deprivation and the perceived family violence associated with the latter.[89] Dr. Robertson depicted wife-beating in Glasgow. A resident of Glasgow's Gorbals he went on to become the local general practitioner and was well acquainted with this area's inhabitants. In response to the Gorbals' 'No Mean City' image and in collaboration with the local beat policeman for the Gorbals between 1923-1930 he wrote, *Gorbals Doctor*. In this they argue :

> The most common kind of violence was wife-assault, particularly on a Friday or a Saturday night between 11pm and 1am. Normally a child of between eight and fourteen years of age would come rushing into the Southern Division Police Station shouting : 'Ma faither's killin' ma mither'. [90]

The *Govan Press* too, is littered with stories of wife-assault which included the women viciously beaten as a result of a conflict with her spouse over 'buroo money'. [91]

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86 See A. Hughes *Popular Pastimes and Wife-Assault*, especially pp.1-9.
87 Interview with author, MrsGZ, born 1917 Govan, Glasgow.
88 M.Tebbutt, *Making Ends Meet*, p.38. See also E. Roberts, *A Women's Place*, pp.4-5.
89 M.Spring-Rice, *Working-class Wives*, pp.115-116,141-142 & passim. See also E.Rathbone, *The Disinherited Family*, London, 1927, index.
90 G.G.Robertson, *Gorbals Doctor*, London, 1975, pp.130-135 & passim.
91 *Govan Press*, 12th February 1932.

High levels of wife-beating in the 1920s and 1930s were exacerbated by various social determinants which operated as constraints to married women. A major restraint was identified by MrsGZ who stated that, 'the police were never anxious to deal with domestic trouble'. [92] Perhaps the police understood that penalties incurred by prosecuted abusers often reflected back on their victims, but the agencies of social welfare increasingly acted as 'marriage menders'. Conflict in the family was officially hidden.

That such conflict did exist implies the possibility that both sexes had very different social and economic concerns, which, when disputed, caused conflict that could erupt into violence. Respondents were asked what caused discord between married couples. They answered, 'the only thing ah could think about would be miybe the man getting over-loaded wi' drink'. Others maintained, 'money. It was always money. Ye see, money was tight then. There wisnae many men worked'. 'Money it was the one thing, because they didn't have it.' [93] Many of these interviews were conducted during the height of the zero tolerance campaign and men's responses reflect this. Their answers tended to be less composed and they elaborated less when detailing the conflict which resulted in domestic violence. Yet, their responses none the less support the more composed answers given by women. MrCA recalled that,

> In Clydebank, a lot of men, they didnae give their wife the wages that they should'a gave them. Course that'd make arguments. They wanted money to run the house and they'd no' the money to do it, while they're away drinking and gambling. These were some of the wrong things and, ah'm not trying to make out ah'm a great person. Ah've got faults like aw the rest. [94]

In point of fact, the lack of composure and the assertion, ' ah'm not trying to make out ah'm a great person. Ah've got faults like aw the rest ---', is, in the local dialect, indicative of an admission, if qualified, of complicity in such behaviour. Thus conflict over the wage ensured that a good husband was equally defined as, 'a man who brought his pay home and didnae

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92 Interview with author, MrsGZ, born 1917 Govan, Glasgow.
93 Interview with author, Mrs GB, born 1907 Calton, Glasgow, Mrs GQ, born 1909 Camlachie, Glasgow and MrsGG, born 1916 Townhead, Glasgow, respectively.
94 Interview with author, Mr CA, born 1920 Clydebank, Dumbartonshire.

spend it in the pub on the road'. [95] It seems that many men did spend the wage or part of it in this fashion, so that, as with males in Manchester and Liverpool, disputes over money and especially male expenditure on leisure was a major sources of tension between couples. Obviously the depression heightened the struggle for scarce resources, but other catalysts contributed. The First World War and the post-war economic climate threatened the foundations of male identity, intensified by the expectations placed upon males to be 'ideal husbands'.

Prior to the war the vast number of Clydeside men worked in heavy industry. Many were regarded as skilled workers and most took pride in their ability to endure hard physical toil. Men's self-image was linked to masculine aggressiveness, synonymous with violence. Davies notes how hardness and masculine status permeated working-class culture in Manchester. It was seen as a virtue. Through the role models of the family man who often embarked on family violence and the alternative model of the hard drinking man this status was re-enforced resulting in a masculine self-assertiveness which legitimised violence.[96]

Correspondingly, not only was employment an extremely important medium from which men gained status, respect and a masculine identity through the 'breadwinner' ideal, but they accrued privileges as household heads, especially pocket-money, formal and informal leisure and freedom from family and household responsibilities. 1914 heralded a new era. The war introduced dilution schemes and, for the first time, women were seen as a real threat to hitherto male preserves. Exacerbating the situation on Clydeside was the expansion of 'women's work' and the necessity which compelled women to supplement their spouses' income. Intensification, deskilling and the threat and incidence of unemployment in the inter-war period reinforced the notion of women as a threat to masculinity. Many men had to accept that they were not the sole breadwinner regardless of the identification of masculinity which

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[95] Interview with author, Ms GS, born 1895 Pollockshields, Glasgow.

[96] A. Davies, 'Youth Gangs, Masculinity and Violence in Late Victorian Manchester and Salford', *Journal of Social History*, Vol.32, No.2, 1998, pp. 349-370.

deemed otherwise. MrGE remembered that, 'women kept half the hooses goin'. They were cleaning tramcars oot tae aw hours in the morning'. MrsGC substantiated this.

> See the wummen didnea work they aw had weans. It wis the men that did aw the work, but the wummen worked at scrubbing' the boats and aw that. They had aw part-time jobs scrubbing the boats, but they hid tae cause labourers were only gettin' £2 a week and a tradesman was £3 6s - fur a tradesman. That wis the wages.[97]

Mr LA recollected that in Lanarkshire, 'both men and wummen worked aw there time unless them wi' big families, they couldnea work. But most of them worked every day'. [98]

Fluctuating wage levels and the monetary policy of the 1930s did little to alleviate male vulnerability. Benefits were cut by 10% and a means test was introduced with, 'benefits often dispensed not as a right but as an act of charity'.[99] This insecurity was exacerbated further :

> Oh the Parish they brought out a scheme - the young persons, trying to get them to go to Canada. But it didnae cum aff.
> Q : How did people feel about that?
> A : Oh ma mother and father felt it, in case they would come and take me away. Aye, they were taking them away and putting them away tae Canada. Putting them on a farm. Oh it was pretty bad then.[100]

Others were publicly humiliated by public assistance employees at labour exchanges. The *Govan Press* reported allegations by the Govan Ward Committee against such employees. They cited incidences of public assistants who told applicants, 'you will get no clothes out of me'. Others were asked, 'are you not ashamed of yourself?'. [101] To make matters worse, the children of these recipients, in receipt of clothing, were frequently humiliated, ' ah don't know if the Parish actually stamped on it but everybody knew. The kids at school used tae say, Oh she's Parish don't talk to her. Ah mean it wis really - it wis cruel'.[102] Smout, stated of this

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97 Interview with author, Mr GE, born 1908 Partick, and Mrs GC, born 1910 Bridgeton, Glasgow, respectively.
98 Interview with author, MrLA, born 1900 Croy, Lanarkshire.
99 T.C.Smout, *A History of the Scottish People 1830-1950,* Glasgow, 1990, pp.67-68.
100 Interview with author, MrGH, born 1901 Govan, Glasgow.
101 *Govan Press*, 15th January 1932.
102 Interview with author, Mrs PA, 1914 Paisley, Renfrewshire.

unemployment that, 'its devastating quality lay in the fact that it became an expectation, a way of life, not a singular misfortune'. [103] And MrsPA remembered the culture of apathy.

> When they wurnae working they just didnae bother. Well ah don't know whether ah'd say they were lazy - they just lay in bed half the day and played cards half the night, anybody that ah knew. They were jist idle so they just took it for granted the longer it went on. [104]

The status which men had accrued from employment, and its associated privileges, was comparatively secure until the out-break of war and had shored up the breadwinner ideal. By definition then a multiplicity of male privileges depended upon the breadwinner philosophy. There had to be a wage packet. This was no longer guaranteed between the wars because of the severity of unemployment. Even many of those who found secure employment often had to accept that their wages were insufficient to maintain the family unit. These wages, or benefits, had to be supplemented so that the masculine status based upon sole provision was diminished. This applied to the skilled and unskilled alike. The corporation of Glasgow's Public Assistance Department's Abstract of Cases show that, among 'Heads of Households', there were 874 engineers out of work, 762 semi-skilled engineers and 644 transport workers. By contrast there were 5688 general workers out of a total of 10,914 unemployed men seeking assistance.[105] Furthermore, as the 1930s progressed wages in the sheltered industries were curbed and brought into line to some extent with those of other occupations.

Yet, during the First World War and thereafter there was a relative social levelling between the different occupational groups of the working class. This permitted the semi-skilled and unskilled men of the Clyde greater opportunity to express masculinity in terms of the provider ideal. The gains accrued may well have been short-lived or precarious due to the specialised nature of the Clydeside economy which ensured that a downturn in the major sectors could send ripples throughout the economy, but they where there.

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[103] T.C.Smout, *Scottish People*, p.117.
[104] Interview with author, MrsPA, born 1914 Paisley, Renfrewshire.
[105] GRA/TD 1207/1-3 [170/1067E], Corporation Of Glasgow Public Assistance Department Statistics : Abstracts of Cases [Heads of Households] Chargeable At 31st May 1932.

However, as already highlighted, women on Clydeside had had a tradition of supplementing their husband's incomes, a tradition which was not the preserve of unskilled workers. The image of the female usurper, therefore, indicates that it was the context that changed rather than the economic structure of the family unit. Thus, a combination of economic insecurity, the force of the re-assertion of masculinity as defined by the breadwinner ideal and new opportunities for women in the workplace, rather than men's ability to provide for and maintain a wife at home caused male insecurity.

If the concept of masculinity was challenged economically, it was seemingly also endangered by a female sexual revolution. Adams argues that the public debate over female sexuality resulted in men internalising fears over their own sexuality. This corresponded with the introduction of contraception and the greater freedoms afforded middle-class women. Combined with the coverage given to the notion of the sexually-liberated woman by the clergy and the media, female sexuality was to gain widespread attention.[106] As demonstrated in chapter three, however, working-class women remained relatively ignorant of the availability and growing social acceptance of contraceptives although knowledge and availability was increasing. Nevertheless, the debate over birth control and the possibility that more working-class women choose to limit family size could have contributed to the masculinity crisis, especially given the form which many working-class women were forced to adopt to control their fertility. For many working-class women the only secure contraceptive or form of family limitation which gave them complete control entailed, 'having no more fun'. Mrs GM stated, 'the only birth control was them that practised it theirself'.[107] Furthermore, Bourke has demonstrated how in Scotland only two medical schools, one in Edinburgh and one in Aberdeen, provided lectures on contraceptives so that information on birth control was usually gained by word of mouth. She notes how outside London there were few birth control clinics. She also suggests that in Glasgow fewer than ten women per week were examined in such

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106 R.Adams, *A Women's Place*, London, 1975, pp. 84-86.
107 Interview with author, MrsPA, born 1914, Paisley Renfrewshire and MrsGM, born 1911 Springburn, Glasgow, respectively.

clinics.[108] As highlighted in chapter three, however, this situation had improved, if marginally by the 1930s.

The claim that easier access to divorce threatened male dominance is equally contentious. As with contraception, divorce was extremely costly, exacerbated by women's dependency on male incomes. Women's wages continued to be substantially lower than male incomes.[109] None the less, the potential for easier divorces no doubt impacted upon male mentalities, especially when they were obtained with greater ease in Scotland than in other regions of Britain. However the divorce rate for Scotland fell for most of the inter-war years. 776 couples divorced in Scotland in 1920, 451 in 1925 and 498 in 1935.[110] Any possibility that divorce was more accessible and more acceptable was also mitigated by that fact that, 'no factor would give a single women a house. It didnae matter what happened it wis the women to blame all the time'. Correspondingly, 'you'd nowhere to go. Your mother couldnae take you in because they all had big families, so it was impossible to run back to your people'. And, 'yer mother taught ye if ye made yer bed you lie in it. Your mother had a family there, you'd made your bed and you'd just tae lie in it. That was what ah was telt anywie. We were aw telt that'. [111]

However, because of these impediments and the high and visible levels of domestic abuse, which normalised this experience, being a victim became a shared experience with other women, a talking point and a form of identity. Furthermore, women, may also have reinforced their own social impediments by placing a new emphasis upon masculinity between the wars. It seems the Boer War followed in quick succession by the First World War created an imbalance of the sexes, compounded by 'ex-soldiers in bad shape mentally and physically'.[112] This took its toll in Glasgow. 'Ex-soldiers', evidently, 'dragged themselves about . . . some on crutches with an empty trouser leg, or a sleeve crudely sewn up swinging in the

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108 J. Bourke, *Working-Class Cultures in Britain*, pp.55-56.
109 J.C.Stevenson, *The Slump : society and politics during the depression*, London, 1977, p.58.
110 J. Bourke, *Working-class Cultures in Britain*, pp.45-55. See also L. Leneman, *Alienated Affections : The Scottish Experience of Divorce and Separation 1684-1830*, Edinburgh, 1998.
111 Interview with author, MrsGM, born 1911 Springburn, MrsGQ, born 1909 Camlachie, and MrsGC, born 1910 Bridgeton, Glasgow, respectively.
112 R.Adams, *A women's Place*, pp.84-86.

wind'.[113] There is also evidence that the number of women did exceed men in Scotland. In Glasgow by 1921 boys under the age of 15 years out-numbered girls by 732, but at the age of fifteen years and over, females out-numbered males by 25,770. [114] This was not merely the result of war. With the exception of the inter-war period, Scotland was characterised by high levels of emigration, the majority of which tended to be young single males. Between 1920-1922, 390,000 more people left Scotland than entered it.[115] The West of Scotland also had a relatively high male mortality rate, a feature of heavy industrial occupations.[116] Thus young widowhood was an ever present possibility. Perhaps this explains MrsGN's sentiments. She had a 'good husband', who was, ' rough and ready', one with whom she remained, 'a wee bit frightened of' throughout her marriage.[117] In such a context working-class women on Clydeside were possibly attracted to an exaggerated masculinity just as the foundations of working-class masculinity were being undermined by structural and ideological change. At the same time men might have felt concern over their 'manliness' and their ability to 'provide and protect'. Naturally, this acted as an impediment to men's subjectification of the readapted 'ideal' husband. In this respect recreations could act as a retreat into culture, providing a means of symbolically expressing masculinity as well as an arena from which to absorb male identity. Thus it was not poverty as such which resulted in conflict, but rather a masculinity crisis that men resolved via the pursuit of 'poisonously misogynist' pastimes and which in turn could cause poverty or undermine the aspirations of more affluent women. In this respect, gender conflict and wife-beating were extreme physical manifestations of masculinity insecurity.

David Morgan suggests that, 'the most fruitful way to investigate masculinity in history might be to focus on a period or issue which rendered gender identity problematic by

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113 R.Glasser, *Growing Up In The Gorbals*, p.48.
114 Census for Scotland, 1921. See also M. Anderson, 'Population and Family Life', A. Dickson, & J.H.Treble, [eds.], *People and Society in Scotland*, p.19.
115 M. Anderson, 'Population and Family Life', A. Dickson, & J.H.Treble, [eds.], *People and Society*, p.14.
116 Ibid. p.17.
117 Interview with author, MrsGN born 1909 Bridgeton, Glasgow.

calling its norms into question'.[118] Such an approach is appropriate to the study of inter-war Clydeside because a sense of masculinity from employment could not be successfully safeguarded. Alternative arenas from which men drew a sense of male identity, including gambling, alcohol consumption and football, provided and continued to provide, 'the absorption of manly identity and male affiliation' as well as 'security in diverse economic conditions'. This was more so when, 'male identities cohering around a notion of toughness associated with the qualities deemed necessary to master heavy industrial work',[119] were being rendered defunct. Certainly it would seem that job security, better housing accommodation and rising living standards caused some relaxation of the sexual division of leisure as pastimes became more home-centred. In many localities on Clydeside, like those in Liverpool, London and Manchester, the pub, and arguably football and gambling remained, 'central to men's networks'. Aspects of popular culture were 'used to carve out terrain which were exclusively masculine republics'.[120] These 'masculine republics' moderated male insecurity, but in turn they were a prime contributory to a high incidence of marital conflict. Male expenditure of the 'family wage' heightened the different gender priorities of both sexes and the home was the arena where the struggle for resources took place.

Not all men behaved this way. There were different ideals of masculinity to identify with and also different 'propensities for male bonding and aggression' which were influenced by different 'socialisation'.[121] Recreations, however, are agents of socialisation which reflect and reinforce the wider society, and hold significance and meanings for the participants. The pub was significant to many Clydeside men. It was also a source of sexual antagonism because of the gender-specific social and economic priorities of each sex, exacerbated by low incomes, insecure employment, unemployment and the potential for men's spending to threaten the standards of living of the more economically secure families. Respondents were asked,

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118 J.Hammerton, 'Rough Music', *Gender And History*, 3, 1991, pp.40-41.
119 Dunning et al, *The Sociology of Sport*, London, 1971, pp.103-105.
120 A.Davies, 'Leisure In The "Classic Slum"', A. Davies & J. Fielding, [eds.] *Workers' Worlds*, p.107.
121 L.Tiger, *Men In Groups*, London, 1969, p.189.

Q : Was there a lot of men who beat their wives?
A : Oh aye there wis quite a lot. Younger wans - even the aulder wan's hen - ye used tae see their wives wae big black eyes and that coming oot.
Q : What kind of things caused that?
A : Ouch, maybe money matters or too much drink. The man would come in drunk and you'd say something and that wis it, it'd started a barney. And they were masters. Whit they said wis law, that's as sure as God! [122]

The majority of my respondents maintained that wife-assault, ' wis common . . . but drink wis at the bottom of it'. It was not drunkenness which caused aggression. It was, 'an expectation of aggressive behaviour' or the 'provocation to aggress'.[123] In this sense, because the home was the terrain in which the struggle over resources took place then the expectation and provocation to behave aggressively, as perceived by many husbands, was a wife's challenge to his 'right' to expenditure. And there were many women who did challenge such expenditure through their expectations of a good husband and directly because this disempowered them if they did not. MrsGC remembered that,

> . . . if the man got his pay instead of going right hame he'd go in for a couple of pints on a Friday night and there was the wummen waiting on her pay. See that's how ah was busy paying out for rags, cause if they waited tae he came in, the faither, they'd tae carry oot food, but they could get a pound a mince for a shilling at that time. But that wis it, the cause e' arguments, drink hen, any agro that wis the drink. [124]

Thus, there were women who determined that 'if a man came intae me drunk, by God he would a' went oot quicker than he came in!'.[125] The identification of the poor husband with drunkenness and violence ensured that men's guilt could compound the situation because men knew what was expected of a good husband. 'She'd be talking about a man that wis quite a nice man in his ways and he looked after her, her children 'n he done his best in every way to justify them getting married, and never at any time could he do things like striking her, things like that'. But equally he was, 'a man that went home and took out his pay

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[122] Interview with author, MrsGD, born 1912 Govan Glasgow.
[123] B.D.Hore, 'Alcohol And Crime.' *Alcohol And Alcoholism,* No.6, 1988, pp.435-439.
[124] Interview with author, MrsGC, born 1910 Bridgeton, Glasgow.
[125] Interview with author, MrsGF, born 1911 Anderson, Glasgow.

poke unopened, "Here you are darling. There ye are." Then she'd open it up and gie him his pocket-money'.[126] MrGU was asked,

> Q : What was considered a good husband?
> A : One that stayed out the pub.[127]

Some women, it seems, were more 'fortunate' than others because, 'some o' them were incapable o' lifting their hauns they'd drank to much'.[128] Like Liverpool, London and Manchester, on the Clyde, 'disputes over male spending on beer and the innocent flutter were the most common source of discord'. Davies attributed this to the fact that such expenditure could push a family below the poverty line, but says little of the attraction such leisure held for men or how this expenditure could be a source of male domination and identity.[129] 'Behaviour during alcohol consumption is situational. Violence occurs without it, but drunkenness allows disavowal.'[130] Mr GA's father beat his mother, because, he felt she was 'askin fur it', but when he was 'sober' he was, 'really good'. In fact he 'wis the secretary of the Municipal Employees' Association'.[130] This was not an unusual occurrence and these attitudes were not unique.

> Q : Did your father hit your mother?
> A : Yes when he was drunk.
> Q : What was he like sober?
> A : What was he like sober! He was taking in his sleep, ye know, 'What was ah like last night'.[131]

Having catalogued how his frequent drunkenness had a terrible impact upon his family, MrGU then responded rather vaguely to the question, did you hit your wife, by answering, 'to the

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126 Interview with author MrCA, born 1920 Clydebank, Dumbartonshire and MrGD, born 1900 Bridgeton, Glasgow, respectively.
127 Interview with author, MrGU, born 1915 Anderson, Glasgow.
128 Interview with author, MrGA, born 1905 Gorbals, Glasgow.
129 A.Davies, 'Leisure in the "Classic Slum"', iA. Davies & J. Fielding, [eds.] *Workers' Worlds*, pp.105-106.
130 H.Levy, *Drink: An Economic And Social Study*, London, 1951, pp.256-261.
130 Interview with author, Mr GA, born 1905 Gorbals, Glasgow.
131 A. Hughes, *Popular Pastimes and Wife Assault*, p. 25.

best of my knowledge, no'.[132] The need for interview composure contributed to this response, but in itself this was a form of disavowal practised by many husbands. Rather than acknowledging abusive and aberrant behaviour, disavowal under the guise of impaired memory, due to excessive alcohol consumption, allowed many men the power of expenditure during a period of depression regardless of the consequences to their families, reinforced by the threat and incidence of violence. This shored up male dominance and masculine identity.

Conflict and the struggle for control

While such behaviour shored up male dominance and masculine identities, it also seems that poverty might have constrained men's access to 'masculine republics' or that transformations did occur in male culture with the possibility that home-centred pleasures became more significant in Scotland. Apparently, the consumption of alcohol declined between the wars. Convictions for drunkenness fell along with the consumption of spirits and the licensing of public houses.[133] Yet statistics do not inevitably indicate that Clydeside's pub culture declined in significance for men. Seemingly, by the inter-war years few women on the Clyde consumed alcohol. This no doubt contributed to the declining levels of alcohol consumption. Of all women interviewed only one stated that she consumed alcohol except on special occasions when 'a sherry' was deemed respectable. This was reinforced by my male respondents. MrGD actually believed, 'wummen were barred. They must've been barred because ah never mind e' seeing a wummen'.[134] Women were never legally barred from public houses. It was publicans who created these 'masculine republics' because their male customers expected it of them. Legislation also made it increasingly difficult for adolescents to consume alcohol. The statistics, furthermore, give no regional breakdowns for alcohol consumption, but, 'working-class inner-city areas continued to hold the most licenses and had the worst drink problems'. In Glasgow there were 1,534 licensed premises in 1921, 1,517 in 1925 and 1,511 in 1929. By the 1930s this declined slightly. In 1932 there were 1,480 and in

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132 Interview with author, MrGU, born 1915 Anderson, Glasgow.
133 T.C. Smout, *Scottish People*, pp.134-137.
134 Interview with author MrGD, born 1900 Bridgeton, Glasgow.

1936 there were 1,404.[135] Thus it seems that the public house remained of great significance between the wars, at least in areas like Glasgow. Moreover, many respondents related how illicit drinking in shebeens in many areas of Clydeside prevailed. Of more significance, poverty may have regulated how much men spent in public houses, but it did not ensure sobriety. MrsGJ remembered that, 'there was a pub on the corner and the unemployed used tae go intae it and it was Jungle Juice they called it. See when they got a glass of Jungle juice, God they were in the Jungle ye know'.[136] What is more, men did not have to drink excessively to act aggressively as behaviour is situational. At the same time, price rises did not necessarily prove a deterrent because many 'men drunk greater quantities of beer to supplement the more expensive spirits'. The Amulree Report stressed that this was often at the expense of family necessities.[137] Mr CA's recollections indicate the means by which this was accomplished.

> Q : Did men let their wives know how much they earned?
> A : Oh no! That would have been terrible, yer wife knowing it!
> Q : What kind of pocket money did men get?
> A : As much as they could, ah think - ah think that's a fair answer.[138]

This inhibited women from identifying with the dominant world view on womanhood :

> Q : How much did your husband earn?
> A : Naebody telt ye that wee bit of the story hen. Ye never knew. Ye never even knew what yer man earned. You got your money and that wis it. You got yer housekeeper's money and that wis it. Ye'd £2 10s that wis then. That wis you, you did what you wanted. Ye'd tae pay yer factor, yer gas and whatever, but he never asked ye whit ye did wae it. He never asked that once, what about his rent book, but he knew what ah wis capable of doing. There wis others, in the Wine Alley when ah first went up, people couldnea pay the rents. People hadnea the coppers.[139]

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135 T.C.Smout, *Scottish People*, p.147 and Statistical Appendix, Drunkenness And Licensed Premises In Glasgow, Source Chief Constable of Glasgow, Section 3,Table 143, J. Cunnison, & J.B.Gilfillan, [eds.], *Third Statistical Account of Glasgow*, p.938.

136 Interview with author, Mrs GJ, born 1917 Cowcaddens, Glasgow.

137 H. Levy, *Drink : An Economic And Social Study*, p.6, pp.30-31, pp.69-71 and passim

138 Interview with author, MrCA, born 1920 Clydebank, Dumbartonshire.

139 Interview with author, Mrs GD, born 1912 Govan, Glasgow.

Many women did not have the money and were impeded from subjectifying the dominant discourse. MrGD, rather vaguely and with little composure, recollected, 'some men would just kinda, they get their pay-packet, they'll take out what their - he'll leave in and gie the wife the rest. Maybe he'd have as much in his pocket'.[140] Furthermore, 'ah never seen a pay packet in ma life hen. Never, never. Ah'd eleven of us to keep on two pounds ten a week. That was to pay rent, buy us clothes, buy their shoes, buy him his clothes. Oh aye off of two pounds ten, so you'll know how hard it was. Ah didnae get it easy'.[141] Mrs GO's husband, a skilled tradesman, 'went off the rails sometimes' and she recalled, 'well his wages were three pounds. I got two pounds and he got one pound. Then ah couldnae tell you much he earned when the wages got bigger. They varied ah suppose'. Describing the difficulties of being a wife this same women stated, 'money was a big problem. We used to say to ourselves, how can ah make ends meet with this money. Ma husband was a tradesman and still the biggest wage he came home with was three pounds'. [142] There were even greater excesses :

> Ah never got a penny off him from the day ah got married, for rent or anything. Ah'd a good wage, ah worked at a factory. Ah didnae need him. He wouldnae part wi' anything, never gied me any pay. Ah know when ma first lassie was getting baptised and we'd nae gas tae make tea and this Mike Murphy came in and he turned the gas oun outside. But ah didnae even know. That's how ah lived. [143]

Apparently concealing and controlling the true extent of the wage was an important trend, integral to the pursuit of masculinity allowing secret spending on masculine recreations. Whilst the pub environment provided an avenue to express male identity, disavowal justified abhorrent behaviour during drunkenness allowing its continuance. Furthermore, because 'cultural constraints restricted male affiliation', alcohol was significant in allowing its manifestation, particularly in Scotland, where, there is a 'strong correlation between manliness and the ability to consume a great deal of alcohol'.[144] The pub, therefore, was an 'institution

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140 Interview with author, MrGD, born 1900 Bridgeton, Glasgow.
141 Interview with author, MrsGN, born 1909 Bridgeton, Glasgow.
142 Interview with author, MrsGO, born 1905 Townhead, Glasgow.
143 Interview with author, MrsGL, born 1907 Dennistoun, Glasgow.
144 L.Tiger, *Men in Groups,* pp.184-185.

were men increasingly had their masculinity recognised and reinforced', where they 'learned they were entitled to power', and 'how to keep it'.[145] Not only were women culturally barred from public houses, but few were employed there either. By 1931 entertainment and leisure were the fastest growing industries on Clydeside, but at this time there were only 238 barmaids in Glasgow as oppose to 3173 barmen. This situation prevailed throughout Clydeside. Paisley had 18 barmaids and 150 barmen, whilst Greenock had 6 barmaids and 164 barmen.[146] Mr GE worked as a barman before the Second World War and he said, 'oh ye couldnae turn roun' and say, "Get the hell oot a' here." You'd say, "Excuse me, your not allowed tae sell drink to a wummen" '.[147]

Clydeside's inter-war pub culture was associated with manliness. It could, therefore, act as a consolation when masculinity identity was insecure because it permitted an alternative means of expression and absorption. Conflict over the distribution of the wage, none the less, had pre-dated the inter-war insecurity experienced by men, but the re-assertion of masculinity, as defined between the wars could have exacerbated male guilt. Although sexual conflict was justified by men through denial, excused as drunken behaviour, this pursuit of masculinity may have been amplified because of inability to aspire to the 'ideal companionate husband' and this could only lead to male guilt. Thus a vicious cycle was created.

If the pub culture was catalytic to the incidence of gender conflict, so too was street gambling. Gambling has been widely debated. Victorian moralist perceived gambling as an excessive vice, contributing to the poverty, misery and brutality of working-class family life. These views contributed to legislation culminating with the repressive, if perhaps humanitarian Gambling Act of 1906. The legislation prohibited working-class gambling, but allowed the upper classes to continue with it unabated. That it did, detracts from a predilection to view gambling as a symptom of poverty. What it does imply is that although gambling is synonymous with a dream of instant wealth, it is also much more. The rise in the propensity to

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145 V.Hey, *Patriarchy And Pub Culture*, London, 1986, p.10.
146 Census for Scotland 1931.
147 Interview with author, MrGE, born 1908 Partick, Glasgow.

gamble between the wars might indicate a shift in mentalities from beliefs in 'notions of progress, solidarity and religious faith' to beliefs in 'luck, chance and fate', reflecting a process of '. . . individuation, atomisation or anomie'.[148]

On the Clyde, the adverse economic climate might have undermined notions of progress and moderated solidarity, whilst, as will be highlighted, men were, to a much greater extent than women, turning from the churches and chapels. Yet, the lure of a flutter might also have been a means of establishing character, the 'principal attributes of which are 'gameness, gallantry, courage, integrity, composure and presence of mind', many of the attributes associated with the employment under threat between the wars. In this context gambling would provide, 'the possibility of effecting reputation . . . in a society which had all but arranged action out of everyday life',[149] enhanced by the element of deviance, offering the status of rebel, winner and even a good loser :

> Q: Did your husband bet?
> A: Oh he loved to, in fact that was his only vice. His whole pocket-money went back, although somebody told me he was quite a lucky winner.[150]

MrsGQ recalled, 'he'd have emptied your purse in a minute. I'd to hide all ma money. He was a good loser right enough and he didnae win very often'. MrsGL remembered,

> A : Oh ma man, aye! He'd 've pawned the shirt off his back.
> Q : Have you any idea how much they would have put on a line?
> A : Oh he put a lot of money on, because ah mean when he won he won.[151]

Men recalled how a win felt, 'oh ye felt like a millionaire. A couple a bob was a lot of money too. Ah pint of beer cost ye 4d and ah didnae drink at that time'. It was, 'a time of elation', which, MrCA stated 'felt champion'. MrGE maintained, 'when ye win ye were over the moon'.[152]

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148 D. Gittins, *Fair Sex*, p.57.
149 Downes et al, *Gambling Work And Leisure*, London, 1976, pp.27-40.
150 Interview with author, MrsGR born 1907 Calton, Glasgow.
151 Interview with author, MrsGL, born 1907 Dennistoun, Glasgow.
152 Interview with author, MrGD, born 1900 Bridgeton, Glasgow, MrCA, born 1920 Clydeside, Dumbartonshire and

Gambling, moreover was linked not only with male bonding, but also with the pub culture as MrsGA's recollections indicate.

> Ah took ah line fur ma father. Ye used tae get the *Topical Times*, and he picked some horse. He'd aboot five horses or something and they all won, and he sent me alang wi the line. He said, 'You'll miybe no' get paid that. It comes tae nearly two pound ten'. So ah went alang and brought the money back. He gave me a dollar tae maself . . . And oh he was doun the pub wi' aw his mates and they were aw drunk fur days. [153]

This could heighten gambling's potential to contribute to gender conflict because, 'it was just a done thing. Ah mean they would do without food to keep the money for gambling'. MrsGM. worked to supplement her husband's unemployment benefit. She recollected that, 'it was with him at this corner. I passed and they'd all a drink in them. I turned and said, "what's left for eating have you had your pals up?" He came up later and was annoyed at me saying this in front of his pals, and they used to say, "ah wouldnae take that of her", ye know'.[154] These members of a male affiliation group felt the need to diffuse the threat to masculinity. This pursuit was thus a focus of contested terrain between couples, safeguarded by the violence which was 'ever present if not indulged,' which Hammerton argues characterised marriages of conflict rather than companionship.[155]

In contrast to Davies, who believed gambling could push a family below the poverty line, Chapman argues that working-class gambling was relative to income with stakes ranging from 6d to 2/6d.[156] MrsGN, however catalogued the way in which a family of eleven could be fed 'for near three days on 2/6d'.[157] For many families bets from 6d to 2/6d could represent the difference between living on the margins or below the poverty line, while more excessive

MrGE, born 1908 Partick, Glasgow, respectively.

153 Interview with Mr GA, born 1905 Gorbals, Glasgow.

154 Interview with author, MrsGG, born 1916 Townhead and Mrs GM, born 1911 Springburn, Glasgow respectively.

155 J.Hammerton, 'Rough Music', *Gender And History*, 3, 1991, p.36.

156 M.Chapman, *A Bit Of A Flutter Popular Gambling and English Society, c1823-1961*, Manchester, 1992, pp.10, 27, 48 and p.210.

157 Interview with author, Mrs GN, born 1909 Bridgeton, Glasgow.

gambling could also represent the difference between average and comfortable living conditions for those more affluent families.

There also exists a substantial body of evidence to further refute Chapman's assertion. Street gambling escalated phenomenally between the wars in Scotland, particularly in working-class communities where it was associated with sport.[158] The amount spent at dog tracks alone in Britain rose from £10,000,000 p/a to £75,300,000 between 1927-1938.[159] MrsGS maintained that the working-class were 'running after the bookies'. MrLA lived in Croy, Lanarkshire with a population of around 'two hundred people'. There were 'three bookies'.[160] Correspondingly, Mrs GL was asked,

> Q : Do you remember the bookies?
> A : Oh aye. They used tae shout, in fact the lady across the road from us they'd a parrot and it used tae shout, 'Get the money in, the polis is coming.' It used tae shout.[161]

MrCA insisted, 'Lots of people in Clydebank had a penny or tuppence on a horse or dogs. It was a way of life. Ye didnae get bankrupt'.[162] In 1929 *Forward* reported that a bookie responsible for 148 closes in Plantation St. [Kinning Park, Glasgow] took £35 per day prior to 1914. By 1923 he made an estimated £300 daily in the flat season. The *Govan Press* is littered with accounts of bookies' arrests. In 1926 it reported on a raid in which 6,000 betting lines and several football coupons were appropriated from a bookie in the Govan area of Glasgow.[163] MrsGD, noted the intensity with which the police arrested bookies in Govan,[164] but the level of police concern over gambling varied from locality to locality. MrsGN recalled how her husband, a bookies runner, took bets from local policemen. She also recollected how, when she was unable to pay her rent local men sent her to her mother's home and took

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158 See C. Brown, ' Sport and the Scottish Office in the Twentieth Century : The Control of a Social Problem', *The European Sports History Review*, Vol.1, 1999, especially pp.171-172.
159 A.Hawkins & J.Lowerson, *Trends In Leisure 1919-1939*, Sussex, 1976, p36.
160 Interview with author, MsGS, born 1895 Pollockshields, Glasgow and MrLA, born 1900 Croy, Lanarkshire, respectively.
161 Interview with author, MrsGL, born 1907 Dennistoun, Glasgow.
162 Interview with author, Mr CA, born 1920 Clydebank, Dumbartonshire.
163 *Forward*, 4th October 1929 *and Govan Press*, 3rd September 1926 respectively.
164 Interview with author, MrsGD, born 1912, Govan Glasgow.

over her house for the purposes of a card game. Each winning player contributed a penny towards the rent arrears. Mrs GN stated, 'you were never poor in that street, it was wonderful'.[165] The latter highlights how gambling provided a source of employment and income for working-class people and how some women could gain, often at the expense of others, through gambling. None the less, gambling held the capacity to push many families to the margins or below the poverty line or eroded their potential to enjoy improved living standards. It was not necessarily relative to income.

Chapman also failed to acknowledge the propensity to gamble in different ways and the large number of men who place a bet daily. Respondents noted bets placed on horses, dogs, football coupons, pitch and toss and card playing as among the variety of ways to gamble.

> Q : Did your father gamble?
> A : Aye. He took horse bets, dug bets, fitbaw bets and boxing bets, but when he got that done he'd drink the winnings. He didnea know when tae stop cause it went tae his heid.[166]

Rather than being relative to income, gambling was often intrinsically linked to the pursuit of masculinity, exacerbating marital tension.

Women also gambled, but it seems that they did not do so with same frequency as their male counter-parts. More ironically, it was women's perceptions of gambling that most correlated to the idea of gambling as a form of working-class saving or the 'dream of instant wealth' and this wealth could exclude the 'breadwinner'.

> Q : Was there quite a lot of women that gambled then?
> A : They used tae try it but of course they hadnae much money. If they had a shilling : try yer luck and see if ye can win something oot it. If ye'd get hauf a crown ye could take aw yer weans tae the pictures - five weans and yerself tae the pictures.[167]

Mrs GI remembered,

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165 Interview with author, MrsGN, born 1909 Bridgeton, Glasgow.
166 A. Hughes, *Popular Pastimes and Wife Assault*, p.30.
167 Interview with author, Mrs GC, born 1910 Bridgeton, Glasgow.

> I did get a first prize. It wis a few pounds and I was very much against betting in every sense of the word and at that time so were my people, but I got that because it was a special one. I, and my young sister, we did it together, got the money I went right up to the draper shop and I bought two pairs of pyjamas - one for my sister and one for myself.[168]

Male gambling, however, like the pub was a means of male bonding and a source of establishing male dominance, a source when masculine identity itself was in crisis.

The final area of Clydeside's 'three cornerstones' of male working-class culture is football. Many Clydeside men 'ate, slept, drank and lived football seven days a week'.[169] Football, the game, spectating and discussion, facilitated male bonding, and was tied to gambling and the pub. Murray, suggest of Celtic and Rangers Football clubs that they represent a microcosm of Scottish society and that they expanded at a phenomenal rate from 1914.[170] If status from employment was threatened in the post-war period, religion, vital to the growth of these teams, was associated with particular occupations. Thus the growth may reflect the perceived threat from unskilled Catholic workers, stemming from perceptions of relative deprivation and the possible effects of deskilling and the Catholic counter-response. The inter-war years were also the period of the North/South divide and of the myth of the working-class hero, the poor tenement boy who overcomes the obstacles of poverty to make good through footballing skills. Moorhouse argues that this myth is endemic of the fatalism engendered by relative deprivation. This myth, moreover, was the allegorical equivalent of the Clydeside crafts, encompassing, 'skills of precision, quality and expertise - rare craftsmanship passed in the blood'.[171] Hence when the status from employment diminished men may have found a new outlet, one also providing the vicarious qualities of 'competitiveness, aggression and instrumentality'.[172] In such a context a team's defeat was possibly internalised as a personal

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168 Interview with author, MrsGI, born 1907 Dennistoun, Glasgow.

169 B. Murray, *The Old Firm Sectarianism And Society In Scotland*, Edinburgh, 1990, p.7.

170 Ibid. p.103.

171 J.J.Moorhouse, 'Shooting Stars: Footballers and Working-class Culture in Twentieth-Century Scotland', R. Holt, [eds.], *Sport and the working-class in modern Britain*, Manchester, 1990, pp.183-185.

172 J.Grayson, ' "But it's more than a game it's an institution." Feminist Perspectives On Sport', *Feminist Review*, 13,1983, pp.5-17.

challenge to masculine identity. Mr GB certainly, 'didnea feel very well when Celtic were defeated', because being a Celtic 'man' meant 'something worthwhile'.[173]

> Q : What did a man's football team mean to him personally?
> A : Oh ah think quite a lot, quite a lot. It gie's them aw an interests.
> Q : So how did you feel when your team got beat then?
> A : Ready for crying.[174]

The bigotry manifest in Rangers and Celtic football support was not restricted to these teams or Glasgow. Brown has highlighted that a similar situation existed between the rival teams of Port Glasgow and Greenock.[175] Mrs GRA remembered Greenock's Morton supporters, 'they used tae come doun our street and they'd be singing and dancing, but when they came oot it wis a different story - they wurnae singing and dancing. They wur cursing and swearing'. On the other hand, MrGE maintained that a man's football team meant, 'the pub. It can lead ye tae it'.[177] Thus, 'many a poor women was frightened for the match being finished and the man coming home'. [178] As masculinity was drawn from such identification, football and its links with gambling and the pub culture could prove a volatile cocktail when contested by wives.

The pillars of male working-class leisure had a long tradition as centres of male power, privilege and identity, but this might have been amplified between the wars, if not always quantitatively at least symbolically. These pursuits held the capacity to mediate men's sense of insecurity and vulnerability stemming from the precarious economic climate, perceptions of a female usurper and the concessions to women embedded in the re-assertion of the dominant gender discourse. These compromises included glorifying mothers and homemakers and conceding equality to women within the family and the neighbourhood. They also included the expectation of love, respect and provision. These expectations were not inconsistent with the traditional ideals of masculinity, but working-class men had been

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[173] Interview with author, MrGB, born 1905 Townhead, Glasgow.
[174] Interview with author, MrLA, born 1900 Croy, Lanarkshire.
[175] C. Brown, 'The Control of a Social Problem', *European Sports History Review*, Vol.1, 1999 pp.172-173.
[177] Interview with author, MrsGRA, born 1919 Greenock, Renfrewshire and MrGE, born 1908 Partick, Glasgow, respectively.
[178] A. Hughes, *Popular Pastimes and Wife Assault*, p.31.

impeded structurally from assimilating the ideal of a paternalistic 'breadwinner', and, therefore, the 'companionate husband' was an equally difficult aspiration. The relative subjectification of the dominant discourse by women, whilst working-class men faced immense economic impediments in aspiring to be 'companionate providers' ensured that intense gender antagonism continued to mark gender relations, and might even have amplified the gender-specific economic and social priorities of the sexes on Clydeside. Men, thus continued to resort to popular culture as a means of expressing and developing a masculine identity and as a form of resistance to acculturation. This put pressure on marriage. It is possible, then that 'poisonously misogynist' male recreations indicate that Clydeside women were far from subordinate to men, and in fact, that they may well have made progress in relation to men, or at very least that men believed that they had. It was not a situation which many working-class men were prepared to accept. Thus women's 'great expectations', were disappointed and the 'new man' of the inter-war period remained a myth. Gender antagonism and marriages of conflict, which had marked Clydeside from at least the eighteenth century, prevailed.

Women, moral guardianship and identity

Working-class women may well have experienced oppression in the work-place, the political arena and in their relations with men, but not meekly. In addition, like the women of the urban poor of England and the women of London investigated by Ross, many working-class females on the Clyde were indeed in a position to 'usurp' men. Others had no choice. 'Ah got married and of course ah discovered ah still had to go out and work. Ah worked harder than ever. Ah didnae look for a rich man. Ah took a poor man.' [179] The necessity of supplementing the 'breadwinner' acted as a major obstacle to women's identification with the exulted mother, respectable housewife and competent household manager confined to her 'private sphere'. Likewise, although many of these women attempted to identify with the inter-war ideal of womanhood this was inhibited by the realities of their lives. Working-class women, therefore, re-adapted the ideal so that it was consistent with these realities because it

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179 Interview with author, MrsGK, born 1907 Anniesland, Glasgow.

was a characterisation which held the capacity to enhance their identity, status and power and one also compatible with the traditions in which they had been raised.

To overcome the barriers which obstructed them from exercising such an identity working-class women converged to moderate these obstacles. They embraced the values associated with the discourse as a means of empowerment so that rather than being subordinated by it, the language and symbolism of the discourse along with the traditional ideals of respectability and Godliness were exploited by women to contest their oppression. As moral guardians of the social sphere working-class women had traditionally defined the 'respectable' and determined family and community behaviour, setting values and social mores, which, while they constrained females also, none the less, directed male behaviour or ensured male guilt.

Like the women of Manchester and Salford, women on Clydeside exercised this power through the medium of 'women's talk', gossip. Tebbutt has demonstrated how gossip was used to bind groups of women together and monitor standards of behaviour within neighbourhoods. She shows how gossip had many functions. It acted as 'a mediator of tensions between the public and private domains of women's lives'. It was 'a vehicle for self-definition which allowed women to exercise informal power over the neighbourhood'. Gossip also, 'helped women survive daily life'. It was a form of leisure and a 'conduit for all sorts of information', as well as being 'a counter to domestic isolation'. Gossip was also, 'a means of effecting a sense of belonging, security and friendship'.[180]

Through gossip and by employing the signifiers of the dominant gender world view which identified the home and the neighbourhood as spaces in which women's 'values should predominate', working-class women enhanced their physical and psychological resources and thereby their status and power. They did so, in part, by exploiting the institutions within the community which promoted this vision of womanhood, especially, religious and para-religious organisations. Therefore, a combination of endeavours to orchestrate women's behaviour, sexual antagonism and the structural realities of working-class women's lives fused to

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180 M. Tebbutt, 'Women's Talk', in A. Davies & J. Fielding, [eds.] *Workers' Worlds*, pp.49-61.

facilitate a 'rough kind of feminism' on Clydeside, one which armed women, allowing them to contest social subjugation.

The glorification of women's roles within the family did indeed offer working-class women an enhanced identity and a specified space to define as their own, the 'private sphere'. 'Ma mother was the boss. Ma father went out and worked and handed in the money, but she ran the house and the children. Oh no she was boss, but she was a good boss, ma mother.' Likewise, Bessie Laycock stated that her 'mother was very much the head of the household'.[181] Similarly, women took pride and a sense of achievement from this identity.

> Q : Did you enjoy being a housewife?
> A : Yes ah enjoyed ma house and ah was proud o' ma house, aye.[182]
>
> A : Oh ah liked that. Ah liked to be a housewife. So did any wee pals ah hud. We used tae see them going up and scrubbing the flair twice a day. See it wis, that linoleum . . . But ye knew fine, scrubbing the flair twice a day.
> Q : Did you enjoy being a mother?
> A : Oh aye! Ah loved babies - ah loved babies. Aye ah loved babies.[183]

Likewise, MrsGRA stated, 'well it was a lot harder then than it is today. There wisnae any mechanical things, but ah liked the housework'. [184] MrsGH recalled,

> Everybody liked tae keep the house clean, and keep it nice. Well ah'd good taste for curtains and so forth and everything just had to be so . . . You know when you look back at some of the work we did, ye'd kitchen shelves and if ma mother saw a nice set - it was in threes, jugs, the big one, a two pint size anyway and then the wee wan at the bottom. They were all in a lovely row and underneath the shelf was what we termed covers. By God periodically we had tae polish them up for their dear life. God when ye think of it, it was hard work. It's fair changed now.
> Q : ...What do you feel you gained from being a housewife?
> A : Everything. Everything. It educated ye, put it that way.[185]

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181 GRA/ PA4/212, WEA, Growing Up in Shettleston between the Wars, 1985, Interview with Bessie Laycock, born 1910, Dennistoun, Glasgow.
182 Interview with author, Mrs GF, born 1911 Anderson, Glasgow.
183 Interview with author, MrsGR, born 1907 Calton, Glasgow.
184 Interview with author, Mrs GRB, born 1905 Greenock, Renfrewshire.
185 Interview with author, MrsGH, born 1900 Kinning Park, Glasgow.

And housework as well as household management did educate women. It required a great deal of skill. Thus women could absorb a sense of satisfaction from their highly skilled work. Yet, others felt it was a burden and an imposition, even when they absorbed a sense of satisfaction from housework. MrsGG stated, 'women were really slaves' but as a housewife she too felt, ' very smug, very smug. I could do everything'. [186]

For many women, however, this was also work which empowered them. On the Clyde it was not unusual for women to, 'make men dependant upon them in the process of negotiating power within the family'.[187] Men acknowledged this.

> Ma wife has looked after me so well that ah could never repay her. When ah was working ah always had ma meals ready - no' that ah wanted it that way. Ah just took ma meals if they were there . . . She kept me quite decently dressed and . . . never had any debt, things like that.[188]

Thus, not only did many women gain a sense of satisfaction from being 'homeworkers', but most of them denied men the opportunity of assisting in the home to ensure their dependency.

> Q : When you had done your housework how did you feel?
> A : Oh a felt great seeing the results, oh aye, and when your man came in on a Friday night fea his work you'd tae have a nice tea going on ready for him with his wage and his meal and everything and that was special and the house all done up, ye know. They were great nights and they enjoyed it too. Ah'd a neighbour too, we'd say, ' A man was brought intae this world to be the breadwinner. No wife unless it's necessary should be out working. She should be at home attending tae him and the children'. Ah think that's right. Right enough there was some poor young widows that had tae take a job tae look after their children. That was different, that was emergency.[189]

The re-affirmation of the traditional gender ideal which identified women with housewifery, household management and motherhood ensured that the post-war idealised woman was compatible with working-class women's primary socialisation.

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186 Interview with author, Mrs GG, born 1916 Townhead, Glasgow.
187 See J. Bourke, *Working-Class Cultures in Britain*, p.66.
188 Interview with author, MrCA, born 1920, Clydebank Dumbartonshire.
189 Interview with author, Mrs GE, born 1907 Gorbals, Glasgow,

Q : Do you think the position of wives had improved by the time you got married or were things much the same?
A : No ah don't think so because ah think the way ma mother brought me up ah tried to bring mine up . . . Ah tried to do things like ma mother would have done, like trying for instance to feed them. Ah tried to make it as nice as possible. What she done for us ah tried to do for mine, and ah mean ah had ah hard time of it trying to get for them all. Ah'd eleven of us, nine kids, ma husband and myself, to keep of off two pounds ten a week. Of course ah had to do a bit of working myself, making their clothes and that. Well ma mother used to do that. Ma mother used to make all our clothes and she kept us all going. If we wanted anything if she had it we got it and if she didnae have it we didnae get it. That's the way ah did it. If ah could give ma children, if ah could afford to give it to them ah used to give it to them, and ah always thought, well that's what ma mother done and there never was anything wrong. [190]

Thus, tradition and the dominant world view on gender identity reinforced each other and the role of motherhood so that it was an extremely important aspect of working-class women's sense of identity. Seemingly, 'there wisnae many that wisnae a good mother in the working class because aw they did was love their kids, and they had nowhere to go but to look after those children, and they gave them the best attention they possibly could. The majority of working-class wimmen were really kind tae their kids'.[191] Yet, because of the prevalence of tradition and the realities of working-class life motherhood in working-class communities did not necessarily mirror the ideal expressed by the prevailing discourse, although attempts were made by Clydeside women to imply that it did to outside agencies. Mrs GM recalled how she and her sister saved money for a piece of floor covering and 'to give the midwife a nice cup of tea'. This same woman, who had ten children, went out to work to supplement her husband's meagre earnings.[192] Working-class mothers often had to amend the 'glorified' vision of motherhood to reflect the realities of their everyday lives and these realities ensured that motherhood went beyond the private sphere and the immediate family unit. This ensured that the growth of welfare clinics and state supervision over women did not undermine their support networks or threaten their autonomy by making them dependant upon

[190] Interview with author, MrsGN, born 1909 Bridgeton, Glasgow.
[191] Interview with author, MrsGM, born 1911 Springburn, Glasgow.
[192] Interview with author, MrsGN, born 1909 Bridgeton, Glasgow.

professionals.[193] On Clydeside women's support networks remained visible and vital between the wars :

> Everybody called ma mother, Granny Thompson, 'cause she looked after kids, as she said, snottery nosed weans. She loved it. She liked to see the children and to hear from them. She looked after a lot of kids. She adopted one wee girl, then her mother got married and wanted her back. She was going to America . . . So ma mother gave her back. [194]

> Ma mother had seven of us and ma mother's brother married. His wife was expecting a baby and her legs started tae swell and everything like that, and ma mother sent ma two sisters and I for a weekend tae clean her house because she couldnae do anything, and attend tae her when she went intae hospital. She'd Margaret, a baby girl and she died, so ma mother brought her up. [195]

Family members, neighbours and young children were fundamental to what was essentially communal motherhood. MrsGZ recalled how, ' if anybody needed anything, like if ye needed yer children looked after a neighbour would say, its all right leave them with me, they'll be aw right ah'll look after them till ye come back'.[196]

Giles, however, argues that these networks were not reflections of 'supportive and empowering sisterhood', that the advantages accrued were enjoyed by, and served, the entire family unit.[197] Mrs GK did not seem to concur. She worked, with the assistance of a support network, not for the entire family unit, but to maintain herself and her children. She stated,

> Ah know maself, perhaps ah would have been hungry many a time and ma children too but ah went out tae work. Ah did house-cleaning . . . Ah used tae put the baby in the pram and go and sort of do it in the afternoon - not in the morning cause he slept great in the afternoon. Ma wee daughter, she was six years older than him and ah'd tell her where ah was and she'd come down and take him out to the garden and hurl him up tae the house and change him. She was able when ah was out . . . And she had a dolls pram that could hold him . . . 'Away we'll go and see Mrs Gorman', and she'd hurl him through. She was a great help tae me . . . [198]

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[193] See, D. Gittins, *Fair Sex*, p.51.
[194] Interview with author, MrsGN, born 1909 Bridgeton, Glasgow.
[195] Interview with author, MrsGK, born 1907 Anniesland, Glasgow.
[196] Interview with author, MrsGZ, born 1917 Govan, Glasgow.
[197] J. Giles, *Women, Identity and Private Life*, p.17.
[198] Interview with author, MrsGK, born 1907 Anniesland, Glasgow.

Support, moreover, as will become evident, was also provided by women and directed against men, especially those males who abused the family and the family wage. Therefore, although there were men who gained secondary benefits from the support bestowed by women's networks, these networks functioned because women understood the potential hardships faced by their sex and combined to moderate these as well as the impediments against their identification with the ideal of the good housekeeper and household manager.

> Some wurnae very good housewives then. They did their housework but they hudnae a very good life, the wummen . . . Ah wummen couldnae go tae a pub ; men could go tae the pub. Wummen couldnae. She couldnae go oot. She hud the weans. He wis away enjoying his- self . And the houses. But they were good decent people. They kept themselves clean but the houses wurnae up tae scratch. Ah'd five weans so ah'd tae be a housewife so ah didnae go oot . . . [199]

These 'three lives' reflect the impediments faced by women in aspiring to be glorified wives and mothers. Thus a good wife good could be equally defined as one, 'going oot looking for cleaning'.[200] For many of these women, employment in the informal, and even the formal economy, was not incompatible with the desire to identify with the elevated role of wife and mother. MrsGJ, a working wife, defined a good wife as, ' a good manager, especially a good manager and kept the house nice and tidy and made decent food and things like that. That'd be a good wife'. This was more so, because, regardless of alternative identities, 'when you got married, well that was your life. You'd to remember that was your life'.[201]

Working-class women on Clydeside, although demonstrating some level of subjectification of the world view which elevated the roles of motherhood and housekeeping, adjusted its boundaries to reflect the everyday realities of their lives. They blended tradition with innovation. Working-class women continued to extend the private sphere and the role of motherhood beyond the confines of the home and into the neighbourhood. Few were 'scientific mothers'. Women behaved in this way not merely to identify with the ideal of

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199 Interview with author, MrsGC, born 1910 Bridgeton, Glasgow.
200 Interview with author, MrsGR, born 1907 Calton, Glasgow.
201 Interview with author, MrsGK, born 1907 Anniesland, Glasgow & MrsGG, born 1916 Townhead, Glasgow, respectively.

motherhood or because they had been socialised to behave this way. Their behaviour was also a reflection of empathy due to the comparatively shared material circumstances and the level of sexual antagonism which guaranteed that a women's consciousness did exist. 'Wimmen ganged up on men. They hud tae'. Not only was this consciousness expressed, but it was also acted upon. 'If we knew that there was wimmen in want or that, we clubbed about and helped them'.[203] This reflection of a women's consciousness gave rise to survival strategies in which, 'you were for me and ah was for you and they all worked hand in hand'.[204]

At the same time, individually and as a group, there were women who would defend their roles, especially those of motherhood and family guardianship, sometimes fiercely, and even to the extent of social condemnation from other women. This was both a survival strategy and a form of self-legitimisation and this was not restricted to Clydeside. Chinn catalogued a wealth of such occurrences amongst the urban poor of England. He depicted one situation in which,

> One Sunday a little girl approached a policemen. She was crying and asked him to come and see what mummy had done to daddy. On arriving at the home, the policeman found the man lying spread-eagled and unconscious and above him his wife standing with the remains of a chamber pot. On asking what happened, the women replied that her husband had come home drunk, and declared that he was "king of the castle". His wife simply decided to crown him.[205]

Behaviour such as this was evident throughout Clydeside. MrsGRA recalled,

> There was one family opposite, the Bells. She used tae beat her husband, run roun the table and he was running roun in front ei' her. He was hiding aw his money. It was a round table and it had four legs and there was a leg and this is were he used tae keep his money. She never discovered this till one night she was dusting and she went tae move the table and she couldnae move it. He moved it and aw the money

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203 Interview with author, MrsGJ, born 1917 Cowcaddens, Glasgow & MrsGM, born 1911 Springburn, Glasgow, respectively.
204 Interview with author, MrsGB, born 1907 Calton, Glasgow.
205 C. Chinn, *They worked all their lives*, p.162.

> fell oot. He collected it thegither. Course she went high. She hit the high heavens aboot it. She was a bad bitch.[206]

As with the women of the urban poor in England not all females on the Clyde were 'ladylike or deferential'. Many women were 'determined not to be subservient to men. Not every women accepted the almighty male', and, 'not all of them called their husbands master'.[207] The ways in which women challenged men, however, took a variety of forms. Although many wives received an allowance from the breadwinner's wage, a number of women demanded greater control. MrsGG stated, 'ah don't know whit other men did, but ma auld man and ma father it was always the pay-packet that we got and ah think that kept peace'. [208] There was an alternative.

> Q : Did men let their wives know how much they earned?
> A : Oh well they hud tae because some of them would go straight tae the work and ask, aye! [209]

There were also many expressions of inter-war working-class women's convergence on specific issues which affected their command of the family, sometimes facilitated by a women's consciousness and at other times by the need to survive. This allowed women to enact a form of family guardianship. As a safeguard in case of future need, women as household managers, would defy their partners and help other women - a situation which would be reciprocated should it be required :

> Many a time ah went tae the pawn to put ma dad's things in. The women next door, she used tae come and get a loan of his suit tae put in the pawn. And we had tae run after her on a Friday for tae get her tae take it oot the pawn shop. Oh ma father used tae go ouf his head. He was against all these things. Well he used tae say, well he was a tradesman. They shouldnae do that. They didn't need to do that. [210]

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206 Interview with author, MrsGRA, born 1919 Greenock, Glasgow .
207 C. Chinn, *They worked all their lives*, p.164.
208 Interview with author, MrsGG, born 1916 Townhead, Glasgow.
209 Interview with author, MrsGR, born 1907 Calton, Glasgow.
210 Interview with author, MrsGL, born 1907 Dennistoun, Glasgow.

It seems, that on Clydeside, in contrast to women from other regions of Britain, the majority of women felt no need to hide their resort to the pawnbrokers from their spouses.[211] They were not, on the whole, inhibited by the perception that a husband might define this as poor housekeeping. However, some wives were compelled to be defiant. MrsGN remembered,

> He thought he was handing in enough money, and well ah think he was just putting me right, to be careful. He told me ah was getting the wages, his pocket-money had nothing to do with me. He thought he was giving me enough money to keep the family, but then as the family started growing ah'd to go out and work myself. Ah realised then. Well ah know how things were with his mother and father - he took to drink. He got a wee bit kinda hard to live with, his own father. He thought that ah was just wasting money, that was it. He knew that if anybody needed help or came to borrow money, ah'd give them it. But he hurt me when he said to me, 'you get the wages and if you cannae'. It was the way he said it ! He says, 'you get the wages and if you cannae make it work out you shouldnae be here'. Ah'd about four kids then. [212]

However, this same women recalled later in the interview that,

> There was a mother stayed up stairs from me and she'd two married daughters. One of the sisters, her man was on the buroo for a long while and she used to come to me and she'd get a loan of a half a crown of ma buroo money. She'd go up and give her sister a shilling and ah'd get it back on Friday. Nobody knew about it. You're the first, and you know it was great. Nobody ever said anything about it. It was really good. [213]

It seems that many women of the Clyde felt their needs were better served by mutually supportive networks than by obeying an authoritarian spouse. Thus women's convergence on specific issues offered them autonomy and covert ways to challenge tyrannical 'master'. This support was based on empathy, sympathy and reciprocity, subversive forms of knowledge which precede consciousness, and forms of knowledge borne from feelings of oppression. Evidence abounds of such support on Clydeside. Mrs GD recalled,

> Ma maw'd good neighbours. They did everything hen. Ah mean if ye were in a hole they were in a hole. Ah mean they made a big pot of soup and if you'd nothing they

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[211] M. Tebbutt, *Making Ends Meet*, p.49.
[212] Interview with author, MrsGN, born 1909 Bridgeton, Glasgow.
[213] Ibid.

> took you soup. Ma maw used tae gie them totties and turnip. She wis having the same. They aw helped wan another.[214]

Mrs GC remembered, 'oh we were all, we hadnae much. Well ma father he was up in the Parkhead Forge wae ma brothers so we were aw working, but some didnae work, but we were aw in it thegither. We'd gie away a pot of soup and say, "that's tae keep ye goin", ye know'. And MrsGQ recalled, 'oh ma mother was awful kind. If any of the neighbours was in trouble or sick or anything it was always ma mother they came for and she always helped them, poulticed them or anything they needed'. [215] Furthermore, Mrs GR stated that,

> Some o' them were oot cleaning and aw that, anything for a job. Cause a mind ma mother got a job as a scrubber in a big warehoose and know much she got? She only got . . . 4s. It was only certain times they got that work . . . Ah mind e' ma auntie saying, 'ah'll be glad whenever yer mother says goinae come doun and gie me a wee haun at the warehoose'. It got wur supper in. She used tae gie ma auntie 2s and she got 2s. They were the lucky wans.[216]

Such support helped women command power. It allowed them to fulfil the role of good housekeeper and thereby identify with the idealised women. More significantly, it made men more dependant on women, thus enhancing women's capacity to negotiate power and security. Women's support networks, therefore, provided them with a means of self-legitimisation, status and autonomy. It enhanced their physical and psychological resources and empowered them in their neighbourhoods, the family and in their relations with men.

> He was a moulder. As soon as he got his five years learning, he worked six months and he got his books. He couldnae get a job because there wasnae such a thing then. They were aw closing down and he would just have to be a labourer then. Ah said, 'Ah was speaking to Helen this morning and she says there's a job in the Cleansing'. 'Cleansing! Oh!'. The very thought oh that! Me going into that! Oh no no!. Ah says, 'Remember its honest and if ye don't take it', well ah says, 'yer no' goinae be here. Ah'm no' goinae be here to do all the work tae keep you, so you'll just go down and see'. And he worked there right up tae he got another job. [218]

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214 Interview with author, Mrs GD, born 1912 Govan, Glasgow.

215 Interview with author, Mrs GC, born 1910 Bridgeton, Glasgow and MrsGQ, born 1909 Camlachie, Glasgow, respectively.

216 Interview with author, MrsGR, born 1907 Calton, Glasgow.

218 Interview with author, MrsGK, born 1907 Anniesland, Glasgow.

Working-class females converged on many issues which affected them as women, particularly concerns which endangered their roles as family guardians. The cost of rent and the condition of housing were major obstacles to women's ability to be good housewives, mothers and household managers. Thus housing fell within working-class women's considerations, especially when money was tight. Although conflict with factors, the intermediates for landlords, had become increasingly difficult, rent strikes still marked the Clyde. Not only was Clydebank labelled the 'spiritual home of anarchy' by factors, but rent strikes took place in Glasgow and Greenock throughout the inter-war years.

> Nearly every close, ah'll no' say every wan, but the biggest majority wouldnea pay their rent, but of course there wis naebody working.
> Q : The kind of people got involved ...?
> A : Just a mix of people, ordinary working people. They wur fighting the rents and they wurnea getting any work tae work. They wur looking fur rent and people just hadnea it tae gie them. Ah just wis lucky as ah said the wae ah wis, a different position.[219]

The perception of 'luck', the realisation by women that they too could find themselves in a similar situation, frequently ensured that there was little or no social condemnation attached to what might otherwise have been defined as aberrant behaviour. Factors, moreover, began to employ intermediates, often working-class girls, at a time when housing as a means of politically mobilising women was being eroded because of the climate of relative defeatism and the labour movement schisms of the late 1920s and the 1930s. This diminished out-right hostility. Muted forms of protest, however, prevailed including caricatured depictions of landlords and this song sung by children on rent day.

> Here comes the factor, the factor, the factor.
> Here comes the factor, the factor for his rent.
> Catch him by the waistcoat, his greatcoat, his billy-goat
> Tell him he's a nanny-goat and fling him doun the stairs.[220]

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219 Interview with author, MrsGD, born 1912 Govan, Glasgow.
220 Interview with author, Mr GE, born 1908 Partick, Glasgow.

Not all forms of mediation were so covert or divorced from formal politics. Unemployment was a major problem for women both as potential employees and wives. It was working-class women who shouldered the burden of unemployment as household managers. This impinged upon their identification with the ideal women and their capacity to make men dependant upon them and thereby secure their power within the family unit. Equally, it was primarily women whose sacrifices were greatest when family resources were scarce. Both Rawlinson and Deacon have demonstrated that between the wars the climate of mass unemployment and an employers counter-attack resulted in trade unions attempting to safeguard the vulnerable jobs of their members. This guaranteed that those out of work had extremely limited resources available to them to co-ordinate protests and therefore the actions of the unemployed tended to be relatively informal and aimed at the lesser agencies of the state.[221] Unemployment, however, disempowered women not only because it adversely affected them in terms of their roles as household managers and guardians of the family, but also due to the fact that women had the least political resources at their disposal. When working-class women confronted the agencies of the state, therefore, they did so directly. This frequently involved the aid of kin and community networks. Mrs GD recalled such a confrontation.

> Ah only once went tae the social. Ma man was ill and ah'd nae money fae anywhere. They huant me 4/6 tae keep four ei' us from Monday tae Thursday. Ah owed that as sure as hell. Ah owed ma milkman 1/6, ah owed the coalman 1/6, so ah had 1/6 tae keep me. Ah went doun tae ma mother and she said, ' how did you get oun?'. Ah said - ah wis greeting - 'know whit they gied me?' She said, 'Whit?'. '4/6'. She said, 'do you go back?' Ah says, 'Naw. That's tae dae me tae Thursday'. 'That'll be---', she says. 'Ah'll put oun a clean overall.' They ei had a clean overall and a clean shawl tae go oot dressed. She went up tae Govan Townhall and she said, 'who wis it?'. Ah said, 'that man'. 'Right!', she says, [to him], 'bye the way are you married?' 'Yes. What's it got to do with you?' 'Have you got children?' 'Yes.' 'Well see if your wife could keep you and your weans wae 1/6 fae Monday tae Thursday.' And he looked and he said, 'ah gied her 4/6'. She said, 'we know ye gied her 4/6. Her milkman's 1/6 and her coalman's 1/6. She cannea do without milk and a fire kin she?'. So we took that long

[221] See G.Rawlinson, 'Mobilising the Unemployed : The National Unemployed Workers' Movement in the West of Scotland', R. Duncan, & A. McIvor, [eds.], *Militant Workers,* pp.176-197 and A. Deacon, 'Concession and Coercion - The Politics of Unemployment Insurance in the Twenties', A. Briggs, & J. Saville, [eds.], *Essays in Labour History 1918-1939*, London, 1977, pp.9-35.

> that the hied man came oot. He said, 'whit is it?' 'How would you like it. Her man's lying ill in bed'. You'd tae pay for medicine then. So he says, 'Jist hold on'. He got us 18/-. He says, 'Is that better mum?'. Only've for ma mother. [222]

Some women were more assertive :

> Oh! the means test was the cruellest thing that ever wis - that was the cruellest thing! People'd to wait in a queue tae get money. Ah always mind, cause it was a November day and it was freezing and the money was getting paid out . . . So, ah'm in this hall and there's aboot fifty behind me. When ah got up tae the table for ma £2 8/- the man flung it at me. It fell on the floor. Ah refused tae lift it. He says, 'lift it!'. 'Naw, ah don't want tae come for this money, ah want tae work. I'm not begging money'. So the crowd took it up. Well you can imagine fifty people waiting for their money behind me. So the guy sitting at the table beside him says, 'If I was you I'd pick that money up and hand it to that lady's hand', 'cause he says, 'This crowd's goinae tare you apart'.[223]

Furthermore, as this woman's memories highlight, such experiences often enhanced awareness of class membership.

> Oh the auld means test was terrible! Oh it wis! They could come intae yer house and tell ye what tae sell, so thank God aw ma stuff was second-hand so it wasnea worth selling. But they'd come in and tell ye what to do. It was really! - talk about Russia, Russia wasnae as bad as whut they wur in them days. [224]

Legitimising their roles, moreover, took many forms. Nor were these strategies limited to Clydeside. Women throughout Britain shared aspects of the socio-economic and political climate experienced by my respondents and were affected by the discourses which identified them as family guardians. MrGZ grew up in Wales. He recalled the effects of the means test.

> She sold off her home bit by bit to keep us in food - bit by bit. Well my mother'd to go to the Parish for boots for me and they were tackity boots, full of studs. Ah could hardly lift ma feet and she says to the man, 'Is this the best you can do? . . . look at the size of him? He couldnae wear them'. He walked away. He says, 'Take it or leave it!'. She says, 'Ah'll leave it'. She hit him under the eye with one of the boots and it was tackity. Course she was arrested, me with her. They took her down to the City Hall and my mother - ah'll tell you something, privately. My mother was a Mosleyite.

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222 Interview with author, Mrs GD, born 1912 Govan, Glasgow.
223 Interview with author, MrsGM, born 1911 Springburn, Glasgow.
224 Ibid.

> She'd had enough. She wusnae a communist, but she was a Mosleyite and that's the black shirts. She joined it. I remember my mother coming home one night after a meeting and her head swathed in bandages. The police'd truncheoned her. Well . . . they took her down to the City Hall and arrested her. They chucked her in, me an' all, in the cell. Ma old man came down and asked her what it was about. She'd been had up for assault. He says, 'Well where's the boots? Let's have a look at them'. ' Would you put a pair of boots on a boy like that?' Ah was only about eight. And the copper says, 'no, no way'. So anyway the case was up and she got fined 1s [225]

Women's protests were a reflection of oppression which was determined by their class and gender. This is evident in women's attitudes and behaviour during the period of means tested benefits in the 1930s. It was working-class women as household managers who had to contest the actions of the state and this was determined by their roles as guardians of the family. It could be suggested, furthermore, that many women became more political, and conscious of their class membership, than their 'brothers' in the industrial wing of the labour movement who frequently refused to mobilise against the means test.

The means test was widely seen as something abhorrent in working-class communities. It was widely criticised as an intrusion of working-class privacy and a mechanism which broke up homes. It was seen as demeaning and 'inhumane'. Unemployment, however, has been seen as a divisive force among the working-class in the inter-war period and in some regions it might well have been. In areas with a high incidence of unemployment there may have been less social stigma. This high incidence of unemployment on Clydeside was manifest in the continual agitation of Clydeside MPs to overturn the 'seeking work' clause and by the fact that they were the only group who remained constant critics of benefit cuts. Unemployment may have produced less militancy because of the pessimism of Clydeside men and women and the vulnerability of those employed, but it did not necessarily divide the working-class along the lines of the tax-payer and the 'scrounger' as it apparently did in other regions.[226] Too many of those unemployed had been skilled workers - 'respectable' men and co-workers. MrsGS was a member of the more affluent working-class. She recalled,

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225 Interview with author, MrGZ, born 1915 Cardiff, Wales.
226 See, A. Deacon, 'The Politics of Unemployment Insurance in the 1920s', in A. Briggs, & J. Saville, [eds.], *Essays in Labour History,* pp.9-35.

> Well there was an awful lot of poverty and a lot of nice people lost their job, and they had been sensible and saved when they had it. They just had tae limit it because they didnae get much money. But then the 30's were very poor. And there were a lot of suicide and a lot of children were really, really hungry at that time. [227]

Working-class women and the unemployed, none the less, had few effective channels by which they could overturn such legislation, but this does not mean that they accepted the status quo. In general, working-class men and women perceived the actions of the state to be contemptible.

> Well if there wis somebody on the means test ye wurnea allowed tae take them intae yer house - ye know yer son or yer daughter. They used tae come up in the middle of the night, the inspectors and knock at the door and go in tae see if the one that wis drawing the means test wis living there. Ooh! there wis always arguments in the stairs because they come up in the middle of the night and banged ye up whether there wis wee weans in the house or not - and they were screeching and the wummen were screeching. Oh it wis a hard time then. [228]
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> Q : How did people feel about the means test?
> A Totally pissed off ! [229]

To resist the outcome of this legislation women, as highlighted in chapter three, formally protested, signed petitions and sent deputations to their councillors. Yet community action was also undertaken. Working-class women participated in informal action to negate the impact of the means test. Hence it did not necessarily destroy family life on Clydeside. Kin and community networks moderated the outcome. Mrs GD did not disagree entirely with the means test, but she nevertheless actively participated in mediating its effects.

> Well ah never was on the means test, but ah'd tae take ma brother's name fur the sake of 'e him getting money. Ah'd a single end and ah took his pals name - it wis done. Ah mean ah'm being truthful and ah'd tae take his pals name and the man used tae come. Well that's whit happened.
> Q : Do you think the means test split up homes?

227 Interview with author, Mrs GS, born 1895 Pollockshields, Glasgow.
228 Interview with author, Mrs GJ, born 1917 Cowcaddens, Glasgow.
229 Interview with author, MrGH, born 1901 Govan, Glasgow.

> A : Ah don't know. Ah lot of people gained by us - everybody wis taking everybody in fur the sake e' trying tae get money although ye wurnae getting fur you fur the sake e' letting ye get a few coppers.[230]

MrGA recalled the support of his family's female neighbour.

> Well ma father hud given up his job and they'd about four weans and were getting twenty-nine bob a week. BUT! they were means tested to such an extent that the likes o' me hud tae, if ah registered saying ah wis stiying there ah hud tae keep ma mother and ma father and these four weans. But there wis this fella, it wis an inspector that came roun' and they did the same as the IRA did. You know how they battered the lids to let them know the army or the police were coming. Well the cry got up, 'Divany's on the go'. Well ah'd tae grab ma uniform, miybe ah wis at a meal. Ah'd tae grab it and go next door. Mrs Ross'd say, 'Well the neighbours bloody helped wan another'. There wis naebody shopping wan another like that. Oh it wis terrible. Oh the means test was the worstest thing! It wis a harsh thing. It wis terrible, inhuman.[231]

According to MrGH, 'some of them, anybody with a big family had tae send, try and split them up among the sisters and that, otherwise, the bigger the family the less money ye got. So they just put them oot so's ye could get some extra money'. [232]

There was an awareness that the means test disempowered women in terms of their roles as household managers, but resistance to it was also a working-class defence of family and community. It was a survival strategy. Women's behaviour against the means test highlights how one strategy could overlap with others, especially when it was in complete defiance of 'male authority'. Women's actions to moderate the means test were a defence of an identity, a shoring of self-legitimisation and a means of safeguarding the spaces which offered women power. It was a protection of women's resources, physical and psychological, albeit with secondary benefits for the entire family unit. MrsGC highlighted this when she stated emphatically, 'oh ah mind the means test and whit it did tae us!'. Women like Mrs GD, who was not directly affected by the means test, also exhibited such a consciousness when she went against the wishes of her husband to support an unemployed family member. 'Ah got

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230 Interview with author, MrsGD, born 1912 Govan, Glasgow.
231 Interview with author, MrGA, born 1905 Gorbals, Glasgow.
232 Interview with author, MrGH, born 1901Govan, Glasgow.

married, and ma brother was on the means test. Parkhead Forge was just kind'a goin' doun a wee bit. This was the 1930s. Ma brother used tae sign on. Ma brother used ma address which ma man didnae like.' [233] These women were aware that their power, like those of the urban poor in England, 'lay in the neighbourhood'.[234]

For this reason, this form of dishonesty among people who apparently placed a high value on honesty was not particularly frowned upon.

> It never affected us right enough, but ah know of people who'd big families and they miybe tae sent a son away to stay with his granny and all that so that they were never actually counted in. Ah think there was a lot of twists went on and in a lot o' cases you couldnea blame the families. Well ah think sometimes the public were away ahead of the people who were causing this, because they knew that it was goinea cost them less money coming in. [235]

The close proximity of tenement life contributed to this and helped ensure that the majority of women understood the hardships of economic and social deprivation they faced as a group. Poverty was not frowned upon. Rather, there was a general understanding and empathy, as well as an appreciation among women that they too might find themselves in a similar situation. This is evident in attitudes towards pawning. Johnson agues that even 'amongst households of the very poor or those with erratic incomes', where pawning was the 'norm' it carried a degree of shame. The shame was increased for the more financially secure members of the working classes when they had to resort to pawning because financial security was an integral aspect of respectable status in working-class communities. Yet, he also indicates that when a whole community had to turn to the pawnbroker because of a community-wide response to a general problem then individual stigma was no longer attached. On Clydeside, given attitudes towards pawning between the wars, the economic climate seems to have created a general problem which ensured that pawning did not carry stigma. Sharing and the use of pawn shops, increasingly a badge of poverty in other areas of

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233 Mrs GC, born 1910 Bridgeton, Glasgow and MrsGD, born 1912 Govan, Glasgow, respectively.
234 C. Chinn, *They Worked All Their Lives*, p.165.
235 Interview with author, MsGA, born 1908 Dennistoun, Glasgow.

Scotland and England,[236] were not deemed so to the same extent on Clydeside because even the more affluent had to resort this.

> There was a building facing us. It was policemen that stayed in it and the people that stayed in it - they were as poor as us, but they didnae like to go to the pawn so ah used to go to the pawn for them. Ah used to go back on a Thursday to get them back. Ma husband used to say, 'Ah don't know whether to go up there with ma buroo money or up to your house with the money'. [237]

Mrs GQ recalled, 'when ah was young first thing on a Monday morning, ma father's suit or ma father's boots. Ah never thought no shame in it and the teacher'd say, "ah saw you going your business this morning". Ah'd say, 'Aye.' Oh no ah wasnae ashamed of the pawn'.[238] Furthermore, the teacher's euphemism suggests a lack of condemnation and perhaps an empathy with the situation of her pupils. Mrs GE summed up the general perception of pawnbroking on the Clyde.

> They used tae say, yer uncles, faith, hope and charity, but mind you that was honest. That was your own. You weren't stealing. You wurnae stealing. Oh aye, the pawn shop was a good thing for people could always get, they didnae need tae sit with nothing if they'd something good tae pawn. [239]

Thus women of the very poor and the more affluent of Clydeside's working classes seem to have shared an empathy which stemmed from their experiences as women, from the close proximity of the housing structure which marked the region and from the impact of the economic environment of the inter-war years. There was a degree of understanding amongst these women which could act, when necessary, as the basis for unity during the need to survive, whether economically or in an environment of sexual antagonism.

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[236] P. Johnson, 'Credit and thrift and the British working class 1870-1939', J. Winter, [ed.], *The Working Class in Modern British History Essays in Honour of Henry Pelling*, London, 1983, p.155. For the declining significance of pawnbroking in England see M. Tebbutt, *Making Ends Meet*, pp.137-138. See also E. Roberts *A Women's Place*, pp. 82-122 for attitudes to pawnbroking.

[237] Interview with author, MrsGN, born 1909 Bridgeton, Glasgow.

[238] Interview with author, MrsGQ, born 1909 Camlachie, Glasgow.

[239] Interview with author, MrsGE, born 1907 Gorbals, Glasgow.

Women, autonomy and resistance

The support which women enjoyed in the neighbourhoods of Clydeside was built up through the channels of gossip, which, therefore, made it an important ingredient of women's survival strategies, regardless of the less positive aspects of such behaviour. As already stated, gossip had many functions in the lives of Clydeside women. It was a form of leisure. But significantly, this 'women's talk' carried the traditions, myths and ideals of women. It provided access to networks and disseminated shared values, and it was a means by which working-class women attempted to control aberrant behaviour which would affect them as a group. Gossip held the capacity to serve these functions because it was a group activity, one which helped empower women by providing access to information and to the skills of articulation. It also facilitated self-help.

Gossip was vital to working-class women between the wars in regions like Clydeside because of the limitations imposed by relatively high levels of poverty and close proximity on the ideals of 'privacy' and 'respectable domesticity' which were gaining currency between the wars, and also because of the sexual division of leisure. The rigid division leisure guaranteed that many working-class women had to forfeit the expanding commercial recreations of the inter-war years on marriage and especially when children arrived. This ensured that gossip was by far one of the most potent forms of socialising for many wives. Economic impediments, time restrictions and role expectations dictated that except for an occasional visit to the cinema, leisure was principally neighbourhood-centred. Gossip therefore permitted women to oversee their children and to be on call should they be required in the home, whilst at the same time it bestowed what little respite and escapism working-class women could enjoy. Mrs GR's recollections highlight the importance of women's talk and the way in which ideals were diffused as well as the links between home and leisure.

> The people used tae sit ootside the close to supper-time. That wis our life, go in noo n' again and clean yer hoose. Some o' them could clean a hoose an aw. When ah wis wee, a flitted here and ah never dreamt for a minute there were such flamin' hooses.

> Ah mean cause when ye were in the Calton ye knew whit it wis tae dae stairs and scrub. [240]

Tebbutt demonstrates the importance of informal leisure in women's lives between the wars in Manchester, arguing that 'gossip helped mediate the physical deprivation of women's homes'. She also notes, however, that the force of gossip was narrowed by 'patriarchy'.[241] Whilst the effects of men's attempts to dominate women did narrow working-class women's use of gossip in men's presence, this depiction of the power of gossip is too restrictive. One significant function of gossip was to challenge men's attempts to dominate women by using it to dispute forms of male behaviour. Glasser depicts the potency of gossip, men's awareness of this power, and their attitudes towards it. He is less than complementary of female neighbours who condemned his father's gambling addiction as a major factor in his mother's early death, arguing that these women were unaware of the true relationship between his parents.[242] However, he seems to have misinterpreted the context of the criticism. Many wives were only too aware of the economic effects of gambling and how domestic violence could result from contesting male expenditure because such expenditure inhibited women from fulfilling their roles of good managers and mothers. It is possible that they were participating in vicarious condemnation of their own real or potential circumstances in a bid to avoid direct conflict with their husbands, and at the same time use the power of community criticism to undermine men's right to such self-expenditure. Gossip allowed women to condemn men's behaviour indirectly and thereby impose guilt, whilst vindicating a women's inability to cope, to act as a good household manager when men abused the 'family wage'. Thus it was a psychological resource. This may explain the 'exaggeration' of gossip.

Glasser's attitude, therefore reflects male fear of gossip's possibilities, its capacity to heighten guilt, even though gossip often mediated direct protest. Gossip was often used in dramatic form as a safety-valve, allowing women a release from their confusion and despair.

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240 Interview with author, MrsGR, born 1907 Calton, Glasgow.
241 M.Tebbutt, 'Women's Talk', A. Davies & J. Fielding, [eds.], *Workers' Worlds*, p.49.
242 R.Glasser, *Growing Up In The Gorbals*, pp.138-139.

Yet as much as it was a comfort reducing women's sense of isolation, it could also be monopolised y men. Because gossip provided women with an education in verbal skills which they used in the battle for scarce resources, men often labelled gossip a deviant activity and attempted to limit women's access to it. Others cited it as a form of 'recalcitrance'. Wife-beaters 'typically justified their actions by claiming provocation, by which they meant a women's refusal to give over money or offering offence with word or manner'.[243] Thus women's condemnation through gossip of men's behaviour was a power struggle because this related to the struggle for scarce resources. Gossip was also used as a necessary strategy to contest women's stigmatisation as a poor wife which vindicated the use of violence towards the 'recalcitrant wife'. Gossip then was a device employed by both men and women for 'control' of resources within the neighbourhood and family, both economic and ideological.

However, on the whole it was women who strictly controlled gossip and in some respects working-class women reinforced their own subjugation. Having a 'blether' often normalised unacceptable behaviour by providing a social measure by which wives might judge their own experiences. Thus, 'the exaggeration which was part of the drama of release', which gossip facilitated,[244] could actually work in reverse.

> Q: ...Was it common for men to hit their wives?
> A: Oh aye, it used to be then but the only time ah remember ma husband hitting me, we were arguing about something and ah was standing on the rug and ah was just a wee bit pregnant at the time. He got angry. He pulled the rug and ah fell on ma behind. He was more alarmed than me.[245]

This pregnant women may have been less alarmed because she could measure her experience via gossip.

> Q: Did you know women who got hit?

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243 M.Tebbutt, 'Women's Talk', A. Davies & J. Fielding, [eds.], *Workers' Worlds*, pp.51-53.
244 Ibid., p.51.
245 Interview with author, Mrs GQ, born 1909 Camlachie, Glasgow.

A: Oh aye many a one. We used to stand at the corner with our babies in their shawls. One came down she'd a black eye; another'd say her man burnt her stockings.[246]

Q : If that happened was there anything that women could do to get help?
A : Well no' anymare than going tae the police, but, depending on what she though o' her man. Sometimes it was miybe drink that done it and she knows it wis jist on the spur of the moment and they didnae bother. They were able tae haud their ain.[247]

Gossip, which reflected women's attitudes and values, apparently limited direct condemnation of aberrant behaviour and was therefore a constraint to women in itself. However, significant to those attitudes, was the aspiration of women to have their roles within marriage and the community elevated. Despite the possibility or reality of marital violence and the sacrifices which marriage frequently entailed, women were 'ashamed to say they were not married'. Gossip helped women identify with the ideal of womanhood by safeguarding the institution of marriage from certain modes of behaviour, labelled deviant, which could cause extreme female vulnerability. A major fear among working-class women was the loss of the 'breadwinner'. This was, and remains, one of the features which ensures the endurance of domestic violence. MrsGE stated, 'in ma mother's time, whether they were foolish or not, you stuck wae yer man tae keep the family together,' more so because, 'when you got married you really got married to have children and most of the wimmen then wouldn't go out and leave their children'. Thus, by safeguarding the institution of marriage from separation, divorce and adultery women might aspire to the security of the glorified wife and mother. As much as this imposed restrictions on women, these restrictions were also applied to the 'breadwinners'. Therefore community mores, determined by women, deemed that if you were divorced you were 'condemned . . . by the general public'.[248]

Q : Would people talk bad of anyone who was divorced ?

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246 Ibid.
247 Interview with author, MrsGF, born 1911 Anderson, Glasgow.
248 Interview with author, MrsGE, born 1907 Gorbals, Glasgow and MrsGG, born 1916 Townhead, Glasgow, respectively.

> A : Oh they didnae like it ! Oh at one time you could hardly walk down the street with your boyfriend never mind anything else. At one time if anybody passed you and you knew, you'd say, 'Look at her, she's nothing but ah slut'.[249]

> A : No that was a thing ye never heard about. Ye heard of separations, but not divorce and not so much pregnancy amongst young brigade - no. Oh it was a crime. That was the crime.[250]

> Q : And what about separation?
> A : It was just about as bad, just the same as a women went intae a pub. That was the most awful thing to happen. You really were bad then.[251]

It seems if 'you were divorced you were a bad women'. MsGA recalled, 'as far as ah'm concerned and as far as you heard folk talking, divorce was a scandal. People would talk in odd voices, "did you hear about so n' so she's divorced", as though it really is a big issue'.[252]

Gossip reflected and reinforced some the glorification of marriage and motherhood and this had both positive and negative implications for women on Clydeside. Nevertheless, gossip could empower women. It provided access to skills of articulation, to community aid, and to a means of self help. MrsGC recalled why, and the means by which she prevented an unwanted pregnancy. 'When ah hud six weans tae a drunk man and he never worked a day ah realised ah'd need tae stop it and ah friend of mine went and got me a douche for there wis nae birth control in they days and ah never hud tae take another.' [253] This gave women a means of controlling their fertility which needed no assistance from men, thus it was a resource, and access to resources denotes power.

Regardless of the elevated role of motherhood, like working-class women in London, and no doubt in many areas of Britain, the dominant discourse on womanhood did not influence females fertility rates. In fact, the number of women attempting to control their fertility can be ascertained by the rising level of maternal mortality. It seems that in the early 1930s illegal

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[249] Interview with author, MrsGN, born 1909 Bridgeton, Glasgow.
[250] Interview with author, MrsGH, born 1900 Kinning Park, Glasgow.
[251] Interview with author, Mrs GG, born 1916 Townhead, Glasgow.
[252] Interview with author, Mrs GJ, born 1917 Cowcaddens, Glasgow & MsGA, born 1908 Dennistoun, Glasgow, respectively.
[253] Interview with author, MrsGC, born 1910 Bridgeton, Glasgow.

abortions accounted for about 10.5% of all maternal mortality figures, but by 1934 this had risen dramatically to 20%. Brookes highlights how, 'a free masonry amongst women' manifest in support networks, dispersed information on the methods of 'bringing on a period' and also the names of abortionists'.[254] This was as evident on Clydeside as it was in London. Poverty and continual childbirth, and the desire for freedom from these obstacles moderated a world view intended to enhance and enlarge Britain's population. MrsGL's recollected,

> There was one that lived beside us. She used to do illegal abortions and if there was anybody expecting they'd say, 'Oh that'll be another wan for Kitty Richie'. This is the wan that used tae dae them. But that's what ah say, it's a good job that there were people like her or there'd be a lot of children walking the streets. But its terrible anybody doing something like that, taking a life away. [255]

Croy in Lanarkshire with its mere 'two hundred or so' of a population also had its 'howdie', an illegal abortionist. [256] MrsGN's recollections indicate, however, that attitudes towards pre-marital sex and abortion were complex and situational.

> There was a wee girl she was expecting, and her mother thought that was terrible. Oh she was high and mighty. She sent for somebody to try and get rid of the baby. Poor wee Nellie, went away to Stobhill. It started before she let her mother know. She lost that much blood she got taken to Stobhill. She was on her last legs. She just got married before she died. It was sad. Her mother didnae want her to. She thought she was too young. She was seventeen, see, and they just carried on and then she was expecting. The mother didnae want the baby. She thought she was ---- That women never came out the house after that. [257]

Although motherhood as an identity was very significant and abortions, or rather 'illegal operations', were generally frowned upon, community mores, determined by the structural realities of women's lives, and disseminated through the channels of gossip, were equally important in determining the way in which working-class women viewed abortion, pre-marital

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[254] B. Brookes, 'The illegal operation', in London Feminist History Group, [eds.], *Sexual dynamics,* pp.171-172.
[255] Interview with author, MrsGL, born 1907 Dennistoun, Glasgow.
[256] Interview with author, MrLA, born 1900 Croy, Lanarkshire.
[257] Interview with author, MrsGN, born 1909 Bridgeton, Glasgow.

sex and the use of contraception. Nevertheless, women's attitudes moderated the ideal of motherhood as enshrined in the dominant world view on womanhood. MrsGK remembered,

> Ah'd two. Ah was only wanting one but six years after that, and then another six years after that ah was expecting again and ah says, 'There's no' goinae be a third here'. But ah never took anything, nor did ah go to a doctor or anything. Ah done ah lot of things ah shouldnae've done. Ah was only about three months when it aw come away and ah got rid of it after that. That was me and ah only have the two. [258]

Abortion, or 'bringing on a period', needed no aid or approval from men. Nor was it in line with the state and state agencies' desire to enlarge Britain's population. This was one way in which women could control their lives and this in itself was a resource, a form of power, if relative. These women were feminists in the respect that 'a feminist is a woman who does not allow anyone to think in her place',[259] even if this was a 'popular feminism' which stemmed from the need to survive and was facilitated by the operation of women's networks, dependant upon a women's consciousness.

Despite this, most women identified with the elevated status of motherhood and homemaker. In general formal female employment after marriage was frowned upon, as was divorce, separation and adultery, whilst good housekeeping and motherhood skills were revered. By aspiring to the ideal of the dominant discourse, women ensured that they had to challenge men to maintain the power of household management, a feature of their ability to be 'glorified' mothers, respectable wives and one which allowed them to ensure men's dependency. This was a situation which often created gender conflict with the dispersal of the family income the principle source of contested terrain.

Women used gossip as part of their artillery in the contest to command family resources. Gossip provided women with verbal skills and the potential to impose particular forms of behaviour or extreme guilt and condemnation when an individual failed to comply with these community mores. This could intensify masculinity in crisis. The greatest source of disputes

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[258] Interview with author, MrsGK, born 1907 Anniesland, Glasgow.
[259] Michele Le Doeuff as quoted in, S. Kemp & J. Squires, 'Epistemologies Introduction', S. Kemp & J. Squires, [eds.], *Feminisms*, Oxford, 1997, p.142.

which could erupt into wife-beating were over money, especially male expenditure, a principle element of women's condemnation of male behaviour. This condemnation was unique to working-class women in their neighbourhoods. It was they who expressed a 'rough kind of feminism' by challenging men's violent subordination of women. Jones has shown that,

> . . . the whole question of domestic rows and violence received little public attention or academic recognition between the wars. Marriage and the family were being upheld as the ideal for which all women should strive so that the violent side of marriage was not something which social scientists and social commentators chose to focus on.[260]

There is also silence among women of the labour movement and the self-proclaimed feminists of Clydeside on this issue. Thus it was also working-class women, through support networks, who attempted to alleviate the incidence of domestic violence. Mrs GM recalled providing aid because 'I knew if that husband came in and there was no bread she would get hit'. MrsGN remembered how she stitched her neighbour's head, after the women had been beaten with a stick, because the victim 'wouldnea go near the doctor cause she knew she'd need tae tell'.[261] This abused woman feared the potential repercussions should she tell, physical, and material if the breadwinner was convicted or fined. Aid, in this context was vital. Other women sought shelter. 'We used to go next door. It's no' the first time ah've been lying under Cavanah's bed when he's come in, "Is ma Helen here?", ye know.' [262]

The more economically secure working-class wives, however, tended to have least contact with community networks and their access to aid and the positive aspects of gossip was therefore, restricted. In some respects this was to their disadvantage. Domestic violence against wives was not confined to the poor, but poverty removed the brake or cloak upholding appearances. Relative affluence was no guarantee of a life free from domestic violence. Yet attitudes and gossip among these women could actually contribute to wife-

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260 H. Jones, *Health and Society in Twentieth Century Britain*, London, 1994, p.128.
261 Interview with author, MrsGM, born 1911 Springburn, Glasgow and MrsGN, born 1909, Bridgeton, Glasgow, respectively.
262 Interview with author, MrsGB, born 1907 Calton, Glasgow.

beating as an invisible crime because it was stigmatised as the animality of the poor - 'rough' behaviour, brought on by a 'recalcitrant' wife. The idea existed that, 'a lot of men go out for a drink, but . . . it's their wives' fault because they drive them to it'. In addition the perception that, 'beating wives and beating children was mostly among the Irish community' contributed to the silence of victims of marital assault.[263] Many women would have been loath to associate themselves with the poverty from which such assaults were seemingly a product and especially the poverty and violence analogous with Irish Catholicism on the Clyde. In this context, perhaps they internalised self-doubt, blaming themselves and hiding this crime from the out-side world. The growing currency given to privacy amongst the better off on Clydeside did little to alleviate the trend of wife-beating as an invisible crime. Thus poorer working-class wives, regardless of the constraints of gossip, gained through association with each other greater community aid. These women accrued release and relief, and when necessary refuge, essential in a period when women as a group were experiencing great social and economic hardship. In this environment, community networks were extremely vital.

If gossip disseminated the shared values of women, it was the concept of respectability which determined these values and bound these networks together. As one contemporary put it, 'to be quite honest we were all respectable, because we couldn't afford tae be anything else'. [264] Although the concept of respectability could differ in each neighbourhood or even street by street, and aspects of it were conservative and divisive, respectability was defined by working-class women. It allowed them to control community behaviour and this permitted women as a group to combat male power. Respectability challenged all forms of deviance which might impact negatively on women's economic and social security as a group. Thus sexual deviance, particularly adultery, separation or domestic violence, along with alcohol abuse and 'rough' behaviour were condemned. Women safeguarded their resources, and marriage provided their greatest resource. Bourke notes how, for working-

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263 A. Hughes, *Popular Pastimes and Wife Assault*, p.37.
264 Interview with author, MrsGJ, born 1917 Cowcaddens, Glasgow.

class women, 'real love was being a family', although Chinn also recognises that while the poor were not 'incapable of love, loving was less easy when a family lived in poverty'.[265] The latter contributed to the perpetuation of marriages of conflict. Yet, whether there was companionship or conflict, and companionship itself is a psychological resource, and regardless of the level of a family's income, the breadwinner was an economic and sexual resource. Men or, more accurately, sexual partners were safeguarded, a situation heightened between the wars because of the public debate stemming from the exacerbation of venereal disease caused by World War I. As an economic resource, the breadwinner, or indeed his wage, was of immense significance and had to be protected. The higher the wage was, thus the resources, the greater was the need for its protection. This might explain why the ideal of respectability was associated to a greater extent, not with the more economically dependant women of the 'urban poor', but rather with the more dependant wives of the middle and upper working-classes and middle-class women. Thus, as much as the widespread use of 'ma man' in working-class neighbourhoods on Clydeside denoted a term of endearment, it also signified to others the perception of ownership of a resource, one which the ideal of respectability protected. The ideal of respectability, therefore safeguarded women's identities, their status in the neighbourhood and provided some level of security, as well as spaces to define as feminine. In this sense it helped women maintain some level of autonomy whilst enhancing their physical and psychological resources. Respectability facilitated empowerment, if qualified and by degree.

It was not only women who could not afford to be respectable, because respectability was an alternative to wealth, a means of coping with social injustice and intrinsically linked to masculinity. Therefore, women could use the idea of respectability to moderate the potential for men to subjugate them through particular forms of aberrant behaviour or behaviour which affected the family income, and, where it did not alter male behaviour, women were not held responsible.

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265 J. Bourke, *Working-Class Cultures in Britain*, p.62 and C. Chinn, *They worked all their lives*, p.157.

Religious affiliation was an element of respectability. Yet not only were the clergy firm advocates of the glorification of motherhood and guardians of the institution of marriage, and therefore, ambassadors of institutions which subjugated women, but it seems that secularisation had set in prior to inter-war years. Boyd, argues this. He states that church-going in Scotland declined with urbanisation and by the time of the Boer War, 70% of soldiers were non-churchgoers.[266] In contrast, Brown rejects the idea that urbanisation eroded a parochial system giving rise to secularisation. Brown highlights the growth of religious institutions avidly attended by the working classes and how in Glasgow, the clergy were involvement in local government.[267] The testimony of my respondents lends weight to this hypothesis. All attended church, chapel or Sunday school as children and this was generally fondly remembered. Furthermore, my female respondents did not become alienated from religion in adulthood. They continued to attend church services. This was not as evident among male respondents, although Catholic men were more inclined to attend religious services. This suggests that the Boer War study to some extent was reflecting secularisation, but secularisation which was gender-specific and denomination based. MrsGS recalled that, 'many of the boys who returned from war, who had come from church families and attended the Boys' Brigade never set foot in a church again'.[268]

Religious institutions played an immense role in working-class women's lives as an extension of the neighbourhood and as a women's sphere of influence. For working-class women, religious affiliation, like gossip, brought a sense of comfort, purpose and identity into narrowly defined lives. Thus it was used to enhance women's psychological resources as well as being a medium by which women expressed self-legitimisation and challenged men's attempts to assert control of the spaces deemed feminine.

These institutions, moreover, often provided access to much needed charity and acted as a childminder through their children's' clubs. They provided venues in which to socialise

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266 K.M.Boyd, *Scottish Church Attitudes To Sex Marriage and Family*, London, 1980, pp.21-22.
267 See C.G.Brown, 'Did urbanisation secularise Britain?', pp.1-16, *Urban History Yearbook*, 1988, pp.11-12.
268 Interview with author, MrsGS, born 1895 Pollockshields, Glasgow.

informally as meeting places and formally via para-religious organisations. My respondents recalled why religion was important to women.

> Q : Why do you think religion was important then?
> A : Well once the service was over they collected outside the church doors and gossiped. And yer mother meet other ladies there and all they'd all families, ye see and they didn't have much time to gossip. It took them all there time to shop, because there wasn't the same facilities. They carried their children in a shawl most of them. There were prams but in the end it was a social gossip. [269]

> On a Sunday morning after the chapel came out - we used to have a man that swept the streets. He'd walk up and down with his brush. He'd wait on us coming out of chapel and then some of the men in the street would get a big urn and they'd take pies with them, and he'd lead us down to the station. We'd go to Milngavie, and some of these wee places for the day with all the kids. That street was marvellous. You were never poor in that street because everybody helped you. [270]

In this respect religious affiliation was significant to working-class women, regardless of whether or not the clergy were ambassadors of institutions which embraced and promoted the prevailing world view on womanhood, in fact even more so because they were. Religious affiliation allowed women to extend their public spaces and public profiles and because the clergy's ideas were compatible with the way in which working-class women ensured security through marriage this enhanced their identity. Thus churches and chapels were exploited to shore up the ideal that women were the moral guardians of home and neighbourhood.

Not every aspect of the clergy's promotion of the glorification of marriage and motherhood was so positive. They too acted as 'marriage menders'. The clergy, Catholic and Protestant, in Scotland were against birth-control. Divorce may have been accepted to some extent by the Protestant clergy, but if it was this was not self-evident to my respondent.

> Q : What were the priest's views on birth control?
> A : Oh they were against it.
> Q : Did they actually let people know they were against it?

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269 Interview with author, MrGJ, born 1899 Townhead, Glasgow.
270 Interview with author, MrsGN, born 1909 Bridgeton, Glasgow.

A : [Nods yes] Course in those days people were very religious to an extent chapels and other places were crowded, Sundays in particular.[271]

Q : Can you tell me if divorce was a common thing when you were young?
A : Naw, no - very, very seldom there wis anything like that. The Roman Catholic church wis against divorce. Some people lived like cat and dog for years - they should'a been separated.[272]

Q : Did people separate from each other?
A : Yes. Ma father and mother were separated and he never sent her any money. He wis bad to her.
Q : Do you know what the clergy's views on these things were?
A : Aye they come up tae ma mother and told her she'd tae go back to her husband, but he belted her every week! So ah'd an argument wae the priest and then ah'd tae apologise tae him. But every week he belted her and she left him and got a legal separation. He wis up every week, 'Ye'll have tae go back tae, yer married to him in the eyes of God'. Ah said, 'Well whit happened tae the eyes of God on a Saturday night when he gets a drink. He belts her'. He said, 'She's married tae him she'll have tae go back tae him'.[273]

These attitudes were not the preserve of the Catholic clergy. Ministers 'didnae believe in' birth control, 'but they didn't do anything to help who was having the children'. MrGH recalled that ministers would, 'go aff their chomp if ye spoke about' divorce.[274] Furthermore, Mrs GQ's recollections highlight the fear amongst the clergy that they might lose their flock to another religious institution and how the clergy's attitudes were disseminated amongst women who did not attend services.

Q : Do you know if they were against birth control ?
A : Oh aye they were always against birth control, aye.
Q : Would they say that at mass ?
A : Oh no they don't preach it as far as ah know, but, ah know they were always against divorce, 'Don't marry out of your religion and then you'll not need to divorce'. They made out it was mixed marriages that caused the divorces.
Q : What kind of things would they ...?

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271 Interview with author, Mr CA, born 1920 Clydebank, Dumbartonshire.
272 Interview with author, MrGA, born 1905 Gorbals, Glasgow.
273 Interview with author, MrsGJ, born 1917 Cowcaddens, Glasgow.
274 Interview with author, MrsGG, born 1916 Townhead, Glasgow and MrGH, born 1901 Govan, Glasgow, respectively.

> A: Ah never ever heard them discussing it right enough, but ah know ones, real ones, good Catholics. They were warned and that, about birth control.[275]

Gossip, then carried the clergy's attitudes to those who could not, or did not attend a formal service. Women, therefore, were likely to be acquainted with the clergy's attitudes on separation, divorce and wife-beating. These were intrinsically linked to their belief in the sanctity of marriage. Generally the issue of domestic abuse arose through concerns over alcohol consumption or some other male 'vice'. Nevertheless, the Catholic and Protestant clergy tended to target wives as either potential reformers of their spouses or as 'recalcitrant' wives. It was standard for organisations such as the Band of Hope to suggest that wife-beating was the product of alcohol consumption, itself the result of a slovenly wife. Catholic institutions reiterated such sentiments. Priests, however, frequently came from working-class backgrounds and understood the hardships faced by women without a 'breadwinner' in this period. Arguably though, religious institutions contributed to the marital tensions revolving around the contested arena of male expenditure. It was not unknown for Catholic premises to be used as outlets for gambling and alcohol consumption.[276] Chinn notes that many bookies and publicans were Catholic who contributed to chapel funds,[277] and perhaps this explains the Catholic clergy's lack of condemnation of male 'vices' and their apparent lack of consideration for women who were abused or impoverished by male self-expenditure. There was a much wider issue, however, which crossed the sectarian divide, very prevalent on Clydeside between the wars. This was a period which gave rise to perceived fears among the clergy over what they seen as the 'disintegration of the family' and female 'immorality'. Among the Protestant clergy in England this permitted an ideological shift in which divorce and birth-control were to gain gradual acceptance. Herbert Gray, a Presbyterian clergyman, founded the marriage guidance council between the wars and was integral in developing the Church of

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275 Interview with author, MrsGQ, born 1909 Camlachie, Glasgow.
276 For attitudes of the Band of Hope see A. Hughes, *Popular Pastimes and Wife Assault,* pp.40-41 and for Catholic premises see ibid., and, M.Keenan, 'The Garngad', unpublished article donated to Glasgow Public Libraries, p.102.
277 C.Chinn, *Better Betting With A Decent Fellar: bookmaking, betting and the British working-class 1750-1990,* London, 1991, pp.213-214.

England's new ideas on sex, love and the family. Sex was to be an expression of love, but entailing responsibility and therefore, marriage.[278] This contributed to the new idealised union in which the family was to represent 'society in miniature' and safeguarding the family was to be the clergy's prime role. Yet, while the Scottish clergy too perceived its role as a guardian of the family, an acceptance of divorce and birth control were less evident. As already highlighted, in the 1930s the Church of Scotland continued to regard the use of birth control as a mortal sin. Moreover,

> Q : How did the clergy feel about divorce?
> A : Oh they didn't like that. You were barred from the church.[279]
>
> A : Oh they didnae believe in that . . . Oh no, ministers didnae believe in it.[280]

Wives were subjected to the prevailing attitudes of the clergy which rejected women's potential economic, social and sexual emancipation, but by their own choice. Marriage and motherhood, regardless of the reality, were glorified by the clergy as a women's rightful place in the inter-war period. Women, however, were not passive. They may have accepted attempts to orchestrate their behaviour, but these endeavours were consistent with working-class women's aims, experiences and aspirations, their politics of everyday life, so that in return for their religious affiliation working-class women gained enhanced status and security. They could also expect aid from religious institutions to uphold their 'society in miniature', the family. Thus they gained assistance to be good managers and mothers. This then shored up the potentially empowering identity of women as moral guardians of home and community.

In addition to this women used the clergy's provisions for children as childminding services. Mrs GZ recalled the services provided in Govan by her local minister.

> Well he'd an old mill out in Fingilton and all the organisations used to go. He bought an old bus and so many went every weekend from different organisations. It cost us half a crown. We went on a Saturday and came back on a Sunday night and it was

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278 J. Lewis, 'Marriage Guidance', *Twentieth Century British History*, 1990 pp.239-240 and passim.
279 Interview with author, MrsGG, born 1916 Townhead, Glasgow.
280 Interview with author, MrsGE, born 1907 Gorbals, Glasgow.

> really great. It was a right feeling of companionship. Ah mean we went from the girls club and there was a whole crowd of young folk and then we'd go with the Sunday school, the Sunday school teachers and all that . . . Some would go from the Guild, and some from the Boys Brigade . . . This bus was filled every Saturday and people went for the weekend and we'd a great time. We played games and we'd community sing-songs. It was really good. We enjoyed that.[281]

Women also gained positions of power denied them elsewhere through their association with para-religious organisations and they could use churches and chapels as centres for socialising.

> Q : You were a member of the church?
> A : . . . Ah was very much brought up in church. Ah lived in it, it was very important to me. Ah helped out whenever ah could. Ah was a primary teacher, a Sunday school teacher, a leader of the Girl's Auxiliary. Ah went through all the stages.[282]

But others had more pragmatic reasons for attending or sending their children to a religious institution.

> We'd a wee penny bank at the church . . . and say ye couldnae pay yer rent, some couldnae pay their rent, he would take yer rent book and go and pay yer rent for ye and keep yer book for we used tae put wur pennies intae it. Every Monday night we went tae church we put the pennies in the bank. That helped the people who couldnae pay rent or if somebody died and didnae have any money for the funeral.[283]

> Q : Do you know if the clergy helped people who were out of work or poor?
> A : Oh there was places were the poor could go and get things. They had one thing in Steel Street in the town and you could put in for a holiday for the children : the Fresh Air Fortnight, and they got away for a fortnight's holiday.[284]

Furthermore, 'some used to get help of the Saint Vincent De Paul , but you had to be deep in, you know'. [285] Glasser corroborated these assertions stating that the Workers' Circle could not boycott religious organisations in Glasgow's Gorbals for fear of 'alienating support especially among women . . . who carried the burden of life . . . when money was more than

281 Interview with author, Mrs GD, born 1912 Govan, Glasgow.
282 Interview with author, MrsGI, born 1907, Dennistoun, Glasgow.
283 Interview with author, MrsGZ, born 1917 Govan, Glasgow.
284 Interview with author, MrsGF, born 1911, Anderson, Glasgow.
285 Interview with author, MrsGQ, born 1909 Camlachie, Glasgow.

unusually short . . . For them charity could in truth be life . . . and a heaven-sent way of getting children off their hands . . . lessening work and worry'.[286] Religion bestowed more. It offered a sense of comfort and hope during a period marked by poverty, insecurity and potential marital violence. Respondents were asked what they felt they had gained from religion and unequivocally they cited strength, purpose, courage and comfort. These were psychological resources. MrsGI felt her faith gave her, 'comfort, definitely, anxiety too, but, comfort was the main thing'. One women maintained, 'without ma faith with all ma worries ah'd have been in the Clyde long ago'. Mrs GO stated, 'well ah used to pray and ah felt if ah asked for something ah got it. . . . Ah felt that God was good'. MrsGN believed, 'that it's God that's given me the strength'. And significantly, MrsGJ noted, 'they hid tae huv something tae hang ontae, they really did. They needed something tae say well when ah die ah'll be getting something. They hud tae huv something tae hold ontae, because they hudnea very much in their lives'.[287]

Women used religious affiliation to combat the effects of their oppression. Perhaps of more consequence, it would have been difficult for men to contest women's involvement with the church or chapel, such 'respectable' Godly pursuits. Equally, it would be hard for men to refuse to care for children while women were so occupied. In this respect women challenged the sexual division of leisure and the restrictions to their public profiles embedded in the ideal of separate spheres.

Participation in religious and para-religious organisations not only moderated the sexual division of leisure, but it assisted women in their challenge of male pastimes which adversely affected their roles and their identities. It helped shore up women's identification as moral guardians. Fundamental to the task of protecting the household economy from male outlay on pleasure was the Women's Temperance Movement on Clydeside. The British Women's Temperance Association had been significant in Scotland from at least 1840 and although

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286 R. Glasser, *Growing Up In The Gorbals*, pp.54-55.

287 Interview with author, Mrs GI, born 1907 Dennistoun, Glasgow, A. Hughes, *Popular Pastimes and Wife Assault*, p.45 and interviews with author, MrsGO, born 1905 Townhead, Glasgow, MrsGN, born 1909 Bridgeton, Glasgow and MrsGJ, born 1917 Cowcaddens, Glasgow respectively.

diminishing in significance from World War I, this organisation still had a relatively strong following on Clydeside between the wars. They had a massive unity campaign in 1920 to have the Temperance [Scotland] Act 1913 enacted. This Act gave Scottish constituents the right to determine whether an area would go 'dry', have limited licences or remain unchanged. This was comparatively unsuccessful on Clydeside, with mainly residential areas opting to go 'dry'.[288] However the working classes were not noted for their support of imposition or infringements on their civil liberties. None the less, it is hardly a surprise that Temperance appealed to working-class women, regardless of its relatively conservative approach. In Scotland, by 1925 membership stood at 62,000.[289] The Greenock branch of the British Women's Temperance Association had such a strong membership that not only was this largely working-class region a 'dry' area, but it had two of its members selected to sit on the Scottish Executive of the British Women's Temperance Association. Furthermore, this organisation had members on the local town council and it could enlist the support of the Mothers' Meeting, the Salvation Army and the local clergy. [290] In Glasgow's Whiteinch branch there were 71 members ; the Gorbals branch had 114 members, but in Motherwell there were 730 members in 1926.[291] This was a year in which the Women's Co-operative Guild in Motherwell feared closure because of its vast membership loss due to the economic impact of the General Strike in this coal-mining region. And it was more striking because the annual membership fee of the Temperance Movement had gone up to 2/2d, [292] almost the sum of money which fed a women with nine children for 'near three days'.[293]

Organisations such as The Women's Temperance Association and their consistent argument that drink was the curse of family life would have done little to ease male guilt. In

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288 E.King, *Scotland Sober and Free : The Temperance Movement 1829-1979*, Glasgow, 1979 pp.16-24. See also C.G. Brown, 'Popular Culture And The Continuing Struggle For Rational Recreation', T.M.Devine & R.J. Finlay, *Scotland in the 20th Century*, pp.215-216.

289 GRA/TD95536 British Women's Temperance Association, [Henceforth BWTA] Greenock Branch Manuscript Minutes, 1st October 1925.

290 BWTA, Greenock Branch Manuscript Minutes, 1st October 1925 and 19th March 1926. See also Annual Report, 19th March, 4th November and 4th March 1926 respectively.

291 BWTA, Alexandria Branch Secretary's Book, 30th November 1926.

292 BWTA, Greenock Branch Manuscript Minutes, 26th February 1926.

293 Interview with author, Mrs GN, born 1909 Bridgeton, Glasgow.

fact as Black's study of the impact of the Temperance [Scotland] Act 1913 highlights, temperance campaigns could force family confrontation. So too, no doubt, could the assimilation of their arguments. The promotion of these arguments was assisted because these organisations understood and did not patronise their constituents, and more significantly, they reflected the concerns of working-class women. Furthermore, women's roles as moral guardians were enhanced by this organisation. Women were informed that 'intemperance was the root of most problems', but it was also noted that alcohol weakens the physical and mental nervous system causing a lack of will power amongst drinkers of alcohol. Thus, not only were women not held accountable for the problems caused by male intemperance, but they also had a crusade to safeguard the 'spiritual welfare of the people'.[294] In this way religious and para religious organisations were used to enhance women's identity as moral guardians and contribute to the way in which women challenged male authority within the locality. This helped women augmented their resources, thus their power.

Working-class men faced immense economic impediments in aspiring to be the 'companionate providers' expected of them by working-class women and promoted in the prevailing gender discourses of the inter-war years. This situation was exacerbated by male refusal to concede working-class women's potential progress, particularly within the family and the locality, the spaces assigned to women. It was a situation worsened by the partial subjectification by working-class women of the elevated role of womanhood which in turn amplified the gender-specific economic and social priorities of the sexes on Clydeside. The sexual antagonism which ensued from this situation combined with the obstacles females faced in aspiring to be idealised women to provide a basis for unity between working-class women resulting at times in the operation of a 'rough kind of feminism'.

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[294]Lectures included, the 'sufferings of little children' because of alcohol consumption. BWTA, Greenock Branch Manuscript Minutes, 1st October 1925, J. Black, 'An Assessment of the Impact of the Temperance [Scotland] Act, 1913', Independent Study Project, University of Strathclyde, 1999, pp.32, 33 and especially p.35. BWTA, Greenock Branch Manuscript Minutes 4th March 1926 and 7th January 1925 respectively.

Working-class women's 'rough kind of feminism' was based on coalition-building. This provided women with the means, however relative, to accrue physical and psychological resources, thus power. Although the neighbourhood strategies used to procure these benefits also had a darker side, constraining women through the same values which they attempted to impose on men, many females, nevertheless, used the language and symbolism of domesticity and the concept of respectability to command power through the image of the women as the 'social' guardian. In doing this, women took command of public spaces and to some extent determined community behaviour. This allowed women to converge on specific issues which affected them as women, working-class women. Therefore, a women's consciousness, survival strategies and feminist behaviour could overlap allowing women on Clydeside some flexibility with which to 'creatively shape their society', whilst moderating the boundaries of their narrowly defined lives. Thus, although they were not feminists their political identities could be were influenced by a 'rough kind of feminism'.

Fragmented communities

A 'rough kind of feminism' did overlap with survival strategies and a consciousness among women of their need to combine as a group to safeguard themselves against the obstacles they faced when attempting to identify with the ideals of good housewifery, motherhood and household management. But as much as particular issues brought women together there were also deep divisions between women of the working classes on Clydeside.

Savage and Miles suggest that one of the main features of the inter-war years was a 'remaking' of the working class, which they maintain, resulted in a greater homogeneity than had previously existed.[295] On Clydeside there was some degree of social levelling in terms of incomes between skilled and unskilled workers. In as much as this occurred there existed the prospect for embourgeoisment, linked to social mobility. Such a situation could well have been more marked when employment was secure and sheltered from the effects of the

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295 M. Savage and A. Miles, *The Remaking of the British Working-class*, especially chapter 3.

adverse economic climate operating on Clydeside. At the same time, workers who were subjected either to falling real wages or unemployment and short time were faced with the prospect of downward mobility and could well have experienced perceptions of relative deprivation. Exacerbating these possible material and ideological divisions was the notion, and to some extent the reality, that women were usurping men economically and socially. Thus, extremely divisive and potentially stratifying forces were at work on the Clyde between the wars. More importantly, Savage and Miles' analysis of class relies heavily on wage differences based on male occupational rankings which are gender-blind and neglect alternative aspects of differentiation, particularly those based on status. Working-class women then, are grouped, not according to their own criteria of class, but by their spouse's income and occupation. This is not to suggest that incomes are not significant in any analysis of class, they are. McCrone notes how 'occupations are the source of income, which 'characterise life chances . . . life security, and give access to housing, education and so on'. [296] Nevertheless, the structural and ideological impediments, including marriage bars, 'pin money' wages and the re-establishment of 'separate spheres', during this period expressively excludes the majority of working-class women from this analysis of class. For the majority of Clydeside women, largely dependant on a 'male breadwinner,' their awareness of class was not linked directly to the formal labour market structures from which, like politics, they were largely excluded or marginalised. It was often women's experiences in the neighbourhoods of Clydeside which formed the basis of their political identity and therefore, their 'vision of class'. McCrone argues that 'between structure and action there operates a culture, a meaning system . . . which translates structural aspects into possibilities for action' and, class will not be interpreted in the same way because 'action is mediated by structure and experience producing different political and social outcomes'. [297]

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[296] D. Mc Crone, 'We're A' Jock Tamson's Bairns', T.M. Devine and R.J. Finlay, [eds.], *Scotland in the Twentieth Century*, p.103.
[297] Ibid. p.113.

By this criteria Clydeside women's class action was mediated by structure and their experiences which were determined by the culture of this region. Not only would women operate within this culture, but their political identity would be determined by it. The locus of working-class women's experiences derived mainly from the family and the neighbourhood. It was here that women largely developed their 'images of class' and these images were shaped by their experiences which included sexual oppression. Such oppression ensured very narrowly restricted lives. 'Women never went out wi' their husbands. It was just a case of if the men went out the mother was left behind. That was her job. She was left behind with the children'. So narrow were the boundaries of women's lives that outside the immediate neighbourhood was defined as 'other wee foreign places, we called them foreign places, ye know'. [298] The neighbourhood was also the space in which working-class women mediated forms of subjugation. Although this produced empathy and convergence, 'the politics of everyday life' also held the capacity to have a negative impact on gender unity and consciousness of class because it sustained a status criteria which was ideologically and materially based. Mr and Mrs GZ remembered,

> MrsGZ :Tradesmen's wives used tae say, oh ma husband's a tradesman.
> MrGZ : Her sister was the same . . . She was the same too. Noses in the air and all this.[299]

Ultimately this gave working-class women a secondary status, but it was merely one aspect of 'the politics of everyday life'. This politics was based upon the ideal of 'respectability'. Although 'respectability' was used to positive effect, contributing to the mediation of issues which united women, it was also an expression of stratification. Thus the ideal held within it the potential to classify and differentiate. And it was used to do so. The ideal of 'respectability' linked acquisitions and aspirations to working-class behaviour and expressions of status and life chances. Yet, because 'respectability' was determined by each

298 Interview with author, MsGA, born 1908 Dennistoun, Glasgow and MrsGD, born 1912 Govan, Glasgow, respectively.
299 Interview with author, MrGZ, born 1915 Wales 1915 and MrsGZ, born 1917 Govan, Glasgow.

neighbourhood, it was neither an overarching or fixed concept. Like images of gender and class and gender or class awareness, the ideals of 'respectability' were constantly reformulated.

During World War I the means of displaying acquisitions was ideologically and physically impeded. Conspicuous consumption, whilst men gave their lives for King and country, was frowned upon, whilst shortages made it difficult to display greater material well-being. Furthermore, the growth of female employment opportunities, when labelled war work was acceptable and respectable. Supplementary earnings and the rising wages of unskilled male workers contributed to a degree of social levelling. Correspondingly, social mobility as expressed through premium house tenure was obstructed due to the extensive housing scarcity on the Clyde. At the same time, the divisions based on religious denomination became less significant because of full employment and the need for national unity. Thus many of the status symbols and divisions of the neighbourhoods of the Clyde were less fundamental for a time, allowing the potential for a more homogenous working class. By the inter-war period the 'politics of everyday life' was reformulated and the concept of respectability re-asserted. Broadly, respectability was determined in each neighbourhood, and in the main by women themselves. However, in order to achieve respectability it seems you had to, 'abide by the rules and regulations of the company you were in'. ' Well you didn't do certain things and you did do certain things. You sort of got the atmosphere of were you lived.'[300] Thus these 'rules and regulations' were relative. While they were relative, they none the less capriciously encompassed the concepts of sobriety, Godliness, cleanliness, thrift, 'honesty' and proper moral and sexual conduct.

> Q : Was there such a thing as a respectable family?
> A : Respectable! Oh go tae church or chapel.[301]

300 Interview with author, MrsGRA, born 1919 Greenock, Renfrewshire and MrsGI, born 1907 Dennistoun, Glasgow, respectively.

301 Interview with author, MrGH, born 1901 Govan, Glasgow.

A : Well ah counted maself as respectable because ah never told lies, ah never borrowed money, ah never owed anybody any debt. The majority o' working people never owed a lot o' debt. You didnae tell lies, and you kept yourself tidy and clean.[302]

A : Everybody was more or less respectable. Ah mean everybody cleaned their own doorsteps n' brassoed their bells and all that sort of thing. Everybody was clean tidy and respectable. They didn't have much money but they were pretty respectable.[303]

In relation to sobriety certain localities apparently frowned less upon women who consumed alcohol, especially the poorer neighbourhoods. Amongst the working class, however, it was generally perceived as 'very much a down thing. If a women went to a pub she was not good'. In fact, 'ye were a bad women if ye went into pubs'.[304] The same was true of 'proper' sexual conduct. 'Well they were aw' much the same tae me roun' aboot. Ye know there wus nane o' this running aboot and huving weans or nothing like that. Well ah mean if you hud a wean ye were bad.'[305] And behaviour thought not to be respectable was condemned :

Well if they thought a women wis, what will ah say, there wis one women beside us and she took men in. It might've been quite innocent, ah don't know, but the rest of the women ganged up on her, so she must've been daein something.
Q : When they ganged up on her what did they do?
A : Oh they just called her names, some of them. Some didnea speak tae her.[306]

Whilst many aspects of 'respectability' were ideological, others were intrinsically linked to an individual's ability to gain access to the mechanisms to effect the ideal, economic and social well-being. Riley notes, ' Women, en masse rarely present themselves . . . their estates divide them as inequalities within their supposed unity'. Thus there were 'respectable people and not respectable people'.[307] Those who were respectable were defined thus,

Some miybe were better off than others, for instance there was people up our stair who'd be better off than ma mother because ma mother was the only one who had no husband, so that aw' the rest had a husband that'd bring in a wage and miybe a

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302 Interview with author, MrsGM, born 1911 Springburn, Glasgow.
303 Interview with author, MrsGZ, born 1917 Govan, Glasgow.
304 Interview with author, MrsGI, born 1907 Dennistoun, Glasgow and MrsGZ, born 1917 Govan, Glasgow, respectively.
305 Interview with author, MrsGN, born 1909 Bridgeton, Glasgow.
306 Interview with author, MrsGJ, born 1917 Cowcaddens, Glasgow.
307 D. Riley, *Am I That Name*, p.9 and interview with author, Mrs GL, born 1907 Dennistoun, Glasgow.

> grown up daughter or son that brought in a wage. So that was - what ma mother had was a war pension and that was all. [308]

However this was fluid. Respectable status could also be detrimentally affected by the behaviour of the breadwinner as MrsGC's recollections of a neighbouring family indicate : 'they were a better class family at wan time tae he started drinking. He jist drank too much'.[309]

Correspondingly, attitudes towards women in work varied. Work, informal and in the formal labour market, did not necessarily negate respectability.

> Q : What sort of things did you need to do to be respectable?
> A : Well behaved. Ah mean a women who lived in the Gorbals in a room and kitchen and went out working was just as respectable as anybody.[310]

Yet,

> My mother didn't work. Ma father was one of the old type that didn't think that wives should work. Most men didn't approve of their wives working then. Ma mother once mentioned working and ma father nearly blew his top. [311]

This same mother, however, cared for children and like many working-class women on Clydeside did not define herself as working because this work was situated in the informal economy. In this respect, sex, the employment of the 'breadwinner', his behaviour and the age of the family unit as well as a women's ability to supplement a husband's income could all contributed to the ability to be 'respectable'. Hence, respectability in the neighbourhoods of Clydeside revolved around a form of materialism associated with behaviour.

Relative economic well-being was demonstrated by way of clearly visible acquisitions, especially attire and even more so by housing tenure. This was linked to a family's ability to gain entry to the apparatus to effect the ideal, economic security but between the wars this

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308 Interview with author, MsGA, born 1908 Dennistoun, Glasgow.
309 Interview with author, MrsGC, born 1910 Bridgeton, Glasgow.
310 Interview with author, MrsGS, born 1885 Pollockshields, Glasgow.
311 Interview with author, MrsGZ, born 1917 Govan, Glasgow.

was vulnerable and often tied to religious denomination.[312] Religious affiliation was an aspect of respectability through the ideal of Godliness and proper behaviour. Godliness also permitted displays of economic well-being, especially through Sunday attire. Hence respectability was the way in which each neighbourhood differentiated class within class, merging income, status, behaviour and religious affiliation as the parameters of stratification. As a mechanism of working-class distinction, the main demarcations were between the respectable working-class, whom respondents sometimes referred to as the middle class, and the roughs, those they regarded as lower working class.

For women, respectability was a logical alternative to stratification based on status from employment, income or wealth. They had limited economic prospects and were socialised into the perception that the worlds of politics, work, and play were male domains. It was also a concept which allowed women to develop an identity from which they express self-legitimisation. Respectability sanctioned women's arrangement of the neighbourhood to mediate inequality. Thus, it was also an expression of autonomy and power. Ironically, although respectability was a means by which women challenged their subordination, and was therefore, a unifying force, and while women could not 'afford to be anything but respectable' in a material or ideological sense, as a system of classification, it was divisive.

> Q : Can you tell me what a respectable family was, was there such a thing ?
> A : Well some thought they were a wee cut above ye that's the only thing that ah could say . . . They're no', they're just, they're working class. They've got to work for their money, otherwise where do they get it.[313]
>
> A : Ah well they went oot wi' their hats. They thought they were— [314]
>
> A : Respectable, well they wore a hat. The wimmen always went out wae their hats oun. Ma ma used tae say, ' Here's the hattie mob coming'. But ma mother she wis working class, but she wisnea the lowest, ye know. [315]

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[312] Many of my respondents noted the difficulties Catholics experienced in getting work. See also, G. Walker, 'Varieties of Scottish Protestant Identity', pp.250-268 and I. Maver, 'The Catholic Community', both in T.M. Devine and R.J.Finlay, [eds.], *Scotland in the 20th Century*, pp.269-284 .
[313] Interview with author, Mrs GF, born 1911 Anderson, Glasgow.
[314] Interview with author, MrsGB, born 1907 Calton, Glasgow.
[315] Interview with author, MrsGJ, born 1917 Cowcaddens, Glasgow.

These divisions were frequently expressed materially.

> Ah well there was a sort 'e, what they termed a middle class There were certain trades in Glasgow that were always that wee bit, one trade had a wee bit more in their wage packet than others, and they wanted the highest. We used tae call them resp— They were that wee bit better off. They would stay up in what they called the wallie close, the tiled close. Well the likes of the lower class they had to contend wi' these black stone buildings.[316]

Furthermore, 'we were aw respectable, believe it or no', just some thought they were better than others. That was the bosses' wives and the gaffers' wives. Oh they would'a treated us like dirt if we would've allowed them'. Moreover, 'if they were in a poor house they would have liked more money to get a better house'. [317] Thus,

> A respectable family always tried tae get oot e' places that were poor. But ah mean they always seemed tae get things tae pay up. They always seemed tae try and get a coat oun or something like that.
> Q : Was it important to be respectable?
> A : Oh aye, aye. It wis jist like everything else they thought they were something better than the other.[318]

As a mark of 'respectability', getting out of places which were 'rough' and 'poor' became both an aspiration and a sign of self-improvement. This was not limited to the rank and file. Dollan, the leader of the Labour group on Glasgow's City Council, was condemned as being 'evidently better of than his colleagues', because it seems that 'he would not take a Corporation house in a gift'.[319] Such attitudes may explain the relative lack of success in the rent strikes of the later 1920s and 1930s, because although housing had been a focal point of unity during the rent strikes on the wartime Clyde, housing as an issue was increasingly provoking divisions amongst working-class people as the inter-war years progressed.

These divisions were not limited to access to the new accommodation being built. Unquestionably at this time on Clydeside home ownership and house purchase with the

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316 Interview with author, MrGD, born 1900 Bridgeton, Glasgow.
317 Interview with author, MrsGM, born 1911 Springburn, Glasgow and MrsGS, born 1885 Pollockshields, Glasgow, respectively.
318 Interview with author, MrsGR, born 1907 Calton, Glasgow.
319 *Govan Press*, 20th October 1922.

exception of local authority housing, were impeded by structural factors.[366] Other means of status distinction based on housing were, therefore, constructed. These applied mainly to surroundings including the better 'wallie closes' and accommodation with an inside toilet.

As a means of differentiation, housing became an area of conflict as the inter-war years progressed and the building of council housing commenced. The back-biting and vying over housing on Clydeside, which caused divisions among working-class women, was due to the fact that there was an insufficient number of houses built to meet the needs of the populace. The *Govan Press* reported that 'the total number of vacant houses in Govan was two, in Fairfield four and in Kinning Park four'.[320] Housing conditions and overcrowding were appalling and although there was some level of slum clearance and council housing projects initiated, these were marginal to needs and rents were expensive. High levels of unemployment acted as a significant factor in deterring private contractors from building on Clydeside, whilst correspondingly the Rent Restriction Act of 1915 was an impediment or an excuse for landlords to neglect repairs and upgrading.[321] Mr GD recalled the Calton in Glasgow.

> Ye smelt the place even before ye seen it and there were no toilets, aw outside toilets and even wash bowls were ootside too. Ye'd tae go up wooden stairs tae it. Miybe at that part there's the sink and running cold water and that'd to do the two houses on each side. Ah think they were two apartments and miybe some of them had seven or eight of a family, miybe more. There was an awful lot of people badly needing re-housed. The housing conditions, they were horrible, absolutely horrible! If they build up a scheme and ye were send there, you were paying about four or five times more rent. Well the people that's all they could afford, the rent they were paying in the house they were in and they felt that they couldnae do it.[322]

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366 J. Butt, 'Working-class Housing in Glasgow 1900-1939', I. MacDougall, [ed.], *Essays in Scottish Labour History*, pp.143-169.
320 *Govan Press* 15th January 1926.
321 See, J.McKee, 'Glasgow Working-class Housing Between The Wars 1919-1939', University of Strathclyde, MPhil. Thesis,1976.
322 Interview with author, Mr.GD, born 1900 Bridgeton, Glasgow.

MrGU, one of seven children, remembered Anderson in Glasgow. 'Well when I was born it was the time of the slums, things were very tough. We lived in a one roomed flat. It was on the ground floor there were two set in beds. Ma mother and father slept in one and the children slept in the other'. MrCA recollected that the houses in Clydebank, 'aw needed repairs and things like that. In some places ye'd ten people in a house, overcrowded and, it wis the only way they could live'. MrGH described the situation in Govan. 'Oh it was overcrowded, overcrowded. They used tae come round at night and check how many were in your hoose. . . If ye were overcrowded ye were liable to loose yer hoose aw' the gether.' [323] The *Glasgow Herald* corroborated these assertions.

> Evidence was given by Dr William C. Gunn, medical officer for the Eastern Division concerning 250 houses in the area which he considered to be uninhabitable. The houses generally, he said, suffered in varying degrees from deficiency of light and ventilation and the majority were in a state of disrepair. In one single apartment house on the ground floor the tenant complained of rats and dampness. Water could be heard flowing under the flooring.[324]

Many women spent most of their lives in and around such housing conditions. It is hardly surprising then that rivalry for decent and affordable accommodation occurred and that it was a general aspiration perceived as self-improvement. Rivalry resulted in divisions among women and presented itself throughout Clydeside, especially where new council housing became available. The main areas to be developed by the Council in Glasgow in this period were Garngad in central Glasgow in 1916 and, between 1925-1937, Moorepark and Mosspark in the south side of the city and Carntyne and Riddrie in the east end. There were also phased developments in Knightswood and Scotstoun, but the onset of depression and the reduction of government subsidies after 1931 resulted in cheaper tenement houses being built in the peripheries and inner-city gap sites of Blackhill, Possil and Lilybank.[325]

323 Interview with author, MrGU, born 1915 Anderson, Glasgow, MrCA, born 1920 Clydebank, Dumbartonshire, Mr GH, born 1900 Govan, Glasgow, respectively.
324 *Glasgow Herald,* 20th September 1927.
325 A. Gibb, *Glasgow the Making Of A City,* London, 1983, pp.165-176.

In Govan the inability of local residents to procure a home on the new Moorepark estate created extreme animosity in this working-class community, with the new residents targets of unfair derogatory abuse. However, many of the new tenants were originally from Kinning-Park which was the more Catholic area of the Tradeston constituency. Thus, religious bigotry might also have been a contributory factor. Mrs GD was one of the Govan residents unable to procure a home on the new housing estate, although she herself later did. She recalled the animosity,

> Ah'll tell ye how the Wine Alley got its name. It wis promised tae the Govan people. Instead o' them getting it it wis Partick people, Anderson people, and the Govan wan's didnae get the hooses. So they used tae watch them goin in and oot the pub and that's when it got nick-named the Wine Alley. The Govan people nick-named it. So they got promised Vicarfield Street and the Govan wan's called it the Promised Land because, well we aw got it.[326]

Ferguslie Park housing estate in Paisley suffered similar stigma. Most of the families housed on this estate were from the slums in the centre of Paisley. They were the families who were amongst 'the poorest', the largest families.[327] Thane shows how, in the economic climate of the 1930s, slum clearances took precedence over house building schemes. In reality, this all but guaranteed that primarily it was those on very low incomes who were getting the opportunity to escape poor housing conditions, whilst those who could not afford to purchase their own home, but who did not dwell in a 'slum' were denied access to better accommodation.[328] Slum clearance in this context could take on implosive religious connotations, especially when the new housing schemes were aimed at combating some of the worst levels of overcrowding. Catholics were highly represented amongst the lowest paid. They continued to have the largest families on Clydeside and were highly concentrated in some of the worst areas of the city. MrGD was asked,

Q : What areas of the city were Catholic?

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326 Interview with author, MrsGD, born 1912 Govan, Glasgow. See also, S. Damer, 'Farewell to the Wine Alley', *Scottish Labour History Review*, No.11, Winter 1997/ Spring 1998, pp.9-11.

327 W.J.McKechin, *Politics : Paisley Pattern*, London, 1969, pp.21-22.

328 P. Thane, *The Foundations of the Welfare State*, p209.

A : There wurnea, more in the Calton, the poorest of the poorest area, that's where you got them.[329]

Smith believed that sectarianism, prior to the inter-war years, was a less divisive force in Glasgow than it was in Liverpool, where it was reflected in political allegiance to Conservatism. She attributed this situation in Glasgow to low levels of unemployment which moderated the threat of cheap Catholic labour, cultural isolation and the lack of vibrant 'little Ireland's' in the city.[330] If this had ever been the case, by the inter-war period it was not evident to my respondents. Furthermore, by looking at the number of Catholic children in a given constituency, to provide an indication of Catholic concentration, it seems that Glasgow's Catholic population was located in a relatively small radius from the city centre, that 'vibrant little Irelands' may well have existed.

Table 4.1 : Catholic school population of Glasgow as a percentage of the total school capacity, 1930.

Constituency.	Total school capacity.	No. of Catholic children.	% of Catholic children in each constituency.
All constituencies	218681	43740	20
Bridgeton	16950	4725	27.8
Camlachie	20948	5071	24.2
Cathcart	11924	920	7.7
Central	10539	3017	28.6
Gorbals	17136	4903	28.6
Govan	14205	3501	24.6
Hillhead	11035	3132	28.3
Kelvingrove	15146	2170	14.3
Maryhill	14795	1964	13.2
Partick	8542	620	7.2
Pollock	15122	920	6
Shettleston	16634	2510	15
Springburn	15378	3416	22.2
St. Rollox	15926	4949	31
Tradeston	14401	1922	13.3

The Catholic population of Partick is misleading : Partick's east end, bordering Anderson, fell within the constituency boundaries of, the largely middle-class, constituency of Hillhead.
Source : Glasgow Education Authority Dairies, 1924 and 1930 and the Catholic Directory for Scotland, 1924 and 1930.

329 Interview with author, MrGD, born 1900 Bridgeton, Glasgow.
330 J. Smith, 'Labour Tradition', *History Workshop*, Issue17, Sp. 1984, pp.47-49.

Corresponding with immigrant patterns these areas included the Calton in particular, which bridged the constituencies of Bridgeton and Camlachie. Likewise there was a large concentration of Catholic families in Anderson, a run down area of the largely middle-class constituency of Kelvingrove. Cowcaddens in the St Rollox constituency and Garngad, a working-class neighbourhood of the largely middle-class Central constituency of Glasgow, also had large Catholic populations. These areas frequently displayed high levels of poverty and corresponding social problems. Respondents from these areas spoke more candidly about using pawn shops, high levels of drunkenness and domestic violence - features associated with a neighbourhood demonstrating a 'culture of poverty'.

Prior to 1900 in Glasgow, 'the densely-packed warrens of cheap housing in the central districts exerted a magnetic influence on all migrants, but especially the Irish'. What is more,

> The 1904 report on housing in the city noted the Irish preference for cheap housing in the inner city. The process of 'filtering up' through the housing market was not one in which the Irish migrants figured greatly . . . Higher rents meant newer and better accommodation was out of reach for the unskilled labouring Irish. [331]

These features and the housing scarcity of the First World War, and for some time thereafter, ensured that particular areas of Clydeside were distinctively Catholic. Slum clearance of overcrowded and uninhabitable accommodation, and the new tenants' need to 'supplement finances to pay higher rents' by taking in lodgers, exacerbated this situation ensuring that, 'to some extent the conditions of the core were replicated in newer tenement areas'. [332]

Furthermore, segregated housing and cultural isolation neither moderated the intense sectarianism or the development of 'vibrant little Irelands' on the Clyde. Outside the main regions of Catholic concentration, the Calton, Garngad, Cowcaddens, Anderson and the Gorbals, there were enclaves, labelled 'little Irelands' throughout Glasgow, in Springburn,

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331 A. Gibb, *The making Of A City*, p.127 and p.130.
332 Ibid. .

Partick's east end, west Maryhill, Parkhead and Shettleston. However, with the exception of Kinning Park in the Tradeston constituency, Catholic penetration was marginal with three Catholic schools accommodating around 2,500 children in the more affluent constituencies of Cathcart and Pollock and the Tradeston constituency. Govan, moreover, which appeared to have a relatively mixed religious community experienced segregation within the neighbourhood. Certain streets in west Govan were known for their Catholic concentration.

> Govan was more or less Protestant except Neptune Street and Nethan Street and up that bit of Govan Road. Ah'd've said the rest of Govan was more or less Protestant, although they aw' ran down to St. Anthony' on a Sunday, fighting on a Saturday night and then down to St. Anthony's on a Sunday.[333]

This concentration, and the attitudes it attracted, were replicated in the east-end of the city of Glasgow.

> Some of these women were always having babies. It was a shame. You used to see the kiddies round about wie hardly any clothes on, just because drink and gambling had a strong hold. They wanted more money, that's the way they went and it was the wife and family they hurt. Down from me, Eastmuir, well there was more and more Catholics than anybody, and ah'll tell ye, ah think it wis because e' that - the men too fond o' drink. In fact, ma grandmother came down through there and she used tae give an old lady who was sittin' ootside the door money. [334]

Furthermore, religious affiliation continued to exert an influence in procuring employment.

> Q: Can you think of a way that your religion was important to you . . .?
> A : In these days some factories you went to for a job, 'What religion are you?'. Now Mitchell's Tobacco work, you know that one that makes cigarettes, they wouldn't employ you if you weren't a Protestant and Templeton's Carpet Factory. You'd, 'What school did you go to?'. 'Bernard Street.' That was next to it, the carpet factory was next door. 'Well that was all right.' You got the job. Aye, they were biased.[335]
>
> A : Well ah'll tell you a got a job fur a week. Ah was a good counter. It was an Irish shop that opened up. It was Galbraiths. Well ma father we'd a big family and he helped oot as a mechanic in a pub. It was an Irish pub. Ah came oot one day and ma

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333 Interview with author, MrGZ, born 1915 Cardiff, Wales and MrsGZ, born 1917 Govan, Glasgow. See also G. Rountree, *A Govan Childhood The 1930s*, Edinburgh, 1993, p.184 and p.258.
334 Interview with author, MrGK, born 1912 Shettleston, Glasgow.
335 Interview with author, MrsGQ, born 1909 Camlachie, Glasgow.

father was just gettin' kellars for the pub and he said, 'Where are ye goin'?'. Ah said, 'That's the boss in there gave me ma books'. Ma da says, 'Did ye steal aff them?'. 'Naw honest to God, ah wouldnea steal', ah said. Mr McBride was in, so ma father says to him, 'Why'd my daughter get her books? Give me a reason'. He said, 'There's no Protestants in here its only Roman Catholics'. 'Well there'll be nae Protestants buying aff ye then', says ma da.[336]

MrGA joined the Orange Order because,

This fella next door he wis a member of the Orange Lodge, the father. His son and I were pretty thick, he got me tae join up in the juvenile lodge. Ah wis idle and ah asked this Irish bloke that wis working in the railway, St Rollox, he wis a foreman, could he do anything fur me and he asked me whit ah'd done. Ah told him. 'Yes ah'll get ye a job.' Ah never heard anything. He never came near me, so ah began tae get disillusioned wi it. Ah said, this is no' fur me. [337]

The economic climate on Clydeside, the potential threat from cheap unskilled Catholic labour in the employment sphere, along with housing segregation based on religious denomination ensured that religious identity could take on abhorrent dimensions from name calling to physical violence.

Ma grandfather was a cabbie in the old days and his stance was at St. Andrews. There was a businessman used to engage him for the whole week. He'd collect him from the station and take him to wherever he worked. This night he was going to a function, ah think it was either the Masonic or something and he took the cabbie in to give him a drink, but when they made a toast they knew he wisnea wan o' them. About four nights later there was two men engaged his cab from Glasgow Cross to Shettleston. They kicked him upside down and they ripped all his cab and he was left unconscious and it was miners going to their work that found him. Ah think he lived four or five months after it, but he was never able to go out the bed, so ma granny hated orange. She didnae like orange people.[338]

The culture of tribalism was often reinforced as Mrs and MrGZ's recollections demonstrate.

As a matter of fact you wouldn't have taken a Catholic boy home. If you'd said you were goin' oot wae him yer mother wouldnae have stood for that. In fact my daughter met her husband she said to him what religion are you? He said Church of England.
MrGZ : He said what difference does that make?

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[336] Interview with author, MrsGC, born 1910 Bridgeton, Glasgow.
[337] Interview with author, MrGA, born 1905 Gorbals, Glasgow.
[338] Interview with author, MrsGP, born 1909 Calton, Glasgow.

MrsGZ : Because she said, if yer a Catholic ye might as well say cherio just now because mum and dad would --- [339]

Ultimately mentalities such as these and the economic climate heightened religious identity.

Q : What did it mean to be a Catholic?
A : If ye wurnae a Catholic ye were the other side, and sometimes it was pretty hard. Ye didnae get on. Sometimes people didnae treat you very well. If you were a Catholic that was it, n' it got better later on. Ah mean if you were a Roman Catholic you couldnae get a job especially your father.[340]

This corresponds with Maver's findings. She notes that although circumstances varied among the different Catholic groups, social mobility was mainly a post Second World War phenomena.[341] By contrast, 'If you were Protestant you were supposed tae be on the up and up. Ah think that wis about aw it meant'. Thus, it was not merely a case of, 'it's what your born'.[342] Anxieties, moreover, were heightened by the perception, often instigated by civic society that Scotland was being over-run with Irish people, and Irish Catholics at that. [343] 'Ah didnae mind any Catholics when ah wis at school, but efter the war years they aw started coming o'er, between say 1918 and 1930 it wis aw Roman Catholics that wis coming in.'[344]

Many Protestant families, whilst having a profound desire to be 'on the up and up' probably experienced a sense of relative deprivation, more so, given the continued religious segregation in housing, employment and leisure. It was the employment from which Catholics were largely barred, moreover, which experienced the highest levels of structural unemployment. MrCA recalled the situation in John Brown's shipyard.

Ma father died and when ah wis sixteen, that wis an age tae start yer apprenticeship, ah hud quite high intelligence. So this Mr, ah jist forget his name, ah got showed intae his office and he spoke at length about various things. He says, 'Ye could serve yer time here'. Then he came tae ma father. He said, 'What school did ah go tae?'. Ah

339 Interview with author, MrGZ, born 1915 Cardiff, Wales and MrsGZ, born 1917 Govan, Glasgow.
340 Interview with author, MrsGJ, born 1917 Cowcaddens, Glasgow.
341 I. Maver, 'The Catholic Community', T.M. Devine and R.J. Finlay, [eds.], *Scotland in the Twentieth Century*, pp.269-284.
342 Interview with author, MrsGRA, born 1919 Greenock, Renfrewshire.
343 G.Walker, 'Varieties of Scottish Protestant Identity', T.M. Devine and R.J. Finlay, [eds.], *Scotland in the Twentieth Century*, pp.260-261.
344 Interview with author, MrsGC, born 1910 Bridgeton, Glasgow.

> said, 'The Holy Redeemers'. His whole demeanour changed. He said, 'Ah thought yer father was a Protestant'. Ah said, 'Well ma father was brought up Protestant, but he changed his religion before ah wis born'. Right away he lost complete interest and he said, 'Ah'm very sorry but the first chance ah get ah'll notify ye'. Ah said, 'Don't kid yerself you've no intention of employing me, because yer one of the biggest bigots'.[345]

Yet, the jobs which had traditionally been secured by Catholics, such as municipal work,[346] were relatively secure, shielded from the worst impact of the economic climate.

> Q : Do you think religion was important in getting a job?
> A : Ah don't think it wis so important here, [Municipal Employment] because as ye know there wis a lot a, especially in municipal section, there were a lot a Roman Catholics councillors allied tae the Labour Party.[347]

This opened many Protestant families to the anti-Catholic propaganda of the Churches, Scottish Protestant League and Unionist [348] which filtered into popular mentalities. In this context, slum clearance and the re-housing of large low income families in regions such as Clydeside,[349] were sectarianism was prevalent, could give the idea that the Catholic minority were getting preferential treatment. In turn this could heighten Protestant religious identity, particularly when it was linked to aspirations of respectability. Godliness, therefore, could take on extremely divisive qualities when religious identity and respectability merged.

> There was thirteen of us in a room and kitchen and we were getting aulder. Ah went tae ma granny. Ma auldest sister went to ma granny . . . and the boys, they did the best fur them but she was cramped. But Irish people comin' o'er and they were gettin' hooses in six weeks in Carntyne, that was opening up. So ma mother was feed up askin' fur a bigger hoose and it was a bath she wanted. We were always goin' tae the baths so that was money aw the time. So she got us aw thegither . . . and took us up the High Street . . . She just marched us aw in, but she'd heard o' people gettin' hooses, gettin' bungs and gettin' hooses, the Irish people coming. Ma mother wasnea kidded . . . They said, 'You've no' got an appointment'. She said, 'This is ma family. They were all born and bred in Glasgow and they're comin' o'er and they're gettin' a hoose in six weeks here. Why is there a Catholic community in

345 Interview with author, MrCA, born 1920 Clydebank, Dumbartonshire.
346 I. Maver, 'The Catholic Community', T.M. Devine and R.J. Finlay, [eds.], *Scotland in the Twentieth Century*, p.273.
347 Interview with author, MrGA, born 1907 Gorbals, Glasgow.
348 See for example, G. Walker, 'Varieties of Scottish Protestant Identity', T.M. Devine and R.J. Finlay, [eds.], *Scotland in the Twentieth Century*, pp.260-261.
349 J. McKee, *Glasgow Working-class Housing Between the Wars*, p.34.

> Carntyne?'. Ma mother said, 'Ah'm no' goin' by religion, they're comin' auf the Irish boat and waitin' six weeks fur a new house. Our own home, we've got a room and kitchen and ah've got twelve in it. We can't live in it'. She said, 'Ah'm goinea sit here till ah get a house'. So we went hame anyway, but the next day she got a three apartment. [350]

Vying for housing as an indication of status was a divisive force in working-class neighbourhoods, moderating the unity which stemmed from the rent strikes and challenges to the means test with which it coincided. Yet, it was not merely visible acquisitions which created demarcations. Mentalities did too. Working-class people, as Seabrook noted, ' would [not] like anyone to think they were without clearly defined notions of what was proper'. [351] The same is true of working-class women on Clydeside.

Religion, images of class and voting behaviour

One of the main criteria of the respectable working-class out with 'proper' moral and sexual conduct was dissociation from 'roughs'. This created cleavages. It was resented by those unable to avoid the stigma of poverty and pursued by those more fortunate. Those who perceived themselves as 'a wee bit above ye' tended to distinguish themselves from other members of the working class through particular images of class and this could have a negative impact on class awareness and in turn class politics.

> Q : ...Which class did you belong to when you were a young women?
> A : Ah think ah was just slightly above working class.
> Q : Now can you tell me what that meant?
> A : You were just that wee bit more snobbish, at least you fancied yourself more and you wouldn't do things that some of the tougher ones would do.
> Q : What sort of things did they do?
> A : Well, ah mean yelling and squealing out in the street, conducting yourself like a hooligan.[352]

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350 Interview with author, MrsGD, born 1900 Bridgeton, Glasgow.
351 J. Seabrook, *The Unprivileged: A Hundred Years of family life and tradition in a working-class street*, London, 1967, p.160.
352 Interview with author, Mrs GG, born 1916 Townhead, Glasgow.

The labour movement was not the only political party favoured by working-class people. Voting for the Conservative and to a greater extent the Liberal party had a long tradition on the Clyde. Many working-class people saw benefits from voting for a candidate from one of these parties and these benefits included an identification with 'respectability'.[353] Others voted Conservative or Liberal because this is what their parents had done and one women from Greenock went so far as to vote Conservative because the candidate was, 'nice looking'.[354] Nevertheless, while many Protestants also voted Labour, images of class, linked to religious denomination and the ideal of respectability, were transferred into political action by way of deferential voting between the wars.

> Q : How did your parents let you know that the Conservative party were a good party to vote for?
> A : Well we were always taught to be behaving ourselves and not to act like hooligans which most of them did, but you just had that feeling that they were a wee bit better class and you did your best to try and copy them.
> Q : Can you tell me what was the Labour party like when you were a young women?
> A : Well rougher. Just a different class.
> Q : Was there a communist party in Townhead?
> A : Not that ah remember, but then that was just like a blue do party that, the communists as far as our people were concerned. You were really low and ---
> Q : What does blue do mean...?
> A : We would never be allowed to go near it. That was one thing we would not be allowed to do.
> Q : What were they like then?
> A : Well again that's what ah'm saying to me they were a rougher type of person.[355]

Dissociation from the 'poorer classes' took different forms.

> Q : What was it that appealed to you about Conservatism?
> A : Well ah always thought that they were the people who had the business brains and they were the people if they could run a business surely they could run the

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353 See, J.F. McCaffrey, 'Political issues and developments', W.H. Fraser & I. Maver, [eds.], *Glasgow*, pp.186-226 and R.J. Finlay, 'Continuity and Change : Scottish Politics, 1900-45', T.M Devine & R.J. Finlay, [eds.], *Scotland In The Twentieth Century*, pp.64-84. For Liberalism in Paisley, where the Liberal Party's 'hegemony' prevailed longer than Glasgow, although less so than it did in Greenock see, C.M.M. Macdonald, *The Radical Thread*, pp.225-235. See also, interview with author, MrGRA, born 1906, Greenock Renfrewshire, whose father was a Greenock local councillor for the Liberal Party.

354 Interview with author, MrsGRA, born 1919, Greenock, Renfrewshire.

355 Ibid.

country, and that they had more up there, [touches her head]. They'd more up there than people who - Labour candidates. [356]

Q : What was the Labour Party like then, when you were young?
A : Well shall I say they were more or less treated as a lesser occupation - poorer people. They were treated as poorer people for a long time.[357]

A : Oh Hot n' Tots ! Oh ho, ah wasnae impressed by these Labour folk then. They were all the greediest rascals under the sun. They wanted everything for nothing and ah think that's what sickened me . . . It was grab grab grab. [358]

MrsGS never voted Labour.

Q : Do you remember people like Jimmy Maxton, what was he like?
A : He was a nice chap himself, but out for the poor. But of course poor people were awful poor at that time. [359]

Nor was this limited to Glasgow.

Q : Do you know what the Labour Party was like in Paisley?
A : It was jist for the poor people. Ye see ma father used tae say, 'it's no' for the poor people, Labour'. Labour made oot they would get work cause they were common men. Ma father said it wis jist communist except they liked tae think - he thought that the only person that can help the working-man was the working-man. If he'd get up of his back-side and go and look for work, there's always work tae be found, if it's only going out and digging the streets or working in the farms. If ye really want tae work you'll find it . . . He really believed that if ye want tae work ye'll find it. [360]

These attitudes were not the preserve of women. MrGH voted ILP, but thought that the CP were 'terrible, wicked aw the time' because 'they aw just wanted to be rough working people'. [361]

Although voting for a labour movement candidate did not necessarily negate respectability, both the ILP and the CP often held outside meetings. These meetings

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356 Interview with author, MrsGZ, born 1917 Govan, Glasgow.
357 Interview with author, GI, born 1907 Dennistoun, Glasgow.
358 Interview with author, Mrs GH, born 1900 Kinning-Park, Glasgow.
359 Interview with author, MrsGS, born 1895 Pollockshields, Glasgow.
360 Interview with author, Mrs PA, born 1914 Paisley, Renfrewshire.
361 Interview with author, MrGC, born 1909 Townhead, Glasgow.

frequently entailed shouting, whilst police hostility, particularly towards the CP, often guaranteed that such meetings were disruptive :

> Q : What way did politicians try and get young people to vote for them?
> A : They'd just stand round about corners and shout and bawl, vote for this and vote for that, mare communism. Ah remember one time too, in High Street, a police van used tae come and belt them and they go for the piper o' it. Ah was of o' school this day and ah seen them. Ah seen people running straight up the stairs fae them, up the side of Montrose Street. They came rushing by and you'd see them running by. [362]

What is more, although academic research may emphasis the growing schisms between the ILP and the CP during the inter-war years, these were not always self-evident to ordinary working-class people on Clydeside. Respondents from both sides of the political divide on Clydeside associated these two parties throughout the inter-war years. MrGE was a 'Labour man' by his own definition. He voted for Maxton of the ILP and described the political context between the wars.

> That was, the ILP, that was Maxton's. It wasnae the Labour Party, it was ILP. And for years, they were treated as the Reds. There was that wan the - what was it? Them that used tae give the Russians - Communists. If ye voted ILP or that, that's what ye were a communist. [363]

Likewise Mrs PA a unionist recalled,''He wis a communist, Jimmy Maxton'. Mr GH, a self proclaimed 'Labour man' from Govan, an ILP constituency, stated, 'the Independent Labour Party they were half communists, ye know. They were all mixed up'.[364] The recollections of MrsGZ, a Conservative voters, indicate the impact of tradition on popular mentalities.

> Ah just sort of knew them as a heard ma father talking about them. Kirkwood and them they were communists weren't they or near enough? They were Labour, but near enough communist. They're the ones that used to spout it all out and they were

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362 Ibid.
363 Interview with author, MrGE, born 1908 Partick, Glasgow.
364 Interview with author, Mrs PA, born 1914 Paisley, Renfrewshire and MrGH, born 1901 Govan, Glasgow, respectively.

> always were gonnae help the working class, but ah never ever remember hearing about brilliant that any of them ever did.[365]

Mr GD considered himself a socialist and supporter of the ILP. He stated of the ILP, ' it was the ILP when the ILP was in existence. When there was a strong John Maclean and Jimmy Maxton, Manny Shinwell, John McGovern and another auld cratter from Govan, Peter Claud McIntyre'.[366] In fact only Maxton of this group was not a communist at some point in his political career, whilst John Maclean was not only a renowned communist, but appointed Russian Consul for Scotland. Communism and communists like Maclean were attacked by all other parties and the media, labelled deviant. In addition many Clydesiders associated the ILP with unskilled workers and with Catholicism. In other words the ILP too was associated with the poorest on Clydeside who frequently displayed symptoms of a culture of poverty. MrsGZ certainly felt that,

> They saw that there was nothing gonnae happen for them because they were communists so they decided to join the Labour Party, but in our day you really found that a lot of the communists, they were Catholics. 90% of them had turned from Catholicism and even a lot of them hadn't turned from it, but was still communists.[367]

MrGK recalled Shettleston's voting culture, where, John Wheatley the Catholic ILP candidate was extremely successful.

> Well a lot of them voted for him because he was a Catholic and most of the Catholics would vote for a Catholic. Ah voted for the Catholics because ah supported their team, but as ah got older ah was getting hassle from them, 'you're a Rangers supporter what are you doing supporting the Celtic?'. Ah said 'all right ah'll go and support Rangers.[368]

In turn he shifted his political allegiance to Conservatism. Yet, the ILP increasingly attempted to dissociate itself with Catholicism. In 1922, through their publication *Forward*, the ILP made it known that in the Education Authority Elections, 'some Protestants rejected free books and

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365 Interview with author, MrsGZ, born 1917 Govan, Glasgow.
366 Interview with author, MrGD, born 1900 Bridgeton, Glasgow.
367 Interview with author, MrsGZ, born 1917 Govan, Glasgow.
368 Interview with author, MrGK, born 1912 Shettleston, Glasgow.

some Catholics did but, no socialist did'. They went on to categorically deny a link between Catholicism and socialists, emphasising that 'there are seven Labour members. All seven are Protestant. Four are Elders in Protestant Churches, one is a Lay Preacher, one is the daughter of a past Professor Of Divinity at the United Free College'. It was the church, the ILP claimed, which had 'allied itself to the boss class'. Nevertheless, by their own admission, the ILP acknowledged that their 'association with Roman Catholicism alienated Protestants'.[369]

The ILP also attempted to advance the idea that it was a 'respectable' party. The ideal of respectability was promoted, albeit not always advantageously. In 1926, Mary Barbour of the ILP stood as the municipal candidate for Govan and maintained that she represented the 'clean respectable' working class of that area. This was much to the annoyance of some of the constituents who waged a constant battle against the unsanitary conditions in which they were forced to live.[370] However, while, ' thousands among the poor tried to maintain the canons of respectability as far as they could',[371] the association with both 'rough' and poor and particular images of class could all but guarantee that certain 'respectable' women, and for that matter men, would refrain from voting for the labour movement, more so when ideas of 'proper conduct' merged with religious identity.

> Q : Do you remember the Communist Party in Paisley?
> A : Oh aye fine - whit was his name, oh ma father couldnae stand him! Course wae him being Unionist he couldnae stand him at aw, anybody that was against the Monarchy wasnae for him. Ma father used tae say, 'cross the street when ye see that man coming in case ye get tainted'. But he wis a great man in Paisley. [372]

Yet the CP could be rejected by women who voted ILP and Labour on the same grounds. It was widely believed that they were ' Just making trouble. They wanted rid of the monarchy and aw that'.[373] And :

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369 *Forward*, 15th April 1922. See also 4th March 1923 and 16th May 1929.
370 *Govan Press*, 9th August 1929.
371 T.C., Smout, *Scottish People*, p.91.
372 Interview with author, Mrs PA, born 1914 Paisley, Renfrewshire.
373 Interview with author, MrsGC, born 1910 Bridgeton, Glasgow.

> Ah think perhaps miybe it was because their ideas too strong and people felt that they could never be safe with them. It was as if they were making oot that everybody else, you were down-trodden, everybody was walking over ye, which wasnea true at all ah don't think. Ah mean ah used to have an argument wi' a girl that worked in the next machine to me. She was a communist and she used to go on about the royal family and that. She was holding them up to the sky, talking about our class, we were nothing, we were deprived people. Well a lot of Russians were deprived. [374]

These attitudes towards the CP crossed the religious divide on Clydeside with both ministers and the Catholic clergy contesting communist anti-clericalism. Co-existing with labour movement's perceived accommodation of 'Rome', this gave greater currency to the Protestant churches' condemnation of 'socialism'. In addition, these forces facilitated the Unionist's propaganda which 'gave political expression to the fears and prejudices of Protestant Scotland'.[375] However, this condemnation, probably owed more to the labour movement's penetration of local government, which had had a significant church presence, increasingly diminished, with the rise of, in particular, the ILP. Moreover, the power struggle accelerated at a time when the churches and chapels, were playing an immense role in working-class women's lives. For women, the clergy remained an hugely important institution in terms of expressing 'respectability'. Churches gave hope and comfort in a period of unprecedented social hardship on Clydeside. In 1932 this was acknowledged in a *Govan Press* editorial. They reported that, 'when everything material was confused and uncertain the churches are full'.[376] Mrs GI's recollections denote how influential the clergy were in women's lives. Widowed with two young children she recalled how, 'the firm had offered me ma job back again. So ah went to my minister and ah told him the problem, asked him what he thought'.[377]

Ministers were firm supporters of the Unionist Party on Clydeside. Almost one in twenty-four subscribers to the Scottish Conservative political fund in 1933 was a member of the cloth

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374 Interview with author, MsGA, born 1908 Dennistoun, Glasgow.
375 G. Walker, 'Varieties of Scottish Protestant Identity', T.M. Devine and R.J. Finlay, [eds.], *Scotland in the Twentieth Century*, p.261.
376 *Govan Press*, 1st January 1932.
377 Interview with author, Mrs GI, born 1907 Dennistoun, Glasgow.

and of all Glasgow subscribers an eighth were listed as reverends.[378] Furthermore, the Unionists' populist agenda, and one Walker claims appealed to Protestant voters, was based on a 'loyalist message and fused with appeals of Empire, religion, Ulster and a definition of Scottishness derived to a large extent from Presbyterian mythology', fuelled by anti-Catholicism.[379] The links between Ireland and Scotland, King, Country and religious denomination, combined with the strength of Protestant identity on Clydeside and the significance of the church in women's lives to impact negatively on consciousness of class. Thus, ' most of them . . . the church-goers or that, they didnae like the ILP. They thought they were out tae do away wi' the churches and that. They didnae like that'. [380]

Religion proved a significant obstacle to class unity and class politics in the west of Scotland between the wars. It was also divisive in terms of gender unity. Divisions based on religion, however, had a complex relationship with class identity. Walker demonstrates the simultaneous growth of both the Labour party and the Orange Order in this period, a time when the hierarchy of this Order was disseminating the idea of an association between socialism and Catholicism and demanding that its members did not ally themselves with the Labour party. Some did, leading Walker to argue that working-class politics could transcend religious divisions ; that workplace interests were separate from the tribalism and sense of community offered by religion or quasi-religious organisations. The same conditions prevailed during the hunger marchers when unemployed people who were members of the Orange Order walked alongside Catholics on a class issue even to the extent of being disaffiliated by their Order.[381] Although religious identity and consciousness of class were not necessarily mutually exclusive they could be. The links between Unionism and Protestant identity in the west of Scotland are manifest in the success of the Scottish Protestant League. Glasgow had

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378 TD1373/DC83, Scottish Conservative Club Records : List of Subscribers to the Political Fund 1933.

379 G. Walker, 'Varieties of Scottish Protestant Identity', in T.M. Devine and R.J. Finlay, [eds.], *Scotland in the Twentieth Century*, pp.260-261.

380 Interview with author, Mr GD, born 1900 Bridgeton, Glasgow.

381 G.Walker, 'The Orange Order in Scotland Between The Wars', *International Review of Social History*, 37, 1992-2, p.177 and pp.185-188 and passim and I. McDougall, *Voices From the Hunger Marches* , pp.103, 134-136, 154-156, 161-165 and 185.

seven Scottish Protestant League councillors elected by 1933.[382] Moreover, many Unionist MPs had links with the Orange Order. Ferguson, the successful Unionist candidate of 1922 and 1923 in Motherwell had. Cairns has also shown that when Labour lost the parliamentary seat of Maryhill in 1924 the Unionist candidate had 'assiduously cultivated Orange support in the area and that the Orange factor may have been the crucial one'. He also notes that, the 'orange vote has been described as clearly decisive in Partick, Glasgow, in the general elections of 1923, 1931 and 1935'. [383] Macdonald felt that, Shaw, the Unionist candidate for Paisley in 1923, a prominent Orangeman, 'undoubtedly activated the Order to a new political awareness', despite the Order's split with Unionism.[384] On the other hand, Govan had the largest membership of the Orange Order with female members out-numbering men, but this constituency was retained throughout the inter-war years by the ILP, if increasingly marginally in the 1930s. However, if as Walker argues, the work-place was the medium which mediated the tribalism of the community then by implication working-class men and their organisations, because they marginalised or excluded women, contributed to the extent to which working-class women's political identity was influenced by the tribalism of the community.

Community tribalism on Clydeside was heightened by the formation of the Orange and Protestant Party in 1922. This party emerged as a result of the 'Orange Order splitting with the Tories to from the new party'.[385] Followed on from this, and co-existing with it, were the activities of a multiplicity of organisations representing Protestant religious identity. There were 'Protestant demonstrations held to discuss Romanism', which was perceived to be 'making inroads among Scotsmen'. In addition, there were 'attacks on Romanism by the Scottish Reformation Society',[386] all of which was reported by the media. No doubt this

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382 J.J. Smyth, 'When the Orange lost its zest : Labour and the moderates in the battle for George Square', Paper for, Red Clydeside in the Inter-war Years, Glasgow Caledonian University, 14th November 1998. Smyth maintains that this party acted as a bridge for voters to shift their votes from the Moderates to the Labour Party. The oral evidence from women who voted for this party does not support this hypothesis.

383 F.W.S. Craig, *Parliamentary Election Results*, p.634 and D. Cairns, *Women and the Clydeside Labour Movement*, p.73.

384 C.M.M. Macdonald *The Radical Thread*, p.222.

385 *Glasgow Evening Times*, 12th October 1922 and *Forward*, 4th March 1922.

386 *Glasgow Herald*, 15th June 1927 and 20th September 1927.

heightened the impact of tribal propaganda. In Glasgow tribalism was exacerbated by the Scottish Protestant League and the behaviour of some of its members who were involved in displays of extreme sectarianism. Such behaviour may have intensified working-class divisions based upon religious affiliation. The *Govan Press* reported how a Govan trade unionist, a Protestant League municipal representative for Bridgeton, was attacked by three young men and hit with a green and white flag at a political rally. His body-guards were members of the 'Billy Boys',[387] a tribal Protestant gang of youths from the Bridgeton area, noted along with the 'Dans', their Catholic equivalent, for fierce and violent sectarianism. Moreover, although Govan was not represented by this party, the Scottish Protestant Evidence Guild was formed in March 1932 and met in the Orange Halls in Lorne Street, Kinning Park to 'study all aspects of the Protestant faith, beliefs and doctrines'. By April this organisation was 'likening itself to the Scottish Protestant League'.[388]

This associational behaviour ultimately served the anti-Labour alliance which Smyth identified in inter-war Glasgow, an alliance which the *Glasgow Evening Times* described as a 'pact between Conservatives and Liberals' which was 'more complete in Glasgow than elsewhere'.[389] It did so by exposing working-class constituents from relatively homogenous communities to counter class identities and subsequently to potential embourgeoisement. Ministers and the upper echelons of an area often participated in these associations thus the link between status, deference, religious identity and Conservatism were formed.

> We had Mrs Mackie, she bought the wee shop, the dairy, and she was an awful nice person - and her pal. They two they were great Unionist women and ah used tae go to quite a lot of wee nights that they had up in the Orange Hall in Temple Road - all wimmen. Mrs Mackie and Mrs eh, they didn't work. Oh they did but, ah mean work with their --- When there was going to be an election or anything in their area, these two worked. They were Unionists. That's what they called themselves then, Unionists, and well ah worked with them as well, electioneering and ah liked it.[390]

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387 *Govan Press*, 29th January 1932.
388 Ibid., 11th March 1932 and 8th April 1932.
389 J.J. Smyth, 'When the Orange lost its zest' and *Glasgow Evening Times*, 16th November 1922
390 Interview with author, Mrs GK, born 1907 Anniesland, Glasgow.

MrsGZ's minister, George McLeod, was a member of the Orange Order during the inter-war years and as late as the 1970s he advised his parishioners 'not to join the European Community because it was the biggest Catholic organisation in the world'. [391] This ultimately influenced political identity. MrGD remembered the 1926 General Strike :

> And the wummen used tae go oot during the strike, when the tram-men went on strike. They went oot and drove the trams and Glasgow students came oot and drove the tramcars. They were called blacklegs.
> Q : The women who were driving was that working-class women?
> A : More or less from the Victoria Fraternity, Orange Order, you know, true blues.[392]

Religious identity on Clydeside, as in Liverpool, did influence images of class and correspondingly class politics. In response to the question which class did you belong to, a Kinning Park resident, an area which had a Scottish Protestant League councillor from 1931-1933 replied, ' how do you mean, Protestant?'. [393] Dennistoun too elected this party from 1931-1935 :

> Q : What were the local councils like for Dennistoun?
> A : Oh well, they got on with their work. We voted them when it came to time. It was more or less always on the Protestant side that I heard anything about them, because we didn't do much in the way of social work, the Labour.
> Q : So what do you mean the Protestant side?
> A : Well how could you express it ? It was always Protestant to me. A Protestant company was a higher grade than a Labour. Ah probably was wrong in that, but that's how I looked at it and, ma parents voted that way.[394]

Mr GE remembered Partick's voting culture.

> It was more or less, see there was a big influx of loyalists, Orangeman and they were all Tories and then you'd other diminutives that didnae know whit they were . . . It was either Labour and if you were Labour you were ostracised, even the weans were pelted if they came oot wae a red rose on the celebration of May Day. The May Day was a celebration for any kinda people, political or otherwise. It changed after it became political though, representation.[395]

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391 Interview with author, MrsGZ, born 1917 Govan, Glasgow.
392 Interview with author, MrGD, born 1900 Bridgeton, Glasgow.
393 Interview with author, Mrs GH, born 1900 Kinning-Park, Glasgow.
394 Interview with author, Mrs GI, born 1907 Dennistoun, Glasgow.
395 Interview with author, Mr GE, born 1908 Partick, Glasgow.

The catholic clergy had just as important, if not more, of an influence on their parishioners lives. MrGE recalled one priest's response to pre-marital pregnancy :

> She was in that condition and the priest got tae hear about it. He called her, mis-called her and did everything but knock a whole in her : punched her, right handling her and, 'you'll call tae church', he says. 'You'll make a public ovation.' And she had tae go there and go doun on her bended - in front of the altar and he gave her hell. There was a right air about it. She was creating a sin. What was the sin she did? Nothing if he had just put this wee sign over her that said you were married, but in order tae make it marked, distinctive in the mind of the laity, he made her get down on her knees again after he'd spoken to her in front and crawl on her knees backward right through the main door, down the steps and all. [396]

What is more, direct political involvement by the clergy permeated both sides of the religious divide on Clydeside and this could exacerbate the situation, heightening the links between church-going, religious identity and voting behaviour. MrGD recalled how priests tried to influence the way people voted, 'not by immediate say so, but by innuendo'.[397] Some were more direct, although not necessarily successful.

> Q : Did the Church get involved in politics ?
> A : Well they did tae a certain extent. Priests and ministers stood in parish councils at first before they got up to the town council. The priests never stood in the town council, the priest wis mainly parish council. Ma father-in-law, ma wife wis a Roman Catholic, although ah wisnae, Johnny became the election agent fur the Labour member fur the parish council and here the priest came up and saw him and said, 'what you doing here?'. 'Ah'm the agent fur so and so.' 'Ah never thought wan a ma boys would turn oun me like that', the Priest says tae him. Willie says, 'it's ma political party. It's the party ah believe in. So that's the reason ah'm doin' this'. [398]

While this seems to have had less of an impact upon the political identities of men, MrsGJ recalled, 'they told us who tae vote fur. It wis up tae yerself, right enough, but they told us, 'no communists, the very opposite fae communism, that widnae interfere wae the church'. She was asked :

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396 Ibid.
397 Interview with author, MrGD, born 1900 Bridgeton, Glasgow.
398 Interview with author, MrGE, born 1908 Partick, Glasgow.

<u>Q : Were priest quite important in the community?</u>
A : Well whitever they said we hud tae do . . . He wis like a policeman and the one we hud had a walking stick and he jist lifted it - wooh! wooh! - belted them. [399]

Significantly, this women voted for the Conservative Party, the party regarded on the Clyde as the very opposite from the Communist Party. She was the only Catholic respondent to do so.

McCrone highlights how, although not unique to Scotland, the links between Protestantism and Conservatism in Scotland have not been eroded, rather, fewer people consider themselves Protestant.[400] This was not the case between the wars when religious identity was an extremely significant identity for many working-class women, and no doubt many men too. Thus the apparent association which the labour movement had with Catholicism possibly influenced the voting behaviour of Catholic working-class women to the advantage of working-class politics. The inverse is true of the female Protestant vote. Seemingly, Catholic women were more likely to vote for the labour movement than their Protestant counterparts and men, regardless of religious affiliation, more supportive of the labour movement than women on Clydeside. Of my females respondents who disclosed their voting behaviour all but one Catholic women voted Labour or ILP, whilst the Protestant women were more than twice as likely to vote against the labour movement. By contrast, all Catholic men voted Labour or ILP and only one in three of the Protestant males stated that they had not voted for a labour movement candidate.

Conclusion

Women, it seems, were more influenced by particular images of class which derived from their experiences within their neighbourhoods. These images of class could and did divide women. Thus any solidarity that women shared, which originated from close proximity,

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399 Interview with author, Mrs GJ, born 1917 Cowcaddens, Glasgow.
400 D. McCrone, 'We're A' Jock Tamson's Bairns', T.M. Devine and R.J. Finlay, [eds.], *Scotland in the Twentieth Century*, p.116.

shared experiences and mutual need, in conjunction with the affinity stemming from the effects of gender conflict, poverty and women's relative subjectification of the glorification of womanhood, resulted a variety of different responses. Working-class women by identifying themselves as guardians of the family and the community, marked these spaces as feminine spheres of influence from which they could enhance their resources, thus their autonomy and power. Yet the influence of the politics of everyday life and civic ideologies and perspectives could create gender disunity and have an adverse effect on class awareness. Respectability very much inspired by women, determined neighbourhood norms of behaviour. These did moderate working-class women's potential powerlessness. The values and mores which women dictated, however, generally embraced some level of economic security, associated with place of residence and to some extent religious affiliation. Combined, these ideals gave rise to particular images of class and a stratification system based on ideological and material differentiation. In turn this held the potential to restrain class awareness by linking religious affiliation to voting behaviour, exacerbating the differentiation of the working class which was already under pressure from transformations of culture in many neighbourhoods and from the uneven effects of the economic climate between the wars. Such a situation suppressed women's 'survival strategies'. It undermined the development of a women's consciousness on the Clyde and moderated the 'rough kind of feminist' behaviour of women by dividing women from each other. The impact on women's collective mentalities did depend on individual circumstances and experience. None the less, women both in terms of consciousness of class and gender awareness were fragmented because of their need to respond to men's attempts to subordinate them. Power in these terms disarmed working-class women and moderated a 'rough kind of feminism'.

CONCLUSION

The formation of working-class women's political identity on Clydeside between the wars was a complex process, but one in which women were active participants. It was also a phenomenon which presented immense contradictions, particularly in relation to the subjectification of the permeating traditional discourse on gender identity, a world view significantly incompatible with the structural realities of many working-class people's lives. These contradictions, and the way in which they were resolved, did not cause gender antagonism, but the conditions which gave rise to these contradictions exacerbated gender conflict on the Clyde. This sexual conflict, however, also empowered working-class women. To some extent, sexual antagonism facilitated, a 'rough kind of feminism'. Working-class women, although divided by age, religion, status and income, nevertheless converged on specific issues which affected them as a group. Fragmented identities did not negate all collective behaviour. Women come together to counter the weight of the adverse economic climate in the region, the reactionary government policies of the 1930s and against men's attempts to subordinate them, especially the worst manifestations of this, abuse of the family resources and domestic violence. In this way they resisted attempts to have their identities dictated ; had they not, the consequences would have been dramatic and detrimental for them.

In the work-place gender antagonism and discrimination were constant realities. Working-class women experienced vertical and horizontal segregation. These women were perceived and labelled a threat to 'men's jobs', to male status and autonomy, and to the very structure of employment and wage levels. They also faced a discourse disseminated by many employers, men and the industrial wing of the labour movement which attempted to identify them and have them identify with docility, political apathy and subservience. The presentation of women as an acquiescent work-force, apathetic to the trade-union movement, industrial action and the class struggle, and female militancy as merely a 'temper', was used to justify their exclusion from positions of power in the workplace and, for that matter, in most trade unions. These characterisations of women, however, had little basis in reality. By contrast, male

workers were increasingly subject to degrees of 'rehabilitation' due to structural unemployment, a surplus of labour and the possible introduction of monopoly capitalism. These conditions contributed immensely to men's vulnerability and were difficult to counter. But the idea that women were usurping men, thus masculinity, male privilege and masculine respectability was not. Although there were some progressive trade unions, culture, exclusionary policies, and the promotion of a characterisation of women which denied them economic liberation through employment, along with the sex-typing of 'new' jobs as masculine were all used to undermine women in the work-place. Working-class females, thus, endured gender antagonism and discrimination as well as the exploitative conditions of their work.

Many working-class women on Clydeside did resist the possibility of this dual exploitation. They frequently responded to the exploitative nature of their work and often in a similar manner to, and alongside, their male counter-parts. Yet, because of their sex, the formal expressions of women's class conflict was regarded as less consequential by the male dominated leadership of the labour movement on Clydeside. On the other hand, a great deal of women's articulation of class awareness was informal due to their exclusion from the formal structures of the labour movement. Such struggles fell outside that defined as normative, that practised by men, and was trivialised and used to vindicate male perceptions of the female workers' industrial struggles as merely a 'temper'.

The undervaluation of women's industrial struggles are largely replicated in the male centred framework of Scottish historiography. Despite this, the exclusion or secondary status attributed to women in the workplace and within the structures of the trade-union movement impacted upon the political identity of working-class evident in the operation of their gender-specific popular culture within the work-place. These work cultures allowed women pride, a 'sense of independence, collectivity and camaraderie'. But, they were also a rejection of attempts to identify women as docile, politically apathetic and subservient. They helped women contest male definitions of skill and work status, permitting women to create their own occupational rankings. These cultures allowed women the capacity for self-definition,

facilitating levels of autonomy and power by providing psychological resources. They were not just spaces accommodating resistance, thus, but spheres of female influence. This was an assertion of the feminine, a political tactic.

However, although to some extent the 'paths of proletarianization' were indeed different for men and women, there were real and potential commonalties. This suggests that men and the leadership of the industrial wing of the labour movement contributed to women's subordinate position in work-place. This in turn added to their own exploitation. They did not do this by allowing cheap female labour to supplement them in the work-place. Women substituting for men was not a common occurrence on Clydeside, rather men did so by internalising an archaic world view based upon the idea that women were a form of competition. These ideals had pre-dated the emergence of heavy industry on the Clyde, but they merged with the growing inter-war political focus on unemployment, perceived as a male affliction, and one exacerbated by women's entry into the labour market in greater numbers. Working-class men's vulnerability, therefore, engendered by the 'rehabilitating' effects of mass unemployment, the possibility of the introduction of monopoly capitalism, and the changing nature of work created a 'defensiveness' which negated 'sustained broader militancy' by focusing upon gender as the source of their subordination and neglecting the 'potential' of any 'Red Skirts' on Clydeside. In general, women were systematically excluded from the class struggle.

The ILP, were, for most of the inter-war period, the dominant political force on the Clyde. They were also, by their definition, the 'Real Women's Party'. Yet, in the political arena, the attitudes and actions of the male-dominated labour movement frequently ensured the continued undervaluation of working-class women as a political constituency. However, while they may have been under-valued in the political sphere women did make political progress. The aims of the women of the labour movement in the post-war years were not equality of the sexes, nor was it equal status for each sex. It was a combination of both. They sought to promote complimentary gender roles along with equality of the sexes. These women operated

from a gender consciousness pre-ordained as subordinate and as such, for many, their political priority was a desire for emancipation of women as women. Thus women of the ILP, the Labour Party and the Co-operative Women's Guild, and for that matter, women of the Communist Party too, used the characterisation of womanhood promoted by the male-dominated labour movement to their advantage. They sought a social wage to disperse power and extend the avenues which, because of the socio-political realm assigned to women, and the ideal of 'separate spheres', could be appropriated by women. More importantly, in this way, these women gained power without direct confrontation and competition with male members who had greater resources and a tradition of activism to draw from. Women of the labour movement, from this position, challenged the sexual division of labour advancing women's rights to freedom of choice, the right to economic independence and their right to control their fertility. However, women's practical politics, their 'muted language' and the symbolism of the 'personal', rather than 'public' attached to their political demands allowed it to be subverted and to some extent submerged beneath a politics increasingly personified as masculine. In this way, the demands of women were frequently side-lined and women's concerns avoided. This situation merely intensified when adverse economic conditions, social pessimism and power vying within the labour movement accelerated. Furthermore, these predicaments may have been exacerbated by the declining significance of the ILP both at local and national level. The ILP's platform of municipalisation gave greater emphasis to the 'social' aspects of the political and therefore accommodated 'women's interests', the 'personal' much more than a Labour Party intent on facilitating trade unions and trade-union issues. The demise of the ILP as a political force, thus, may have eroded a platform from which women could agitate for a social wage and forward their 'commonsense demands'. The ILP was the party to which most of the active women from the labour movement were attracted. It was also the party most likely to mobilise women. Hence the declining significance of the ILP might have ensured that women's political progress was hampered greatly. Women, even those who had attained positions of power within the ILP, could either remain with what was

increasing a fringe political organisation, refrain from political activity altogether or they could switch their political loyalty to the Labour Party, a party identified to a greater extent with the interests of trade unions and men. Arguably this guaranteed that the labour movement was increasingly ill-equipped to generate a pan-gender plebeian discourse with a multiplicity of symbols and meanings from which working-class women in all their diversity could identify and which would have allowed them to transcend the growing differentiation of working-class culture.

Nevertheless women of the labour movement, throughout the inter-war years, sought ways to promote women's demands. Their strategies often included defiance and the crossing of party lines to advance women's interests. In this, they were more feminist than the self-proclaimed feminists of Clydeside. They extended women's political sphere and public profiles and challenged the sexual division of labour as well as the constraints of gender and labour movement discourses on womanhood - discourses which they also exploited. These women were the dissenting domestics of the dominant male vision of the 'politics of the kitchen'.

Outside of the formal worlds of work and politics working-class women's lives were narrowly restricted, particularly after marriage and more so when children came along. They were largely confined to the family and the immediate locality, functioning to maintain the preservation and comforts of the family unit. This was a role which, although demanding a high degree of skill, also involved great hardship and physical sacrifice. But it was also a role, given the prevailing attempts to define and orchestrate women's behaviour, which could be held in high esteem, offering women an enhanced status, autonomy and power. Many men, however, were neither prepared nor equipped to concede this on the Clyde. Hence, it was in working-class women's relations with men, because of the extreme sexual antagonism, that a 'rough kind of feminism' manifest itself throughout the neighbourhoods of Clydeside.

The region was in a process of social, economic, political and ideological ruptures. Noted for their relative political and industrial militancy during the period 1910-1922, Clydesiders experienced immense set-backs in the inter-war years. These changes were to the detriment

of working-class men. The power and privilege of the household, of the breadwinner, had been challenged during World War I by women's entry into the formal labour market in greater numbers. The inter-war period brought little relief. The recession corresponded with the dissemination of an ideal which re-asserted a definition of masculinity based upon the provider ideal. Compounding matters were the effects of mass unemployment, deskilling and rationalisation. These structural forces were exacerbated by the perception engendered by various institutions, organisations, the media and the state that women were a threat to masculinity. In an attempt to re-situate women in the private sphere as glorified wives and mothers, a polarised vision of womanhood was invented, that of the liberated usurper of men economically, politically, socially and sexually. The cumulative effects of the discursive and extra discursive context of Clydeside was extreme male vulnerability. The masculinity crisis which ensued, due to male inability to aspire to the ideal of manliness, was expressed through the extreme levels of gender antagonism, manifest in an exceptionally high rate of domestic violence and a retreat by men into aspects of popular culture. 'Masculine republics', the traditional areas of male popular culture, were symbolically re-invented to facilitate the expression and absorbing of a sense of masculinity when other forms of expression and absorption were fragile and vulnerable. However, this entailed expenditure at a time when poverty and social deprivation was extreme on Clydeside. Yet, even among the more economically secure families this situation could cause conflict. Economic security offered improved life chances and status between the wars, providing access to the ideals of the companionate marriage, respectability and privacy. Significantly though, it was the skilled male worker of the Clyde who faced the greatest threat to their employment between the wars, those who had had greatest security before 1919. Thus women, the poor and the more affluent alike, could face the problems, real and potential, associated with men's abuse of the 'family wage'. Male expenditure threatened women's identities as good wives, mothers and household managers. It impeded their potential subjectification of a vision of womanhood which would offer them an enhanced status and spaces of influence, the home and the

neighbourhood. Thus it encroached on their capacity for self-legitimisation and eroded their physical and psychological resources, therefore, their autonomy and power. This had to be contested. The struggle for control of the wage, therefore, aggravated gender antagonism on the Clyde.

These forces congealed to ensure that women often recognised their oppression, permitting a relative sense of gender cohesion to exist, conciliated in networks of kin and community. This cohesion provided the basis for women to challenge their subordination. And they did. Working-class women defined themselves in their terms, expressed demands for status and autonomy, thus acknowledging their right to self-definition. Ultimately this provided a sense of self-esteem and self-respect, shaping and contributing to the making of working-class women's political identities, influenced, not just by the need to survive or by the development of a women's consciousness but through behaviour which was a 'rough kind of feminism'.

Marginalised, therefore, in the worlds of work, politics and play and subjected to attempts by men to undermine them, a tradition of 'shared interests, shared space and channels of communication' prevailed amongst women allowing them to converge on issues which affected them as a group. Through this women's consciousness and 'women's talk', their 'myths, rituals, symbols and beliefs' - and by way of a moderated subjectification of the prevailing gender discourse, many of these women countered the potential for powerlessness. Glorifying marriage and motherhood, this discourse attempted to situate women in the private sphere, fenced as dependants of men. By embracing, but modifying the boundaries set by this characterisation, working-class women ensured the continued classification of the family and the neighbourhood as their spheres of influence. They used their networks, along with gossip, religious and para-religious institutions to dictate neighbourhood norms. This 'politics of everyday life' provided them with a medium for power, status and identity. Thus they contested attempts to undervalue them while simultaneously mediating class and gender oppression where it affected them as women. They did so, by uniting on specific issues, through sharing and by way of mutual support. This was 'a rough

kind of feminism' was born of the need to survive and the shared feelings which stemmed from sexual oppression, an empathy which was a subversive form of knowledge, one which did precede consciousness. Survival strategies and a 'women's consciousness' on Clydeside did overlap to produce a politics of everyday life which allowed women to recognise the need to behave in ways which would challenge sexual oppression.

A 'rough kind of feminism', channelled through gossip, provided many women with access to mechanisms of relief, release and when necessary refuge. It also allowed them the means by which to vicariously condemn male abhorrent behaviour and at the same time it alleviated their material and psychological deprivation. It also extended their spaces of influence, their public profiles and their access to self-legitimisation, allowing women some level of autonomy and power, and therefore also the power of resistance. Such social cohesion was vital to the quality of life of many working-class women confined to their extended 'private sphere' and often denied respite in the form of recreations or leisure activities.

The politics of everyday life which working-class women developed was based upon notions of respectability, spirituality and community. Although this politics largely united women these same ideals formed the basis of stratification determined by behaviour, the family economy, local identity, and, on Clydeside, religious affiliation and particular kinds of residence. In this respect, the politics of locality, very much decided by women, also held the capacity to divide them. Such a situation suppressed working-class women's 'rough kind of feminism', dividing women from each other, and gave rise to particular images of class which moderated class awareness by linking religious affiliation to voting behaviour. This often resulted in deferential voting and aspects of embourgeoisement. The impact on women's collective mentalities did depend on individual circumstances and experience. Women, nevertheless, were fragmented through a process of sexual oppression and their own attempts to moderate the powerlessness such oppression would create.

Working-class women's 'rough kind of feminism', however, did challenge male privilege and power in ways that the self-proclaimed feminist movement failed to do. This may not

have dramatically altered the balance of gendered power relations on the Clyde significantly, but it was vital during a period of extreme sexual antagonism, a product of masculinity in crisis. If masculinity is again in crisis, then the potential for a male backlash against women also exists. Recently, Scottish television allowed media coverage of the Clydebank Men's Movement. Its mouth piece, George McCauley, an ex-SAS soldier, not only lambasted feminists as lesbians, spinsters and men haters, but he harked back to the good old days when men were men and women were women. He lamented on the demise of manly occupations, of the Clyde's heavy industries, where boys were taught to be men and he reiterated the ideal that a women's place was in the kitchen and beside the crib.

Such attitudes, and they are neither peripheral or exclusive to Clydeside, if they were again to gain prevalence hold the potential to hamper or reverse women's progress. Changes in fashion, the re-assertion of 'feminine' attire, condemnation of the laddette and the family values and policies promoted by 'New Labour' might well indicate that such a process is under way. David Thomas writing for the *Daily Mail* on the Labour Party's proposal to establish a minister for men, reported on the 'betrayal of boys by the education system', and on the 'unemployed men thrown on the scrapheap'. It seems they are 'downtrodden and emasculated' and that this is reflected in higher rates of male 'suicide, drug-addiction, alcohol abuse, homelessness and premature deaths'. He also, quite rightly notes that men are subjected to domestic violence. Unfortunately he fails to concede that one in five women still live with, or in fear of such violence in their own homes. However, he does go on to acknowledge that men still earn more on average than women. Apparently men command higher wages, and by association it would seem better job opportunities, 'principally because fatherhood makes them work harder'.[1] This is in stark contrast to the fact that girls are increasingly out-performing boys at school - a situation which is not reflected to any great extent in the workplace. Women, however, have made some progress in the political sphere, although they only account for around one in six MPs. Yet, their progress is mitigated by the

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[1] *Daily Mail*, 13th March 2001.

prevailing attitudes which identify female politicians as frivolous and inept, or to be more precise, regardless of party loyalty, as 'Blair's Babes'. Sexual antagonism continues to exert a strong influence on women's lives in Britain.

However, this can led to behaviour which is identifiable as feminist. Meehan argues that, 'feminism is broadly defined as the quest for a sexually just society'. By this definition, 'many people share at least some of its goals, though they disavow the label'.[2] This capacity to share feminist goals, and even strategies, while still expressing disavowal points to a need for a re-evaluation of 'feminism' itself. In particular there is a need for a greater analysis of the sources of working-class women's disavowal of a feminist identity, its underlying foundations and their capacity, nevertheless, to share feminist goals. This thesis has gone some way in that direction, highlighting that although working-class women do indeed have fragmented identities and that they generally reject a feminist identity, they can, none the less, unite on specific issues, and behave in feminist ways. Working-class women have done so when the 'predisposing ground for coalition-building' was experienced sexual antagonism, which can be a product of masculinity in crisis. Thus a 'rough kind of feminism' has, and can ensure that the future is not masculine, 'that men do question their natures, their identities and their roles in society'.

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[2] E. Meehan, 'British Feminism from 1960 to 1980s', H.L.Smith, *British Feminism*, p.189.

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Oral History :

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Interviews with author [see appendix for profiles] :

SOHCA/019/01 : Questionnaire.

1. SOHCA/019/02, Transcript A : MsGA born in 1908, Dennistoun, Glasgow.
2. SOHCA/019/03, Transcript B : MrsGB, born 1907, Calton, Glasgow.
3. SOHCA/019/04, Transcript C : MrsGC, born 1910, Bridgeton, Glasgow.
4. SOHCA/019/05, Transcript D : MrsGD, 1912, Govan, Glasgow.
5. SOHCA/019/06, Transcript E : MrsGE, born 1907, Oatlands, Glasgow.
6. SOHCA/019/07, Transcript F : MrsGF, born 1911, Anderson, Glasgow.
7. SOHCA/019/08, Transcript G : MrsGG, born 1916, Townhead, Glasgow.
8. SOHCA/019/09, Transcript H : MrsGH, born 1900, Kinning Park, Glasgow.
9. SOHCA/019/010, Transcript I : MrsGI, born, 1907, Dennistoun, Glasgow.
10. SOHCA/019/011, Transcript J : MrsGJ, born 1917, Cowcaddens, Glasgow.
11. SOHCA/019/012, Transcript K : MrsGK born 1907, Anniesland, Glasgow
12. SOHCA/019/013, Transcript L : MrsGL, born 1907, Dennistoun, Glasgow

13. SOHCA/019/014, Transcript M : MrsGM, born 1911, Springburn, Glasgow.
14. SOHCA/019/015, Transcript N : MrsGN, born 1909, Bridgeton, Glasgow.
15. SOHCA/019/016, Transcript 0 : MrsGO, born 1905, Townhead, Glasgow.
16. SOHCA/019/017, Transcript P : MrsGP, born 1909, Calton Glasgow.
17. SOHCA/019/018, Transcript Q : MrsGQ, born 1909, Camlachie, Glasgow.
18. SOHCA/019/019, Transcript R : MrsGR, born 1907, Calton, Glasgow.
19. SOHCA/019/020, Transcript S : MrsGS, born 1885, Pollockshields, Glasgow.
20. SOHCA/019/021, Transcript T : MrsGT, born 1909, Camlachie, Glasgow.
21. SOHCA/019/022, Transcript U : MrsGRA, born 1919, Greenock, Renfrewshire.
22. SOHCA/019/023, Transcript V : MrsGRB, born 1904, Greenock, Renfrewshire.
23. SOHCA/019/024, Transcript W : MrsGRC, born 1901, Port Glasgow Renfrewshire.
24. SOHCA/019/025, Transcript X : Mrs PA, born 1914, Ireland [Immigrated to Paisley 1921].
25. SOHCA/019/026 Transcript Z : MrsGZ, born 1917, Govan, Glasgow.
25. SOHCA/019/026, Transcript Z : MrGZ, born 1915, Cardiff, Wales.
26. SOHCA/019/027, Transcript AA : MrGA, born 1905, Gorbals, Glasgow.
27. SOHCA/019/028, Transcript AB : MrGB, born 1905, Govan, Glasgow.
28. SOHCA/019/029, Transcript AC : MrGC, born 1909,Townhead, Glasgow.
29. SOHCA/019/030, Transcript AD : MrGD, born 1900, Bridgeton, Glasgow.
30. SOHCA/019/031, Transcript AE : MrGE, born 1908, Partick, Glasgow.
31. SOHCA/019/032, Transcript AF : MrGF, 1914, Charing Cross, Glasgow
32. SOHCA/019/033, Transcript AG : MrGG, born 1914, Oatlands, Glasgow.
33. SOHCA/019/034, Transcript AH : MrGH, born 1901, Govan, Glasgow.
34. SOHCA/019/035, Transcript AI : MrGI, born 1893, Kelvinside, Glasgow.
35. SOHCA/019/036, Transcript AJ : MrGJ, born 1899, Townhead, Glasgow.
36. SOHCA/019/037, Transcript AK : MrGK, born 1912, Shettlestoun, Glasgow.
37. SOHCA/019/038, Transcript AL : MrGM, born 1900, Townhead, Glasgow.
38. SOHCA/019/039, Transcript AM : MrGN, born 1918, Possilpark, Glasgow.
39. SOHCA/019/040, Transcript AN : MrGO, born 1913, Govan, Glasgow.
40. SOHCA/019/042, Transcript AO : MrGU, born 1915, Anderson, Glasgow.
41. SOHCA/019/043, Transcript AP : MrCA, born 1920, Clydebank, Dumbartonshire.
42. SOHCA/019/044, Transcript AQ : MrLA, born 1900, Croy, Lanarkshire.
43. SOHCA/019/046, Transcript AR : MrGRA, born 1906, Greenock, Renfrewshire.

Old Paisley Society, 11-17 George Place, Paisley PA1 2HZ :

Typed Transcripts:

1. Jessie Henderson, born 1923 Paisley, Renfrewshire.
2. Jessie McGregor, born 1926 Paisley, Renfrewshire.

3. Mary Neil, born 1898 Paisley Renfrewshire.

4. Allie Wright, born 1919 Paisley Renfrewshire.

William Gallacher Memorial Library, Glasgow Caledonian University :

Interview with : Joe and Marion Henery [Inter-war Communist Party Activists], Tapes No.6-7.

APPENDIX

Appendix

Respondents profiles :

1. Name : MsGA, born 1908, Dennistoun, Glasgow.
Father's occupation : warehouseman.
Mother's occupation : after the death of her husband took a number of low paid unskilled jobs.
School leaving age : 14.
Employment : textile worker [Templeton's carpet factory].
Religious affiliation : Protestant.
Voting behaviour : ILP/Labour Party.
Marital status : spinster.
Number of children : none.

2. Name : MrsGB, born 1907, Calton, Glasgow.
Father's occupation : red leader, [John Brown's shipyard].
Mother's occupation : no formal paid employment.
School leaving age :11.
Employment : packer/machinist [sweet factory].
Religious affiliation : Protestant.
Voting behaviour : ILP.
Marital status : married.
Number of children : two.

3. Name : MrsGC, born 1910 Bridgeton, Glasgow.
Father's occupation : tradesman [Parkhead Forge].
Mother's occupation : no formal paid employment.
School leaving age : 14.
Employment : factory worker [biscuit factory]/ rag-store owner.
Religious affiliation : Protestant until marriage then practised Catholic faith.
Voting behaviour : ILP.
Marital status : married.
Number of children : five.

4. Name : MrsGD, born 1912, Govan, Glasgow.
Father's occupation : coal merchant.
Mother's occupation : casual agricultural labourer.
School leaving age :14.
Employment : shop assistant/domestic servant/cleaner.
Religious affiliation : Catholic.
Voting behaviour : ILP/Labour Party.
Marital status : married.
Number of children : three.

5. Name : MrsGE, born 1907, Gorbals, Glasgow.
Father's occupation : monumental worker.
Mother's occupation : no formal paid employment.
School leaving age : 14.
Employment : hosiery trade/machinist.
Religious affiliation : Protestant.
Voting behaviour : ILP.
Marital status : married.
Number of children : one.

6. Name : MrsGF, born 1911, Anderson, Glasgow.
Father's occupation : labourer.
Mother's occupation : no formal paid employment.
School leaving age : 14.

Employment : book-binder [Mitchell library].
Religious affiliation : Protestant.
Voting behaviour : Labour Party.
Marital status : married.
Number of children : one.

7. Name : MrsGG, born Townhead, Glasgow.
Father's occupation : manager of a public house.
Mother's occupation : no formal paid employment.
School leaving age : 14.
Employment : office worker.
Religious affiliation : Protestant.
Voting behaviour : Conservative Party.
Marital status : married.
Number of children : two.

8. Name : MrsGH, born 1900 Kinning Park, Glasgow.
Father's occupation : foreman.
Mother's occupation : no formal paid employment.
School leaving age : 14.
Employment : textile machinist [Co-operative] munitions worker/ textile machinist.
Religious affiliation : Protestant.
Voting behaviour : Conservative Party.
Marital status : widowed.
Number of children : two.

9. Name : MrsGI, born 1907, Dennistoun, Glasgow.
Father's occupation : packer [furniture store] and part-time church office.
Mother's occupation : no formal paid employment.
School leaving age : 14.
Employment : stationary worker.
Religious affiliation : Protestant.
Voting behaviour : Conservative Party.
Marital status : married.
Number of children : two.

10. Name : MrsGJ, born 1917, Cowcaddens, Glasgow.
Father's occupation : steel moulder.
Mother's occupation : school cleaner.
School leaving age : 15.
Employment : sales assistant [chemist] / factory worker.
Religious affiliation : Catholic.
Voting behaviour : Conservative Party.
Marital status : married.
Number of children : none.

11. Name : MrsGK, born 1907 Anniesland, Glasgow.
Father's occupation : railwayman.
Mother's occupation : no formal paid employment.
School leaving age : 15.
Employment : sales assistant / saddlery worker [leather works].
Religious affiliation : Protestant.
Voting behaviour : Conservative Party.
Marital status : married.
Number of children : two.

12. Name : MrsGL, born 1907, Dennistoun, Glasgow.
Father's occupation : plane-maker.

Mother's occupation : entertainer.
School leaving age :14.
Employment : factory worker/entertainer.
Religious affiliation : Protestant.
Voting behaviour : ILP.
Marital status : married.
Number of children : five.

13. Name : MrsGM, born 1911 Springburn, Glasgow.
Father's occupation : railway foreman.
Mother's occupation : no formal paid employment.
School leaving age : 14.
Employment : printer-feeder/domestic servant.
Religious affiliation : Catholic.
Voting behaviour : Labour Party.
Marital status : married.
Number of children : none.

14. Name : MrsGN, born 1909 Bridgeton, Glasgow.
Father's occupation : blacksmith.
Mother's occupation : no formal paid employment.
School leaving age : 14.
Employment : lace weaver.
Religious affiliation : Catholic.
Voting behaviour : ILP.
Marital status : married.
Number of children : ten [one died in infancy].

15. Name : MrsGO, born 1905 Townhead, Glasgow.
Father's occupation : furnace worker, steel mill.
Mother's occupation : no formal paid employment.
School leaving age : 14.
Employment : textile worker.
Religious affiliation : Protestant.
Voting behaviour : not disclosed.
Marital status : married.
Number of children : one.

16. Name : MrsGP, born 1909, Calton, Glasgow.
Father's occupation : carter.
Mother's occupation : no formal paid employment.
School leaving age : 14.
Employment : book-binder.
Religious affiliation : Catholic.
Voting behaviour : not disclosed.
Marital status : married.
Number of children : four.

17. Name : MrsGQ, born 1909, Camlachie, Glasgow.
Father's occupation : metal worker.
Mother's occupation : no formal paid employment.
School leaving age : 14.
Employment : textile worker.
Religious affiliation : Protestant, but practised Catholic faith after marriage.
Voting behaviour : not disclosed.
Marital status : married.
Number of children : four.

18. Name : Mrs GR, born 1907 Calton, Glasgow.
Father's occupation : boiler worker.
Mother's occupation : no formal paid employment.
School leaving age :14.
Employment : factory worker [Tenant's brewery]/shop assistant.
Religious affiliation : Catholic.
Voting behaviour : ILP.
Marital status : married.
Number of children : three.

19. Name : MsGS, born 1885, Pollockshields, Glasgow.
Father's occupation : office clerk.
Mother's occupation : no formal paid employment.
School leaving age : 16.
Employment : office worker.
Religious affiliation : Protestant.
Voting behaviour : Conservative.
Marital status : unmarried.
Number of children : none.

20. Name : MrsGT, born, 1909 Camlachie, Glasgow.
Father's occupation : labourer.
Mother's occupation : no formal paid employment.
School leaving age : 14.
Employment : factory worker.
Religious affiliation : Catholic.
Voting behaviour : Labour.
Marital status : married.
Number of children : four.

21. Name : MrsGRA, born 1919 Greenock, Renfrewshire.
Father's occupation : distribution trade.
Mother's occupation : no formal paid employment.
School leaving age :14.
Employment : textiles/shop assistant..
Religious affiliation : Protestant.
Voting behaviour : Conservative Party.
Marital status : married.
Number of children : two.

22. Name : MrsGRB, born 1904, Greenock, Renfrewshire.
Father's occupation : metal worker.
Mother's occupation : no formal paid employment.
School leaving age : 14.
Employment : shop assistant.
Religious affiliation : Protestant.
Voting behaviour : Conservative Party.
Marital status : married.
Number of children : four.

23. Name : MrsGRC, born 1901 Port Glasgow, Renfrewshire.
Father's occupation : small store owner.
Mother's occupation : no formal paid employment.
School leaving age :14.
Employment : textiles.
Religious affiliation : Catholic.
Voting behaviour : Labour.
Marital status : married.

Number of children : six.

24. Name : MrsPA, born Ireland 1914, migrated to Paisley 1921.
Father's occupation : labourer.
Mother's occupation : no formal paid employment.
School leaving age : 14.
Employment : office work.
Religious affiliation : Protestant.
Voting behaviour : Conservative Party.
Marital status : married.
Number of children : six.

25a. Name : MrsGZ, born 1917, Govan, Glasgow.
Father's occupation : coal merchant.
Mother's occupation : no formal paid employment.
School leaving age : 14.
Employment : shop assistant [fish mongers]/factory worker.
Religious affiliation : Protestant.
Voting behaviour : Conservative Party.
Marital status : married.
Number of children : two.

25aa. Name : MrGZ born, 1915 Cardiff, Wales,[married and moved to Glasgow].
Father's occupation : labourer.
Mother's occupation :no formal paid employment.
School leaving age : 14.
Employment : shipyard worker.
Religious affiliation : Protestant.
Voting behaviour : Conservative Party.
Marital status : married.
Number of children : two.

26. Name : MrGA, born 1905, Gorbals, Glasgow.
Father's occupation : hewer.
Mother's occupation : seamstress.
School leaving age : 14.
Employment : stand-by [Acme Rubber Co.]/casual labouring /bus driver/machine operator.
Religious affiliation : Protestant.
Voting behaviour : ILP.
Marital status : married.
Number of children : five.

27. Name : MrGB, born 1905, Govan, Glasgow.
Father's occupation : night watchman.
Mother's occupation : mill worker.
School leaving age :14.
Employment : whiskey distillery/personal service/saw mill worker.
Religious affiliation : Protestant.
Voting behaviour : Labour.
Marital status : married.
Number of children : none.

28. Name : MrGC, born 1909, Townhead, Glasgow.
Father's occupation : railway foreman.
Mother's occupation : no formal paid employment.
School leaving age : 14.
Employment : messenger boy/woodwork trade.
Religious affiliation : Catholic.

Voting behaviour : Labour.
Marital status : married.
Number of children : five.

29. Name : MrGD, born 1900, Bridgeton, Glasgow.
Father's occupation : milkman.
Mother's occupation : no formal paid employment.
School leaving age : 14.
Employment : brass foundry worker/casual labourer/bakery worker.
Religious affiliation : Protestant.
Voting behaviour : ILP.
Marital status : married/widowed.
Number of children : none.

30. Name : MrGE, born 1908, Partick, Glasgow.
Father's occupation : hewer.
Mother's occupation : no formal paid employment.
School leaving age : 14.
Employment : butcher's apprentice/casual labourer/dock worker.
Religious affiliation : Protestant.
Voting behaviour : ILP.
Marital status : married.
Number of children : five.

31. Name : MrGF, born 1914, Charing Cross, Glasgow.
Father's occupation : motor salesman.
Mother's occupation : no formal paid employment.
School leaving age : 16.
Employment : electrician.
Religious affiliation : Protestant.
Voting behaviour : Conservative Party.
Marital status : married.
Number of children : three.

32. Name : MrGG, born 1914 Gorbals, Glasgow.
Father's occupation : tradesman.
Mother's occupation :no formal paid employment.
School leaving age : 14.
Employment : fireman.
Religious affiliation : Protestant.
Voting behaviour : Conservative Party.
Marital status : married.
Number of children : two.

33. Name : MrGH, born 1901, Govan, Glasgow.
Father's occupation : rivetter.
Mother's occupation : brass finisher.
School leaving age : 14.
Employment : baker.
Religious affiliation : Catholic.
Voting behaviour : Labour Party.
Marital status : married.
Number of children : seven.

34. Name : MrGI born 1893, Kelvinside, Glasgow.
Father's occupation : skipper.
Mother's occupation :no formal paid employment.
School leaving age : 14.

Employment : shop-assistant [Co-operative].
Religious affiliation : Protestant.
Voting behaviour : Liberal than Labour Party.
Marital status : married.
Number of children : four.

35. Name : MrGJ, born 1899, Townhead, Glasgow.
Father's occupation : clerk [Post Office].
Mother's occupation :no formal paid employment.
School leaving age : 16 [attended Glasgow University].
Employment : chartered accountant.
Religious affiliation : Protestant.
Voting behaviour : Conservative Party.
Marital status : married.
Number of children : none.

36. Name : MrGK born 1912 Shettleston, Glasgow.
Father's occupation : bottle-blower.
Mother's occupation : died in child-birth.
School leaving age : 14.
Employment : furnace worker [Parkhead Forge].
Religious affiliation : Protestant.
Voting behaviour : Labour then Conservative Party.
Marital status : married.
Number of children : none.

37. Name : MrGM born 1900, Townhead, Glasgow.
Father's occupation : stableman.
Mother's occupation :no formal paid employment.
School leaving age : 14.
Employment : truck driver.
Religious affiliation : Protestant.
Voting behaviour : floating voter.
Marital status : married.
Number of children : five.

39. Name : MrGO, born 1913, Govan Glasgow.
Father's occupation : labourer
Mother's occupation :no formal paid employment.
School leaving age : 14.
Employment : shop assistant.
Religious affiliation : Catholic.
Voting behaviour : Labour Party.
Marital status : married.
Number of children : four.

38. Name : MrGN, born 1915, Possil, Glasgow.
Father's occupation : various unskilled labouring jobs.
Mother's occupation :no formal paid employment.
School leaving age : 14.
Employment : shop assistant.
Religious affiliation : Catholic.
Voting behaviour : Labour Party.
Marital status : married.
Number of children : four.

40. Name : MrGU, born 1915, Anderson, Glasgow.

Father's occupation : Undertaker
Mother's occupation :no formal paid employment.
School leaving age : 14.
Employment : railway signalman.
Religious affiliation : Protestant.
Voting behaviour : not disclosed.
Marital status : married.
Number of children : two.

41. Name : MrCA born 1920 Clydebank, Dumbartonshire.
Father's occupation : foreman [John Brown's shipyard].
Mother's occupation : [widowed] char.
School leaving age : 14.
Employment : unskilled shipyard labourer.
Religious affiliation : Catholic.
Voting behaviour : Labour Party.
Marital status : married.
Number of children : none.

42. Name : MrCB, born 1900, Croy, Lanarkshire.
Father's occupation : labourer.
Mother's occupation : no formal paid employment.
School leaving age : 14.
Employment : agricultural labourer.
Religious affiliation : Protestant.
Voting behaviour : ILP.
Marital status : unmarried.
Number of children : none.

43. Name : MrGRA : born 1899, Greenock, Renfrewshire.
Father's occupation : printer.
Mother's occupation : no formal paid employment.
School leaving age 16 [attended university]
Employment : teacher.
Religious affiliation : Protestant.
Voting behaviour : Liberal.
Marital status : married.
Number of children : two