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**Women's Organisations and Feminism in Interwar Scotland**

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## ABSTRACT

The aim of this thesis is to contribute to the growing historiography which questions the theory that feminism was diminished in the interwar years following the partial enfranchisement of women in 1918. It highlights that a diverse range of women's organisations were thriving in interwar Scotland. This includes the outwardly feminist Glasgow Society for Equal Citizenship (GSEC) and Edinburgh Women Citizens Association (EWCA); the Scottish Cooperative Women's Guild (the Guild), which was largely based in urban working-class areas; and finally the Scottish Women's Rural Institutes (the Rurals), which provides a rural comparison. Therefore a range of geographical and political contexts within Scotland are considered.

This work explores the differing ways in which these organisations could be termed 'feminist', which involves questioning the way that feminism and feminist activism was defined in the interwar period. Each organisation had its own political concerns and demands, which highlight both differences and similarities between the organisations under consideration. However, all of these organisations were ultimately concerned with improving the lives of its members and empowering them. The attempts made by each organisation to achieve these aims are considered in relation to a working definition of feminism in order to determine the extent to which each organisation was 'feminist' in its activities.

In addition, this thesis also addresses the double marginalisation of Scottish women in the established historiography. Scottish women are overwhelmingly neglected in accounts of British feminism in the interwar years. Research has tended to focus on developments in the national feminist movement, as represented by national organisations and prominent English feminists. Within such work 'British' can often translate as 'English'. Recent contributions to the historiography of interwar feminism have, with few exceptions, continued this trend, although such research perhaps more explicitly focuses on England. Women are also marginalised within the discipline of Scottish history, which largely neglects women's experiences of, and contributions to, Scottish society. While there are exceptions, the extent of attempts to include women in the narrative of Scottish history in published research often amounts to case studies or chapters on 'gender', rather than systematic and comprehensive inclusion of the female experience.

This thesis therefore provides an in depth account of the diversity of interwar women's organisations in Scotland, which builds upon recent studies of women's political experiences in interwar Scotland, and also contributes to the wider historiography of interwar feminism. It also places women's political experience in this period within the broader Scottish historiography, thereby including women in accounts of interwar political culture, as well as challenging the neglect of women in the historiography relating to interwar Scotland.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

DWCA	Dundee Women Citizen's Association
ESEC	Edinburgh Society for Equal Citizenship
ESS	Edinburgh Suffrage Society
EWCA	Edinburgh Women Citizens Association
FWCA	Falkirk Women Citizens' Association
GSEC	Glasgow and West of Scotland Society for Equal Citizenship
GSS	Glasgow and West of Scotland Suffrage Society
GWCA	Glasgow Women Citizens' Association
ICWG	International Co-operative Women's Guild
ILP	Independent Labour Party
NCW	National Council of Women
NFWW	National Federation of Women Workers
NUSEC	National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship
NUTG	National Union of Townswomen's Guilds
NUWSS	National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies
SCWG	Scottish Co-operative Women's Guild (The Guild)
SCWS	Scottish Co-operative Wholesale Society
SCWCA	Scottish Council of Women Citizens' Associations
STUC	Scottish Trade Union Congress
SWRI	Scottish Women's Rural Institutes (The Rurals)
WFL	Women's Freedom League
WIL	Women's International League
WPC	Women's Peace Crusade
WSPU	Women's Social and Political Union

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## INTRODUCTION

Writing in 1997 Kemp and Squires state that ‘the diversity within feminism is now well established’. Indeed their edited volume is entitled *Feminisms* in order to reflect the ‘contemporary diversity of motivation, method and experience among feminist academics’ as well as ‘feminism’s political commitment to diversity – its validation of a multiplicity of approaches, positions and strategies’.<sup>1</sup> Yet in spite of the accounts of the diversity of ‘current forms of feminism’, Kemp and Squires describe a rather narrow and simplistic view of the history of feminism, and perhaps what constituted feminist activity in the past. It is suggested that ‘it is conventional to distinguish two waves of feminism’, the first characterised by the demand for female enfranchisement between 1890 to 1920 and the second representing the re-emergence of feminism in the 1960s ‘to the present’.<sup>2</sup> Consequently it is argued that ‘the period from 1920 (following the achievement of the vote for women) is usually assumed to be one of relative inactivity for women’.<sup>3</sup>

This broad interpretation of feminist activity is an assumption which has become widely held. It is based on the perception that following the partial enfranchisement of women in 1918 the individuals and organisations involved in the suffrage movement, or ‘first wave’ feminism, no longer had shared aims or ground for coalition, with the movement fragmenting. It follows that feminism declined not to be reborn until the 1960s. This re-emergence is popularly attributed to a range of factors including, improved educational opportunities for women, increased equality in traditionally male professions, legalisation of abortion and the introduction of the contraceptive pill. Under such conditions it is suggested that ‘feminism’ as a political movement thrived, with the permissive society of the 1960s enabling feminists to voice their opinions and concerns in an overtly public forum and demand further equality. Yet would such conditions have been achieved if it had not been for continuing feminist activity in the intervening forty odd years? Arguably the feminists of the 1960s were assisted by earlier generations of individuals and organisations who laid the foundations for later campaigns for equality.<sup>4</sup>

Until recently the historiography of feminism has accepted this view of inactivity in the interwar years. By portraying the suffrage movement as united for a singular cause, the vote, it is suggested that once women gained the legislation required the women’s movement lost

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<sup>1</sup> S. Kemp and J. Squires (eds.), *Feminisms*, OUP, Oxford, 1997, p. 3. Notably the volume includes contributions from leading feminist theorists including Mary Evans, bell hooks, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Michele Barrett, Nancy Chodorow, Denise Riley, Judith Butler and Donna Haraway among others.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Delmar, among others, suggests that ‘when the women’s liberation movement came into existence in the late 1960s, it emerged into a social order already marked by an assimilation of other feminisms’. She suggests that ‘feminism was already part of the political and social fabric’. R. Delmar, ‘What is Feminism?’, in J. Mitchell and A. Oakley (eds.), *What is Feminism?*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1986, p. 24.



momentum and fragmented, feminism inevitably becoming moribund in the years that followed. However the enfranchisement of women in 1918 was limited, applying only to those over the age of thirty. The demands of the suffrage movement had not been fully realised. While many prominent activists bowed out of public life and political activity as a result of the exhaustion of years of endless campaigning, many continued to demand wider and more comprehensive equality for women. This was not limited to demands for an extension to the franchise, but individuals and women's organisations campaigned for welfare and other legal reforms that would be of material benefit to women and would also, in some cases, challenge the existing patriarchal order of society.

Historians, such as Alberti, Harrison, and Spender, have considered the continuing political activity of such women, supporting the view that 'there's always been a women's movement in this Century'.<sup>5</sup> However these studies largely outline the progress of feminism in the interwar period by concentrating on the fate of overtly feminist national organisations and their campaigns for further legal and on occasion welfare reforms. A central theme in this research is the evolution of feminist ideology in the interwar period, again at a national level. It is argued that debates relating to the nature of feminism became heightened following the partial enfranchisement of women with prominent figures such as Eleanor Rathbone, Millicent Fawcett and Vera Brittain, among others, debating the future of the feminist movement and its ideologies.<sup>6</sup> It has been suggested that the conflicting opinions espoused by these individuals led to a division in the national feminist movement in the late 1920s. Rathbone is portrayed as an advocate of 'difference' or 'new' feminism, which is described as accentuating women's differences from men and arguing for 'real equality'.<sup>7</sup> In contrast Fawcett and Brittain are positioned as supporters of 'equality' feminism, which represented a belief that women were equal to men and should receive equal treatment in all respects.

The dichotomy constructed between these opposing two types of feminism is often referred to, and used as a framework to guide the narrative, in this early historiography of the

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<sup>5</sup> See J. Alberti, *Beyond Suffrage: Feminists in War and Peace*, Houndsmills, Hampshire, 1989, B. Harrison, *Prudent Revolutionaries: Portraits of British Feminists between the Wars*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1987 and D. Spender, *There's Always Been a Women's Movement in this Century*, Pandora Press, London, 1983.

<sup>6</sup> In the interwar period Rathbone supported and campaigned on behalf of many issues including the integration of women into political life, however she is best known for her campaign in support of family allowances. She was elected president of the NUSEC in 1919. Fawcett was the president of the NUWSS from 1907 strongly believing in constitutional methods as opposed to militancy. She continued to be actively involved in the renamed NUSEC following her retirement of the presidency, although she resigned in 1925 in disagreement with Rathbone's demands for family allowances, and the direction the organisation was taking. Brittain well known as an author and journalist was also a prominent member of the Six Point Group. This organisation's six demands which included legislation on child assault, for the widowed mother, for the unmarried mother and her child, equal rights of guardianship for married parents, equal pay for teachers, and equal opportunities for men and women in the civil service, were based on 'equality-based' principles and demanded equality for women in the same terms as men.

<sup>7</sup> H. L. Smith, 'British feminism in the 1920s', in H. L. Smith (ed.) *British Feminism in the Twentieth Century*, Edward Elgar, Aldershot, 1990, p. 48.

national feminist movement in the interwar years.<sup>8</sup> Often difference feminists are positioned as advocating motherhood as a women's most important occupation, while equality feminists are described as promoting the 'common humanity' of men and women, hoping that this would lead to the formation of a gender-neutral society.<sup>9</sup> These competing ideologies are described as determining the reforms promoted by those supporting either 'equality' or 'difference' feminism. Yet the dichotomy constructed between 'difference' and 'equality' feminism has also come under criticism in the historiography, with it being argued that these 'feminisms' were not mutually exclusive in the interwar years, or in the present.<sup>10</sup> National feminist organisations included issues that could be categorised as 'equality' and 'difference' on their programmes.<sup>11</sup>

Consequently, while these additions to the historiography highlight that feminists were active in the interwar years, ultimately this research supports the view that the women's movement becomes ideologically divided in the 1920s, which causes the decline of feminism as a political force in the 1930s. Yet, this interpretation again fails to recognise the diversities and divisions inherent within the women's movement from its formation, and which continue to divide feminists in the present day. It is argued that the united goal provided by the pursuit of the vote enabled women's organisations to temporarily put aside their differences and therefore did not provide a long-term solution to the ideological divisions within feminism. Cott suggests that the women's movement fragmented in the interwar years as there was no longer a predisposing ground for coalition between women's organisations. She suggests that there is an 'element of inevitability or predictability in any fragmentation that follows a united front of women'.<sup>12</sup> Such accounts of the failure of the interwar feminist movement to overcome ideological differences, while refuting the claim of inactivity, have nonetheless pointed to a decline in feminist activity.

More recent interpretations offered by Kent and Pugh also consider the fate of the women's movement in a national context, associating feminism with the national organisations that have received most attention in the early historiography. Both historians argue unreservedly that feminist activity declined in the interwar years. While Kent suggests that this can be attributed to the effect of the First World War on society, Pugh argues that the rise

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<sup>8</sup> The dichotomy between difference and equality feminism will be discussed in greater detail below.

<sup>9</sup> Smith, 'British feminism in the 1920s', p. 48.

<sup>10</sup> See M. Barrett and A. Phillips (ed.), *Destabilising Theory Contemporary Feminist Debates*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1992, p. 1, 6, and 8, and J. W. Scott, 'Deconstructing equality-versus-difference: or, the uses of post-structuralist theory for feminism', *Feminist Studies*, Vol. 14, No. 1, pp. 33-50.

<sup>11</sup> The same was true of women's organisations in interwar Scotland as will be discussed in chapters two, three and four.

<sup>12</sup> See Cott, 'Feminist theory and Feminist movements: the past before us', J. Mitchell and A. Oakley (eds.), *What is Feminism?*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1986, p. 58.

of consumer culture was responsible for the decline of feminism.<sup>13</sup> Both of these interpretations suggest an ideological backlash against women in post war society.<sup>14</sup>

Further contributions to the historiography challenge this narrow view of the women's movement in the interwar period by including women's organisations not traditionally associated with feminist activity. This process began with studies of women's organisations affiliated to the labour movement.<sup>15</sup> Such research has successfully and convincingly widened the scope of the women's movement in terms of the individuals and organisations involved. Thane, for example, places the women of the Labour party within the narrative of the interwar women's movement questioning the extent to which the 'cult of domesticity', associated with the societal backlash against women, forced women to embody roles associated with the private sphere of the home.<sup>16</sup> She argues that women were influential within the Labour Party in the interwar years, being particularly effective in influencing welfare policy.<sup>17</sup> While women were largely assigned to issues and campaigns concerned with welfare, such as housing, health and education, Thane suggests that this enabled these individuals to become policy makers on behalf of women.<sup>18</sup> Thus Labour women are described as subverting and

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<sup>13</sup> Kent suggests that traditional gender roles were promoted in order to ease the demobilisation of servicemen back into British society. According to Kent the 'acceptance of the dominant discourse on sexuality represented a fundamental, and finally fatal, abandonment of pre-war feminist ideology', which in turn led to 'new' feminism and its emphasis on difference rather than equality between men and women. Pugh further elaborates on this theme of decline, citing the rise of the 'cult of domesticity' as its main cause. He states that the promotion of this discourse in society by the government, official bodies and the popular press led to women accepting the view that their most important roles were as wives and mothers. In his view women chose to be 'new' women rather than feminists, who were seen as 'spectacled, embittered women, disappointed, childless, dowdy and generally unloved'. S. Kingsley Kent, 'The Politics of Sexual Difference: World War I and the Demise of British Feminism', *Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 27, No. 3, 1988, pp. 232-253, M. Pugh, *Women and the Women's Movement in Britain, 1914-1999*, Second Edition, Macmillan, London, 2000, and M. Pugh, 'Domesticity and the Decline of Feminism, 1930-1950', in H. L. Smith (ed.), *British Feminism in the Twentieth Century*, Elgar, Aldershot, 1990, pp. 144-164.

<sup>14</sup> The ideological 'backlash' against women following the First World War is discussed further in chapter two.

<sup>15</sup> The historiography relating to female activism associated with the labour movement has expanded steadily. See for example C. Rowan "'Mothers, Vote Labour!' The State, the Labour Movement and Working-Class Mothers, 1900-1918", in R. Brunt and C. Rowan (eds.), *Feminism, Culture and Politics*, Lawrence and Wishart, London, 1982, pp. 59-84, J. Hannam, "'In the Comradeship of the Sexes Lies Hope of Progress and Social Regeneration": Women in the West Riding ILP, 1890-1914', in J. Rendall (ed.), *Equal or Different*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1987, pp. 214-238, C. Collette, *For Labour and for Women: The Women of the Labour League 1906-1918*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1990, C. Sowerwine, 'Socialism, Feminism and the Socialist Women's Movement from the French Revolution to World War II', in R. Bridenthal, S. M. Stuard and M. E. Wiesner (eds.), *Becoming Visible Women in European History*, Houghton Muffin Co., New York, 1998, pp. 357-387 and M. Walsh (ed.), *Working Out Gender Perspectives from Labour History*, Ashgate, Aldershot, 1999.

<sup>16</sup> Again historian's responses to this 'backlash' model will be discussed in chapter two.

<sup>17</sup> 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', in G. Bock and P. Thane (eds.), *Maternity and Gender Policies Women and the Rise of the European States 1880s-1950s*, Routledge, London, 1991, pp. 93-118, and P. Thane, 'The Women of the British Labour Party and Feminism, 1906-1945', in Smith (ed.) *British Feminism in the Twentieth Century*, 1990, pp. 124-143.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid. Women were limited in the Labour party where their proposals conflicted with the interests of the male dominated and powerful sections of the party. Yet Thane suggests that their presence meant that issues concerning women's lives such as maternity, which had never before been discussed, were now given consideration.

negotiating the reassertion of traditional gender norms in interwar society in order to gain important welfare legislation for working-class women and their families.<sup>19</sup>

Similarly, in her study of the Co-operative Women's Guild, Scott outlines the role that this organisation played within the interwar women's movement through its demands for divorce law reform and other measures for the legal equality of women, combined with its campaigns for welfare reforms.<sup>20</sup> However, she argues that the Women's Co-operative Guild's feminist activity declined in the interwar years as it pursued welfare reforms or 'difference' feminism as opposed to legal equality or 'equality' feminism'. Thus Scott presents a picture of decline, which adheres to the framework based upon the equality / difference dichotomy.<sup>21</sup> Graves argues that the same was true of socialist women.<sup>22</sup> She suggests that 'socialism and feminism were effectively divorced' by 1933 within the socialist movement, with female members being assigned to a 'women's sphere'. Such women 'transformed this defection' into an opportunity to campaign for equal rights and social welfare reforms, which would be of benefit to working-class women. Yet, Graves argues that this gendered separation led to women abandoning their women-centred agendas in the 1930s, favouring an approach that was based on working-class and not gender solidarity.<sup>23</sup> For her this represented a weakening of their feminist position.

In addition Beaumont and Andrews, among others, have made equally important contributions to the historiography of the interwar women's movement in recent years.<sup>24</sup> This research further extends the range of organisations that could be considered participants. Beaumont focuses on the inclusion of mainstream, conservative and mainly middle-class women's societies in order to provide a 'more accurate understanding of the campaign for

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<sup>19</sup> The strategies which enabled such subversion will be discussed in chapter four in relation to the Scottish Co-operative Women's Guild.

<sup>20</sup> G. Scott, *Feminism and The Politics of Working Women The Women's Co-operative Guild 1880 to the Second World War*, UCL Press, London, 1998. Also see B. Blaszk, *The Matriarchs of England's Co-operative Movement: a study in gender politics and female leadership, 1883-1921*, Greenwood Press, London, 1999.

<sup>21</sup> See chapter four for further analysis of Scott's depiction of feminism.

<sup>22</sup> P. Graves, 'An Experiment in Women-Centred Socialism: Labour Women in Britain', H. Gruber & P. Graves, *Women And Socialism, Socialism and Women: Europe Between the Two World Wars*, Berghahn Books, Oxford, 1998, pp. 180-214.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid. Graves argues that separate gendered spheres within the socialist movement worked to women's benefit in local politics with women being elected to local government simply because they were women. Female activists were seen as best suited to positions that were traditionally associated with their gender, the care of mothers, children, the elderly, the sick, and the insane.

<sup>24</sup> C. Beaumont, 'Citizens not Feminists: the boundary negotiated between citizenship and feminism by mainstream women's organisations in England, 1928-39', *Women's History Review*, Vol. 9, No. 2, 2000, pp. 411-429, and C. Beaumont, 'The Women's Movement, Politics and Citizenship, 1918-1950s', in I. Zweiniger-Bargielowska (ed.), *Women in Twentieth Century Britain*, Pearson Education, London, 2001, pp. 262-277. Also see M. Andrews, *The Acceptable Face of Feminism: The Women's Institute as a Social Movement*, Lawrence and Wishart, London, 1997, A. Bingham, '“An Era of Domesticity”? Histories of Women and Gender in Interwar Britain', *Cultural and Social History*, Vol. 1, No. 2, 2004, pp. 225-234. and C. Law, *Suffrage and Power: The Women's Movement, 1918-1928*, I. B. Tauris, London, 1997.

women's rights' in this period.<sup>25</sup> She argues that the previous omission of the activities of such organisations, as a result of their conservative views or religious beliefs, is both 'historically inaccurate' and ignores the 'complex networks and diverse priorities of women's organisations at this time'.<sup>26</sup> Significantly, Beaumont suggests that the term 'women's movement' should refer to all groups that promoted the social, political and economic rights of women, regardless of whether or not they identified themselves as feminist.<sup>27</sup> In fact she suggests that these organisations employed the language of 'citizenship' rather than 'feminism' to avoid being associated with what was perceived as an 'extreme, unpopular and controversial ideology'.<sup>28</sup>

In contrast, Andrews' study of the Women's Institute movement in England not only includes this organisation in the interwar women's movement, but also positions it as feminist. She refers to the Women's Institute as the 'acceptable' face of feminism. This is because although it did not question the view that women's role was primarily domestic, the Women's Institute challenged the construction and conception of this role.<sup>29</sup> In this way the Women's Institute remained within the realms of 'acceptable' female behaviour, while at the same time subverting and stretching the boundaries of this domestic role. Consequently she argues that the Women's Institute challenged perceptions of the domestic role of women and that this in turn facilitated its campaigns for the improvement of women's lives, which included demands for municipal housing in rural areas and a clean water supply piped into every home. This analysis is supported by, and based upon, Andrews' own working definition of feminism. She argues that 'any activities by groups of women which challenge the boundaries of socially constructed acceptable behaviour for women, whether in economic, political, or cultural terms was and is feminist'.<sup>30</sup> Andrews also suggests that 'there is a real problem with any sort of feminism which assumes that unless an organisation rejects domesticity it cannot be feminist'.<sup>31</sup>

Similarly Hughes presents working-class female activists in interwar Clydeside as 'feminist'.<sup>32</sup> Drawing on Riley's hypothesis that 'sexual antagonism can shape sexual solidarity' that can ultimately lead to 'a rough kind of feminism', Hughes suggests that 'feminist behaviour need not be defined as a conscious challenge to male domination' but 'can also be a response to an identity produced by the perceptions and actions of the generalised

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<sup>25</sup> C. Beaumont, 'Moral Dilemmas and Women's Rights: the attitude of the Mother's Union and Catholic Women's League to divorce, birth control and abortion in England, 1928-1939', *Women's History Review*, Vol. 16, No. 4, 2007, p. 463.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, p. 464.

<sup>27</sup> Beaumont, 'Citizen's not Feminists', p. 413.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Andrews, *The Acceptable Face of Feminism*, p. xiii.

<sup>30</sup> M. Morgan (now Andrews), 'The Women's Institute Movement – The Acceptable Face of Feminism?', in S. Oldfield (ed.), *This Working Day World: Women's Lives and Culture(s) in Britain, 1914-1945*, Taylor & Francis, London, 1994, p. 30.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid, p. 33.

<sup>32</sup> A. Hughes, *A Rough Kind of 'Feminism': The Formation of Working-class Women's Political Identity, Clydeside, c. 1919-1939*, PhD Thesis, University of Strathclyde, 2001.

‘other’’.<sup>33</sup> In this way she argues that sexual antagonism could provide ‘a predisposing ground for coalition’ among women as well as impetus for actions that could be defined as feminist.<sup>34</sup> However Hughes acknowledges that the participants may not identify their actions or behaviour as feminist. Thus she also highlights the existence of a ‘popular feminism’ that ‘does not name itself feminist’, which can be ‘found in the everyday’ activities of women’ or as a ‘politics of everyday life’.<sup>35</sup>

These recent additions to the historiography have illustrated the diversity of the women’s movement in interwar Britain, especially in terms of the groups of women participating. This thesis will contribute to this discussion by arguing that a range of women’s organisations were active in the interwar years in Scotland, both explicitly feminist and those which disavowed a feminist identity. The traditional view of feminist inactivity following the enfranchisement of women in 1918 will therefore be contested, as will the theory that feminism declined in the interwar years. It will be demonstrated that a variety of women’s organisations raised a wide range of concerns and issues in a Scottish context that could, to varying degrees, be considered ‘feminist’ even if the organisation could not be defined as such.<sup>36</sup>

The political activities of four women’s organisations in interwar Scotland will be considered. Discussion of the explicitly feminist Glasgow Society for Equal Citizenship (GSEC) and Edinburgh Women Citizen’s Association (EWCA) provides analysis at a regional level of the national feminist organisations with which the historiography has traditionally been preoccupied.<sup>37</sup> The inclusion of these two organisations provides an opportunity to study the possible regional differences within the women’s movement, which has been a field largely neglected in the historiography.<sup>38</sup> The analysis of the Scottish Co-operative Women’s Guild (the Guild) will illustrate the contribution of a women’s organisation affiliated to the labour movement to Scottish political life. It was largely an urban organisation, which although not

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid, p. 2-3. Also see D. Riley, ‘*Am I That Name?*’ *Feminism and the Category of ‘Woman’ in History*, Macmillan, London, 1988, p. 10, and M. Barret and A. Phillips, *Destabilising Theory, Contemporary Feminist Debates*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1992, p. 1-9.

<sup>34</sup> Hughes, *A Rough Kind of ‘Feminism’*, p. 6.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid, p. 6.

<sup>36</sup> This will involve a discussion of the ways in which such ‘feminism’ was practiced. As stated the ways in which ‘feminism’ will be defined will be considered provided below.

<sup>37</sup> See chapter one for further details regarding the national women’s organisations to which the GSEC and EWCA were affiliated.

<sup>38</sup> Current research has begun to uncover the work of the Women’s Citizens Associations at a regional level. S. F. Browne, *Making the Vote Count: The Arbroath Women Citizens’ Association 1931-1945*, Abertay Historical Society, 2007. R. Davidson is also undertaking research on women’s involvement in local government in Croydon and Surrey, which involved analysing the work of the Croydon Women Citizen’s Association. Unpublished conference papers entitled ‘Citizens at Last! Women in Local Government in Croydon & Surrey, 1918-1939’ and ‘Women’s health, education and welfare work in interwar Surrey’. Also see S. Innes, ‘Constructing Women’s Citizenship in the Interwar Period: the Edinburgh Women Citizens’ Association’, *Women’s History Review*, Vol. 13, No. 4, 2004, p. 621-647.

formally disavowing a feminist identity, did not claim feminism as its main influence.<sup>39</sup> However it will be argued that its activities and those of its members were within a feminist framework. In contrast the Scottish Women's Rural Institutes (the Rurals) explicitly denied a feminist identity. Yet its contributions to the social and political life of rural Scotland were significant. It will be argued that its involvement in public debates, which gave a voice to the female inhabitants of such areas, although not necessarily feminist, empowered women.

The activities of the English equivalents of all of these organisations have been considered in the historiography, and it is significant that their Scottish contemporaries are largely absent from these narratives.<sup>40</sup> Indeed the experiences of Scottish women have been neglected not only in the field of British gender studies, which generally focus on England, but also by Scottish historians. In the former 'British' is often used as an alternative to 'English' with the Scottish perspective often being overlooked.<sup>41</sup> In fact Breitenbach, Brown and Myres argue that concepts such as 'British' and 'Britishness' 'often completely ignore Scottish experience'. It is suggested 'that when some acknowledgement of Scotland or Scottish experience is made it rarely goes beyond a form of tokenism, with no attempt to examine in any detail what is distinctive about Scotland'.<sup>42</sup> The same is generally true of the treatment of Welsh and Northern Irish women in British gender studies.<sup>43</sup> This representation of Scotland as peripheral is particularly evident in the traditional historiography relating to the women's movement in the interwar years.<sup>44</sup> Thus this thesis will contribute to the most recent historical

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<sup>39</sup> As will be discussed in chapter four, its membership of the Co-operative movement and Co-operative ideology proved to be increasingly influential throughout the interwar years.

<sup>40</sup> Scott, *Feminism and The Politics of Working Women*, 1998 and Andrews, *The Acceptable Face of Feminism*, 1997. This is also true of accounts of the work of the national organisations to which the GSEC and the EWCA were affiliated. Discussions of organisations such as the NUSEC and the National Council of Women in the historiography largely neglect the Scottish perspective. There are numerous examples, among them see H. L. Smith, 'British feminism in the 1920s', in H. L. Smith (ed.) *British Feminism in the Twentieth Century*, Edward Elgar, Aldershot, 1990, pp. 47-65, and M. Pugh, *Women and the Women's Movement in Britain, 1914-1999*, Second Edition, Macmillan, London, 2000.

<sup>41</sup> Scottish examples may be given, or case studies provided, but in analyses of the British experience, Scottish women are largely marginalised.

<sup>42</sup> E. Breitenbach, A. Brown and F. Myers, 'Understanding Women in Scotland', *Feminist Review*, No. 58, Spring 1998, p. 50, and 53-57. Examples are given of published studies which 'fail to acknowledge Scottish experience' and advance 'a 'universal' thesis for Britain on the basis of information and statistics drawn from England'.

<sup>43</sup> Gender historians in both countries have begun the project of 'making visible' the women of Wales and Northern Ireland and analysing women's contribution to the history of both nations. For Wales see A. John (ed.), *Our Mothers' Land: Chapters in Welsh Women's History 183-1939*, University of Wales Press, Cardiff, 1991, and D. Beddoe, *Out of the Shadows: A History of Women in Twentieth-Century Wales*, University of Wales Press, Cardiff, 2000. For Ireland see M. Hill, *Women in Ireland: a Century of Change*, Blackstaff Press, Belfast, 2003, and M. Hill, 'Ulster: debates, demands and divisions: The battle for (and against) the vote', in L. Ryan and M. Ward (eds.), *The Irish Suffrage Movement*, (forthcoming) 2007.

<sup>44</sup> As discussed the traditional historiography which presents a picture of decline of feminism in the interwar years focuses on developments at a national level, with activities in London being prominent as this was the location of the headquarters of the national organisations such as the NUSEC. Such studies take a regional approach only when analysing the contributions of individuals who chose to live outside of London, for example Eleanor Rathbone in Liverpool. As Scotland generally lacked feminists with a comparable nationwide profile, the activities of Scottish women have received little coverage in histories of the interwar women's movement.

interpretations of interwar feminism by providing a Scottish perspective, making comparisons to developments in England where appropriate, and ultimately suggesting that feminism was not moribund in Scotland in the interwar period.<sup>45</sup> Offen suggests that 'we cannot afford to indulge in partial or localised visions, or to interpret the past too narrowly'.<sup>46</sup> However studying developments of the women's movement in Scotland will only serve to enrich British women's history. This will reveal distinctions in a regional context that may be overlooked in a national study, and therefore adds to historical interpretation.

Breitenbach, Brown and Myres also suggest that 'there is very little work that attempts to make comparisons between different regions within Scotland'. Again, it is an aim of this thesis to provide such a study by comparing women's organisations both urban and rural, and including geographical areas throughout Scotland. It is also argued that 'women in the Highlands are poorly served by historians and sociologists' even though 'women contribute enormously to rural life and work'.<sup>47</sup> It is not only women living in the Highlands that are neglected, but also women throughout rural Scotland. The analysis of the Scottish Women's Rural Institutes addresses this significant gap in the historiography.<sup>48</sup>

While the history of Scottish men is also arguably marginalised within British historiography, Scottish women occupy a second 'marginal location in the British patriarchal state', that of 'women'.<sup>49</sup> Hills suggests that 'the history of women, their struggles and their triumphs has not been absorbed by the dominant Scottish myth'.<sup>50</sup> This gives support to Breitenbach, Brown and Myres' view of Scottish culture as 'misogynistic and sexually repressed'.<sup>51</sup> Scottish historians, or historians of Scotland, are beginning to include women as historical actors in their research and publications, yet this is by no means exhaustive.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> There have been few published studies devoted entirely to women's involvement in politics in Scotland in the interwar years. Notable are S. Innes, 'Constructing Women's Citizenship in the Interwar Period: the Edinburgh Women Citizens' Association', *Women's History Review*, Vol. 13, No. 4, 2004, pp. 621-647 and A. Hughes, 'Fragmented Feminists? The Influence of Class and Political Identity in Relations between the Glasgow and West of Scotland Suffrage Society and the Independent Labour Party in the West of Scotland, c.1919-1932', *Women's History Review*, Vol. 14, No. 1, 2005, pp. 7-32.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid, p. 209.

<sup>47</sup> Breitenbach, Brown and Myres, 'Understanding Women in Scotland', p. 48.

<sup>48</sup> Recent contributions to the historiography which have considered women in rural Scotland include: D. A. Symonds, 'Reconstructing Rural Infanticide in Eighteenth-Century Scotland', *Journal of Women's History*, Vol. 10, No. 2, 1998, pp. 63-84, L. Abrams, 'From Demon to Victim: The Infanticidal Mother in Shetland, 1699-1899' in Y. Brown and R. Ferguson (eds.), *Twisted Sisters: Women, Crime and Deviance in Scotland since 1400*, Tuckwell, Edinburgh, 2002, pp.156-80 and L. Abrams, *Myth and Materiality in a Woman's World: Shetland 1800-2000*, MUP, Manchester, 2005.

<sup>49</sup> Breitenbach, Brown and Myres, 'Understanding Women in Scotland', p. 51.

<sup>50</sup> Leslie Hills quoted in Breitenbach, Brown and Myers, 'Understanding Women in Scotland', p. 45.

<sup>51</sup> Breitenbach, Brown and Myres, 'Understanding Women in Scotland', p. 45.

<sup>52</sup> Often the study of women in Scottish history amounts to a chapter devoted to women within an edited collection. See A. J. McIvor, 'Women and work in Twentieth century Scotland', in A. Dickson and J. H. Treble (eds.), *People and Society in Scotland, Vol. III, 1914-1990*, John Donald, Edinburgh, 1992, p. 138-173, and A. J. McIvor, 'Gender Apartheid?: Women in Scottish Society', in T. M. Devine and R. J. Finlay (eds.), *Scotland in the Twentieth Century*, EUP, Edinburgh, 2006, p. 188-210. Often where publications are devoted entirely to the experience of Scottish women this has taken a 'popular' approach providing biographies and is more descriptive than analytical. See W. W. J. Knox, *Lives of Scottish Women, Women and Scottish Society, 1800-1980*, EUP, Edinburgh, 2006.



Attempts to rectify this ‘double marginalisation of women in Scotland’ include the publication of *The Biographical Dictionary of Scottish Women* and *Gender in Scottish History since 1700* by members of Women’s History Scotland.<sup>53</sup> Writing in 1998 Breitenbach, Brown and Myres suggest that there were ‘few large-scale studies that contribute to the development of a theoretical analysis of gender in Scottish Society’.<sup>54</sup> It is argued that much of what had been produced was ‘descriptive rather than explanatory’ with many studies being ‘small-scale and not widely disseminated’.<sup>55</sup> These two publications are an attempt by Scottish gender historians to provide and stimulate such studies. Abrams states that the broad aim of *Gender in Scottish History since 1700* ‘is to engage with and expand the Scottish historical narrative, by adding women’s experience and by applying gender as a category of analysis’.<sup>56</sup> The reluctance to include women in the grand narratives of Scotland, where their presence is ‘fragile and partial’, only serves to accentuate the necessity of a gendered approach to Scottish history.<sup>57</sup> This perspective, which amounts to more than recovering women and adding their experiences to history, challenges assumptions and provides a more accurate account of men’s and women’s roles in Scotland’s past. Its aim is to challenge and restructure the historical framework and the way Scotland’s historical past is viewed. Traditional definitions and frameworks within the historical narrative must be stretched and subverted. This thesis aims to contribute to this project, adding to the work of Innes and Rendall in questioning definitions of what constituted the ‘political’ in Scottish history.<sup>58</sup> It will situate the activities of women’s

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<sup>53</sup> E. Ewan, S. Innes, S. Reynolds and R. Pipes (Eds.) *The Biographical Dictionary of Scottish Women*, EUP, Edinburgh, 2006, and L. Abrams, E. Gordon, D. Simonton and E. J. Yeo (eds.) *Gender and Scottish History since 1700*, EUP, Edinburgh, 2006. Women’s History Scotland promotes study and research in women’s and gender history. It provides both a forum for discussion and a support network for women working in historical studies in Scotland. For further details see [www.womenshistoryscotland.org](http://www.womenshistoryscotland.org).

<sup>54</sup> Breitenbach, Brown and Myres, ‘Understanding Women in Scotland’, p. 48.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid. Examples of such early contributions to the study of the feminist movement in Scotland include L. Leneman, *A Guid Cause – the women’s suffrage movement in Scotland*, Aberdeen University Press, Aberdeen, 1991.

<sup>56</sup> L. Abrams, ‘Introduction: Gendering the Agenda’, in Abrams, Gordon, Simonton and Yeo (eds.), *Gender and Scottish History since 1700*, p. 2. The latter ‘enables a re-evaluation of some of the ways in which Scotland’s past is imagined’ and involves ‘thinking about gender as a discourse; as socially constructed and not immutable’. Also see J. W. Scott, ‘Feminism’s History’, *Journal of Women’s History*, Vol. 16, No. 2, 2004, p. 10-28 and J. W. Scott, *Gender and the politics of history*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1992 (Rev. Ed.), especially chapter two ‘Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis’, p. 28-52.

<sup>57</sup> In addition there is not ‘a comfort with, and support of, the empirical contribution women’s history has made to historical writing’. Such marginalisation of women historically, and of the contributions of gender historians, may be explained by Scotland’s patriarchal nature as a country, which has ensured that men’s stories have been privileged. The continuing acceptance of a ‘separate spheres’ model of gender relations in relation to the historical past has also exacerbated the exclusion of women from Scotland’s history. Abrams argues that ‘there is no need for national narratives to consign women to the domestic sphere for want of material or analytical rigour. The reason they so often do this must lie in the assumptions of the writers’. Abrams, ‘Introduction: Gendering the Agenda’, p. 4-5. Also see E. Gordon quoted in Breitenbach, Brown and Myres, ‘Understanding Women in Scotland’, p. 47.

<sup>58</sup> See S. Innes and J. Rendall, ‘Women, Gender and Politics’, in Abrams, Gordon, Simonton and Yeo (eds.), *Gender and Scottish History since 1700*, p. 43-83. Innes and Rendall argue that ‘political history in Scotland has been dominated by the labour movement and, more recently, by work on the ‘growth of the nation’, both of which have tended to marginalise women’s and gender history’. Further it is suggested that ‘politics in Scotland has been gendered in that it has been almost exclusively defined as a ‘male game’ via the exclusion of women’. Women’s political participation ‘has continued to be gendered’ as it has been ‘understood as

organisations, and the political and other experiences of their members, firmly within narratives of Scotland's political and social history, with this inclusion challenging the nature of the political arenas in which these organisations and individuals acted.

The consideration of a diverse range of women's organisations in interwar Scotland facilitates the formation of a working definition of feminism that is sufficiently broad to encompass a range of women's experiences, while remaining true to the ways in which 'feminism' has been conceived in the past and present. As stated, feminist theory has evolved to take account of a variety of 'feminisms' to produce a more universal notion of what feminist activity constitutes.<sup>59</sup> This has involved taking 'feminism' beyond its largely white, western, heterosexual and middle-class academic identity and considering why women outside of these parameters did not associate with this identity.<sup>60</sup> Fundamental in this approach is the inclusion of non-white, working-class, homosexual feminist activists, as well as those of women in developing countries.<sup>61</sup> The resultant universal notion of feminism encompasses a variety of women experiences and considers the diversity of women's identities.<sup>62</sup> This makes 'feminism' not only more inclusionary but also relevant to the lives of a larger group of women.

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joining formal institutions, or oppositional movements, and learning to play by their rules'. Innes and Rendall seek to explore women's involvement in politics by stretching the definition of 'political' by analysing 'women's approaches to civil society and to citizenship'. For Scottish women in the late nineteenth century this involved the use and creation of a 'feminine public space'. See E. Gordon and G. Nair, *Public Lives, Women, Family and Society in Victorian Britain*, Yale University Press, London, 2003, and M. K. Smitley, 'Women's Mission': the temperance and women's suffrage movements in Scotland, c1870-1914, Glasgow University, Unpublished PhD Thesis, 2002.

<sup>59</sup> Kemp and Squires (eds.), *Feminisms*, p. 3, and b. hooks, *Feminism is for everybody: Passionate Politics*, Pluto Press, London, 2000, p. viii.

<sup>60</sup> See C. Hemmings, 'The Life and Times of Academic Feminism' in K. Davis, M. Evans and J. Lorber (eds.), *Handbook of Women and Gender Studies*, SAGE Publications Ltd, London, 2006, pp. 13-35.

<sup>61</sup> For an overview of this process see Davis, Evans and Lorber (eds.), *Handbook of Women and Gender Studies*, 2006, N. A. Naples (ed.), *Community activism and feminist politics: organizing across race, class, and gender*, Routledge, London, 1998, and Barrett and Phillips (eds.) *Destabilizing theory*, 1992. For the inclusion of non-white women see b. hooks, *Ain't I a Woman: black women and feminism*, Pluto Press, London, 1982, b. hooks, *Feminist Theory: from margin to centre*, Pluto Press, London, 1984 (first edition) and 2000 (second edition), and b. hooks, 'Race and Gender' in b. hooks, *Feminism is for everybody: Passionate Politics*, Pluto Press, London, 2000, pp. 55-61. Also see G. C. Spivak, 'Feminism and Critical Theory' in D. Landry and G. MacLean (eds.), *The Spivak reader: selected works of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak*, Routledge, London, 1996, pp. 53-75. For discussions of class see J. Brenner, *Women and the politics of class*, Monthly Review Press, New York, 2000, and M. Barrett, *Women's oppression today: the Marxist/feminist encounter*, Verso, London, 1988. For lesbian feminism see S. Jeffreys, *Unpacking queer politics: a lesbian feminist perspective*, Polity Press in association with Blackwell, Cambridge, 2003, and M. Merck, N. Segal and E. Wright (eds.), *Coming out of feminism?*, Blackwell, Oxford, 1998. Finally for feminism in developing countries see V. M. Moghadam, *Globalizing women: transnational feminist networks*, Johns Hopkins University Press, London, 2005, C. Jackson and R. Pearson (eds.), *Feminist visions of development: gender, analysis and policy*, Routledge, London, 1998, and A. Cornwall, E. Harrison and A. Whitehead (eds.), *Feminisms in Development: Contradictions, contestations and challenges*, Zed Books, London, 1998.

<sup>62</sup> Admittedly the various groups of women who all identify themselves with feminism continue to have different needs by virtue of the fact that they are of different racial, class or economic backgrounds. As was the case in interwar Britain, feminists will continue to have their differences, feminism as a movement was and will be fragmented, but this does not mean that feminism as an theory is irrelevant.

This reconsideration of 'feminism' and its relevance involves constant and regular questioning of what is meant by 'feminism' and 'feminist' activism. As discussed, historians such as Andrews and Hughes have similarly reconstituted the ways in which 'feminism' can be defined with reference to the interwar years. This enables each historian to include women who would not traditionally be associated with feminist activity in the historiography of the interwar women's movement. This thesis will also question the traditionally narrow view of feminist activity and 'feminism' in the historiography of the interwar women's movement. However, in order to make 'feminism' relevant to a more extensive range of women, both in the past and present, historians and theorists must ensure that, as a critique of society, it does not become so generalised that it risks losing its distinctive meaning and strength as a theoretical concept. As Delmar argues 'if feminism is a concern with issues affecting women, a concern to advance women's interests, so that therefore anyone who shares this concern is a feminist, whether they acknowledge it or not, then the range of feminism is general and its meaning is equally diffuse'. Further, she suggests that this way of considering feminism 'as a diffuse activity', 'makes feminism understandably hard to pin down'.<sup>63</sup>

In *Feminism is for Everybody* bell hooks argues that 'feminism is a movement to end sexism, sexual exploitation and oppression'.<sup>64</sup> She uses this definition as it 'clearly states that the movement is not about being anti-male'.<sup>65</sup> hooks perceives feminism to be open to men as well as women as she argues that 'all of us, female and male, have been socialised from birth on to accept sexist thought and action'.<sup>66</sup> This definition is useful in challenging views regarding the 'evil of feminism' and 'bad feminists', who 'hate men', 'want to go against nature', 'are all lesbians' and 'are taking all the jobs and making the world hard for white men, who do not stand a chance'.<sup>67</sup> Thus, as hooks illustrates, 'feminism' and 'feminist' evoke controversy in Western society today as they did in the interwar years and before.<sup>68</sup> As Delmar also argues 'it is, in practice, impossible to discuss feminism without discussing the image of feminism and the feminists'.<sup>69</sup> Perceptions of 'feminists' in the interwar years were not dissimilar to hooks' description. Stereotypes were also prevalent with feminists being characterised, and even caricatured, as man-haters, spinsters, or lesbians, and seen as a threat to the 'natural' order of society.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Delmar, 'What is Feminism?', p. 8.

<sup>64</sup> hooks, *Feminism is for everybody*, p. viiii.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid, p. vii.

<sup>68</sup> For discussion of the political backlash against feminist activism in the late 1980s and 1990s see A. Oakley and J. Mitchell (eds.), *Who's afraid of feminism? : seeing through the backlash*, Hamish Hamilton, London, 1997.

<sup>69</sup> Delmar, 'What is Feminism?', p. 12-13.

<sup>70</sup> However Bingham has questioned whether the press perpetuated such images to the extent suggested by proponents of the 'backlash' model. See Bingham, "An Era of Domesticity?", p. 232. For 'backlash' perspective see S. Jeffreys, *The Spinster and her Enemies: Feminism and Sexuality, 1880-1930*, Pandora,

Such misinterpretation of ‘feminism’ and what it means to be a ‘feminist’ has led to women disavowing this identity, with individuals often stating ‘I’m not a feminist, but ...’ while simultaneously ‘insisting on equal pay, sexual and reproductive choice, paternal leave, and political representation’.<sup>71</sup> Perhaps this is because feminism is seen as old fashioned, unnecessary, irrelevant, or extreme. It is conceivable that this was also the case for women in the interwar years. Freedman argues that in the 1980s the term ‘feminism’ was used to describe ‘anyone who challenged prevailing gender relations’, regardless of whether they ‘agreed with all of the tenets of women’s liberation, or claimed the label’.<sup>72</sup> As a result ‘a generation of Western women came of age influenced by feminism to expect equal opportunities’.<sup>73</sup> Thus Freedman argues that a generation of both women and men has grown up in Western countries with these feminist expectations while not identifying with feminism itself. However, she suggests that in spite of its unpopularity the ‘political goals of feminism have survived’ as a result of its redefinition as discussed.<sup>74</sup>

Freedman’s own definition of feminism includes ‘views that may be shared by those who claim the label as well as many who reject it’.<sup>75</sup> She states that ‘feminism is a belief that women and men are inherently of equal worth’.<sup>76</sup> In addition Freedman argues that ‘because most societies privilege men as a group, social movements are necessary to achieve equality between men and women, with the understanding that gender always intersects with other social hierarchies’.<sup>77</sup> Like the definition presented by hooks, Freedman’s is also useful in explaining feminism’s relevance to women and men in today’s society, as well as the continuing need for feminist activism. Indeed she believes that ‘a better historical understanding of feminism’ can ‘illuminate the impact that this revolutionary movement continues to have on all of our lives’.<sup>78</sup> While this may be true, there is a danger of applying current definitions of ‘feminism’ to the past, where political, social, economic, and as a result ideological and discursive, circumstances were naturally different than those of today.<sup>79</sup> Delmar suggests that in the ‘writing of feminist history’ a ‘broad view’ of feminism is predominant which defines feminism as ‘an active desire to change women’s position in

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London, 1985, chapters 8 and 9, and D. Beddoe, *Back to Home and Duty, Women Between the Wars 1918-1939*, Pandora, London, 1989, p. 26-31.

<sup>71</sup> E. B. Freedman, *No Turning Back, The History of Feminism and the Future of Women*, Profile Books, London, 2002, p. 5.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid, p. 6.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid, p. 7.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid, p. 12.

<sup>79</sup> As Delmar argues ‘the way feminism’s past is understood and interpreted thus informs and is informed by the ways in which feminism is understood and interpreted in the present’. Delmar, ‘What is Feminism?’, p. 13.

society'.<sup>80</sup> However, arguably it is problematic to define historical actors as 'feminists' if they themselves did not adopt this identity or actively denied it. Historians cannot force the beliefs and behaviour of women in the past to fit current definitions and theoretical models. Rather it is the task of the historian to explain women's experiences in the past within the context of a particular time and place.

The definition of feminism that will be presented in this thesis will therefore draw upon recent developments in feminist theory, but will also crucially be rooted within the historical context of the interwar years. Such a definition will help explain the experiences of the women's organisations under consideration, and those of their members, and will also assist in determining the extent to which these organisations and individuals were 'feminist' in their political activities. Offen's attempt to redefine feminism in order to 'rectify the confusion that surrounds the meanings and connotations' of it is useful as she addresses the historical divisions inherent in the meaning of 'feminism'. In doing so she proposes that her definition will be 'more dynamic, more supple and more comprehensive than those formerly inscribed in dictionaries' and will 'transcend historical specifics by raising our thinking about feminism and its meaning to a higher level of generalisation'.<sup>81</sup> Admittedly it is her aim to use the ways in which feminism was defined by its practitioners in historical contexts in order to formulate a universal definition for the present.<sup>82</sup> Yet this is the strength of her approach, as her definition of feminism explicitly takes account of historical developments.<sup>83</sup>

Historically 'feminism' does not have a universal definition. As is the case with all theoretical concepts it could be interpreted broadly in a variety of ways by a diverse range of individuals. While for some feminism meant the promotion of equal rights for women, for others it could mean demands for rights equal to those of men.<sup>84</sup> This is a subtle difference, but is a difference all the same, and is one which has led to distinctions within feminism from its inception. Offen is particularly critical of such dualistic or tripartite distinctions as 'old' and 'new' feminism or 'liberal', 'Marxist' and 'radical' feminisms'. Instead she identifies two distinct historical discourses, which she suggests have provided the framework for 'feminism', in an attempt to form a definition of feminism which is not bound by time, and that 'can bear the weight of the historical evidence and make sense of it'.<sup>85</sup> These are what she describes as 'relational' and 'individualist' feminisms. Offen suggests that 'the relational feminist traditions proposed a gender-based but egalitarian vision of social organisation' in which 'a

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<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> K. Offen, 'Defining Feminism: a comparative historical approach', *Signs*, Vol. 14, No. 1, 1988, p. 124.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid. Offen suggests that she views definition as a 'powerful working tool for enhancing understanding of a concept that remains undisputedly significant to both women and men today'.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid. Her definition 'is intended to accommodate the existent historical evidence specific to time and place'.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid, p. 128.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid, p. 134.

companionate, non-hierarchical, male-female couple' was the primary 'basic unit of society'.<sup>86</sup> In contrast the individualistic tradition positioned the individual, whether male or female, as the basic unit of society.<sup>87</sup> To this end, relational feminism demanded women's rights as women, and emphasised the roles that only women could perform in society, while individualist feminists demanded individual human rights and personal independence in all aspects of life.

Offen argues that both of these feminist traditions should be the basis for a new definition of feminism which should incorporate a broad spectrum of ideas and be seen as pro-woman, but not necessarily anti-man as a consequence.<sup>88</sup> A sentiment she shares with hooks and Freedman. Offen states that feminism should represent a re-balancing between men and women in society with respect to social, economic and political power, with this being achieved on behalf of both sexes due to their 'common humanity', while retaining an acknowledgement of their differences. Consequently, she argues that feminism should continue to be a challenge to male authority in society, as it has been historically. Offen gives the definition of a 'feminist' as someone, male or female, who meets the following criteria:

- (1) They recognise the validity of women's own interpretations of their lived experience and needs and acknowledge the values women claim publicly as their own in assessing their status in society relative to men, (2) they exhibit consciousness of, discomfort at, or even anger over institutionalised injustice toward women as a group by men as a group in a given society, and (3) they advocate the elimination of that injustice by challenging, through efforts to alter prevailing ideas and / or social institutions and practices, the coercive power, force or authority that upholds male prerogatives in that particular culture.<sup>89</sup>

It is suggested that this definition could be used to overcome the hostility towards feminism, with 'the most valuable features of both historical traditions' being used in order to make 'feminism' relevant to all. This involves overcoming the dualistic and tripartite distinctions within feminism, and instead accommodating the 'actual range of diversity and differing needs' of women. It also incorporates men 'whose self-concept is not rooted in domination over women'.<sup>90</sup>

Again the strength of Offen's definition is in the consideration given to the development and history of feminism. This enables her to contribute to attempts to provide a universal notion of feminism, as discussed. Yet Offen's methodology and definition have been criticised for creating 'its own dualism', which Dubois states is biased towards relational

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid, p. 135.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid, p. 135.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid, p. 151.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid, p. 152.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid, p. 192-193.

feminism.<sup>91</sup> Cott is also critical of Offen's limited vocabulary in her definition of feminism. Cott suggests that Offen has 'taken a wrong turn, toward a mistaken inclusiveness under the heading 'feminism''.<sup>92</sup> She states that 'as feminist historians today, we must be able to appreciate and credit women's ideas in the past without having to name them feminists'.<sup>93</sup> Cott is of the opinion that 'we ought to multiply our vocabulary' and 'invent additional new terms in women's political and intellectual history in order both to preserve feminism's distinctiveness and to understand the full historical complexity and range of women's views'.<sup>94</sup> Offen defends her position by stating that it would be a 'travesty to restrict the use of the term 'feminism' only to the beliefs and practices of such a small, avant-garde American group'.<sup>95</sup> This is reference to the individuals and groups considered by Cott in her research, women who explicitly identified themselves as feminists such as the National Women's Party. Offen states that she is 'unwilling to let go of 'feminism' as it 'is the most powerful term we have at our disposal and that we should use it knowledgeably, taking into account its trans-national historical provenance and its varied implications over time and place'.<sup>96</sup>

It is obvious that Offen intends for her definition of feminism to have a wider and more universal use. However as Cott suggests there has to be a way of differentiating between women who associated themselves with feminism in the past and those who did not, even if they could be described as such under a universal definition such as Offen's. In spite of the differences in opinion between these two historians, Offen's three part definition of what it means to be a 'feminist', outlined above, remains useful, again given her attention to the historical experiences of women in the formation of her definition. Particularly relevant is her critique of the 'equality/difference' dichotomy which was prominent as a framework for understanding the interwar women's movement in the early historiography. Offen, like Joan Scott, suggests that this dichotomy is an 'intellectual trap'.<sup>97</sup>

This thesis will therefore adopt Offen's definition of feminism, as 'feminism' remains 'the most powerful term we have at our disposal', especially following recent feminist

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<sup>91</sup> E. C. Dubois, 'Comment on Karen Offen's 'Defining Feminism: A Comparative Historical Approach'', *Signs*, Vol.15, No.1, 1989, p. 195. In *Destabilising Theory*, Barret and Philips also criticise the use of dichotomies within feminist theory, both historically and in the present. The approaches taken by theorists applying liberalism, humanism and Marxism in attempts to define feminism are all criticised as falsely universalising, over-generalising and over ambitious. Post-structuralist and post-modern approaches, which have led feminists to analyse the 'local, specific' and particular' are also outlined, as is the use of local studies to prove feminist theories. Barrett and Phillips (ed.), *Destabilising Theory Contemporary Feminist Debates*, p. 1, 6, 8 and 9.

<sup>92</sup> N. F. Cott, 'Comment on Karen Offen's 'Defining Feminism: A Comparative Historical Approach'' *Signs*, Vol.15, No.1, 1989, p. 203. For Cott's full perspective on the development and definition of feminism see. N. F. Cott, *The Grounding of Modern Feminism*, Yale University Press, London, 1987.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid, p. 205.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid, p. 205

<sup>95</sup> K. Offen, 'Reply to Cott', *Signs*, Vol.15, No.1, 1989, p. 207-8. Fundamental in her defence is Offen's critique of the 'equal/difference' dichotomy, which she suggests both Cott and Dubois adhere to, taking an individualistic perspective. The equality/difference dichotomy will also be discussed in chapter two.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid, p. 209.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

theorists' work that has made it relevant to a wider range of women.<sup>98</sup> However in the subsequent chapters distinctions will be drawn between the organisations under consideration with regard to their identification with 'feminism'.<sup>99</sup> As suggested the Glasgow Society for Equal Citizenship (GSEC) and the Edinburgh Women Citizens' Association (EWCA) both explicitly identified with feminism and the women's movement. Thus Offen's definition is entirely applicable to the members of each of these organisations as will be discussed in chapters two and three. The Scottish Co-operative Guild (the Guild) on the other hand did not disavow feminism, but did not fully embrace it, largely due to its working-class identity and its membership of the Co-operative movement. Thus class could be described as an impediment to feminist unity in the interwar years, with this reflecting the political and class tensions found in interwar Scotland. Yet, as will be outlined in chapters two and four the members of the Guild acted in a feminist manner and fulfilled all three requirements of Offen's definition. Admittedly the identification of guildwomen as 'feminist' is not as straight forward as is the case for members of the GSEC and the EWCA. Finally the Scottish Women's Rural Institutes (the Rurals) were explicitly non-feminist in their self-identification. Given its aim to include all women in rural areas, in spite of religion, class or creed, officially a 'non-political' stance was taken. While this proves to be an inaccurate description of the activities of the members of the Rurals in interwar Scotland, it is true that its members did not meet all of the requirements of Offen's definition of what constitutes a 'feminist'. Yet its members did challenge societal norms and discourses by voicing their opinions and addressing the needs of rural women in a public political sphere, as highlighted in chapters two and five.

Fundamental to the political activities and campaigns of each organisation, and the extent to which this behaviour can be termed feminist, was the use of strategies and tactics to achieve their aims. Chapter two will discuss the various discourses and ideologies that were contested and subverted by each organisation, which encouraged its members to make a contribution to Scottish political life in the interwar years. This will involve a consideration of the ways in which each organisation overcame the theoretical boundaries of women's separate sphere and the associated discourses of domesticity, which, as suggested in the historiography, were reinvigorated following the First World War. Instrumental in doing so was a prominent assertion of female citizenship. Each organisation, in its own way, created or drew upon a gendered citizenship which justified its members participation in political life, a tactic used by previous generations of women to carve out a 'feminine public space'. For the Guild and the Rurals especially, this involved the elevation of motherhood, which supported women's arguments for some form of political representation in society. The Rurals also used the language of imperialism to support its claims in the public sphere.

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<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> In each of the subsequent chapters Offen's definition of feminism will be adopted.



Chapter one will provide further introduction to each organisation by outlining its rationale for formation and the services provided for its members. Chapters three, four and five, will explain the political activities of each organisation and the extent to which these could be described as feminist. This will include considering both the campaigning strategies employed by each organisation, as well as the objectives of the campaigns. In depth case studies will be provided where appropriate. Housing conditions were a concern for all of the organisations under consideration and the improvement of maternity care for women was also a shared objective. However each organisation had its own ideological background, motivations and issues that it prioritised, and as a consequence the level of co-operation between these four women's organisations was minimal. Yet, the range of issues supported and promoted by the women's organisations under consideration highlight that feminism was not moribund in interwar Scotland.

It was the aim of the GSEC, the EWCA and the Guild to gain formal political representation for its members. While the Rurals did not share this objective, the final chapter considers female representation on the education authorities in Glasgow, Edinburgh and Perth, and discusses the issues prioritised by these individuals.<sup>100</sup> This chapter explores the extent to which female representatives on the education authority, a political sphere more easily accessible for women, were able to forward a feminist or women's agenda or instead were subsumed within the agenda of the political party they were representing.<sup>101</sup> The majority of women considered were either members of, or had connections to, the GSEC, the EWCA, the Guild and the Rurals.

The minutes of meetings of the GSEC, the EWCA, the Guild and the Rurals are among the main source materials used in this thesis. There are limitations in using these sources, the main one being the fact that often the views of ordinary members were marginalised, with the opinions of the executive committee or central council being most prominent. This is especially evident in the minutes of the executive committees of the GSEC and the EWCA, as well as the publications of the latter. Efforts have been made to provide an alternative to this 'top down' approach resulting from the use of these minutes. Where possible the views of members of each organisation, and therefore their political agency has been uncovered, thus providing a 'bottom up' approach to the history of the organisations under consideration. This has involved using the letters pages in *The Scottish Co-operator* and *Scottish Home and Country*. Resolutions passed at the annual meetings of each organisation by local branches

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<sup>100</sup> Glasgow and Edinburgh were chosen as the locations in which the GSEC and the EWCA operated and in which the Guild was prominent. This allows the political situation of each city to be explored further from a class perspective as outlined in chapters three and four. While Perth is not presented as representative of rural Scotland as a geographical area, it is situated as representative of the Rurals as its headquarters were located in Perth from 1928.

<sup>101</sup> Chapter Six also considers women affiliated to the labour movement more generally. Explanations of why the education authority was relatively more accessible for women will be provided in chapter six.

also provide evidence of the opinions of the broader membership, as do reports sent to the central council or executive committee. The solicitation of opinions from members and later used in evidence given in government enquiries by the leadership of the Rurals was also particularly useful. Government reports and articles in local and national newspapers have also been used where appropriate.

This thesis contributes to recent historical research that has challenged and re-evaluated the entrenched historiography of feminism, which characterises the interwar years as inactive. By providing an account of feminist activity in interwar Scotland, a geographical area largely neglected in accounts of the women's movement in this period, this thesis challenges the view that feminism was moribund. Rather the women's movement and feminist activity was diverse and thriving in Scotland in this period.

## CHAPTER ONE

### Rationale, Formation and Services Provided

#### The GSEC and The EWCA

The Glasgow Society for Equal Citizenship (GSEC) and the Edinburgh Women Citizens' Association (EWCA) were both explicitly feminist organisations and notably each had its roots in the suffrage movement. While the GSEC was founded in 1902, and was known as the Glasgow and West of Scotland Suffrage Society (GSS), the EWCA, like the National Council of Women Citizens' Associations, was formed in 1919.<sup>1</sup> The enfranchisement of women prompted a renaming of the GSS to reflect its future aims. This legislation also facilitated the formation of new women's organisations for the promotion of active citizenship for women.

The GSS became the GSEC in May 1919, with demands for female equality remaining prominent in its programme.<sup>2</sup> Its name change mirrored that of the national organisation to which it was affiliated, the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies, which became the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship. In both cases the change in name reflected each societies new aims for the future, preparing women for active citizenship. One of the GSEC's primary goals became the education of its members, and women more generally, in how to use their votes. It was hoped that this would facilitate women's involvement in public life. This education took many forms, including general information such as voters' registers, public meetings, as well as canvassers classes, lectures and addresses from outside speakers in specific topics relating to legislative reforms.<sup>3</sup> Such political education was largely representative of the GSEC's programme. While charity and fund raising bazaars and garden parties provided recreational opportunities for members, these often also had an educational purpose with addresses and talks being prominent.

The political motivations of the GSEC were further illustrated by its prominent involvement in the Women's Local Representative Joint Committee. Women's organisations of all political persuasions were invited to join this committee by the founding members the

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<sup>1</sup> The GSS was a prominent member of the Scottish Federation of Women's Suffrage Societies, which was formed in 1910 to provide a central body for the increasing numbers of societies being formed throughout Scotland. Members of the Scottish Federation took part in suffrage processions in London under the auspices of the National Union of Suffrage Societies and also organised 'a grand suffrage pageant and procession' in 1909, which 'brought most of Edinburgh's populace out to watch the spectacle'. L. Leneman, *The Scottish Suffragettes*, NMS Publishing Ltd, Edinburgh, 2000, p. 12.

<sup>2</sup> Glasgow and West of Scotland Suffrage Society (GSS), *Executive Committee Minute Book*, Glasgow City Archives, SR 187/891036/1/4, 19 May 1919. During the First World War the GSS, as part of the Scottish Federation, focused on raising funds for the Scottish Women's Hospitals. These were all-women hospital units formed to serve allied armies in the field. Over a thousand women volunteered and half a million pounds were raised. The GSS also continued campaigning for the extension of the franchise and 'kept itself in readiness for the time when the franchise would be widened'. Leneman, *The Scottish Suffragettes*, p. 15 and 16.

<sup>3</sup> For further details of such education see chapter three.

GSEC and Glasgow Women Citizens' Association (GWCA). The GSEC argued that labour women's groups should be equally represented, 'if they were willing to join'.<sup>4</sup> The other organisations represented on this Committee were mainstream women's organisations, including the National Council of Women (NCW) and the Women's Educational Association (WEA). The GSEC and the GWCA each had a close relationship with both of these organisations. In contrast women's organisations with affiliations to the labour movement were not represented on the council.<sup>5</sup> Hughes suggests that the GSEC's largely middle-class political identity created friction with women of the labour movement.<sup>6</sup> Indeed it will be argued that the political polarisation evident in interwar Glasgow was an impediment to co-operation between the GSEC and women's organisations with connections to the labour movement such as the Guild.<sup>7</sup>

The formation of this Joint Committee was a reflection of developments at a national level within the women's movement. In 1920 a non-party Women's Election Committee was established with the aim of consolidating the efforts of women's organisations in securing the election of women to parliament. There was a controversy within this committee as to whether women should run as independents or seek election by a political party and possibly sacrifice feminist positions. The members of the Joint Committee in Glasgow shared this concern. However it would appear that it was more flexible in its arrangements, with the GSEC arguing that they should be 'willing to give a little in their principles' in order to 'secure the best candidate'. The GSEC also contacted the Liverpool Society for Equal Citizenship in 1920 to enquire about its policy regarding 'the case of party candidates for Parliament'.<sup>8</sup> The executive sought to discover whether members of the society would work for a candidate irrespective of which party she might be standing for, and whether the running of a party candidate had any effect adverse or otherwise. This suggests that it was considering assisting the candidature of female candidates standing on behalf of a political party as well as those standing as independents.

Indeed the GSEC nominated, financially supported and canvassed on behalf of independent candidates and also women standing under the 'Moderate' banner.<sup>9</sup> It followed

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<sup>4</sup> GSS, *Executive Committee Minute Book*, SR187/891036/1/4, 8 April 1918.

<sup>5</sup> The Co-operative Women's Guild received an invitation but declined to be represented.

<sup>6</sup> A. Hughes, 'Fragmented Feminists? The Influence of Class and Political Identity in Relations between the Glasgow and West of Scotland Suffrage Society and the Independent Labour Party in the West of Scotland, c.1919-1932', *Women's History Review*, Vol. 14, No. 1, 2005, p. 13. See chapter three and six for further discussion of the GSEC's political identity.

<sup>7</sup> Again see chapters three, four and six.

<sup>8</sup> Glasgow and West of Scotland Society for Equal Citizenship (GSEC), *Executive Committee Minute Book*, SR187/891036/1/5, 20 December 1920.

<sup>9</sup> As will be discussed in greater detail in chapter three, Liberal and Unionist candidates tended to stand under the banner of 'Moderate' in the interwar years following the establishment of a coalition between these two political parties in order to combat the perceived growth of the socialist vote in Glasgow. See chapter three for a more comprehensive definition.

that the Women's Local Representative Joint Committee also supported such candidates.<sup>10</sup> Notably three Moderate women were represented on Glasgow education authority in 1922, all of whom were directly supported by the GSEC.<sup>11</sup> In fact Hughes argues that the executive of the GSEC was associated with the hierarchy of the Unionist Party.<sup>12</sup> She also states that the lack of support given to female labour activists provoked condemnation from Patrick Dollan.<sup>13</sup> Yet in 1921 the GSEC had nearly two hundred members in the Gorbals and almost one hundred members in Possil, both of which were predominantly working-class areas.<sup>14</sup> Therefore Hughes suggests that class was not an 'impediment to a feminist identity' in the west of Scotland. She insists that 'promoting women-centred policies or being recognised as a feminist was not an obstacle to being selected as a candidate for the Labour movement'.<sup>15</sup> It would appear that class was the divisive factor, as members of the GSEC and working-class women's organisations can both be described as being aligned to a feminist identity. The lack of support given to women of the labour movement in municipal and national elections may represent a failure of the GSEC to fully realise its aim of increasing the political representation of women.

In spite of this divisive political climate, which led to class distinctions, and lack of official co-operation between the GSEC and women of the labour movement, there were links. The GSEC provided representatives and speakers to the Guild and members of the executive also often attended the Guild's annual meeting. Admittedly such contact was limited in comparison with the GSEC's co-operation with its fellow members of the Joint Committee, the NCW and WEU. The GSEC regularly sent delegates to committee and annual meetings of these organisations at both a local and national level. The GSEC also formulated deputations with these organisations on a range of issues, usually in connection with their shared aim of rectifying the under-representation of women on official bodies in a national and regional context. In 1918 the GSEC took part in a deputation to the Secretary for Scotland regarding the representation of women on the Board of Health for Scotland. It also joined a deputation to Glasgow town council concerning the appointment of women probation officers. The GSEC later became involved in a wider range of issues, taking part in joint deputations concerning

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<sup>10</sup> See chapter six, including appendix 6a, for details of the candidates supported by both the GSEC and Joint Committee including the political allegiances of these individuals.

<sup>11</sup> The involvement of the GSEC in the election of Moderate women will be discussed in greater detail in chapters three and especially six. In the latter, including appendices 6a and 6b, the identity of these women will be discussed, which will include the constituencies that these individuals represented.

<sup>12</sup> Hughes, 'Fragmented Feminists?', p. 14. This assertion is supported by the fact that a prominent member of the executive committee resigned to take up the post of organiser with the Glasgow Unionist Association. The candidates supported by the GSEC also had affiliations with Unionist Associations. See chapter six, appendix 6a and 6b, for details.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid. Dollan was a prominent member of the Independent Labour Party who later became leader of the Labour Party on Glasgow Corporation and Lord Provost in 1938. See appendix 6b for further details.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, p. 15.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

the illegitimate child, national health insurance, lodging houses for women in Glasgow, and the need for an adoption bill in Scotland.<sup>16</sup>

In 1923 the society amalgamated with the Glasgow Women's Citizen's Association (GWCA).<sup>17</sup> The president of the GSEC 'urged members to continue wholeheartedly in their work and generous in their givings, and to make the amalgamation a real union that would more than double the strength of the two societies working separately'.<sup>18</sup> In 1926 the GSEC began to discuss ways in which to attract new members, with an emphasis being placed on interesting young women.<sup>19</sup> Hughes argues that the GSEC's failure to attract new members could be attributed to its class bias. She suggests that while it was the aim of the NUSEC to promote issues that would benefit women and attract working-class women to the organisation, this was not the main concern of the GSEC. Instead Hughes insists that the GSEC were more concerned with the condition of the hockey pitch at Rouken Glen Park, a distinctly middle-class district of Glasgow, and the condition of 'worn out horses' rather than 'worn out women'.<sup>20</sup>

The society disbanded in March 1933. A report in *The Herald* cited a 'lack of funds', with the closure being attributed to 'the general financial depression' that 'adversely affected the income'.<sup>21</sup> It was suggested that 'many Glasgow women will regret the passing of this amalgamated organisation, which achieved much good work' and was an 'influential feminist force in public affairs'.<sup>22</sup> The GWCA began the process of reorganising a month later, emphasising both the need for women's 'vital interest in good government' and stating that 'intensive effort will be made to secure membership representative of women of every class'.<sup>23</sup> The work of the GWCA appears to have continued throughout the remainder of the 1930s.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> GSS, *Executive Committee Minute Book*, April 1918, and GSEC, *Executive Committee Minute Book*, April 1924, April 1925, and April 1928. The GSEC's involvement in campaigns relating to these issues will be discussed in further detail in chapter three.

<sup>17</sup> This amalgamation may suggest that the GSEC was possibly struggling financially due to the economic circumstances of the interwar years. Membership was also in decline, falling from 'over 2,000' in January 1925 to 1,840 in December 1926. In both cases the GWCA would provide extra strength and support. The membership of the GWCA was 1,700 in 1921, while the EWCA was 1,355. On the other hand it could simply have been the natural thing for the two societies to amalgamate in that their aims were so similar. GSEC, *Executive Committee Minute Book*, SR 187/891036/1/6, 23 January 1925, 22 December 1926 and Glasgow Women Citizen's Association (GWCA), *Third Annual Report*, National Archives of Scotland, GD1/1076/4/2, 1920-1921.

<sup>18</sup> GSEC, *Executive Committee Minute Book*, SR 187/891036/1/5, 26 November 1923.

<sup>19</sup> This suggests an ageing membership, as did increasing numbers of deaths and retrials of members. Yet a suggestion from one member of the executive that weekly handicrafts classes be established was opposed by her colleagues who argued that this was too 'trivial' a pursuit for a political organisation. Interestingly this strategy was implemented by the EWCA, as will be discussed. GSEC, *Executive Committee Minute Book*, SR 187/891036/1/6, 24 November 1926.

<sup>20</sup> Hughes, 'Fragmented Feminists', p. 24.

<sup>21</sup> *The Herald*, 14 April 1933, p. 8. GSEC, *Executive Committee Minute Book*, SR 187/891036/1/6, 3 March 1933. Notably declining membership is not attributed as a cause of the closure.

<sup>22</sup> *The Herald*, 14 April 1933, p. 8 and 13 May 1933, p. 9.

<sup>23</sup> This was also an objective of the EWCA, as will be discussed.

<sup>24</sup> Unfortunately records of this organisation did not survive.

Labour took control of the town council in 1933. Members of the GSEC with political aspirations may have found these difficult to realise largely as a consequence of the decline of the Moderate coalition.<sup>25</sup> The GSEC's limited success in facilitating the election of women to public bodies in the interwar years could partially be attributed to this, as its connections with the coalition may have become relatively useless in helping them gain access to the public sphere for their members. In spite of this, the GSEC continued to 'prepare members for local government work' until its closure. Arguably the changing political circumstances of Glasgow's municipal authorities were also instrumental in disbandment of the GSEC.

As the EWCA was formed in 1919, after the initial enfranchisement of women, it did not have a direct role in the campaign for the vote. Innes argues that the development of Women's Citizens' Associations throughout Britain contributed to the new stage in women's entry into public life. She states, quoting Alberti, that 'there was no sense that the struggle was over', although there was 'a perception that the struggle would change'.<sup>26</sup> These new organisations 'participated in a broad agenda centred on the perceived power of women's votes in forwarding gender equality and social reform', which was shared by other women's organisations such as the NUSEC and the Co-operative Women's Guild.<sup>27</sup>

The initial aims of the EWCA were much the same of that of the GSEC at this time, to educate women in how to use their vote and ensure that women became active and equal citizens. Indeed it was argued that 'a better, happier nation will not be secured by merely wishing for it'.<sup>28</sup> Instead the executive of the EWCA suggested that 'organisation' was necessary, as women 'irrespective of differences of politics, religion or education, must unite to form a solid body of opinion on the great social and moral questions for which they, as women, have a special responsibility'.<sup>29</sup> Ultimately it was argued that 'a woman voter could do very little to help the community by herself, but a great deal in co-operation with others'.<sup>30</sup> It was hoped that through such co-operative action, accompanied by the education provided by

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<sup>25</sup> This was also attributed to 'lack of funds'.

<sup>26</sup> S. Innes, 'Constructing Women's Citizenship in the Interwar Period: the Edinburgh Women Citizens' Association', *Women's History Review*, Vol. 13, No. 4, 2004, p. 623.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 628. Interestingly Eleanor Rathbone, president of the NUSEC, had a prominent role in the formation of the Women Citizens' Associations and envisaged them as 'broad based women's organisations' that would 'be ready' for when the fight for the vote recommenced following the First World War. Rathbone also viewed these organisations as a means to 'harness women's newfound sense of citizenship' as a 'permanent source of strength to the feminist movement'. In addition she hoped to involve a new group of women, especially married working-class women who were 'shy of organisations controlled by the well-to-do'. As noted, this became an objective of the EWCA and GWCA.

<sup>28</sup> Edinburgh Women Citizens Association (EWCA), *Second Annual Report*, National Archives of Scotland, GD333/2/1, 1919-1920.

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

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.* The GSEC shared this view, as did numerous other women's organisations including the Scottish Co-operative Women's Guild and Scottish Women's Rural Institutes.

the organisation, women would seek and achieve representation in 'local administration, and in the affairs of the nation and of the Empire'.<sup>31</sup>

The founding members of Women Citizens' Associations had been active in both the militant and non-militant branches of the suffrage campaign and this was no different in Edinburgh.<sup>32</sup> The executive committee of the EWCA was composed of prominent members of the WSPU, the WFL and the Edinburgh National Society for Women's Suffrage (ENSWs).<sup>33</sup> The differences between the two branches of the movement, the constitutional 'suffragists' and militant 'suffragettes', appear to have been overcome. This could largely be attributed to the fact that this was a new organisation, which allowed all members to reformulate their ideals and start afresh together. In contrast the GSEC retained much of the same ideals and membership from its earlier guise as a suffrage society. In this respect the Women Citizens' Associations had an advantage in its distance from the tensions inherent in the suffrage movement. It is possible that this facilitated the early growth of the EWCA, which had over a thousand members by the end of the first year.<sup>34</sup>

Most Scottish Women Citizens' Associations remained independent of the National Council of Women Citizens' Associations based in London. However, in 1919 a Scottish alternative was established, the Scottish Council of Women Citizens' Associations (SCWCA), to which all fourteen Women Citizen Associations (WCA) in Scotland became affiliated. By 1934 there were twenty-one member associations.<sup>35</sup> It was hoped that the formation of the SCWCA would facilitate co-operation between WCAs in Scotland and link them together for 'mutual help, and for combined pressure, when necessary, to secure social or political reforms'.<sup>36</sup> At annual meetings delegates from each WCA would express the views of their members and the work of the SCWCA for the following year would be decided upon.<sup>37</sup> The council then drew up an 'agreed common programme' of political and social subjects within which associations had the choice to work either collectively or individually.

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<sup>31</sup> The assertion of the importance of women's role in the future of the nation and empire was a tactic employed by many women's organisations following the First World War. For further information, see the discussion of the Scottish Women's Rural Institutes and its strategy of aligning its aim to that of the nation and empire in chapter two.

<sup>32</sup> As the campaign for the vote intensified in the early years of the twentieth century a division appeared and relations became strained between those who preferred to campaign for women's suffrage using constitutional methods, the 'suffragists' and the more militant 'suffragettes'. For a more in-depth analysis of the divisions between suffragists and suffragettes see S. S. Holton, *Feminism and Democracy: Women's Suffrage and Reform Politics in Britain, 1900-1918*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1986, pp. 29-52.

<sup>33</sup> S. Innes and J. Rendall, 'Women, Gender and Politics', in L. Abrams, E. Gordon, D. Simonton and E. J. Yeo (eds.), *Gender and Scottish History since 1700*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 2006, p. 44.

<sup>34</sup> Innes, 'Constructing Women's Citizenship in the Interwar Period', p. 628. Innes describes the EWCA as a large, well-organised and autonomous women's organisation. See appendix 1a, graph 1 which illustrates the sustained growth of the membership throughout the period.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid, p. 626.

<sup>36</sup> EWCA, *Souvenir booklet of the 21<sup>st</sup> Anniversary of Edinburgh Women Citizen's Association*, National Archives of Scotland, GD1/1076/19/1, 1939, p. 8.

<sup>37</sup> Scottish Council of Women Citizens' Associations (SCWCA), *Handbook for Women Citizens Associations of Scotland*, National Archives of Scotland, GD1/1076/18/1, 1935, p. 1.



Collective action proved popular with WCAs in Scotland working together on a range of issues, which included supporting local government or parliamentary measures relating to industrial or social reform, and ‘practical schemes of useful work for the betterment of the community’.<sup>38</sup> The SCWCA argued that united action ‘brought greater pressure to bear’ in promoting reforms that were considered to be beneficial for the community.<sup>39</sup> It stated that this was especially true in relation to support for parliamentary measures, as joint action through the Scottish council focused national opinion and placed more pressure upon parliament to ‘give effect to the desires of Women Citizens Associations’.<sup>40</sup> The common programme included both the promotion of equality, such as equal opportunity in industry and the professions and equal pay for equal work, as well as more hands on projects in local areas. The WCAs had a wide choice of work within the common programme, but each association had a degree of autonomy in its locality. A wide range of practical schemes were embarked upon with great initiative, such as running soup kitchens for children of the unemployed during winter months, or organising and funding holiday camps for ‘slum children’.<sup>41</sup>

The EWCA and the SCWCA also worked closely with other women’s organisations in Scotland including the Equal Citizenship societies.<sup>42</sup> In fact Innes argues that the distinction between the EWCA and Edinburgh Society for Equal Citizenship (ESEC) was ‘not easy to draw’ as it was common for one organisation to initiate activity on a particular issue and bring the other in to support them in deputations or joint committees.<sup>43</sup> The EWCA was also instrumental in the formation of the Edinburgh Local Elections Committee in co-operation with the ESEC and the Edinburgh branch of the NCW. Like the Joint Committee in Glasgow, this was formed to promote the candidature of ‘suitable women candidates’. Such women were supported ‘irrespective of party’ on the condition that they agreed to the programme set out by the Committee, which included housing, child welfare, civic recreation, food, public health and cleaning, and sex disabilities. The EWCA also discussed equality for women within the professions, equal employment rights, and other forms of legal equality, concerns shared by the GSEC as discussed. Issues such as the formation and expansion of the female police force in Scotland, for the protection of women and children, and child adoption were also prominent. In contrast to the GSEC, the EWCA also demanded more comprehensive improvements to working-class housing and the provision of more extensive maternity services.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid, p.4.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid, p.7.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Other projects included the management and running of a nursery school, volunteering in a children clinics and fund raising for women’s hospitals.

<sup>42</sup> Innes, ‘Constructing Women’s Citizenship in the Interwar Period’, p. 622.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid, p. 631. This was also often the case for the GSEC and GWCA in Glasgow.

<sup>44</sup> For further comparison of these two organisations in this respect see chapter three.

These latter concerns indicate the EWCA's comparatively greater alignment to working-class concerns. Indeed Innes argues that the EWCA hoped to include women from all political parties and 'to do politics differently', as it believed that women's politics could be 'above' party politics.<sup>45</sup> It organised along 'non-party and democratic lines'.<sup>46</sup> This had the aim of fostering 'a sense of citizenship in women' and allowed 'women of all political parties, or none' to become members and enabled the 'discussion of questions from all points of view'.<sup>47</sup> The annual subscription fee was also kept at a minimal rate throughout the interwar years to make membership affordable for working-class women. Innes states that the absence of membership records makes it difficult to determine the class composition of the EWCA, yet she suggests that the executive committee was largely comprised of 'well-to-do' members. Not only did such women add status to the EWCA, as was the case in many women's organisations, but these individuals often had the time to attend committee meetings and conferences. Indeed many were career philanthropists, in the Victorian sense, who had dedicated themselves to such work.<sup>48</sup> However the overall increase in membership throughout the 1920s would suggest some success in attracting women from all areas of the city, in fact branches were organised by parliamentary constituency.<sup>49</sup> In 1932 branches were established in the working-class areas of Leith and Broughton, with membership being approximately two hundred in each in the first year.<sup>50</sup>

Class tensions were less divisive in interwar Edinburgh than in Glasgow, which could be attributed to its relatively more stable economic position.<sup>51</sup> This may have facilitated co-operation between the EWCA and women of the labour movement.<sup>52</sup> Nevertheless there were divisions in political opinion within the membership, which was to become increasingly problematic when the executive of the EWCA decided to support female candidates in parliamentary elections in 1919. Some members opposed its decision to support a female Progressive candidate in 1922, resigning in protest as she was opposing a 'sitting member' who had been helpful to the association.<sup>53</sup> Yet throughout the period the EWCA continued to largely support female representatives of the Progressive coalition and also Independent

<sup>45</sup> Innes, 'Constructing Women's Citizenship in the Interwar Period', p. 627.

<sup>46</sup> EWCA, *Second Annual Report*, National Archives of Scotland, GD333/2/1, 1919-1920.

<sup>47</sup> SCWCA, *Constitution and Aims*, National Archives of Scotland, GD1/1076/1/6. The executive of the EWCA often described its deputations as 'representing all sections of the community', which may highlight the diversity of the membership.

<sup>48</sup> See chapter two for further discussion of philanthropy as a route into public life for 'well-to-do' women and chapter six for discussion of the previous involvement of women represented on the municipal authorities in Glasgow, Edinburgh and Perth in philanthropic activities.

<sup>49</sup> Innes, 'Constructing Women's Citizenship in the Interwar Period', p. 628. Also see appendix 1a, graph 1.

<sup>50</sup> EWCA, *Fourteenth Annual Report*, GD333/2/13, 1931-1932. Arguably the EWCA's success in attracting working-class membership may be explained by its promotion of issues such as housing and maternity. See chapter three for further details of these two campaigns.

<sup>51</sup> The economic and thus political situation of the two cities, and how such differing circumstances affected the work of each organisation will be discussed in greater detail in chapter three and six.

<sup>52</sup> EWCA, *Fourteenth Annual Report*, GD333/2/13, 1931-1932. In fact the EWCA held study circles on 'the Co-operative Movement and Guild Socialism'.

<sup>53</sup> Innes, 'Constructing Women's Citizenship in the Interwar Period', p. 627.

candidates.<sup>54</sup> Notably, like the GSEC, formal support was not given to women associated with the labour movement.

Membership of the EWCA reached its peak in the 1929-1930 session, with the executive arguing that the achievement of the extended political enfranchisement of women had 'aroused fresh interest in the activities of the Association' which enabled 'further development of the work'.<sup>55</sup> In this session a 'Junior Section' was established, which the executive argued 'typified the increasing interest in the duties and responsibilities of young people who are soon to exercise the power of the vote'.<sup>56</sup> However membership figures show a decline in the early 1930s. To combat this the EWCA made a committed attempt to extend the area of its operations. In 1934 it made surveys of the new housing areas and suburbs surrounding Edinburgh, with 'a view to finding out the possibilities'.<sup>57</sup> As a result it actively sought co-operation with existing groups and, where these did not exist, made attempts to form new branches.

Other responses to the declining membership included the formation of a Handicrafts Circle in 1934, as well as the provision of other entertainments for the members. The handicrafts classes provided by the EWCA were very much like those of the Rurals, although the exclusive aim of these classes was 'to guide and develop the artistic faculties of women'.<sup>58</sup> Its programme of classes, talks and demonstrations therefore developed the theme 'Art in the Home'.<sup>59</sup> An arts section, which provided classes in drama and 'physical culture', was also established in 1934 'to meet the desire for the expression of aspects of citizenship hitherto beyond the scope of the association's work'.<sup>60</sup> This was formed explicitly to 'appeal to a wider circle of women, and to emphasise the educational value of artistic expression as a contribution to citizenship'.<sup>61</sup> The establishment of the arts section may also have been an attempt to attract women to the organisation for more than political discussions, and also echoed the objectives of the Rurals in forming classes in dramatic art, country dancing and singing.<sup>62</sup> Similarly, a 'social and card club' was also formed in the early 1930s to provide a more social side to the

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<sup>54</sup> See chapter six for further details.

<sup>55</sup> EWCA, *Tenth Annual Report*, GD333/2/9, 1927-1928.

<sup>56</sup> EWCA, *Twelfth Annual Report*, GD333/2/11, 1929-1930.

<sup>57</sup> EWCA, *Seventeenth Annual Report*, GD333/2/16, 1934-1935.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.* The Rurals' classes will be discussed below. Notably there was no emphasis on the ways in which women could develop their skills in order to sell products and make an additional income for their families, as there was in the Rurals, although sales of work were used to raise funds for the EWCA.

<sup>59</sup> The Rurals were instrumental in arranging a visit to the National Exhibition of Needlework for members of the EWCA, and one of the Rurals pioneers, Nannie Brown gave several talks to branches of the EWCA. Miss Nannie Brown is often described as 'A fine Scottish character who has done more for the Scottish movement than any other woman' in histories of the movement. The Ayrshire Federation, *The Best of the Old, The Best of the New: History of the Ayrshire Federation SWRI, 1921-2006*, Walker and Connell Ltd, Darvel, Ayrshire, 2006, p. 11.

<sup>60</sup> EWCA, *Seventeenth Annual Report*, GD 333/2/16, 1934-1935.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>62</sup> See chapters two and five for further discussion of these classes.

organisation.<sup>63</sup> The members desire for recreation became increasingly influential. Social and musical evenings became a regular feature of the programme, with it being argued that these provided ‘friendliness and good fellowship’ and catered for the ‘lighter side of life’. It would appear that all of these measures were successful with membership increasing in 1935.<sup>64</sup>

The provision of these recreational facilities was also arguably a response to the development of women’s organisations in Scotland more generally. The success of the Rurals, and also to an extent the Guild, in providing a space for women to socialise, as well as useful and interesting activities for women to become involved in, would have been influential in the change in the EWCA’s programme in the 1930s. Moreover, the disbandment of the GSEC would not have gone without notice given its place in the network of feminist organisations in Scotland.<sup>65</sup> The GSEC’s failure to diversify and provide such recreational pursuits for its members may have contributed to its closure. Undoubtedly the EWCA would have wished to avoid such an outcome.

Both of these organisations were an integral part of the feminist movement in their respective cities, with there being significant continuities in their policies for the realisation of equality for women. The GSEC and EWCA both campaigned for equality in the professions and equal pay for equal work. More importantly both placed an emphasis on their shared aim to educate women in how to use their votes through the promotion of ‘active citizenship’, which it was hoped would facilitate women’s representation in public life on municipal and national government bodies. However there were significant differences between these two organisations. The GSEC had its roots firmly in the suffrage movement. Its membership was largely composed of former ‘constitutional’ suffragists who were, according to Hughes, politically and class biased due to their support of the Liberal and Conservative Parties. The EWCA, on the other hand, was formed in 1919 and its members had been involved in a full spectrum of suffrage organisations, including the WSPU, the WFL as well as the Edinburgh Suffrage Society. While individuals may have had political affiliations, it was a non-political organisation and therefore Innes argues that it had an inclusive membership. In contrast, Hughes argues that the GSEC’s political affiliations caused friction with women in the labour movement in Glasgow resulting in minimal co-operation. The political situation in each city was extremely influential on the policies of the organisations and issues supported. In Glasgow this proved to be extremely divisive, in contrast to Edinburgh.<sup>66</sup> The GSEC disbanded in 1933 citing financial reasons, while the EWCA survived until the early 1990s.

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<sup>63</sup> The social and card club also raised funds for the EWCA, with £37, 15s being donated in 1930, £19, 10s in 1931, £32, 10s in 1932, and £23 in 1933. EWCA, *Twelfth Annual Report-Fifteenth Annual Report*, GD333/2/11-14, 1929-1930 – 1932-1933.

<sup>64</sup> See appendix 1a, graph 1.

<sup>65</sup> The EWCA was a member of the SCWCA, as was the GWCA, to which the GSEC was amalgamated. The GSEC also had connections to the ESEC, which was closely linked to the EWCA.

<sup>66</sup> This will be discussed in greater detail in all of the subsequent chapters.

The EWCA's successful diversification through its attempts to extend the area of its operations into both suburban and municipal housing areas surrounding the city, as well as the provision of more recreational activities for its members, may be notable in its relative longevity.<sup>67</sup> These differences between the GSEC and the EWCA illustrate the diversity of the women's movement, and the way in which feminism was practiced, even within the group of explicitly feminist women's organisations.

### Scottish Co-operative Women's Guild

The Scottish Co-operative Women's Guild is the oldest of the four women's organisations under consideration. The formation of a Women's Co-operative League was first proposed in 1883, and the first branch of the Scottish Co-operative Women's Guild was established under the auspices of Kinning Park Co-operative Society in 1890. Both men and women were involved in its formation, and these individuals were later credited, not only with promoting women's meetings and gathering interested women together, but also with establishing an Association to which all these branches could become affiliated.<sup>68</sup> This was later to become the Scottish Co-operative Women's Guild.<sup>69</sup> From its inception the Guild was closely involved with the Co-operative movement of which it was a part.<sup>70</sup>

The Guild's membership was almost exclusively comprised of working-class women. Gordon states that in the years leading up to the First World War it was the largest working-class women's organisation in Scotland, and was aimed at the wives of the 'better off' sections of the working class.<sup>71</sup> If the members of the Guild's central council are taken as representative of the membership as a whole, and admittedly this is problematic, photographs suggest that the membership was largely middle-aged in the interwar period, which was in stark contrast to the significantly younger membership of 1890.<sup>72</sup> The Guild's membership continued to grow steadily after 1918 with a sharp increase from 1919 to 1921, after which membership of the Guild fluctuated, most likely as a consequence of the uncertainty of the

<sup>67</sup> The EWCA's first suburban branch was formed in 1933. EWCA, *Fifteenth Annual Report*, GD333/2/14, 1932-1933.

<sup>68</sup> K. M. Callen, *History of the Scottish Co-operative Women's Guild*, SCWS, Glasgow, 1952, p. 2. This included Mr Duncan McCulloch, Mr Robert Stewart, Mrs McLean (who was to become known as 'mother' McLean in the interwar period), Mrs McAulay and Mrs Rutherford.

<sup>69</sup> Representatives from eleven branches attended the first meeting of the central council in Glasgow with Mrs Rutherford being elected general secretary. At a meeting in November 1892 the constitution was agreed upon and the central committee was formed to include Mrs McLean as president.

<sup>70</sup> The Co-operative movement was established in Scotland with the formation of the Scottish Co-operative Wholesale Society in 1868. While the Co-operative movement began essentially as a consumer's movement for more equitable trade and fairer prices for the working classes, ideological demands for a fairer distribution of wealth and demands for a Co-operative Commonwealth, where nations could trade fairly free of capitalism, soon resulted in the formation of a political side to the movement and distinct Co-operative political ideology and associated discourses.

<sup>71</sup> E. Gordon, *Women and the Labour Movement in Scotland, 1850-1914*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1991, p. 266.

<sup>72</sup> See appendix 1b, figures 1 and 2.

interwar economy in Scotland.<sup>73</sup> There was sustained growth from 1929 throughout the 1930s. The Guild combated the effects of the declining economy, and its possible affects on membership figures, by expanding into rural areas and taking advantage of ‘competition in transport services’ and the establishment of ‘new routes’. It also formed branches in the municipal housing estates constructed on the peripheries of Scotland’s major cities and towns in the interwar years, notably Glasgow and Edinburgh, where the ‘response was most encouraging’.<sup>74</sup> The expansion and development of the Guild eventually resulted in the need for subdivision into eight sections, each with an executive committee.

At the end of the First World War the Guild’s commitment to the wider Co-operative movement was also strengthened. Historians of the Co-operative movement, including Callen, have argued that the movement was ‘severely handicapped’ during the war due to the ‘unfair distribution of the available food supplies of the country’. She suggests that ‘it was the common practice’ to find that ‘Co-operators did not receive sufficient food in their branch shops to supply the needs of their members’.<sup>75</sup> The situation became so acute that the Co-operative Union called an Emergency conference in 1917 to discuss the situation, at which the Scottish Guild was represented. It was at this conference that it was first argued that the Co-operative movement should be represented directly in Parliament and in local government to prevent such injustices from reoccurring. This resolution received unanimous support from the delegates and work immediately began in promoting the Co-operative Party throughout the movement. The Guild approached this work with renewed vigour. The First World War had disrupted many of the Guild’s activities, with Callen stating that a large number of ‘our halls and meeting places were commandeered by the government for military purposes’.<sup>76</sup> As a result the Guild became disorganised and many branches closed until alternative accommodation could be found. In spite of such disruption Callen argues that the educational work of the Guild was ‘fully maintained’ throughout the war.

However not all members were in agreement with the Guild’s increasing involvement in the promotion of direct Co-operative representation in Parliament.<sup>77</sup> Outspoken members argued that the Labour Party and ILP represented the Co-operative movement, and the proposed formation of a Co-operative Party was a waste of money and resources. The Guild continued to canvass and support the Labour Party and ILP as well as the Co-operative Party. In 1925 when the central council made it compulsory for branches to affiliate to the

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<sup>73</sup> See appendix 1a, graph 2. This rise in membership may be attributed to increased family incomes following the return of husbands from war, which may have enabled more working-class women to pay the subscription fees.

<sup>74</sup> Scottish Co-operative Women’s Guild (SCWG), *Thirty-fourth Annual Report*, Glasgow Regional Archives, CSW1/39/6/34, 1927-1928, and *Thirty-seventh Annual Report*, CSW1/39/6/37, 1930-1931.

<sup>75</sup> Callen, *History of the Scottish Co-operative Women’s Guild*, p. 15.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18.

<sup>77</sup> See chapter four for further details.

Co-operative Party further protests were raised, most vociferously by Mrs Helen Gault of Knightswood, a well-known ILP propagandist.<sup>78</sup>

The education provided for members by the Guild largely focused on Co-operative politics and ideology. The classes for women Co-operators and speaker's classes encouraged women to actively use this education and stand as candidates themselves in local elections. The central council also expected guildwomen to take a more prominent role in the Co-operative movement and put themselves forward for positions on the committees of Co-operative societies, the Co-operative Party and other related bodies. The Guild's increasing involvement in Co-operative politics was viewed by the central council as empowering for its members, as this would give them greater opportunity to take an active role in the movement and local politics.

Many members continued to oppose the politicisation of the Guild, especially those who were not politically motivated in terms of seeking representation within the movement or in municipal politics. The Guild attracted many such women, who viewed the Guild as an opportunity for recreation. It was a place that they could go to get away from the domestic drudgery of the home. Indeed one of the Guild's original aims was to 'enable the women of the Co-operative movement to meet together in friendly converse and by so doing, help to break the monotonous existence of even the most comfortable home'.<sup>79</sup> Guild meetings also provided the opportunity for working-class women to meet other women of a similar age and background, who could provide friendship and support, and also financial, child-rearing, and home management advice. The love and friendship offered by the Guild was much publicised in their own pamphlets with it being suggested that 'many, many women, lonely and despairing, have been restored to new life and interest by the loving help of her Guild sisters'.<sup>80</sup>

Members also emphasised the social functions of the Guild, Mary Tourish a member of the Springburn Guild, stated that

It was a social life for them and somewhere for them to go and they were interested in the Guild as a social life cause in these days they didn't have the Bingo, and they loved the Guild. Once a month we had a dance and we had hot pie and peas and a wee dance. And we had speakers or somebody comin' demonstrating to us.<sup>81</sup>

Such demonstrations largely focused upon improving housewifery. These were very popular in the Guild's early years, with topics such as 'flannelette and its dangers' being common.<sup>82</sup> Similarly sewing classes, cookery demonstrations and health lectures were all prominent

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<sup>78</sup> Helen Gault's career in municipal politics will be discussed in greater detail in chapter six.

<sup>79</sup> As quoted in Gordon, *Women and the Labour Movement in Scotland*, p. 266.

<sup>80</sup> Callen, *History of the Scottish Co-operative Women's Guild*, p. vii.

<sup>81</sup> J. Faley, *Up Oor Close, Memories of Domestic Life in Glasgow Tenements, 1910-1945*, Oxford, White Cockade in association with Springburn Museum Trust, 1990, p. 126.

<sup>82</sup> Gordon, *Women and the Labour Movement in Scotland*, p. 267.

features of early Guild programmes. Such domestic training for women remained popular in the Guild branches and with members in the interwar period. Arts and crafts classes were also provided which allowed the 'creation of lovely and useful articles'.

However, while such classes had co-existed with the political aspect of the Guild, in the early 1930s explicit divisions began to appear between the central council and the membership as a result of increasing emphasis placed on Co-operative politics throughout the 1920s. In 1931 the president Mrs Hardstaff stated that 'perhaps even more gratifying than the increase in membership is the greater interest branches are taking in vital matters'.<sup>83</sup> She argued that it was essential that branches 'get away, if possible' from domestic affairs. Hardstaff insisted that

No matter how nice and pleasant it may be to do fancy work, we are not going to bring about great reforms by fancywork classes. The time for fancy work classes in our branches is past: we must go forward.<sup>84</sup>

A year later she even expressed relief at the fact that such classes were 'receding into the background' and had even been abolished by some branches'. Hardstaff branded this a 'step in the right direction'.<sup>85</sup> Such sentiments, and the designation of political educational classes as more worthy, alienated those members who attended Guild meetings for 'a night out'. In this respect, the Guild had provided an important function for many of the working-class guildwomen. While there were many forms of entertainment in urban areas, it was not necessarily the case that the working-class housewife could afford to participate, or if she perceived herself to be a 'respectable' working-class woman, want to frequent the dancehall, pub or cinema. The Guild meeting was one source of reliable recreation for many women. Hardstaff was aware of this and tried to resolve the conflict developing between those members who advocated politics and those who wanted the Guild to remain recreational in nature. She stated that 'all progress is slow' with some branches being 'much more progressive than others', therefore she urged

The more active and progressive to be kindly and tolerant, and to realise that our guild organisation has among its members many women who have had a hard life; many who have been fighting poverty all their days, and whose time has been taken up with a multitude of duties, having little or no opportunity to study questions relating to the Co-operative Movement or of national importance. To many the Guild is a 'night out' and we welcome them, even if it is for the 'night out' that they come, and earnestly hope that they will soon realise the greatness of the Co-operative Movement and take an interest in the ideals and principles.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> SCWG, *Thirty-eighth Annual Report*, CSW1/39/6/38, 1931-1932.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> SCWG, *Thirty-ninth Annual Report*, CSW1/39/6/39, 1932-1933.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.



Ultimately the aim was to ensure that all branches were considering the politics of the Co-operative movement and the promotion of political education continued throughout the remainder of the 1930s. It would be naïve to assume that all of the ‘backward’ branches would acquiesce to the central council’s requests, and undoubtedly many branches continued to provide entertainment for those women who wanted ‘a night out’. Hardstaff realised this when she insisted that ‘our organisation must not be judged by one or two backward branches, but by the movement as a whole.’<sup>87</sup>

In spite of this conflict over the aims of the Guild, the central council continued to encourage guildswomen to consider ‘Co-operative subjects and questions affecting the movement’ such as questions on civic politics, health and housing, travel and education.<sup>88</sup> While a new emphasis was placed on the importance of guildswomen’s involvement in Co-operative politics, many of the themes discussed by the Guild in the pre-war period continued to be relevant, illustrating a continuity in the immediate concerns of working-class women. The medical inspection of school children and free school meals were prominent on the agenda of the Guild in the earlier period, with the equivalent in the interwar period being its demand for free milk for school children. Similarly in the pre-war period the Guild demanded a minimum wage of Co-operative employees, many of whom were women, with increased wages for female Co-operative employees being a concern in the 1920s and 1930s.

The Guild’s increasing commitment to Co-operative politics was accompanied by an emphasis on wider working-class concerns.<sup>89</sup> The rising level of unemployment became an important issue for the Guild in the interwar years, with resolutions relating to this issue being frequently submitted to the government. These often demanded that unemployment should be treated as a national problem rather than a local burden. In particular, youth unemployment was targeted by the Guild. It demanded that the Government raise the school age to sixteen, and argued that proposed economy cuts in education be reduced. The Guild also protested against the household means test, arguing as many working-class organisations did, that this measure broke up homes and resulted in many families living on the poverty line.<sup>90</sup> In addition the Guild supported the trade union movement and the workers it represented, most notably the miners in the lock-out of 1921 and general strike of 1926.

The Guild also promoted measures that it argued would ensure female equality.<sup>91</sup> Like the GSEC and the EWCA, it campaigned for a further extension of the franchise until this was gained in 1928. Indeed it sent its first petition for women’s suffrage to the government in 1893, and was the first advocate for this measure among the broader labour movement. From the Guild’s inception, the central council encouraged branches to consider ‘all questions

<sup>87</sup> SCWG, *Thirty-eighth Annual Report*, CSW1/39/6/38, 1931-1932.

<sup>88</sup> SCWG, *Thirty-ninth Annual Report*, CSW1/39/6/39, 1932-1933.

<sup>89</sup> Each of the following issues is discussed in much greater detail in chapter four.

<sup>90</sup> See chapters four and six for a more detailed description of the Household Means Test and its effects.

<sup>91</sup> A detailed analysis of each of these issues will be provided in chapter two.

relating to women'.<sup>92</sup> The Guild affiliated to, and had delegates on the committee of the non-militant GSS, which later became the GSEC.<sup>93</sup> It was also instrumental in the rent strikes of 1915, and subsequent campaigns in the interwar period for rent restrictions.<sup>94</sup> Related demands for adequate housing were also a central plank of the Guild's agenda throughout the interwar years. Improved maternity care, child welfare provisions, mother's pensions and family allowances were also prominent issues on its agenda.

In addition the Scottish Guild was prominently involved in the formation of the International Co-operative Women's Guild (ICWG) in 1921. At the international congresses held by the ICWG Co-operative Guilds and the equivalents in many European countries met to discuss which issues and reforms were being pursued in each country.<sup>95</sup> Prominent guildswomen from all of the countries attended, such as Margaret Llewelyn Davies and Eleanor Barton from England, Frau Freundlich from Austria and Miss Callen represented Scotland throughout the period. The issues discussed often reflected and even led discussions in the national guilds. Those adopted in Scotland included 'The Rights of Women in Co-operative Societies', 'Mothers of the Future' and 'Resolutions on Disarmament', which was designed to unite guildwomen in their campaign for peace.<sup>96</sup> Callen argues that such frequent conferences allowed relations to be strengthened between Scottish guildwomen and women Co-operators overseas. In this way members acquired 'a deeper knowledge of each other's difficulties and problems' and were 'imbued with a keen desire to help and encourage our sister guildwomen'.<sup>97</sup> By attending such conferences Scottish women could also meet with their Co-operative sisters and in the words of Callen 'find them inspired by the same ideals, facing the same difficulties and sharing the same hopes'.<sup>98</sup>

The Guild provided women with educational opportunities and encouraged them to become involved in Co-operative politics with the hope that this would result in women gaining positions of influence within the movement and in wider society. This drive for political awareness may have alienated some members who did not believe that the Co-operative movement should be politically represented, or simply were not interested in the

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<sup>92</sup> Gordon, *Women and the Labour Movement in Scotland*, p. 268.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> The Guild's involvement in the Rent Strikes and subsequent Rent Restriction legislation will be discussed in chapter four.

<sup>95</sup> The first international congress was held in Basle in 1921, followed by Brussels in 1923, Ghent in 1924, Stockholm in 1927, Vienna in 1930, London in 1934, which coincided with the English Guild's Jubilee celebrations, and Paris in 1937.

<sup>96</sup> Callen, *History of the Scottish Co-operative Women's Guild*, p. 11.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid, p. 12.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid, p. 13. The ICWG continued traditions of 'Internationalism' inherent in Co-operative ideology, which outlined plans for a 'Co-operative commonwealth' where all people worked together for the common good. This was based on an alternative democracy where capitalism would be abolished in favour of a society built upon collectivism.

politics of the movement, but it did not seem to adversely affect the membership figures.<sup>99</sup> In fact the central council insisted that ‘considering the very many counter attractions that are provided for the education and amusement of the masses, the Guild was more than holding its own’.<sup>100</sup> The president Mrs Hardstaff argued in 1933 that ‘year by year the Guild increases in number, and we may congratulate the Guild on the progress that has been achieved, and we are encouraged to continue to educate and agitate for the social reforms that are so necessary for the welfare of the community’.<sup>101</sup> Therefore for many guildwomen the Guild provided the ‘link between the home and the great world beyond’.<sup>102</sup>

### Scottish Women’s Rural Institutes

The first Scottish Women’s Rural Institutes was founded at Longniddry in East Lothian in June 1917 following a year of campaigning. The Women’s Institute movement had begun in 1897 in Canada, later spreading to Wales in 1910 and England in 1915. The Scottish Institutes, which were to become affectionately known as the ‘Rurals’ by their members, shared their aims with these earlier Institutes. Indeed the early pioneers in Scotland received assistance from prominent women from each of these national organisations in campaigning for the formation of the movement in Scotland. In particular Mrs Madge Watt, president of the Canadian movement, lectured in Scotland on the aims and methods of Women’s Institutes in 1917, just as she had done in England two years previously.<sup>103</sup>

The importance of the agency of individuals such as Mrs Watt in the formation of the Women’s Institute movement cannot be underestimated, and the same is true in Scotland. Catherine Blair is acknowledged as the driving force behind the formation of the Rurals in Scotland.<sup>104</sup> Blair was a suffragette and although she was never personally involved with the radical branch of the movement, citing her family commitments as preventing her from taking part in physical demonstrations, she did support the WSPU and its actions.<sup>105</sup> Leneman argues that she was one of Scotland’s strongest advocates of militancy.<sup>106</sup> In 1914 she argued that suffragettes who had burned down Whitekirk Church had been driven to such action by a government intent on ignoring the suffrage issue. While Blair did not join such protests, she supported the actions of the WSPU in hundreds of letters sent to the Scottish press. She also

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<sup>99</sup> Again see appendix 1a, graph 2.

<sup>100</sup> SCWG, *Thirty-eighth Annual Report*, CSW1/39/6/38, 1931-1932.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid, and SCWG, *Fortieth Annual Report*, CSW1/39/6/40, 1933-1934.

<sup>102</sup> Callen, *History of the Scottish Co-operative Women’s Guild*, p. 11.

<sup>103</sup> Mrs Watt was also present at the first ever meeting of a Women’s Institute in Scotland at Longniddry.

<sup>104</sup> See J. W. R. Scott, *The story of the Women’s Institute Movement in England and Wales and Scotland*, Idbury, Kingham, Oxon., 1925, p. 214, J. E. Courtney, *Countrywomen in council. The English and Scottish Women’s Institutes*, Oxford University Press, London, 1935, p. 122 and also <http://www.swri.org.uk/ruraljourney.html> for the SWRI’s contemporary opinion of Blair.

<sup>105</sup> As stated the WSPU pioneered more militant forms of protest to gain the enfranchisement of women.

<sup>106</sup> Leneman, *The Scottish Suffragettes*, p. 55.

gave lectures on women's suffrage and provided a refuge for suffragette prisoners released under the Cat and Mouse Act.<sup>107</sup> Leneman also states that Blair's husband fully supported her and even resigned his vice-presidency of the local Liberal party as a result of the government's treatment of the suffrage issue.<sup>108</sup> Blair's support for female enfranchisement and later demands for female equality was an important influence in the early years of the Rurals.

Blair stated in *Rural Journey*, her history of the movement, that the inspiration for the formation of Rurals came from the tearful complaints of her family's dairymaid that

Men ken naething about it. They dinna understand. They are aye meetin' their neebors in the stable, an' passin' the time o' day wi' the maister; or they're up at the station speakin' tae somebody; but for the likes o' me, there's never a body tae speak tae.<sup>109</sup>

These sentiments were described as the movements 'raison d'être'. Blair's belief in female equality is illustrated in her support of this woman's predicament. She argued that a woman had a right to have the same opportunities as men to speak to other people about her life and generally have contact with the world outside her home. The formation of women's institutes was therefore a solution to combat the isolation of women in rural areas. Blair also suggested that such institutes would provide a 'substitute' for 'social co-operation' as women were denied the pleasure of working in common.<sup>110</sup> In addition she claimed that men did not understand the 'craving for social intercourse' and the 'nervous depression resultant from all work and no play'.<sup>111</sup> Therefore the 'dullness' of women's lives was also to be 'combated' through the formation of such women's institutes in rural villages.

Blair was strategic in gaining support for the Institute movement in Scotland. Not only did she have to persuade rural women to join but she also had to gain institutional support and funding for the organisation. Blair had first encountered the Women's Institute movement in 1916 while preparing for an address on 'The Farmhouse in Relation to Food Supply and Labour'. An account of the work of the movement in England in relation to the English Agricultural Organisation Society (EAOS) interested her and she wrote immediately to its secretary Mr Nugent Harris.<sup>112</sup> He responded with 'much valuable information' and the relationship with Mr Nugent Harris and the EAOS proved to be instrumental in the early days of the Rurals. In fact Blair followed the example of the English Institute and justified the

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<sup>107</sup> This act was introduced as a solution to hunger strike. Striking women would be released to their homes where they could recover to full health before being re-imprisoned. Yet while such women were placed under police supervision in their homes, many managed to escape to safe houses.

<sup>108</sup> Leneman, *The Scottish Suffragettes*, p. 55.

<sup>109</sup> C. Blair, *Rural Journey, A History of the S.W.R.I from Cradle to Majority*, Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd, Edinburgh, 1940, p. 11.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid*, p. 9.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid*, p. 14.

<sup>112</sup> For further information see Scott, *The story of the Women's Institute Movement in England and Wales and Scotland*, p. 218.

formation of Women's Institutes as 'a help' in food production and conservation. As a result the necessity of the Rurals in the war effort and later in 'improving the nation' was emphasised. The Rurals remained fiercely patriotic throughout the interwar years with its guiding motto being 'For Home and Country'.<sup>113</sup>

After 'setting the official machinery in motion' Blair began the process of rousing public opinion through a campaign of publicity for the new movement. She stated that the editors of the Scottish press received her with 'open arms' now that they were 'no longer being asked to publish letters or articles dealing with the Militant Suffrage question'.<sup>114</sup> As a result representatives from the Women's Country Agricultural Committee's and the Farm Servants' Union were present at the inaugural meeting in Edinburgh in 1917, with this meeting being given broad press coverage.<sup>115</sup> Yet the formation of the Rurals was not always met with approval. Indeed Blair had to overcome the apathy and opposition of women to involvement in public meetings, which she had first encountered when campaigning for female enfranchisement. She described women's suffrage as 'the burning political question in those pre-war days'. However, many women she approached for support argued that 'I have a good husband and a good home, and I don't want a vote'.<sup>116</sup> Blair sympathised and understood such apathy stating that it was only understandable 'when one considers that the women had no time for anything but the day's endless duties'.<sup>117</sup> Thus it was her intention to campaign for and provide leisure time and space for 'country women' in order that they could have the opportunity to discuss such issues as suffrage and female equality.

Blair and her supporters embarked upon a scheme of door-to-door canvassing to persuade women on all of the farms in her immediate neighbourhood to attend a meeting to discuss the possibility of forming an Institute. In response Blair suggested that members of the community informed them that 'the women may promise to come, but you'll find they won't turn up'.<sup>118</sup> Similarly when Blair later decided to gauge interest in other areas of Scotland, writing to a leading Ayrshire agriculturalist asking for the names of women who might be interested in becoming involved, he informed her that all the women in his part of the country were too busy with farm work to be able to attend meetings. Enraged she replied that she had never known men so busy on the farms that they could not attend meetings. Furthermore she argued that 'as they (men) had always regarded themselves as the Lords of Creation', 'they might manage to milk the cows and look after the bairns on one evening a month when the

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<sup>113</sup> See chapter five for further analysis.

<sup>114</sup> Blair, *Rural Journey*, p. 19-20.

<sup>115</sup> Courtney, *Countrywomen in council*, p. 124. Also in attendance were Miss Jobson of the Scottish Rural Workers, Mrs L Mackenzie of the National Union of Women Workers, and representatives of the Scottish Agricultural Organisation Society, the Scottish smallholders Society, and three of Scotland's Agricultural Colleges.

<sup>116</sup> Blair, *Rural Journey*, p. 16.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid.

Institutes met!’<sup>119</sup> Nevertheless, given such male attitudes and entrenched notions of women’s duty to the home and children the responses from women were not surprising.

In spite of such opposition and criticism Blair continued her campaign putting forward the case for an Institute movement in Scotland at a suffrage meeting in February 1917. Two months later, she persuaded the Scottish Council of Agriculture to pass a resolution ‘realising the importance of social life in the development of agriculture and the importance of home life in rural economy’. Blair continued to write letters to the rural press and daily newspapers. Eventually she received the support of the vice-chairman and chairman of the Board of Agriculture, Dr Robert Greig and Sir Robert Wright. As a result, the Secretary for Scotland, Mr Munro, also received a deputation of women from the Rurals. Blair ensured that this was representative of the membership; it included Lady Carlaw Martin; Mrs. Hamilton of Hairmyres; Mrs Forbes of Rothiemay; Miss Anderson to represent the smallholders; Miss Jobson to represent farm workers’ wives; and Blair herself who represented farmers’ wives. The deputation was successful and Munro gave the Rurals his warm approval, authorising the appointment by the Board of Agriculture of an organiser and a clerk for approximately two years until the movement was of a sufficient size to form a central council that would then replace the organiser. He also hoped that the movement would be strong enough following these initial two years, in terms of size and standing, to apply for and receive grants to support itself.<sup>120</sup> The appointed organiser, Miss Agnes Campbell, was immediately called away to serve on the ‘Tinkers’ Commission’ and was unable to give her full attention to the Rurals until 1918. Blair replaced her as a ‘voluntary organiser’ raising funds from friends and well-wishers.<sup>121</sup>

The development of the Rurals, both in terms of membership and number of branches, was impressive. Membership grew significantly and constantly throughout the 1920s and early 1930s, most remarkable was the doubling of membership between 1918 and 1919.<sup>122</sup> The establishment of branches throughout the period was also rapid, increasing from 35 in 1918 to 930 in 1932.<sup>123</sup> Rurals were formed throughout Scotland, from small towns to more isolated villages. The Board of Agriculture was actively involved in the formation of the Rurals’ constitution, which provided for a conference, a financial committee, and an advisory committee, which was composed of two representatives from a north-western, a north-eastern, a central and a southern area. The three agricultural colleges in Scotland could also appoint a representative. Ultimately the Board’s organiser held full power. The Board also suggested

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<sup>119</sup> Ibid, p. 17.

<sup>120</sup> Scott, *The story of the Women’s Institute Movement*, p. 217.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid. The Board of Agriculture also informed Blair of other Scottish women who had expressed an interest in the formation of an Institute movement in Scotland. Consequently she made contact with Mrs Gooch from Banavie and Miss E. B. Mitchell from Biggar. Both enthusiastically joined her in the campaign for the formation of further institutes.

<sup>122</sup> See appendix 1a, graph 3a.

<sup>123</sup> See appendix 1a, graph 3b.

that a federated system be instituted. Under this scheme each federation would appoint a representative to the central committee and each Rural would affiliate to this committee.<sup>124</sup> This amendment was not carried, and the Board's suggestion resulted in continued controversy between those who supported the accepted area system, which had a certain level of dependence on the guidance and funding of the board, and those that favoured independence through a federated system of organisation. This led to a very public dispute between Catherine Blair and Miss Campbell, the appointed organiser, which was especially divisive.

The Rurals' relationship with the Board of Agriculture became increasingly strained culminating in the Board's decision in 1922 to end its official connection with the Rurals 'in the interests of the Institutes'.<sup>125</sup> However the Rurals did not become entirely independent. The movement received a five year grant of £3,000, with it being hoped that it would be 'on its feet' at the end of this period. In November 1922 a central council was appointed, with five area committees, to take over control of the movement from Miss Campbell. Blair continued to campaign for the establishment of a federated system, which would result in total independence from the Board. She regularly wrote letters to the rural press and national newspapers outlining her position and suggesting that the area system resulted in fragmentation of the movement. Those who defended the area system as 'entirely democratic' were not so vociferous, but the controversy raged on, especially in the letters pages of the movement's journal, *Scottish Home and Country*.

At the end of this grant period in 1928 the Rurals eventually became entirely independent from the board with its new headquarters being located in Perth. As Sir Robert Greig had predicted, 'there will be no money, no red-tape and no control, and the Institutes will be free to develop as they please'.<sup>126</sup> The central council was now in total control of the finance of the organisation. Again there was dispute over the course of action that should be taken with regards to reorganisation. After much discussion, many letters in *Scottish Home and Country*, and national voting in each branch, a federated scheme of organisation was adopted, theoretically replacing the area system. Yet in reality both systems co-existed. The area system was not entirely abandoned, although the formation of federations became more numerous and important.<sup>127</sup> By 1930 the central council reported that almost every county had its own federation and election to the central council was through the federation system.<sup>128</sup> In spite of this, disagreements continued throughout the remainder of the 1930s between Blair

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<sup>124</sup> The English Institutes operated under a federated system, with the NFWI quickly establishing its independence from the Agricultural Board.

<sup>125</sup> For further details see Blair, *Rural Journey*, p. 70-103, and Scott, *The story of the Women's Institute Movement*, p. 219-227.

<sup>126</sup> Scott, *The story of the Women's Institute Movement*, p. 232.

<sup>127</sup> Courtney, *Countrywomen in council*, p. 131.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid*, p. 134. Courtney suggested that in this, and many other respects, the constitution of the Scottish Rurals differed little from that of the NFWI in England.

and the central committee.<sup>129</sup> Yet it would appear that the membership were largely unaffected by this controversy, it certainly did not adversely affect membership figures.<sup>130</sup>

From its inception the Rurals were built solidly on a democratic basis, which prioritised 'just representation'. The following became the model for Institute committees:

The following is a typical Women's Institute Committee, due regard being had to the representation of all churches, all political opinions, older and younger members, and different districts in the parish: Proprietor's wife – 1, representatives from the households of the learned professions – ministers, doctors, teachers – 2, farmer's wives or daughters – 2, smallholders or crofters – 2, farm servants or cottars – 2, domestic servants – 1, younger girls – 2.<sup>131</sup>

It was also decided to make the Rurals free from patronage. Nevertheless some of the Rurals had honorary presidents who were titled.<sup>132</sup> In rural areas there seemed to be a great deal of respect for what would have traditionally been the laird's or largest landowner's wife. This was arguably a product of existing social organisation, tradition and history within a given area.<sup>133</sup> It was also probable that a Rural that had such endorsement may have been taken more seriously in the area, especially in the face of male opposition and female apathy.

The Rurals in Scotland, like their counterparts in England, also made a conscious decision to welcome all women irrespective of class or creed.<sup>134</sup> In certain circumstances this curtailed the issues that could be discussed, and any subject deemed to be 'controversial' was not included on recommended lists of lecture topics or suggested demonstrations.<sup>135</sup> Birth control was not officially discussed, as this would have alienated the Catholic members of the Institute. Indeed it was argued that 'just representation' would enable the Rurals to 'keep free from political and sectarian controversy which would at once reduce the Institute to merely a section of well-meaning women'.<sup>136</sup> In the early years the appointed organiser, Miss Campbell, insisted that 'the root idea of an Institute is that it should draw us together in the

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<sup>129</sup> Blair complained about the central committee's account of the history of the Rurals as printed in *Scottish Home and Country*. In fact there is a whole file devoted to 'correspondence with Catherine Blair' in the records of the Central Council. The Publications Committee even passed a resolution on 29 November 1932 asking the Central Council for powers to take any necessary action, should Mrs Blair publish in the public press any attack on the Editor of *Scottish Home and Country*. Uncatalogued archives held at SWRI headquarters, 42 Heriot Row, Edinburgh.

<sup>130</sup> Again see appendix 1a, graph 3a.

<sup>131</sup> Scottish Women's Rural Institute (SWRI), *Annual Report*, H.M.S.O., Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, 1919, p. 36.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5-7. Sixteen percent of the honorary presidents were titled in 1919 including the Countess of Morton, the Lady Hermione Cameron of Lochiel, The Lady Marjory Mackenzie, The Lady Veronica Bruce, Lady Haldane and the Countess of Southesk.

<sup>133</sup> The social organisation of rural areas will be discussed in greater detail in chapter six.

<sup>134</sup> Women of all ages were encouraged to join with it being argued that Grannies, Mothers, young wives and teenagers were happy in each other's company. The Ayrshire Federation, *The Best of the Old, The Best of the New*, p. 12-14.

<sup>135</sup> SWRI, *Annual Report*, 1919, p. 40-44.

<sup>136</sup> SWRI, *Handbook and Report for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> October 1919*, uncatalogued archives held at SWRI headquarters, 42 Heriot Row, Edinburgh, p.16.



things we all have in common, and that it is based on respect for the personality and opinion of every member'. She suggested that Rurals should 'keep clear on subjects on which our members have a right to differ.' Catherine Blair, and later the central council, argued that the Rural's inclusiveness was its strength, as it brought all women together to discuss issues of importance to them and gave women the opportunity to socialise and share each other's company.

All members paid a yearly subscription of 2s and therefore theoretically had equal opportunity of taking part in the life of the Rural. In fact Blair argued that the 'cottage women' who formed approximately 80-95 percent of the membership shared equally in the responsibility of running the Institute, arranging the syllabus, and acting as hostess to the meeting.<sup>137</sup> This, she maintained, gave them a real part in the social life of the neighbourhood. What Blair failed to mention was that it was often the wives of men with professions such as doctors' wives or the clergyman's wife who held the position of president, secretary or treasurer. This illustrates an element of paternalism in the structure of the Rural. As the committee model above suggests, women were classified according to their husbands or their own occupations or titles, thus the Rurals reiterated the established model of social stratification in rural areas. It would be difficult for all of the members to have an equal input in the running of a Rural given that members were aware of each individuals standing in the community. This would not only have been intimidating for working-class members, but could also have given unwanted responsibility to middle-class members such as the doctors' or ministers' wives. Blair suggested that the 'breaking down of social barriers' within Rurals through the inclusion of women of all classes not only helped to eliminate 'patronage', but 'gave scope to the women of ideas'. She suggests that the Rurals enriched 'the lives of women of social standing' who were expected to 'give of their best for the good of the Institute'.<sup>138</sup> This could include giving travel talks, organising pageants and introducing new speakers. While this gave women of 'social standing' added influence within the Rural, through the fulfilment of such responsibilities, this may have been a social expectation rather than motivated by the desire of the individual concerned. Such women may simply have been expected to fulfil their paternalistic role within the community.

Following the establishment of a Rural, all members were issued with cards which contained the pledge 'to attend the meetings regularly, and to interest others in the movement to the best of their ability'.<sup>139</sup> Blair argues that these membership cards made the members aware of the 'scope and dignity of the movement'.<sup>140</sup> The initial aims of the Institute were also outlined on these cards, which was intended to be used as a guide by newly formed Rurals

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<sup>137</sup> Blair, *Rural Journey*, p. 41, and Scott, *The story of the Women's Institute Movement*, p. 235.

<sup>138</sup> Blair, *Rural Journey*, p. 41.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid, p. 35.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid, p. 36.

when forming its first programme.<sup>141</sup> The syllabus of the first meeting of the Longniddry Institute in 1917 included an address by Miss Louisa Innes Lumsden, a pioneer in the campaign for the higher education of women. This was followed by demonstrations on bottled fruit, fish, meat and vegetables. Food conservation was to become a regular feature on the programmes of Rurals. There was also a china ‘shower’ to provide the meeting with teacups. Such ‘showers’ served a useful purpose throughout the interwar period, as it allowed members to contribute to the meeting when money was scarce by bringing an item from their own home, such as cutlery for a special supper or picnic, eggs for a cookery demonstration or books for an Institute library. In this way the Institute could provide for extra expenses, which the annual subscription fee did not cover, and more importantly every member could do her bit to help.

Roll calls were also instrumental in involving all members and were based upon the Rurals’ motto ‘if you know a good thing, pass it on’.<sup>142</sup> During a ‘roll call’ every member had to contribute something to the proceedings whether it be a recipe, a household hint or a song or poem. In this way even the shyest member would be ‘forced out of her shell’ and it was hoped that once she had overcome her initial fear of speaking in front of others she would become more confident in her own abilities and ultimately more ‘articulate’. Consequently ‘roll-calls’ were seen as necessary, as they ‘accustom members to the sound of their own voices’.<sup>143</sup> Roll calls were also used to lead discussions and debates, where a topic would be chosen and every member was required to give her opinion.<sup>144</sup> They also proved useful in determining what demonstrations, lectures, classes and competitions the members wanted to be included in the syllabus. Therefore these roll calls could be seen as an extension of the Institute’s democratic ethos, in that all members, their views and opinions were considered. Indeed Blair described the most successful branches as those which were informal and unconventional and where all members were encouraged to express their views and take part in all discussions.

Handicrafts classes also became an essential element of programmes, with a wide variety of demonstrations and classes being given such as leather craft, basket making, embroidery, and rug making. It was hoped that these classes would not only help women beautify their homes, but would also allow them to make articles and products that they could sell for a profit, thus developing their own rural enterprises. The Handicrafts Guild was formed in 1926 for the organisation of advanced handicrafts.<sup>145</sup> The Rurals also developed a programme of choir singing, folk dancing and dramatic art, with funding being provided by the Carnegie Trust from 1924.<sup>146</sup> These classes were popular with members as they provided both

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<sup>141</sup> Also see appendix 1b for a six-month sample syllabus, which illustrates the range of issues discussed and activities provided by the Rurals.

<sup>142</sup> Blair, *Rural Journey*, p. 43.

<sup>143</sup> SWRI, *Handbook and Report for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> October 1919*, p.16.

<sup>144</sup> Blair, *Rural Journey*, p. 43.

<sup>145</sup> For further details see chapter five.

<sup>146</sup> Again see chapter five.

education and entertainment in often isolated areas of rural Scotland. The central council justified the formation of these classes as an attempt to reduce rural depopulation by providing social facilities for rural communities.

The priority placed on education was also illustrated by the close contact that the Rurals maintained with the wider agricultural community throughout the interwar years. Lecturers from Scotland's three agricultural colleges regularly provided classes, demonstrations, and on occasion residential training courses on how to produce more and better food. A wide variety of subjects were discussed including dairying, butter and cheese making, poultry, egg tests, plucking and trussing of fowls, gardening and optimum conditions for growing vegetables, bee keeping and the treatment of goats. Blair argued that such topics appealed to 'the farm folk', which reiterates the rural nature of the Rurals in Scotland. She also stated that 'through our industry we are increasing the productivity of our country', which again highlights the importance which the Rurals placed on its work in helping the nation.<sup>147</sup>

In addition, the social side of the movement was not neglected and members were provided with a vast array of entertainment. Literary evenings where the works of Scott, Dickens and Robert Louis Stevenson were discussed were popular. Lectures on history and especially local history were well attended and were often followed by visits to relevant places of historical interest including museums and ruins. Members also enjoyed learning about the 'famous' women 'who had made the Institutes possible' as well as those who were pioneers in women's education, political and social reforms. This included Mary Wollstonecraft, Elizabeth Fry, Josephine Butler, Octavia Hill, and also women of 'their own time' such as Marie Curie and Helen Keller.<sup>148</sup> In this respect even the social section of the programme was regularly educational in nature. This interest in women's history and the history of women's lives was reflected in a series entitled 'Brief Biographies' that featured in *Scottish Home and Country*, which included an extensive range of women.<sup>149</sup> Members interest in contemporary women's lives was also reflected in 'women who are making history' a popular series that recorded the achievements of women in all walks of life.<sup>150</sup>

Yet, arguably most enjoyment came from the musical, dramatic or games section of meetings. Blair suggests that such entertainment was useful for helping members 'to mix' as well as for 'relieving the muscles after a long sitting at a lecture or demonstration'.<sup>151</sup> On occasions whole meetings were devoted to such pursuits especially at Christmas, Halloween

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<sup>147</sup> Blair, *Rural Journey*, p. 47.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid, p. 54.

<sup>149</sup> *Scottish Home and Country*, January 1932 – December 1932. This series included Maria Edgeworth, Ellen Terry, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Charlotte Bronte, Florence Nightingale, Elizabeth Garret Anderson, Mrs Siddons, Dr Elsie Inglis, Elizabeth of England, Ida Pfeiffer, Katharine Nairn, and Edith Cavell.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid, January 1932, February 1932 and March 1932. Titles included 'women in aviation', 'woman wins Nobel Peace Prize', 'Scots Girl makes Film History', 'First Woman Senator in United States', and 'first woman Burgess'.

<sup>151</sup> Blair, *Rural Journey*, p. 55.

and Burns' Suppers. Many of the events organised were for the members only, this was their time to spend away from the gaze of their husbands, and to enjoy themselves in the company of their friends. Indeed at one Burns supper, as the festivities were proceeding one of the women spotted shadowy figures moving around outside. It transpired that it was the men of the village and she said to the other members 'we should let them in'. To which she received replies of 'they've had their Burns' Nichts for a hundred years, and never let us in!'<sup>152</sup> This was not always the case, and such events could also provide entertainment for other members of the community. At another Rural it was decided that members could bring a man to its fancy dress dance, to which one 'cheery spinster' responded that she had 'been trying to get a man for twenty years – and the 'Rural' expects me to get one in a fortnight!'<sup>153</sup> Rurals were also fond of holding parties for children to coincide with their own, especially at Christmas and Halloween.<sup>154</sup> In such circumstances the Rurals contributed to the social life of the whole community by providing this entertainment.

The Rurals also became involved in community-based projects such as the campaign for the establishment of mobile village libraries, it later received boxes of books from the Carnegie Trust.<sup>155</sup> The library schemes organised by the Rurals were used extensively by members and the wider community until the county authorities established a system in 1925.<sup>156</sup> Similarly many Rurals, through lack of adequate premises, raised money and built their own halls for their monthly meetings.<sup>157</sup> These often became village halls that were used for many purposes in the locality. Therefore the Rurals again provided facilities for the whole community, and in this case a focus of village activity. In addition, during its establishment, Blair was hopeful that the Rurals would 'meet a real need' in solving 'the problems of rural life'.<sup>158</sup> Her main areas of concern included improving the quality of rural housing, with the lack of indoor running water and inadequate sanitation being prioritised. Rural depopulation was also targeted, with Blair arguing that it was the 'existing social conditions' and 'dullness of the country' that were to blame for 'the drift of labour from the country'.<sup>159</sup>

The Rurals shared such concerns and interest in their communities with 'countrywomen' throughout the world, but especially those from the former dominions of Canada, Australia and New Zealand. Like the Guild, the Rurals also had international connections, in its case through its involvement in the International Association of Country Women, of which the English Women's Institute was also a member. International congresses

<sup>152</sup> Scott, *The story of the Women's Institute Movement*, p. 236.

<sup>153</sup> Blair, *Rural Journey*, p. 55.

<sup>154</sup> See Kippen SWRI, *Minute Book of Monthly Meetings*, Stirling Council Archive Service, PD 97 3/1, 27 October 1937 and 29 December 1937. Also see appendix 1c.

<sup>155</sup> Courtney, *Countrywomen in Council*, p. 126.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid, p. 126. This was an extension of the existing scheme.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid, p. 137.

<sup>158</sup> Blair, *Rural Journey*, p. 12. For further discussion of issues such as rural housing and depopulation see chapter five.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid, p. 14.

were held where members of Women's Institutes, and equivalents, throughout the world would meet and discuss developments in their countries. In addition articles about 'sister' Institutes in other countries were a regular feature of *Scottish Home and Country*, with branches being encouraged to seek 'twin' Institutes in Canada and Australia in particular. Similarly members often became 'pen-friends' with women in such locations.

The Rurals achieved much in the interwar years, especially in easing the isolation of countrywomen and improving the social facilities in rural areas, and it was hoped that this would help ease rural depopulation. It provided leisure, a meeting place for the sharing of troubles and ideas, and perhaps most importantly it had supplied practical education in a wide range of crafts, arts and domestic skills that would have been of great use to local women. So much so that Blair stated that she had seen a 'Victorian' mother develop into a 'fine demonstrator, full of pep and hospitality'.<sup>160</sup> Similarly she also claimed to have observed a farm servant's daughter, who was a chronic invalid with asthma; develop 'through working with beautiful things, into a strong, vigorous woman, good at many crafts'.<sup>161</sup> Consequently the Rurals provided an essential service for countrywomen. Many described it as 'their night out' or 'their holiday', while others discussed how they 'looked forward to it for a whole month'.<sup>162</sup> Membership of the Rurals educated women and gave them the confidence to participate in the life of the community. Indeed the fact that many members of the Rurals were more than willing to walk long distances of up to six miles to attend the monthly meeting illustrates their success in providing facilities for such women and as Scott argues 'is no bad indication of the reality' of their 'belief in the movement'.<sup>163</sup> The Rurals' course did not always run smoothly as was illustrated by the internal disputes between the central council and Catherine Blair over the organisation of the movement. In spite of this, and the other tensions discussed, in 1927 Sir Robert Greig described the Rurals as 'the most important movement in the social and agricultural life of Scotland for a hundred years'.<sup>164</sup>

### Conclusion

All of the four organisations under consideration were established in different circumstances, which shaped their future activities in the interwar period. The GSEC and the EWCA both played an important role in the network of explicitly feminist organisations of the 1920s, and for the GSEC, to a lesser extent the 1930s. The GSEC was formed as the GSS in 1902 as a

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<sup>160</sup> Ibid, p. 104.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid.

<sup>162</sup> Scott, *The story of the Women's Institute Movement*, p. 236.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid, p. 215. Also see The Ayrshire Federation, *The Best of the Old, The Best of the New*, p. 12 and 53 for examples of the long distances members would walk to Rural meetings, often arranged to coincide with the full moon.

<sup>164</sup> Scott, *The story of the Women's Institute Movement*, p. 232.

suffrage organisation, and this guided its activities and campaigns in the interwar years. The EWCA by contrast was formed as a reaction to women's enfranchisement in 1918. However it remained part of the broader suffrage tradition with its founding members being comprised of both militant suffragettes and constitutional suffragists. The shared objectives of these feminist organisations illustrate their similarities, although there were also differences, as will be discussed in chapter two. The polarised nature of municipal politics in Glasgow, which was less extreme in Edinburgh, influenced the extent to which each organisation became involved in reforms such as housing and welfare provision, as will be discussed in chapter three.

The Guild, established earlier in Glasgow in 1892, was formed to provide the working-class women of the Co-operative movement with their own space for discussion outside of their homes. In its early years it largely provided classes and education in domestic economy, with the aim of improving the housewifery skills of its members. In this respect it had much in common with the objectives of the Rurals. However there were significant differences, not only in the geographical location of both of these organisations, but also their political motivations. The Rurals explicitly avoided associations with political parties and made a concerted attempt to attract women of all political persuasions and class backgrounds. In comparison the Guild's activities were very much motivated and guided by their membership of the wider Co-operative movement. Admittedly both the EWCA and the Rurals were also motivated by political considerations. While the EWCA had a comparatively broader programme than the GSEC, this was still influenced by the political affiliations of many of its prominent members with the Progressive coalition in Edinburgh. The Rurals were also influenced by its relationship to the Board of Agriculture, which resulted in its adherence to imperialist ideology which guided its aim to improve national efficiency.<sup>165</sup>

The Guild, which had been politically motivated from its inception, became increasingly so in the interwar years. This caused disputes within the membership relating to the purpose of the Guild, and the need for involvement in the politics of the wider Co-operative movement. Many members viewed Guild meetings as an opportunity to meet their friends and have a night out away from their troubles, their families and homes. This was also true of members of the Rurals, with both organisations providing a support network for its members. However, while the Guild provided entertainment and recreational facilities for its members, a greater emphasis was placed upon this in the Rurals. It is possible that this, accompanied by the relative isolation of women in rural areas, accounted for its success in terms of membership, which reached a peak of approximately 50,000 in 1932. In the same year the Guild's membership was 30,032, reaching its peak in 1937 of 32,852.<sup>166</sup>

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<sup>165</sup> This will be discussed in greater detail in chapter two.

<sup>166</sup> Where membership figures exist for the GSEC and the EWCA, they are not comparable as they relate only to Glasgow and Edinburgh. Again see appendix 1a, graphs 1, 2, and 3a.

In spite of the different, and influential, circumstances and rationale for each organisation's formation, there were similarities between the four organisations under consideration. Ultimately, each organisation provided an opportunity for women to interact, discuss their concerns, both political and those relating to their own lives, and basically find time and space of their own outside of their homes. In this respect each of these organisations empowered their members by providing them with such an opportunity. However the political and economic circumstances of interwar Scotland were influential in shaping the ideologies which each organisation adhered to and supported. As will be discussed in the following, and subsequent chapters, such ideologies, although providing opportunities for coalition, also caused divisions. As a result there was limited co-operation between these organisations, which prevented unity in the Scottish women's movement in the interwar period.

## CHAPTER TWO

### The Negotiation of Ideologies and Discourses

During the interwar years women's organisations operated within a complex network of discourses and ideologies. The ideology of 'separate spheres', which had its roots in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, remained dominant in the interwar period. The emergence of 'separate spheres' as a model of gender relations in this earlier period essentially structured women's identity around the home.<sup>1</sup> It followed that prominent socially constructed discourses situated women within the private sphere, which ensured that women were viewed primarily as wives and mothers.<sup>2</sup> This ideology, at its most basic and simplistic, also clearly demarcated and contrasted women's place within the private sphere of the home and family with the public sphere that was occupied by men, characterised by the economic marketplace and civil society. Yet, it has been argued that this ideological division of men and women into specific and complementary roles in society was not necessarily associated with the notion of a 'private' sphere for women and a 'public' sphere for men'.<sup>3</sup> Rather it is acknowledged that the ideology of separate spheres did not result in women being confined to the domestic sphere and that in reality the boundaries between 'public' and 'private' were porous.<sup>4</sup> There was space for renegotiation and manoeuvre within the boundaries of this ideology.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> C. Hall, 'The Early Formation of Victorian Domestic Ideology', in S. Burman, *Fit Work For Women*, Croom Helm, London, 1979, p. 15.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, p. 31.

<sup>3</sup> Recently historians have become critical of the use of separate spheres as an analytical tool for exploring relations between men and women. Vickery argued in 1993 that gender historians were over-reliant on the use of the separate spheres framework. She even suggested that 'public and private', 'separate spheres' and 'domesticity' were 'rapidly becoming unquestioned key words'. In spite of acknowledging 'dissenting voices', Vickery suggested that the 'chronology of the separate spheres framework' still held 'an uneasy sway'. A. Vickery, 'Golden Age to Separate Spheres? A Review of the Categories and Chronology of English Women's History', *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 36, No. 2, June 1993, p. 383-414. For further, albeit brief, discussion of the aims of feminist and gender historians in the 1970s and 1980s in relation to the discussion of separate spheres see L. Davidoff, 'Gender and the 'Great Divide', Public and Private in British Gender History', *Journal of Women's History*, Vol. 15, No. 1, 2003, p. 11. Also see L. E. Klein, 'Gender and the Public/Private Distinction in the Eighteenth Century: Some Questions about Evidence and Analytic Procedure', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, Vol. 29, No. 1, 1996, pp. 97-109.

<sup>4</sup> See L. Davidoff and C. Hall, *Family Fortunes, Men and Women of the English Middle Class 17-80-1850*, Hutchinson Education, 1987. This seminal work demonstrates that the public/private dichotomy was an ideological construct rather than a physical or spatial division. Also see L. Davidoff, 'The separation of home and work? Landladies and lodgers in nineteenth and twentieth centuries' in S. Burman, *Fit Work For Women*, Croom Helm, London, 1979, p. 93. In addition see E. Gordon and G. Nair, *Public Lives, Women, Family and Society in Victorian Britain*, Yale University Press, London, 2003, p. 1-3 for discussion of 'separate spheres' and the relevance of Davidoff and Hall's work.

<sup>5</sup> Again this is demonstrated by Gordon and Nair in *Public Lives*. See the following for discussions of the way in which women's attributes associated with the private sphere such as 'moral motherhood' were used by individuals and women's organisation to justify an involvement in the political or civic 'public' sphere in the nineteenth century and before: A. Burton, *Burdens of History: British Feminists, Indian Women and Imperial Culture, 1865-1915*, University of Caroline Press, London, 1994, E. J. Yeo, *Radical Femininity: Women's Self-Representation in the Public Sphere*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1998, S. S. Holton, A. Mackinnon, and M. Allen (eds.), 'Between Rationality and Revelation: Women, Faith and Public Roles in the Nineteenth Centuries', *Women's History Review*, special issue, Vol. 7, No. 2, 1998, C. Midgley (ed.), *Gender and Imperialism*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1998, M. Smitley, 'Women's



The porosity and malleability of the ideology of separate spheres was evident in the roles played by, and activities of, women's organisations in the interwar period, which involved negotiating the boundary between the public and private sphere. While the separate spheres dichotomy was grounded in the nineteenth century, as many historians have demonstrated, it continued to be relevant following the First World War.<sup>6</sup> Consequently exploiting the malleability of the meanings inherent in the ideology of separate spheres continued to be a viable strategy for individuals and women's organisations, in the 1920s and 1930s, as it had been in this earlier period. Each of the organisations under consideration exploited such strategies to varying degrees in its political activities.

However, the continuing need for women to negotiate the boundary between the 'private' and 'public' spheres in the interwar years has led historians to the conclusion that there was a heightened resistance to women's involvement in public life following the First World War. The proponents of this 'backlash' model, at its height in the 1980s and early 1990s, suggest that in spite of gaining the vote in 1918, and other legal reforms such as the Sexual Disqualification (Removal) Act of 1919, women's position in society remained largely unchanged. In addition it is argued that any gains realised during the war years, such as improved employment opportunities, were only temporary. Indeed, it is suggested that traditional gender roles were re-established with ideals of 'domesticity' being reasserted in society, and women being encouraged by societal discourses to return to their roles as wives and mothers within the private sphere of the home.<sup>7</sup> Also fundamental in this model was the assertion that the women's movement was unable to counter these trends, and as a result were only able to muster support for welfare or legal reforms, which reinforced women's position as wife and mother.<sup>8</sup> Proponents of the 'backlash' model therefore viewed women's role in interwar society as restricted.

The consensus relating to the dominance of this re-emphasis on women's 'domesticity' in the interwar period has begun to break down.<sup>9</sup> One of the main challenges to this backlash model has been the recent body of historical research which argues that the women's

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Mission: The Temperance and Women's Suffrage Movements in Scotland, c. 1870-1914, unpublished PhD thesis, University of Glasgow, 2002, and M. Smitley, "'Inebriates", "Heathens", Templars and Suffragists: Scotland and Imperial Feminism, c. 1870-1914', *Women's History Review*, Vol. 11, No. 3, 2002, pp. 455-480.

<sup>6</sup> Klein questions whether separate spheres, as an organising concept, was also evident in the eighteenth century. Klein, 'Gender and the Public/Private Distinction in the Eighteenth Century', pp. 97-109.

<sup>7</sup> G. Braybon, *Women Workers in the First World War*, Croom Helm, London, 1981, and D. Beddoe, *Back to Home and Duty: Women Between the Wars, 1918-1939*, Pandora, London, 1989.

<sup>8</sup> See S. K. Kent, *Making Peace: The Reconstruction of Gender in Interwar Britain*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1993, M. Pugh, *Women and the Women's Movement in Britain 1914-1959*, Macmillan, Basingstoke, 1992, M. Pugh 'Domesticity and the Decline of Feminism, 1930-1950', in H. L. Smith (ed.), *British Feminism in the Twentieth Century*, Elgar, Aldershot, 1990, pp. 144-164, and H. L. Smith, 'British Feminism in the 1920s' in H. L. Smith (ed.), *British Feminism in the Twentieth Century*, Elgar, Aldershot, 1990, pp. 47-65.

<sup>9</sup> A. Bingham, 'An Era of Domesticity'? Histories of Women and Gender in Interwar Britain', *Cultural and Social History*, Vol. 1, No. 2, 2004, p. 225.

movement was not as ineffective or unpopular as has been suggested previously.<sup>10</sup> This has included a reappraisal of what constituted feminist activity in the interwar years.<sup>11</sup> Law, for example, argues that the focus on welfare reforms by some women's organisations, which elevated the status of women's roles as wives and especially mothers, was not a submission to discourses of domesticity, but an attempt to gain real improvements in the material conditions of women's lives. Similarly Andrews and Beaumont both argue that the range of organisations included in the interwar 'women's movement' should be extended. While Beaumont does not position the organisations she has researched as feminist, Andrews argues that the Women's Institute was a feminist organisation. However both have suggested that such organisations, which were considered to be 'conservative', could provide women with opportunities to participate in public life, and voice their concerns, regardless of whether or not they adopted a feminist identity.<sup>12</sup> The same is true of women's organisations associated with the labour movement.<sup>13</sup> Arguably when the activities of such organisations are taken into account alongside those of formal feminist organisations such as the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship, it would appear that, 'more women, from a wider range of backgrounds, were actively campaigning for gender equality in the 1920s and 1930s than before the First World War'.<sup>14</sup>

Therefore just as women negotiated the boundary between the private and public spheres to perform philanthropic work and occupy positions on the committees of charities in the nineteenth century, women in the interwar period were also able to negotiate a space for themselves in public life. The existence of women's organisations in a period characterised by an apparent re-emphasis of domesticity and separate spheres of activity for men and women is not surprising, but is a continuity of women's experience of political life. This highlights that societal discourses and ideologies, while influential, did not dictate the behaviour of individuals or groups in the interwar years and before. Interwar women's organisations continued to employ similar strategies to their predecessors in order to transcend the boundary

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid, p. 228. Also see C. Law, *Suffrage and Power: The Women's Movement, 1918-1928*, I. B. Tauris, London, 1997, M. Andrews, *The Acceptable Face of Feminism: The Women's Institute as a Social Movement*, Lawrence and Wishart, London, 1997, and C. Beaumont, 'Citizens not Feminists: The Boundary Negotiated between Citizenship and Feminism by Mainstream Women's Organisations in England 1928-39', *Women's History Review*, Vol. 9, No. 2, 2000, pp. 411-429.

<sup>11</sup> See the introduction for further discussion.

<sup>12</sup> Beaumont considers organisations as diverse as the Mother's Union, the YWCA, the Catholic Women's League, the Townswomen's Guild and the National Council of Women.

<sup>13</sup> For example see 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', in G. Bock and P. Thane (eds.), *Maternity and Gender Policies Women and the Rise of the European States 1880s-1950s*, Routledge, London, 1991, pp. 93-118, G. Scott, *Feminism and The Politics of Working Women The Women's Co-operative Guild 1880 to the Second World War*, UCL Press, London, 1998 and P. Graves, 'An Experiment in Women-Centred Socialism: Labour Women in Britain', H. Gruber & P. Graves, *Women And Socialism, Socialism and Women: Europe Between the Two World Wars*, Berghahn Books, Oxford, 1998, pp. 180-214.

<sup>14</sup> Bingham, 'An Era of Domesticity?', p. 229-230. Also see P. Thane, 'What Difference Did the Vote Make? Women in Public and Private Life in Britain since 1918', *Historical Research*, 76, 2003, pp. 268-285.

of the private sphere and make women's views and concerns known in political arenas. The circumstances and context in which women's organisations operated may have changed, but women continued to negotiate the meanings and boundaries inherent in the ideology of separate spheres.

The formation or continuing relevance of women's organisations in the interwar years, which provided women with the opportunity to discuss issues of importance to them, political or otherwise, was significant. These organisations took women out from their homes, provided them with social interaction and friendship, and a place or space of their own, separate from the gaze of their husbands and families.<sup>15</sup> In addition, membership of such organisations allowed women to participate in public or civic life, whether it was that of the village or city.<sup>16</sup> This involved an empowering reconsideration of their identities associated with the private sphere of the home. This was especially true for the Guild and the Rurals. Members of these organisations manipulated and subverted their identities as mothers and wives, often by celebrating and elevating the status of motherhood, in order to justify their participation in public life and the community. While women's roles associated with the private sphere of the home were emphasised in such behaviour, the elevation of such roles was not necessarily an acceptance of a reassertion of domesticity, as suggested by proponents of the backlash model. This was an empowering strategy which enabled women to voice their concerns and take a political role in society.

For each of the four organisations under consideration this involved the promotion of female equality. The way in which each envisaged such equality varied, and such distinctions can be explained by each organisation's interpretation of 'citizenship', and related to this, the extent to which it elevated the status of 'motherhood'. The partial enfranchisement of women in 1918 placed a renewed emphasis on citizenship for women's organisations in the interwar years. However, as Innes and Rendall argue, the meanings of citizenship were gendered in this period and before, as historically 'different definitions from the eighteenth century onwards reflected the varied discourses of masculine citizenship'.<sup>17</sup> While excluded from formal citizenship by such definitions and the accompanying restrictive ideologies, women continued to participate in public life and made their opinions known on a range of issues. Indeed Innes and Rendall suggest that 'long before their acquisition of the vote, some Scotswomen were active in areas that are now contested as the subject of political decision making'.<sup>18</sup> This included, 'in today's terminology' anti-slavery, child protection and childcare, social work and

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<sup>15</sup> See chapter one for further discussion of the services provided for members of each of the organisations under consideration.

<sup>16</sup> For greater details of the ways in which each organisation encouraged members to take an active role in public life see chapters three-five.

<sup>17</sup> S. Innes and J. Rendall, 'Women, Gender and Politics' in L. Abrams, E. Gordon, D. Simonton and E. J. Yeo (eds.), *Gender in Scottish History since 1700*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 2006, p. 44.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

public health.<sup>19</sup> Such work was not described as ‘political’, yet it allowed women to make ‘a claim to influence in public life and to a role as citizens that did not depend on formal voting rights’.<sup>20</sup> Involvement in a range of religious, philanthropic and other voluntary associations therefore provided an entry into public life for such women.<sup>21</sup>

Women’s involvement in political life and civil society in the interwar years in Scotland drew upon this tradition of female philanthropy and voluntary work, which highlights important historical continuities.<sup>22</sup> Yet there is no denying that the right to vote in national elections was empowering, as it theoretically gave women the same legal rights as men. The franchise was limited to women over thirty and therefore was not universal; nevertheless it had an important impact on both the work and rhetoric of women’s organisations. Women’s citizenship and relationship to the state had fundamentally altered, at least in theory. Consequently, many women’s organisations reconsidered their aims for the future. The first objective of the majority of women’s organisations was an extension of the franchise to include all women, which it was felt would result not only in equal citizenship rights but also full legal equality for women.<sup>23</sup> For many women’s organisations, including those under consideration, citizenship therefore was equated with more than legal suffrage, which was a starting point.

However historians have suggested that once the vote was gained in 1918 there was no longer a predisposing ground for coalition in the women’s movement as there had been in the demand for female enfranchisement.<sup>24</sup> Innes challenges this view, arguing that the idea of active citizenship invigorated the agenda of the women’s movement.<sup>25</sup> For her, the use of ‘citizenship’ emphasised women’s new rights, role and political reach in society. Moreover, in contrast to Beaumont, she argues that ‘citizenship’ was not distinct from feminism. Beaumont contends that the use of ‘citizenship’ allowed ‘mainstream’ women’s organisations, such as the Young Women’s Christian Association and Townswomen’s Guild, to distance themselves from feminism, which they perceived to be an ‘extreme, unpopular and controversial ideology’.<sup>26</sup> Instead these organisations opted for the rhetoric of citizenship and citizenship rights in order to campaign for social and economic reforms that would benefit their members. However, Innes suggests that all women’s organisations used the concept of ‘citizenship’, as it was an affirmation of women’s new status in society, having gained the vote. For Innes,

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, p. 58-59.

<sup>22</sup> See chapter three-five, and especially six, for discussion of the ways in which women’s work in areas such as social work was influential in women’s political representation in the interwar years.

<sup>23</sup> See R. Voet, *Feminism and Citizenship*, Sage, London, 1998, p. 21.

<sup>24</sup> See N. F. Cott, ‘Feminist theory and Feminist movements: the past before us’, J. Mitchell & A. Oakley (eds.), *What is Feminism?*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1986, pp. 49-62.

<sup>25</sup> S. Innes, ‘Constructing Women’s Citizenship in the Interwar Period: the Edinburgh Women Citizens’ Association’, *Women’s History Review*, Vol. 13, No. 4, 2004, p. 624.

<sup>26</sup> Beaumont, ‘Citizens not Feminists’, p. 415.

discussion of 'citizenship' was also 'an expression of intent', of the work that would be done now that women were enfranchised citizens.<sup>27</sup> This interpretation of 'citizenship' as a motivating factor for female political involvement in the interwar years is useful in explaining the renewed emphasis placed on 'citizenship' by each of the four organisations under consideration.

In addition Innes suggests that women's organisations in the interwar years could be understood as 'a continuum organised around shared broad goals of women's empowerment and representation and social reform'. Within this continuum, she suggests that, 'citizenship' as an organising concept could stretch across political representation, equal legal and employment rights, participation in civil society and social and welfare campaigning'.<sup>28</sup> Innes's approach is useful as it questions the accuracy of classifying women's organisations according to the equality / difference dichotomy, which was a prominent organising concept in the early historiography of the interwar women's movement.<sup>29</sup> Such accounts suggest that the ideological divides present in feminism and the women's movement from its formation, and during the suffrage movement, were intensified following the enfranchisement of women in 1918 as women's organisations and individuals no longer had the shared objective of gaining the vote.<sup>30</sup> This discussion of the fragmentation of the women's movement in the interwar years was often characterised by the widening division between 'equality' and 'difference' feminists, especially in the 1920s.<sup>31</sup> Yet this view has been criticised and it is instead argued that these two types of feminism were not mutually exclusive.<sup>32</sup> Thus the rights of 'citizenship', gained as a result of political enfranchisement, were emphasised by a diverse range of women's organisations in the interwar years, which meant that 'citizenship' could act as a unifying influence within the women's movement to help overcome ideological divisions which existed.

In addition, women's organisations drew upon both feminist traditions where appropriate in the interwar years, which makes it difficult to neatly define such organisations as either 'equality' or 'difference' in orientation. The early historiography of the interwar women's movement, which focuses on such categorisation as well as drawing distinctions

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<sup>27</sup> Innes, 'Constructing Women's Citizenship in the Interwar Period' p. 636.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> As discussed in the introduction.

<sup>30</sup> See for example, Cott, 'Feminist theory and Feminist movements: the past before us', p. 58.

<sup>31</sup> As discussed in the introduction these two types of feminism were described in the early historiography as distinct with 'equality' feminists being characterised by the belief that women should have equal rights to those of men and should be treated as equals in every way. In contrast it was suggested that 'new' or 'difference' feminists argued that women should be equal but different, because women have different needs and priorities and should therefore seek 'real equality'. For an overview see Smith, 'British feminism in the 1920s', pp. 47-65.

<sup>32</sup> For example see J. W. Scott, 'Deconstructing equality-versus-difference: or, the uses of post-structuralist theory for feminism', *Feminist Studies*, Vol. 14, No. 1, pp. 33-50 and J. Vellacott, 'A Place for Pacifism and Transnationalism in Feminist Theory: the early work of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom', *Women's History Review*, Vol. 2, No. 1, 1993, p. 25-27 and Innes, 'Constructing Women's Citizenship in the Interwar Period', p. 635.

between the proponents of 'equality' and 'difference' feminism, therefore does not take account of the complexity of the interwar women's movement. Many prominent national feminist organisations included elements of both 'equality' and 'difference' feminism in their programmes.<sup>33</sup> The same was true in the Scottish context. As a result it is difficult to identify the Glasgow Society for Equal Citizenship (GSEC) and the Edinburgh Women Citizens Association (EWCA) as either 'equality' or 'difference' feminists.

The GSEC, although affiliated to the NUSEC, largely promoted issues relating to women's individual legal equality in the public sphere.<sup>34</sup> This apparent contradiction was reflected in the resolutions passed and issues discussed. The GSEC demanded a further extension of the franchise on the same terms as men until this was gained in 1928.<sup>35</sup> It also supported legislation for equal pay for equal work, which featured prominently in its annual resolutions, as did equal access to the professions, especially in teaching, law and medicine.<sup>36</sup> Other 'equality' measures included demands for married women's property rights, an equal moral standard and equal guardianship of infants.<sup>37</sup> However, the GSEC also passed resolutions that considered the needs of women as mothers, which simultaneously considered the legal equality required by such women. It discussed the status of the unmarried mother, campaigned for improved widows' pensions and argued that the National Health Insurance Bill should consider 'the position of married woman and her child'.<sup>38</sup> The GSEC's campaigning on behalf of such issues ensures that it cannot be categorised as proponents of either 'equality' or 'difference' feminism, as elements of both are evident in its agenda.

This is further illustrated by its rejection of the 'endowment of motherhood', Eleanor Rathbone's, and the NUSEC's, defining campaign of the early 1920s.<sup>39</sup> The executive committee considered this to be a highly controversial issue and did not organise study circles for members to discuss the issue.<sup>40</sup> Rathbone, whom the GSEC considered its 'wise

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<sup>33</sup> The Women's Freedom League for instance advocated equal pay for equal work, traditionally viewed as the hallmark of 'equality' feminism. It also supported proposals for improved housing and childcare provisions, which were some of the main proposals associated with 'difference' feminism. As discussed in the introduction, the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship (NUSEC), under the leadership of Eleanor Rathbone, and the Six Point Group are positioned in the historiography as the main proponents of 'difference' and 'equality' feminism respectively. The conflicts between these organisations are documented widely in the historiography, however each organisation promoted issues supported by the other. The NUSEC advocated equality of entry for women to the professions and the Six Point Group supported legislation for widowed and unmarried mothers. Smith, 'British feminism in the 1920s', pp. 47-65 and Pugh, *Women and the Women's Movement in Britain*.

<sup>34</sup> Again the NUSEC is positioned as the main proponents of 'difference' feminism in the early historiography of the interwar women's movement.

<sup>35</sup> See chapter three for further discussion of this issue.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> As discussed the NUSEC are characterised as 'difference' feminists in the early historiography of the interwar women's movement, with the 'endowment of motherhood' being used as a prominent illustration of this.

<sup>40</sup> Glasgow Society for Equal Citizenship (GSEC), *Executive Committee Minute Book*, Glasgow City Archives, SR187/891036/1/5, 29 November 1920 and 6 December 1920.

stateswoman', had suggested that such study circles be held when she herself had visited Glasgow to discuss the endowment of motherhood with the executive. While a speaker against was secured, the executive failed to find a speaker in favour.<sup>41</sup> Therefore the endowment of motherhood was never advocated by the GSEC, in spite of its prominence on the agenda of the NUSEC.<sup>42</sup> The GSEC's affiliation to the NUSEC, characterised as the leading proponents of 'difference' feminism, as well as its decision not to support the endowment of motherhood, again highlights its complex identity, which encompassed both 'equality' and 'difference' feminism.

Finally, the GSEC justified its demands for equal access to employment for women, as well as equal representation in the legal professions, including the police, by suggesting that this would allow for the greater protection of women and children. It argued that in this way its demand for equal citizenship was 'no selfish feminism'.<sup>43</sup> This draws upon a similar technique employed by Victorian feminists, who themselves borrowing from female reform ideology, argued that as a result of female emancipation, women could 'claim justice, the only sure defence of the weak, not for herself but for all who are oppressed and downtrodden in the struggle for life'.<sup>44</sup> Within this justification both 'equality' and 'difference' feminism was present, with women's nurturing and protective roles, inherent in motherhood, being used as justification for legal equality.

The range of issues promoted by the EWCA also provides further evidence of the difficulty and inaccuracy of classifying the nature of feminism espoused by a given organisation. This supports Innes' suggestion that the 'equality/difference distinction may over-dichotomise feminist politics'.<sup>45</sup> The EWCA campaigned for and promoted 'equality' issues and what it termed 'social provision'.<sup>46</sup> Indeed in its early years the central committee supported the 'reforms on the immediate programme' of the NUSEC and was also 'in contact with' the Six Point Group.<sup>47</sup> Innes describes the EWCA as an organisation comfortable with difference, and argues that its conception of citizenship was one that drew on ideas of women's distinctive role in public life and saw gender difference as not an impediment to, but a reason

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid, 20 December 1920.

<sup>42</sup> Notably the GSEC later supported family endowment in 1926. GSEC, *Executive Committee Minute Book*, Glasgow City Archives, SR187/891036/1/7, 24 November 1926.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid, 26 Nov 1923.

<sup>44</sup> A. Burton, *Burdens of History, British Feminists, Indian Women, and Imperial Culture, 1865-1915*, Chapel Hill, London, 1994, p. 44.

<sup>45</sup> Innes, 'Constructing Women's Citizenship in the Interwar Period', p. 635.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid, p. 633.

<sup>47</sup> Again while the NUSEC is positioned as the main proponents of 'difference' feminism, the Six Point Group is associated with 'equality' feminism in the early historiography of the interwar women's movement. Edinburgh Women Citizens' Association (EWCA), *Second Annual Report*, National Archives of Scotland, GD333/2/1, 1919-1920, and *Third Annual Report*, GD333/2/2, 1920-1921. In contrast the GSEC were opposed to the formation of the Six Point Group. The executive committee argued that it had 'practically taken the NUSEC programme and paraphrased it'. GSEC, *Executive Committee Minute Book*, SR187/891036/1/5, 21 February 1921.

for equality.<sup>48</sup> Yet, the EWCA's aims and campaigns only partially overlapped with the agenda advanced by Rathbone and the NUSEC, characterised as 'difference' feminism. No formal support was given to family endowments, even though Rathbone addressed the EWCA on the subject.<sup>49</sup> However in 1923 it added the objective 'to secure a real equality of liberties, status and opportunities between men and women'.<sup>50</sup> This was a NUSEC objective, adopted in 1918, which incorporated Rathbone's insistence on moving beyond legal to 'real' equality. Innes suggests that by adding this objective the EWCA was situating 'social feminist aims alongside education for citizenship and work for women's representation'.<sup>51</sup> Thus the EWCA's agenda was also inclusive of both 'equality' and 'difference' feminism.

Yet, in spite of the inaccuracy of classifying organisations as 'equality' or 'difference' feminists, the issues and campaigns that an organisation supported were indicative of the ways in which it defined citizenship. The GSEC largely promoted issues relating to equal political and civic rights for women. It was these demands that prove to be most influential in framing its conception of citizenship. For the GSEC, women had to be equal to men in order to benefit from citizenship rights, which were defined according to the needs of men. Thus it focused its energies on campaigns which would ensure that women gained equal status with men in society, whether that be in the eyes of the law, within employment in the professions, or in the provision of healthcare. Such legislative reform remained its main concern throughout the 1920s and early 1930s. Citizenship for the GSEC was gendered in the sense that its campaigns and demands were centred on gaining equality for women.

In contrast the EWCA's conception of citizenship was more comprehensively based upon the feminist traditions inherent in both 'equality' and 'difference'. This included an emphasis on women's 'social mission', an important continuity from the arguments of Victorian and Edwardian feminists on sexual morality and social welfare. The EWCA also simultaneously linked 'citizenship' to political and civil rights, like the GSEC. Indeed one of the EWCA's main aims was 'to obtain all such reforms as are necessary to secure a real equality of liberties, status, and opportunities between men and women'.<sup>52</sup> However, the EWCA positioned women as bringing 'special qualities' to public life, a claim never made by the GSEC. Increasingly, following the partial extension of the franchise, such special qualities, which were largely derived from women's roles as wife and mother, became integral to its definition of 'active citizenship'.<sup>53</sup> Consequently the EWCA suggested that women 'extend

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<sup>48</sup> Innes, 'Constructing Women's Citizenship in the Interwar Period', p. 635.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid, p. 634.

<sup>50</sup> EWCA, *Second annual report*, GD333/2/1, 1919-1920.

<sup>51</sup> Innes, 'Constructing Women's Citizenship in the Interwar Period', p. 625.

<sup>52</sup> EWCA, *Souvenir booklet of the 21<sup>st</sup> Anniversary of Edinburgh Women Citizen's Association*, 1939, National Archives of Scotland, GD1/1076/19/1, p.14.

<sup>53</sup> Innes, 'Constructing Women's Citizenship in the Interwar Period', p. 638, as will be discussed in chapter three, the term 'active citizenship' was employed by both the EWCA and the GSEC.



their role in the home and family into wider society'.<sup>54</sup> Its members were advised not to compete with men for power and influence, but instead 'develop areas of public life that were their own'.<sup>55</sup> Indeed the co-operation of men and women in public life was advocated, as the EWCA worked 'for reforms of real importance to all citizens, both men and women'.<sup>56</sup>

The assertion of women's private role as a justification for the EWCA's work in public life builds on the central premise of 'difference' feminism, that women are different but equal. The need for women in public positions was explained by women's difference from men. This drew on a familiar route for middle-class women. In the nineteenth century women negotiated the boundary between the private and public spheres, by arguing that the expertise found in women's roles within the home and family were required in public life.<sup>57</sup> The EWCA also employed this strategy. By extending the boundaries of women's accepted sphere of interest and responsibility, the home and family, Innes suggests that the EWCA justified 'a role in associated areas in the public sphere'.<sup>58</sup> Therefore although female enfranchisement theoretically gave women equality with men, and as Innes argues 'the rights of citizenship were gender neutral', in that 'entitlement should not be dependent on sex or marital status', in reality 'the practice of citizenship was not'.<sup>59</sup> Innes suggests that as a result the EWCA promoted a gendered definition of citizenship, which reinterpreted and questioned the male defined nature of 'citizenship' in the interwar years and stressed the necessity of women in public life.

Lady Leslie Mackenzie of the EWCA encouraged this gendered citizenship suggesting that women had 'an exceptional claim to a place in local government' as the 'system of local government is really a method for enabling the family to realise its primary purposes as the growing point of society'.<sup>60</sup> She summarised the requirements of the family, which included

a wholesome place to live, a satisfactory house, provided with a sufficiency of air space both within and without, an adequate water supply, a correct system of drainage, a system for the removal of waste and filth, protection from danger, provision against fire, against infection, against theft, provision for obtaining food, for transit, in a word, for all the elementary arrangements now necessary to rear young children in comfort without over-stress, either of the mother as home-maker and home-keeper or of the father as bread-winner.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> This is a view that it shared with National Women's Citizens Association. Its president, Mrs Ogilvie Gordon, perceived women's participation in the local council as 'efficient housekeeping on a larger scale'. See Voet, *Feminism and Citizenship*, p. 22-23.

<sup>55</sup> Innes, 'Constructing Women's Citizenship in the Interwar Period', p. 639.

<sup>56</sup> Scottish Council of Women Citizens' Associations (SCWCA), *Constitution and Aims of the SCWCA*, 'Why should you join a Women Citizens' Association', National Archives of Scotland, GD1/1076/1/6. The EWCA was a prominent member of this umbrella organisation for all Women Citizens' Associations in Scotland. See chapter one for further details.

<sup>57</sup> E. Gordon, *Women and the Labour Movement in Scotland*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1991, chapter seven.

<sup>58</sup> Innes, 'Constructing Women's Citizenship in the Interwar Period', p. 639.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 638.

<sup>60</sup> SCWCA, *Scottish Women Citizens Yearbook*, National Archives of Scotland, GD1/1076/16, 1923, p. 11.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

The comparison of local government to the family was significant. In fact later in this article Mackenzie suggests that 'to-day, then, the whole of our city organisation is really domestic economy on a great scale'.<sup>62</sup> Elevating women's role within the family therefore enabled the EWCA to justify women's involvement in local government. It is also interesting that Mackenzie positions women as housewives and men as breadwinners, which would appear to conform to the gender stereotypes inherent in the separate spheres paradigm. However the use of women's private identity to facilitate entry into the public sphere challenges this assumption. Indeed, Mackenzie stated that 'we are constantly reminded that 'the place of women is in the home'.<sup>63</sup> She suggested 'let that be so' arguing that this meant that 'the place of women is in the different authorities that carry out the functions of the city, which is a congeries of homes, and we shall see that these functions are all elements of the Home Life'.<sup>64</sup> This was because

Wherever there are sick people to nurse, wherever there is destitution to relieve, wherever there are children to educate, where in the public institutions thousands of responsible officers are women, and where the children to be prepared for life number their tens and even hundreds of thousands, there surely is a place for women.<sup>65</sup>

Again Mackenzie places an emphasis on women's role in relation to the home and family as justification for 'women's claim' to involvement in public life.

This gendered notion of citizenship resulted in the EWCA's promotion of 'welfare' issues as part of its programme. It has been argued in the historiography that the promotion of such issues, often associated with 'difference' feminism, represented a weakening of feminism in the interwar period as these campaigns focused upon women's differences. However Innes argues that such critiques of feminism's perceived 'turn to welfare' fail to appreciate the complexity of feminist thinking.<sup>66</sup> As discussed, equality feminism and difference feminism continued to co-exist within individual organisations, with elements of both being present on agendas and educational programmes. More importantly this criticism of the interwar women's movement also fails to recognise the material circumstances of women and their families in the interwar years, as well as the nature of domestic work.<sup>67</sup> The concentration of many women's organisations on welfare reforms, in the context of the unprecedented economic upheaval of the 1920s and 1930s, had the aim of improving living conditions and health care, therefore making a real difference to women's lives.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid, p. 14.

<sup>66</sup> Innes, 'Constructing Women's Citizenship in the Interwar Period', p. 633.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid, p. 633.

<sup>68</sup> Indeed Hughes suggests that such demands for the expansion of welfare services for women were influential in the campaign for female enfranchisement. A. Hughes, 'Fragmented Feminists? The Influence

Innes also insists that the promotion of welfare issues such as women's right to health care in relation to maternity and child-rearing, were as important in questioning women's second class status in society as 'equality' measures such as the right to vote or employment on equal terms.<sup>69</sup> Furthermore she suggests that the political priorities expressed in such campaigns recognised the social conditions of most women and the support needed if they were to participate in society as equal citizens. The EWCA's support of these campaigns therefore highlights a conception of citizenship which was more comprehensively gendered than that of the GSEC. The EWCA's definition of citizenship aimed to include women, like that of the GSEC. Yet the EWCA also more explicitly asserted women's needs as women, wives and mothers. It emphasised women's difference from men in order to demand equality in society in a way that the GSEC did not.

While the Scottish Co-operative Women's Guild (the Guild) employed a gendered 'citizenship' similar to that of the EWCA, its relationship with the wider Co-operative movement also shaped its definition of citizenship. This was largely because:

The Co-operative movement means more to women than to men. Men have so many channels through which they can take part in public life; the woman at home, absorbed in her housework, her shopping, her children, has so few. The Co-operative movement provides just that link between the home and the great world beyond.<sup>70</sup>

As a result the Guild became increasingly involved in the politics of the Co-operative movement during the interwar period. Its political interests had first surfaced in 1908 when branches began considering 'questions affecting the welfare of the community'. It also further developed its interest in local government, which illustrated its belief that women had a role to play in public life. In addition, the tone of the resolutions submitted at the annual meeting became increasingly political in nature.<sup>71</sup>

In 1910 the Guild affiliated to the Labour Party and began campaigning on behalf of Labour candidates in local and general elections.<sup>72</sup> In the same year the central council also argued that 'the time has now arrived when women should take a deep interest in social and civic questions'.<sup>73</sup> It suggested that a programme of meetings, papers and addresses should be prepared which would bring the importance of 'citizenship' before the Guild. The central council also advocated the need for women's involvement in the public sphere, insisting that

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of Class and Political Identity in Relations between the Glasgow and West of Scotland Suffrage Society and the Independent Labour Party in the West of Scotland, c.1919-1932', *Women's History Review*, Vol. 14, No. 1, 2005, p. 16.

<sup>69</sup> Innes, 'Constructing Women's Citizenship in the Interwar Period', p. 634.

<sup>70</sup> K. M. Callen, *History of the Scottish Co-operative Women's Guild*, SCWS, Glasgow, 1952, p. 11.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> For more detailed analysis of the Guild's relationship with the wider movement and the influence of Co-operative ideology see chapter four.

<sup>73</sup> Gordon, *Women and the Labour Movement in Scotland*, p. 267.

guildwomen be trained 'to take their place in the home, in the social circle and in the Co-operative Society'.<sup>74</sup> While women's 'place in the home' was acknowledged in this directive, women's identity associated with the private roles of wife and mother did not preclude a public role in the wider Co-operative movement and beyond.

In addition, the Guild's understanding of citizenship was based upon the socialist traditions of the labour movement, which linked self-emancipation to social transformations.<sup>75</sup> Issues relating to working-class health and housing were therefore prominent considerations for the Guild in the interwar years, as they had been since its formation. The promotion of such welfare issues would have real benefits for women and their families, as improvements in these areas would improve the quality of life of working-class families. Consequently working in co-operation with the wider Co-operative and labour movements to achieve improvements in health and housing was perceived to be essential by the central council.

In spite of the Guild's differing political background, it employed similar strategies to that of the EWCA. The Guild also stretched the boundaries of the private sphere, and women's private role, to include involvement in the public sphere. Gordon argues that before the First World War

Women's involvement in politics and wider social questions was premised on the belief that it would develop their qualities as homemakers as well as infusing political life with the 'purifying and elevating' influence of women.<sup>76</sup>

Therefore, as Gordon suggests, 'references to women's special nature were used as a means of asserting their moral superiority and as a justification for their entry into public life', and 'did not imply social subordination or women's confinement to the domestic sphere'.<sup>77</sup> Women's qualities and strengths in the private sphere therefore became assets in public life. An essential component of this strategy was motherhood. Gordon argues that in the pre-war period the Guild's 'belief in women's unique qualities which derived from motherhood fuelled their feminism'.<sup>78</sup> This assertion of the importance of motherhood in the renegotiation of women's identity continued to be essential for the Guild in the interwar period, illustrating a continuity in its subversion of popular discourses. In 1918 for example the Guild's president Mrs MacDonald stated that 'she was afraid women were sometimes inclined to limit the sphere of 'motherhood' to their own particular family, whereas they should aim at being 'the mothers of

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Hughes, 'Fragmented Feminists?', p. 9.

<sup>76</sup> Gordon, *Women and the Labour Movement in Scotland*, p. 269.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid, p. 271. Burton also suggests that 'in keeping with Victorian sexual ideology, female-ness in feminist terms meant not inferiority, but a moral superiority that justified participation in the political sphere', Burton, *Burdens of History*, p. 42.

<sup>78</sup> Gordon, *Women and the Labour Movement in Scotland*, p. 270.

the race.’<sup>79</sup> In 1922 she reiterated this sentiment suggesting that women ‘awake to their responsibilities and to the influence that they had in the Co-operative movement’. In addition MacDonald suggested ‘Let them awaken to their influence as mothers’.<sup>80</sup> The importance of motherhood was again re-emphasised in 1925 when Mrs McNair, a member of the central council, urged guildwomen to ‘keep ever in mind that yours is the responsibility for the future generation’.<sup>81</sup> Guildwomen’s influence in the Co-operative movement, and also society, was therefore explicitly linked to their influence as mothers.

Yeo argues that the use of ‘motherhood’ to justify women’s involvement in the public sphere became viable from around the 1750s when women were increasingly identified with motherhood and given responsibility, not only for the fate of the family, but also the stability of class identity and for the vitality of the race.<sup>82</sup> By the nineteenth century femininity had become synonymous with motherhood. In fact Yeo suggests that the cult of motherhood became so influential in this period that ‘it would have been difficult for women to create public identities and strategies totally outside it’.<sup>83</sup> However while the ideology of separate spheres suggested that motherhood belonged in the private sphere, it became instrumental in women’s negotiation of the boundaries between public and private. Indeed Burton argues that the assertion that women were ‘mothers of the race’ gained common currency in the feminist literature of the Victorian and Edwardian periods.<sup>84</sup> Feminists argued that women ‘were ‘race creators’’, with ‘the greatness of the race attributable to the role mothers played’.<sup>85</sup> Such arguments remained influential in the interwar women’s movement in Scotland. Lady Leslie Mackenzie of the EWCA suggested that ‘the fundamental function of the family’, and therefore mother, was to ‘keep alive, to feed, to clothe, to house, to educate and to train for citizenship the child in his various stages – first as infant, next as growing child, then as youth.’ This was aligned to her belief that ‘the child must survive or the race stops’, which illustrates the continuity of the importance placed on mothers in the future of the nation. Essentially maternity and motherhood, theoretically designated as private, and to be found within the realm of the home and family, became public.

Similarly the Guild’s understanding of the influence, and therefore importance, of motherhood allowed it to stretch the ideology of private motherhood in order to authorise its entry into the public sphere. This was achieved by extending ‘two essential elements of their

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<sup>79</sup> *Scottish Co-operator (SC)*, ‘Woman’s Corner’, 6 Dec 1918, p. 511. See p. 69 for further discussion and contextual information relating to the use of the term ‘race’ in the interwar period.

<sup>80</sup> Scottish Co-operative Women’s Guild (SCWG), *Twenty-ninth Annual Report*, Glasgow Regional Archives, CSW1/39/6/29, 1922-1923.

<sup>81</sup> SCWG, *Thirty-second Annual Report*, CSW1/39/6/32, 1926-1927.

<sup>82</sup> E. J. Yeo, ‘The Creation of ‘Motherhood’ and Women’s Responses in Britain and France, 1750-1914, *Women’s History Review*, Vol. 8, No. 2, 1999, p. 201.

<sup>83</sup> E. J. Yeo, ‘Introduction’, in E. Yeo (ed.), *Radical Femininity, Women’s self-representation in the public sphere*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1998, p. 18.

<sup>84</sup> Burton, *Burdens of History*, p. 48.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid*, p. 49.

private maternal identity', women's position as moral guardians and women's role as custodians of family life.<sup>86</sup> The men of the movement wholly accepted this identity, and helped to reinforce it. In 1918 Mr Lawrie, of Newmains Co-operative Wholesale Society, argued that 'there was much truth in the assertion that the standard of morality in any community was regulated in large degree by the quality of its womanhood'. He insisted that 'women take high ground and keep it, for, by doing so, she would assuredly raise man'.<sup>87</sup> Lawrie also discussed women's influence in public life on the care of the children and the 'unfortunate' of her own sex. The Guild's role within the movement was clearly situated as the protectors of women and children. There was no sign of this changing, as Lawrie 'looked forward with hope to the exercise by her of even greater influence in the future'.<sup>88</sup> Burton suggests that such views, which situated women as the morally superior sex, also popular among Victorian feminists, did not preclude co-operation with men in areas of social reform or politics.<sup>89</sup> Yet women were situated 'as the vessels through which the moral improvement of society could be achieved'.<sup>90</sup> The continuity of these views, which elevate the status of women, in the interwar years, especially when reiterated by men, highlights women's success in subverting societal discourses.

This renegotiation of women's identity, which emphasised women's association with the private sphere of the home and family, and in the case of the Guild prioritised motherhood, was criticised by contemporary 'equality' feminists as limiting women and situating their identity only in relation to their reproductive functions.<sup>91</sup> Indeed the activities of the Guild could be restricted by the emphasis placed on women's 'special' qualities associated with the home and family. Callen, a prominent member of the Guild in the interwar years, and later historian of the Guild, states that 'it has usually been found since the institution of the Guild that the members found their way more readily to the Educational Committee than they did the Board of Management'.<sup>92</sup> Similarly other positions earned, both inside the movement and in public life, were often in areas that related to women's maternal caring roles such as education, health and housing. The EWCA also found itself restricted in a similar manner by the assertion of its gendered citizenship, with positions on educational and health authorities appearing to be the easiest for members to gain.<sup>93</sup> However, Innes argues that this construction of citizenship, which used 'womanly expertise', opened up more, if still limited, space for women.<sup>94</sup> Ultimately the assertion of a gendered citizenship allowed both guildwomen and

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<sup>86</sup> Yeo, 'The Creation of Motherhood', p. 207.

<sup>87</sup> SC, 'Woman's Corner', 21 June 1918, p. 308.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> Burton, *Burdens of History*, p. 42.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> See Smith, 'British feminism in the 1920s', pp. 47-65.

<sup>92</sup> Callen, *History of the Scottish Co-operative Women's Guild*, p. 24-25.

<sup>93</sup> Innes, 'Constructing Women's Citizenship in the Interwar Period', p. 625.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid, p. 639.

members of the EWCA to gain access to responsible positions in local government, and in the case of the Guild, within the Co-operative movement. This representation allowed these women to promote issues of importance to their fellow members, such as health and housing, and gave women an essential role in gaining improvements in these areas.

Yet, prominent guildwomen also acknowledged the limited nature of women's role within society and articulated the need for equality. In 1918 Mrs Hardstaff, of the central council, asserted that 'for ages women had been taught to consider themselves of less social importance than men, even though they had not been given the same opportunity to develop educationally'.<sup>95</sup> She declared that 'the time was long overdue for women to set a truer value on themselves and demand equality in all respects with men'. Again this highlights the complex nature of women's organisations and the inadequacy of the equality/difference dichotomy. The Guild shared the EWCA's belief in not challenging male spheres of activity but creating women's own. It also campaigned for direct equality with men in the eyes of the law, as the GSEC and the EWCA also did. The Guild's belief in equality can be traced back to the pre-war period, when Gordon argues that there was 'a strong feminist strand' within the Guild, and members were encouraged to think of themselves as 'a worker, a missionary for the cause of women's progress'.<sup>96</sup> This explains the fact that the Guild was 'the first and most persistent advocate amongst the socialist and labour groups for the extension of the parliamentary franchise to women'.<sup>97</sup> The first petition for women's suffrage was sent to the Government in 1893 and resolutions were passed at the annual conferences every year until 1918.<sup>98</sup> Gordon also argues that 'the Guild was also the only working-class women's organisation to affiliate to a suffrage society, having delegates on the committee of the non-militant West of Scotland Suffrage Society'.<sup>99</sup>

These concerns regarding women's equality continued in the interwar period. Again in 1918 Mrs Hardstaff observed that while the management committees of the Co-operative movement were 'just beginning to realise the value of women', in the labour market, in the eyes of the state, and in the eyes of the law, women were 'still viewed as subordinate'.<sup>100</sup> She therefore argued that women should aim to secure equality with men in society. Consequently, the Guild continued to protest for a further extension of the parliamentary franchise for women until this was realised in 1928. In fact in 1918 Mrs Tulloch, the president, stated that 'they had been very badly treated in not being allowed to vote till they were over thirty'.<sup>101</sup> These were concerns that the Guild shared with both the GSEC and the EWCA. The Guild also questioned

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<sup>95</sup> SC, 'Woman's Corner', 8 March 1918, p. 160.

<sup>96</sup> Gordon, *Women and the Labour Movement in Scotland*, p. 268.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> SC, 'Woman's Corner', 8 March 1918, p. 160.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid, 5 April 1918, p. 195.

women's status within the Co-operative movement, with Mrs Hendry of the central council arguing in 1928 that the Guild was a great asset to the movement, but could do more if given the opportunity by the Board of Management.<sup>102</sup>

Scott criticises the English Guild's extension of the boundaries of the private sphere, and elevation of women's private roles associated with the home and family, in order to justify its involvement in the public sphere. She suggests that this illustrated a weakening of its feminist position in the interwar years.<sup>103</sup> However women's organisations had to work within the complex network of discourses available to them in any given context. In this respect the Guild in Scotland, and its English counterpart, renegotiated and subverted the meanings inherent in the 'private' identity of working-class women in the interwar years, as these organisations had also done in the pre-war period. The separate spheres paradigm remained ideologically influential in the interwar years. The Guild exploited this and its associated societal discourses for its own ends by elevating the status of the mother and wife within the Co-operative movement. It argued that as wives and mothers its members had a right to be represented in positions of authority in the Co-operative movement, and in public life more generally, as they had special qualities and experience which was required in decision making bodies. While this strategy, and associated arguments, often resulted in guildwomen being restricted to areas of influence which were related to their roles as wife and mother, such as health and housing, it cannot be denied that this strategy ultimately gained power and agency for the Guild and its members. The Guild simultaneously demanded equality with the men in the movement and in society. Therefore it did not abandon an 'equality' approach in favour of 'difference', with both types of feminism co-existing on its agenda. The use of this strategy was pragmatic. The Guild was playing to its strengths within the discourses and ideologies of the Co-operative movement and indeed society. The use of this strategy empowered its members and enabled them to argue for improvements which would have an important impact on the lives of working-class people.<sup>104</sup>

While there were similarities in the strategies employed by the Scottish Women's Rural Institutes (the Rurals), the Guild and the EWCA, in terms of justifying their members involvement in public life, there remained significant differences. The geographical location of the Rurals was vastly different from the other three organisations under consideration and this had important implications on the way in which the Rurals defined citizenship. More significantly, whilst they shared a gendered understanding of citizenship, unlike the three other

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<sup>102</sup> Ibid, 16 Sept 1928, p. 102.

<sup>103</sup> G. Scott, "'As a war-horse to the beat of drums' representations of working-class femininity in the Women's Co-operative Guild, 1880s to the Second World War", in E. Yeo (ed.), *Radical Femininity, Women's self-representation in the public sphere*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1998, p. 215. Also see G. Scott, *Feminism and The Politics of Working Women The Women's Co-operative Guild 1880 to the Second World War*, UCL Press, London, 1998.

<sup>104</sup> For further discussion of the Guild's campaigns, and methods and strategies in this regard, see chapter four.



organisations, the Rurals explicitly disavowed a feminist identity. In 1926 an article published in *Scottish Home and Country* insisted ‘Don’t let the Institute become a feminist one’. This assertion was based on the premise that ‘men and women are not superior one to the other. They are different – they are the complement one to the other’.<sup>105</sup> Furthermore the author insisted that ‘while we manage our own affairs, let us sometimes consult the men. They have done public and co-operative work longer than we have.’<sup>106</sup> For the Rurals, women’s participation in public life involved co-operation with men. Feminism was viewed as a threat to such co-operation.

Similarly Courtney argued, in her contemporary account of the Women’s Institute movement in Britain, that while it ‘is a feminine movement, it has not shown itself to be feminist’.<sup>107</sup> She insisted that this was because ‘it contains too large a proportion of married women’. Courtney’s account may indeed reflect negative contemporary views relating to feminism, as illustrated in her assumption that married women were not feminists. She remains opposed to feminists arguing that ‘home makers are not going to be home breakers’ and if ‘ever a firebrand appeared amongst their leaders’ the ‘commonsense of the rank and file’ would act as a ‘safeguard’ against such action with there being a ‘sufficient supply of cold water on tap to avert any serious danger’.<sup>108</sup> In addition Courtney suggested that rather than ‘distancing masculine help, the Institutes invite it’ especially in handicrafts, ‘agricultural exhibitions’ and occasionally drama.<sup>109</sup> She stated that this has made the Institutes popular with husbands, although simultaneously suggested that while ‘a husband can be a ‘poor thing’’, a ‘wise’ wife would not tell him so, but would be much more likely ‘to find him a job of sorts and make him of use’.<sup>110</sup> Therefore for Courtney, including men in the periphery of the Institutes work may make them less oppositional to its existence. Undoubtedly this may have been a technique employed by Women’s Institutes throughout Britain. However there is also evidence of Rurals whose members thrived on their autonomy from the men of the village. Indeed many Rurals were in the position to choose when to make use of men’s help or advice, or when to invite men to social gatherings.<sup>111</sup>

In spite of the Rurals’ disavowal of feminism, like the Guild and the EWCA, its conception of citizenship was largely related to women’s roles in the private sphere of the home and family. In an address given to the first meeting of a Scottish Rural Institute in 1917,

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<sup>105</sup> *Scottish Home and Country*, February 1926, p. 2.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>107</sup> J. E. Courtney, *Countrywomen in council. The English and Scottish Women’s Institutes*, Oxford University Press, London, 1933, p. 151.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 153. Courtney’s aversion to feminism ignored the fact that many of the pioneers of the Women’s Institute movement in both England and Scotland had been involved in the campaign for the vote.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 151.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>111</sup> See chapter five for further discussion of the provisions made for the community by Rural Institutes, and the autonomy shown by many Rural Institutes in staging dramatic productions with women playing male roles.

Miss Louisa Innes Lumsden argued that while women were far too often confined within the four walls of their homes, 'it was not desired to take her from that sphere, but to deepen and broaden it'.<sup>112</sup> This suggestion was very much like the strategy adopted by the Guild. In addition, Lumsden argued that the nation was 'awakening to the importance of the work of women', not only in 'filling the gap' created by the absence of men at war, but also in recognising 'the importance of women's work in the home'. She also suggested that 'it had been well said that the mother was the first servant of the state'.<sup>113</sup> Therefore as well as the Rurals' understanding of citizenship being based upon women's roles as mothers, this was also bound up with women's duty to the nation. As Lumsden stated 'these institutes would go a long way in helping the mother make country life a better thing'.<sup>114</sup> This contention was also highlighted in the formation of the Rurals, which Blair argued were established with the aim of 'bringing variety and interest into the lives of women in dull rural districts'.<sup>115</sup> It was argued that this would help countrywomen 'fulfil their purpose', and was linked explicitly to the promotion of 'ideals of good citizenship among Scottish women'.<sup>116</sup>

However the proposed formation of the Rurals did not meet with universal approval. Local farmers laughed at the possibility of teaching women 'leisure crafts', questioning the availability of leisure time in which to do so. It was generally suggested that women were too busy to attend meetings.<sup>117</sup> Many women were also apathetic and opposed to involvement in public meetings. When door-to-door canvassing in the local area, Catherine Blair, accredited as the founder of the movement, and her supporters, received responses such as 'no, I can't go to your meeting, I'm on the Lord's side', 'I keep masel' to masel' or 'I'm proud to say I've never been out o' ma ain hoose for sixteen years'.<sup>118</sup>

Blair and the other founding members overcame this opposition by justifying the formation of the Rurals as 'a help' in food production and conservation. The nation was at war, food was rationed and submarine warfare had resulted in the destruction of shipping. Consequently fruit, vegetables, and other foodstuffs could not be imported in sufficient quantities from overseas. The necessity of home production ensured that the importance of women's agricultural work increased as the war continued. The Scottish Council of Agriculture therefore received Blair's suggestion for the formation of Rural Institutes

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<sup>112</sup> Miss Lumsden was one the pioneers in the campaign for the higher education of women. Notably she also appeared on the EWCA's list of speakers and conducted study circles on 'international affairs' and 'the league of nations', and gave talks on 'Women's Responsibility in Public Affairs', EWCA, *Second and Forth Annual Report*, GD333/2/2 and 4, 1919-1920 and 1921-1922. Also see C. Blair, *Rural Journey, A History of the S.W.R.I from Cradle to Majority*, Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd, Edinburgh, 1940, p. 29.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid, p. 30.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid, p. 26.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid, p. 15.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid, p. 16, these quotes are also reproduced in Scott, *The story of the Women's Institute Movement in England and Wales and Scotland*, Idbury, Kingham, 1925, p. 219.

sympathetically. Blair was also appointed to represent women's interests and given a remit to report on the conditions affecting social life in rural areas. This resulted in the Scottish Council of Agriculture acknowledging 'the importance of social life in the development of agriculture and other rural industries' and it recommended that the Board of Agriculture support the establishment of Women's Institutes in Scotland.<sup>119</sup>

Essentially Blair had justified the formation of Rural Institutes by linking this explicitly to the benefits for the nation. She suggested that if women chose to spend their leisure time within the Rurals, they would be taught how to grow their own fruit and vegetables or do so more productively. The Rurals would therefore be helping women to 'do their bit' for the war effort, which could be viewed as another way of encouraging 'active citizenship'. As a result the aim to increase the homegrown food supply, conserve it and utilise it to the best advantage, was a significant feature in the early syllabuses. Courtney argues that the Board of Agriculture was using British Women's Institutes as channels of wartime propaganda. Arguably Blair and her supporters were aware of this fact, and marketed the Rurals as being useful to the war effort in order to receive funding.<sup>120</sup> Whether or not this was a conscious strategy, fears concerning national efficiency under wartime conditions facilitated the establishment of the Rurals.

In spite of this the Rurals continued to face opposition. The main criticism was that the time was inopportune for the formation of such a movement when the country was at war. Again Blair reiterated the work that members could do for the war effort in relation to increasing the food supply, and also suggested that such work would lay the foundations for women's involvement in the reconstruction of Scotland after the war. She also made a direct appeal to the critics, and asked them 'for the sake of those who have fallen' to 'help in this effort to uphold the ideals for which the war is being fought' and 'to render our country better worthy of sacrifice'.<sup>121</sup> Again this may have been a strategic move. By aligning the aims of the Rurals to the aims of the nation, and suggesting the importance of the Rurals in helping the nation, Blair was able to justify its existence. It is obvious that the geographical location of the newly established Rurals in predominantly agricultural areas facilitated Blair's arguments for the necessity of the formation and expansion of the Rurals as a help in food production. However it also played a prominent role in the way in which the Rurals conceived citizenship. This became increasingly influenced by a the belief in women's duty to the nation, which was often directly linked to what women could do on the farm, in the home, or in co-operative village enterprises.<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> Blair, *Rural Journey*, p. 19. Also see *The Scotsman*, 20 April 1917, p. 3.

<sup>120</sup> Courtney, *Countrywomen in council*, p. 135.

<sup>121</sup> Blair, *Rural Journey*, p. 39.

<sup>122</sup> See chapter five for further discussion of such activities.

Indeed one of the Rural's guiding mottos became 'there are duties we owe the race outside our dwelling place'. In this context the use of the word 'race' may have been a reference to discourses relating to imperialism in the interwar years.<sup>123</sup> Burton suggests that while imperialism following the First World War was 'not what it had been in the nineteenth century', the 'break between 1918 and what came before is perhaps not as definitive as it once seemed'.<sup>124</sup> She argues that discourses relating to empire, from its glories in the mid-Victorian period to the 'pre-war crises of confidence' must be taken into consideration as 'among the influences shaping the feminist discourses'.<sup>125</sup> Catherine Blair was an active suffragist in Scotland and may have been influenced by the feminist movement's use of imperial rhetoric to justify their arguments for female emancipation.<sup>126</sup> Burton argues that feminists of the late Victorian Britain 'demonstrated their allegiances to the imperial nation state' as 'justification for their claims upon the state'. In addition she suggests that British feminists in the Victorian and Edwardian era 'worked consistently to identify themselves with the national interest and their cause with the future prosperity of the nation state'.<sup>127</sup> Blair employed a similar strategy in aligning the aims of the Rurals to those of the nation, thereby justifying their formation and existence. Not only does this illustrate the continuity of fears relating to the efficiency of the nation and empire, but also highlights a continuity in the strategies employed by the feminist movement. Therefore even though the Rurals did not consider themselves to be feminist, Blair's feminism, and history as a suffragist, informed the strategies used by the Rurals, with this continuing throughout the interwar years.

The Rurals continued to employ such imperialist discourse following the First World War, arguing that rural women would play a fundamental role in the reconstruction of the nation.<sup>128</sup> As it had during the war, the Rurals largely related women's role in reconstruction to women's role in the home and family. The central council suggested that the 'importance to the nation of home making and of those branches of rural economy in which women are especially concerned' should be emphasised.<sup>129</sup> It also insisted that 'if men produce the food, it falls to the women to use it to the best advantage in dairy, poultry yard, and kitchen'.<sup>130</sup> In

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<sup>123</sup> As noted this terminology was also used by the Guild, which may illustrate the fact that such imperialist discourses were influential on a range of feminist organisations.

<sup>124</sup> Burton, *Burdens of History*, p. 4.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid, p. 5. See chapter one for further details of Blair's involvement in the suffrage movement in Scotland.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid.

<sup>128</sup> Following the war the EWCA also added to its list of objectives that 'all women, voters and non-voters, will be appealed to in no way to relax their efforts to help the country in this time of stress'. This involved 'giving careful consideration to national, imperial, and international issues involved in problems of reconstruction'. The adoption of this objective again illustrates the influence of imperialist discourses in the immediate aftermath of the First World War. EWCA, *First Annual Report*, GD333/46/1, 1918-1919.

<sup>129</sup> Scottish Women's Rural Institutes (SWRI), *Handbook and Report of the year ended 31 October 1919*, 'Notes on the History of the Women's Institute', uncatalogued archives held at SWRI headquarters, 42 Heriot Row, Edinburgh, p. 8.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid.

addition it was argued that ‘the type of brain and manual labour available in any country depends on the knowledge and care displayed by the previous generation of housewives’.<sup>131</sup> Thus women’s work was positioned as essential, with it being suggested that the government should recognise that ‘a prosperous rural economy depends on the work of both men and of women’, and consequently ‘both should share in the advantages that spring from education’.<sup>132</sup> The role of rural women in reconstruction was situated as essential and again justified the Rurals’ provision of educational classes for its members, as well as its demands for educational grants from local councils.<sup>133</sup>

The organiser appointed by the Scottish Board of Agriculture, Miss Campbell, had similar perceptions of the Rural’s role in reconstruction. She compared the Rurals to war memorials, of which there was ‘much talk’, arguing that ‘surely there is a memorial to be built by the women of Scotland which is more enduring than granite’.<sup>134</sup> Campbell outlined the problems left by the war, the ‘men coming home broken in body and mind’, ‘children and the old folks of those others who have had to leave to our care what they most cared for’ and ‘the many for whom life can never be the same’.<sup>135</sup> For her the solution was the Rurals, ‘for they stand for home, and it is home that all are needing, not the building, but women and girls who bring ‘home’ with them wherever they go’.<sup>136</sup> This positioning of the Rurals as a ‘living memorial’ and fundamental help in reconstruction, employs a similar justification as that used by Blair during its formation.

The members of the Rurals embraced such imperialist discourses relating to women’s duty to the nation, with several Institutes organising addresses on the ‘British Empire and women’s part in reconstruction’.<sup>137</sup> Charity work was an important element of the Rural’s work for the nation during the war, when parcels for soldiers were sent to the front, money was collected for the Minesweepers’ Fund, and the Red Cross was supported.<sup>138</sup> The Rurals also collected money to provide two beds in the Scottish Women’s Hospitals in Serbia and France, and later became involved in the building of war memorials.<sup>139</sup> Such charity work was

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<sup>131</sup> Ibid.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid.

<sup>133</sup> See chapter five for further discussion of the Rurals’ attempts to receive local government recognition and funding of their educational classes.

<sup>134</sup> SWRI, *Handbook and Report of the year ended 31 October 1919*, ‘Report on the Board’s Work’, p. 15.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid, p. 21. Notably Burton argues that in Victorian culture ‘nation and empire were effectively one in the same’, arguably this was also true in the interwar period. Burton, *Burdens of History*, p. 6.

<sup>138</sup> The members of Dunlop SWRI, for example, knitted socks and woollen garments for men serving in the armed forces during the First World War. The Ayrshire Federation, *The Best of the Old, The Best of the New: History of the Ayrshire Federation SWRI, 1921-2006*, Walker and Connell Ltd, Darvel, Ayrshire, 2006, p. 41.

<sup>139</sup> Many Rurals became involved in community efforts to construct war memorials. This very public involvement in community affairs highlights the influence of women in rural life. In Ormiston the Rural felt that ‘women ought to have a little to say as to what they were going to give; otherwise it was nearly all men who had to do with it’. Its fundraising efforts raised £303. Similarly Keiss Rural raised over £60 to be divided between the Red Cross Fund and towards the construction of a war memorial to fallen soldiers. Its

instrumental in the Rurals' negotiation of the boundary between the public and private spheres. While it was linked explicitly with women's roles as wives and mothers, it also provided women with the role of protectors of those who could not care for themselves such as invalids, children and 'unfortunates' of their own sex. This gave members of the Rurals a legitimate reason for participation in the public sphere. Thus such 'duties to the race' effectively 'widened and deepened' the private sphere.<sup>140</sup>

The Rurals not only fulfilled their 'duty to the nation' through such charity work. This was only one element of their 'efforts in citizenship'. Many Rurals felt that 'the war has widened our vision', which resulted in women wanting to play a 'large part in the reconstruction of our country'.<sup>141</sup> For many this involved entering 'into close fellowship with our overseas dominions'. This highlights the continuity of women's organisations' interest in the fate of the empire, and also illustrates the interchangeable nature of 'nation' and 'empire'. The Rurals' role in reconstruction also included ensuring that 'we women who have the right of citizenship should be kept in touch with all the movements of the day that concern the health and happiness of our homes and country'. Child welfare, the new Education Act and 'its future development for the benefit of our young people' were listed as priorities.<sup>142</sup>

The enfranchisement of women stimulated an interest in 'citizenship' for members of the Rurals, although the education provided by the central council was limited in comparison to that of the other organisations under discussion. In 1919 a polling station demonstration toured throughout Scotland to explain and illustrate the process of voting to members. This was described as 'very enjoyable' with speeches being given, followed by an audience vote at the polling booth to demonstrate the way enfranchised members would be 'called upon to do in connection with the Education Act and Temperance (Scotland) Act'.<sup>143</sup> On occasion 'citizenship' was formally discussed in monthly meetings. Representatives of the Edinburgh Society for Equal Citizenship lectured branches in the Stirlingshire Federation, with Miss Bury the secretary speaking on 'citizenship its duties and principles' in 1923.<sup>144</sup> Similarly in 1926 'a most absorbing address on 'citizenship' was given by Dr Jane Suttie throughout the Perth and Kinross Federation. The part women had to play in the training of good citizens was emphasised and 'a few practical illustrations of what to avoid' were given.<sup>145</sup> Thus women's special role and responsibility in teaching good citizenship to others was emphasised.

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members also cooked and served 'a very sumptuous supper' for 'our returned soldiers'. Balbeggie WRI raised £191 for the Red Cross Fund and 'for the purposes of entertaining wounded soldiers. SWRI, *Handbook and Report of the year ended 31 October 1919*, p. 30. Also see Courtney, *Countrywomen in council*, p. 21 and 28.

<sup>140</sup> Courtney, *Countrywomen in Council*, p. 44.

<sup>141</sup> SWRI, *Handbook and Report of the year ended 31 October 1919*, p. 18.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid. The Rurals' interest in child welfare and housing will be discussed in greater detail in chapter five.

<sup>143</sup> SWRI, *Handbook and Report of the year ended 31 October 1919*, 'Programme Making', p. 14. Accounts of this exhibition also appear in the minutes of several Rurals.

<sup>144</sup> Kippen SWRI, *Record of Meetings*, Stirling Council Archives Services, PD 97/1/1, 27 April 1923.

<sup>145</sup> *Scottish Home and Country*, February 1926, p. 10.

However, it would be best to describe the Rurals' approach to 'citizenship' as practical as illustrated by their 'efforts in citizenship'.

The 'widened vision' of many members of the Rurals following the war resulted in an increasing interest in 'public work'. It was argued that through such work the Rurals would enrich rural life by improving the 'home life of the people'. Therefore there was an explicit link between home and country, with such activities being justified both by women's 'duty to the nation' following the war and also by women's qualities inherent in their private identity associated with the home and family. Sir Robert Greig of the Board of Agriculture insisted that the Rurals 'offered a unique opportunity for national service' and urged the women to remember that 'the strength of our Empire lies in the homes of our people'.<sup>146</sup> Like the Guild, the Rurals employed such discourses when addressing its concerns relating to the improvement of the material conditions of the lives of its members and their families. Consequently the poor condition of rural housing became a major component of its 'citizenship' work. The emphasis placed on housing directly related to the Rurals' dedication to strengthening the nation through the home, as it was argued that the improvement of housing conditions would arrest depopulation.<sup>147</sup> As Britain required a strong agricultural workforce the Rurals again saw itself as assisting the nation. It was also addressing the material needs of its members, to have a warm, dry, comfortable house with running water, electricity and sanitation. Therefore the Rurals' understanding of citizenship both encompassed its duty to the nation and its dedication to improving the lives of its members. It also promoted other 'welfare' issues, with members being urged to consider all questions relating to the welfare of children. Again this was related to the Rurals' duty to the nation, with it being argued that there was a need to save the youth of the country and stop the wastage and damage of child life. Consequently the establishment of child welfare centres was encouraged, as this would be of 'inestimable benefit to the young mother'. It was even suggested that the places where the Rurals met could double as such centres.<sup>148</sup>

The Rurals also considered women's position in regard to the law. However, 'equality' issues were not given the same level of attention within the Rurals as 'welfare' issues such as health and housing. In fact the former largely featured as advertisements in the *Scottish Home and Country*. In particular an article in April 1926 entitled 'Law and the

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<sup>146</sup> *The Scotsman*, 20 April 1917, p. 3. Notably the terms 'nation' and 'empire' are again used in the same context in the discussion of 'national service' and 'strength of the empire', and women's role therein. This connection of the home with the nation and empire was again a continuity with the Victorian period where women were given an imperial role, as their homes were a 'nursery of national life, and the reproduction of which across the seas will always be the ideal of imperialism'. As quoted in Burton, *Burdens of History*, p. 51.

<sup>147</sup> See chapter five for further discussion of the Rurals' demands for housing improvements.

<sup>148</sup> *The Scotsman*, 23 November 1917, p. 3, and 29 June 1918, p. 7.

Woman' gave details of a pamphlet based on six papers given at the EWCA's study circles.<sup>149</sup> These issues were not discussed in detail, members were simply advised that the booklet would be 'of inestimable value to all those who wish to know how the law of the land affects women and children'.<sup>150</sup> This was peculiar considering that prominent members of the Rurals attended at least two conferences held by the EWCA to consider the work of women's organisations, and on both occasions gave accounts of the work of the Rurals.<sup>151</sup> Yet there was no formal co-operation in terms of the EWCA providing speakers for Rurals on such issues. The Rurals' disavowal of a feminist identity and non-political stance may have prevented such co-operation, as well as discussion of this particular pamphlet and the issues within it.

In discussing current women's grassroots political movements in the United States, Ackelsberg, has commented on the way in which community-based organisations suggest that their work and activities are 'not political'.<sup>152</sup> Indeed many of her respondents 'made a separation between what they described as their 'community work' and what they identified as 'politics'.<sup>153</sup> Community work was viewed as 'simply an expression of their roles as wives and mothers' and a 'logical extension of their desire to improve the lives of their families and neighbours'.<sup>154</sup> In addition such women positioned their activism as separate from traditional forms of political activity associated with men. In this way they were creating a 'borderland region between the domestic and public spheres'.<sup>155</sup>

The Rurals arguably held a similar view of their work. They justified women's involvement in 'citizenship' or 'public' work as being related to women's private role in the home and family, and in turn linked this to women's duty to the nation. Yet the Rurals rarely became involved in formal politics, as illustrated by, for example, the local council or education authority.<sup>156</sup> They also generally did not employ traditional lobbying tactics such as forming deputations and sending formal resolutions to local councillors or MPs. The Rurals did not formally advocate such political representation of women. This may explain the lack of interest in female equality in a legal sense, and campaigns that were associated with explicitly feminist organisations such as the EWCA. However, while the Rurals were not feminists, they empowered their members by enabling them to transcend the boundaries of the

<sup>149</sup> This illustrated the range of issues considered by the EWCA and included 'Marriage and Divorce according to the Law of Scotland', 'The Law as it affects the woman as Wife and Mother', 'The Laws of Scotland affecting the Unmarried Mother and her Child', 'The Law of Scotland as it affects the Woman Worker', 'The Law as it affects the Unemployed Woman' and 'The Scottish Law of Inheritance'.

<sup>150</sup> *Scottish Home and Country*, April 1926, p. 8.

<sup>151</sup> *The Scotsman*, 18 March 1927, p. 7, and 19 October 1928, p. 15. These conferences will be discussed in greater detail in chapter five, as will the Rurals' relationship with the EWCA and the Guild.

<sup>152</sup> M. Ackelsberg, 'Women's Community Activism and the Rejection of 'Politics'', *Some Dilemmas of Popular Democratic Movements*, in M. Friedman (ed.), *Women and Citizenship*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2005, p. 67.

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid*, p. 74.

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>155</sup> Diaz-Barriga as quoted in Ackelsberg, 'Women's Community Activism and the Rejection of 'Politics'', p. 74.

<sup>156</sup> See chapter five for further discussion.



private sphere and argue for improvements in their everyday circumstances.<sup>157</sup> Similarly Andrews argues that the English Women's Institutes' 'perception of themselves at the heart of the nation' was 'able to be transferred into demands for social welfare legislation'.<sup>158</sup> Consequently the Rurals, like their counterparts in England, were not as 'conservative' as they are often perceived to be in the popular imagination.

While all four organisations under discussion understood 'citizenship' as gendered, there was a significant difference between the GSEC and the other three organisations. The GSEC's conception of citizenship largely centred around the belief that women were deserving of equality on the same terms as men. Admittedly the GSEC promoted issues that could be characterised as both 'equality' and 'difference' in orientation, which lends support to the contention that the tendency for historians to categorise women's organisations as either equality or difference is misleading. However for the GSEC 'citizenship' was a status, which equated with women's entitlement to equality, this being illustrated in its recurrent and prominent demands for the equal representation of women in positions of influence in the public sphere, as well as in the legal and teaching professions and civil service. The extension of the franchise in 1918 and again in 1928 provided justification for its demands.

The other three organisations' understanding of citizenship was more complicated and more comprehensively gendered in that it involved a conception of women's identities being shaped by the private spheres of home and family. Each of these three organisations, the EWCA, the Guild and the Rurals, to differing extents, developed an analysis of citizenship in which women's entitlement to equality was based upon the unique qualities related to their roles as wives and mothers. The EWCA argued that women had special qualities that were required in public life, and that these qualities derived from motherhood and women's domestic role. Such arguments enabled the EWCA to negotiate the boundaries of the private sphere and use women's 'private' identity to justify an involvement in public life. The EWCA also continued to demand equality with men in the public sphere, like the GSEC. However its gendered conception of citizenship was used as a justification for women's representation in positions of influence on, for instance, local councils and education authorities.<sup>159</sup>

The Guild and Rurals used a similar strategy to that of the EWCA, in stretching the boundaries of women's private identities to encompass involvement in public life. Their understandings of citizenship were also affected by other factors. For the Guild its involvement in the politics of the Co-operative movement proved to be influential, as

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<sup>157</sup> See Introduction for discussion of definitions of 'feminism' and what constitutes feminist activity. Also see chapter five for further discussion of the Rurals' campaigning for improved housing and healthcare.

<sup>158</sup> Andrews, *The Acceptable Face of Feminism*, p. 77.

<sup>159</sup> See chapter six for further discussion of the ways in which this conception of citizenship was used by representatives of the EWCA during their election campaigns and in their work once appointed.

Co-operative ideology and working-class concerns also shaped its conception of citizenship. Similarly the Rurals' belief in women's duty to the nation, which was related to women's roles within the private sphere as wives and mothers, also influenced the way in which it defined citizenship. Yet, while the Guild also promoted 'equality' issues in a similar manner to the EWCA, as discussed above, the Rurals rarely did. As suggested this may be as a result of the Rurals' explicit disavowal of a feminist identity as well as a denial that their activities were 'political'. Ultimately the way in which both organisations conceived of citizenship was based on the gendered definition shared by the EWCA.

As a result of this gendered citizenship the EWCA, the Guild and the Rurals largely promoted welfare issues such as housing and health, which related directly to women's special caring and maternal nature. It was the promotion of these issues that facilitated their members' access to public life. Thus although the promotion of a gendered citizenship could be seen as restrictive for women, for these three organisations it allowed women to promote issues of importance to their fellow members and their families. As Innes argues, this opened up more, if still limited space for women.<sup>160</sup>

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<sup>160</sup> Innes, 'Constructing Women's Citizenship in the Interwar Period', p. 639.

## CHAPTER THREE

### ‘Active Citizenship’: The Glasgow Society for Equal Citizenship and the Edinburgh Women Citizens’ Association

The GSEC and the EWCA both promoted ‘active citizenship’ among their members, and women more generally, following the partial enfranchisement of women in 1918. This became a guiding principle of each organisation’s work in the interwar years<sup>1</sup>, and took a dual role. ‘Active citizenship’ permeated the education provided by each organisation for its members, as women were to be prepared to take a role in the public sphere. Members were to be educated in how to use their votes, and encouraged to take an interest in local government and political issues more broadly. This principle of ‘active citizenship’ also guided each organisation’s feminism. The issues and campaigns that the GSEC and the EWCA supported reflected their feminist beliefs. In turn, through involvement in these campaigns, the members of each organisation realised their own ‘active citizenship’ and feminism.

Each organisation’s campaigns can broadly be divided into two groups. There were the on-going issues, usually of a legislative nature, which were prominent throughout the period.<sup>2</sup> Both organisations also participated in or led campaigns which became its dominant concern in a given session or period. Three case studies will be provided to illustrate the latter, and will include each organisations involvement in the campaigns for the provision of permanent care for ‘the feeble minded’, improved housing, and reduction in maternal mortality.

#### Education

The GSEC and the EWCA both situated ‘active citizenship’ as the next step in the women’s movement. This was broadly defined by each organisation as the use of the new citizenship rights gained by the enfranchisement of women over thirty. It followed that both organisations provided ‘education for active citizenship’ for its members, which initially involved educating women in how to use their vote. The GSEC placed advertisements in various newspapers, including the *Glasgow Herald* and *Glasgow Citizen*, offering information and inviting newly enfranchised women to visit its offices to consult its copy of the register of voters.<sup>3</sup> The GSEC

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<sup>1</sup> As noted the GSEC disbanded in 1933, in its case the term ‘interwar’ therefore relates to the period from 1918 to its closure.

<sup>2</sup> It was through demands for legal reforms that each organisation’s belief in female equality was most evident, with the promotion of an extension of women’s voting rights or equal pay for equal work both being important. Legislation pertaining to child welfare was also prominent.

<sup>3</sup> Glasgow and West of Scotland Suffrage Society (GSS), *Executive Committee Minute Book*, Glasgow City Archives, SR187/891036/1/4, 11 February 1918. Glasgow (and West of Scotland) Society for Equal

stated that this was ‘largely taken advantage of by members and also by the public’.<sup>4</sup> Similarly it was one of the EWCA’s first aims to propagate ‘information as to the qualifications for women’s parliamentary and local vote’.<sup>5</sup>

Each organisation also held public meetings and speakers’ classes, which in the case of the GSEC were advertised in the local press.<sup>6</sup> The EWCA’s speakers’ classes operated as a course of six weekly meetings, where various subjects were considered. In 1934 over forty members attended one such course and ‘all the members took part in the discussions, thus acquiring greater confidence and facility in expression’.<sup>7</sup> In its early years the EWCA also provided classes to explain lobbying and committee work.<sup>8</sup> In addition, each organisation held ‘study circles’ that considered ‘civic, economic, industrial and social questions’, and also encompassed ‘national and international politics’.<sup>9</sup> Meetings, lectures, addresses and debates also featured prominently on the programmes of both organisations.<sup>10</sup> All of these events had the objective, not only of politicising women, but also preparing them to take their place in public life by raising their self-confidence and ensuring that they were able to voice their opinions in public.

The EWCA argued that such opportunities for study allowed members to inform themselves on ‘new subjects’ and ‘keep abreast of all movements for reform’, as it was felt that ‘a woman can use her vote to better purpose if she studies public questions’.<sup>11</sup> Both organisations ensured that when drawing up their syllabi for the following year, all issues of importance to women and the community were considered, and that suitable speakers were arranged. This often meant that on issues relating to, for example local government, town councillors and other public men or increasingly women, would be invited to address a meeting.<sup>12</sup> Indeed the EWCA ‘gladly’ thanked ‘the heads of departments of the Local Authority’, stating that its members had learned ‘much as to the management of Municipal

Citizenship (GSEC), *Executive Committee Minute Book*, Glasgow City Archives, SR187/891036/1/4-6, 17 March 1919, 16 February 1920, 4 March 1920, 27 February 1922, 4 February 1924, 24 February 1925, 22 September 1926 and periodically throughout. The GSEC later issued cards notifying all members who were not included in the voters’ roll, with this being considered ‘a most important piece of work’, GSEC, *Executive Committee Minute Book*, SR 187/891036/1/5, 3 March 1924.

<sup>4</sup> GSEC, *Executive Committee Minute Book*, SR187/891036/1/5, 18 February 1924, 24 February 1925.

<sup>5</sup> Edinburgh Women Citizens’ Association (EWCA), *Second annual report*, National Archives of Scotland, GD333/2/1, 1919-1920.

<sup>6</sup> GSS, *Executive Committee Minute Book*, SR187/891036/1/4, 8 September 1918, and GSEC, *Executive Committee Minute Book*, SR187/891036/1/5, 4 March 1920, 22 March 1920, and 20 September 1920.

<sup>7</sup> EWCA, *Seventeenth Annual Report*, GD333/2/17, 1934-1935.

<sup>8</sup> S. Innes, ‘Constructing Women’s Citizenship in the Interwar Period: the Edinburgh Women Citizens’ Association’, *Women’s History Review*, Vol. 13, No. 4, 2004, p. 637.

<sup>9</sup> EWCA, *Souvenir booklet of the 21<sup>st</sup> Anniversary of Edinburgh Women Citizen’s Association*, National Archives of Scotland, GD1/1076/19/1, 1939, p.14.

<sup>10</sup> All of these types of educational activity will be discussed in relation to specific campaigns. Notably these were not unique to the interwar period, and were used by previous generations of the women’s movement and other groups of political activists. The GSEC would have used such methods as a constitutional suffragist organisation.

<sup>11</sup> EWCA, *Second annual report*, GD333/2/1, 1919-1920.

<sup>12</sup> Appendix 3, tables 1.1 and 1.2 provide examples of addresses given by representatives of local authorities and other public bodies.

affairs' and the 'essentials of good local government' from such individuals in the 'talks' given to various branches and committees.<sup>13</sup> In addition, the 'local government' subcommittee of the EWCA embarked upon a scheme of 'civic visits', the intention of which was to give the members a realistic understanding of the 'inside working' and management of local institutions. The EWCA's chairman, Councillor Mrs Somerville, used her influence as a prominent member of Edinburgh city council to assist in the organisation of these visits, which proved to be very popular with the members.<sup>14</sup> This scheme of 'civic visits' continued throughout the period, with members visiting a wide range of municipal, legal and civic institutions.<sup>15</sup> Prominent individuals from within the women's movement were also a favourite on programmes, and visits to both the GSEC and the EWCA by Eleanor Rathbone, among others, were enthusiastically received.<sup>16</sup> Similarly perceived 'experts' in given fields were also invited to address members and public meetings.<sup>17</sup>

As well as attempting to 'arousing civic conscience' and promote 'voluntary social work', each organisation's citizenship education also involved encouraging female voters to support female candidates and policies that were judged to be beneficial to women. This is evident in the GSEC's provision of classes for canvassers, which were held at election times for its members.<sup>18</sup> The letters from women who were assisted in their candidatures by the society, thanking its members for their assistance, were arguably testament to the success of this endeavour.<sup>19</sup> The EWCA also provided such classes for its members, which later took the form of 'Workers' Meetings', held before elections to organise canvassing and 'putting questions' to candidates.<sup>20</sup> The attendance at such meetings was described by the executive as 'large and enthusiastic', which was viewed as evidence of its success in ensuring that election campaigning was 'carried through in each Division and Ward in a much more methodical and efficient manner'. It was suggested that 'many members' gave 'valuable services as speakers, chairmen, bill distributors, questioners and stewards'.<sup>21</sup>

The executive committee of the GSEC was also of the opinion that the equal representation of women in the public sphere, and thus public positions, was essential in

<sup>13</sup> EWCA, *Souvenir booklet of the 21<sup>st</sup> Anniversary of Edinburgh Women Citizen's Association*, p. 11.

<sup>14</sup> Councillor Mrs Millar and Lady Leslie Mackenzie, chairman of the SCWCA, also assisted in organising these visits. See chapter six for further discussion of Councillor Somerville and Councillor Mrs Millar, their involvement in the EWCA, and their work on the town council. EWCA, *Third Annual Report*, GD333/2/2, 1920-1921.

<sup>15</sup> For a list of the range of institutions visited by members of the EWCA see appendix 3, table 4.

<sup>16</sup> Appendix 3, tables 2.1 and 2.2 provide examples of the issues discussed by such speakers.

<sup>17</sup> The range of issues discussed by these 'experts' is provided in appendix 3, tables 3.1 and 3.2. Such speakers were more popular on the EWCA's programme.

<sup>18</sup> GSEC, *Executive Committee Minute Book*, SR187/891036/1/5-6, 4 October 1920, 25 October 1920, 18 September 1922, 18 June 1923, 19 November 1923, 24 February 1925, 27 October 1925.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, 8 November 1920, 21 November 1921, 19 December 1921, 20 March 1922, 3 April 1922, 24 April 1922, 20 November 1922, 18 December 1922, 3 September 1923, 17 December 1923, 24 March 1925, 1 December 1925, November 1928, 13 November 1929, and 17 November 1930.

<sup>20</sup> EWCA, *Fourth Annual Report*, GD333/2/4, 1921-1922.

<sup>21</sup> EWCA, *Tenth Annual Report*, GD333/2/9, 1927-1928, *Eleventh Annual Report*, GD333/2/10, 1928-1929, and *Fourteenth Annual Report*, GD333/2/13, 1931-1932.

making women's views known. It highlighted the 'importance of ceaseless individual effort and propaganda' in the election of women to local boards, councils and other public bodies'.<sup>22</sup> It also placed particular emphasis on the 'great need for female Members of Parliament'.<sup>23</sup> The EWCA shared this aim 'to ensure greater representation of women'. It added a study circle to its 'Workers' Meeting' in 1928, which featured lectures on 'The Need for Women on Local Boards', 'The Action necessary to achieve this Aim', 'How to run a Candidates' Committee Room' and 'How a Non-Party Women's Organisation can help a Woman Party Candidate'.<sup>24</sup> Both organisations were also instrumental in the formation of joint committees of women's organisations for the pooling of 'suitable' female candidates, independent and from all parties, who agreed to the committee's agreed political programme.<sup>25</sup>

The GSEC and the EWCA encouraged its members to stand as candidates in local elections with the support of these committees. In fact both organisations hoped that the education provided for members would encourage them to 'take their due share' in local and parliamentary government. It was argued that by doing so, women would 'use their citizenship' to secure 'such social reforms as were considered beneficial to the community'.<sup>26</sup> Members who stood as candidates for municipal bodies, or indeed those who already were represented such as Councillor Somerville in Edinburgh and Miss Bannatyne in Glasgow, were fully supported throughout the period.<sup>27</sup> The EWCA's executive committee argued that a candidate 'would go forward with much greater heartiness if she received the full support of her fellow members'.<sup>28</sup>

### General campaigning strategies

The 'education for active citizenship' provided by the GSEC and the EWCA for its own members was only the first step. The aim of both organisations was also to 'help form public opinion' on many social reforms and issues that were considered to be 'beneficial for the common weal'. The EWCA argued that an 'educated public opinion' was 'essential in achieving such aims' and was 'the only hope for a democratic state'.<sup>29</sup> Consequently, public

<sup>22</sup> GSEC, *Executive Committee Minute Book*, SR187/891036/1/4, 19 January 1920.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, SR187/891036/1/4-6, 25 March 1918, 14 April 1918, 22 November 1918, 14 April 1919, 19 January 1920, 19 April 1920, 20 September 1920, 20 December 1920, and 24 November 1926.

<sup>24</sup> EWCA, *Eleventh Annual Report*, GD333/2/10, 1928-1929.

<sup>25</sup> These were the Women's Local Representative Joint Committee in Glasgow and the Edinburgh Local Elections Committee. See chapter one for further details, including the other women's organisations represented.

<sup>26</sup> Scottish Council of Women Citizens Associations (SCWCA), *Handbook for Women Citizens Associations of Scotland*, National Archives of Scotland, GD1/1076/18/1, 1935, p. 1. This view was held by the EWCA as a member of this council, and as discussed in chapter one, the GSEC amalgamated with the Glasgow Women Citizen's Association (GWCA) in 1923, which was also a member of the SCWCA.

<sup>27</sup> See chapter six for further details of the female candidates supported by the EWCA and GSEC.

<sup>28</sup> EWCA, *Annual General Meetings*, National Archives of Scotland, GD333/3, 8 October 1928.

<sup>29</sup> EWCA, *Souvenir booklet of the 21<sup>st</sup> Anniversary of Edinburgh Women Citizen's Association*, p.13, and EWCA, *Fourth Annual Report*, GD333/2/4, 1921-1922 and *Seventh Annual Report*, GD333/2/6, 1924-1925.

meetings were held on a range of issues and were considered to be important propaganda for the promotion of both organisations' aims.<sup>30</sup> Each organisation made extensive use of the local press in advertising such events, especially if a well-known public figure had been secured to give a lecture. The EWCA even thanked the Edinburgh press for its 'unfailing courtesy in calling public attention' to its work. It stated that the reports of its many meetings and conferences had given it 'a standing in the community, which otherwise could not have been obtained' and it therefore 'owed the press a deep debt of gratitude'.<sup>31</sup> In addition the EWCA's propaganda secretary also 'drew upon' information and articles from the *Woman's Leader* and *Time and Tide*, writing a series of articles for the *Edinburgh Evening News* on such issues as 'The Unmarried Mother', 'The Protection of Children' and 'Maternity Insurance'.<sup>32</sup> As a constituent member of the SCWCA, the EWCA also began publishing some of its own findings.<sup>33</sup> Its pamphlets were 'placed on sale with the leading booksellers', sold to WCAs throughout Scotland and women's organisations such as the Scottish Women's Rural Institutes.<sup>34</sup>

Providing speakers for meetings of other organisations was another way in which the GSEC and the EWCA promoted its campaigns and attempted to educate public opinion. The latter suggested that this was a 'very valuable form of propaganda' as it reached 'large numbers of women unable to attend the central meetings of the association'.<sup>35</sup> It compiled an extensive panel of speakers, who were willing to address meetings on given issues in which they had varying levels of expertise. The EWCA insisted that its speakers, who gave 'substantial service to the association', could be 'trusted to treat their subjects with knowledge and understanding from a non-partisan point of view'.<sup>36</sup> A list of these individuals, and the 'diversified list of subjects' which they specialised in, was made available in its office. The subjects considered by the speakers reflected the general concerns of the EWCA and therefore varied according to the emphasis of its work in any given year.<sup>37</sup> The EWCA stated that many requests were received from all parts of Edinburgh for speakers, from church and mothers' meetings to literary societies. Significantly branches of the Scottish Co-operative Women's

<sup>30</sup> Public meetings were a campaigning strategy employed by the GSEC and the EWCA in many of their campaigns. Examples will be considered under the headings 'legislative issues' and 'cases studies of practical work'.

<sup>31</sup> EWCA, *Souvenir booklet of the 21<sup>st</sup> Anniversary of Edinburgh Women Citizen's Association*, p.13.

<sup>32</sup> EWCA, *Fifth Annual Report*, GD333/2/4, 1922-1923, and *Seventh Annual Report*, GD333/2/6, 1924-1925. *Time and Tide* and *The Woman's Leader* were feminist journals which had their roots in the suffrage movement and were circulated nationally throughout Britain. While the publication of such articles in the Edinburgh press proved to be fairly short-lived, arguably these articles may have helped to draw attention to such issues.

<sup>33</sup> This will be discussed in relation to the EWCA's campaign for the 'Permanent Care of the Feeble-Minded'.

<sup>34</sup> EWCA, *Fifth Annual Report*, GD333/2/4, 1922-1923.

<sup>35</sup> EWCA, *Sixth Annual Report*, GD333/2/5, 1923-1924.

<sup>36</sup> Appendix 3a, table 5 provides an account of the expansion of this panel of speakers throughout the period, both in the number of speakers and meetings addressed.

<sup>37</sup> Details of the issues discussed in such 'talks' are provided in appendix 3a, table 6. This is limited as information is only available for 1919-1923.

Guild (the Guild) and the Scottish Women's Rural Institutes (the Rurals) regularly requested speakers, highlighting a link between these organisations.<sup>38</sup> The GSEC's provision of speakers to 'outside organisations' was not as extensive as that of the EWCA. A formal 'panel of speakers' was not compiled, and it rarely offered speakers, rather waiting for requests. It was approached by various organisations, notably the central council of the Rurals, which requested a speaker on the franchise for several of its branches.<sup>39</sup> Yet the Guild was offered and received speakers. Branches in Anniesland, Maryhill and Cowlares all responded to offers of speakers on 'The Price of Public Indifference' and 'The Unmarried Mother'.<sup>40</sup>

Both the GSEC and the EWCA also argued that it was essential that the public should be provided with information relating to the opinions of candidates during elections. The EWCA devoted a great deal of time and energy to compiling 'election questions' to 'help elicit' the views of candidates; a technique employed by all Women Citizens Associations throughout Scotland. The responses were often printed on leaflets for distribution, made available in its office, or on occasion sent to the press and *Woman's Leader*. These questionnaires largely expressed the views of the EWCA, with questions reflecting its own concerns.<sup>41</sup> The GSEC also issued such questionnaires to candidates, often at the request of the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship (NUSEC), with the questions reflecting both its own and the NUSEC's programme.<sup>42</sup> In addition the EWCA prepared a 'Municipal Policy', which often accompanied its 'election questions', and gave suggestions of local reforms that would be of benefit to the community.<sup>43</sup> It also organised 'common platform' public meetings for candidates before municipal, education and ward elections. Every candidate standing for a particular position or locality, no matter his or her party or views, was invited to address a meeting of members and, as time progressed, and the EWCA became more confident, all voters in the constituency or ward.<sup>44</sup> This enabled the women, and men, of a constituency to question each candidate and determine which would best represent her or his views.<sup>45</sup> The EWCA stated that while such meetings proved expensive they 'may well be considered justified in view of their marked success', as illustrated by the 'crowded and

<sup>38</sup> EWCA, *Second Annual Report – Seventeenth Annual Report*, GD333/2/1-15, 1919-1920 – 1934-1935. Unfortunately the annual reports only record that speakers were supplied to branches of the Guild and Rurals, and the issues discussed were not listed.

<sup>39</sup> GSEC, *Executive Committee Minute Book*, SR187/891036/1/5, 18 September 1922. The Steppes branch of the British Women's Temperance Association also received speakers on 'Housing', 'Women Police', and 'Parliamentary Bills Affecting Women', GSEC, *Executive Committee Minute Book*, SR187/891036/1/6, 23 June 1925.

<sup>40</sup> GSEC, *Executive Committee Minute Book*, SR187/891036/1/5-6, 7 June 1920, 18 September 1922, 26 May 1925, 23 June 1925, 22 September 1925. Kinning Park Co-operative Society also requested a speaker on Equal Citizenship, GSEC, *Executive Committee Minute Book*, SR187/891036/1/6, 26 May 1925.

<sup>41</sup> See appendix 3, table 7.2 for the issues featured in the election questions of the EWCA.

<sup>42</sup> For the issues featured in the election questions of the GSEC See appendix 3, table 7.1 For further exploration of the relationship between the GSEC and NUSEC see section entitled 'Legislative Issues' below.

<sup>43</sup> See appendix 3, table 8 for the issues that featured on the municipal policy of the EWCA.

<sup>44</sup> EWCA, *Souvenir booklet of the 21<sup>st</sup> Anniversary of Edinburgh Women Citizen's Association*, p.12

<sup>45</sup> EWCA, *Eleventh Annual Report*, GD333/2/10, 1928-1929.



attentive audiences'.<sup>46</sup> It also hoped that the candidates would find these meetings 'useful as a guide to the opinions and desires of organised women'.<sup>47</sup>

### On-going Legislative issues

These methods and strategies were further refined by each organisation in the promotion of its on-going legislative campaigns, with both organisations dividing this work between two committees. The first, the parliamentary sub-committee, considered the legislative bills that would have repercussions for women at a national level, with 'national' signifying both Britain and Scotland. The second, the local government subcommittee, was concerned with legislation that would be influential in the immediate municipal area.

All of the general campaigning techniques discussed were applicable to the work of these two committees. However further specific methods were employed, which drew upon the strategies of the constitutional suffragists and earlier generations of the women's movement.<sup>48</sup> As noted, the GSEC continued to work closely with the NUSEC in the promotion of legislative reforms, the relationship between these two organisations being formed when both were constitutional suffrage organisations.<sup>49</sup> Such methods included the sending of memorandums, relating to a specific issue or campaign, to prominent individuals such as the Prime Minister, Home Secretary, the Secretary for Scotland, the leaders of the opposition and MPs in Glasgow and Edinburgh. These communications ensured that the views of the GSEC and the EWCA were made clear to those in positions of influence, with the hope that its opinions would be considered. The passing of resolutions by each organisation had the same aim to lobby influential individuals or authorities. This strategy became part of each organisation's 'routine committee work', with the majority of resolutions concerning legislative issues being passed at the annual meeting, although emergency resolutions could be passed and sent when required.

Deputations to the relevant authorities often accompanied these actions, and were another method used by both organisations to make their views known in the hope of influencing the passing or amendment of legislation. The GSEC and the EWCA often organised such deputations in co-operation with a range of organisations, most notably the

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<sup>46</sup> EWCA, *Twelfth Annual Report*, GD333/2/11, 1929-1930, and *Fourteenth Annual Report*, GD333/2/13, 1931-1932.

<sup>47</sup> EWCA, *Eleventh Annual Report*, GD333/2/10, 1928-1929.

<sup>48</sup> Both organisations were similarly influenced by previous generations of the women's movement in terms of the way in which it conducted its campaigns, even though, as noted in chapter one, the GSEC was established as the Glasgow and West of Scotland Suffrage Society in 1909, while the EWCA was formed in 1919 following the enfranchisement of women.

<sup>49</sup> The EWCA also affiliated to the NUSEC. It later became a member of the Scottish Legislation Committee, as did the GSEC, which was formed to represent societies in Scotland affiliated to the NUSEC. EWCA, *Seventh Annual Report*, GD333/2/6, 1924-1925, and *Ninth Annual Report – Tenth Annual Report*, GD333/2/8-9, 1926-1927 - 1927-1928.

National Council of Women (NCW), which each organisation worked closely with. Both organisations also took part in the deputations of other societies, although involvement was dependent on whether these ‘outside bodies’ were in sympathy with the aims of the GSEC or the EWCA.<sup>50</sup>

These campaigning strategies were employed widely by both the parliamentary and local government sub-committee of each organisation in its demands for a range of legislative reforms. The following examples will illustrate the ways in which both organisations asserted its feminism and encouraged the ‘active citizenship’ of its members, in its pursuit of such legislation.

### Parliamentary Sub-committee

The GSEC’s earliest and most prominent demand in the 1920s was for the further extension of the franchise to include all women over the age of twenty-one. It followed the lead of the NUSEC in its campaign, receiving numerous letters and circulars which requested that memorials be forwarded to local MPs, the Prime Minister and other influential figures such as the Secretary for Scotland. The GSEC regularly sent such communications throughout the 1920s.<sup>51</sup> In addition it also composed, passed and sent its own resolutions advocating the extension of the franchise, as did the EWCA. In both cases this featured prominently until such an extension was welcomed in 1928, with each organisation holding ‘Enfranchisement Celebrations’.<sup>52</sup>

Other legislative reforms received similar attention, especially those that promoted equality for women. The GSEC and the EWCA both adamantly supported the Sex Disqualification (Removal) Bill 1919, and later amendments to it. The GSEC argued that this would enable women to have ‘equality of liberty, status and opportunity with regard to public functions, dignities, honours, civil and judicial offices, posts or professions’.<sup>53</sup> The EWCA particularly prioritised the later amendments, suggesting that these would ensure that ‘there can be no evasion of it in letter or in spirit’.<sup>54</sup> In addition both organisations focused on passing and sending resolutions relating to issues that explicitly demanded equality in the public sphere

<sup>50</sup> The co-operation of the GSEC and EWCA with other organisations will be discussed in greater detail below.

<sup>51</sup> GSEC, *Executive Committee Minute Book*, SR187/891036/1/4-6, 1 July 1918, 3 May 1920, 6 December 1920, 2 May 1921, 5 December 1921, 16 April 1923, 18 February 1924, 3 March 1924, 3 June 1924, 23 January 1925, 24 February 1925, 26 January 1927, 19 October 1927. The GWCA supported memorials drawn up by the GSEC, GWCA, *Third Annual Report*, National Archives of Scotland, GD1/1076/4/2, 1920-1921. The EWCA’s involvement in the Scottish Legislation Committee may have ensured that it also sent such memorials to influential figures.

<sup>52</sup> EWCA, *Eleventh Annual Report*, GD333/2/10, 1928-1929, and GSEC *Executive Committee Minute Book*, SR187/891036/1/6, 19 November 1928.

<sup>53</sup> GSS, *Executive Committee Minute Book*, SR187/891036/1/4, 22 November 1918, and GSEC, *Executive Committee Minute Book*, SR187/89103/1/5, 30 September 1919, 13 October 1919, 25 November 1920, 26 November 1923 and 23 April 1925.

<sup>54</sup> SCWCA, *Handbook for Women Citizens Associations of Scotland*, p. 13.

for women. Equal opportunity in industry and the professions, and especially the legal profession, was prominent in the programmes of each organisation, and also featured on the common programme of the SCWCA.<sup>55</sup> This was especially true in the early 1920s when both organisations campaigned for women to become Justices of the Peace and Jurors, with prominent members later gaining such positions.<sup>56</sup>

Demands for equal pay for equal work between the sexes was also a prominent resolution, which illustrates each organisations commitment to gaining equality for women in the public sphere.<sup>57</sup> The GSEC adopted the NUSEC's argument that 'no differentiation should be made on the grounds of sex between men and women doing work of equal value'.<sup>58</sup> The GSEC's local campaigns relating to this issue included demands that women should be equally represented on a commission considering the inequitable salaries of female teachers and also demands that Glasgow Corporation's female employees be given the same annual bonus as their male counterparts. In fact the Corporation was the focus of one of the GSEC's most forceful campaigns for female equality, when in 1922 it adopted a policy of dismissing married women as 'an economy to combat unemployment'.<sup>59</sup> The GSEC opposed this measure on several grounds. First it argued that if such dismissal was a 'measure directed to prevent two incomes coming into one household during the period of unemployment, it should apply to all women and men, regardless of marital status'. It also suggested that such action was 'an interference with the right of husband and wife to decide for themselves whether or not the woman should be the wage earner'. Finally the GSEC insisted that such dismissal would be 'detrimental to the economic position of the married woman', and that 'efficiency should be the only standard by which employees should be judged'.<sup>60</sup> It decided to organise a deputation to the Corporation to state its case, and enlisted the support of WCAs throughout Scotland and branches of the NCW. These organisations had sent letters of support and passed resolutions in favour of the GSEC's actions, with delegates from these organisations also attending the resulting deputation.<sup>61</sup> However in spite of the GSEC's actions the policy was not reversed, even though 'many town councillors found themselves in full agreement with the

<sup>55</sup> Ibid. Also see EWCA, *Annual General Meetings*, GD333/3, 8 February 1928 and EWCA, *Seventh Annual Report*, GD333/2/6, 1924-1925.

<sup>56</sup> GSEC, *Executive Committee Minute Book*, SR187/891036/1/4, 7 July 1919, 4 October 1920, 8 November 1920, 20 December 1920, 21 February 1921, March 1922, 22 May 1923, 4 June 1923. EWCA, *Third Annual Report*, GD333/2/2, 1920-1921. See chapter six for examples of members of each organisation who later became Justices of the Peace.

<sup>57</sup> GSEC, *Executive Committee Minute Book*, SR187/891036/1/5, 9 June 1919, February 1920, 25 November 1920, 17 January 1921, 16 May 1921, 25 November 1924, 23 March 1926, 23 March 1927. Also see EWCA, *Eighth Annual Report*, GD333/2/7, 1925-1926, and SCWCA, *Handbook for Women Citizens Associations of Scotland*, p. 13.

<sup>58</sup> GSS, *Executive Committee Minute Book*, SR187/891036/1/4, 14 April 1919.

<sup>59</sup> GSEC, *Executive Committee Minute Book*, SR187/891036/1/5, 18 April 1921, 19 December 1921, 27 Feb 1922, and 20 March 1922.

<sup>60</sup> GWCA, *Third Annual Report*, GD1/1076/4/2, 1920-1921.

<sup>61</sup> EWCA, *Fourth Annual Report*, GD333/2/4, 1921-1922, Dundee Women Citizen's Association (DWCA), *Fourth Annual Report*, GD1/1076/4/4, 1921-1922, Falkirk Women Citizens' Association (FWCA), *Minute Book*, A660.01, 21 February 1922, and GWCA, *Third Annual Report*, GD1/1076/4/2, 1920-1921.

deputation'.<sup>62</sup> The EWCA also embarked upon a similar campaign in 1926 to ensure that Edinburgh town council's system of increments of pay were equal for women and men.<sup>63</sup>

Both organisations also placed an emphasis on legal equality for women. The promotion of an equal moral standard relating to the prosecution of solicitation was particularly prominent on the agenda of each.<sup>64</sup> The GSEC argued that the 'laws dealing with moral offences . . . should be framed so as not to differentiate between the sexes either in wording or in enforcement so that such offences shall be offences of all persons equally'.<sup>65</sup> The EWCA also discussed proposed 'Scottish Solicitation Laws' supporting Lady Astor's Public Places (Order) Bill, with several resolutions being drawn up and forwarded to the Parliamentary Committee of the SCWCA.<sup>66</sup> It organised a conference on 'Solicitation Laws' with delegates from thirteen societies, including Scottish branches of the NCW and the GSEC, which argued that 'the number of women who take part in prostitution is negligible compared to men'.<sup>67</sup> As a result of this conference Sir Patrick Ford and Dr Drummond Shiels raised the matter in the House of Commons, determining whether the scope of the Committee of Enquiry into Solicitation Laws would be extended to Scotland.<sup>68</sup> It was later decided that a Scottish representative be appointed to this committee, with Councillor Morison Millar of Edinburgh city council taking this role, which was welcomed 'with much gratification' by the EWCA.<sup>69</sup>

Similarly the GSEC and EWCA, as well as other WCAs throughout Scotland, campaigned against the compulsory notification of venereal diseases in 1924. The Royal Commission on Venereal Diseases had published its results in 1916, and Davidson argues that its findings 'fuelled crisis perceptions of the incidence of the 'social evil' and its implications

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<sup>62</sup> This also included 'sending several paragraphs to the press'. GWCA, *Fourth Annual Report*, GD1/1076/4/3, 1921-1922 and GSEC, *Executive Committee Minute Book*, SR187/891036/1/5, 24 April 1922.

<sup>63</sup> Councillor Mrs Somerville was instrumental in this campaign with her proposals for a more equitable pay scale being granted in March 1928 with the support of Councillor Mrs Eltringham Millar, an ILP councillor. See chapter six for further information relating to Mrs Eltringham Millar. EWCA, *Ninth Annual Report - Tenth Annual Report*, GD333/2/8-9, 1926-1927 - 1927-1928.

<sup>64</sup> The campaign for an equal moral standard had its roots in the demands of late nineteenth century feminists and other protest groups, and was a prominent concern for many women's organisations in the interwar years. See L. Hall, 'Hauling Down the Double Standard: Feminism, Social Purity and Sexual Science in Late Nineteenth-Century Britain', *Gender and History*, Vol. 16, No. 1, 2004, p. 36-35.

<sup>65</sup> GSS, *Executive Committee Minute Book*, SR187/891036/1/4, 12 May 1919, 13 October 1919 and GSEC, *Executive Committee Minute Book*, SR187/891036/1/4-6, 24 November 1926, 22 May 1923, 3 March 1924, 28 October 1924, 27 October 1926, 24 November 1926, and 23 March 1927.

<sup>66</sup> EWCA, *Eighth Annual Report*, GD333/2/7, 1925-1926. The GSEC also briefly discussed this Bill, GSEC, *Executive Committee Minute Book*, SR187/891036/1/6, 1 December 1925.

<sup>67</sup> The GSEC also made an amendment to the resolution forwarded by the EWCA in relation to brothels, and inserted a paragraph in their own memorandum 'dealing with the degenerating effect of promiscuous intercourse'. GSEC, *Executive Committee Minute Book*, SR187/891036/1/6, 22 December 1926.

<sup>68</sup> EWCA, *Ninth Annual Report*, GD333/2/8, 1926-1927.

<sup>69</sup> EWCA, *Tenth Annual Report*, GD333/2/9, 1927-1928. Notably each of the organisations in attendance at the conference organised by the EWCA had been asked to submit suitable names and recommend witnesses for this Committee. Arguably the GSEC would also have been satisfied with Morison Millar's appointment following its demand that the representative for Scotland should be a woman. GSEC, *Executive Committee Minute Book*, SR187/891036/1/6, 18 May 1927.

for the health, efficiency, and social morality of the nation'.<sup>70</sup> Consequently the Scottish Office implemented the Public Health (Venereal Diseases) Regulations, which had also been issued in October 1916.<sup>71</sup> This required local authorities to establish 'free, voluntary and confidential systems of provisions for the diagnosis and treatment of VD, with appropriate clinics and laboratory facilities'.<sup>72</sup> While this scheme was successful, the general public and medical professionals demanded more stringent controls.<sup>73</sup> This culminated in the Venereal Disease (Children) (Scotland) Bill of 1923, which proposed that all cases of congenital syphilis and gonorrhoeal ophthalmia in children under the age of five should be notifiable. More controversial was its suggestion that the Medical Officers of Health 'should be empowered to examine and test parents of infected children with a view to ensuring their adequate treatment in the interests of family and public health'.<sup>74</sup> A wide range of women's organisations, including the NUSEC, Association for Moral Hygiene and Medical Women's Federation, 'vigorously resisted' such demands. This was largely due to the experience of wartime controls, which had provided 'damning evidence' of how 'punitive purity legislation, designed to control VD, discriminated against women'.<sup>75</sup> Such legislation as that proposed in 1923 was therefore seen as an attempt to 'criminalize the transmission of VD'.<sup>76</sup>

The GSEC and the EWCA strongly opposed the Venereal Disease (Children) (Scotland) Bill on the same grounds.<sup>77</sup> After seeking advice from the NUSEC, the GSEC proposed a deputation to the Parliamentary Minister for Health for Scotland to 'put before him the attitude of the NUSEC'.<sup>78</sup> It eventually received a response which stated that he did not intend 'to take any steps at present towards making venereal disease compulsory notifiable'.<sup>79</sup> A public meeting was also arranged in co-operation with the SCWCA, EWCA and NCW.<sup>80</sup> Resolutions passed at this meeting were sent to the Prime Minister and Minister of Health for

<sup>70</sup> R. Davidson, 'A Scourge to be firmly gripped': The Campaign for VD Controls in Interwar Scotland', *Journal of the Society for the Social History of Medicine*, Vol. 6, No. 2, 1993, p. 213. For details of the incidence of venereal disease in Scotland in this period see R. Davidson, 'Measuring 'The Social Evil': The Incidence of Venereal Disease in Interwar Scotland', *Medical History*, Vol. 37, No. 2, 1993, p. 167-186.

<sup>71</sup> Davidson, 'A Scourge to be firmly gripped', p. 214.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid. In fact over ninety percent of the Scottish population had access to approved VD schemes by 1922.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid, p. 215.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid, p. 228.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid, p. 229.

<sup>77</sup> Representatives of the GSEC had attended a conference organised by the National Council for Combating Venereal Disease in Dundee in April 1922. Its 'questions dealing with the difficulty of any form of compulsory notification and the injustices which were almost certain to ensue, were either not answered, or answered in such a way as to avoid the point'. In addition the West of Scotland Federation of Medical Women were against any form of compulsory notification. GSEC, *Executive Committee Minute Book*, SR187/ 91036/1/5, 1 May 1922.

<sup>78</sup> GSEC, *Executive Committee Minute Book*, SR187/ 91036/1/5-6, 1 May 1922, 19 February 1923, 4 June 1923, 18 June 1923, 3 September 1923, 1 October 1923 and 25 November 1924. This consultation highlights the influence of the NUSEC in this aspect of the GSEC's programme, and to an extent in this case that of the EWCA and NCW.

<sup>79</sup> GSEC, *Executive Committee Minute Book*, SR187/ 91036/1/5, 15 October 1923.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid, 21 January 1924. EWCA, *Sixth Annual Report*, GD333/2/6, 1923-1924. This was advertised in the *Glasgow Herald* and *Glasgow Citizen* to ensure the largest possible audience, the GSEC requesting that the EWCA do the same in Edinburgh.

Scotland.<sup>81</sup> It was also decided to ask the Parliamentary Undersecretary for Health, James Stewart MP, to receive a deputation either in Edinburgh, or in London during the NUSEC council meetings.<sup>82</sup> The purpose of this was to 'lay before him the information that there was a large body of public opinion adverse to any form of compulsory notification'.<sup>83</sup> Following the success of the meeting with Stewart the GSEC and the EWCA approached the Board of Health, inviting the West of Scotland Medical Women's Federation and Alliance of Honour and requesting that Stewart also be present.<sup>84</sup> The GSEC also organised another public meeting to ensure 'well informed public opinion' and an 'educative meeting' was to be held as part of the winter programme.<sup>85</sup> The Scottish campaign for state regulation of VD later failed, which may have been a consequence of the actions of the GSEC, EWCA and other women's organisations. The Ministry of Health rejected the Venereal Disease (Children) (Scotland) Bill on 'medical, social and administrative grounds'.<sup>86</sup>

The EWCA similarly opposed the Edinburgh Corporation (Venereal Disease) Bill.<sup>87</sup> This proposed legislation aimed at giving the Medical Officer of Health the authority 'to compel anyone believed to be infectious, and who refused to seek and to sustain treatment, to undergo treatment by a qualified private practitioner or clinic'.<sup>88</sup> Mrs Robertson of the executive of the EWCA argued that 'the Bill stood for one law for the rich and another law for the poor and would lead to blackmail'.<sup>89</sup> She insisted that supporting the Bill was a 'wrong step and a retrograde one'. Dr Watson seconded her motion stating that the Bill 'sought to perpetuate the double moral standard' and was 'cowardly'.<sup>90</sup> Yet, another prominent member, Mrs Somerville employed eugenic arguments in voicing her support of the Bill. She stated that the Bill was justified on three grounds, 'the dire effects of these diseases on the whole world'; that such diseases 'touched the spring of life'; and 'that such diseases have a definite relationship to maternal mortality and morbidity and still-births'.<sup>91</sup> This Bill was also later defeated in the House of Commons.

Both organisations consistent aim to secure female equality also ensured that each paid special attention to legislation which improved women's legal position in their roles as wife and mother. The GSEC supported the introduction of a Married Women's Property Act in

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid, 3 March 1924, 17 March 1924. A copy was also sent to the Glasgow town clerk to put before the council at the next general meeting, consequently it was felt that it was not necessary to ask the council to receive a deputation.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid, 17 March 1924.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid, 17 March 1924 and 1 April 1924. The report of this deputation was filed in the office and sent to the press.

<sup>84</sup> GSEC, *Executive Committee Minute Book*, SR187/891036/1/6, 7 April 1924, 28 April 1924, 3 June 1924. EWCA, *Sixth Annual Report*, GD333/2/6, 1923-1924.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid, 3 June 1924 and 25 November 1924.

<sup>86</sup> Davidson, 'A Scourge to be firmly gripped', p. 230.

<sup>87</sup> EWCA, *Annual General Meetings*, GD333/3, 31 January 1928.

<sup>88</sup> Davidson, 'A Scourge to be firmly gripped', p. 215.

<sup>89</sup> EWCA, *Annual General Meetings*, GD333/3, 31 January 1928.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

Scotland on the lines of that in England, sending resolutions to the relevant authorities and prominent individuals.<sup>92</sup> This advocated the removal of the regulation that states that ‘the profits of a married woman living with her husband shall be deemed the property of the husband’.<sup>93</sup> It also demanded divorce law reform, sending a memorandum and questionnaire to all Glasgow MPs in 1920, to determine the extent to which the proposed reforms affected Scotland.<sup>94</sup> Its main concern was ‘equality between men and women in the Divorce Laws’.<sup>95</sup> Such demands by women’s organisations led to the appointment of a Royal Commission, which ‘advocated the equalising of grounds for dissolution’.<sup>96</sup> In comparison there is no evidence of the EWCA supporting the first measure, although it promoted equality in Divorce and the reform of existing legislation in this direction.<sup>97</sup>

The expansion of the government’s proposed scheme of widows’ pensions was also a priority for the GSEC and the EWCA.<sup>98</sup> This involved demanding the establishment of state pensions for widows with dependent children. The EWCA first took action in 1919 by sending deputations to the town council and the trades’ council, in co-operation with other organisations including the Edinburgh branch of the NCW. The EWCA argued that ‘as a result of the representations made, both bodies adopted a resolution on the lines recommended by the deputations’.<sup>99</sup> Demands for improved legislation for widows’ pensions continued throughout the period for both organisations.<sup>100</sup> This was also the case for the SCWCA, which stated that ‘the present law does great injustice to widows with dependent children by giving them no means of obtaining public assistance except through the poor law’.<sup>101</sup> It therefore urged the government to establish ‘an adequate system of pensions for widows with dependent children’.

In addition the GSEC and the EWCA both supported the NUSEC’s pursuit of an Equal Guardianship of Infants Bill, which stressed the equal rights of a mother to have legal guardianship of her children. At the NUSEC’s request the GSEC sent memorandums to all

<sup>92</sup> GSS, *Executive Committee Minute Book*, SR187/891036/1/4, 19 January 1920 and 25 November 1920.

<sup>93</sup> GSEC, *Executive Committee Minute Book*, SR187/891036/1/5, 24 November 1921.

<sup>94</sup> GSS, *Executive Committee Minute Book*, SR187/891036/1/4, 4 March 1920. Two private members’ bills were introduced before the House of Lords in 1920 and 1921 advocating desertion as a ground for divorce. While both of these bills failed to be passed by the Conservative government, following pressure from women’s groups, in 1923 women were given the right to sue for divorce on the ground of adultery. The number of divorce petitions filed by women immediately increased with fifty-sixty percent of divorce proceeding being initiated by women until 1939. See C. Beaumont, ‘Moral Dilemmas and Women’s Rights: the attitude of the Mothers’ Union and Catholic Women’s League to divorce, birth control and abortion in England, 1928-1939’, *Women’s History Review*, Vol. 16, No. 4, 2007, p. 466.

<sup>95</sup> GSEC, *Executive Committee Minute Book*, SR187/891036/1/5, 21 March 1921.

<sup>96</sup> Hall, ‘Hauling Down the Double Standard’, p. 51.

<sup>97</sup> EWCA, *Seventeenth Annual Report*, GD333/2/16, 1934-1935.

<sup>98</sup> GSS, *Executive Committee Minute Book*, SR187/891036/1/4-5, 28 November 1919, 16 February 1920, 23 January 1925, 26 May 1925, 23 June 1925, 22 September 1925. During the course of its campaign the GSEC regularly sent ‘paragraphs explaining its point of view’ to the press.

<sup>99</sup> EWCA, *Second Annual Report*, GD333/2/1, 1919-1920.

<sup>100</sup> GSEC, *Executive Committee Minute Book*, SR187/891036/1/5-6, 18 February 1924, 28 October 1924. EWCA, *Seventeenth Annual Report*, GD333/2/16, 1934-1935.

<sup>101</sup> SCWCA, *Annual Conference programmes and notices*, GD1/1076/3/1, 1924, p. 2-3.

Glasgow MPs, with the EWCA doing the same in Edinburgh.<sup>102</sup> This proposed legislation was later redrafted by the NUSEC as the Guardianship, Maintenance and Custody of Infants Bill (1923), which provided for the equal treatment of women in terms of legal custody of their children. Both organisations supported this in its passage through parliament, which involved sending several resolutions to the Prime Minister and Secretary for Scotland.<sup>103</sup>

Such campaigning techniques were also evident in the promotion of legislation for the protection of children by the parliamentary committees of the GSEC and the EWCA. The GSEC first promoted the NUSEC's amendments to the Bastardy Bill in 1920 by writing to Glasgow MPs for their support.<sup>104</sup> It then organised a conference to which the Guild, GWCA and Glasgow branch of the NCW were invited, with a deputation to the Secretary for Scotland arranged to follow the conference.<sup>105</sup> The GSEC and EWCA's concern with the status of the illegitimate child continued into the 1920s with deputations to the Secretary for Scotland being arranged.<sup>106</sup> Each organisation also approached MPs and Lords who could assist in ensuring that a Bill was introduced in Scotland like that in England and Wales and individual members were encouraged to write to their MPs.<sup>107</sup> In addition members of the executive of the GSEC gave addresses on the status of the illegitimate child to branches of their own members, and also to the EWCA and its counterpart in Falkirk.<sup>108</sup> This led to resolutions being passed on increased alimony for the illegitimate child, which later resulted in the GSEC and the EWCA arranging a deputation to the Scottish Law Officers.<sup>109</sup> Demands for the passing of the

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<sup>102</sup> GSS, *Executive Committee Minute Book*, SR187/891036/1/4, 4 February 1919, 14 April 1919, GSEC, *Executive Committee Minute Book*, SR187/891036/1/5, 12 May 1919, 19 April 1920, 25 November 1920, 21 March 1921, 24 November 1921, 27 February 1922, 20 November 1922. Also see EWCA, *Third and Fourth Annual Report*, GD333/2/2-3, 1920-1921 - 1921-1922.

<sup>103</sup> GSEC, *Executive Committee Minute Book*, SR187/891036/1/5, 15 October 1923, 26 November 1923, 4 February 1924, 1 April 1924, 22 September 1925, 22 December 1926, 26 January 1927. EWCA, *Seventh Annual Report*, GD333/2/6, 1924-1925.

<sup>104</sup> GSEC, *Executive Committee Minute Book*, SR187/891036/1/4, 3 May 1920.

<sup>105</sup> Other organisations invited to this conference included the Voters Council, Women's Educational Union, National Vigilance Association, Scottish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, Glasgow branch of the Society for the Care of Unmarried Mothers and her Child, and the Infant Health Visitors' Association. GSEC, *Executive Committee Minute Book*, SR187/891036/1/4, 7 June 1920, 21 June 1920, 4 October 1920, and 20 December 1920.

<sup>106</sup> GSEC, *Executive Committee Minute Book*, SR187/891036/1/5, 20 December 1920, 7 February 1921, 19 February 1923, 16 April 1923, 4 June 1923, 1 October 1923, 15 October 1923. Also see EWCA, *Sixth Annual Report*, GD333/2/5, 1923-1924.

<sup>107</sup> GSEC, *Executive Committee Minute Book*, SR187/891036/1/5, 17 January 1921, 5 February 1923, 3 September 1923, 5 November 1923, 19 November 1923, 26 November 1923, 8 December 1923, 17 December 1923, and 21 January 1924. EWCA, *Seventh Annual Report*, GD333/2/7, 1924-1925. Individuals lobbied on behalf of this campaign included, Mr Hutchison MP, Lord Rowallan, Lord Haldane, Sir William Mitchell Thomson, Major Dudgeon, Sir Godfrey Collins, and Sir J Baird.

<sup>108</sup> GSEC, *Executive Committee Minute Book*, SR187/891036/1/5, 4 February 1924.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid, SR187/891036/1/5-6, 21 January 1924, 4 February 1924, 1 April 1924, 25 November 1924, 17 December 1924. Also see EWCA, *Seventh Annual Report*, GD333/2/6, 1924-1925. For the GSEC this involved co-operation with, Glasgow Parish Council, Govan Parish Council, National Vigilance Association, Glasgow Charity Organisation, Poor Law Agents, National Council of Women, and the Infant Health Visitors' Association. A report of this deputation featured in the *Glasgow Herald*.



Illegitimate Children (Scotland) Act continued thereafter, which included deputations to the Secretary for Scotland.<sup>110</sup>

The promotion of legislation to protect children also extended to resolutions and deputations concerning child assault. The EWCA's involvement in the campaign for adequate sentences in cases of child outrage began in 1919, when it attended a conference on this topic.<sup>111</sup> During the following year several resolutions were passed, one of which protested against the light sentences passed in the courts on persons convicted of child outrage.<sup>112</sup> Both the EWCA and the GSEC demanded a national enquiry in resolutions sent to the Prime Minister, Secretary for Scotland, Parliamentary under Secretary for Health for Scotland, and other prominent individuals.<sup>113</sup> Specialist sub-committees for the consideration of this issue were established within the parliamentary standing committees of each organisation, illustrating the importance of this issue for each organisation.<sup>114</sup>

A Department Committee was later established to enquire into Sexual Offences against Children and Young Persons in Scotland, and these child assault committees articulated their views clearly.<sup>115</sup> The main reform both organisations lobbied for was the raising of the age of consent and of marriage. This was followed by the demand that 'any man, not mentally deficient, who was guilty of child assault should receive adequate punishment', as both organisations were particularly angered by what they perceived to be lenient sentences.<sup>116</sup> The EWCA also demanded the appointment of greater numbers of female police officers, both to collect evidence from victims of child assault and also to safeguard children in public places.<sup>117</sup> It also argued that a female medical officer be employed to examine women and children if and when this was required. The EWCA continued to raise awareness of this issue by holding

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<sup>110</sup> GSEC, *Executive Committee Minute Book*, SR187/891036/1/6, 24 March 1925, 16 February 1926, 26 January 1927, 13 November 1929, 17 November 1930. EWCA, *Twelfth and Thirteenth Annual Report*, GD333/2/11-12, 1929-1930 - 1930-1931.

<sup>111</sup> The society organising the conference was not named. Before the conference the Lord Advocate and Solicitor General received a deputation representing twenty-nine women's organisations to outline the issues that would be discussed.

<sup>112</sup> EWCA, *Third and Forth Annual Report*, GD333/2/2-3, 1920-1921 - 1921-1922. It was noted that the Rurals also passed resolutions on the subject of child assault and its more adequate punishment.

<sup>113</sup> GSEC, *Executive Committee Minute Book*, SR187/891036/1/6, 25 November 1924, 17 December 1924, and 25 February 1925. EWCA, *Seventh Annual Report*, GD333/2/7, 1924-1925.

<sup>114</sup> EWCA, *Third Annual Report*, GD333/2/2, 1920-1921, and GSEC, *Executive Committee Minute Book*, SR187/891036/1/6, 17 December 1924.

<sup>115</sup> The Duchess of Atholl was instrumental in the establishment of this Departmental Committee. See chapter six for further information relating to her work as an MP. EWCA, *Seventh and Eighth Annual Report*, GD333/2/6-7, 1924-1925 - 1925-1926. GSEC, *Executive Committee Minute Book*, SR187/891036/1/6, 23 January 1925.

<sup>116</sup> GSEC, *Executive Committee Minute Book*, SR187/891036/1/6, 24 March 1925. EWCA, *Seventh Annual Report*, GD333/2/7, 1924-1925 and EWCA, *Annual General Meetings*, GD333/3, 21 November 1928. Notably the Guild also campaigned against such 'inadequate sentence passed on the criminal for such degrading offences', and demanded that the Secretary for Scotland pass legislation to act as a deterrent, as well as more severe punishment. Mrs Helen Gault of the Possilpark branch argued that in Glasgow alone there were 280 cases involving 400 children of whom 212 under 5 years old, with there being only 257 convictions made. Scottish Co-operative Women's Guild (SCWG), *Twenty-eighth Annual Report*, CSW1/39/6/28, 1921-1922 and *Thirty-second Annual Report*, CSW1/39/6/32, 1925-1926.

<sup>117</sup> EWCA, *Seventh Annual Report*, GD333/2/6, 1924-1925.

a public meeting entitled 'The Community and the Child' at which Mrs William Fyfe, a member of the Scottish Departmental Committee on Offences against Young Persons, gave the main address.<sup>118</sup> A joint conference was also organised in co-operation with the Scottish Branch of the Howard League for Penal Reform to discuss the findings of this Departmental Committee.<sup>119</sup> Child assault continued to be a prominent concern throughout the remainder of the 1920s and early 1930s.<sup>120</sup>

These examples illustrate the breadth of the issues considered by the parliamentary sub-committees of both organisations, the majority of which focused on promoting female equality, with the exception of those that considered the protection of children. This included equality in the public sphere such as representation on public bodies and the equality of opportunity in employment, and also an emphasis on the legal equality of women in relation to their roles as wives and mother. The support of legislation for the protection of children was arguably recognition of women's role as mothers, with both organisations taking a similarly maternal or protective role in the promotion of such legal measures. It follows that the feminist motivations of each organisation were also similar as both pursued equality for women in the public and private spheres. The involvement of members in such campaigns, and thus their 'active citizenship', was therefore channelled into campaigns which could crudely be characterised as both 'equality' and 'difference' feminism. This clearly questions the dichotomy often employed in the historiography of feminism which seeks to define interwar women's organisations as either 'equality' or 'difference'.<sup>121</sup>

### Local Government Sub-committee

The local government sub-committees of each organisation employed similar campaigning techniques to those of the parliamentary sub-committee. The issues discussed by the local government sub-committees of the GSEC and the EWCA were very similar, with both organisations focusing on ensuring the appointment of female police officers and national film censorship.<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> EWCA, *Eighth Annual Report*, GD333/2/7, 1925-1926. The EWCA organised another public meeting two years later at which Mrs Fyfe gave the same address. EWCA, *Tenth Annual Report*, GD333/2/9, 1927-1928.

<sup>119</sup> EWCA, *Eighth and Ninth Annual Report*, GD333/2/7-8, 1925-1926 - 1926-1927. The GSEC also discussed the findings of the Departmental Report, GSEC, *Executive Committee Minute Book*, SR187/891036/1/6, 28 April 1926.

<sup>120</sup> In 1931 the EWCA submitted a resolution to the NUSEC Annual Meeting which protested against 'the inadequacy and unsuitability of the sentences frequently passed in proved cases of cruelty and sex assault on children, and to the necessity from mental and medical examination, if necessary, treatment of the offender'. EWCA, *Thirteenth Annual Report*, GD333/2/12, 1930-1931 and this was reiterated in the following years, *Fourteenth-Fifteenth Annual Report*, GD333/2/13-14, 1931-1932 - 1932-1933. GSEC, *Executive Committee Minute Book*, SR187/891036/1/6, 23 June 1926, 21 November 1932.

<sup>121</sup> A more in-depth critique of this distinction as a method for definition can be found in chapter two.

<sup>122</sup> Housing also came under the remit of this sub-committee, however it will be discussed as a case study below.

Both organisations demanded the establishment of a female police force in Scotland on the grounds that women officers would be better suited to specific types of police work. This included interviewing victims of sexual assault, investigating cases of abortion and accompanying policemen ‘when brothels are raided’.<sup>123</sup> It was also argued that female officers would be able to ‘better protect’ women and children in public places, such as parks and cinemas, with this being explicitly connected to the prevention of child assault.<sup>124</sup> The GSEC’s campaign met with some success. In 1924 ten policewomen were sworn in with the status of constables with pensions.<sup>125</sup> However, the GSEC continued to campaign for further appointments of women constables to patrol public places, sending letters to the relevant authorities, including the Secretary for Scotland and all Glasgow MPs.<sup>126</sup> The EWCA’s demands for the employment of women police began in 1919, when it organised a deputation to the Lord Provost’s Committee in co-operation with the Edinburgh branch of the NCW and ESEC.<sup>127</sup> The council authorised the appointment of two female officers, although their ‘position with regard to powers’ was ‘not yet defined’.<sup>128</sup> The EWCA continued to demand increased provision with deputations regularly being sent to the Lord Provost.<sup>129</sup> In 1928 it also suggested that statutory regulations be introduced, which would provide for the appointment of a woman assistant Inspector of Constabulary.<sup>130</sup>

Each organisation’s campaign for national film censorship was similarly inconclusive in terms of its success. The local government sub-committee of the GSEC first introduced a programme of visiting cinemas in the mid 1920s in an attempt to determine the level of unsuitable films. Members were encouraged to participate in these visits, and also to write to the press demanding the production and supply of ‘better types of films’.<sup>131</sup> Glasgow education authority also joined this campaign, inviting the GSEC to intend conferences considering the ‘national censorship of films’ and the ‘influence of films on the minds of

<sup>123</sup> GSEC, *Executive Committee Minute Book*, SR187/891036/1/4, 15 December 1919, 3 May 1920, 5 November 1923.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid, SR187/891036/1/5-6, 20 March 1922, 15 January 1923, 5 November 1923, 19 November 1923, 1 December 1925. EWCA, *Third-Fifth Annual Report*, GD333/2/2-4, 1920-1921- 1923-1924. The Guild also supported the employment of female police officers for similar reasons, with the central council ‘urging all women’s organisations to put forward renewed efforts to persuade every chief constable in the country to include women in the police force’. SCWG, *Thirty-seventh–Thirty-eighth Annual Report*, CSW1/39/6/37-38, 1930-1931 – 1931-1932.

<sup>125</sup> GSEC, *Executive Committee Minute Book*, SR187/891036/1/5, 7 April 1924. SCWCA, *Scottish Women Citizens Yearbook*, National Archives of Scotland, GD1/1076/16, 1923, p. 27.

<sup>126</sup> GSEC, *Executive Committee Minute Book*, SR187/891036/1/6, 23 October 1924, 1 December 1925, 13 November 1929, and 21 November 1931. The GSEC also demanded equal pay for equal work in relation to the police force, *ibid*, 23 June 1924.

<sup>127</sup> EWCA, *Second Annual Report*, GD333/2/1, 1919-1920.

<sup>128</sup> SCWCA, *Scottish Women Citizens Yearbook*, and EWCA, *Fifth Annual Report*, GD333/2/5, 1924-1925.

<sup>129</sup> GSEC, *Executive Committee Minute Book*, SR187/891036/1/5, 7 April 1924. EWCA, *Fifth–Eighth Annual Reports*, GD333/2/4-7, 1922-1923 - 1925-1926, *Eleventh Annual Report*, GD333/2/10, 1928-1929, and *Thirteenth Annual Report*, GD333/2/12, 1930-1931.

<sup>130</sup> EWCA, *Annual General Meetings*, GD333/3, 6 December 1928.

<sup>131</sup> GSEC, *Executive Committee Minute Book*, SR187/891036/1/6, 26 May 1926, 22 December 1926.

children'.<sup>132</sup> The assembled organisations and official bodies came to the conclusions that only films marked 'for universal exhibition' should be shown, special films for boys and girls between the ages of five and sixteen should be provided, and that an effort should be made to establish a national censorship of films.<sup>133</sup> The GSEC sent resolutions supporting these findings to the relevant prominent individuals.<sup>134</sup> It also took part in a deputation to the Secretary of State for Scotland. While he did not commit himself to any immediate legislation, he promised to discuss the question with the Scottish Office and members of the Cabinet.<sup>135</sup> The EWCA came to the same conclusions after consultation with Edinburgh education authority.<sup>136</sup>

Both of these issues were concerned with the protection of children, thus the inherent maternal caring role of women was evident in the campaigns of each local government sub-committee. While both organisations prioritised female equality in terms of entry to the police force as a profession, the role that such female police officers would play in the community as protectors of women and children was equally important. The latter concern illustrates the gendered conception of citizenship employed by the EWCA and the GSEC. This was influential in the way in which each organisation framed its campaigns, and therefore the way in which each organisation's members performed their 'active citizenship', as the following case studies will highlight.

### Case Studies

The second type of campaign which the GSEC and the EWCA engaged in were those which became the dominant concern of a given period, or on which the organisation focused its efforts for specific periods of time to achieve a reform considered to be particularly urgent. The strategies employed by the parliamentary and local sub-committees were used by each organisation in these campaigns. Given the intensive nature of the latter campaigns, a more in-depth analysis will be provided of the motivations guiding them, which considers the ways in which these campaigns were an illustration of each organisations' pursuit of its members 'active citizenship', as well as a reflection of its feminism.

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<sup>132</sup> Ibid, 26 January 1927, 23 February 1927.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid, 23 March 1927. The GSEC also argued that if a national board of film censors was established, 'an endeavour should be made to have women included, ibid, 16 November 1931.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid, 22 December 1926.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid, 19 October 1927.

<sup>136</sup> EWCA, *Ninth Annual Report*, GD333/2/9, 1926-1927, EWCA, *Twelfth Annual Report*, GD333/2/11, 1929-1930, EWCA, *Fifteenth Annual Report*, GD333/2/14, 1932-1933 and EWCA, *Annual General Meetings*, GD333/3, 21 November 1928. The SCWCA also urged the government to set up a Departmental Committee to enquire into the question of film censorship, with this demand featuring on the agreed common programme. SCWCA, *Handbook for Women Citizens Associations of Scotland*, p. 13.

I - The Permanent Care of the Feeble-Minded

The campaign for the establishment in Scotland of a 'residential farm and industrial colony' for the 'Permanent Care of the Feeble-Minded' was the result of several years' discussion at the annual meetings of the SCWCA, beginning in 1920.<sup>137</sup> This issue aroused much interest in the delegates who found it to be a 'matter of immediate and fundamental social importance'.<sup>138</sup> It was decided in 1924 that to 'foster a feeling of homogeneity' amongst the members of the WCAs in Scotland 'the menace of mental deficiency' would be placed on the agreed common programme.<sup>139</sup>

Developments in England relating to the campaign for the permanent care of 'feeble-minded' individuals were extremely influential, especially in guiding the SCWCA's motivations.<sup>140</sup> Following its initial campaigning, which involved the passing of resolutions, organisation of public meetings and other attempts to raise public consciousness, the SCWCA argued that the members of WCAs should embark upon 'practical work'.<sup>141</sup> It stated that this would 'help ameliorate this menace in the interest not only of the feeble-minded but of the nation'.<sup>142</sup> Such appeals to national efficiency were prominent in the attempts of late Victorian and early Edwardian eugenicists to control the reproduction of what these individuals termed the 'feeble-minded'. Indeed Jackson argues that mental deficiency, more broadly, was 'the product of a range of societal anxieties about rising levels of insanity and deficiency, ...and the preservation of national and imperial strength'.<sup>143</sup> These concerns were illustrated in the campaigns of a variety of eugenicist organisations such as the Charity Organisation Society, Eugenics Education Society, and National Association for the Care of the Feeble-Minded, often in co-operation with such influential bodies as the British Medical Association.<sup>144</sup> Demands included the institutionalisation of 'feeble-minded' individuals, the segregation of the sexes to prevent procreation, and in some cases sterilisation.<sup>145</sup>

<sup>137</sup> See chapter one for a discussion of the Scottish Council of Women Citizens' Associations (SCWCA) and its relationship with the GSEC and EWCA.

<sup>138</sup> SCWCA, *Handbook for Women Citizens Associations of Scotland*, p.14.

<sup>139</sup> This resolution was passed at the annual meeting held in Falkirk in 1924, which was reported in *The British Medical Journal*, 8 November 1924, p. 875. Following its amalgamation with the GWCA, the GSEC would also have been subject to the Common Programme and therefore would also have considered this issue. EWCA, *Souvenir booklet of the 21<sup>st</sup> Anniversary of Edinburgh Women Citizen's Association*, p.8.

<sup>140</sup> Notably the Women Citizens' Associations in England published a pamphlet in 1922 entitled 'Mental Deficiency and Racial Decay', which was advertised in the *Scottish Women Citizen's Yearbook* of 1923, and could be obtained from the secretary of any WCA in Scotland. SCWCA, *Scottish Women Citizen's Yearbook*, 1923, GD1/1076/18, p.6.

<sup>141</sup> EWCA, *Third-Sixth Annual Report*, GD333/2/2-5, 1920-1921 – 1923-1924.

<sup>142</sup> EWCA, *Souvenir booklet of the 21<sup>st</sup> Anniversary of Edinburgh Women Citizen's Association*, p.8.

<sup>143</sup> Jackson, quoted in K. Myres and A. Brown, 'Mental Deficiency: The Diagnosis and After-Care of Special School Leavers in Early Twentieth Century Birmingham (UK)', *Journal of Historical Sociology*, Vol. 18, No. 1/2, 2005, p. 92.

<sup>144</sup> H. G. Simmons, 'Explaining Social Policy: The English Mental Deficiency Act of 1913', *Journal of Social History*, Vol. 11, No. 3, 1978, p. 389-391.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid*, p. 394-395.

The SCWCA's association with, and adoption of, these views developed through its visits to existing colonies for the 'feeble-minded' in England, most notably the residential Sandlebridge School near Manchester. The founder of this 'self-supporting, self-contained colony' or 'little kingdom', Mary Dendy was particularly influential on the SCWCA's campaign, as she had been in the movement for the establishment of such colonies.<sup>146</sup> She gave an address at the annual conference of the SCWCA in 1920, which stimulated interest in this issue, and the campaign that followed.<sup>147</sup> Dendy's work with 'feeble-minded' children began when she was a member of the Manchester School Board, a traditional route into public life for middle-class female philanthropists. During her visits to local schools she was 'struck by the 'outcast' children in the school playgrounds and those unable to make use of the education on offer' and felt that special day schools should be provided by the Board to care for these children.<sup>148</sup> She later became 'a driving force' behind the establishment of the residential Sandlebridge Schools, which were opened in 1902. This institutional complex was the first in Britain to provide accommodation for 'feeble-minded' individuals from childhood to adulthood. It had a school, a house for very young children, a laundry, workshops, farmland and buildings, a hospital wing and facilities for recreation. The number of residents rose from 204 in 1909 to 362 in 1929.<sup>149</sup> However, Read argues that the establishment of such colonies marked a shift in emphasis from 'an optimistic view of the potential of education to enable 'feeble-minded' children to live lives in the community' to a focus on 'containment' in institutions.<sup>150</sup> Dale also suggests that 'campaigners like Mary Dendy' were 'increasingly hostile to the educational and rehabilitative mission' employed at pre-existing institutions provided by local authorities.<sup>151</sup>

Nevertheless, the SCWCA's representatives were very impressed by their visit to Sandlebridge in 1921.<sup>152</sup> Its chairman, Lady Leslie Mackenzie and her husband Sir Leslie Mackenzie, published a pamphlet entitled *The Problem of the Feeble Minded*, which gave an in-depth account of Sandlebridge and its work.<sup>153</sup> This visit also galvanised its campaign, as Sandlebridge became the model for the establishment of a similar 'farm and industrial colony' in Scotland. The SCWCA's original plan was to raise £40,000 to extend the premises of the Royal Scottish Institution for Mentally Deficient Children at Larbert to 'fulfil the requirements

<sup>146</sup> J. Goodman, 'Pedagogy and sex: Mary Dendy (1855-1933), feeble-minded girls and the Sandlebridge Schools, 1902-1933', *History of Education*, March, 2005, Vol. 34, No. 2, p. 178.

<sup>147</sup> SCWCA, *The Menace of Mental Deficiency*, GD1/1076/14, 1925, p. 1.

<sup>148</sup> Goodman, 'Pedagogy and sex: Mary Dendy (1855-1933)', p. 172.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>150</sup> J. Read, 'Fit for what? Special education in London, 1890-1914', *History of Education*, May, 2004, Vol. 33, No. 3, p. 283.

<sup>151</sup> P. Dale, 'Implementing the 1913 Mental Deficiency Act: Competing Priorities and Resource Constraint Evident in the South West of England before 1948', *Social History of Medicine*, Vol. 16, No. 3, 2003, p. 405.

<sup>152</sup> EWCA, *Souvenir booklet of the 21<sup>st</sup> Anniversary of Edinburgh Women Citizen's Association*, p.8.

<sup>153</sup> Sir Leslie Mackenzie was a prominent member of the Scottish Board of Health, thus arguably his involvement in the campaign would have been extremely influential. SCWCA, *The Problem of the Feeble Minded*, National Archives of Scotland, GD1/1076/12, 1922.

of such a colony'. The directors of this institution accepted the three conditions laid down by the SCWCA, which were representation on the management, recognition of the SCWCA in some part of the new colony and a limited right to nominate inmates.<sup>154</sup>

It was not only the operation of Sandlebridge, and its provisions, which impressed the SCWCA. Dendy's background as a part of the 'growing international network of eugenicists' in the early years of the twentieth century was equally influential in way in which the colony at Larbert was envisaged.<sup>155</sup> As a result of her work in Manchester, Dendy gave evidence to the Royal Commission on the Care and Control of the Feeble-Minded in 1908, which in turn led to her attendance in the public gallery during the discussion of the 1913 Mental Deficiency Act in the House of Commons.<sup>156</sup> Her involvement in both events resulted in her appointment as the first paid commissioner under the Board of Control, the administrative body that regulated the 1913 Act. This gave her considerable influence with regard to the education of 'feeble-minded' children.

The term 'feeble-minded' was widely used in the interwar years and before. However, its definition was unclear and it was used in a range of circumstances. Even Dendy's definition was particularly vague. She suggested that 'feeble-mindedness' could merge into 'imbecility, at the lowest point, and into dullness and backwardness at the highest'.<sup>157</sup> Jackson suggests that the 'feeble-minded' 'came to occupy a critical social and cognitive space' in the late Victorian and Edwardian period, which was a 'borderland' between the educationally and socially normal and the pathological'.<sup>158</sup> However, Dendy 'consistently reiterated' what she felt was the 'over-riding characteristic of feeble-mindedness', a 'lack of will-power'. She suggested that while 'you can predict pretty certainly of normal children that under certain circumstances they will do a certain thing', by contrast 'feeble-minded' children 'will do anything that they are told' and were 'easily led astray'.<sup>159</sup>

Significantly such assumptions led to the widely held belief that 'feeble-minded' women were easily seduced. These claims gave support to the growing hysteria concerning the sexuality of such women, with this becoming a 'focal point for eugenicists, psychiatrists and criminologists'.<sup>160</sup> Eugenic concerns relating to the promiscuity and resulting illegitimate children of 'feeble-minded' women, and the affect that their sexuality would have on race

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<sup>154</sup> SCWCA, *The Menace of Mental Deficiency*, National Archives of Scotland, GD1/1076/14, 1925, p. 2.

<sup>155</sup> Goodman, 'Pedagogy and sex: Mary Dendy (1855-1933)', p. 172.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid. Notably the Charity Organisation Society was 'instrumental in the bringing about the appointment of the Royal Commission', Simmons, 'Explaining Social Policy', p. 389. In addition Thomson describes the 1913 Mental Deficiency Act as 'paternalistic, even authoritarian' suggesting that the welfare it provided was 'for the protection of the defenceless and for the good of the community, nation and race'. As discussed in Dale, 'Implementing the 1913 Mental Deficiency Act', p. 403.

<sup>157</sup> Goodman, 'Pedagogy and sex: Mary Dendy (1855-1933)', p. 174.

<sup>158</sup> Jackson, as quoted in Read, 'Fit for what? Special education in London, 1890-1914', p. 284.

<sup>159</sup> Goodman, 'Pedagogy and sex: Mary Dendy (1855-1933)', p. 174.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid, p. 173, and Simmons, 'Explaining Social Policy', p. 397.

deterioration, were therefore paramount.<sup>161</sup> While Dendy questioned the role of men in the reproduction of the 'feeble-minded', she considered 'the 'uncontrolled' sexuality of the feeble-minded woman 'a threat to society'.<sup>162</sup> She therefore became one of the main proponents of views 'regarding the sexual proclivities of feeble-minded women', and was also at the forefront in demanding permanent segregated care for the feeble-minded, which would prevent 'the future deterioration of the race'.<sup>163</sup> Both of these views became inter-related in the education and care provided at Sandlebridge, which Goodman argues was 'an encoding of Dendy's highly sexualised and eugenic view of 'feeble-minded'.<sup>164</sup>

The SCWCA's campaign closely reflected Dendy's views, with it arguing that it was 'in the interests of their own health and happiness as well as of social purity and public health that the feeble-minded be protected throughout life from the dangers arising from their inability to understand and withstand temptation'.<sup>165</sup> Such 'temptation' was described explicitly in *The Problem of the Feeble Minded* as leading to juvenile delinquency, criminality, and illegitimate births. The SCWCA, like Dendy, targeted the 'feeble-minded' young girl, who was presented as 'bringing forth her children, most probably feeble-minded like herself'. Such girls were labelled as a 'known cause of race degeneracy' and accused of 'increasing the very grave social problem of the unrestricted multiplication of the unfit'.<sup>166</sup> Furthermore, it was suggested that 'it was not in the interests of good citizenship that the responsibility of parenthood and the training of the future citizens of the country should be assumed by the feeble-minded'.<sup>167</sup>

Dendy's views were again influential in the SCWCA's demands for permanent segregation. This was especially evident in a circular sent to possible patrons of its campaign, which outlined its guiding motivations and broad aims.<sup>168</sup> This circular opened with a description of the provisions made under the Mental Deficiency Act of 1913, which included special schools for children up to the age of sixteen under the education authorities, or care for individuals under the District Board of Control until the age of eighteen or twenty-one. The SCWCA stated that while several towns in Scotland 'did a certain amount in establishing special schools and in teaching feeble-minded children' only a 'mere handful of the children

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<sup>161</sup> Ibid, p. 174.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid, p. 172.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid, p. 173.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid.

<sup>165</sup> SCWCA, *Papers mainly relating to raising funds to build an annexe for mentally retarded children at Larbert*, National Archives of Scotland, GD1/1076/13, 1925.

<sup>166</sup> SCWCA, *The Problem of the Feeble Minded*, p. 3.

<sup>167</sup> SCWCA, *Papers mainly relating to raising funds to build an annexe for mentally retarded children at Larbert*, 1925.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid. In 1924 a memorandum was issued to all WCA's in Scotland requesting a list of possible patrons who could 'subscribe to the fund'. A list of eighty-five individuals was compiled, which included Duchesses, Dukes, Marchionesses, Countesses, Lords, Ladies, Sirs, Doctors, Very Reverends, Principles and notably Mrs (mother) McLean of the Co-operative Women's Guild. Also see GSEC, *Executive Committee Minute Book*, SR187/891036/1/6, 25 November 1924.



requiring such special care found their way into the special schools'.<sup>169</sup> It was also argued that beyond these ages 'neither care, nor control' was provided 'by the community for the majority of the feeble-minded'.<sup>170</sup> Thus 'unable from feeble-mindedness to become ordinary self-supporting citizens' it insisted that many of these children became burdens on their family or drifted into lives of delinquency and crime.<sup>171</sup>

The SCWCA therefore stated that the special schools provided by municipalities could only be regarded as a 'first stage in the training of the feeble-minded' and must be supplemented by permanent care. It argued that 'permanent defect required permanent care', which would be provided 'for the most urgent cases in Scotland' by the proposed Colony at Larbert. It insisted that this institution, like Sandlebridge, would provide a 'modified social environment' where the 'feeble-minded' could be safe, happy and partially self-supporting.<sup>172</sup> This emphasis on partial self-support was particularly relevant given the economic context of the interwar period, and also relates to eugenic arguments concerning national efficiency. The SCWCA suggested that the colony would limit the public expenditure caused by such 'dependant citizens' and would serve as an 'economy' which would 'save hundreds of thousands of pounds in future years'.<sup>173</sup> The use of the term 'economy' was especially notable, as Progressive and Moderate councillors in Edinburgh and Glasgow frequently made appeals to economy when proposing reductions in municipal expenditure.<sup>174</sup> By employing this language, the SCWCA was aligning itself to those in control of the town council in both cities. Indeed the SCWCA argued that permanent care was a 'more radical and humane solution' when compared to the 'great cost' of maintaining 'institutions of punishment and detention'.<sup>175</sup> Thus it insisted that this was the most practical and economic means of providing a suitable environment for the mentally deficient.

Moreover, it envisaged the Larbert Colony as self-supporting, like Sandlebridge, which received minimal grants. It was part of Dendy's progressive pedagogy that manual training was the most suitable branch of education for 'feeble-minded' children.<sup>176</sup> She argued that this helped children to become part of their community. Thus at Sandlebridge girls were taught the skills that would enable them to work in the kitchen, laundry and help look after the younger children, while boys learned carpentry in the workshops and laboured on the farm. Such gendering of occupations, which was 'driven by an agenda of social control and national

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<sup>169</sup> SCWCA, *The Problem of the Feeble Minded*, p. 2.

<sup>170</sup> SCWCA, *Papers mainly relating to raising funds to build an annexe for mentally retarded children at Larbert*, 1925.

<sup>171</sup> SCWCA, *The Problem of the Feeble Minded*, p. 3.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid.

<sup>174</sup> See the 'Housing' case study below for further details of the Progressives, Moderates and 'economy' measures.

<sup>175</sup> SCWCA, *The Problem of the Feeble Minded*, 1922, p. 4.

<sup>176</sup> Goodman, 'Pedagogy and sex: Mary Dendy (1855-1933)', p. 180.

efficiency', enabled the inhabitants to look after themselves and each other.<sup>177</sup> Similarly the SCWCA suggested that 'mental deficient of all grades can, according to capacity, be trained in housework, garden work, farm work, or industrial shop work'.<sup>178</sup> It was hoped that by learning suitable and useful skills such as carpentry, shoemaking, sewing, basket weaving and farm work, inhabitants would feel useful and be able to partly support themselves in the colony. Therefore such individuals would no longer be 'a trouble and a burden' from his or her 'birth to death', and would consequently live happy and productive lives, which the SCWCA felt that such individuals could not do in the outside community.<sup>179</sup> It was also argued that a proportion of the colony's income would be derived from surplus produce or products from the workshops.

However, more explicitly eugenic arguments remained prominent in the SCWCA's campaign for the permanent care of the 'feeble-minded'. It continued to argue that many forms of mental deficiency were hereditary, and insisted that the proposed Larbert Colony would provide for segregation 'under comfortable and useful conditions' which would restrict the multiplication of the mentally deficient.<sup>180</sup> This would further be ensured with the strict separation of the sexes in the proposed colony, a policy implemented 'at all costs' at Sandlebridge.<sup>181</sup> In this way it was argued that the colony would 'remove a serious menace to our national fitness'.<sup>182</sup> Consequently the SCWCA, like Dendy, viewed this type of colony as a form of control, as well as a place that cared for such individuals.<sup>183</sup>

In 1924 the SCWCA reported that the propaganda campaign publicising its aim to establish a permanent colony for the feeble minded was being 'enthusiastically carried on by every Women Citizen's Association', and 'good reports were being received as to the raising of money'.<sup>184</sup> Indeed the EWCA formed a special sub-committee to consider this matter and raise funds, with Lady Findlay of Aberlour as Chairman. A public meeting was held at the City Chambers to 'inaugurate the effort' with the co-operation of the Lord Provost, Magistrates and Council. The Lord Provost, Lady Leslie Mackenzie, and Sir H Arthur Rose, chairman of the General Board of Control, were among those who spoke in support of the scheme.<sup>185</sup> In addition to the sub-committee a further general committee was formed of sixty members of the

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<sup>177</sup> Myres and Brown, 'Mental Deficiency: The Diagnosis and After-Care of Special School Leavers in Early Twentieth Century Birmingham (UK)', p. 82.

<sup>178</sup> SCWCA, *The Problem of the Feeble Minded*, 1922, p. 4.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid, p. 3.

<sup>181</sup> Goodman, 'Pedagogy and sex: Mary Dendy (1855-1933)', p. 177.

<sup>182</sup> SCWCA, *Papers mainly relating to raising funds to build an annexe for mentally retarded children at Larbert*, 1925.

<sup>183</sup> The emphasis placed on both control and care represents what Read has described as a 'clash of discourses' in this context, Read, 'Fit for what? Special education in London, 1890-1914', p. 297.

<sup>184</sup> EWCA, *Seventh Annual Report*, GD333/2/6, 1924-1925.

<sup>185</sup> A similar public meeting was held two years later in the City Chambers to report on the work of the EWCA in relation to the Colony. At this meeting, which was 'largely attended', it was announced that the EWCA had raised £3187. EWCA, *Ninth Annual Report*, GD333/2/8, 1926-1927.

EWCA and ‘forty influential members of the general public’ which was committed to ‘spreading interest’ in the Colony. Publicity was also deemed essential, and therefore a Press and Propaganda sub-committee was formed, which resulted in ‘invaluable assistance’ from ‘many private individuals, editors, and members of reporting staffs’.<sup>186</sup> The churches in Edinburgh were also approached, with ‘many individual ministers and congregations’ expressing ‘much sympathy with the aims of the proposed colony’ by giving donations. The Edinburgh Presbyteries of the Church of Scotland, the United Free Church, the Synod of the Wesleyan Methodist Church, also received deputations. Methods of fund raising included the ‘Melting Snowball’ system of collecting, where cards and subscription sheets were circulated, which was accompanied by Bridge and Whist Parties, garden fetes and ‘remarkably successful’ concerts.<sup>187</sup>

The SCWCA and the EWCA also offered speakers to a multitude of organisations. The Guild and the Rurals both accepted and promised to help in ‘whatever propaganda work their influence could command’.<sup>188</sup> The EWCA noted that the Guild in particular showed ‘great sympathy and a practical interest in this fundamental social problem’, doing ‘much to further the knowledge of the problem’.<sup>189</sup> Many Guilds also sent ‘generous donations’. Lectures were also given within the network of WCAs with the GSEC receiving a lecture from Lady Leslie Mackenzie as part of the winter programme in 1924.<sup>190</sup> Finally, the SCWCA launched a National Appeal throughout Scotland, with it being argued that ‘evidence is forthcoming that the Scheme is heartily supported by the general community’.<sup>191</sup> An instalment of £10,000 was handed over to the Larbert Board of Directors after only a year of fundraising.<sup>192</sup>

In addition to circulating its pamphlet, *The Problem of the Feeble Minded*, ‘thousands’ of which were ‘sold and distributed all over the country’, the SCWCA also published a second booklet in 1925 entitled *The Menace of Mental Deficiency*.<sup>193</sup> While the introduction reflected upon the success of the previous year’s intensive campaign, it primarily focused upon studying

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<sup>186</sup> EWCA, *Seventh-Eighth Annual Report*, GD333/2/6-7, 1924-1925 - 1925-1926.

<sup>187</sup> EWCA, *Seventh Annual Report-Ninth Annual Report*, GD333/2/6-8, 1924-1925 – 1926-1927.

<sup>188</sup> Ibid. The Rurals also accepted a speaker from the GSEC on the establishment of a colony and stated that it would contribute to the funds, GSEC, *Executive Committee Minute Book*, SR187/891036/1/ 5, 24 March 1924. The following year the central council of the Rurals’ stated that it was strongly in sympathy with the SCWCA with regard to their scheme for the establishment of a colony in Scotland for the Permanent Care of the Feeble Minded, and it would be ‘glad to supply them with any information which they may wish in order to make this scheme known among the Rurals’, SWRI, *Yearly Central Council Meetings*, 26 February 1925.

<sup>189</sup> EWCA, *Eighth Annual Report*, GD333/2/7, 1925-1926. Indeed the Guild urged the government to establish farm colonies and other industrial centres for the permanent care of the feeble-minded in 1924. Mrs Hardstaff of the central council estimated that in Glasgow there was 2,100 mentally or physically defective children and she advocated the establishment of farm colonies in order to develop the after-care treatment and enable ‘the defectives’ to become self-supporting. SCWG, *Thirtieth Annual Report*, CSW1/39/6/30, 1923-1924, and SCWG, *Minute Books of the Central Council*, CWS1/39/1/6, 8 October 1924.

<sup>190</sup> GSEC, *Executive Committee Minute Book*, SR187/891036/1/6, 23 September 1924.

<sup>191</sup> EWCA, *Seventh Annual Report*, GD333/2/6, 1924-1925.

<sup>192</sup> EWCA, *Eighth Annual Report*, GD333/2/7, 1925-1926.

<sup>193</sup> EWCA, *Seventh Annual Report*, GD333/2/6, 1924-1925.

‘this question more closely’ and giving it ‘a more precise intellectual form’. This second publication was based on ‘a very successful’ study circle held by the EWCA in the previous year, the aim of which was to consider the ‘chief problems expounded by experts’ and ‘make the views of the experts current coin among the Scottish people’. It included printed versions of the addresses given and was circulated throughout the WCAs in Scotland and sold to interested parties.<sup>194</sup> The SCWCA hoped to educate public opinion to the importance of this issue, and it was later estimated that 60,000 copies were sold.<sup>195</sup> It also recorded its gratitude to other ‘well known Scottish experts’ who were ‘in full sympathy with the movement’ such as Sir Arthur Rose and Dr Cruickshank of the Scottish Board of Health.<sup>196</sup>

Therefore the SCWCA and EWCA were contributing to discourses relating to the categorisation of individuals as ‘feeble-minded’, and attempting to influence the education and care provided for such children and adults, both through the publication of such documents and its campaign more generally. As discussed this involved the reiteration of the views of late Victorian and Edwardian eugenicists. In particular the work of Mary Dendy in relation to the Sandlebridge residential school and colony was extremely influential, providing a model for the proposed Colony at Larbert. Her views concerning the need for permanent care, and thus segregation of such individuals from the outside world, and also the separation of the sexes within the colony were adopted by the SCWCA. Ultimately the aim of this was to control the fertility of ‘feeble-minded’ individuals, and especially women, in order to prevent both illegitimacy and ‘race-degeneracy’.

The WCAs in Scotland, through the SCWCA, raised £12,000 in total for the extension of the Royal Institution for Mentally Deficient Children at Larbert.<sup>197</sup> The EWCA’s final share amounted to £3,187 and the GSEC raised £2,052.<sup>198</sup> While the SCWCA did not realise its initial aim of raising £40,000, this donation was substantial and enabled the Royal Institution to purchase an adjoining estate and plan a scheme for the establishment of the colony.<sup>199</sup> The buildings, which accommodated three hundred individuals, were opened in 1935, eight years after the completion of the SCWCA’s intensive campaign. The fundraising efforts of the Scottish WCAs were recorded on a plaque, and the SCWCA had the right to elect two

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<sup>194</sup> Contributions included W. M. McAlister, Deputy Physician-Superintendent Royal Edinburgh Mental Hospital, ‘Mental Deficiency as Distinct from Mental Derangement’ and ‘Sterilisation: Methods, Results and Comparisons’; R. D. Clarkson, Medical Superintendent, Royal Scottish National Institution, Larbert, ‘Is Heredity the Predominating Factor in Producing Mental Deficiency?’; and Chas. G. A. Chislett, Medical Superintendent, Institution for Mental Defectives, Glasgow District Board of Control, ‘Institutional Treatment and Training of Adult Mental Defectives’. SCWCA, *The Menace of Mental Deficiency*, 1925, p. 4-31.

<sup>195</sup> SCWCA, *Handbook for Women Citizens Associations of Scotland*, p.14.

<sup>196</sup> SCWCA, *Papers mainly relating to raising funds to build an annexe for mentally retarded children at Larbert*, 1925.

<sup>197</sup> EWCA, *Souvenir booklet of the 21<sup>st</sup> Anniversary of Edinburgh Women Citizen’s Association*, 1935, p. 8, and SCWCA, *Handbook for Women Citizen’s Association of Scotland*, p.14.

<sup>198</sup> EWCA, *Ninth Annual Report*, GD333/2/8, 1926-1927, and GSEC, *Executive Committee Minute Book*, SR187/891036/1/6, 27 October 1926, and 22 December 1926.

<sup>199</sup> SCWCA, *Handbook for Women Citizens Associations of Scotland*, p.14.

representatives to the Colony's Board of Management.<sup>200</sup> Moreover, the SCWCA argued that the lobbying and campaigning of the WCAs throughout Scotland had resulted in the District Boards of Control, the Local Education Authorities, and the Parish Councils developing 'measures for the more adequate handling of all forms of mental deficiency'.<sup>201</sup> The EWCA also stated that 'the value of the association' had been acknowledged through its provision of evidence at the request of the Departmental Committee on Laws relating to Mental Welfare.<sup>202</sup> Indeed its discussion of the need for amendment of the Mental Deficiency Act began in 1934.<sup>203</sup>

## II – Housing

The housing reforms advocated by the GSEC and the EWCA were shaped by each organisations locality, and the political composition and economic position of Glasgow and Edinburgh were influential. In Glasgow the development of a class-based politics in the interwar years and before was particularly important. The representatives of the middle classes, the Unionist and Liberal Parties, fervently opposed the growth of the Labour Party and Independent Labour Party (ILP). As a result of this shared interest a 'centre-right' coalition was formed between some of the local Unionist and Liberal Parties. Thus the Unionist and Liberal parties rarely fielded candidates in municipal elections under the banner of the individual parties, instead candidates stood as 'Moderates' in Glasgow. Consequently resources were pooled and one candidate was chosen to stand against the labour candidate, with it being hoped that this would prevent the middle-class vote being split. However Smyth suggests that the polarisation of class in Glasgow led to the 'almost utter collapse of the Liberal Party in Glasgow'.<sup>204</sup> Therefore, while the Labour Party and ILP represented the interests of the working classes, which involved demands for significant municipal expenditure on housing and health care, the Moderate coalition campaigned on 'economy' lines. One of its main policies was the reduction of public expenditure in order to lower the rates, which was a

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<sup>200</sup> EWCA, *Souvenir booklet of the 21<sup>st</sup> Anniversary of Edinburgh Women Citizen's Association*, 1935, p.8. Lady Leslie Mackenzie also provided occasional accounts of the Colony's progress at the EWCA's annual conference. SCWCA, *Annual Conference Programmes and Notices*, 1931. EWCA, *Thirteenth Annual Report*, GD333/2/12, 1930-1931.

<sup>201</sup> SCWCA, *Handbook for Women Citizens Associations of Scotland*, p.14.

<sup>202</sup> EWCA, *Souvenir booklet of the 21<sup>st</sup> Anniversary of Edinburgh Women Citizen's Association*, 1939, p. 11-12.

<sup>203</sup> EWCA, *Seventeenth Annual Report*, GD333/2/16, 1934-1935. This amendment may have been required as Dale suggests that the segregation schemes, like Larbert, were not 'as comprehensive as might be assumed from the rhetoric of the time'. She suggests that 'far from meeting a eugenic agenda, many of the facilities concentrated on child cases, with the implicit assumption that, in the absence of sufficient accommodation for adults, many would not receive permanent institutional care'. Dale, 'implementing the 1913 Mental Deficiency Act', p. 405.

<sup>204</sup> J. J. Smyth, 'Resisting Labour: Unionists, Liberals, and Moderates in Glasgow between the Wars', *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 46, No. 2, 2003, p. 378.

major concern of the middle-class supporters.<sup>205</sup> The policies of the two groups therefore directly conflicted.

The formation of the Moderate coalition had its roots in the establishment of the Anti-Socialist Alliance in 1913, the same year in which the Glasgow Labour Party was founded. This in turn was a descendant of the Citizens' Union of the late 1890s, which was formed to articulate anti-socialist sentiment, and 'combat the socialist propaganda in Glasgow'.<sup>206</sup> The Anti-Socialist Alliance was supported by a number of middle-class interest groups, which also promoted economy in public expenditure that would keep the rates down. In addition the Scottish Middle-Class Union was especially vociferous in urging the government to reduce expenditure on housing and education, both nationally and locally. The Good Government Committee, formed in 1920 'to promote good government within our city' was also notable among such organisations, opposing social reform and reconstruction in an attempt to keep the rates low. The latter was instrumental in supporting the electoral campaigns of Moderate candidates through electioneering and fundraising. However Baxter suggests that such alliances and coalitions formed between Liberals and Unionists were fairly informal when it came to elections, at least until the 1930s.<sup>207</sup> Consequently the formation of the Good Government Committee 'did not prevent rival candidates from seeking election under the Moderate label'.<sup>208</sup> Baxter also states that such bodies were 'vulnerable to collapse'. Indeed the Good Government Committee disbanded in 1933, citing 'financial problems'.<sup>209</sup>

The Moderate coalition's majority on Glasgow City Council was maintained until 1933 through the promotion of middle-class interests. Not only did this result in the domination of middle-class municipal wards, but also the modification of policies and exploitation of sectarian interests won a number of working-class seats.<sup>210</sup> Consequently in areas where emphasising middle-class concerns relating to rising rates did not gain sympathy, other avenues were taken to maintain control of the council. As Smyth argues, 'anti-socialism may have been an essentially negative message but it was certainly effective'.<sup>211</sup> The labour movement increased its representation dramatically, with forty-four councillors being elected

<sup>205</sup> 'Rates' were a form of taxation on property, which was proportional to the amount of property an individual owned and the value of the property. As the middle classes were more likely to own property, both residential and commercial, the opposition to rate increases was substantial among the middle class electorate in Glasgow.

<sup>206</sup> As quoted in Smyth, 'Resisting Labour', p. 381.

<sup>207</sup> K. Baxter, *'Estimable and Gifted'? Women in Party Politics in Scotland c1918-c1955*, PhD thesis, University of Dundee, 2007, p. 101.

<sup>208</sup> Ibid.

<sup>209</sup> Ibid. The GSEC also disbanded in 1933 citing financial difficulties.

<sup>210</sup> Smyth suggests that the Moderates exploited national fears concerning the decline of the Scottish nation to maintain control of the council, arguing that in the 1920s, and especially the 1930s, sectarianism became a force in Scottish political life. Basically the Catholic community in Scotland, defined by popular opinion and the intelligentsia as 'Irish', were targeted as the scapegoats for Scotland's decline. Gallagher also argues that the Moderates mobilised such anti-Catholic opinion in marginal working-class and lower middle-class wards. See Smyth, 'Resisting Labour', p. 395, and T. Gallagher, 'Protestant Extremism in Urban Scotland 1930-1939: Its Growth and Contraction', *Scottish Historical Review*, Vol. 64, No. 2, 1985, p. 146.

<sup>211</sup> Smyth, 'Resisting Labour', p. 384.

in 1920 when it won eighteen of Glasgow's thirty-seven wards. However Smyth suggests it had reached a plateau. Again in 1926 it did not secure control of the council in spite of making eight clear gains. The Moderate coalition remained in power even in 1926 when much of the working class was united in support of the workers participating in the general strike.<sup>212</sup> Labour later took control of Glasgow City Council in 1933. Smyth argues that this could be partially attributed to the fact that the success of the Moderate coalition began to falter in the early 1930s when it became increasingly difficult to satisfy middle-class supporters who were outraged at the possibility of rate increases.

While the GSEC firmly stated that it had no political affiliations, its policies were undoubtedly affected by the political landscape of Glasgow in these years. Indeed it supported female candidates standing as Moderates, with Miss Hamilton of its executive committee also being a Moderate representative on the education authority.<sup>213</sup> It also allowed the Good Government Committee access to its membership list in order to send a circular to men who may be interested in subscribing.<sup>214</sup> However in 1924 the GSEC took the decision that 'in view of the fact that that the Good Government League was not strictly a non-party body the society should not be represented on it'.<sup>215</sup> Nevertheless, it would appear that initially the GSEC's housing policy reflected the Moderates aim to keep the rates low. It argued that due to the 'level of taxation and the large number of unlet houses' the construction of Corporation housing 'should cease except for slum clearance'.<sup>216</sup> Therefore, as Hughes contends, the political activity of women's organisations 'cannot be divorced from the wider political, social and economic context of time and place, and neither can their class or party loyalties'.<sup>217</sup>

The housing problem had a long history in Glasgow and was first recognised by the municipal authorities at the turn of the century. Butt notes that the City Improvement Trust was 'well aware of the slums, of the extent of overcrowding, and of the obvious contrasts between areas of affluence and squalor'.<sup>218</sup> In 1913 the town clerk estimated that 40,000 people lived in 'inhabitable houses' and that many other dwellings were 'in a state of structural disrepair, ruinous and should be demolished'.<sup>219</sup> His observations were not acted upon as it was accepted that statutes and by-laws would not be enforced rigorously for fear of increasing

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<sup>212</sup> Arguably this industrial action would also have had the same effect in consolidating middle-class support for the Moderates in Glasgow.

<sup>213</sup> See chapter six for further details of women supported by the GSEC in their candidature as representatives of the Moderate coalition.

<sup>214</sup> GSEC, *Executive Committee Minute Book*, SR187/891036/1/5, 4 October 1920 and 25 October 1920. In addition the GWCA, before affiliation to the GSEC, appointed three representatives to the committee. GWCA, *Third and Fourth Annual Report*, GD1/1076/4/2-3, 1920-1921 - 1921-1922.

<sup>215</sup> GSEC, *Executive Committee Minute Book*, SR187/891036/1/5, 3 June 1924.

<sup>216</sup> A. Hughes, 'Fragmented Feminists? The Influence of Class and Political Identity in Relations between the Glasgow and West of Scotland Suffrage Society and the Independent Labour Party in the West of Scotland, c.1919-1932', *Women's History Review*, Vol. 14, No. 1, 2005, p. 19.

<sup>217</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>218</sup> J. Butt, 'Working-Class Housing in Glasgow, 1900-1939', in I. MacDougall, *Essays in Scottish Labour History*, John Donald Publishers, Glasgow, 1978, p. 143.

<sup>219</sup> Quoted in Butt, 'Working-Class Housing in Glasgow, 1900-1939', p. 144.

the number of homeless people in the city, a concern that would persist well into the interwar years. In spite of this, the city council were given power under the terms of the 1909 Housing and Town Planning Act to enforce repairs and improvements upon landlords. Thus the Corporation was committed to a policy of piecemeal slum clearance and local improvement by the beginning of the First World War.<sup>220</sup> However, the main problem facing the Corporation was the demand for new and improved housing to ease overcrowding. The low level of wages ensured that rents could not be economic, thus the council would either have to subsidise rents or employers would have to raise wages. This dilemma was compounded by the fact that Glasgow was an unattractive area for private house building because of the relatively high rates and interest charges.

The *Report of the Royal Commission on the Housing of the Industrial Population of Scotland* published in 1918 provided further evidence of the inadequacy of existing housing provision throughout Scotland. In particular the deplorable conditions within Glasgow were highlighted with it being suggested that overcrowding reached ‘black hole of Calcutta’ proportions.<sup>221</sup> The report attributed such conditions to the ‘single end’, a severely cramped form of one room accommodation, stating that it ‘lies in the extreme margin of industrial civilisation’ and ‘should be ended as soon as the city administration found it practicable’.<sup>222</sup> Yet in the interwar years many working-class families continued to live in such dwellings, and in 1919 the Scottish Office found that 57,000 new houses were required in the city.<sup>223</sup> In addition, obstacles to the private provision of housing remained. Land was expensive, in Dundee land that would have cost £80 to £100 an acre was between £200 and £300 in Glasgow.<sup>224</sup> High building costs meant that rents were beyond the means of many workers. The continuing demand for rent restrictions by the Labour party until ‘such time as adequate housing was provided for the broad mass of the population at reasonable rents’ further aggravated the situation, as rents would be pegged at an artificially low rate.<sup>225</sup> Ultimately if rents could not be economic then landlords would not make a profit. As a result, the Corporation decided that the commercial provision of housing was not possible and advocated that the state take direct responsibility.<sup>226</sup>

Consequently the Housing and Town Planning (Scotland) Act of 1919, which was part of Addison’s initiative to build ‘homes fit for heroes’, allowed Glasgow Corporation the opportunity to put its plans for re-housing the working classes into action, as this legislation

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<sup>220</sup> Ibid, p. 145.

<sup>221</sup> As Quoted in Butt, ‘Working-Class Housing in Glasgow, 1900-1939’, p. 150.

<sup>222</sup> Ibid, p. 151.

<sup>223</sup> Butt, ‘Working-Class Housing in Glasgow, 1900-1939’, p. 149. Also see D. Stenhouse, *Glasgow, Its Municipal Undertakings and Enterprises*, Corporation of Glasgow, 1931, p. 118.

<sup>224</sup> J. Melling, ‘Clydeside rent struggles and the making of Labour Politics in Scotland, 1900-39’, in R. Roger (Ed.), *Scottish Housing in the Twentieth Century*, Leicester University Press, 1989, p. 73.

<sup>225</sup> Ibid.

<sup>226</sup> Butt, ‘Working-Class Housing in Glasgow, 1900-1939’, p. 153.



recognised the need for subsidies. In spite of middle-class opposition in Glasgow, by 1921 4,474 houses had been built in Glasgow under the Addison Act, although in the same year the Medical Officer declared 12,000 occupied houses in the city unfit for human habitation.<sup>227</sup> In addition Butt argues that the Wheatley Act of 1924 made significant house building possible in Glasgow until the subsidy provisions were withdrawn in 1934.<sup>228</sup> In contrast Melling suggests that the Act did little to alleviate the slum problem and instead created, through rent restrictions, a 'safe ghetto of older, poorer maintained and frequently over-crowded dwellings which could be rented for well under ten shillings a week'.<sup>229</sup> Therefore the good quality local authority housing provided accommodation for the better-paid manual workers and lower middle-class groups who had a secure income, and the long-term unemployed working classes who desperately needed re-housed did not generally benefit. In 1935 it was found that 100,000 houses were needed to solve overcrowding, which remained a major problem in Glasgow.<sup>230</sup> Thus 'slum clearance' became the main priority of the city council rather than 'general needs provision', with the council aiming to re-house the working classes as cheaply and quickly as possible.<sup>231</sup>

Initially the GSEC adopted the view of the Moderate controlled council in its housing campaign, which began in earnest in 1925, prioritising slum clearance. The local government sub-committee was assigned the issue of housing provision in the city. It suggested that members of the society should be encouraged to visit slum areas with a view to 'getting an informed opinion and pressing for improved housing conditions'.<sup>232</sup> A deputation to the town council later followed, which urged the need to take action relating to the delay in slum clearance. As was common practice other interested parties, including the Glasgow branch of the NCW were approached to co-operate.<sup>233</sup> As a result of this deputation the Corporation's Housing Department and Director of Housing compiled a memorandum. The GSEC continued its scheme of visiting slum areas in Cowcaddens while considering this document. However, it also visited the municipal housing scheme being constructed at Hamiltonhill under the

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<sup>227</sup> Ibid, p. 155

<sup>228</sup> Ibid, p. 162. David Stenhouse, the town clerk, suggests that a total of 23,501 houses had been constructed by 31 May 1930, under the various housing acts, which was comprised of the following: 1919 Housing and Town Planning (Addison) – 4,988, Housing Act 1923 – 2,052, and its revision in 1924 (Wheatley) – 11,703. This was supplemented by a limited 'house purchase scheme' and also a scheme for 'tenants from uninhabitable houses', which supplied 662 and 4,096 houses respectively. Stenhouse, *Glasgow, Its Municipal Undertakings and Enterprises*, p. 129.

<sup>229</sup> Melling, 'Clydeside rent struggles and the making of Labour Politics in Scotland, 1900-39', p. 76.

<sup>230</sup> N. J. Morgan, '£8 cottages for Glasgow citizens' Innovations in municipal house-building in Glasgow in the inter-war years', in R. Roger (Ed.), *Scottish Housing in the Twentieth Century*, Leicester University Press, 1989, p. 126.

<sup>231</sup> Ibid.

<sup>232</sup> GSEC, *Executive Committee Minute Book*, SR187/891036/1/6, 23 June 1925.

<sup>233</sup> Ibid, 1 December 1925.

Wheatley Act, which may illustrate a degree of commitment to the provision of such housing.<sup>234</sup>

The demand for slum clearance was therefore not the full extent of the GSEC's policy on housing. In 1926 it attended a public meeting arranged by the Glasgow branch of the NCW to consider the city's housing.<sup>235</sup> A resolution was passed at this meeting which stated that 'while aware of what the Local Authorities had been able to do', the organisations represented were 'of the opinion that the housing conditions of the City of Glasgow are still to be deplored'.<sup>236</sup> The Guild also attended this meeting, their invitation being at the suggestion of the GSEC.<sup>237</sup> Following this meeting another deputation was organised to 'lay the views of the conference before the authorities', where it would be demanded that 'active steps should be taken without further delay to meet the needs of the community'.<sup>238</sup> The GSEC arranged for Sir John Gilmour and Sir John Horne to receive this deputation at the Scottish Office, and MPs from all three political parties were also interviewed at the House of Commons afterwards. Sir John Gilmour sent all of the organisations involved a reply which stated that while he had been directly responsible for the implementation of the Government policy, 'there had been many difficulties in the way'. He suggested that much opposition had been experienced from local authorities, trade unions, and building contractors, who had combined to form a 'sheltered' industry against the interests of the community. Therefore he encouraged the organisations to send a deputation to the local authorities.<sup>239</sup>

The GSEC responded by adding the issue of municipal housing schemes to its questionnaire for candidates for the town council, demanding greater efficiency and speed in the construction of such housing.<sup>240</sup> It also drafted a resolution along similar lines. This suggested that preference in the allocation of houses should be given to large families to ease overcrowding, and that private sanitary arrangements should be made in all new houses. The GSEC also suggested that the possibility of reconstruction should be explored in cases where this would improve health. This resolution was sent not only to the town council but also to the Home Secretary, Secretary of State for Scotland and the Ministry of Health.<sup>241</sup> Therefore the GSEC's housing campaign was only partially influenced by Moderate demands for economy. It also campaigned for housing that would meet the needs of the community, which

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<sup>234</sup> Ibid, 25 December 1925.

<sup>235</sup> Ibid, 26 January 1926.

<sup>236</sup> Ibid.

<sup>237</sup> Ibid, 28 April 1925 and 26 January 1926. The GSEC had received a letter from the NUSEC urging 'women of all social and political organisations to co-operate in a national movement for immediate housing action'. It sent a reply suggesting that the secretary of the Scottish Women's Co-operative Guild should be contacted directly. Arguably this acknowledges the Guild's expertise in such matters, and may also indicate that there was an element of co-operation between these two organisations.

<sup>238</sup> Ibid, 26 January 1926.

<sup>239</sup> Ibid, 2 March 1926.

<sup>240</sup> Ibid, 27 October 1926.

<sup>241</sup> Ibid, 23 March 1927.

involved the provision of municipal housing. However, as discussed, the construction of such housing in Glasgow in the 1920s was far from adequate. As a result the GSEC's housing campaign could be deemed unsuccessful, as it did not achieve its aims. Yet poor standards of housing and overcrowding remained widespread in Glasgow following its disbandment in 1933. The sheer extent of the problem even resulted in the newly appointed Labour Council adopting a policy of slum clearance, with municipal construction remaining short of requirements.

In comparison, it would appear that the housing situation in interwar Edinburgh was less severe.<sup>242</sup> Unlike Glasgow, Edinburgh avoided the worst of the recession in the 1920s, and subsequent depression of the 1930s, with its economy being largely based upon the service and financial sectors. In addition the Scottish office was based in Edinburgh as Scotland's capital, and it was consequently an important administrative centre. Edinburgh therefore had a proportionately large middle-class population when compared to Glasgow, given the opportunities for employment in the civil service and other white-collar occupations. Significantly the Progressive coalition, which was much the same as the Moderates in Glasgow, remained in control of the city council throughout the period. Moreover, its representatives, like their counterparts in Glasgow, also consistently demanded 'economy' in public expenditure. As a result of all of these factors there was a comparatively higher level of private building and hence owner occupation in Edinburgh. Private sector housing accounted for 66 percent of housing stock compared with 27 percent in Glasgow.<sup>243</sup> O'Carroll attributes this to the success of Edinburgh councillors in protecting the interests of the middle classes and keeping rates low by allowing the housing shortage to be met by private enterprise.<sup>244</sup>

Consequently municipal housing was not provided by Edinburgh city council to the same extent as that required in Glasgow. The fact that as the working-class population of Edinburgh was smaller, arguably meant that there was simply not the same scale of demand for such housing. However, as will be illustrated by the EWCA's housing campaign, this was not the case. In fact representatives of the ILP and Labour Party were able to secure a level of influence through their demands for improvements in housing and health services in the working-class areas of Edinburgh that they represented.<sup>245</sup> Rather the lack of municipal housing can be attributed to the Progressive city council's emphasis on minimising public expenditure of this type, and the success of this policy in ensuring the return of its

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<sup>242</sup> Unfortunately the historiography relating to housing in Edinburgh is severely lacking in comparison to Glasgow.

<sup>243</sup> A. O'Carroll, 'The influence of local authorities on the growth of owner occupation: Edinburgh and Glasgow 1914-1939', *Planning Perspectives*, Vol. 11, No. 1, 1996, p. 58.

<sup>244</sup> Ibid, p. 69. Notably the municipal rate in Edinburgh was on average 8s, 8d from 1927-1930 while Glasgow's was significantly larger at 14s, 1d in the same period. Thus construction firms would have been more inclined to build private housing in Edinburgh. *The Scotsman*, 21 October 1929, p. 13.

<sup>245</sup> See chapter six for details of the demands of female representatives of the ILP in Edinburgh such as Mrs Eltringham Millar, Mrs Swan Brunton, Mrs Mary Graham, and Mrs Barbara Woodburn who represented the working-class areas of Gorgie, St. Giles, Dalry, and Central Leith respectively.

representatives at elections. In contrast the labour movement was less successful in mobilising support in opposition to this policy. In fact Gallagher cites the fact that the militant sectarian group Protestant Action was more successful in Edinburgh than its counterparts in Glasgow as evidence of the ILP and Labour party's relative failure.<sup>246</sup> Yet, it could be argued that Protestant Action's success could be attributed to the fact that the Progressives did not capitalise on working-class protestant sectarianism as the Moderates had in Glasgow. In addition the Catholic population in Edinburgh was much smaller, reflecting the proportionately smaller working-class population. This is a more likely explanation of the relative lack of success of the labour movement in Edinburgh as compared to Glasgow, where in certain areas of the city the ILP and Labour Party were often reliant on the catholic vote. Nevertheless, in spite of the domination of the Progressives in municipal affairs, an element of class polarisation was evident in Edinburgh's political composition.<sup>247</sup>

All of these factors shaped the nature of the housing reforms demanded by the EWCA. Its campaign began in 1925, initially along similar lines of the GSEC's, with a scheme of visits by the local government sub-committee to the inhabited and uninhabited slum houses of Edinburgh.<sup>248</sup> In addition it visited municipal housing schemes in the city, at Lochend and Saughtonhill, and was 'kept well informed' of the progress of such schemes through its close relationship with the town council.<sup>249</sup> This was especially true when Mrs Somerville, a prominent member, and later chairman, of the executive committee of the EWCA, became head of the council's housing sub-committee. She was also the convenor of the EWCA's housing sub-committee when this was formed in 1925, holding this position throughout the period.<sup>250</sup> As will become apparent, her influence on the council became particularly important and useful in the EWCA's housing campaigns.

The EWCA then expanded its housing campaign to demand more extensive provision of municipal housing. This demand effectively contested the Progressives' policy of 'economy' in municipal expenditure.<sup>251</sup> In fact in 1926 the EWCA actively challenged the Corporations' 'clearance scheme'. This replaced houses 'forcibly vacated for demolition or reconstruction' and therefore provided accommodation 'for only a small proportion of the

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<sup>246</sup> Gallagher, 'Protestant Extremism in Urban Scotland 1930-1939: Its Growth and Contraction', p. 157 and 161. In spite of general condemnation of its violent protests, at the height of the movement in 1936 Protestant Action held around a third of the total municipal vote.

<sup>247</sup> See chapter six for details of the demands of the female ILP councillors in comparison to the line taken by the Progressive majority.

<sup>248</sup> EWCA, *Fifth Annual Report*, GD333/2/4, 1922-1923, and *Eighth Annual Report*, GD333/2/7, 1925-1926.

<sup>249</sup> EWCA, *Eighth Annual Report*, GD333/2/8, 1925-1926, and *Fifteenth-Sixteenth Annual Report*, GD333/2/14-15, 1932-1933 – 1933-1934.

<sup>250</sup> EWCA, *Eighth Annual Report*, GD333/2/7, 1925-1926. and *Tenth Annual Report*, GD333/2/9, 1927-1928.

<sup>251</sup> Notably the EWCA continued to support female candidates standing as Progressives, just as the GSEC supported Moderate women. See chapter six for further details of the careers of Miss Harrison, Mrs Morison Millar, and Mrs Ross, Progressive representatives on Edinburgh education authority for Merchison, Morningside and St. Bernard's respectively. However Mrs Somerville was an 'Independent' and therefore not bound to any party line with regard to housing provision.

wage-earning population'.<sup>252</sup> The EWCA suggested that 'more could be done', and began considering 'the problem of rent'. The rate of rent of municipal houses under construction were deemed to 'have little relationship to the incomes of the people who, in their own interests and in the interests of the community, ought to move out of their present homes'.<sup>253</sup> The EWCA therefore studied the 'many and varied community efforts' which were 'being made throughout the country to meet this difficulty'. It stated that organisations were being formed 'in almost all the larger towns in England, and in some towns in Scotland' to raise 'cheap' money to make lower rents possible.<sup>254</sup> The housing sub-committee studied these schemes and was impressed by 'the need for these efforts and their successful results'. It then issued a questionnaire to municipal candidates on the matter of 'the provision of adequate housing accommodation for the low paid wage earner with a large family'. As this received 'no satisfactory answer', the EWCA formed a committee of men and women representative of a range of religious and social organisations in Edinburgh to consider the use of a 'cheap money scheme'.<sup>255</sup>

This committee later became the Edinburgh Welfare Housing Trust. The EWCA's role in the formation and work of this organisation was the most notable achievement in its housing campaign. Again Councillor Somerville was instrumental in the formation of this Trust 'rousing interest in the subject' and persuading Sir H Arthur Rose to take the role of chairman. Its aim was to raise money, either by loan or donation, for the purpose of 'erecting houses in the city at a reduced rent to selected families with young children'. This scheme can be seen as an alternative to the unaffordable municipal housing, as it provided accommodation for the low paid wage earner. The executive committee urged all members to support the scheme, which was launched with a public meeting at the City Chambers in April 1928.<sup>256</sup> Resolutions passed also encouraged members to give donations themselves.

Fund raising methods employed in this campaign by the EWCA included issuing collecting cards to its members, these were also distributed to the public at drawing room meetings, whist drives and concerts organised by members of the housing sub-committee. As a result of these efforts the Trust had received over £5,500 in donations and £7,500 in loans in the first year alone. Individual members of the EWCA also contributed £900 in gifts and £3,200 in loans.<sup>257</sup> This allowed the Trust to build twenty-four houses on two sites, which included all the charges for land, roads, sewer services, fencing and administration. The

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<sup>252</sup> EWCA, *Ninth Annual Report*, GD333/2/8, 1926-1927.

<sup>253</sup> Ibid.

<sup>254</sup> Ibid.

<sup>255</sup> EWCA, *Tenth Annual Report*, GD333/2/9, 1927-1928.

<sup>256</sup> EWCA, *Annual General Minutes*, GD333/3, 21 November 1928. EWCA, *Souvenir booklet of the 21<sup>st</sup> Anniversary of Edinburgh Women Citizen's Association*, 1939, p.9.

<sup>257</sup> EWCA, *Eleventh Annual Report*, GD333/2/10, 1928-1929. The EWCA continued to raise funds for the Trust, which amounted to £228, 2s, 5d, in 1931. The total raised for the campaign was £988, 1s, 9d. EWCA, *Thirteenth Annual Report*, GD333/2/12, 1930-1931.

completed houses contained a living room and kitchenette on the ground floor, and three bedrooms and a bathroom on the first floor, with the rent being 8/6 a week including rates.<sup>258</sup> The Secretary for Scotland opened a further eighteen houses on the second site in May 1930. Priority was given to the number of young children in a family and the existence of overcrowding in their previous dwelling when allocating the houses.<sup>259</sup> The EWCA maintained close co-operation with the Edinburgh Welfare Housing Trust, which completed a further ten houses in Gorgie in 1933.<sup>260</sup> Reports of the work of the Trust continued to appear in accounts of the housing sub-committee's work.<sup>261</sup> Such concern with the standard of living of working-class families lends support to Innes' agreement with Law's assertion that some middle-class feminists, such as the EWCA, were 'aware of the grim realities of working-class women's lives and sought to improve them'.<sup>262</sup> Innes argues that by doing so the EWCA was able to bridge the gap between middle-class feminist organisations and working-class women.<sup>263</sup>

A fundamental part of the EWCA's housing campaign was what it termed its 'voluntary housing crusade' to raise public awareness and funds for the construction of municipal housing.<sup>264</sup> Its first action in 1925 was to organise a 'Housing and Building Exhibition' at which public lectures were given on related subjects. This included 'Slumdom and what it Means', 'Housing the Citizens of Edinburgh', and 'Housing and the Ratepayers' Pockets'.<sup>265</sup> This event became an annual feature of the EWCA's programme. Councillor Mrs Somerville was instrumental in the organisation of these exhibitions and gave the lecture on 'A Voluntary Housing Crusade' in 1928.<sup>266</sup> Other lectures in 1928 included 'The Slum Housing Question', 'The work of the Continuation Classes allied to Housing' and 'The Housing of the Poor and Aged'. The following year lectures were given on 'How we stand with the Slum Problem of To-day' and 'The Housing (Rural Workers) Act, 1926'.<sup>267</sup> In 1929 Sir H Arthur Rose gave an account of the Edinburgh Welfare Housing Trust, and a propaganda stall was also erected to distribute literature to aid the fund raising for the Trust.<sup>268</sup>

Attempts were also made by the EWCA to establish a 'Housing Sunday' when 'reference would be made in pulpits throughout the city to the great need for better housing in

<sup>258</sup> EWCA, *Eleventh Annual Report*, GD333/2/10, 1928-1929.

<sup>259</sup> EWCA, *Twelfth Annual Report*, GD333/2/11, 1929-1930.

<sup>260</sup> EWCA, *Fifteenth Annual Report*, GD333/2/14, 1932-1933.

<sup>261</sup> EWCA, *Sixteenth Annual Report*, GD333/2/15, 1933-1934.

<sup>262</sup> C. Law, *Suffrage and Power: The Women's Movement, 1918-1928*, I. B. Tauris, London, 1997, p. 176.

<sup>263</sup> Innes, 'Constructing Women's Citizenship in the Interwar Period', p. 627.

<sup>264</sup> EWCA, *Annual General Minutes*, GD333/3, 13 December 1927.

<sup>265</sup> These lectures were given by William Robertson the Medical Officer of Health for the City of Edinburgh, E. J. MacRae, City Architect, and John D Imrie, the City Chamberlain respectively, EWCA, *Ninth Annual Report*, GD333/2/8, 1926-1927.

<sup>266</sup> EWCA, *Annual General Minutes*, GD333/3, 8 February 1928 and 21 May 1928. EWCA, *Tenth Annual Report*, GD333/2/9, 1927-1928.

<sup>267</sup> EWCA, *Eleventh Annual Report*, GD333/2/10, 1928-1929.

<sup>268</sup> *Ibid.*, and *Twelfth Annual Report*, GD333/2/11, 1929-1930.

the congested areas', and a leaflet written by the Medical Officer for Health would be distributed.<sup>269</sup> The main issue to be raised through this propaganda was the need to eliminate overcrowding through slum clearance. This venture was unsuccessful, as the Presbytery of Edinburgh 'could not see their way to recommend it to the Assembly'.<sup>270</sup> Nevertheless, the EWCA argued that its propaganda and education relating to housing continued to be an essential requirement as many of the problems, such as overcrowding, were becoming 'more acute in spite of extensive housing schemes'.<sup>271</sup>

The EWCA continued to promote its views relating to overcrowding and slum clearance, with the housing sub-committee compiling questions for the EWCA's parliamentary questionnaire in 1928.<sup>272</sup> This was accompanied by a public meeting entitled 'Houses for our Poorer Neighbours', which was organised in co-operation with the Glasgow Slum Abolition League.<sup>273</sup> It also drafted questions for the municipal questionnaire, which in 1933 included 'social centres in new housing areas'.<sup>274</sup> In the same year a study circle was organised to consider 'Some Aspects of Housing Problems'.<sup>275</sup> The EWCA's programme of study in 1934 included addresses on the 'Law of Landlord and Tenant', 'Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act', and 'Family Budgets and Rents in New Housing Areas'.<sup>276</sup> In 1935 its newly named Housing and Town Planning Sub-Committee organised a study circle which considered 'methods of dealing with overcrowding', 'social centres in new housing areas', and 'rents within the means of the dispossessed'.<sup>277</sup>

In addition the EWCA's housing sub-committee studied legislative Bills and Acts. In 1930 it held a study circle to consider the Housing (Scotland) Bill. The resulting resolutions urged the Government to lay 'the duty on Local Authorities of framing and adopting schemes of assisted rents for families with young children where the total income does not exceed £3, 10s or 10s per head, whichever is the less'.<sup>278</sup> A general meeting of members also considered the Scottish Departmental Committee Report on Housing in 1934.<sup>279</sup> In the following year the resulting Housing (Scotland) Bill of 1935 was given particular attention with the Parliamentary Committee of the EWCA seeking advice from the housing sub-committee.<sup>280</sup> The Rent

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<sup>269</sup> EWCA, *Eleventh Annual Report*, GD333/2/10, 1928-1929.

<sup>270</sup> EWCA, *Twelfth Annual Report*, GD333/2/11, 1929-1930.

<sup>271</sup> EWCA, *Fourteenth-Seventeenth Annual Reports*, GD333/2/13-16, 1931-1932 – 1934-1935.

<sup>272</sup> EWCA, *Eleventh Annual Report*, GD333/2/11, 1928-1929.

<sup>273</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>274</sup> EWCA, *Fifteenth Annual Report*, GD333/2/14, 1932-1933.

<sup>275</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>276</sup> EWCA, *Sixteenth Annual Report*, GD333/2/15, 1933-1934.

<sup>277</sup> EWCA, *Seventeenth Annual Report*, GD333/2/16, 1934-1935. Notably Miss Cornwall, a member of the central council of the EWCA and also Parish Councillor gave the latter two addresses. For further information relating to her municipal work see chapter six.

<sup>278</sup> EWCA, *Twelfth Annual Report*, GD333/2/12, 1929-1930.

<sup>279</sup> EWCA, *Sixteenth Annual Report*, GD333/2/15, 1933-1934.

<sup>280</sup> EWCA, *Seventeenth Annual Report*, GD333/2/16, 1934-1935.

Restriction Bill, Housing (Financial Provisions) Scotland Bill, and Town Planning Act, 1932 were also considered.<sup>281</sup>

The economic and political circumstances of Glasgow and Edinburgh influenced and determined the policies adopted by each organisation with regard to housing. In this context, the demands of both the GSEC and the EWCA for slum clearance to solve the problem of overcrowding was pragmatic. Each organisation's campaign for slum clearance was successful in so far as this was the course of action that both town council's were committed to. In contrast the GSEC and the EWCA's demands for the extensive construction of municipal housing or reconstruction, to ease overcrowding, were less successful. In Glasgow the town council simply did not have the funding to provide affordable municipal housing with relatively cheap rents, without the aid of government subsidies. It made use of the Addison Act and Wheatley Act, constructing housing with rents affordable for the better-paid working classes. In 1933, the year in which the GSEC disbanded, Glasgow's housing stock was characterised by overcrowding, congestion and the prevalence of one-room dwellings. In comparison, Edinburgh town council provided relatively little municipal housing. The Progressive council was therefore more successful than the Moderates in Glasgow in protecting middle-class interests through its pursuit of 'economy' in public expenditure. Edinburgh council's refusal to construct municipal housing with affordable rents for 'the low paid wage earner' led to the EWCA taking matters into their own hands. It played an important role in the establishment and work of the Edinburgh Welfare Housing Trust, and the associated propaganda campaign, which involved public meetings, fund raising and study circles for members. However, the Trust was limited in scale by its nature, as it depended on donations and loans. As a result it could never satisfy the demand placed upon it, with there being three hundred applicants for the first twenty-four houses.<sup>282</sup> Overcrowding and poor housing in Edinburgh also remained a problem in spite of the efforts of the EWCA.

### III – Maternal Mortality and Morbidity

The demands of the GSEC and the EWCA concerning the reduction of maternal mortality and morbidity, and the connected campaigns for access to birth control were clearly influenced by national concerns. Each organisations' campaign for increased provision of maternity services, were like their housing campaigns, also subject to the economic position and politics of Glasgow and Edinburgh.

In the 1920s and 1930s maternal mortality, and the associated morbidity, were a significantly important health problem to warrant widespread concerns, largely relating to national efficiency and the falling birth rate. The medical profession produced, and the

<sup>281</sup> EWCA, *Fourteenth-Fifteenth Annual Report*, GD333/2/13-14, 1931-1932 – 1932-1933.

<sup>282</sup> EWCA, *Eleventh Annual Report*, GD333/2/11, 1928-1929.



government commissioned, reports, all of which came to the general conclusion that ‘healthy babies required healthy mothers’.<sup>283</sup> The press printed the findings and consequently the general public began demanding a reduction in the maternal death rate. Lewis argues that the high maternal mortality rate ‘appeared particularly reprehensible when the importance of the duties and responsibilities of motherhood were being stressed’.<sup>284</sup> She suggests that the government were ‘acutely aware of this’ and found the ensuing publicity disturbing, fearing that women would be dissuaded from having children, thus negatively affecting the birth rate further.<sup>285</sup> This was also ‘politically embarrassing’ as it was the government’s own reports on maternal mortality, published from 1924, which drew attention to the problem.<sup>286</sup> Moreover, after stimulating such public concern, and as the rate of maternal mortality continued to rise, it appeared as if the government was either taking no action or could not find a solution to the problem.

The concern with the maternal death rate was directly related to earlier consideration of high infant mortality. The latter when accompanied by a declining birth rate led to widespread fears concerning the health and future of the nation.<sup>287</sup> This was especially true following the loss of life in the First World War, which ‘concentrated attention on ensuring the survival of future generations to people lands and empires’.<sup>288</sup> Responding to medical findings and opinions, the government focused upon providing pre-natal care and education for mothers, with state intervention being ‘justified in terms of the national good and racial improvement’.<sup>289</sup> Notably, where Glasgow Council made provisions under its ‘child welfare scheme’, the government’s emphasis on the education of mothers was evident rather than attempts to address the environmental causes of infant mortality such as poor housing.<sup>290</sup> Average infant mortality rates began to fall, with municipal construction and the improvement

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<sup>283</sup> I. Loudon, ‘Some international features of maternal mortality, 1880-1950’, in Fildes, Marks and Marland (Eds.), *Women and Children First*, p. 10.

<sup>284</sup> J. Lewis, *The Politics of Motherhood, Child and Maternal Welfare in England, 1900-1939*, Croom Helm, London, 1980, p. 117.

<sup>285</sup> Ibid.

<sup>286</sup> Ibid. p. 39.

<sup>287</sup> J. Walker-Smith, ‘Sir George Newman, Infant Diarrhoeal Mortality and the Paradox of Urbanism’, *Medical History*, Vol. 42, No. 3, 1998, p. 347. Also see Lewis, *The Politics of Motherhood*, p. 15.

<sup>288</sup> V. Fildes, L. Marks, and Hilary Marland, (Eds.), *Women and Children First, International Maternal and Infant Welfare, 1870-1945*, London, Routledge, 1992, p. 1.

<sup>289</sup> Lewis, *The Politics of Motherhood*, p. 16.

<sup>290</sup> Corporation of Glasgow, Public Health Department, *General Statements, Maternity and Child Welfare Scheme*, Glasgow Regional Archives, D-HE-1/1/2, 1933. Glasgow council’s welfare centres or clinics were described in 1933 as having ‘undergone a process of evaluation’. Eight new specially built premises and six ‘adapted premises’ were provided as ‘agencies for the dissemination of knowledge of all that pertains to the hygiene of the mother and child. Special reference was made to ‘the feeding and management of children on rational principles’. ‘Various additional activities of an educative, helpful or social kind’ were also provided to ensure that the centres operated as ‘an educative influence’. This included cookery and sewing classes, lectures and demonstrations for mothers.

in housing conditions being cited as influential.<sup>291</sup> Rates of maternal mortality and morbidity, on the other hand continued to rise.<sup>292</sup> The health of pregnant women had become a focus of medical and government investigation during the First World War when it was discovered that antenatal factors had an important affect on infant mortality. The rise in maternal mortality in the period from 1926 to 1936 resulted in greater attention being paid to the health of the mother herself. In addition the high incidence of maternal mortality made it increasingly difficult for 'MPs to openly encourage women to have more children' to address the falling birth rate.<sup>293</sup>

The explanations given for the growing incidence of maternal mortality were the cause of much controversy. Basically there were two contemporary schools of thought, the first of which believed that the level of maternal mortality was determined by the quality of care provided by the birth attendant. Thus whether this was a neighbour, trained or untrained midwife, or doctor, high mortality was due to poor obstetric practice.<sup>294</sup> Loudon therefore suggests that the risk to mothers of childbirth was the same for all women 'regardless of social class'.<sup>295</sup> The fact that middle-class and working-class women were equally affected by the problem of maternal mortality was undoubtedly one of the main reasons for the government and public's concern. It was difficult to explain why well-educated women who could afford specialist obstetric care were dying at the same rate as working-class mothers who had to rely on the local 'handywoman'. The other view was that too much emphasis was placed on clinical factors and that poor maternal health was a result of social, economic and nutritional deprivation, which led to a consideration of social conditions in interwar Britain.<sup>296</sup>

This debate continued throughout the 1930s, and the government focused upon the clinical causes of mortality. Lewis argues that the 'narrowness of the official analysis of the problem' was due to 'political considerations'.<sup>297</sup> The demands of women's organisations for economic assistance for mothers therefore went largely unheeded as the government focused upon improving the medical conditions provided for pregnant women and new mothers.<sup>298</sup> It also established legislation for the more adequate training of doctors and especially midwives,

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<sup>291</sup> Ibid. Notably infant mortality rates in Glasgow fell from 115 per thousand for the period 1916-1920 to 98 per thousand in 1933, with the council attributing this to the 'progressive development' of the 'child welfare movement', which resulted in an improved maternity service.

<sup>292</sup> Loudon, 'Some international features of maternal mortality, 1880-1950', p. 5.

<sup>293</sup> Lewis, *The Politics of Motherhood*, p. 36.

<sup>294</sup> I. Loudon, 'On Maternal and Infant Mortality, 1900-1960', *Social History of Medicine*, Vol. 4, No. 1, 1991, p. 34.

<sup>295</sup> Loudon, 'Some international features of maternal mortality, 1880-1950', p. 5.

<sup>296</sup> Loudon, 'On Maternal and Infant Mortality, 1900-1960', p. 35.

<sup>297</sup> Lewis, *The Politics of Motherhood*, p. 51.

<sup>298</sup> Glasgow Corporation observed in 1933 that increasing use was being made of maternity hospitals for births, which again illustrates adherence to the government's attempts to medicalise the process of childbirth. It suggested that 'an increasing number of women are seeking admission to hospital for normal confinement because of their belief in the greater advantage and convenience offered by an institution', which was a 'modern social phenomenon common to all classes'. Corporation of Glasgow, Public Health Department, *General Statements, Maternity and Child Welfare Scheme*, D-HE-1/1/2, 1933.

which resulted in the medical profession becoming defensive. As the government increasingly encouraged hospitalisation as a solution to the problem of maternal mortality, it also extended such legislation to encompass domiciliary practice. Thus general practitioners, and more specifically midwives, who performed home deliveries were targeted. The concern with the competence of midwives was illustrated by the passing of the Midwives Act of 1936. This gained much support from women's groups, which were becoming increasingly concerned with the persisting levels of maternal mortality in comparison with infant mortality. Indeed the GSEC began campaigning for 'sound midwifery before, during and after childbirth' in 1932 as it was argued that this would result in a decrease in deaths.<sup>299</sup> It therefore accepted the government line on this matter.

In fact Lewis suggests that 'women tended to accept the recommendations of the Ministry of Health's committees on the medicalisation of childbirth'.<sup>300</sup> Therefore the demands of women's organisations for improved maternity services to reduce maternal mortality, were a response to the governments findings, and also reflected its attempts at medicalisation.<sup>301</sup> The GSEC passed resolutions calling on the government 'in view of the continued heavy maternal death rate, to grant facilities to the Maternity and Nursing Homes (Scotland) Bill'.<sup>302</sup> In 1926 'maternal mortality' also became a subject for study circles in the divisional meetings of members.<sup>303</sup> Improvements in the provision of maternity benefits were also advocated by the GSEC.<sup>304</sup> This measure was not a feature of the government's recommendations, and improvement in the level of economic assistance was viewed as politically unacceptable.<sup>305</sup> This demand therefore may be an indication that the GSEC was supporting the arguments put forward by women's organisations aligned to the labour movement such as the Women's Co-operative Guild, who argued for such economic assistance.<sup>306</sup>

The GSEC also followed the lead of the NUSEC in its consideration the prevention of maternal mortality. It opposed the introduction of block grants for fear that this would prevent further expansion of maternity and child welfare services, again supporting the government's

<sup>299</sup> GSEC, *Executive Committee Minute Book*, SR187/891036/1/6, 21 November 1932

<sup>300</sup> Lewis, *The Politics of Motherhood*, p. 120. Glasgow Corporation established a scheme of supervision of midwives as a result of the 1915 Midwives (Scotland) Act, which involved the inspection of their practice and home. In 1933 there were 250 registered midwives, none of whom were trained nurses. Corporation of Glasgow, Public Health Department, *General Statements, Maternity and Child Welfare Scheme*, D-HE-1/1/2, 1933.

<sup>301</sup> For further discussion of the actions taken by the government to medicalise childbirth and its motivations see A. Oakley, 'Feminism, Motherhood and Medicine – Who Cares?', in J. Mitchell and A. Oakley (eds.), *What is Feminism?*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1986, p. 132-138.

<sup>302</sup> GSEC, *Executive Committee Minute Book*, SR187/891036/1/6, 15 June 1927. The Maternity and Nursing Homes (Scotland) Act, of 1927 enabled the 'periodic inspection' of any home registered by a local authority. Homes were 'required to keep records as drawn up by the Department of Health'. Fifty such homes were registered by Glasgow Corporation.

<sup>303</sup> *Ibid*, 23 March 1926.

<sup>304</sup> *Ibid*, 1 December 1925.

<sup>305</sup> Lewis, *The Politics of Motherhood*, p. 51.

<sup>306</sup> See chapter four for further details.

emphasis on medicalisation.<sup>307</sup> The NUSEC also suggested that local authorities should be urged to use their powers under the Maternity and Child Welfare Act of 1918, a request that the GSEC followed up, by sending a memorial and resolution to the town council.<sup>308</sup> In fact this focus upon the optimal use of the 1918 legislation had originated in a report of the unofficial Maternal Mortality Committee in 1928.<sup>309</sup> This committee had been formed in 1927, in response to the public outcry, with its intention to lobby the government to take action. The unofficial Committee proved to be extremely influential in guiding government policy, the NUSEC and the GSEC's adoption of its recommendations was therefore not surprising. The GSEC encountered significant difficulty in persuading Glasgow town council to extend its maternity services. Often when such legislation was passed at a national level, municipal localities did not fully exploit it due to other demands on its funding such as unemployment relief, this being the case in Glasgow. Therefore like the provision of municipal housing, where maternity services were required most urgently, Glasgow city council could not afford to provide them.<sup>310</sup>

Yet, the GSEC did not always agree with the NUSEC, which in 1930 fully supported a scheme for a National Maternity Service, as suggested by Sir George Newman, the Chief Medical Officer of the Ministry of Health. In contrast the GSEC questioned the advisability of introducing this measure, due to the economic situation of the nation.<sup>311</sup> Glasgow experienced severe economic downturn in the interwar period, especially during the early 1930s. Based upon its difficulties in securing housing reform in the city, the GSEC would have been aware of the fact that there would be little chance of such a measure being accepted by Glasgow town council. Hughes also suggests that the GSEC opposed such expenditure on social services to keep the rates low.<sup>312</sup> Indeed in March 1931 it did 'not feel' that it was 'the time to urge for any increases in social services' which would mean 'increased taxation and a further burden on industry'.<sup>313</sup>

<sup>307</sup> GSEC, *Executive Committee Minute Book*, SR187/891036/1/6, 19 November 1928.

<sup>308</sup> Ibid, 17 November 1930.

<sup>309</sup> It made this suggestion in the hope that maternity services would become available to more women, and that the coordination of such services may also improve. Notably its members were extremely well connected, the majority were titled, and crucially all sectors of the political spectrum were represented. Lewis, *The Politics of Motherhood*, p. 152.

<sup>310</sup> In 1929 there were only eleven Child Welfare Officers, thirty-nine Child Welfare Nurses, and fourteen consultation centres. In addition there were only 583 Ante-Natal Sessions. It would appear that no further provisions were made for the special treatment of mothers, possibly with the exception of the Corporations 'Country Homes' which treated 806 mothers and children. Stenhouse, *Glasgow, Its Municipal Undertakings and Enterprises*, p. 68-69.

<sup>311</sup> GSEC, *Executive Committee Minute Book*, SR187/891036/1/6, 17 November 1930. Notably the government shared the GSEC's concerns and Newman's scheme was not realised due to restrictions in public expenditure.

<sup>312</sup> A. Hughes, *A Rough Kind of 'Feminism': The formation of working-class women's political identity, Clydeside, c. 1919-1939*, PhD thesis, University of Strathclyde, 2001, p. 141.

<sup>313</sup> GSEC, *Executive Committee Minute Book*, SR187/891036/1/6, 17 March 1931. The demand for a National Maternity Service for Scotland featured on the common programme of the SCWCA, which represented WCA's throughout Scotland, including the GWCA. It was interesting that the GSEC did not support this measure, even though affiliated to the GWCA. This may point to a conservative view in relation

The EWCA's demands for an improved maternity service for the prevention of maternal mortality developed parallel to that of the GSEC. Its campaign began with the establishment of a study circle entitled 'The Problem of Maternal Mortality'.<sup>314</sup> This involved lectures by experts in the field, and included 'The Importance of Ante-Natal Work', 'Venereal Disease in Relation to Maternity', 'The Provision for Women during Child Birth', 'Puerperal Fever' and 'Maternity as it should be'.<sup>315</sup> A series of resolutions was passed at the end of the course, the first demanding the provision of antenatal clinics was sent to the town council. The Central Midwives Board was also sent a resolution urging refresher courses for midwives and the provision of sterilised outfits where necessary. The final resolution was sent to the Scottish Board of Health, and insisted that the provision of maternity services be devoted to securing adequate medical and nursing attendance and that this should result in a reduction of maternal deaths.<sup>316</sup> The emphasis on the provision and improvement of medical facilities was overwhelming and reflects the government's focus on the medicalisation of childbirth.

The EWCA, like the GSEC, also demanded that the local authorities employ the powers they possessed under the Maternity and Child Welfare Acts.<sup>317</sup> Letters were sent to the municipal authorities, including the Edinburgh Public Health Department, as well as the Scottish Board of Health, to determine the action that these bodies intended on taking.<sup>318</sup> The EWCA also 'wholeheartedly supported' the establishment of a National Maternity Service, thus it may have been more optimistic than the GSEC in its ability to persuade the council to implement this.<sup>319</sup> However, given the domination of the Progressive coalition in the council and its commitment to protecting middle-class interests, the EWCA experienced overwhelming opposition to such municipal expenditure.

Nevertheless, the EWCA was later successful in securing a scheme of home helps provided by the municipality. This was notable as it illustrates a break from government recommendations and emphasis on providing medical facilities to ease maternal morbidity. Lewis states that the unofficial Maternal Mortality Committee and also the Women's Co-operative Guild 'attached great importance' to the provision of such non-medical services. Both bodies argued that this would 'compensate for the prohibition put on the handywoman's

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to expenditure on welfare reform, or a recognition of the limitations placed on any possible campaign by the Moderate council's emphasis on 'economy'.

<sup>314</sup> EWCA, *Ninth Annual Report*, GD333/2/8, 1926-1927.

<sup>315</sup> These lectures were given by R. W. Johnstone, Professor of Midwifery at the University of Glasgow, Dr Mary MacNicol, Miss Margaret Martin MB of the Elsie Inglis Memorial Hospital, Dr I W Benson Medical Superintendent of the City Hospital, and John M Munro Kerr, the Regius Professor of Midwifery, University of Glasgow. EWCA, *Ninth Annual Report*, GD333/2/8, 1926-1927. The Professor of Midwifery at Edinburgh University had also given a lecture the year before entitled 'The Problem of our High Maternal and Infantile Mortality and Morbidity', EWCA, *Eighth Annual Report*, GD333/2/7, 1925-1926.

<sup>316</sup> EWCA, *Ninth Annual Report*, GD333/2/9, 1926-1927.

<sup>317</sup> EWCA, *Tenth-Eleventh Annual Report*, GD333/2/9-10, 1927-1928 - 1928-1929.

<sup>318</sup> EWCA, *Eleventh Annual Report*, GD333/2/10, 1928-1929.

<sup>319</sup> EWCA, *Thirteenth Annual Report*, GD333/2/13, 1930-1931.

services'.<sup>320</sup> Again the influence of the unofficial Committee and also opinions of women associated with the labour movement was notable. The EWCA had first considered the introduction of a scheme of home-helps in Edinburgh following 'a very interesting' account given by Miss Barker, Assistant Inspector of Midwives in Glasgow, of her work in relation to the 'Home Helps Scheme in the city'.<sup>321</sup> Home helps assisted new mothers in the weeks immediately following childbirth, performing household chores and running errands, with childcare being her main duty. The EWCA decided that such an initiative would be of value in Edinburgh. After sending a questionnaire to various organisations interested in social work, the committee sent a resolution to the Town Clerk arguing for the provision of such a scheme.<sup>322</sup> A year later as a result of its work, the Medical Officer of Health had drafted a scheme that included a panel of suitable home helps.<sup>323</sup>

Its work in lobbying for the introduction of this service in Edinburgh was significant as it illustrated an awareness and understanding of the situation in which working-class women found themselves after giving birth, which involved the immediate return to caring for their homes and families. It was also notable given that, as Lewis suggests, local authorities in England were 'reluctant to spend money on this service'.<sup>324</sup> However, home helps were not popular with working-class mothers. This was mainly for two reasons; firstly the home helps remained too expensive in spite of the fact that the fee was decided according to the means of the family. The second reason was simply that working-class women preferred to make their own arrangements with neighbours and family than employ an outsider, who the mother often feared might not perform the chores she required.<sup>325</sup>

The EWCA also engaged in propaganda work to stimulate public interest in maternal mortality and morbidity, which included the publication of a 'Memorandum of Maternity Services' in co-operation with the Edinburgh branch of the NCW.<sup>326</sup> In 1932 this co-operation was further formalised with the establishment of the Scottish Joint Maternity Committee. Its main purpose was the study of the Interim and Final Reports of the Departmental Committee

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<sup>320</sup> Lewis, *The Politics of Motherhood*, p. 157. Handywomen were unofficial midwives who delivered babies in working-class areas for a fraction of the cost of midwives or doctors. They also nursed the mother, washed the baby and performed any other domestic chores that were required. The Government targeted such women, stating that they were unsafe and a cause of maternal mortality, although these claims remained unproven. The loss of their services was a hardship for many working-class women who could not afford to pay for the services of a trained professional.

<sup>321</sup> EWCA, *Eleventh Annual Report*, GD333/2/10, 1928-1929.

<sup>322</sup> Ibid.

<sup>323</sup> EWCA, *Twelfth Annual Report*, GD333/2/11, 1929-1930, and *Fourteenth Annual Report*, GD333/2/13, 1931-1932.

<sup>324</sup> Lewis, *The Politics of Motherhood*, p. 131.

<sup>325</sup> Ibid. Evidence provided by Glasgow Corporation supports this. Its scheme had been introduced in 1924 'continuing to expand' thereafter. However in 1929 only 195 women employed the service. It made a significant loss with only £195, 2s and 6d being recovered from the patients with the balance of £423, 17s and 6d being met by the Corporation. Stenhouse, *Glasgow, Its Municipal Undertakings and Enterprises*, p. 71.

<sup>326</sup> SCWCA *Handbook for Women Citizens Associations of Scotland*, p.15.

on Maternal Mortality and Morbidity and its 'bearing on conditions in Scotland'.<sup>327</sup> The Joint Maternity Committee later investigated what action was required to give effect to the recommendations of this committee.<sup>328</sup> Further co-operation with other WCAs through the Scottish Council (SCWCA) was also encouraged with it being suggested that each should join the Joint Maternity Committee.<sup>329</sup> The influence of the latter was strengthened by the appointment of representatives of the College of Nursing, the Mid Scotland Federation of Townswomen's Guilds, Scottish Midwives' Association, the Queen's Institute of District Nursing and the Scottish National Health Visitors' Association.<sup>330</sup> The Joint Maternity Committee's particular concerns were the city's provision of maternity services including nursing, and the prevention of maternal sepsis and domiciliary nursing.<sup>331</sup> Again there was a clear emphasis on improving clinical conditions as a solution to maternal mortality.

In addition the EWCA's members were encouraged to become involved in the 'practical work' of fundraising in aid of maternity services in Edinburgh. In 1927 it organised a 'flag day' in aid of the Simpson Memorial Maternity Hospital and the Elsie Inglis Memorial Maternity Hospital. A sum of £1,564 was raised, which was considered 'satisfactory' by the association given the 'wide-spread ignorance of the value to the general community of the work the Maternity Hospitals are doing'.<sup>332</sup> The EWCA worked tirelessly to address this ignorance and lectures on the work of such institutions became a topic of public meetings.<sup>333</sup> Fundraising continued, and as a 'result of a study of the problem of Maternal Mortality and Morbidity', in 1931 the EWCA issued a public appeal and initiated a campaign in aid of the ante-natal work of the Elsie Inglis Memorial Maternity Hospital.<sup>334</sup>

As the rate of maternal mortality continued to rise, illegal abortion began to be considered an influential factor.<sup>335</sup> Thus discussion concerning the provision of birth control,

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<sup>327</sup> EWCA, *Fifteenth Annual Report*, GD333/2/14, 1932-1933.

<sup>328</sup> Unfortunately no details are given in the annual reports relating to the findings of the Departmental Committee of the action that was required. EWCA, *Sixteenth Annual Report*, GD333/2/15, 1933-1934.

<sup>329</sup> EWCA, *Fifteenth Annual Report*, GD333/2/15, 1932-1933.

<sup>330</sup> EWCA, *Seventeenth Annual Report*, GD333/2/16, 1934-1935.

<sup>331</sup> EWCA, *Sixteenth Annual Report*, GD333/2/15, 1933-1934.

<sup>332</sup> EWCA, *Ninth-Tenth Annual Report*, GD333/2/9-10, 1926-1927 - 1927-1928. Fundraising for the Elsie Inglis Memorial Maternity Hospital was significant given Inglis' contribution to the war effort as the director of the Scottish Women's Hospitals. The GSEC was involved in this organisation during the war. The EWCA continued to raise funds for the Elsie Inglis Memorial Maternity Hospital, the Portobello branch sponsoring a bed in 1928.

<sup>333</sup> The first public meeting was held in 1927 when Dr Margaret Martin gave an address entitled 'Some Aspects of the Work of the Elsie Inglis Memorial Maternity Hospital', EWCA, *Ninth Annual Report*, GD333/2/8, 1926-1927.

<sup>334</sup> This involved various fund-raising efforts such as a lantern lecture entitled 'Round the World on a Magic Carpet', a Bridge Party, a Whist Party, a Musical comedy performed by pupils of a Dancing School, a Free Gift Competition, and a cakes and handicraft sale. The 'intensive' campaign culminated in 'a Pageant and Tableaux of Child Life', followed by a procession and collection through the main streets of the city. The EWCA raised a total of £854, which used to establish and equip an outpatient department. EWCA, *Thirteenth-Fourteenth Annual Report*, GD333/2/12-13, 1930-1931 - 1931-1932.

<sup>335</sup> 10.5 percent of all maternal deaths were attributed to abortion in 1930, this rising to 20 percent in 1934. In 1934 it was also estimated that 68,000 illegal abortions had taken place, although only 73 cases were officially recorded. Beaumont, 'Moral Dilemmas and Women's Rights', p. 476-477.

and the establishment of birth control clinics came to the fore.<sup>336</sup> The GSEC and the EWCA had differing reactions to this. The initial response of the GSEC was to protest against the inclusion of resolutions relating to birth control on the NUSEC's parliamentary agenda, as 'it seemed out with the scope of its work'.<sup>337</sup> Two years later, while opposing the use of the title 'resolution on birth control', it did support the NUSEC's decision to argue for the removal of restrictions on medical information given at maternity and child welfare clinics in receipt of government grants. Indeed the executive committee demanded that the Ministry of Health allow information 'with respect to methods of birth control' to be given by medical officers at Maternity and Child Welfare Centres in cases where 'either a mother asks for such information or in which the opinion of the medical officer, the health of the parent renders it desirable'.<sup>338</sup> The society was careful to stress the point that it held no opinion on the general question of birth control. This was a controversial issue in interwar Glasgow and this might explain the GSEC's relative conservatism on this issue.<sup>339</sup> However this resolution did emphasise a woman's right to access to birth control information if she should want it. This would have had limited impact as women would need to be aware of the availability of such information to be able to ask for it. Also it is difficult to determine how many women the medical officers would have felt it was appropriate to give such information to. Nevertheless this resolution does encourage the provision of such information, which would enable women to have control over their fertility.<sup>340</sup>

The EWCA, on the other hand, viewed birth control in connection to national efficiency. At a general meeting of members a debate was held on the topic 'That Birth Control is in the interests of the individual and of the nation', with this 'arousing great interest'.<sup>341</sup> It later considered the 'laws dealing with abortions' and 'sterilisation', an issue never considered by the GSEC.<sup>342</sup> Discussions on birth control continued to feature, and the resolutions passed were similar to those of the GSEC.<sup>343</sup> In 1931 the SCWCA circulated a motion relating to birth control, which the EWCA supported. This called upon the Department of Health for Scotland to recommend that information with respect to methods of birth control

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<sup>336</sup> T. McIntosh, 'An Abortionist City': Maternal Mortality, Abortion, and Birth Control in Sheffield, 1920-1940', *Medical History*, Vol. 44, No. 1, 2000, p. 76.

<sup>337</sup> GSEC, *Executive Committee Minute Book*, SR187/891036/1/ 5, 5 February 1923.

<sup>338</sup> Ibid, SR187/891036/1/6, 27 October 1925, 1 December 1925, and 27 October 1926. Notably the wording of this resolution was the same as that issued by the National Council of Women in 1930. See Beaumont, 'Moral Dilemmas and Women's Rights', p. 473.

<sup>339</sup> Opposition to birth control in interwar Glasgow will be discussed in chapter four.

<sup>340</sup> Notably local authorities were not compelled to adopt the limited measures introduced in 1930, which allowed maternity and child welfare clinics to advise married women on methods of birth control. As a result of a lack of resources and apathy, accompanied by public opposition to birth control and falling birth rates, only 95 maternal and child welfare clinics in England and Wales of a possible 423 provided such information. Beaumont, 'Moral Dilemmas and Women's Rights', p. 475.

<sup>341</sup> EWCA, *Eighth Annual Report*, GD333/2/7, 1925-1926.

<sup>342</sup> EWCA, *Thirteenth Annual Report*, GD333/2/12, 1930-1931.

<sup>343</sup> Notably speakers included Mrs Stocks JP BSc and Mrs Alice Ross JP MA, EWCA, *Thirteenth Annual Report*, GD333/2/12, 1930-1931.



be available to married women at Maternity and Child Welfare Centres in receipt of Government grants.<sup>344</sup>

Therefore the GSEC and the EWCA employed similar methods to urge the implementation of welfare schemes for the prevention maternal mortality. Both lobbied the local authorities, sent memorandums and resolutions, and the EWCA also circulated propaganda and held public meetings. More importantly, both organisations were successful in pressing for such welfare reforms within the limits of the municipal policy of each city. It must be remembered that welfare spending was being reduced nationally, as was illustrated by the failure of Newman's attempt to institute a National Maternity Service. Notably maternal mortality began 'to decline steeply and continuously' from the mid-1930s, which may be another explanation for the failure of the respective councils in Glasgow and Edinburgh to react to the demands of the GSEC and EWCA.<sup>345</sup>

### Conclusion

One of the main aims of the education provided by the GSEC and the EWCA was to imbue its members with a sense of 'active citizenship' and a desire to take a role in public life. This included becoming actively involved in the campaigns and issues promoted by each organisation, both those of an on-going legislative nature and those that were the prominent concern of a given period. A variety of strategies and methods were employed in both types of campaign, which enabled the members of each organisation to effectively lobby local and national government, as well as individuals in positions of influence. All of the campaigns and issues promoted by both organisations also provide an illustration of its feminism, with members being encouraged to adopt their own 'active citizenship'.

Each organisation considered on-going legislative campaigns through its parliamentary and local government sub-committees. The GSEC and the EWCA employed strikingly similar campaigning strategies in both of these sub-committees, largely to demand equality for women in the public sphere. The parliamentary sub-committee of each organisation also promoted legal equality for women as both individuals and also in their roles as wives and mothers. This was accompanied by demands for legislative measures that would protect children. The local government sub-committee of each organisation focused upon the introduction of protective legislation for children, again employing similar campaigning strategies. Therefore, while the formal, legal equality of women in the public sphere was prominent in the campaigning work of both organisations, so too was a recognition of women's role, both literally and symbolically, as mothers and protectors. The campaigns and issues supported by the GSEC and the EWCA

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<sup>344</sup> Notably this featured four years after the same resolution was passed by the GSEC. EWCA, *Thirteenth Annual Report*, GD333/2/12, 1930-1931.

<sup>345</sup> Loudon, 'Some international features of maternal mortality, 1880-1950', p. 5.

were therefore guided by the gendered conception of citizenship employed by each organisation.<sup>346</sup> Consequently each organisation's feminism cannot be narrowly defined according to the 'equality/difference' dichotomy. Rather both organisations demanded equality for women as individual citizens, which encompassed recognition of women's specific roles in society as women, notably as wives and mothers. Undoubtedly this gendered conception of citizenship, which in turn influenced the feminist motivations of each organisation, would have shaped the feminism adopted by its members and would also have guided their involvement in the organisation's campaigns and thus their 'active citizenship'.

The second type of campaign promoted by each organisation, as illustrated in the case studies, highlighted the range of external influences that guided the GSEC and the EWCA's lobbying work. In all three campaigns, for the permanent care of the 'feeble-minded', for housing improvements and the prevention of maternal mortality, both organisations employed strategies and methods similar to those of the on-going legislative campaigns. These campaigns illustrate clearly the way in which the GSEC and the EWCA responded to societal discourses as perpetuated by the press, public opinion, and local and national government. Both organisations also attempted to influence such forces through its campaigns. This was especially clear in the campaign for the establishment of a colony for permanent care for the 'feeble-minded' where the GSEC and the EWCA, through their membership of the SCWCA, contributed to discourses relating to the treatment and institutionalisation of such individuals. While the SCWCA's campaign for the establishment of a colony for the Permanent Care of the Feeble-Minded was not necessarily a reflection of its, and the GSEC and the EWCA's, feminist beliefs, its success in achieving its aims highlights the influence of such women's organisations in political life and in lobbying those in positions of influence to gain reforms of interest to its members. This campaign was an illustration of the practice of feminism in the sense that these organisations successfully made the opinions of its members known in the public or political sphere.

The other two campaigns were affected to a greater extent by the economic and political context of Glasgow and Edinburgh, which resulted in each organisation experiencing varying levels of success in achieving their aims. Each organisation's housing campaign was not explicit in its feminist motivations. While the GSEC tended to demand general housing improvements, the EWCA focused upon gaining increased housing provision for 'the low-paid wage earner and his family', neither of which specified women as the beneficiaries. Nevertheless any improvement of housing conditions for the working classes, including slum clearance and the construction of municipal housing, would undoubtedly have improved the lives of working-class women, easing the burden of caring for their families in cramped one

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<sup>346</sup> See chapter two for further discussion of the way in which each organisation employed a gendered notion of citizenship.

room dwellings. Yet, in spite of the campaigning efforts of each organisation, overcrowding and poor housing remained a feature of both cities in the interwar years and beyond.

Similarly, the success of each organisations demands for the reduction of maternal mortality was restricted by Moderate and Progressive policies of 'economy'. This campaign was guided by both organisations' feminist principles and outrage at the government's failure to prevent the premature deaths of new mothers. Each organisation emphasised the importance of the health of mothers to national efficiency, successfully employing public discourses to gain support for its campaign. Yet, both the GSEC and the EWCA encountered difficulties in gaining the reforms required to improve post-natal care at a municipal level.

Ultimately, all of the campaigns and issues that the GSEC and the EWCA embarked upon, and became involved in, made an attempt to educate its members, informed their feminism and encouraged 'active citizenship' and involvement in public life. In addition each organisation practiced its feminism in ensuring that the views of its members were made clear to those individuals and bodies in positions of responsibility, who were in turn able to enact changes in legislation that would improve the lives of women and their families. The involvement of the GSEC and the EWCA in this range of campaigning work therefore provides an illustration of the breadth and diversity of feminist action in interwar Scotland.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### ‘A Force to be Reckoned With’: The Scottish Co-operative Women’s Guild

The central council of the Scottish Co-operative Women’s Guild considered the Guild to be an influential part of the broader Co-operative movement in Scotland and Britain. Co-operative ideology was therefore instrumental in shaping the education provided for members, as well as the campaigns and issues that the Guild promoted in the interwar period. This reflected a commitment to both Co-operation and women, which for the Guild were not mutually exclusive.

The Guild divided its campaigns into three categories: political, social and Co-operative propaganda. The latter referred to the promotion of issues that related directly to the Co-operative movement and also to what will be termed ‘class issues’. It was the promotion of this type of campaign that distinguishes the Guild from the other organisations under consideration. The Guild’s involvement in the Co-operative movement was ideologically significant in framing its perception of a range of issues.<sup>1</sup> This was also true of its political and social propaganda, which generally related to legislative reform and welfare provision respectively. While such issues were promoted by the GSEC and the EWCA, the Guild’s campaigns differed in that they explicitly focused on the needs of working-class women. This was the case both in terms of the legislation sought, such as improvements to widows’ pensions, and in its consideration of ‘social propaganda’ including the provision of maternity services and affordable housing. Co-operative ideology, and the Guild’s involvement in the Co-operative movement, therefore shaped the issues and campaigns it supported, and its feminism. This was reflected in the education provided for members.

#### Education

The Guild’s campaigning methods were similar to those employed by the GSEC and the EWCA. It shared the emphasis that these organisations placed on citizenship, which became increasingly prominent in the education provided for members following the partial extension of the franchise in 1918. The Guild also viewed the vote as enabling women to become active citizens, leading to participation in public life. Consequently it also prioritised the education of new women voters. The central council encouraged women to use their vote and ‘not neglect their power’.<sup>2</sup> Yet, it suggested that ‘if young women are to vote wisely they must be educated in politics as their fathers and brothers have been’.<sup>3</sup> The editor of the ‘Women’s Page’ of the

<sup>1</sup> The influence of Co-operative ideology on the Guild is also discussed in chapter two.

<sup>2</sup> Scottish Co-operative Women’s Guild (SCWG), *Twenty-fourth Annual Report*, Glasgow Regional Archives, CSW1/39/6/24, 1917-1918.

<sup>3</sup> *The Scottish Co-operator (SC)*, ‘Woman’s Corner’, 18 February 1928, p. 181.

*Scottish Co-operator* insisted that there was no better place for this to be achieved than in the Guild, and she justified this by stating that:

For thirty years there have poured into the Guilds thousands of workingwomen – ignorant, inarticulate, and fearful. What has the Guild done? It has educated them, it has made them raise their voices against countless wrongs, and it has made them a fearless band of fighters for working-class independence.<sup>4</sup>

The Guild's close relationship with the wider Co-operative movement proved to be influential in this education, with the central council arguing that 'the Vote gives more power to Co-operation'.<sup>5</sup> The renewed emphasis placed on the education of women, and especially new female voters, was immediately apparent in 1918. It was suggested that all branches of the Guild should set aside at least one night a month for 'educational matters and the discussion of social problems'. This was the beginning of the central council's renewed mission to politicise guildwomen. Members were also strongly encouraged to express their opinions on the given topic of discussion and even prepare short papers.<sup>6</sup>

Twelve classes for women Co-operators were also established in 1918, under the auspices of the Co-operative Union. Prominent guildwomen, and on occasion male Co-operators, delivered the lectures on such topics as 'The History of the Co-operative Movement'.<sup>7</sup> The men of the Co-operative movement undoubtedly had a vested interest in ensuring that guildwomen were educated in the principles of Co-operative ideology, as the labour movement in Scotland was keen to gain the support of as many of the recently enfranchised female voters as possible. However the central council had an equally powerful motivation for providing their members with Co-operative education. Such classes, which increased its members knowledge of both Co-operative ideology and also the inner workings of the movement, provided guildwomen with the education afforded the men of the movement. This equality of education provided further justification for the Guild's demand for greater representation within the Co-operative movement. Another of the central council's aims was to increase the confidence of guildwomen in expressing their opinions and making their voices heard, especially when members secured such representation.<sup>8</sup> It was estimated in 1927 that over 11,000 women had 'made sacrifices' to attend such educational classes.<sup>9</sup> Speakers'

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> SCWG, *Twenty-seventh Annual Report*, CSW1/39/6/ 27, 1920-1921.

<sup>6</sup> SC, 'Women's Page', 7 June 1918, p. 292.

<sup>7</sup> K. M. Callen, *History of the Scottish Co-operative Women's Guild*, SCWS, Glasgow, 1952, p. 21.

<sup>8</sup> Such classes continued throughout the interwar years, even in times of severe financial hardship. Many branches received no financial assistance from their local societies and were entirely self-supporting in their provision of education for their members. This not illustrates the Guild's commitment to the education of guildwomen, but also the demand for these classes from members. See appendix 4a for further details of attendance of these classes, which became known as 'two-day schools' from 1924. SCWG, *Twenty-fifth Annual Report*, CSW 1/39/6/ 25, 1918-1919, and *Thirtieth Annual Report*, CSW1/39/6/30, 1923-1924.

<sup>9</sup> SCWG, *Thirty-fourth Annual Report*, CSW1/39/6/34, 1927-1928.

classes, which had been a feature of pre-war programmes, were also arranged for members. The aim of these classes was also to encourage participation in discussions and ‘inspire confidence in the ability of members to speak and make their views known in public’.

This education reflected the central council’s belief that ‘very often there is a lot of talent among our members lying dormant which only requires a little encouragement to develop’.<sup>10</sup> It urged members to use this talent to promote their own interests and those of their children. Mrs McNair, a prominent guildwoman, argued that the Guild should ‘bring the young woman into line, give them enthusiasm, and make them understand that they had the right to demand better conditions for their children and themselves’.<sup>11</sup> The Guild’s gendered understanding of citizenship was evident in such sentiments, with women’s involvement in public life being based on their role as mothers. In its view mothers had the responsibility for the future generation, which entitled them to a role in public life.<sup>12</sup> This elevation of the status of motherhood enabled guildwomen to argue for improved conditions for themselves and their children.

Similarly, the central council argued that ‘local government boards faced so many problems affecting the welfare of women and children’ that it was ‘essential that there should be an increase in the number of women elected as representatives’.<sup>13</sup> Therefore guildwomen were encouraged to ‘take all opportunities’ and ‘attend all available classes’, as these would assist them in ‘taking their places on boards of management and public bodies’.<sup>14</sup> The central council was hopeful that as well as increasing the representation of women on the committees of the Co-operative movement, guildwomen would also stand as candidates in the education authority, parish, town and county council elections. In fact Gordon suggests that efforts had been made since the Guild’s inception to involve women in local government politics.<sup>15</sup> In 1923 the central council argued that its members who had a ‘knowledge and practical experience of industrial conditions’ should ‘take a more active part on local government bodies’. It was even suggested that a register should be kept of the numbers of guildwomen elected to local government bodies to monitor its progress.<sup>16</sup>

As a consequence of such encouragement and education the central council stated that guildwomen were successful in gaining representation in municipal politics and in responsible positions within the Co-operative movement. One member even stated that she thought Co-operative women had ‘a great chance through their Guilds to voice their opinions’, having

<sup>10</sup> SC, ‘Woman’s Corner’, 7 June 1918, p. 292.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, 2 June 1928, p. 559.

<sup>12</sup> See chapter two for analysis of the Guild’s gendered conception of citizenship.

<sup>13</sup> SCWG, *Twenty-fifth Annual Report*, CSW 1/39/6/ 25, 1918-1919, and *Thirtieth Annual Report*, CSW1/39/6/30, 1923-1924.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> E. Gordon, *Women and the Labour Movement in Scotland, 1850-1914*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1991, p. 268. In 1894 the Guild was represented on an association in Glasgow that campaigned for the return of women to local government boards.

<sup>16</sup> SCWG, *Minute Books of the Central Council*, Glasgow Regional Archives, CWS1/39/1/7, 25 April 1923.

‘opportunities now greater than ever before’.<sup>17</sup> In 1922 the president Mrs McLean suggested that increasing numbers of guildwomen were represented in the movement and on ‘almost every important committee that has for its object the welfare of women and children’.<sup>18</sup> It was also argued that guildwomen also increasingly gained representation on the commercial side of the Co-operative movement.<sup>19</sup> Callen argues that ‘in every case’ these women ‘acknowledged that they owed their success to the training they received in the Guild’.<sup>20</sup> In 1931 the president Mrs Hardstaff also stated that women who had won places on Co-operative committees had ‘proved their worth’ and that ‘any society was the better for having women on their committees’.<sup>21</sup> Indeed members of the central council often argued that ‘such a band of organised women’ were ‘of inestimable value to the retail societies’ as it made all its members conscious Co-operators and was also responsible for ‘an educated and intelligent democracy’.<sup>22</sup>

By the 1930s the central council argued that the position of guildwomen in the movement had improved further. Mrs Watson of the central council stated that ‘guildwomen in increasing numbers were taking their places and proving their ability in all the national Co-operative committees’ and especially the Homes, Press, and Scottish sections. Prominent guildwomen were also being selected as Co-operative candidates.<sup>23</sup> The president, Mrs Hardstaff, also argued in 1931 that through their training in the Guild, its members had made ‘very efficient members of town councils and other public bodies, such as education authorities’.<sup>24</sup> Guildwomen also became increasingly involved in public advisory committees relating to the administration of old age pensions, child welfare and labour exchanges. Moreover, Mrs Watson, president in 1935, insisted that ‘wherever decisions are made the women Co-operator has a definite part to play in the scheme of things tending towards a better system of society’.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> SC, 21 July 1928, p. 796.

<sup>18</sup> SCWG, *Twenty-ninth Annual Report*, CSW1/39/6/29, 1922-1923. This again highlights the Guild’s assertion of a gendered citizenship, which enabled its members to gain positions that were related to women’s caring or maternal nature. This strategy, while limiting in that it equated women with their maternal capabilities, enabled the Guild to secure a sphere of influence within the movement.

<sup>19</sup> SCWG, *Thirty-third Annual Report*, CSW1/39/6/33, 1926-1927. For example, on a management board of twelve persons, the St. Georges society had an average of four women directors throughout the interwar period. Callen, *History of the Scottish Co-operative Women’s Guild*, p. 24.

<sup>20</sup> Callen, *History of the Scottish Co-operative Women’s Guild*, p. 24-25.

<sup>21</sup> SCWG, *Thirty-seventh Annual Report*, CSW1/39/6/37, 1930-1931, and *Forty-second Annual Report*, CSW1/39/6/42, 1935-1936.

<sup>22</sup> SCWG, *Minute Books of the Central Council*, Glasgow Regional Archives, CWS1/39/1/7, 4 March 1925.

<sup>23</sup> Callen, *History of the Scottish Co-operative Women’s Guild*, p. 17.

<sup>24</sup> SCWG, *Thirty-seventh Annual Report*, CSW1/39/6/37, 1930-1931.

<sup>25</sup> SC, ‘Woman’s Corner’, 18 May 1935, p. 542.

### General Campaigning Methods

The general education provided for guildwomen, which empowered and arguably enabled them to gain representation within the Co-operative movement and in municipal government, was accompanied by specialist education for its campaigns. Each followed an established campaigning procedure, regardless of the type of 'propaganda' that it was categorised as. In each new session the central council would specify which issues were to be considered 'special subjects' by the sections and branches of the Guild. This decision was often based upon the resolutions submitted by branches to the annual congress. These issues would then be given prominence on the syllabuses or programmes of each branch. Members of the central council and section executives also specialised in these topics in order to give talks and lectures at section and branch meetings. The training for speakers from the section executives was conducted at sectional conferences, where members of the central council gave educational addresses.<sup>26</sup> When their training had been completed, such individuals embarked upon a 'scheme of visits' throughout the various sections.<sup>27</sup> The intention was to visit every branch to prepare the members for involvement in the campaign under discussion, which was an increasingly difficult task as the membership increased throughout the interwar period.<sup>28</sup> Notably there could be more than one 'special subject' in a given year, which resulted in branches receiving addresses from several members of the central council and section executive. The addresses given by these trained speakers, and the members of the central council, were supplemented by pamphlets issued by the central council, which on occasion were sent to all branches.<sup>29</sup>

This education relating to 'special subjects' was followed by the appropriate action. The lobbying methods employed by the Guild were again much the same as those used by the GSEC and the EWCA. The Guild took part in deputations to individuals or public bodies to state its case on a range of issues.<sup>30</sup> It very rarely organised such meetings, instead co-operating with a variety of organisations, or accepting invitations for its support and involvement. Members of the central council or section executives were appointed to deputations in relation to their special area of interest, and were expected to prepare a

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid. Those attending were always reminded that 'when introducing a controversial subject, tact and persuasion rather than force, should lead the members along the path they should tread'.

<sup>27</sup> SCWG, *Minute Books of the Central Council*, Glasgow Regional Archives, CWS1/39/1/8, 14 June 1929.

<sup>28</sup> See chapter one for further details of the growth of the Guild in the interwar years, both in terms of membership and geographically. Also see appendix 1a, graph 2.

<sup>29</sup> These pamphlets were written by a member of the central council or issued by one of the constituent bodies of the Co-operative movement such as the Co-operative Party or Co-operative Union. Guildwomen were often encouraged to buy their own copy. While the price was kept as low as possible to facilitate this, the sale of such pamphlets was also a means of raising funds for the Guild or wider movement. The circulation and demand for such pamphlets was often described as high, especially in regard to popular and emotive campaigns such as peace or maternity, although no specific figures were given in the minutes. SCWG, *Minute Books of the Central Council*, CWS1/39/1/6-9.

<sup>30</sup> Examples of these issues will be discussed below.



presentation giving ‘the working-class women’s view’ or ‘the Co-operative women’s view’. In addition branches were urged to send letters of protest on particular issues to their local MPs and councillors, which were to explicitly include the Guild’s resolutions, often as passed at the Annual Congress. Individual guildwomen, and especially branch officials, were also encouraged to send such letters. Finally, as a more direct measure, the central council also suggested that guildwomen should ‘agitate’ for positions on ‘all kinds of national and local Public Committees’.<sup>31</sup> It was argued that the representation of guildwomen in the public sphere would allow them to promote issues of importance to working-class women through formal political channels.<sup>32</sup>

However, in spite of the similar campaigning methods that the Guild shared with the GSEC and the EWCA, there was remarkably little co-operation with these organisations.<sup>33</sup> Both offered speakers to branches of the Guild and invited the central council to send representatives to their annual meetings, with the Guild often accepting. Yet, while there was evidence of limited co-operation on some issues, the Guild also rebuffed attempts made by both organisations to gain its support on specific issues, with the central council often deciding to ‘take no action in the matter’.<sup>34</sup> This was especially evident in April 1918 when the Guild did not send representatives to a preliminary meeting held by the Glasgow Women’s Citizen Association (GWCA) regarding the representation of women in public life.<sup>35</sup> Similarly a year later when the GSEC and the GWCA were in the process of forming a joint representative committee of women’s organisations, with the objective of putting forward women candidates for local public bodies, the Guild declined to be represented.<sup>36</sup>

Scott argues that in the case of the Guild in England, increasing involvement in the politics of the Co-operative and labour movement was responsible for this lack of co-operation with ‘formal’ feminist organisations. She suggests that it began ‘to subscribe to conventional notions of working-class womanhood and women’s role in the family’ in the 1930s rather than ‘promoting women as citizens as they had done before this point’.<sup>37</sup> In contrast the Scottish Guild, although becoming increasingly involved in the politics Co-operative movement, had from its inception carved out a special role for its members in the wider movement, which was premised on women’s roles in relation to the private sphere of the home and family. It simultaneously promoted ‘women as citizens’ throughout the interwar period, with its

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<sup>31</sup> SC, ‘Women’s Page’, 12 October 1935, p. 1088.

<sup>32</sup> The GSEC and the EWCA also promoted the increased representation of women in public life in order to give voice to women’s concerns in a formal political environment. See chapter three for further discussion.

<sup>33</sup> See appendix 4a for further details of entries in the *Minute Books of the Central Council*, CWS1/39/1/6-9.

<sup>34</sup> Again see appendix 4a, especially highlighted sections.

<sup>35</sup> SCWG, *Minute Books of the Central Council*, CWS1/39/1/6, 23 April 1918.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid*, 5 March 1919.

<sup>37</sup> As quoted in A. Hughes, *A Rough Kind of ‘Feminism’: The formation of working-class women’s political identity, Clydeside, c. 1919-1939*, PhD thesis, University of Strathclyde, 2001, p. 124. Also see, G. Scott, *Feminism and The Politics of Working Women The Women’s Co-operative Guild 1880 to the Second World War*, UCL Press, London, 1998.

gendered conception of citizenship remaining influential.<sup>38</sup> For the Scottish Guild, women's special role and position in the movement, based on women's role as mothers, was not incompatible with a belief in female equality.<sup>39</sup> Moreover the Scottish Guild's involvement in the Co-operative movement was not a direct barrier to co-operation with 'formal' feminist organisations, although it was undoubtedly influential on the way in which the Guild viewed certain issues. In fact the Guild was represented on the Legislative Committee of the Scottish Federation of Societies for Equal Citizenship, which was in turn affiliated to the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship (NUSEC).<sup>40</sup> It appointed representatives to this Committee in both Glasgow and Edinburgh, including the Guild's then president Mrs McNair.<sup>41</sup> It was also directly affiliated to the NUSEC, regularly ordering its pamphlets on such topics as 'why women are required on local councils' and 'Town Councils their power and duties'.<sup>42</sup>

However in a local context the Guild perceived 'formal' feminist organisations, such as the GSEC and the EWCA, to be on the whole unsympathetic to the aims of Co-operation and by extension the interests of working-class women and their families. Indeed the central council insisted that branches should not accept speakers who were not supportive of the 'principles of Co-operation' or 'in sympathy with the aims of the Guild'. Members were to 'beware of the lady who came from an outside organisation to speak' as it was argued that 'never at election times could they vote with the Guildswomen'.<sup>43</sup> Indeed the Guild's president Mrs MacDonald argued in 1920 that while Women's Citizens' Associations were non-party, 'the principle members of it were all associated with a particular party'.<sup>44</sup> Consequently the Guild gave its support to campaigns promoted by the GSEC and the EWCA, when this was of benefit to working-class women. Thus, as Hughes argues, 'fragmented alliances' between working-class and largely middle-class women's organisations were also attributable to the latter, with the interests and opinions of the GSEC often proving a barrier to co-operation.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> The Guild's gendered conception of citizenship is discussed in greater depth in chapter two.

<sup>39</sup> See chapter two for further discussion.

<sup>40</sup> The GSEC and the EWCA were also both affiliated to the Legislative Committee of the Scottish Federation of Societies for Equal Citizenship as discussed in chapter three.

<sup>41</sup> SCWG, *Minute Books of the Central Council*, CWS1/39/1/8, 29 December 1926.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid, CWS1/39/1/7-9, 4 August 1920, 25 August 1926, 27 October 1926, 26 September 1928, 26 June 1929, 17 September 1930, and 1 April 1931. Representatives from the Guild also passed a resolution at its annual congress in London in March 1929. SCWG, *Minute Books of the Central Council*, CWS1/39/1/8, 26 December 1928, and 30 January 1929. See appendix 4b.

<sup>43</sup> SCWG, *Twenty-ninth Annual Report*, CSW1/39/6/29, 1922-1923.

<sup>44</sup> SCWG, *Twenty-sixth Annual Report*, CSW1/39/6/26, 1919-1920.

<sup>45</sup> Hughes, *A Rough Kind of 'Feminism'*, p. 126. As discussed in chapter three the middle-class interests of the EWCA, while in some cases less pronounced (notably it took account of working-class demands in its housing and maternity campaigns) may also have been a barrier to co-operation with the Guild.

In contrast, the Guild actively developed its relationship with other working-class women's organisations connected to the trade union and labour movements.<sup>46</sup> The Organising Women's Committee of the Trade Union Congress first issued an appeal for closer co-operation with the Guild in 1933.<sup>47</sup> The central council agreed to allow a representative from this body, Miss Jobson, to address branch meetings on the subject of 'Women in Trade Unions', suggesting that branches should take advantage of this opportunity.<sup>48</sup> It later recommended that Miss Jobson's name be placed on the speakers' panel of the Co-operative Party. The relationship between the Guild and this Committee was formalised by the establishment of the Scottish Committee of Co-operative, Labour and Trade Union women in the same year.<sup>49</sup> The Guild's president, Mrs Watson argued that the Guild would find this committee useful in keeping informed of the provisions of certain acts of Parliament in relation to trade union and social questions.<sup>50</sup>

In the following accounts of the Guild's political, social and Co-operative propaganda the education provided for members, and the campaigning methods employed, will be discussed in the specific contexts of the issues it supported and promoted.

### Political Propaganda

On the whole the Guild's political propaganda related to legislative reforms. While the Guild promoted some of the same reforms as the GSEC and the EWCA, its relationship with the wider Co-operative movement played an influential role in the way it framed its campaigns. The Guild not only had a working-class perspective on many issues, which would have occurred simply as a result of the class composition of its membership, but its views were also influenced by Co-operative ideology.

Such Co-operative rhetoric developed as an extension of the wholesale store system. Co-operative stores were established in the mid-nineteenth century as an alternative to 'profit-seeking' retailers who were seen to be exploiting the working classes. In contrast the principle of Co-operative stores was to reward its members, who had to pay a fee to join, through the payment of an annual dividend proportional to their spending in the store. Thus the aim of the Co-operative stores was not profit, but rather the supply of essential goods at an affordable

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<sup>46</sup> SCWG, *Minute Books of the Central Council*, CWS1/39/1/7, 5 October 1921. The Guild had worked with such organisations from its inception, with many guildwomen being members of a variety of working-class women's organisations, which facilitated such co-operation. See appendix 4b for further details of this co-operation.

<sup>47</sup> This committee had been established in 1926 to 'enlist members, to promote discussion on topics of interest to women, to accommodate co-ordination between female trade unionists, women of the labour party and females from the Co-operative Women's Guild, to facilitate propaganda, and to advance local activities'. Hughes, *A Rough Kind of 'Feminism'*, p. 95.

<sup>48</sup> SCWG, *Minute Books of the Central Council*, CWS1/39/1/9, 1 March 1933.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid*, 1 November 1933. Again see appendix 4b.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid*, 20 June 1934.

price for its largely working-class members, with any profits theoretically being returned to the members through the dividend.<sup>51</sup> The political ideology of the Co-operative movement later developed along similar lines, industrial capitalism was opposed in favour of socialist co-operation or ‘universal Co-operation’ on a larger scale. In this international order the working-class peoples of the world would produce goods that would be traded by their governments, not for profit or influence, but through basic necessity.<sup>52</sup> It was argued that such ‘mutual trading’ would end the need for war, as there would be no conflict over resources. The Guild actively supported and promoted such ideology. The president, Mrs Watson, argued in 1933 that while ‘the present system produces for profit’, the Co-operative movement ‘produces for use’, and it was for this reason that the Guild had a ‘different point of view to propagate’.<sup>53</sup> In addition the Co-operative movement, comprising the wholesale societies and the political branches such as the Co-operative Union and later Party, was positioned as the true representatives of the working classes. Mrs MacDonald, the president of the Guild in 1919 agreed. She argued that Co-operation was ‘recognised as the greatest organisation of working people’ the benefits of which were ‘bountiful’ and could be increased if guildwomen were to ‘obey our motto ‘each for all and all for each’’.<sup>54</sup>

Such Co-operative ideology was more explicit in some of the Guild’s legislative campaigns than others, with it being particularly influential in its demands for peace.<sup>55</sup> However, even in campaigns that on the surface appeared to be motivated by demands for female equality, a class element was evident. It was in such circumstances that Co-operative ideology influenced the Guild’s campaigns, through its emphasis on working-class solidarity. The Guild demanded an extension of the franchise for women and ‘universal suffrage for all’ until 1918. Notably this demand for female equality was accompanied by the insistence that working-class men should also be enfranchised.<sup>56</sup> Like the GSEC and the EWCA, the Guild also demanded further extension of the franchise for all women over the age of twenty-one until this was achieved in 1928. The Guild’s campaigning methods were similar to those employed by these organisations, both in the lead up to the 1918 and 1928 legislation. The Guild issued memorandums, sent copies of resolutions passed at its annual meetings, and deputations to local town councillors, MPs and influential individuals such as the Scottish Secretary and Prime Minister.<sup>57</sup> As well as ensuring greater equality for working-class

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<sup>51</sup> J. Kinloch and J. Butt, *The History of the Scottish Co-operative Wholesale Society Ltd*, Co-operative Wholesale Society, Manchester, c.1981, p. 1-44.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> SCWG, *Minute Books of the Central Council*, CWS1/39/1/9, 14 June 1933.

<sup>54</sup> SCWG, *Twenty-fifth Annual Report*, CSW1/39/6/25, 1918-1919.

<sup>55</sup> This will be discussed in greater detail below.

<sup>56</sup> The support given to men in this instance continued throughout the period, as will become apparent

<sup>57</sup> As discussed in chapter two, Gordon states that the first petition for women’s suffrage was sent to the Government in 1893. Resolutions were passed at the annual conferences every year until 1918. For the campaign for further extension of the franchise see SCWG, *Twenty-fifth - Thirty-fourth Annual Report*, CSW1/39/6/25-34, 1918-1919 – 1927-1928.

women, it was argued that such newly enfranchised women 'could be organised in favour of the Co-operative vote', thereby increasing the political strength of the movement.<sup>58</sup>

The Guild's demand for equal pay for equal work also differed from that of the GSEC and the EWCA. Its resolutions stated that this should be based on the value of work done, and 'not that the payment should merely be made', thus equality must be earned and not just given.<sup>59</sup> Arguably this view supported trade union aims to guard male wages from female dilution. The Guild also actively supported the introduction of a 'family wage'.<sup>60</sup> Thus, while the GSEC and the EWCA promoted equal pay for women as individuals, the Guild was more concerned with what would be better for the working-class household, which it argued was the family wage. It was of the opinion that this would provide for the whole family, and more importantly protect the welfare of children, by ensuring that mothers could stay at home and provide full-time care. Indeed Lewis argues that women's groups such as the Women's Co-operative Guild and Women's Labour League also saw this family income as equally crucial in providing the conditions for healthy childbearing and childrearing as the provision of maternal and infant welfare centres.<sup>61</sup>

In addition Hughes suggests that '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'.<sup>62</sup> She argues that in the community women had been subject to 'habituation and socialisation into sex stereotyped roles', with girls being socialised as housewives at both school and at home.<sup>63</sup> Hughes insists that this resulted in the majority of women wanting and expecting marriage and motherhood.<sup>64</sup> Moreover she suggests that the political identity of enfranchised housewives were influenced by such experiences. Consequently, while working-class women may have been forced to engage in formal paid employment for economic reasons, they continued to support the 'ideal of the family wage' as this 'could secure the material means by which women might aspire to the ideal female identity'.<sup>65</sup> Indeed the central council argued that 'everything that would mean a larger amount of money coming into the home through the father' was better 'than schemes where the mother must leave her home'.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Arguably, the GSEC and the EWCA's campaigns for the extension of voting rights were not motivated by such overt political considerations.

<sup>59</sup> SCWG, *Twenty-sixth Annual Report*, CSW1/39/6/26, 1919-1920.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>61</sup> J. Lewis, *The Politics of Motherhood: child and maternal welfare in England, 1900-1939*, Croom Helm, London, 1980, p. 165.

<sup>62</sup> Hughes, *A Rough Kind of 'Feminism'*, p. 36. Arguably the same was true in working-class areas of Edinburgh, where female activists of the Guild and ILP had similar concerns as their counterparts in Glasgow. See chapter six for further details.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 145.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 146.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 46.

<sup>66</sup> SCWG, *Twenty-fourth Annual Report*, CSW1/39/6/24, 1917-1918.

Middle-class feminists, on the other hand, criticised the family wage, arguing that its aim was the 'full employment for men' at the expense of equally qualified women. Yet Hughes argues that, in spite of this aim, the family wage could be seen as a form of empowerment for working-class women, as it would ensure that the family as a whole had greater resources.<sup>67</sup> As the 'chancellor of the exchequer of the home', as the Guild often described its married working-class members, such women would effectively have control of her husband's increased income and the resources this money could buy. The implementation of a family wage would therefore increase the 'domestic bargaining power and security' of such women.<sup>68</sup> Thus Hughes suggests that middle-class criticism of the acceptance of the family wage 'under-estimates the immense significance of this for working-class women who were the main beneficiaries'.<sup>69</sup> Arguably the family wage therefore 'embodied a monetary family allowance for women', which could also be interpreted as elevating the status of women's roles in the family to the status of the male breadwinner.<sup>70</sup> Hughes insists that the family wage 'recognised women's responsibility as guardians of the home' and 'promoted motherhood and housewifery as occupations deserving recognition and improved conditions'.<sup>71</sup> In addition, like the GSEC and the EWCA, the Guild continued to simultaneously oppose the marriage bar, demanded better wages for women's trades, and demanded assistance to ease unemployment affecting women.<sup>72</sup> The Guild's support for the 'family' or 'living' wage, which reinforced the breadwinner ideal, co-existed with demands for equal pay for equal work that 'acknowledged women's right to economic independence'.<sup>73</sup> As Hughes suggests, working-class female activists were prudent in their actions.<sup>74</sup>

The Guild's support of a system of 'children's' or 'family' allowances further highlights its class-based perspective. The central council was of the opinion that such allowances should be instituted by the state and financed by direct taxation in order to 'meet the needs of the people'.<sup>75</sup> It was also argued that this would provide an 'endowment for motherhood' which would make it unnecessary for mothers to work. Working-class women would therefore have a degree of economic freedom, which would also enhance their status as both wives and 'home workers'.<sup>76</sup> In this respect the Guild were supporting Eleanor Rathbone's vision, which the GSEC and the EWCA found 'controversial'.<sup>77</sup> The Guild's arguments for the implementation of family allowances therefore also illustrated a connection

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<sup>67</sup> Hughes, *A Rough Kind of 'Feminism'*, p. 47.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid, p. 149.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid, p. 171.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid, p. 148. As did the ILP and its women's sections.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid, p. 149.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid, p. 150.

<sup>75</sup> SCWG, *Thirty-eighth Annual Report*, CSW1/39/6/38, 1931-1932.

<sup>76</sup> Hughes, *A Rough Kind of 'Feminism'*, p. 176.

<sup>77</sup> See chapter three for further details.

with the feminist movement. Hughes suggests that its demands were ‘based on traditional arguments put forward by pre-war feminists and by the Family Endowment Society’. The Guild also positioned this ‘endowment of motherhood’ as protecting the welfare of children as ‘the highest infant death rate occurred when women went out to work’.<sup>78</sup> Again women’s roles as wives and especially mothers were emphasised as this had been in the support given to the family wage. This reflects the Guild’s perceived speciality within the Co-operative movement, and also the concerns of the guildwomen themselves, as the majority were working-class wives and mothers. By positioning the needs of guildwomen in relation to their special responsibility within the Co-operative movement as mothers, the Guild was attempting to raise the profile of this issue within the movement. However Hughes argues that the men of the Co-operative and labour movements ‘opposed monetary family endowment as this benefit was a wage subsidy’.<sup>79</sup>

The Guild’s campaign for the introduction of ‘mother’s’ pensions was largely motivated by concerns relating to the living standards of working-class women and their children, yet it also became aligned to the demands of the GSEC and the EWCA. Following the First World War the Guild suggested that such pensions would ‘provide for a healthy and useful life for all widows with children, or mothers whose family breadwinners had become incapacitated due to the war’.<sup>80</sup> It also intended that ‘the services of mothers to the community’ would be recognised by state provision of such pensions.<sup>81</sup> Again the status of the working-class motherhood was elevated by the Guild in this campaign. While the Government introduced a national scheme of widows’ pensions, the Guild, like the GSEC and the EWCA, protested against the fact that not all widows were eligible for pensions under the legislation provided, branding it ‘unjust and unsatisfactory’.<sup>82</sup> In 1928 the Guild deemed the Widows’ and Orphans Pensions Bill ‘totally inadequate for the needs of the people’ arguing that further reform was required, such as finding the ‘financial means to make it a non-contributory scheme’ and to include ‘all widows and orphans whose chief supporter is dead’.<sup>83</sup> It extended its demands in 1930, arguing that all widows and spinsters at the age of 55 should be considered in government legislation.<sup>84</sup> The inclusion of spinsters was notable as this strays from the Guild’s emphasis on motherhood as justification for eligibility for such pensions, and illustrates that this campaign was based on a belief in the equality of women as individuals as

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<sup>78</sup> SCWG, *Twenty-fourth Annual Report*, CSW1/39/6/24, 1917-1918.

<sup>79</sup> Hughes, *A Rough Kind of ‘Feminism’*, p. 176.

<sup>80</sup> SCWG, *Twenty-seventh Annual Report*, CSW1/39/6/27, 1920-1921.

<sup>81</sup> SCWG, *Twenty-ninth Annual Report*, CSW1/39/6/29, 1922-1923.

<sup>82</sup> SCWG, *Thirty-third and Thirty-fourth Annual Report*, CSW1/39/6/33-34, 1926-1927 - 1927-1928, and *Thirty-fifth Annual Report*, CSW1/39/6/35, 1928-1929. Women were not eligible for benefit under the current system unless they had children under fourteen.

<sup>83</sup> SCWG, *Thirty-sixth Annual Report*, CSW1/39/6/36, 1929-1930.

<sup>84</sup> SCWG, *Thirty-seventh Annual Report*, CSW1/39/6/37, 1930-1931.

well as mothers. It was in this respect that the Guild's demands were similar to those of the GSEC and the EWCA.

As stated, the Guild's demand for peace was largely influenced by its involvement in the Co-operative movement, and was an extremely prominent element of its political propaganda. The central council argued that war always 'brought in its train unemployment', increased costs of living, lowering of public morality and a 'general degradation of humanity'. It was 'no longer prepared to accept the idea of war as an impersonal force outside the human will'. War was 'man created' and it was argued that 'the intelligent and organised forces of women could kill war'.<sup>85</sup> Peace became a major theme in interwar feminism, with Hinton arguing that in the course of the 1920s pacifist ideas became more central in British politics, as there was a 'growing recognition that the war had solved nothing'.<sup>86</sup> Black also suggests that the relationship of women to violence, and especially to war, was an important part of the social feminist rationale.<sup>87</sup> However the increasing preoccupation of feminist organisations with pacifist and internationalist work has been considered as one cause in the decline of domestic feminism in the interwar years. This argument suggests that many women abandoned feminist activism in favour of promoting disarmament and the peaceful settlement of international disputes.<sup>88</sup> Yet Miller argues this interpretation fails to consider the feminist dimension of women's international work.<sup>89</sup> Internationalism was promoted by many women's organisations in the interwar period and before, especially in relation to pacifism. This was particularly true for the Guild, as internationalism was an essential component of Co-operation. The Guild's support of peace was also influenced by the Co-operative movement's analysis of world politics as illustrated in the central council's argument that

The weapons, which they had been told had been designed for their defence, were now being used by their rulers to secure domination for the wealthy classes, in order that these people might live in luxury and idleness while 90% of the people groaned under burdens they were almost unable to bear. This state of affairs would continue just so long as they continued to supply their oppressors with the physical forces that kept themselves in subjection.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> SCWG, *Twenty-seventh Annual Report*, CSW1/39/6/27, 1920-1921, also see J. Alberti, *Beyond Suffrage: Feminists in War and Peace, 1914-1928*, Macmillan, Houndsmills, Basingstoke, and Hampshire, 1989, p. 212.

<sup>86</sup> J. Hinton, *Protests and Visions: peace politics in twentieth-century Britain*, Radius/Century Hutchinson, London, 1989, p. 75.

<sup>87</sup> N. Black, 'The Mothers' International: The Women's Co-operative Guild and Feminist Pacifism', *Women's Studies International Forum*, Vol. 7, No. 6, p. 467.

<sup>88</sup> B. Harrison, *Prudent Revolutionaries: portraits of British Feminists between the wars*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1987, p. 7. This was not the case for the GSEC and the EWCA. While the executives and branches of both organisations accepted speakers from and supported the work of pacifist organisations such as the League of Nations Union and Women's Peace Crusade, with Miss Cornwall of the EWCA being particularly active in this field (see chapter six for further details), peace at no time featured prominently on the agenda of either organisation.

<sup>89</sup> C. Miller, '"Geneva – the Key to Equality": inter-war feminists and the League of Nations', *Women's History Review*, Vol. 3, No. 2, 1994, p. 219.

<sup>90</sup> SCWG, *Twenty-seventh Annual Report*, CSW1/39/6/27, 1920-1921.



Consequently it insisted that the ‘only hope for the future lay in the common people becoming united nationally and internationally’.<sup>91</sup>

The Guild’s belief in a ‘Co-operative Commonwealth’ of nations guided its demands for peace. Within Co-operative ideology this was viewed as an alternative democracy where capitalism, which was based on individualism, would be abolished in favour of a society built upon collectivism and where all people worked together for ‘the common good’. The central council was of the opinion that ‘each succeeding year the truth is becoming more convincing that only through the channels of international Co-operation will it be possible to secure International Peace’.<sup>92</sup> It closely followed the work of the Co-operative International Alliance, led by Sir William Maxton.<sup>93</sup> The central council considered this organisation to be ‘a great international body’ that was ‘laying the foundation of a new world wide federation of intelligent and free peoples’, which by mutual trading ‘would protect themselves against ignorance, aggression and economic despotism’.<sup>94</sup> The Guild also became affiliated to the Women’s International committee in 1922, the object of which was to ‘unite the Co-operative women of every country for the peace of the world; to unite every mother, every woman, every wife; and imbue them with the Co-operative spirit’.<sup>95</sup>

The Scottish Guild was also one of the founding members of the International Co-operative Women’s Guild in 1921.<sup>96</sup> It argued that the international congresses that it attended as a member of this organisation ‘led to a better understanding of what international Co-operation stood for’ and ‘strengthened the desire for international Co-operation and international peace among all guildwomen’.<sup>97</sup> At these congresses there was an emphasis on intensive education within the national guilds.<sup>98</sup> Consequently in 1924 ‘the International Co-operative Women’s Guild’ and ‘what women can do for peace’ were designated as ‘special subjects’ and thus the scope of the work of the Guild was broadened.<sup>99</sup> Two years later the president Mrs McNair again appealed to the guildwomen to do more for international peace and give ‘aid to those organisations that specialise in this work’.<sup>100</sup> Members of the central council were also encouraged to explain the Guild’s pledges for international peace and disarmament to the members when visiting branches and quarterly meetings, with it being

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid. The Guild’s belief in internationalism was further illustrated by its involvement in the International Co-operative Women’s Guild. For further details see chapter one, p. 24-25.

<sup>92</sup> SCWG, *Twenty-eighth Annual Report*, CSW1/39/6/28 1921-1922, and SCWG, *Minute Books of the Central Council*, CWS1/39/1/6, 7 January 1925, 4 October 1922.

<sup>93</sup> SCWG, *Twenty-seventh and Twenty-eighth Annual Report*, CSW1/39/6/27-28, 1920-1921 and 1921-1922.

<sup>94</sup> SCWG, *Twenty-seventh Annual Report*, CSW1/39/6/27, 1920-1921.

<sup>95</sup> SCWG, *Twenty-eighth Annual Report*, CSW1/39/6/28, 1921-1922, and *Thirtieth Annual Report*, CSW1/39/6/30, 1923-1924.

<sup>96</sup> For further details see chapter one.

<sup>97</sup> SCWG, *Minute Books of the Central Council*, CWS1/39/1/7, 10 September 1924.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid, CWS1/39/1/8, 31 August 1927.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid, CWS1/39/1/7, 8 August 1923, 30 July 1924.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid, CWS1/39/1/8, 30 June 1926.

suggested that this topic form the basis of discussions in branches.<sup>101</sup> Regular circular letters from the International Guild outlining points for discussion, pamphlets, reports and other propaganda material relating to disarmament were essential in providing educational material.<sup>102</sup>

In addition the Guild supported the work of the League of Nations in encouraging 'international arbitration' or 'diplomatic negotiation' as a method of settling disputes between nations.<sup>103</sup> A belief in the 'absolute necessity' for 'an international body such as the League of Nations' was shared by many women's organisations in the interwar period as a result of the death and destruction caused by the First World War.<sup>104</sup> Alberti suggests that the League of Nations became the focus for the hopes of many people in the 1920s, with Hinton describing it as 'at the heart of the new pacifist establishment'.<sup>105</sup> In 1927 the Guild even passed a resolution calling 'upon the working peoples throughout the world to use their utmost influence in making the League of Nations fully effective'.<sup>106</sup> The central council accepted deputations from the League of Nations Union on several occasions, at which the latter circulated pamphlets. As a result of these meetings guildwomen were encouraged to attend lectures and public meetings.<sup>107</sup>

A variety of other pacifist organisations were also supported by the Guild, with the Glasgow branch of the Women's International League (WIL) and Women's Peace Crusade (WPC) being the most notable. The former was established in 1915 by Helen Crawford and Agnes Dollan in an attempt to show solidarity with the women of other European countries who were also opposed to the First World War.<sup>108</sup> In June 1916 the WIL organised a women's peace conference in Glasgow, with the Women's Peace Crusade being formed a year later in 1917 as a result.<sup>109</sup> While the Guild wished the WPC 'every success' and 'sympathised with its aims', it would appear that its relationship with the Women's International League was more substantial.<sup>110</sup> The Guild accepted speakers from the WIL to address branches and also

<sup>101</sup> Ibid, CWS1/39/1/8-9, 8 September 1926, 8 June 1932.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid, 25 January 1928, 8 May 1928, 4 November 1931, 2 December 1931, 27 December 1933.

<sup>103</sup> SCWG, *Thirty-fourth Annual Report*, CSW1/39/6/34, 1927-1928. SCWG, *Minute Books of the Central Council*, CWS1/39/1/6, 6 October 1920.

<sup>104</sup> SCWG, *Minute Books of the Central Council*, CWS1/39/1/8, 9 September 1925.

<sup>105</sup> Alberti, *Beyond Suffrage*, p. 191, and Hinton, *Protests and Visions*, p. 75.

<sup>106</sup> SCWG, *Thirty-third Annual Report*, CSW1/39/6/33, 1926-1927.

<sup>107</sup> SCWG, *Minute Books of the Central Council*, CWS1/39/1/7-9, 9 January 1924, 6 February 1924, 4 March 1925, 7 October 1925, 19 May 1926, 25 January 1928, 29 March 1930, and 3 May 1933.

<sup>108</sup> Both of these individuals played an equally important role in the organisation of rent strikes in the same year. See chapter six for further details relating especially to Dollan's later career as a Glasgow town councillor. The rent strikes will be discussed below.

<sup>109</sup> Mary Barbour was enlisted at this stage, she was also a prominent rent striker and later a Town Councillor for Fairfield in Govan. The WPC was pro-active in its opposition to war, holding street meetings in working-class areas of industrial towns and cities throughout the central belt of Scotland. On at least one occasion it was reported that the WPC disrupted a meeting of Glasgow Town Council by distributing anti-war leaflets whilst it was in session. Glasgow Caledonian University, First World War Peace Movement, Radical Glasgow, <http://www.gcal.ac.uk/radicalglasgow/chapters/ww1.html>

<sup>110</sup> SCWG, *Thirty-sixth Annual Report*, CSW1/39/6/36, 1929-1930.

co-operated in organising the signature of an 'International Declaration on World Disarmament', which involved circulating forms around quarterly meetings.<sup>111</sup> The WIL also organised a conference of all women's societies working for international peace in Glasgow in 1928, with two members of the central council, Mrs Wilson and Mrs Hendry, representing the Guild.<sup>112</sup>

One of the Guild's main motivations for the promotion of peace was the protection of children and the future generation. The central council 'wished the government to give some guarantee that when they were reared the young men would not be taken away and slaughtered'.<sup>113</sup> A major component of 'what women could do for peace' included 'instilling into the children a hatred of warfare' as well as informing opinion against war among the mothers of the nation.<sup>114</sup> Mothers were given special responsibility, as they were seen as essential in teaching their children the ideals of peace and were encouraged 'not to force their sons to enlist in the armed forces because of their economic conditions'.<sup>115</sup> This provides support for Black's assertion that social feminism supplied distinctive activities for women in relation to peace, because 'as mothers and potential mothers' women could direct themselves to issues related to child-rearing and socialisation, and to the demilitarisation of the influences of children'.<sup>116</sup>

Consequently, guildwomen were advised to co-operate with teachers and ministers to achieve world peace. This involved a campaign for the institution of a Peace day in all primary and secondary schools where 'the spirit of comradeship and fellowship would be instilled into the hearts of children'.<sup>117</sup> The Guild also drafted a veto on the military training of youth believing that 'education freed from any element of militarism should be increasingly directed towards training in world citizenship'. Therefore boys should be instructed in citizenship, international peace and harmony, instead of war.<sup>118</sup> Similarly the Guild demanded the withdrawal from schools of all the 'old history books' that contained subtle war propaganda.<sup>119</sup> Its campaign for film censorship was also related to its belief in peace, and it

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<sup>111</sup> SCWG, *Minute Books of the Central Council*, CWS1/39/1/6 and 9, 4 December 1918, 25 June 1930, and 13 August 1930. Mrs Trotter of the Glasgow branch of the WIL gave addresses to the St. Georges' Guild on such topics as 'Women Peace Makers, Past and Present' and 'Women of Other Countries'. St. Georges, Glasgow, *Women's Guild Minute Books*, Glasgow Regional Archives, CWS1/33/21/65, 29 November 1923, 12 February 1925, and 14 January 1926. This Guild also received speakers from the Glasgow branch of the League of Nations Union, all of whom gave an account of the League's work and appealed for the members support. St. Georges, Glasgow, *ibid*, 23 October 1924, 19 November 1925, and 22 November 1928.

<sup>112</sup> SCWG, *Minute Books of the Central Council*, CWS1/39/1/8, 23 May 1928.

<sup>113</sup> SCWG, *Twenty-fourth Annual Report*, CSW1/39/6/24, 1917-1918.

<sup>114</sup> SCWG, *Minute Books of the Central Council*, CWS1/39/1/7, 8 October 1924.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid*, CWS1/39/1/9, 30 August 1933.

<sup>116</sup> Black, 'The Mothers' International', p. 472.

<sup>117</sup> SCWG, *Minute Books of the Central Council*, CWS1/39/1/8-9, September 1925, 17 June 1932.

<sup>118</sup> SCWG, *Thirty-eighth Annual Report*, CSW1/39/6/38, 1931-1932.

<sup>119</sup> SCWG, *Thirty-ninth Annual Report*, CSW1/39/6/39, 1932-1933.

called for the government to prohibit the showing of 'those pictures which glorify war' giving 'a false impression of war to young people'.<sup>120</sup>

Black argues that for many women's organisations such pacifist activities were 'authentically feminist in origin' but 'remained at best indirect and likely to be slow in their effects'.<sup>121</sup> She suggests that what was lacking was 'anything specifically feminist that could tap the structural causes of war', or 'something that was truly international rather than merely related to women, or to conditions inside each nation state'.<sup>122</sup> She argues that for the English Guild this was provided by the influence of Co-operative ideology as an 'international force', which gave guildwomen an 'understanding of the structural bases of violence and inequality'. Black also states that 'Co-operation's collaborative notion of society and social change was thoroughly compatible with social feminism'.<sup>123</sup> Thus for the English Guild feminism, pacifism and Co-operation formed 'a marvellous combination for women'.<sup>124</sup> For Black the English Guild's pacifism demonstrated the central core of its beliefs, representing the possibility of women taking active measures against war by doing something close to their own experience and expertise.<sup>125</sup> This was also true of the Guild in Scotland. The use of women's role as mothers, and thus influence in educating their children, was therefore empowering in enabling women to use their own experience to oppose war. Guildwomen's involvement in the International Guild also gave them a sense of unity with Co-operative women in other countries. This provided what the Guild termed 'a solution to the problem of ignorance', which it considered to be 'a cause of conflict between nations'.

The Guild's political propaganda was therefore largely influenced by its involvement in the Co-operative movement, with each of the legislative reforms considered above being affected to some extent by Co-operative ideology. However this did not adversely affect its feminism. Not only is such an assumption reliant on a very narrow definition of what constitutes feminist activity, but it also implies that the Guild passively accepted Co-operative ideology as propagated by the largely male leaders of the movement. The Guild displayed its feminism by renegotiating the discourses available within Co-operative ideology, thereby empowering its members. It supported such ideologies as the breadwinner model on its own

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<sup>120</sup> SCWG, *Thirty-eighth Annual Report*, CSW1/39/6/38, 1931-1932. The central council also argued 'the guildwomen can do a great deal to create the demand for a higher standard of pictures shown in local picture houses'. Thus there were similarities between its campaign and those of the GSEC and the EWCA. SCWG, *Minute Books of the Central Council*, CWS1/39/1/9, 13 June 1930.

<sup>121</sup> Black, 'The Mothers' International', p. 473.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid. Vellacott questions this, arguing that the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom were a feminist organisation. She argues that this organisations assertion of a 'right of women to a say in the destiny in the world' is comparable to feminist struggles for legal equality or equal educational and employment opportunities. J. Vellacott, 'A Place for Pacifism and Transnationalism in Feminist Theory: the early work of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom', *Women's History Review*, Vol. 2, No. 1, 1993, p. 49.

<sup>123</sup> Black, *ibid.*, p. 475.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid, p. 473.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid, p. 475.

terms. This was illustrated by the emphasis on the importance of motherhood in the demands for the legislative reforms discussed, which elevated the status of the working-class housewife. These attempts to secure legislation that would improve the lives of its working-class members, and again elevate the status of working-class housewives, also illustrates the Guild's feminism. The establishment of family allowances, the improvement of widows' pensions or even the further enfranchisement of working-class women, would provide recognition of working-class women's responsibility and duties within the home and family. The achievement of international peace on the other hand would be an acknowledgement of women's influence as mothers in educating their children against war.

### *Social Propaganda*

The second category of campaign supported by the Guild was what it termed 'social propaganda'. This encompassed many issues that were related to improving conditions for working-class women and their families. The most prominent in the interwar years were increased and improved housing and greater provision of maternity services. These were issues also prioritised by the GSEC and the EWCA, with there being some evidence of co-operation with the Guild in these campaigns.<sup>126</sup> However the Guild rarely sought the assistance of these organisations in its own campaigns. As suggested, this was largely attributable to its working-class roots and involvement in Co-operative politics, which ensured that the Guild was more likely to work with other working-class women's organisations.

Adequate housing provision for the working classes had been a concern of the Guild from its inception. The need for housing in Glasgow was widespread and urgent with it being estimated by the town clerk in 1913 that 40,000 people lived in 'inhabitable houses' and that many other dwellings were 'in a state of structural disrepair, ruinous and should be demolished'.<sup>127</sup> As a result of little public or private investment in the housing stock of the city in the pre-war period, accompanied by rising in-migration at the beginning of the First World War, the demand for accommodation increased dramatically. Landlords took this opportunity to increase rents, which tenants were not prepared to accept. Rent strikes occurred in working-class areas of the city. These protests, which have become popularly associated with the beginnings of 'Red Clydeside', are often attributed to the creation of the Labour Party Housing Committee, in which all of the trade unions and Co-operative organisations in Glasgow were involved.<sup>128</sup> However the success of the rent strikes can be more accurately accredited to the

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<sup>126</sup> See chapter three for further details.

<sup>127</sup> Quoted in J. Butt, 'Working-Class Housing in Glasgow, 1900-1939', in I. MacDougall, *Essays in Scottish Labour History*, John Donald, Glasgow, 1978, p. 144. For further details of housing in Glasgow see chapter three.

<sup>128</sup> There is much debate relating to social unrest and the possibility of revolution in the historiography pertaining to political developments in Glasgow in this period, especially from the 1980s and 1990s. See for

work of self-organised groups of women who came together to protect themselves and each other from hardship.<sup>129</sup>

Working-class women established local housing associations before the war to protect working-class families from unscrupulous landlords, with these organisations coming into their own in 1915. Protests began in Kinning Park and South Govan, with women refusing to pay increased rents while their husbands, fathers and brothers were away fighting in the war. Guildwomen were prominently involved in these strikes, as the Co-operative movement was particularly strong in these areas.<sup>130</sup> All women irrespective of their political allegiances, class or religion were called upon to prevent the poverty in working-class homes that would be caused by rent increases. Housing was positioned as an issue above party loyalties, as it was argued that only women could appreciate the necessity of good housing. Melling states that ‘patriots and pacifists, Catholics and Protestants, and Tories and socialists’ were all united in a common cause.<sup>131</sup> Some of the women involved in this struggle remained in political life and continued to campaign for material improvements to working-class living conditions, of particular note are Mary Barbour, Helen Crawford, Agnes Dollan and Mary Laird.<sup>132</sup> As a result of the rent strikes in Glasgow, and other industrial areas in Britain, the Rent Act of 1915 was passed. Butt argues that this was part of a Liberal policy ‘to kill socialism with kindness’.<sup>133</sup> Yet this measure simply fuelled further working-class demands for government intervention in the provision of housing, and allowed the Labour Party to extend its influence and popularity.<sup>134</sup>

Throughout the interwar years the legacy of this action was fiercely protected throughout Scotland by the Guild’s demands for the continuation of rent restrictions. This began in 1920 when the Guild opposed the Rent Restriction Amendment Act and sent resolutions to the Prime Minister, Sir Donald McLean, Mr Adamson MP, Mr William Graham MP, and Mr Neil McLean MP.<sup>135</sup> The president Mrs MacDonald argued that as the passing of this amendment would result in increased house rents, this would cause great hardship on a large number of the poorer and casual workers.<sup>136</sup> The opposition to rent increases was whole-

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example T. Brotherstone, ‘Does Red Clydeside really matter any more?’, in R. Duncan and A. McIvor, *Militant Workers: Labour and Class Conflict on the Clyde*, John Donald, Edinburgh, 1992, I. McLean, *The Legend of Red Clydeside*, John Donald, Edinburgh, 1983, and A. McKinlay and R. Morris (eds), *The ILP on Clydeside, 1893-1932: from Foundations to Disintegration*, MUP, Manchester, 1991.

<sup>129</sup> J. Melling, ‘Clydeside rent struggles and the making of Labour Politics in Scotland, 1900-39’ in R. Roger (Ed.), *Scottish Housing in the Twentieth Century*, Leicester University Press, 1989, p. 67 and p. 79.

<sup>130</sup> In fact the first Guild in Scotland was formed in Kinning Park as discussed in chapter one.

<sup>131</sup> Yet class proved to be divisive in the interwar years in regard to housing as will be discussed. Also see chapter three.

<sup>132</sup> Melling, ‘Clydeside rent struggles and the making of Labour Politics in Scotland, 1900-39’, p. 79. See chapter six for further information on these individuals.

<sup>133</sup> As Quoted in Butt, ‘Working-Class Housing in Glasgow, 1900-1939’, p. 148.

<sup>134</sup> Melling, ‘Clydeside rent struggles and the making of Labour Politics in Scotland, 1900-39’, p. 69 and 79.

<sup>135</sup> SCWG, *Minute Books of the Central Council*, CWS1/39/1/6, 20 February 1920. The latter three were Labour MPs.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid*, 4 August 1920.

heartedly welcomed by the membership, with MacDonald praising the ‘vigorous protest being organised in certain districts against the increase in rents’.<sup>137</sup>

The campaign resurfaced in the late 1920s with the government’s attempts to decontrol rents and introduce protective legislation for tenants.<sup>138</sup> Again the Guild responded by passing a resolution supporting the extension of the Rent Restrictions Act, ‘until such time as an adequate supply of houses is available to meet the needs of the people’.<sup>139</sup> This was sent to all of the necessary government representatives including the Secretary of State for Scotland. The Guild took part in deputations to the Secretary in co-operation with the Scottish National Housing Association and Glasgow Housing Association (GHA) to state the case of the working women.<sup>140</sup> Notably the GHA had been formed by the rent strikers and the Guild’s co-operation with this organisation in the 1920s therefore illustrates continuity in the activism of working-class women in the Glasgow area. It also highlights a close bond with other women of the labour movement in the demand for affordable rents.

In 1932 the campaign was again reinvigorated by resolutions demanding that ‘in view of grave unemployment and low wages prevalent among the working classes’ the government should introduce legislation for the immediate return to pre-war rents. It was suggested that until sufficient houses had been built to provide accommodation for the people, adequate protection should be given to tenants against expulsion from their homes.<sup>141</sup> This resolution remained a standard feature of the Guild’s agenda in the 1930s and became especially prominent as economic circumstances deteriorated further.<sup>142</sup>

The protest against rent increases was accompanied by demands for improved housing conditions for the working classes. The Guild drafted resolutions, passed at each annual congress, which called upon the government to assume responsibility for providing better housing, and give assistance to local authorities to enable them to build new houses and deal adequately with the slums.<sup>143</sup> The central council welcomed the Wheatley Acts of 1924 stating that such reforms were urgently required, and that ‘the labour government were desirous of remedying these evils’.<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>137</sup> Ibid, 1 September 1920.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid, CWS1/39/1/8, 15 June 1927.

<sup>139</sup> SCWG, *Thirty-fourth Annual Report*, CSW1/39/6/34, 1927-1928.

<sup>140</sup> SCWG, *Minute Books of the Central Council*, CWS1/39/1/8, 28 August 1929, 25 September 1929.

<sup>141</sup> SCWG, *Thirty-eighth Annual Report*, CSW1/39/6/38, 1931-1932.

<sup>142</sup> SCWG, *Thirty-eighth – Forty-fourth Annual Report*, CSW1/39/6/38-44, 1931-1932 – 1937-1938. The Kinning Park branch proposed the resolution on rent restriction in 1933, again illustrating continuity in the concerns of guildwomen at a local level

<sup>143</sup> SCWG, *Twenty-fourth - Forty-fourth Annual Report*, CSW1/39/6/24-44, 1917-1918 – 1937-1938.

<sup>144</sup> SCWG, *Minute Books of the Central Council*, CWS1/39/1/7, 6 February 1924. John Wheatley, one of the infamous ‘Red Clydesiders’, tackled the housing problem by extending the subsidies of the 1923 housing act, which provided for municipal construction. He also removed the condition that the local authority had to prove the inadequacy of private enterprise in building houses. The Wheatley Acts reflected the Labour government’s commitment to the maintenance of rent controls and the improvement of working-class housing, however, as discussed in chapter three there are different interpretations of its success.

Yet, in 1935 overcrowding remained a major problem in Glasgow with it being estimated that 100,000 houses were required.<sup>145</sup> As a result the city council adopted a policy of 'slum clearance' to address this problem, abandoning its programme of 'general needs provision'.<sup>146</sup> It was the council's aim to quickly and cheaply re-house families living in overcrowded slum housing. While the council's emphasis on slum clearance can be viewed as limited in scope, as it replaced an emphasis on the provision of good quality municipal housing, it was welcomed by the Guild. In 1930 the president Mrs Hardstaff also stated that she was 'pleased to see that the government were introducing a Slum Clearance Bill in Parliament'.<sup>147</sup> Thus the Guild even approved of the relatively limited programme of slum clearance adopted by the government and municipalities, as this was perceived to be an attempt to improve housing conditions for the working classes and was better than inaction, or worse still, a reduction of existing subsidies.

Poor housing conditions were considered by the central council to be 'responsible for much of the misery of a large number of people', and it was argued that 'the creation of a strong public opinion was necessary if improvement was to be attained'.<sup>148</sup> Therefore, like the GSEC and the EWCA, emphasis was placed on informing the public of the reforms that were required. In order to achieve these aims the Guild worked with a number of working-class organisations in the campaign for improved housing. The Glasgow Labour Party Housing Association received the support and co-operation of the Guild who attending its meetings and conferences.<sup>149</sup> Similarly the Guild also sent delegates to the annual conferences of the Scottish Labour Housing Association.<sup>150</sup> The Association of Co-operative, Labour and Trade Union Women, also provided the Guild with copies of rent rebate schemes and leaflets explaining housing subsidies.<sup>151</sup> In addition the Guild supported the Scottish Council for Women's Trades on a deputation to Glasgow town council to discuss the increased provision of municipal housing.<sup>152</sup> The Guild's co-operation with other working-class organisations in the campaign for improved housing was not surprising given that many of these women's organisations' members would have undoubtedly shared the Guild's concerns relating to the poor standard of housing many working-class families occupied. However, the Guild did on one occasion co-operate with 'outside' organisations in relation to housing. In 1919, following

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<sup>145</sup> N. J. Morgan, '£8 cottages for Glasgow citizens' Innovations in municipal house-building in Glasgow in the inter-war years', in R. Roger (Ed.), *Scottish Housing in the Twentieth Century*, Leicester University Press, 1989, p. 126.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid. The Progressive council in Edinburgh adopted a similar policy of slum clearance as a solution to overcrowding. However it did not provide municipal housing to the same extent as the council in Glasgow, rather relying on private contractors to meet the needs of Edinburgh's population. See chapter three for further discussion.

<sup>147</sup> SCWG, *Minute Books of the Central Council*, CWS1/39/1/9, 29 March 1930.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid, CWS1/39/1/8, 28 September 1927.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid, CWS1/39/1/6-7, 15 February 1918, 1 October 1919, 3 October 1923.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid, CWS1/39/1/8, 29 December 1926, 28 December 1927, 25 December 1929.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid, CWS1/39/1/9, 4 July 1934.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid, CWS1/39/1/6, 6 November 1918.



the Report on Scottish Housing, the Guild attended a conference on housing held by the Scottish Board of Health, at which the GSEC and the EWCA were also represented.<sup>153</sup>

The growth of socialism in urban Scotland was based upon the 'campaign for social justice', which often prioritised improvements in the living standards of working-class families. The Labour Party gained early support in Glasgow, and thus election to the city council, through the promotion of housing reform as one of its main policies.<sup>154</sup> Yet, Hughes suggests that in interwar Glasgow it was the ILP rather than the Labour that was the 'dominant political force'. It was often described as the 'social conscience' of the Labour Party, with Hughes arguing that this 'may have influenced women's experiences of the Labour Party in this region', and especially the attitudes of the Scottish Co-operative Women's Guild 'with whom it had links'.<sup>155</sup> Indeed she suggests that the ILP encouraged working-class female activists such as guildwomen 'to forward 'women's issues', which she argues they continued to do throughout the 1920s and early 1930s.<sup>156</sup> The largely male leadership of the Co-operative movement similarly encouraged women to take responsibility for such 'women's issues' as housing, health and education, with these becoming women's established spheres of activity. While this strategy could be viewed as restrictive, and was on occasion, it also gave the Guild a platform and voice within the Co-operative movement and broader sphere of labour politics. As Hughes suggests, the politics of such female working-class activists was 'pragmatic' and 'determined by the concerns of their everyday lives', with 'women's issues' such as housing featuring prominently.<sup>157</sup> Therefore working-class female activists, such as the Guild, were able to successfully exploit this emphasis on municipal socialism, which overlapped with such 'women's issues' to voice their concerns.<sup>158</sup>

It was also a common perception in the interwar years, and before, that housing conditions had a direct effect upon the health of the population. The central council of the Guild considered this to be especially true in relation to child welfare. It argued that it was difficult to nurse and care for children satisfactorily in small, overcrowded housing.<sup>159</sup> Similarly Lee argues that the high room density of Scottish homes was viewed as a significant factor in the nations comparatively high rates of infant mortality in the interwar years.<sup>160</sup> As well as the improvement of such housing conditions, the Guild also argued that increasing the provision of maternity services for mothers would also help to solve the problem of infant mortality. In advocating this measure the Guild adopted the Government's policy of

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<sup>153</sup> Ibid, 5 November 1919.

<sup>154</sup> Melling, 'Clydeside rent struggles and the making of Labour Politics in Scotland, 1900-39', p. 62.

<sup>155</sup> Hughes, *A Rough Kind of 'Feminism'*, p. 126.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid, p. 144

<sup>158</sup> Ibid, p. 126. This was also the case in the Co-operative movement. Such strategies were employed throughout urban Scotland in areas where the Co-operative movement was influential.

<sup>159</sup> SCWG, *Twenty-fourth Annual Report*, CSW1/39/6/24, 1917-1918.

<sup>160</sup> C. H. Lee, 'Regional Inequalities in Infant Mortality in Britain, 1861-1971: Patterns and Hypotheses', *Population Studies*, Vol. 45, No. 1, March 1991, p. 65.

medicalising the process of childbirth, as did the GSEC and the EWCA.<sup>161</sup> The similarity in the policies of these organisations is further substantiated by the Guild's appeal to national efficiency. In 1918 the president argued that 'the greatest and grandest subject which women could take up was the care of maternity and child life, for on that principally did the weal or woe of the nation depend'.<sup>162</sup> This assertion of the importance of women as mothers in the future of the nation, not only reflects the Guild's belief and use of the ideology of motherhood, but also mirrors the strategies employed by the GSEC and the EWCA.<sup>163</sup>

The Scottish Guild's maternity campaign can be roughly divided into three stages, though there was a degree of overlap. Immediately following the First World War it worked to consolidate the gains that had been made before and during the war, which culminated in the 1918 Maternity and Child welfare Act. In the late 1920s, like the GSEC and the EWCA, the Guild argued that the powers that the 1918 Act had given local authorities were not being used to their full capacity.<sup>164</sup> It was its aim to pressure these authorities into fully adopting this Act and all of its proposed measures, thereby realising its full potential. Its demands included maternity and child welfare centres and a system of home helps. Finally from 1928 and throughout the 1930s the Guild's attention was increasingly drawn to the high rates of maternal mortality that had persisted and grown throughout the period.<sup>165</sup>

The Guild's maternity campaign followed its set campaigning procedure, which was rigorously carried out. The central council designated maternity a 'special subject', consequently each branch received lectures from district and sectional guild-trained speakers on this subject, preparing members for involvement in the campaign. Pamphlets were also obtained from the NUSEC and issued to the branches by the central council. The Guild followed this education by sending deputations to the appropriate authorities and individuals, as well as suggesting that guildwomen write letters of protest to their local MPs and councillors. Finally, guildwomen were again encouraged to stand as candidates in national and local elections, as this would allow them to promote issues of importance to working-class women such as improved maternity care.

As stated the campaign began in 1918 with the demand that 'there must be maternity centres, where mothers would get that care that they could not get in their own homes'. The central council also stated that 'it was essential also to have a very careful watching and visitation scheme' with it now being 'possible to have in every town baby clinics, where

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<sup>161</sup> See chapter three for further details of the arguments relating to infant mortality and the government's proposed solutions.

<sup>162</sup> SCWG, *Twenty-fourth Annual Report*, CSW1/39/6/24, 1917-1918.

<sup>163</sup> Again see chapter three for discussion of the strategies employed by the GSEC and the EWCA with regard to the importance of women as 'mothers of the nation'.

<sup>164</sup> For further details of the campaigns of the GSEC, EWCA and NUSEC see chapter three.

<sup>165</sup> Again this mirrors the concerns of the GSEC, the EWCA and broader feminist movement, as illustrated by the NUSEC.

doctors could give careful attention to the children'.<sup>166</sup> The problem of infant mortality was explicitly addressed through such demands, with the president, Mrs MacDonald, explaining in 1918 that it was estimated that an eighth of all children born in England and Wales died before their first birthday, with this proportion 'being roughly the same' in Scotland.<sup>167</sup> She also argued that this was exacerbated by the nation's declining birth rate, which reiterates the contemporary demographic fears present in the British public consciousness.<sup>168</sup> At the beginning of its campaign the Guild also followed the Government's lead in prioritising the prevention of infant mortality, with the provision of pre-natal clinics and maternity hospitals being seen as a solution.<sup>169</sup> Yet, it did suggest that such institutions would be beneficial for the health of new mothers as well. The Guild may have both exploited these demographic fears, and taken account of the priority given to infant mortality, in its campaign, in order to ensure improvements for both babies and significantly, their working-class mothers.

The Co-operative movement shared, and possibly influenced, or were influenced by, the Guild's concern for child welfare. In 1918 the editor of *the Scottish Co-operator* argued that 'the problems of child welfare are beginning to receive some of the attention which their importance demands'.<sup>170</sup> In outlining the benefits of the Maternity and Child Welfare Act of 1918, he stated that the local authority was to be charged with the proper care of children up to five years, after which time the school boards would look after them. It was significant that little reference was made to the improvements for women contained in this act. Instead the editor argued that 'such legislation indicated that the nation was awakening to the value of child life, which was the nation's greatest asset'.<sup>171</sup> Therefore the Co-operative movement largely shared the government's view of infant mortality. The editor insisted that 'the health of mothers and children' was 'at the root of social improvement'.<sup>172</sup> Thus, even where the health of mothers was considered, this was largely in connection with their children. While the 'problems involved' were considered 'numerous and complicated', he argued that some may be solved by 'maternity benefit, the feeding of mothers and children, housing, medical services, health visitors, welfare schemes, and a national institute of maternal and child welfare'.<sup>173</sup>

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<sup>166</sup> SCWG, *Twenty-fourth Annual Report*, CSW1/39/6/24, 1917-1918. This statement was overly optimistic. In 1933 only 8,628 infants and 1,491 toddlers attended Glasgow Council's child welfare centres regularly. Yet its home visitation scheme was more successful. With the aid of health visitors and voluntary visitors, approximately 18,000 children were visited each year, generally six times a year. In 1933 84,283 visits were made to children of all ages. Corporation of Glasgow, Public Health Department, *General Statements, Maternity and Child Welfare Scheme*, D-HE-1/1/2, 1933.

<sup>167</sup> SCWG, *Twenty-fifth Annual Report*, CSW1/39/6/25, 1918-1919.

<sup>168</sup> See chapter three for further discussion.

<sup>169</sup> SCWG, *Twenty-fifth Annual Report*, CSW1/39/6/25, 1918-1919.

<sup>170</sup> SC, 8 February 1918, front page.

<sup>171</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>172</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 93.

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*

The editor of *The Scottish Co-operator* also stated that these subjects were ‘sufficient to supply texts for papers and discussion for the Co-operative Women’s Guild for a long time’, and he ‘hoped that they will take them up in real earnest’. He also suggested that guildwomen were not to be content with ‘speaking about them’ but were to ‘urge the local authorities and institutions to do their duty’.<sup>174</sup> Therefore the responsibility for child welfare was placed firmly in the hands of the Guild. Given the Guild’s emphasis on the importance of motherhood as a justification for its increasing involvement and representation within the Co-operative movement, which led to its specialising in forwarding ‘women’s issues’, this was not surprising. Indeed the Guild positioned itself within the movement as ‘guardians of the race’, thereby simultaneously elevating the status of its members as mothers, and exploiting contemporary demographic fears, which were shared by the labour movement. Hughes suggests that this strategy of exploiting ‘concerns over the quantity and quality of the race’ was employed by other working-class female activists, and enabled them to publicise and possibly gain support for their campaigns that would benefit women.<sup>175</sup> She argues that this was successful and undoubtedly contributed to ‘the extension of maternal and child welfare schemes’.<sup>176</sup>

In the second stage of its campaign the Guild began to argue for improvements to existing pre and postnatal facilities for working-class women, which included the optimum use of the 1918 Maternity and Child Welfare Act. In 1928 it also passed a resolution urging the Ministry of Health ‘to take such steps as will lead to the establishment in every district of a complete maternity service for the protection of motherhood’. In proposing the resolution, which was passed unanimously, Mrs Hunter of the central council insisted that ‘motherhood was still the most dangerous of dangerous trades’.<sup>177</sup> This resolution also insisted that ‘whatever is possible *shall be done* to tackle the vital task of lessening the risks of motherhood’.<sup>178</sup> This proposed ‘complete maternity service’ would have had direct and far ranging implications for working-class women. Its establishment would enable women to receive health care where previously there had been none, and would ensure that women were able to seek advice on their pregnancies.

Fundamental to this complete service was the establishment of a system of home helps.<sup>179</sup> Jessie Stephen argued that the government should ‘assist the municipalities in establishing a corps of mother’s helps, to be sent where they are so sorely needed’.<sup>180</sup> She

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<sup>174</sup> Ibid, p. 93.

<sup>175</sup> Hughes, *A Rough Kind of ‘Feminism’*, p. 157 and 170.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid, p. 177.

<sup>177</sup> SCWG, *Thirty-fifth Annual Report*, CSW1/39/6/35, 1928-1929, p. 22.

<sup>178</sup> SC, ‘Woman’s Corner’, 9 June 1928, p. 626.

<sup>179</sup> The EWCA also prioritised the establishment of a system of home helps to ease the burdens placed on working-class mothers after childbirth. See chapter three for further details.

<sup>180</sup> SC, ‘Women’s Page’, 12 May 1928, p. 514. Stephen was a prominent member of the ILP, which illustrates the connection between the Guild and the women of the ILP.

insisted that there was no 'sense of talking about our C3 population, and the terrible mortality among working-class mothers in childbirth, if we are not prepared to deal with the causes'.<sup>181</sup> Stephen insisted that there should be 'less of the sentiment tosh about 'dear old mother', and instead the government should prioritise the 'lives and well being of our mothers' over the cost of a system of home helps, which 'would not be tremendous'.<sup>182</sup> However, Mary Barbour pointed out that such a scheme was already operating under the Glasgow Corporation.<sup>183</sup> She was instrumental in the establishment of this scheme in 1924 and had 'visualised every harassed mother taking advantage of such help even although she was asked to contribute a small payment towards the cost'.<sup>184</sup> Yet, Barbour was 'sadly disappointed by the slow development', attributing this to 'prejudices and social customs' which were 'hard to break down'.<sup>185</sup> Consequently she stated that only seventeen mothers took advantage of the service in 1924, and while this improved two years later, increasing to 107, she was 'far from satisfied with the measure of support'.<sup>186</sup> Thus Barbour appealed to the Guild and its members to support the scheme. Possibly as a result, 249 mothers used the service in 1932.<sup>187</sup>

The Guild also co-operated with the International Guild in the second stage of its campaign. In 1928 the latter launched an enquiry to determine what provision was made for the care of mothers in a variety of countries, with special reference to the work of the Co-operative movement.<sup>188</sup> Its aim was the establishment of a League of Nations inquiry into maternity and child welfare.<sup>189</sup> It recommended that each national Guild encourage the government in its country to support such an enquiry. The international Guild also suggested that each national Guild should seek the co-operation of other women's organisations on this question. While the Scottish Guild agreed to obtain statistics relating to infant and maternal mortality from the medical officers of Edinburgh and Glasgow, it did not contact the GSEC or the EWCA. A year later the inquiry was completed and a petition on behalf of all the national guilds was sent to the League of Nations and International Labour Office.<sup>190</sup>

In addition the Guild was reluctant to become involved in fundraising for maternity hospitals, unlike the EWCA. In 1921 it declined to officially support and appeal to raise

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<sup>181</sup> Ibid.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid.

<sup>183</sup> Barbour notes that 'this and many other much needed schemes to assist working-class mothers' were the 'main planks' of her programme when she entered the Glasgow Town Council in 1920. *SC*, 'Women's Page', 19 May 1928, p. 542. See chapter six for an account of her work on the council.

<sup>184</sup> Barbour states that 'the home helps are all specially picked for the work, and are supervised by our own inspector of midwives', with there being 'many applicants for work of this description'. The charge was 'made according to the income of the home where the help is employed' and was usually 5s per day for ten days. *SC*, 'Women's Page', 19 May 1928, p. 542.

<sup>185</sup> See chapter three for further discussion of the reasons why home helps were not popular among working-class women.

<sup>186</sup> *SC*, 'Women's Page', 19 May 1928, p.

<sup>187</sup> Corporation of Glasgow, Public Health Department, *General Statements, Maternity and Child Welfare Scheme*, D-HE-1/1/2, 1933.

<sup>188</sup> SCWG, *Minute Books of the Central Council*, CWS1/39/1/8, 31 October 1928.

<sup>189</sup> Ibid, 26 June 1929.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid, 28 August 1929 and 27 November 1929.

money by the Royal Maternity and Women's Hospital, although the secretary was instructed to reply that some branches and individuals had already subscribed.<sup>191</sup> In 1929 the central council also decided to 'take no action' in relation to an appeal from the Glasgow Maternity Hospital that the Guild take a stall at a fundraising bazaar.<sup>192</sup> Admittedly, the Guild's charity efforts in this regard were concentrated in its work for the Co-operative Convalescent homes and especially Airdmhor rest home for mothers and babies.<sup>193</sup> Nevertheless, two years later it was recorded in the annual report that the 'generosity of guildwomen towards maternity hospitals and local infirmaries' was 'appreciated by organisational secretaries of these various institutions'.<sup>194</sup>

The reduction of maternal mortality became the guiding motivation of the final stage of the Guild's campaign in the 1930s, with it viewing 'with grave concern the appalling and increasing death rate and disability among women in childbirth'.<sup>195</sup> This was especially true following the publication of the Report of the Departmental Committee on Maternal Mortality and Morbidity in 1930, which gave detailed statistics of the death rate among young mothers.<sup>196</sup> The president Mrs Hardstaff was outraged that 'half the several thousands of young mothers who lost their lives could have been saved if proper treatment and care had been available'.<sup>197</sup> Maternal mortality increased to a rate of 4.6 per thousand live births in 1934 compared with a rate of 4.33 in 1929 and 4.03 in 1915, and it was estimated that this could be as high as 6.4 in Scotland.<sup>198</sup> The public's concern regarding maternal mortality was heightened by such figures.<sup>199</sup> The international Guild even suggested that the Health Committee of the League of Nations be approached to institute an enquiry into maternal mortality 'on the lines of their recent inquiry into infant mortality'.<sup>200</sup> Each national Guild was instructed to collect information from their members and other mothers regarding the effect of their home and working conditions and the Scottish Guild also decided to approach the Scottish Board of Health for information.<sup>201</sup> In 1932, it drafted a memorandum on maternal mortality for submission to the reporting committee on maternal and infant welfare of the League of Nations.<sup>202</sup>

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<sup>191</sup> Ibid, CWS1/39/1/7, 2 March 1921.

<sup>192</sup> Ibid, CWS1/39/1/8, 27 March 1929 and 25 September 1929.

<sup>193</sup> This will be discussed in greater detail below.

<sup>194</sup> SCWG, *Thirty-seventh Annual Report*, CSW1/39/6/37, 1930-1931.

<sup>195</sup> SCWG, *Thirty-sixth Annual Report*, CSW1/39/6/36, 1929-1930.

<sup>196</sup> Like the GSEC, EWCA and numerous other women's and charity organisations, the Guild responded to this government report. Arguably the Government therefore set the agenda and ultimately brought criticism upon itself. See chapter three for further discussion.

<sup>197</sup> SCWG, *Minute Books of the Central Council*, CWS1/39/1/9, 13 August 1930.

<sup>198</sup> SC, 'Woman's Corner', 20 July 1935, p. 796.

<sup>199</sup> See chapter three for further discussion.

<sup>200</sup> SCWG, *Minute Books of the Central Council*, CWS1/39/1/9, 7 January 1931.

<sup>201</sup> Ibid, 4 February 1931.

<sup>202</sup> Ibid, 2 September 1932.

The Guild, like its counterpart in England, and also the GSEC and the EWCA, seized the opportunity of the heightened public interest in maternal mortality to reiterate possible solutions through resolutions to the Prime Minister, Secretary for Scotland and the Scottish Board of Health. This included a reassertion of its demand for the establishment of a ‘complete maternity service for the protection of motherhood, to be directly under the control of the state or local authorities and to operate in conjunction with GPs’.<sup>203</sup> In 1930 it added the condition that ‘all hospitals and infirmaries should be controlled and financed by the state’.<sup>204</sup> National or centralised funding, as opposed to local municipal funding, of hospitals was important to the Guild. This would ensure that such institutions would have adequate finance to be fully equipped with all modern scientific equipment, which would in turn be of direct benefit to the working-class women who used these services.<sup>205</sup> Furthermore the Guild argued that ‘the state should recognise that a healthy nation is a wealthy nation and that working mothers should get the same care and treatment as royal mothers’.<sup>206</sup> The importance of working-class women’s health for the nation was again made explicit, as was equality of treatment for working-class mothers.

The central council of the Guild also expressed dissatisfaction with the Minister of Health, Sir Kingsley Wood. It argued that although he had admitted that the problem of maternal mortality was one of national importance, the death rate among mothers has not decreased in comparison with the infant mortality. The importance of the health of mothers was emphasised, and Mrs Wilson of the central council argued that just as infant mortality has decreased through the establishment of child welfare and other centres, the same consideration should be given to women’s health. The Scottish Guild again reiterated its demand for a state maternity service, which would provide facilities that would lead to a decrease in the death rate among mothers, which included education for mothers.<sup>207</sup> While this demand questions the Government’s commitment to reducing maternal mortality, it was also framed by the Government’s attempts to medicalise the process of childbirth and its supporting services.<sup>208</sup> The Guild was again being pragmatic in their demands. Yet the emphasis placed on the importance of motherhood, and the outrage at the loss of women’s lives remained prominent.

The wider Co-operative movement also emphasised the importance of women’s role as mothers at this stage, with the editor of *The Scottish Co-operator* stating that ‘the drain of

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<sup>203</sup> Ibid, 3 December 1930.

<sup>204</sup> SCWG, *Thirty-seventh Annual Report*, CSW1/39/6/37, 1930-1931.

<sup>205</sup> Glasgow Corporation also favoured the introduction of a national maternity service, which would enable it to provide better and more comprehensive care, with it noting that ‘the ante-natal clinics of local authorities have been subjected to criticisms from various quarters’. It also suggested that any national scheme that was established should ‘make provision for all persons not in a position to secure for themselves similar benefits by private arrangements’ and not just ‘strictly insured persons’. Corporation of Glasgow, Public Health Department, *General Statements, Maternity and Child Welfare Scheme*, D-HE-1/1/2, 1933.

<sup>206</sup> SCWG, *Forty-fourth Annual Report*, CSW1/39/6/44, 1937-1938.

<sup>207</sup> SCWG, *Thirty-seventh Annual Report*, CSW1/39/6/37, 1930-1931.

<sup>208</sup> Again see chapter three for further details.

mothers is the most serious fact of social biology'.<sup>209</sup> He argued that the high rates of maternal mortality, 'means infants robbed of their nurses, families robbed of their first friends and teachers, and husbands robbed of their companions and confidants'. Thus he suggested that 'the death of the mother means the maximum of unhappiness to the family she leaves'.<sup>210</sup> Given this view of the importance of mothers within the working-class family, it was not surprising that the Guild emphasised motherhood in its demands for improvements in health care provisions that would reduce maternal mortality. Based upon the editor's comments, this would have been the most persuasive argument within the wider movement and would therefore have facilitated the promotion of this issue. It was significant that maternal mortality became an issue on the Scottish Committee of Co-operative, Labour and Trade Union Representatives in 1935.<sup>211</sup>

However the Guild's close relationship with the wider Co-operative movement, and support for the labour movement, restricted its promotion of more controversial issues. The Guild did not promote birth control as extensively as its English counterpart.<sup>212</sup> This can be attributed to the fact that the Scottish labour movement and clergy were largely opposed to this measure being introduced. Indeed Hughes suggests that the 'issue of birth control had major political ramifications for the ILP'. In 1924, John Wheatley, then Labour Minister for Health, 'rejected the claims of working-class women' for birth control information to be available for married women at clinics stating that 'you might as well ask me why I don't eat beef on Fridays'.<sup>213</sup> Such rejection on religious grounds was not unique. Cairns attributes this hostility to birth control to the ILP's accommodation of the Catholic Church, with its 'obsessive puritanism' and 'burning morality'.<sup>214</sup>

Birth control featured only twice as a resolution in the interwar period, in 1927 and 1934, although guildwomen had been recommended to attend meetings of the Workers Birth Control Group in 1926.<sup>215</sup> Hughes argues that the majority of the Guild's members voted in favour of Birth control.<sup>216</sup> In fact not only was the 1927 resolution a composite resolution of several branches, but it was passed unanimously, which suggests that there was local support for the issue.<sup>217</sup> Again in 1934 the resolution was passed without opposition.<sup>218</sup> The inclusion of

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<sup>209</sup> SC, 26 January 1935, p. 94.

<sup>210</sup> Ibid.

<sup>211</sup> SCWG, *Forty-second Annual Report*, CWS1/39/6/42, 1935-1936.

<sup>212</sup> The English Guild's campaign for birth control began with its publication of *Maternity: Letters from working women from Working Women* in 1915. M. L. Davies (ed.), *Maternity: Letters from Working Women*, 1915, Virago, London, 1978.

<sup>213</sup> Hughes, *A Rough Kind of 'Feminism'*, p. 161-163

<sup>214</sup> D. Cairns, *Women in the Clydeside labour movement*, University of Strathclyde, M Phil thesis, 1996, p. 43, 68, 72 and 197.

<sup>215</sup> SCWG, *Minute Books of the Central Council*, CWS1/39/1/8, 3 February 1926.

<sup>216</sup> Ibid.

<sup>217</sup> The St. Georges branch in Glasgow accepted an address on 'birth control' from Mrs Hicks of the Glasgow Women's Advisory Clinic, after which a collection was taken. Donations continued to be made by this



these resolutions was significant, and directly contradicted John Wheatley's ban on the discussion of birth control in maternity clinics. In 1927 the Guild urged 'the Government and the Scottish Board of Health to release facilities at all maternity centres for the guidance and instruction in constructive birth control to married women who require it'.<sup>219</sup> Thus the Guild was challenging the predominant view of the labour movement in Clydeside and in other urban areas in Scotland where the ILP and Labour Party were reliant on Catholic support.

The Guild's demand that birth control information be made available for married working-class women also challenged the 'Labour Party's vision of womanhood'.<sup>220</sup> In its 1927 resolution the Guild strategically argued that the provision of birth control would solve both the problems of infant and maternal mortality. By emphasising the importance of women's health in relation to their roles as mothers, the Guild effectively, used 'the language of their oppressors' to 'legitimise' their demands. Hughes suggests that this did 'not necessarily imply that working-class women accepted the existing structures of society'.<sup>221</sup> The Guild used the discourses available to them within the confines of the labour movement in order to voice its concerns, and in this case challenge the views of the male leadership. Yet, it is notable that the Guild never discussed the legalisation of abortion in the interwar years, not even as a solution to reduce maternal mortality.<sup>222</sup> Given the opposition to birth control from the leaders of the labour movement, the opposition to abortion would have been even more severe.<sup>223</sup>

Hughes suggests that the issue of access to birth control gained feminist recognition on Clydeside as it 'would emancipate middle-class as well as working-class women'.<sup>224</sup> While the Guild may have been influenced by the opinions of organisations such as the GSEC on this issue, at least indirectly as both were affiliated to the NUSEC, class-based concerns remained an important factor in shaping the Guild's views. Another of the Guild's main arguments in advocating the availability of birth control for working-class women was that it was 'practiced

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branch. St. Georges, Glasgow, *Women's Guild Minute Books*, CWS1/33/21/65, 29 September 1927 and 15 March 1928.

<sup>218</sup> SCWG, *Minute Books of the Central Council*, CWS1/39/1/9, 20 June 1934.

<sup>219</sup> Ibid, CWS1/39/1/8, 13 June 1927. SCWG, *Thirty-fourth Annual Report*, CWS1/39/6/34, 1927-1928.

<sup>220</sup> Hughes, *A Rough Kind of 'Feminism'*, p. 171.

<sup>221</sup> Ibid.

<sup>222</sup> In contrast, the Guild in England passed a resolution in favour of legalising abortion in 1934, also demanding that all women in prison for procuring an abortion should be released. This argument was fought along the lines of reducing maternal mortality, as legalising abortion would minimise, if not eradicate, the deaths of women through the procurement of illegal 'back-street' abortions. Women's Cooperative Guild, *Annual Reports*, British Library of Political and Economic Science, COLL MISC 657, Volume 5, 1934-1935, p. 30.

<sup>223</sup> In 1933 Glasgow Corporation observed that there was a 'growing demand being made on hospital accommodation for the treatment of abortions', with there being 'no doubt that the premature termination of pregnancy' was 'being increasingly practiced'. In 1931 991 cases were admitted to the corporation hospitals and Royal Maternity Hospital combined, as opposed to 1360 in 1933. No reasons are given for this increase, however the conservative political climate in Glasgow and opposition to birth control may account for the rise in abortions. Corporation of Glasgow, Public Health Department, *General Statements, Maternity and Child Welfare Scheme*, D-HE-1/1/2, 1933.

<sup>224</sup> Hughes, *A Rough Kind of Feminism*, p. 143.

by the rich so why not the poor'.<sup>225</sup> The women's sections of the ILP and Labour Party shared this belief that working-class women should also have the right to control their fertility.<sup>226</sup> Indeed Hughes argues that there 'appears to have been a quiet revolution on Clydeside' with regard to birth control, which 'corresponded with the activity of female activists in formal political circles'.<sup>227</sup> She suggests that the influence of the ILP women and Guild 'probably far exceeded membership' as they 'took their educating and propaganda work seriously'.<sup>228</sup> As a result of the efforts of the Guild, and other likeminded working-class women's organisations, in making their members, and other women, aware of the availability of birth control, the Glasgow Branch of the Scottish Federation of Mothers' Welfare Clinics gained as many as thirty new members each week by the late 1930s.<sup>229</sup>

The Guild, through its social propaganda, prioritised basic improvements in the living standards of working-class women and their families, as illustrated by its campaigns for improved housing and increased maternity services, including access to birth control. These campaigns rarely directly challenged the inequality of working-class women's position in society. In fact Hughes argues that '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'.<sup>230</sup> This effectively limited the sphere of women's politics to the 'personal' as opposed to the 'public' concerns considered by men.<sup>231</sup> Women's special role and expertise as mothers qualified them to discuss and demand improvements in housing, health and education. However, the Guild challenged the limitations placed upon it by attempting to elevate the status of the working-class mother and wife, emphasising the importance of their roles in family life in order to justify greater representation within the Co-operative movement and wider labour movement. While this political tactic proved to be restrictive, and in some cases marginalizing, it gave the Guild a voice and thus influence. More importantly it gave the Guild scope to 'advance their programme' of demands for improved housing conditions and increased maternity care for working class women as discussed.<sup>232</sup>

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<sup>225</sup> SCWG, *Thirty-fourth Annual Report*, CSW1/39/6/34, 1927-1928.

<sup>226</sup> Beaumont notes that the National Council of Women held similar views arguing that birth control advice given by general practitioners would not be available to working-class women who could not afford medical fees. C. Beaumont, 'Moral Dilemmas and Women's Rights: the attitude of the Mothers' Union and Catholic Women's League to divorce, birth control and abortion in England, 1928-1939', *Women's History Review*, Vol. 16, No. 4, 2007, p. 473.

<sup>227</sup> Hughes, *A Rough Kind of 'Feminism'*, p. 178.

<sup>228</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>229</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 179.

<sup>230</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 111.

<sup>231</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>232</sup> Female activists of the ILP and Labour Party also exploited these discourses. This allowed the ILP women to put forward its programme, which Kate Beaton described as 'expressions of our social commonsense'. Hughes, *A Rough Kind of 'Feminism'*, p. 111. For details of Beaton's political career in Glasgow see chapter six.

As a result of the emphasis placed on the importance of working-class women's roles as mothers, such demands were taken seriously and supported by the leaders of the Co-operative movement. If realised, each of the Guild's demands would have immediate effects in improving both working-class women's living conditions and health. The wider availability of birth control for married women would have been especially empowering in enabling them to have control over their fertility, thereby reducing the risk of multiple and unwanted pregnancies, and even the danger of illegal abortion. The support given to such 'welfare' measures is often criticised within the historiography, described as at the expense of more controversial issues that demanded equality for women and challenged the division of labour within the working-class home. Yet, such criticism rarely takes account of the extent of the poverty that working-class women experienced in the interwar years. The Guild had more pressing and immediate concerns than directly challenging male supremacy, both in the home, and in the Co-operative and labour movements. Yet it would be unfair to suggest that attempts were not made to do so, as the Guild's increasing involvement in the politics of the Co-operative party, and in public life, undermines the notion that guildwomen were confined to the 'private' sphere of the home and family.<sup>233</sup>

#### 'Co-operative Propaganda'

The Guild's promotion of propaganda relating to Co-operative and more broadly based class concerns was an illustration of the way in which it became an integral part of the Co-operative movement. The emphasis placed on women's special role as mothers was also influential in this the final form of propaganda. The Guild's increasing commitment to the Co-operative movement may also have resulted in it gaining support from the leaders of the movement for some of the campaigns the Guild prioritised in its political and social propaganda. Its efforts in raising funds for the Co-operative convalescent homes and in promoting loyalty to the movement, in particular, ensured that it was viewed as indispensable. Arguably the leadership would have to acknowledge this by supporting the Guild's campaigns in order to ensure its continuing support. Simultaneously the Guild's promotion of Co-operative propaganda illustrates the influence of the movement on its work.

The Guild's support for the direct representation of the Co-operative movement in Parliament was the most prominent example of its promotion of Co-operative principles and ideology. As discussed it became increasingly involved in the politics of the Co-operative movement with the growth of the Co-operative and Labour parties in the interwar years. Gaffin and Thoms suggests that the interwar crisis in domestic and international affairs drove

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<sup>233</sup> See chapter two for discussion of the Guild's demands for further equality within the Co-operative movement.

the English Guild into 'a more political and radical position than it had ever held before'.<sup>234</sup>

This was also the case in Scotland.

The campaign for direct representation began in earnest following the First World War. After perceived attacks by the government on the Co-operative movement's methods of mutual trading through the threat of taxation on Co-operative surpluses, the leadership felt that the Co-operative movement could no longer rely on the Labour Party to represent its interests.<sup>235</sup> Indeed the Guild's president Mrs MacDonald argued that the Co-operative movement 'could not remain out of politics' as it was 'a great moral, social and economic movement'. In order to 'safeguard the movement' she argued that Co-operators had to 'make their minds as between Liberalism, Unionism and Co-operation'.<sup>236</sup> The leadership of the movement took the decision to put forward its own candidates, a move that was instigated by the Co-operative Union, which formed the Co-operative Party for these purposes. The leadership of the Guild supported this measure with Mrs McLean, a former Guild president, stating that the men and women of the movement 'were beginning to see that it was a clamant necessity that they should have Co-operators in parliament'.<sup>237</sup>

The central council insisted that guildwomen should support direct representation as 'Co-operative policy provided for housing, education and the sweeping away of private interest'.<sup>238</sup> Moreover MacDonald suggested that 'the question of direct representation had a direct bearing on child welfare' and a 'direct effect on the home life of the people'. Therefore while 'they could send resolution after resolution to Parliament and to the Government', 'it was no use unless they had power in the House of Commons'.<sup>239</sup> Thus the central council was strategic in appealing to its members as mothers, suggesting that direct representation would give the Co-operative movement, and by extension guildwomen, a more influential voice in demanding improvements for working-class families.

Prominent members of the Scottish Co-operative movement actively encouraged the Guild's involvement in the campaign. Mr D. H. Gerrard of the Co-operative Party stated that 'it was many years now since some of them had first advocated Co-operative representation in Parliament' and 'some of them had doubts then, seeing that they had to deal only with men; but now that the women were going to have the vote, he, at least, had more confidence'.<sup>240</sup> Mr Stewart of the Scottish Co-operative Wholesale Society (SCWS) added that 'there were enemies who were trying to destroy the beneficial work of the Co-operative movement, and their efforts could only be nullified on the floor of the House of Commons'. He suggested that

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<sup>234</sup> J. Gaffin and D. Thoms, *Caring & Sharing: the centenary history of the Co-operative Women's Guild*, Co-operative Union, 1983, p. 84.

<sup>235</sup> Such fears were to continue throughout the 1920s.

<sup>236</sup> SCWG, *Twenty-fifth Annual Report*, CSW 1/39/6/ 25, 1918-1919.

<sup>237</sup> SC, 11 January 1918, p. 22.

<sup>238</sup> SCWG, *Twenty-fifth Annual Report*, CSW 1/39/6/ 25, 1918-1919.

<sup>239</sup> Ibid.

<sup>240</sup> Ibid.

‘the women should organise their vote in such a way that when a general election came they could go forward unitedly’.<sup>241</sup> This sentiment was reiterated in 1928 when the editor of *the Scottish Co-operator* commented on the increase of women voters, suggesting that ‘profound changes in the conduct of national affairs have become immediately possible’. He maintained that ‘a mighty task and glorious opportunity lies to the hands of the Co-operators organised in the branches of the Women’s Guild’, arguing that ‘the period of activity upon which it has entered now will be the most fruitful in Guild history’.<sup>242</sup>

The award of the vote in 1918, and its extension in 1928, ensured that such influential members of the Scottish Co-operative movement realised the power that guildwomen had to help make Co-operative representation a reality. Consequently the leadership of the Co-operative Union and Co-operative Party impressed upon the Guild its responsibility to the movement in supporting direct representation, as well as ‘organising the female vote in this view’. The central council welcomed this interest in politicising and formalising the role of the Guild in the Co-operative movement. Indeed, the president Mrs Tulloch also emphasised the importance of the enfranchisement of women in 1918, and consequently ‘what a power guildwomen could be’.<sup>243</sup> She insisted that guildwomen should ‘prepare for much hard work’, and ‘concentrate all our energies on direct Co-operative representation in Parliament in the furtherance of our great movement’.<sup>244</sup> Such loyalty was further illustrated by her insistence that guildwomen ‘were to remember their duty to the movement in which they have been called to play a prominent part’. In fact the Co-operative Union requested that the Guild ‘help to form a new political party for co-operators’.<sup>245</sup>

‘Direct representation’ became prominent on the Guild’s agenda. Its campaign began with the president Mrs MacDonald’s insistence that each member of the central council should ‘take an active role’ in educating the members of branches. This involved specialising in and giving addresses on the direct representation of the Co-operative movement in parliament. Members of the central council were also expected to educate guildwomen on how to use their votes, thereby ‘organising the female vote in favour of Co-operation’.<sup>246</sup> MacDonald made it clear that these subjects ‘should be the basis’ of their remarks when visiting branches.<sup>247</sup> She argued that ‘women’s part in political affairs must always be kept prominently before the guildwomen until they become conscious of their power to select the right type of men and women to represent them in local and imperial government’.<sup>248</sup> ‘Direct representation’ was also established as a ‘special subject’, with the central council suggesting that it be discussed in

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<sup>241</sup> Ibid.

<sup>242</sup> SC, 23 June 1928, p. 669.

<sup>243</sup> SCWG, *Minute Books of the Central Council*, CWS1/39/1/6, 11 January 1918.

<sup>244</sup> Ibid, 27 February 1918.

<sup>245</sup> Ibid, 3 September 1918. This later became the Co-operative Party as stated above.

<sup>246</sup> Ibid, CWS1/39/1/6-7, 3 September 1918 and 1 September 1920.

<sup>247</sup> Ibid, 3 September 1918, 1 December 1920.

<sup>248</sup> Ibid, CWS1/39/1/7, 3 March 1920 and 5 January 1921.

all quarterly meetings in every section.<sup>249</sup> In addition branches also received lectures from the Co-operative Union and Party, with the Scottish representatives of these organisations often writing to the Guild to offer speakers.<sup>250</sup> These lectures often focused on 'ways and means for organising the Co-operative voters'.<sup>251</sup> The central council welcomed plans by the Co-operative Union to introduce and provide the funding for two-day schools that would educate guildwomen in how to be 'teachers in organising the Co-operative vote'. Guildwomen were actively encouraged to attend these classes, as they were a 'medium of creating opinion on the political aspect of our movement'.<sup>252</sup> The Co-operative Union also provided the Guild with educational pamphlets such as 'The Case for Co-operative Representation and How to Obtain It'.<sup>253</sup>

As a result of its involvement in this campaign, members of the central council or section executives were appointed to the Co-operative Union, the Scottish Section of the Co-operative Union, and the Scottish National Propaganda Committee.<sup>254</sup> Arguably, such representation highlights the Guild's belief in the partnership of men and women in the Co-operative movement. In 1918 Mrs Hardstaff, who later became president of the Guild, argued that men and women of the movement must learn together how to use their power, 'for so long as democracy was split up into sections their enemies would triumph'.<sup>255</sup> The president, Mrs McNair, echoed these sentiments in 1928 when she suggested that 'men could not give to the full what they might give unless they had the assistance and co-operation of the women'.<sup>256</sup>

The representation of prominent guildwomen on Co-operative committees also illustrates the Guild's increasing responsibility within the movement. Admittedly, in this case discussion was confined to the promotion of direct representation. Yet, direct representation of the movement in parliament would also have been beneficial for the Guild. Ultimately it was hoped that guildwomen would become Co-operative candidates and thus the Guild would be able to voice its concerns relating to its political and social propaganda. As discussed Scott suggests that the English Guild's increasing involvement in the politics of the Co-operative movement resulted in it abandoning more feminist objectives which demanded equality for working-class women. However, the Scottish Guild's greater involvement in the Co-operative movement through the promotion of direct representation gained it credibility and was

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<sup>249</sup> Ibid, CWS1/39/1/6 and 8, 11 January 1918 and 13 January 1926.

<sup>250</sup> Ibid, CWS1/39/1/7-8, 6 September 1922 and 24 December 1925.

<sup>251</sup> Ibid, CWS1/39/1/6, 5 February 1919.

<sup>252</sup> SCWG, *Thirty-Ninth Annual Report*, CSW1/39/6/39, 1932-1933.

<sup>253</sup> SCWG, *Minute Books of the Central Council*, CWS1/39/1/6, 3 September 1918.

<sup>254</sup> Ibid, 26 June 1918. Two members of the central council were appointed to a special joint committee called by the central education committee of the Co-operative Union to discuss 'the promotion and organisation of educational work among co-operators in relation to co-operative political action'.

<sup>255</sup> SC, 'Woman's Corner', 8 March 1918, p. 160.

<sup>256</sup> Ibid, 2 June 1928, p. 559.

therefore empowering, in that it theoretically allowed it to gain greater influence and involvement in setting the agenda.

The Guild actively supported Co-operative candidates in both national and municipal election campaigns. In 1922 the central council insisted that guildwomen should 'realise their duty to the movement and as citizens' and 'do all in their power to make the success of the Co-operative candidates at the coming elections a certainty'.<sup>257</sup> This again illustrated loyalty to the movement as it was suggested by the president Mrs McLean that

As women we must remember that we have something at stake. We must defend our own rights and see to it that the movement which has been built up to the present state of efficiency by the self-sacrificing efforts of our predecessors should not suffer through our neglect and shoulder our responsibilities. Our association is at stake if we do not place in power legislators who will safe guard the interests of working people.<sup>258</sup>

As Hughes argues the support given to male candidates by women of the Guild, ILP and Labour Party, 'no doubt influenced the labour movement's agenda' as 'support is rarely unconditional'.<sup>259</sup> Through its support for Co-operative candidates the Guild was effectively protecting its own interests. Its campaigning on behalf of such candidates was based on the premise that its interests in improving the conditions of working-class women's lives would be acknowledged and 'safeguarded' when these individuals were elected. Therefore, as Hughes argues, while the 'women of the labour movement were often regarded as the party's fundraisers', this may not have been viewed 'as a major obstacle in the advancement of their political ideals'.<sup>260</sup> Instead the roles played by women in organising, canvassing and fundraising could, as Hughes suggests, allow the women to use the voters demands as evidence of the popularity of their proposals, thereby providing justification for their demands.

Members of the central council 'gave their services willingly' and embarked upon schemes of canvassing on behalf of Co-operative candidates.<sup>261</sup> Guildwomen were encouraged to follow their example, with the president, Mrs MacDonald highlighting their responsibility to the movement. She argued that 'it rested with them to show their eagerness of purpose and zeal for the movement, which was doing so much for them'. This was due to the fact that 'there was no other movement in the world which gave to the women the same opportunities as were given by Co-operation and it rested with them to put their ideals into practice'.<sup>262</sup> Consequently she argued that now women had the vote they should support Co-operative

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<sup>257</sup> SCWG, *Minute Books of the Central Council*, CWS1/39/1/6, 1 November 1922.

<sup>258</sup> Ibid.

<sup>259</sup> Hughes, *A Rough Kind of 'Feminism'*, p. 133.

<sup>260</sup> Ibid, p. 154.

<sup>261</sup> SCWG, *Minute Books of the Central Council*, CWS1/39/1/7, 31 March 1920.

<sup>262</sup> SC, 11 Jan 1918, p. 22.

candidates 'who would be the very best that could be got'.<sup>263</sup> The central council had high expectations of guildwomen, stating that:

We hope our members are keeping in the forefront of all canvassing committees and political meetings, especially in the constituencies where Co-operative candidates have been adopted. We are on our trial; on us depends the success or otherwise of the campaign. Let every one of us do everything possible to place the three Co-operative candidates at the top of the poll.<sup>264</sup>

The responsibility given to guildwomen validated the central council's claim that the Guild was 'a force to be reckoned with' because it was 'a great army in the march for Co-operation'.<sup>265</sup> In fact Callen suggested that the National Committee of the Co-operative Party 'appreciated the value of having the organised Guildwomen as members of the Divisional Co-operative Parties in constituencies' and as 'willing workers at all elections, Parliamentary and Local Government'.<sup>266</sup> It was noted that while such electioneering work was 'arduous', the results were 'gratifying'. The central council also suggested that involvement in this work resulted in many instances in 'a great awakening on the part of the women members to a sense of responsibility as voters'.<sup>267</sup>

The Guild's support for direct representation of the movement in parliament was further formalised in 1925 when the Co-operative Party suggested that Guild branches could directly affiliate.<sup>268</sup> The Scottish Committee of the Co-operative Party sent a deputation to the central council to discuss the development of the 'idea of politics among guild branches' with the object of increasing affiliation to the Co-operative Party.<sup>269</sup> At this meeting it 'highly praised' the 'work already carried out on behalf of Co-operative representation' by the Guild. Yet the central council encountered difficulty in persuading some branches to affiliate to the Co-operative Party. Indeed direct representation became fairly contentious issue in the interwar years, with opposition being prominent among the rank and file, both within the Guild and wider Co-operative movement. Some members who supported the Labour Party were of the opinion that Co-operative representation was unnecessary as the majority of Co-operative issues were covered by Labour policies. Opposition began at the annual meeting of 1920 when 'some prominent guildwomen' engaged in 'unruly conduct while the mover of the important resolution on direct representation was speaking'.<sup>270</sup> This was met by reassertions of the need for loyalty to the Co-operative cause and therefore the Co-operative Party. The president, Mrs

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<sup>263</sup> Ibid.

<sup>264</sup> Ibid, 6 Dec 1918, p. 511.

<sup>265</sup> SCWG, *Thirtieth Annual Report*, CWS1/39/6/30, 1923-1924.

<sup>266</sup> Callen, *History of the Scottish Co-operative Women's Guild*, p. 16.

<sup>267</sup> SCWG, *Minute Books of the Central Council*, CWS1/39/1/7, 6 December 1922.

<sup>268</sup> Ibid, 1 April 1925.

<sup>269</sup> Ibid, CWS1/39/1/8, 24 December 1925.

<sup>270</sup> Ibid, CWS1/39/1/7, 2 June 1920.



McLean later argued in 1924, that 'we must not surrender, but hold our rightful place among working-class forces, and be prepared to take a full share of representation'.<sup>271</sup> She also suggested in 1926 that

We should advocate Co-operative representation not by coercion, but because of its usefulness to the movement. Objection was often raised because of political or personal prejudice. In the coming year let us carry on our propaganda consistently for we believe that with constant reiteration, we will permeate our members with the true Co-operative spirit.<sup>272</sup>

The central council continued to promote direct representation, although it noted that the number of branches affiliating to the Co-operative Party was 'far from satisfactory'.<sup>273</sup> Section officials were urged to secure literature and speakers from the Scottish section of the Co-operative Party in order to remedy the situation, which was considered to be especially urgent at election times.<sup>274</sup> With an average of only 114 to 140 branches of 371 affiliating, the central council took a hard line in 1934 and passed a resolution which stated that branches had to affiliate to the Co-operative Party.<sup>275</sup> All branches were expected to honour this decision. Yet opposition continued and full affiliation was not achieved.

Loyalty to the Co-operative cause was also illustrated by the campaign against taxation of the movement. When agitation for taxation of Co-operative surpluses recommenced following the First World War, the president, Mrs McDonald argued that 'secret treaties were at work to cripple the movement, and it was for them as leaders to do their best in every possible way to protect the interests of working women'.<sup>276</sup> This campaign had a dual purpose, to protect the financial security and success of the movement, and to protect the largely working-class female members of the Co-operative societies and Guild from increased prices. The central council had a vested interest in ensuring that its members were not placed under further strain in their roles as 'chancellors of exchequer of the home'.<sup>277</sup> It followed that members of the central council were encouraged 'to do their utmost' in the branches, and in their societies, to 'arouse the indignation of the rank and file' and 'make them realise the danger of this unjust tax and its effects on the mutual trading of Co-operative societies'.<sup>278</sup>

This campaign intensified as the government proposed imposing Corporation Tax on the retail Co-operative societies. The central council stated that 'this action should be the basis

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<sup>271</sup> Ibid, 5 November 1924.

<sup>272</sup> Ibid, CWS1/39/1/8, 13 January 1926.

<sup>273</sup> Ibid, 20 June 1928.

<sup>274</sup> Ibid, 14 June 1929, 25 December 1929.

<sup>275</sup> SCWG, *Thirty-Seventh Annual Report*, CSW1/39/6/37, 1930-1931 and *Fortieth Annual Report*, CSW1/39/6/40, 1933-1934.

<sup>276</sup> SCWG, *Minute Books of the Central Council*, CWS1/39/1/7, 31 March 1920.

<sup>277</sup> It was suggested that through this role the 'guildwomen were more conversant with the' inner workings of the movement' than the men, as they were 'imbued' with 'the root principles of co-operation'. SC, 'Women's Page', 7 June 1918, p. 292.

<sup>278</sup> SCWG, *Minute Books of the Central Council*, CWS1/39/1/7, 5 May 1920.

of discussions and addresses in the branches', in order to motivate all members into action. The Guild was also to be represented at an 'important congress' to be held at Preston to discuss the effects of the Corporation Tax and how it could be combated.<sup>279</sup> It continued to lobby the Chancellor of the Exchequer, asking for an interview to discuss the removal of taxation.<sup>280</sup> The Co-operative movement 'narrowly defeated' the imposition of such taxation in 1921.<sup>281</sup> This campaign continued throughout the interwar period, as 'the opponents of Co-operation kept the question open. The Finance Act of 1933 eventually introduced a tax on Co-operative societies, and although the dividends could not be taxed, the reserves could be.'<sup>282</sup> The Co-operative movement responded by holding discussions to develop strategies to reduce the amount of capital that could be taxed. The Guild attended these meetings, outcomes of which included various forms of evasion such as introducing a higher dividend and reducing prices.<sup>283</sup> In addition the president Mrs Hardstaff 'hoped that if any MP dared to vote in favour of the Chancellors tax proposals that the Co-operative Guild women in his constituency would see that he did not return to Parliament at the next election'.<sup>284</sup>

The Guild's opposition to taxation was accompanied by a campaign to increase Co-operative sales. This 'loyalty to the movement' was categorised as a 'special subject' with members of the central council and section executive being instructed to promote this in their visits to branches. The president Mrs Hardstaff insisted that the 'influence of guildwomen' should be used to increase the sales in our local societies.<sup>285</sup> She suggested that this increase in 'cash and trade' would benefit members, including guildwomen, by the return of a higher dividend, and would also create more work for employees, thereby easing unemployment.<sup>286</sup> Such propaganda was considered especially important at times of financial difficulty for the movement when unemployment had drastically reduced purchasing power.<sup>287</sup> Occasionally the English and Scottish joint Co-operative Wholesale Society (CWS) launched specific propaganda campaigns to promote Co-operative goods. The Guild was essential in the implementation of these, as it was assumed that guildwomen as 'wage-spenders' would be loyal to Co-operative goods and stores and would not spend their money elsewhere. The central council also suggested that guildwomen would have the ability to influence women of

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<sup>279</sup> Ibid, 1 September 1920.

<sup>280</sup> Ibid, 4 May 1921.

<sup>281</sup> Kinloch and Butt suggest that Ramsay MacDonald's government of 1924 offered hope, suggesting that Labour politicians were 'generally sympathetic to the movement'. Even when Winston Churchill took the post of Chancellor of the Exchequer he 'doubted the wisdom of imposing any additional taxation on the Co-operative movement'. Kinloch and Butt, *The History of the Scottish Co-operative Wholesale Society Ltd*, p. 304-5.

<sup>282</sup> Ibid, p. 305.

<sup>283</sup> SCWG, *Minute Books of the Central Council*, CWS1/39/1/9, 31 May 1933.

<sup>284</sup> SCWG, *Thirty-ninth Annual Report*, CSW1/39/6/39, 1932-1933.

<sup>285</sup> SCWG, *Minute Books of the Central Council*, CWS1/39/1/7 and 9, 25 April 1923, 4 February 1931, 17 June 1932.

<sup>286</sup> Ibid.

<sup>287</sup> Kinloch and Butt, *The History of the Scottish Co-operative Wholesale Society Ltd*, p. 285.

the benefits of Co-operative products, whether members of Co-operative stores or not.<sup>288</sup> It was noted in 1932 that members of the central council were advocating Co-operative productions 'wherever an opportunity arose', and guildwomen were encouraged to do the same.<sup>289</sup> Consequently the central council received appreciative letters from the English and Scottish joint CWS expressing their 'warm appreciation for the splendid co-operation and magnificent assistance' given during such campaigns.<sup>290</sup> Such 'push-the-sales' campaigns to stimulate Co-operative trade continued throughout the 1930s.<sup>291</sup>

The Guild's loyalty to the movement was also illustrated by its charity work on behalf of Co-operative causes. Its major achievement in this field was its involvement in the development of the Co-operative Convalescent Homes, where members of the retail Co-operative societies, both male and female could recover from illness. The first home was formally opened at West Kilbride in 1896.<sup>292</sup> Its efforts ensured that further homes were established in Seamill and Galashiels. In 1906 a mother and child's rest home was purchased in Airdmhor in Dunoon to commemorate the Guild's 'coming of age'. Notably all of these homes were 'fully furnished and equipped to a high standard' as a result of fundraising by, and donations from, branches of the Guild. As a result Partick Dollan stated that guildwomen were 'the real builders of the homes'.<sup>293</sup> Women's special maternal role within the movement was clear in the responsibility given to the Guild in this charity work for the convalescent homes. However, as Dollan argued, the 'poor man's wife' was a particular beneficiary of the homes, which were described as 'a heaven on earth for many women, crushed and jaded by domestic drudgery, whose souls and bodies cried out for quiet, sunshine, and the consolidations of social fellowship'.<sup>294</sup>

The Guild's fundraising efforts continued on behalf of the homes, and Airdmhor especially, with jumble sales and flag days, among other events, being organised.<sup>295</sup> Airdmhor

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<sup>288</sup> SCWG, *Minute Books of the Central Council*, CWS1/39/1/9, 29 February 1932.

<sup>289</sup> Ibid.

<sup>290</sup> As a result of the Guild running a 'Lutona fortnight' in December 1932, the joint Co-operative Wholesale society noted that sales in co-operative cocoa and chocolate showed 'an encouraging increase'. SCWG, *Minute Books of the Central Council*, CWS1/39/1/9, 28 December 1932.

<sup>291</sup> SCWG, *Thirty-eighth - Thirty-ninth Annual Report*, CSW1/39/6/38-39, 1931-1932 – 1932-1933, *Forty-first Annual Report*, CSW1/39/6/41, 1934-1935, and *Forty-third Annual Report*, CSW1/39/6/43, 1936-1937.

<sup>292</sup> Initially it was estimated that £2,000 would be needed to build such an institution, however this soon proved to be only a fraction of what was actually required. The Guild was undeterred and organised a 'grand bazaar' in Glasgow during the New Year holidays of 1894. This alone raised the original sum of £2,000, which prompted Mr William Barclay of Kinning Park Society to donate an equal sum.

<sup>293</sup> P. J. Dollan, *Jubilee History of Kinning Park Co-operative Society Ltd.*, Kinning Park Co-operative Society, Glasgow, 1923, p. 145.

<sup>294</sup> Ibid, p. 146.

<sup>295</sup> The central council were regularly invited to visit Airdmhor in the early 1920s. The treasurer of the Homes Board would thank the Guild for all of the work that had been done for the Convalescent Homes. The president would in turn reiterate the need for the continued efforts of the guildwomen in the maintenance of Airdmhor Home, often emphasising the Guild's special responsibility and interest 'in the welfare of this home for mothers and children'. SCWG, *Minute Books of the Central Council*, CWS1/39/1/6-7, 2 January 1918, 11 January 1918, 15 February 1918, 3 September 1918, 22 May 1920, 1 March 1922, and 5 December 1923.

was extended in 1922, with further pressure for support being placed on the Guild for donations and fundraising efforts.<sup>296</sup> The directors of the Convalescent Homes also suggested that the Guild establish an endowment fund to reduce the debt and financial worries placed on the Homes by 'poor economic conditions'.<sup>297</sup> The central council agreed. It encouraged branches to have a 'Homes' night on their syllabus each session, the contributions raised on such evenings were then to be sent to the central endowment fund.<sup>298</sup> Guildwomen were also asked to 'raise the matter' at quarterly meetings of retail societies. Indeed Dollan suggested that the Guild was very successful in raising funds from members of the Co-operative movement through its 'insistent claim that generous consideration should be made for comrades in need of rest and help'.<sup>299</sup> He estimated that the homes had been 'havens of rest and restoration' and 'veritable fountains of health and happiness' for over 97,000 people by 1923, who were 'indebted to the humane wisdom of Co-operative women'.<sup>300</sup>

The Guild also supported issues that reflected more broadly based working-class concerns, one of which was the rising level of unemployment. It regularly submitted resolutions to the government which insisted that unemployment should be viewed as a national problem and responsibility rather than a local burden.<sup>301</sup> Notably Hughes suggests that there was a shift in ILP policy in the 1920s from 'municipal socialism', as discussed, to an emphasis on unemployment. She suggests that unemployment was situated as the 'greater public concern' in contrast to 'women's issues', which were 'conceptualised as 'personal''.<sup>302</sup> The Guild countered this by focusing on youth unemployment, thereby emphasising the importance of women's role as mothers, and suggesting that women were not only affected by unemployment, but had a responsibility to look after the interests of their children. The central council argued that 'one of the most serious problems we have' was the 'adolescent leaving school and finding there is no place for them in the labour market'.<sup>303</sup> It first called upon the government to raise the school age from 14 to 16 years in 1921, yet was still demanding legislation of this nature in 1930.<sup>304</sup> This was viewed as 'one of the first steps towards the relief of unemployment' as 'the extra year at school would keep the boys and girls off of the street and out of the labour market'.<sup>305</sup> In addition the expected increase in the number of

<sup>296</sup> Ibid, CWS1/39/1/7, 2 August 1922.

<sup>297</sup> Ibid, CWS1/39/1/7-8, 5 December 1923, 2 December 1925.

<sup>298</sup> Ibid, CWS1/39/1/8, 24 December 1925.

<sup>299</sup> Dollan estimated that over £75,000 was spent on building the homes and fully £150,000 had been devoted to their maintenance by 1923. Dollan, *Jubilee History of Kinning Park Co-operative Society Ltd.*, p. 145.

<sup>300</sup> Ibid.

<sup>301</sup> The national funding of unemployment assistance would have significantly eased the burden on municipalities, which had a high incidence of unemployment, as was the case in many areas of Scotland. SCWG, *Thirtieth Annual Report*, CSW1/39/6/30, 1923-1924.

<sup>302</sup> Hughes, *A Rough Kind of 'Feminism'*, p. 166.

<sup>303</sup> SCWG, *Thirty-Ninth Annual Report*, CSW1/39/6/39, 1932-1933.

<sup>304</sup> SCWG, *Twenty-seventh Annual Report*, CSW1/39/6/27, 1920-1921 and *Thirtieth Annual Report*, CSW1/39/6/30, 1923-1924. SCWG, *Minute Books of the Central Council*, CWS1/39/1/9, 5 November 1930.

<sup>305</sup> SCWG, *Minute Books of the Central Council*, CWS1/39/1/9, 5 November 1930.

pupils would require new schools and equipment, as well as more teaching posts, thereby lowering unemployment in construction and teaching.<sup>306</sup> The Guild continued to prioritise this issue with branches receiving addresses from members of the central council, which drew attention to the statistics from the fifth report of the National Advisory Council for Juvenile Employment (Scotland) published in 1934.<sup>307</sup>

Economy cuts in education grants were also seen to be aggravating the situation of youth unemployment. In 1933 the Guild accused the 'Tories' of 'being afraid of the learning that was being acquired by the working-class people' arguing that they were 'determined to stop the workers children from getting a decent education'.<sup>308</sup> It had also 'emphatically protested' against the recommendations of the Geddes committee of 1922, sending a resolution to all branches which was to be sent by each to the 'appropriate authorities'.<sup>309</sup> The president Mrs Watson argued that the only hope of reform was 'through the ballot box' and 'the selection of the personnel of all local government boards'.<sup>310</sup> Again the need for direct representation of the Co-operative movement was reiterated, with it being argued that Co-operative representatives would safeguard the interests of working-class children.

In addition Hughes suggests that increased unemployment undoubtedly 'politicised' women 'as mothers and household managers', which led to street demonstrations over the household means test.<sup>311</sup> The central council had come to a similar conclusion. It suggested that the Guild's campaign against the means test, which focused on informing public opinion 'on the necessity' of abolishing this measure, had further politicised its members.<sup>312</sup> This was illustrated by the resolutions submitted by branches at the annual congress.<sup>313</sup> The government had introduced the household means test in an attempt to reduce municipal spending on unemployment relief. It met with universal opposition from working-class organisations. The Guild argued that 'many thousands of respectable people' were 'living on the poverty line', and with 'the inquisition of the Means Test, the situation had become definitely worse'. The

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<sup>306</sup> Ibid.

<sup>307</sup> Ibid, 20 June 1934.

<sup>308</sup> SCWG, *Thirty-Ninth Annual Report*, CSW1/39/6/39, 1932-1933. The Guild had previously argued in 1921 that the government was attempting to restrict 'the facilities for education of the workers children'. SCWG, *Minute Books of the Central Council*, CWS1/39/1/7, 2 February 1921.

<sup>309</sup> These recommendations included raising the school age from 5 to 6 years, increasing in the number of pupils in each class, and segregating pupils at 12 years of age into secondary and non-secondary schools. SCWG, *Minute Books of the Central Council*, CWS1/39/1/7, 1 March 1922.

<sup>310</sup> Ibid, CWS1/39/1/9, 14 June 1933.

<sup>311</sup> Hughes, *A Rough Kind of 'Feminism'*, p. 168.

<sup>312</sup> SCWG, *Minute Books of the Central Council*, CWS1/39/1/9, 17 June 1932. This involved assisting and taking part in demonstrations organised by the Glasgow and District Conference Association, which represented eighty societies, including the Guild. SCWG, *Minute Books of the Central Council*, CWS1/39/1/9, 31 August 1932. The president even suggested that guildwomen would 'march to London if necessary' to demand that their 'protest be taken up'. SCWG, *Fortieth Annual Report*, CSW1/39/6/40, 1933-1934.

<sup>313</sup> SCWG, *Minute Books of the Central Council*, CWS1/39/1/9, 17 June 1932. Eight resolutions supported by twenty branches had been submitted in this session, with a composite resolution being drafted from them all. SCWG, *Thirty-eighth Annual Report*, CSW1/39/6/38, 1931-1932.

Guild was 'appalled at the misery inflicted by this most unjust measure'.<sup>314</sup> The president Mrs Hardstaff stated that it 'had the effect of breaking up homes, because sons and daughters had to go into lodgings in order to get their unemployment benefit, or in order that the father might receive his'. Indeed she even suggested that the 'national Government had done all they could to destroy self-respect of thousands of homes'.<sup>315</sup>

The Guild also supported the trade union movement, with the miners' strikes of 1921-1922 and the general strike of 1926 receiving particular attention. The central council empathised with the miners stating that 'like Co-operators, the miners had found themselves face to face with private trade allied to the government', therefore 'with the miners the Co-operators had a common cause and common enemy'.<sup>316</sup> The president Mrs MacDonald reiterated this sentiment in 1921 when she suggested, 'let us not forget that the miners' fight is our fight and if they are compelled to submit to the master's terms it will be serious for all trades'.<sup>317</sup> Branches were encouraged to take collections at monthly meetings as 'our movement can be of enormous service collectively' and 'every little given means victory not only for the miners but for us'.<sup>318</sup>

This class unity was again present in the Guild's response to the general strike of 1926, which began with support for the miners in their opposition to proposed wage reductions. The central council argued that the miners' wages were 'inadequate as a return for vital services to the nation, in industrial and home life, rendered daily at risk of life and limb'.<sup>319</sup> The president Mrs McNair also insisted that such wage reductions would not only affect mining, 'the basic industry of the country', but as 'every other industry depended upon it', all workers would suffer as a result of the actions of the mine owners and government.<sup>320</sup> The central council forwarded resolutions to all branches stating that 'the power should be taken out of their hands in inflicting hardship on the producers of wealth'.<sup>321</sup> It demanded that the government 'insist on the immediate re-opening of the pits on the terms existing before the lock-out, pending national reorganisation of coal production and distribution'.

As the general strike progressed support for the miners was strengthened. McNair informed the guildwomen that 'if success is to be achieved there must be strong cohesion among the working classes and support for the principle for which the workers are agitating, namely a better standard of life for all'.<sup>322</sup> She also stated that 'the leaders of the Trade Unions have not entered into the strife in the spirit of self-interest but to secure for their members

<sup>314</sup> SCWG, *Thirty-eighth Annual Report*, CSW1/39/6/38, 1931-1932.

<sup>315</sup> SCWG, *Thirty-ninth Annual Report*, CSW1/39/6/39, 1932-1933.

<sup>316</sup> SCWG, *Twenty-eighth Annual Report*, CSW1/39/6/28, 1921-1922 and *Thirty-second Annual Report*, CSW1/39/6/32, 1925-1926.

<sup>317</sup> SCWG, *Minute Books of the Central Council*, CWS1/39/1/7, 6 April 1921.

<sup>318</sup> *Ibid*, 4 May 1921.

<sup>319</sup> SCWG, *Thirty-third Annual Report*, CSW1/39/6/33, 1926-1927.

<sup>320</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>321</sup> SCWG, *Minute Books of the Central Council*, CWS1/39/1/8, 5 August 1925.

<sup>322</sup> *Ibid*, 5 May 1926.

adequate recompense for their labours'. McNair insisted that guildwomen 'must support the trade union leaders in their efforts and give the wives of the workers every assistance to carry on until the struggle is over'. She suggested that 'all must make sacrifices in the fight, but let no murmur of complaint pass our lips and we will emerge from the battle with a greater sense of unity'.<sup>323</sup> This unity involved heavy criticism of middle-class strike-breakers, who 'during the recent stoppage' took 'the place of workers'. Such individuals were accused of 'volunteering for pleasant jobs' but not 'offering to go down into the dark bowels of the earth to bring up coal'.<sup>324</sup>

During the general strike guildwomen were encouraged to 'give their quota of services to the mining areas where the work would be most useful', which included giving 'every help possible' to the miners, their wives and children 'in their time of need'.<sup>325</sup> This involved taking collections at meetings and fund raising, the proceeds of which were donated to the Scottish Relief Fund organised by the National Union of Scottish Mine Workers.<sup>326</sup> Finance and clothing was also donated directly to women and children in the mining areas, with this being considered especially urgent in the winter months.<sup>327</sup> Hughes argues that while historians often disregard this informal activity, it should be acknowledged as 'it involved immense sacrifice on the part of women in terms of time, energy and material provision'.<sup>328</sup> Moreover she suggests that this work 'held the capacity to politicise women'. Indeed, resolutions demanding the relief of miners dependents containing 'lists of persons suffering in health owing to inadequate food and clothing' were sent to Sir John Gilmour, secretary of state for Scotland, who forwarded these on to the Scottish Board of Health.<sup>329</sup>

The Guild's working-class roots and increasing involvement in the politics of the Co-operative movement were therefore influential in the promotion of Co-operative propaganda and the support of other class-based issues. However, the Guild's support for direct representation, opposition to taxation, loyalty to Co-operative products and charity work on behalf of the convalescent homes, did not represent compliance to the leadership of the Co-operative movement, but rather an increasing responsibility within the movement. The Guild was again restricted to roles within the wider movement that were based upon women's maternal qualities. Yet such increased responsibility earned the Guild credibility, support and respect. In addition the central council of the Guild supported these issues as it argued that

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<sup>323</sup> Ibid.

<sup>324</sup> SCWG, *Thirty-third Annual Report*, CSW1/39/6/33, 1926-1927.

<sup>325</sup> Ibid.

<sup>326</sup> SCWG, *Minute Books of the Central Council*, CWS1/39/1/8, 30 June 1926.

<sup>327</sup> Ibid, 8 September 1926, 29 September 1926. SCWG, *Thirty-third Annual Report*, CSW1/39/6/33, 1926-1927.

<sup>328</sup> Hughes, *A Rough Kind of 'Feminism'*, p. 75.

<sup>329</sup> SCWG, *Minute Books of the Central Council*, CWS1/39/1/8, 27 October 1926 and 29 December 1926. The central council drew attention to the plight of the miners again in 1928 due to the closure of pits. Branches were expected to give financial support and take action politically by making appeals to the government. SCWG, *Minute Books of the Central Council*, CWS1/39/1/8, 16 April 1928.

they would also be beneficial for its members. Guildwomen did not always agree, as was the case with direct representation, yet the central council's intentions were clear, to improve the lives of its working-class members by improving the circumstances of the Co-operative movement. The same was true for the Guild's support of more broadly class-based concerns such as opposition to the means test, youth unemployment, and the miners' disputes and general strike. In each case support was given as it was felt these measures would improve the lives of its members in ensuring that they and their children were not subject to such perceived injustices.

It was in this way that the Guild's actions in supporting such campaigns were feminist. The Guild through its working-class solidarity and loyalty to the Co-operative movement was stating its view and ensuring that the woman's perspective on such issues was heard. It largely reiterated the importance of women's private roles associated with the home and family, which reflects the restricted nature of the Guild's role in the Co-operative movement. Yet, by emphasising the importance of this role the Guild tested the boundaries of the sphere assigned to it by the movement. The Guild attempted to make the specialities of its members, as working-class wives and mothers, central to Co-operative propaganda and these class based issues, in order to ensure that their interests were served by the Co-operative and labour movements.

### Conclusion

The Guild's relationship and involvement in the wider Co-operative movement, and its working-class identity, was influential in the way it conducted and framed the campaigns that were encompassed in all three types of its propaganda, 'political', 'social' and 'Co-operative'. This influence was most clearly seen in the promotion of the latter, with the campaign for direct representation of the Co-operative movement in parliament and the promotion of Co-operative goods and principles being guided by the central council's belief that guildwomen were 'ambassadors for the gospel of Co-operation'.<sup>330</sup> Class-based issues such as opposition to the means test, youth unemployment and support for the miners' strikes were also influenced by its involvement in the Co-operative movement, as this was an integral part of the broader labour movement. Thus working-class solidarity was promoted in such campaigns just as loyalty to the movement was emphasised in the Co-operative campaigns.

The Guild's political and social propaganda was also affected by its involvement in the Co-operative movement. Its support of the family wage ensured that its view of the endowment of motherhood and family allowances differed from that of the GSEC and the EWCA. Similarly, the Guild's pacifism was underpinned by its belief in the establishment of a

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<sup>330</sup> Ibid, CWS1/39/1/7, 4 February 1925.



Co-operative Commonwealth and Co-operative internationalism. The Guild's demands for housing reform were an essential element of its 'social propaganda'. This campaign was reflective of the labour movement's, and specifically the ILP's, early campaign for social justice through 'municipal socialism', which prominently included improved housing conditions for the working classes. Working-class female activism was especially relevant in this campaign historically, with the actions of women's groups in the rent strikes of 1915 remaining influential on the Guild in the interwar years. Its continuing demands for rent restrictions illustrates this. Finally the Co-operative movement's views regarding the welfare of young children and their mothers, and the impacts of this for the 'nation', also guided the Guild's campaigns for improved maternity care for working-class mothers.

It could be suggested that the extent of the Co-operative movement's influence on the Guild led to it prioritising class over gender, which in turn resulted in an acceptance of inequality within gender relations in the 'private' sphere of the home and family, and also in society more broadly. However the reality was more complex than such an analysis would suggest. Guildwomen were working-class women. The central council of the Guild therefore prioritised the interests of its members as both women and members of the working classes, with these identities being fundamentally interlinked. Thus, its involvement and relationship with the Co-operative movement did not, in this sense, place limitations on its feminism or feminist activity. Instead this facilitated its demands for the improvement of the standard of living for working-class women and their families, as Co-operative ideology essentially demanded the same. As the president Mrs Watson argued in 1937 guildwomen had become increasingly determined to improve 'their present conditions through the principles and practice of Co-operation'.<sup>331</sup> Admittedly the Guild was ascribed a restricted role within the movement based upon the private sphere of the home and family. While this may have made it difficult for the Guild to directly challenge the sexual division of labour within working-class homes or society, the Guild embraced its 'special role' in the Co-operative movement. It emphasised the importance of motherhood and attempted to elevate the status of the wife and mother in order to gain recognition of its campaigns and demands. Ultimately this strategy of the 'assertion of the feminine', and use of 'the language of their oppressors', was successful in ensuring that the Guild and its members gained a voice in the Co-operative movement. This enabled the Guild to put forward its agenda, which encompassed 'political', 'social' and 'Co-operative' propaganda. It was in this way that the Guild employed its 'gendered' citizenship and practiced its feminism.

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<sup>331</sup> SCWG, *Forty-fourth Annual Report*, CSW1/39/6/44, 1937-1938.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### ‘In the Service of Home and Country’: The Scottish Women’s Rural Institutes

The Scottish Women’s Rural Institutes (Rurals) were concerned with countrywomen’s responsibilities in two areas, the home and the nation. Often the Rurals explicitly linked women’s perceived duties in the home to the fortunes of the nation, which established an intimate connection between these two spheres of activity. While the Rurals largely focused on countrywomen’s role in the home and on the farm, appearing to conform to a model of Victorian domesticity, this was not the case. Like the Scottish Co-operative Women’s Guild, the Rurals used women’s roles associated with the private sphere of the home and family to justify women’s involvement in the public sphere. Thus ‘private’ attributes associated with caring for the family could be extended into the public realm of the community and eventually the nation. This was apparent in its demands for improved rural housing, where women’s knowledge and experience of poor housing was used as evidence in government reports. Similarly imperialist discourses relating to women’s ‘duty to the nation’ were employed to justify the formation of the Rurals in 1917, and continued to be a guiding force throughout the interwar years. It justified the establishment of classes in drama and music by arguing that these would provide education as well as entertainment, which would help ease rural depopulation and improve country life. In both cases the Rurals’ involvement reflected broader national concerns relating to the government’s provision of housing and adult education.

#### Duty to the Nation

The Rurals inherited from its English counterpart the idea that the home was the ‘foundation of national prosperity’.<sup>1</sup> Mrs Watt, the English organiser, argued at the inaugural meeting of the Rurals in 1917 that the rural home occupied ‘a position of extraordinary significance’.<sup>2</sup> She stated that the farm home was not an ordinary home, but rather ‘a place where the activities of the farm centred’. The efficiency of the farm home therefore ‘directly influenced the prosperity of the farm itself’.<sup>3</sup> Watt suggested that the Rurals could begin by ‘seeking to improve the conditions of the home’, which would then be followed by demands for better social conditions and improved agricultural conditions more broadly.<sup>4</sup> As a result, it became

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<sup>1</sup> *The Scotsman*, 28 June 1917, p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

the aim of the Rurals to 'link up the home with the community and consider the social, educational and industrial requirements of rural life'.<sup>5</sup>

Sir Robert Greig, of the Board of Agriculture for Scotland, reinforced this view. He stated that the movement would have a 'great and important influence on the future life of agricultural districts, and on the prosperity and the happiness of those who dwelt in the country'.<sup>6</sup> Greig also argued that Scottish women had taken 'a great and important part in the work of the development of agriculture' and suggested that they were 'capable of much more in ensuring the success of the agricultural industry'.<sup>7</sup> This explained why he, and the Board of Agriculture, strongly supported the formation of the Rurals.<sup>8</sup> Greig also highlighted its wider responsibilities, stating that its formation 'offered a unique opportunity for the women in the home to render national service' as 'the strength of our Empire lies in the homes of our people'.<sup>9</sup> At the Rurals' first annual conference a year later, he reiterated these views and insisted that it was 'a great army of women', who were 'united in one common bond of service to their country'.<sup>10</sup> For him this was an indication that 'the women of Scotland' wished to express their 'sense of responsibility of citizenship in social service'. The requirements of citizenship were therefore connected explicitly with service to the nation.

However, it is possible that the Board of Agriculture, and government more broadly, had alternative motives for supporting the Rurals. Following the First World War, which illustrated Britain's reliance on foreign exports, British agriculture was given a renewed importance in national life. This ensured that rural areas were given greater political significance.<sup>11</sup> The Labour Party began focusing on campaigning in rural areas to challenge the Conservative Party's domination in such areas.<sup>12</sup> Consequently there was a growth in agricultural trade unions, although this was not as successful in Scotland as England.<sup>13</sup> In spite of this it is possible that the Government's support for the formation of the Rurals was an attempt to pacify rural working-class communities with education and leisure to prevent such unionisation or growth of Labour politics. The central council of the Rurals proved to be supportive of government initiatives. Indeed as a result of its non-political status it could be

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid, 12 September 1917, p. 3.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, 28 June 1917, p. 3.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, 29 June 1918, p. 7. Sir Robert Wright, of the Board of Agriculture for Scotland, was also impressed by the Rurals' remarkable progress, and hoped that the Highland and Agricultural Society, the Scottish Chamber of Agriculture, and other agricultural societies would 'interest themselves actively by giving moral and financial support to the work of the institutes'.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, 28 June 1917, p. 3.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, 29 June 1918, p. 7.

<sup>11</sup> This was accompanied by changing perceptions of rural areas as idyllic, in comparison to the often overcrowded housing conditions to be found in urban Britain. While this glorification of the countryside was largely based on imagination rather than reality, it was powerful.

<sup>12</sup> For further discussion of the changing perception of rural areas, as a result of the importance of agriculture following the First World War, see C. Griffiths, *Labour and the Countryside: The Politics of Rural Britain, 1918-1939*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2007.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, p. 178-213 and especially p. 198-202 which considers the Scottish Farm Servants Union.

described as politically conservative, although individual branches could be more politicised on issues such as housing and unemployment.

It follows that the central council wholeheartedly adopted the notion of women's duty to the nation. In March 1918 Catherine Blair made a special appeal to the members of the Rurals to 'respond to the call which had come to them at this critical period to help the nation in its life and death struggle for existence'.<sup>14</sup> Such evocative and sometimes dramatic language was often used to appeal to the members. At the first annual conference Blair stated that, while the existence of the Rurals had 'undoubtedly done much to improve the social amenities of neighbourhoods', it could also help in the government's general economy campaign. She described how many Rurals had collected waste paper, which was sold and the proceeds donated to the Scottish Women's Hospitals.<sup>15</sup> The Rurals were also involved in 'a large amount' of work for the Red Cross.<sup>16</sup>

Charity work continued to be a significant part of the Rurals' 'citizenship work' in the interwar years. Such work, viewed as 'helping the nation', was used as justification of its member's participation in the public sphere, as it 'widened and deepened' the private sphere. The 'notable' charity work of the Rurals was listed in *Scottish Home and Country*. This included 'donations to others', and 'gifts to hospitals', such as the collection of fresh eggs from farms for the patients.<sup>17</sup> Fundraising for the maintenance of hospitals also featured prominently.<sup>18</sup> Ayrshire federation collected boxes of eggs, thirty dozen per box, in the spring 'when eggs were plentiful and cheap' and also sacks of potatoes and turnips in the autumn.<sup>19</sup> To celebrate the Silver Jubilee of King George and Queen Mary in 1935 it raised £500 for the endowment of a 'Child's Cot' in Ayr County Hospital. Rurals also gave to other charitable bodies of their own volition. Fenwick SWRI, for example, gave donations to the Russian Famine Relief Fund and Kilmarnock Unemployment Fund, along with donations to Kilmarnock Infirmary.<sup>20</sup> Similarly, while Mauchline SWRI collected eggs for the county's

<sup>14</sup> *The Scotsman*, 18 March 1918, p. 6. As discussed in chapter one, Catherine Blair is considered to be the leading force behind the establishment of the Rurals in Scotland. Her sentiments reiterate the emphasis placed on agriculture following the First World War, and its place in improving national efficiency.

<sup>15</sup> *The Scotsman*, 30 January 1919, p. 7. This was an appropriate charity considering its commitment to the nation and thus war work.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 29 June 1918, p. 7. Also see The Ayrshire Federation, *The Best of the Old, The Best of the New: History of the Ayrshire Federation SWRI, 1921-2006*, Walker and Connell Ltd, Darvel, Ayrshire, 2006, p. 41.

<sup>17</sup> *Scottish Home and Country*, June-December 1930, January 1932, February 1932, April 1932, June 1932, July 1932, August 1932, January-December 1936.

<sup>18</sup> Southwick SWRI, *Minute Book*, Dumfries and Galloway Archives, GGD521/12/1, 19 June 1923, and Gelston SWRI, *Minute Book*, Dumfries and Galloway Archives, GGD/521/13/1, 8 August 1933. As discussed in chapters three and four such charity work was also common in urban areas, with the EWCA and the Guild engaging in fundraising for hospitals.

<sup>19</sup> The Ayrshire Federation, *The Best of the Old, The Best of the New*, p. 13. Rurals in Stirlingshire also collected eggs for hospitals, with Kippen SWRI collecting 68 dozen eggs after an appeal from Stirling Royal Infirmary. Kippen SWRI, *Minutes of Committee Meetings*, Stirling Council Archives Services, PD 97/1/1, 27 April 1938.

<sup>20</sup> The Ayrshire Federation, *The Best of the Old, The Best of the New*, p. 85. Such donations for the relief of unemployment have obvious comparisons to the support given to similar charitable bodies by the Guild.

two main hospitals, and collected toys for children in hospital at Christmas time, it also catered for a concert in support of the unemployed.<sup>21</sup>

Assisting in the government's economy campaign also encouraged the Rurals' patriotic sense of women's duty in ensuring national efficiency.<sup>22</sup> Consequently, the central council encouraged the promotion of 'agricultural domestic economy' such as the keeping of goats and bees and the co-operative tending of school gardens.<sup>23</sup> In 1931 it formed the Co-operative Production and Marketing Committee to oversee the Rurals' involvement in such activities, the remit of which evolved to include the production and sale of agricultural produce and craft goods.<sup>24</sup> This was further divided in 1932 into two 'sectional sub-committees' for food and handicrafts.<sup>25</sup> It was hoped that this committee would stimulate and increase rural, and thus British, trade and would in turn make the nation more self-reliant and efficient. The central council argued that 'the present national emergency' meant that the increase in British trade was an 'urgent matter' that should be 'dealt with' immediately.<sup>26</sup> Its scheme gained the 'warm approval' of Sir Robert Greig, who stated that 'he knew of no body of people in the country who would be more likely to make a success' than the Rurals.<sup>27</sup> The Scottish Agricultural Organisation Society also offered its help, with a prominent member, T. G. Henderson stating that it was 'most encouraging' to know that the Rurals had decided to assist in forming the necessary organisation, and he welcomed 'their interest and co-operation'.<sup>28</sup>

The central council hoped that the county federations would support the formation of this committee, as it was a 'great opportunity' for the Rurals to 'organise work of great value to the nation'.<sup>29</sup> Indeed its convenor Mrs Douglas stated that as 'the only really neutral and independent body in the whole of rural Scotland' the Rurals were in the unique position, if they 'had the grit to take advantage of it', for 'serving our country and really producing betterment in Scottish rural life'.<sup>30</sup> Lady Elgin of the Food Production Sub Committee agreed, she suggested that each federation should 'encourage individual effort to help the country in its

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However it is unclear whether there were the same class-based political motivations behind Fenwick SWRI's actions.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, p. 107. Also see Mauchline SWRI, *Minutes*, Ayrshire archives centre, ACC 1196, Box 2/4, 17 January 1938.

<sup>22</sup> The Rurals involvement in the Food Economy Campaign in the immediate aftermath of the First World War was used as justification for its formation. See chapter one for further details.

<sup>23</sup> *The Scotsman*, 23 November 1917, p. 3.

<sup>24</sup> SWRI, *Yearly Central Council Meetings*, uncatalogued archives held at SWRI headquarters, 42 Heriot Row, Edinburgh, 18 November 1931.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, 30 November 1932.

<sup>26</sup> *Scottish Home and Country*, January 1932. The details of the 'national emergency' were not specified but it is likely that this reference is to the worsening economic depression of the late 1920s and early 1930s.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, March 1932. The Rurals had received the support of the Department of Agriculture for Scotland from 1929 when it had approached the central council for information and figures concerning its work in the co-operative production and marketing of agricultural produce. SWRI, *Yearly Central Council Meetings*, 13 November 1929.

<sup>28</sup> *Scottish Home and Country*, February 1932.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, January 1932.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, March 1932.

hour of need'.<sup>31</sup> She also insisted that each federation call a joint meeting of all people and organisations that would be interested in the scheme, such as the Education Committee, Agricultural Colleges, Agricultural Organisation Society, Farmers' Union, Farm Servants' Union, large producers of foodstuffs, and co-operative societies. It was suggested that the aim of the resultant local committees should be to 'explore and examine any possible means of promoting larger production and better marketing'.<sup>32</sup>

The aims of the Co-operative Production and Marketing Committee were therefore in line with the Rurals' overall objectives with regard to the promotion of national efficiency.<sup>33</sup> Its formation would provide an opportunity for the co-operative marketing of both agricultural produce and handicrafts, which it was hoped would result in a reduction of wastage and additional income for those participating in the local committees.<sup>34</sup> The Rurals would be helping by providing individuals in country areas with a forum and platform for marketing and selling their goods. This would be a co-operative endeavour in rural villages, with individuals, organisations and the Rurals coming together to improve productivity.<sup>35</sup>

However there was conflict over the implications of this committee for the membership. Winifred T Mitchell of the Whitebridge SWRI voiced her concerns in an article in *Scottish Home and Country*, entitled 'Are We Undertaking Too Much?' She feared that the federations and Rurals were already doing enough work, and she pleaded to the central council not to give office bearers 'a burden too big to bear'.<sup>36</sup> Mitchell suggested that it was the 'forte' of the Rurals to help its country by 'bringing happiness and vigour into its cottages and homes', rather than 'going out of its sphere by interfering with committees, such as education, agricultural colleges and other unions'.<sup>37</sup> She insisted that while all of the members of her Rural made a great effort to keep up with competitions for agricultural shows and annual

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> The Rurals' Co-operative Production and Marketing Committee was also a reflection of broader developments in the marketing of British produce in the interwar years. This included the 'buy British' campaigns of the 1930s, the objective of which was to stimulate British trade and thereby alleviate the effects of the economic depression on the nation. These campaigns, which focused on agricultural produce, depended on the promotion of patriotism to encourage consumers to purchase British goods instead of the often cheaper foreign equivalent. Politically conservative and largely middle-class organisations such as the Guild of Empire and National Council Women also promoted these campaigns. As discussed the Guild was also similarly involved in the promotion of Co-operative produce through 'push-the-sales' campaigns, which relied on Co-operative rather than nationalistic ideology. Thus the promotion and marketing of produce was an issue supported by a variety of women's organisations.

<sup>34</sup> The financial and other benefits of such co-operative enterprises will be discussed in greater detail below. The marketing of surpluses from agriculture for 'important cash income' was traditionally a women's role on the farm. D. Simonton, 'Work, Trade and Commerce', in L. Abrams, E. Gordon, D. Simonton and E. J. Yeo (eds.) *Gender and Scottish History since 1700*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 2006, p. 201.

<sup>35</sup> While the Rurals' involvement in such marketing reflects the co-operative ethos of the Guild and Co-operative movement, in the sense that people would work together for one common aim, it did not share its politics.

<sup>36</sup> *Scottish Home and Country*, April 1932.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

rallies, many went to monthly meetings ‘just to sit and rest’.<sup>38</sup> As a result she felt that if members were to be asked to take part in organising societies for trading purposes they ‘shall be asked to do more than they are able for, and therefore shall do nothing well’.<sup>39</sup> Another member, who signed her letter ‘Ayrshire’, agreed, arguing that the federations were already overburdened with work, and suggesting that the Marketing Board may be ‘the straw which broke the camel’s back’.<sup>40</sup>

Mrs Douglas, convenor of the Co-operative Production and Marketing Committee, defended the central council stating that while she sympathised with those who feared that the federations might be overburdened by this new development, she did not think members should be alarmed. Rurals were not expected to act as trading organisations, but rather it was suggested that the place that they ‘held in the life of rural Scotland’ gave them ‘unique opportunities’ to initiate ‘new attempts to meet the difficulties of the present hard times’.<sup>41</sup> While every Rural had the opportunity of joining the scheme, none would be obliged to do so. She emphasised that, as in all matters, the Rurals had ‘the fullest freedom of choice’, and that the central council were simply providing an opportunity for the consideration of members.<sup>42</sup> She acknowledged that not all Rurals would have members who would benefit from selling agricultural produce or handicrafts through trading committees, but for those that did this would be an important development. The central council therefore pressed on with its plans regardless of this opposition.

In 1933 it embarked upon an even more ambitious scheme, suggesting that it could assist in the national marketing of eggs through the Co-operative Production and Marketing Committee.<sup>43</sup> This ‘poultry work’ was singled out as it ‘was to large extent in the hands of women’, and was therefore a ‘side of agricultural work’ in which its members ‘would be especially interested’.<sup>44</sup> The under Secretary for Scotland rejected the proposals suggesting that there was ‘no evidence of any desire in Scotland for an egg marketing scheme’.<sup>45</sup> He recommended that the Rurals should be advised to ‘curb their enthusiasm’ and instead focus on

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid, May 1932 and June 1932.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> SWRI, *Yearly Central Council Meetings*, 30 November 1932. This decision had followed ‘the drafting of a Trading Scheme for the better Collection and Marketing of Eggs’ by Food Production Sub Committee of the Co-operative Production and Marketing Committee in 1932.

<sup>44</sup> Livestock Products and Agricultural Marketing Files, *Eggs and Poultry Marketing Scheme, Proposals by Scottish Women’s Rural Institute, Imports, Deputation from National Poultry Council*, AF46/155, National Archives of Scotland, 23 January 1933. Griffiths also argues that British farmers were increasingly losing out to overseas competition in the interwar years, ‘even in commodities for which they had natural advantages, like dairy products and eggs’. Arguably the government and farmers unions would have wanted to reverse this trend, the Rurals may therefore have been strategic in choosing to become involved in egg marketing.

<sup>45</sup> Livestock Products and Agricultural Marketing Files, *Eggs and Poultry Marketing Scheme*, AF46/155, 23 January 1933.

encouraging co-operative organisation as they had been doing.<sup>46</sup> The Board were aware of the Rurals' work in this field and noted that it was 'doing quite useful work in a small way' by organising co-operative marketing by their members.<sup>47</sup> He also stated that it was not the Board's intention to 'discourage the Institutes from taking an interest in large-scale marketing organisation', as it could 'provide a medium' which could be used for the circulation of propaganda 'in favour of well-conceived schemes'.<sup>48</sup> The Board felt that the Rurals were not equipped to organise a large-scale campaign, but could assist in publicising government initiated campaigns.<sup>49</sup>

The central council was not dissuaded and continued to lobby for the establishment of a national egg-marketing scheme, in which it would play a prominent role. In November 1933 it submitted a draft scheme for the collection and marketing of eggs to the Secretary of State for Scotland 'for his information'.<sup>50</sup> On this occasion its determination resulted in members of the central council being invited to give evidence before the Reorganisation Commission for the Marketing of Eggs and Poultry.<sup>51</sup> In addition it sought advice from the Scottish Agricultural Organisation Society attending a conference on the marketing of eggs and poultry in 1935, and discussions were also held with a representative of the East of Scotland College of Agriculture.<sup>52</sup> As a result the central council was represented on the committee formed to consider the report of the Reorganisation Commission for Scotland in 1936.<sup>53</sup> It continued to be consulted on issues relating to eggs and poultry.<sup>54</sup>

### Education

The educational opportunities provided for the members of the Rurals were similarly influenced by the central council's sense of women's duty to the nation in improving national efficiency. Indeed it often supported its applications for funding, or answered criticism from

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid. The Board's stated that the members of the Committee did not have 'sufficient knowledge' of large-scale marketing organisation to 'warrant their aspiration to undertake the functions of a Reorganisation Commission'.

<sup>50</sup> SWRI, *Yearly Central Council Meetings*, 22 November 1933.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid, 22 November 1933 and 14 March 1934. The Rurals were represented at this meeting in March of the following year. Members of the central committee were advised to 'send to the Council office any useful information or suggestions they might collect in their Federations, to be brought before the commission in the next meeting'. Therefore the members were consulted on their views.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid, 20 November 1935. On this occasion it agreed to send a recommendation to the Great Britain Reorganisation Commission 'that any levy imposed on imported eggs should be utilised for the express purpose of erecting, equipping, and otherwise establishing Egg and Poultry Packing Stations set up by producers under an Egg and Poultry Marketing Scheme'.

<sup>53</sup> *Scottish Home and Country*, July 1936.

<sup>54</sup> SWRI, *Yearly Central Council Meetings*, 28 October 1937. In 1937 the Rurals were invited to send representatives to give evidence at meetings of the Poultry Technical Committee in Aberdeen and Edinburgh. It was noted that the committee 'expressed their gratitude at the helpful evidence given in both cases'.



local men, by stressing the benefits of this education for the whole community.<sup>55</sup> The Rurals' targeting of rural depopulation through its provision of such education that was most effective in this regard. Rural depopulation dominated the politics of rural Scotland and was intimately connected to issues such as land reform, agricultural competitiveness, and in turn national efficiency. It also featured prominently in many government reports, including those on adult education and housing. The issue of rural depopulation received wide coverage in the popular press, especially following the publication of government findings. In 1919 for example *The Scotsman* gave an account of the Report of the Committee on Women in Agriculture. This suggested that 'the influence of the town and industrial life should be counteracted', as this outweighed 'to a dangerous extent' the 'claims and needs of the country'.<sup>56</sup>

Depopulation remained a very real concern for the inhabitants of rural areas. This was clearly illustrated in an address given by Provost MacEwan at the Rurals' national conference in Perth in 1931. He argued that the nation was 'industrially overloaded' as a result of the fact that 'the great cities have been draining away the population from the countryside'.<sup>57</sup> MacEwan also insisted that 'we shall never have a healthy nation until the balance between the town and country is, in some measure, readjusted'.<sup>58</sup> He argued that the Rurals could play a prominent role in achieving such readjustment, thereby 'accomplishing one of the greatest revolutions in the history of Scotland'. It could do so by 'getting the young people in all the straths and glens to realise that the country's possibilities' were 'equal those of any', and that the 'work and pleasures of the countryside' were 'greater, deeper and more soul satisfying than the fancy pleasures and allurements of the town'.<sup>59</sup>

As a result, rural depopulation was an influential factor in the provision of adult education by the government, and also influenced the level of funding given to voluntary agencies such as the Rurals. In 1917 the government's Reconstruction Committee appointed a committee to consider adult education. Its report published in 1919 proved to be 'a powerful factor in the development of adult education between the wars'.<sup>60</sup> The government hoped that the development of educational opportunities for adults in a range of skills, both agricultural and artistic, would result in a more efficient agricultural industry and an improved social life for the rural population. It followed that rural depopulation would decline, as people would be more inclined to remain in country areas. This report recommended the expansion of 'extra mural' programmes by universities in association with the Workers Education Association. Kelly argues that this process was 'inadequate' in Scotland in comparison to the rest of

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<sup>55</sup> See chapters one and two for further discussion of male opposition to the formation of Rurals.

<sup>56</sup> *The Scotsman*, 15 September 1920, p. 8.

<sup>57</sup> *Scottish Home and Country*, January 1931.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>60</sup> T. Kelly, *A History of Adult Education in Great Britain*, Liverpool University Press, third edition, 1992, p. 268.

Britain.<sup>61</sup> Consequently the classes provided by the Rurals were essential in providing education for adults throughout the interwar period. In fact Kelly describes the growing participation of Women's Institutes throughout Britain as 'one of the most remarkable features of twentieth century adult education'.<sup>62</sup> Mr Munro, the secretary for Scotland, made a similar claim in 1920 when he stated that rural depopulation 'could be arrested by no better means than the methods that were being employed by the Institutes'.<sup>63</sup>

These methods were varied, with the education provided for the members of the Rurals taking many forms. The central council began exploiting the medium of radio broadcasting in 1926 when prominent members of the central council presented a series of programmes considering the work of the Rurals.<sup>64</sup> In 1928 *Scottish Home and Country* also began publishing lists of programmes that it considered would be useful for members.<sup>65</sup> In addition, representatives of the central council attended a conference held by the British Institute of Adult Education and the British Broadcasting Corporation to discuss the 'great value of broadcasting in adult education' and the need for co-operation between the BBC and voluntary organisations.<sup>66</sup> The central council also investigated the possibility of using films for educational purposes.<sup>67</sup> In 1931 the Educational Committee of the central council suggested that it could organise 'a scheme of travelling cinemas in Scotland'.<sup>68</sup> Finally, the central council also promoted local adult educational institutions such as the College of Adult Education at Newbattle Abbey in Dalkeith.<sup>69</sup> It printed articles in *Scottish Home and Country*

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid, p. 275.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid, p. 302. Moore also notes that the Rurals were 'one of the most successful 'self-help' educational institutions'. L. Moore, 'Education and Learning', in L. Abrams, E. Gordon, D. Simonton and E. J. Yeo (eds.) *Gender and Scottish History since 1700*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 2006, p. 130.

<sup>63</sup> *The Scotsman*, 20 May 1920, p. 5.

<sup>64</sup> *Scottish Home and Country*, December 1926. Later talks in the series dealt specifically with the educational aspect of the movement, such as 'Education and the Institutes' by Miss Haldane, 'Institutes and Agricultural Education' by Mrs Moir-Byres and 'Handicrafts and the Institutes' by Miss Bruce.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid, February 1928. A series entitled 'Women's Part in Village Life' was given special attention as Mrs Anstruther-Gray gave the final talk on the role that the Rurals 'may be expected to play in village life tomorrow'.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid, February 1928 and June 1928. At this conference, Dr Burnett, Director of Education for the County of Dumfries, stated that the Rurals were the 'most important voluntary agency for adult education in the rural areas of Scotland'. He insisted that the Rurals 'give careful attention to making the best use of the great opportunities offered by the rapid development of broadcasting'. As a result the central council often sent 'suggestions for broadcast talks which would be of interest to institute members'. SWRI, *Yearly Central Council Meetings*, 22 November 1933. The BBC also sent the central council pamphlets advertising 'programmes of interest' to be circulated throughout the Rurals, and representatives visited Rurals giving talks on its work and asking for programming suggestions. Mauchline SWRI, *Minutes*, Acc 1196, Box 2/4, 17 January 1938. Arnprior SWRI, *Committee Minutes and Record of Meetings*, PD 192/2/4, Stirling Council Archive Services, 15 February 1926.

<sup>67</sup> The Rurals were later represented on the Scottish Film Council, showing particular interest in educational films. Scottish Film Council, *Monthly Film Bulletin*, Vol. 3, No. 14, October 1937.

<sup>68</sup> SWRI, *Yearly Central Council Meetings*, 18 November 1931. After investigation the central council decided that the scheme was too ambitious as the 'costs were too large'. Instead it recommended that 'in the meantime' those Rurals which had access to suitable halls 'might arrange cinema evenings once or twice a year' at which 'good films could be shown'.

<sup>69</sup> Perth and Kinross Federation of the SWRI, *Executive Committee Minute Book*, Perth and Kinross Regional Archives, MS161, 29 January 1937.

describing the classes offered by such institutions and asking for responses from interested members.<sup>70</sup>

However the main focus of the central council's educational policy was to encourage members to take an interest in the practical agricultural classes organised by federation committees. Such classes included butter and cheese making, and poultry trussing, which again reflected women's perceived expertise in areas of agriculture associated with dairy produce and poultry management.<sup>71</sup> The classes were supplemented by articles in *Scottish Home and Country*.<sup>72</sup> Other 'agricultural domestic science' classes in bee keeping, pig feeding, bacon curing, fruit growing, and gardening were also provided. Representatives from local agricultural colleges on occasion visited branches giving lectures and demonstrations on all of these topics.<sup>73</sup> It was envisaged that all of these classes would provide members with skills that would assist them in their work on the farm. As a result it was suggested that women would be more efficient in their agricultural occupations, which would in turn be of benefit to the nation. Catherine Blair argued that 'through our industry we are increasing the productivity of our country', which again highlights the importance placed on improving national efficiency.<sup>74</sup> In addition, the central council and federations encouraged members to attend agricultural classes provided by local education authorities, which were in 1922 'not attracting sufficient enrolment by women'. In particular poultry rearing classes were again singled out as particularly useful for members of the Rurals, who would have been engaged in such work on farms.<sup>75</sup>

In addition, the 1919 report of the Committee on Women in Agriculture suggested that facilities for the technical training of women in agriculture should be increased and improved, with this being especially urgent 'if the present revival of economic prosperity in the

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<sup>70</sup> SWRI, *Yearly Central Council Meetings*, 17 November 1937.

<sup>71</sup> These agricultural classes also had the objective of motivating members and raising the status of their work on the farm. This led to members competing in County and National Agricultural events. In 1935 the Ayrshire Federation was especially proud of the fact that it had produced the nation's champion butter maker, Miss Annie Woodburn, a member of the Auchencloigh SWRI, who won the Gold medal at the Scottish Fatstock show in Edinburgh. Similarly the Kilmarnock cheese show was 'an important date in Rural calendars' with Mauchline, Sorn and Kingsford, Auchencloigh, Dunlop and Stair SWRI's 'all winning many top awards'. Such public recognition of women's skills in these areas was important in placing women firmly in the public sphere. This provided the individual, and by extension her fellow members, with a sense of achievement, confidence and validation. The Ayrshire Federation, *The Best of the Old, The Best of the New*, 2006, p. 13.

<sup>72</sup> *Scottish Home and Country*, July 1928, February 1932, June 1932. Such articles focused on the 'Breeding and Rearing of Poultry', 'The Housing of Poultry', or 'The Feeding and General Management of Poultry'.

<sup>73</sup> Miss Weir a lecturer from Glasgow Agricultural College gave a lecture on Poultry Keeping to Dundonald SWRI on 7 April 1921. The Ayrshire Federation, *The Best of the Old, The Best of the New*, p. 52. Miss McCutcheon of the West of Scotland Agricultural College gave a similar lecture to the Kippen SWRI entitled 'Poultry Management', which was followed by a demonstration on trussing and boning fowls. Kippen SWRI, *Records of Meetings*, PD 97/1/1, 27 February 1920.

<sup>74</sup> C. Blair, *Rural Journey, A History of the S.W.R.I from Cradle to Majority*, Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd: Edinburgh, 1940, p. 47.

<sup>75</sup> Perth and Kinross Federation of the SWRI, *Executive Committee Minute Book*, MS161, 18 November 1922.

agricultural industry is to be maintained and increased'.<sup>76</sup> The committee stated that it was necessary to bring agricultural education within the reach of the whole agricultural community, and strongly recommended the establishment of local agricultural schools and dairy institutes. Throughout the interwar years the central council actively promoted such schools and visits were arranged as part of annual federation excursions.

The encouragement given to the establishment of home and rural industries by the central council also had the aim of increasing national efficiency. As discussed it placed a particular emphasis on co-operative enterprises, through which members of the community could work together to grow vegetables or produce craft goods that could be sold for a profit.<sup>77</sup> In its report in 1919 the Committee on Women in Agriculture suggested that the development of rural industries and co-operative organisation was 'of great importance', with 'women's future prospects in agriculture largely depending on these two interrelated projects'.<sup>78</sup> Like the central council, it also suggested that fruit and poultry farming, and market gardening should be focused upon. These activities were identified as suitable work for women, which also 'lent themselves easily to co-operative organisation'.<sup>79</sup>

The central council encouraged the co-operative development of such home and rural industries. It was envisaged that these schemes would involve the co-operative buying of materials and also co-operative marketing and selling of the final product. Macmerry SWRI established the first co-operative trading effort during the First World War as part of its economy campaign. The members involved took shares at 2s. 6d. each, which supplied the capital to start the enterprise. Jams and bottled fruits, bearing the name 'Mak' Merry', were produced and sold for a slight profit at the end of each meeting, with funds being raised for the war effort. Catherine Blair's expansion of the 'Mak' Merry' brand, through the establishment of a pottery studio in a shed on her farm, was a good example of how the central council envisaged 'co-operative rural industries' in relation to the production of craft goods. Members were able to visit and paint pottery with their own designs, which often incorporated the 'Mak' Merry' name. The pottery shed had two aims, to enable women to express their artistic abilities, and ultimately to provide those members working in the studio with an additional income.

It was hoped that such efforts would be expanded in the interwar years throughout Scotland. The Scottish sub-committee of the Rural Industries Bureau, established in 1921, defined 'rural industries' as industries, trades and any crafts carried out in rural areas either in the home or in small factories and workshops. This was a definition that the Rurals adopted. In fact its chairman Mrs Anstruther-Gray and Mrs Gooch, the convener of the Handicrafts

<sup>76</sup> *The Scotsman*, 15 September 1920, p. 8.

<sup>77</sup> As discussed its interest in this area later culminated in the formation of the Co-operative Production and Marketing Committee.

<sup>78</sup> *The Scotsman*, 15 September 1920, p. 8.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*

Guild, were represented on this sub-committee. The Board of Agriculture also encouraged the revival or establishment of such rural industries. Mr M J Ramsay, of the Board stated that 'the only really hopeful channel' for the revival of old home crafts and rural industries, or the establishment of new ones, was the Women's Rural Institutes'.<sup>80</sup> He argued that the future of the rural industries and home craft 'lay in the hands of the Rurals'. Thus the Rurals received institutional support in its attempts to establish such industries.

The central council was of the opinion that co-operative methods could also be 'usefully applied' to the marketing of agricultural produce. It encouraged members to attend agricultural classes and form co-operative organisations using the skills learned. As a result Rurals embarked upon such schemes within their communities. Spean Bridge SWRI bought three thousand plants and 50lbs of shallots co-operatively. Its president stated that while its members 'ambitions had never soared higher than a cabbage patch' they were 'now becoming proficient growers of shallots and other vegetables'.<sup>81</sup> The central council suggested that such home industries should not be part of the work of the Rurals, but should be a separate part of its activities, like Blair's pottery shed. Thus involvement was entirely voluntary and the monthly meeting was unaffected and continued to cater for all.

It was also argued that the development of rural and home industries would address the problem of rural depopulation. The Scottish Country Industries Development Trust, formed in 1936, shared the central council's view. A wide range of interests in country life and in the farming and industrial worlds were represented on the board of Trustees and working committee, with the president of the Rurals, Mrs Gooch, being a member of the latter. Its main aim was to 'endeavour to readjust the unequal balance between town and country' which it perceived to be a threat to the well being of Scotland. The Trust argued that rural crafts and industries were 'essential to the full and satisfactory life of the countryside'.<sup>82</sup> Like the Rurals, this Trust hoped that by encouraging the development of rural industries and crafts, increasing opportunities would be available to countrywomen. In turn it was argued that standard of life in rural areas would be improved, which would dissuade or prevent people from relocating to urban areas.

The establishment of rural and home industries was also described as a 'useful extension of WRI work', which would give employment to women and girls 'during the winter months and at other times when seasonal work in agriculture was not available'.<sup>83</sup> This was an attempt to empower women, by helping them to find ways to earn their own money. This also

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<sup>80</sup> Ibid, 19 July 1926, p. 4.

<sup>81</sup> Spean Bridge also 'supported the idea of co-operation in the supply of dairy produce, eggs and garden stuffs'. J. E. Courtney, *Countrywomen in council. The English and Scottish Women's Institutes*, London, 1935, p. 28.

<sup>82</sup> *The Scotsman*, 15 February 1936, p. 15.

<sup>83</sup> SWRI, *Handbook*, 1928, Carnegie United Kingdom Trust, *Rural Development Committee: Scottish Women's Rural Institutes, 1928-1929*, File 3, GD281/82/219, 6 July 1928.

illustrates an awareness of the lack of opportunities for female agricultural workers, a problem which may have been remedied by women organising their own work. The central council may also have been challenging the idea that unemployment was a masculine affliction. As government legislation largely considered male unemployment, women were generally left with no other choice than to find their own solutions. The establishment of home industries may have been a viable option in rural areas. Moreover women's involvement in such local and home industries did not undermine the breadwinner model in which men were the main earners, or their own identities as wives, mothers and household managers. In this sense this work also assisted in the identification of 'good womanhood'. While such work did not question the status quo in terms of gender relations, it did assert women's ability to economically contribute to the family and thus empowered them within these restricted parameters.

The central council developed and exploited a range of opportunities for its members to sell their products. In the late 1920s it actively drew attention to the work of the Rural Industries Bureau. The most important function of this organisation was putting craftsmen and women in touch with prospective buyers. The Scottish sub-committee compiled a register of rural skilled craftsmen and women in Scotland, which could be consulted by department stores and other outlets. The contact details of this organisation were printed in *Scottish Home and Country* in order that members could register.<sup>84</sup> In addition, in 1932 the central council organised its first trade show in Edinburgh.<sup>85</sup> The work of members, in a variety of crafts, was exhibited to the buyers of 'commercial houses', with each exhibit being clearly marked with the name and address of the producer. Each item was also labelled with the wholesale price, the number of similar items that could be supplied quickly, and the minimum time required if an order was received. It was suggested that 'the response to this venture would be 'eagerly awaited in many rural homes', 'where its success might make all the difference during a difficult winter'.<sup>86</sup> The sale of such goods could have a significant impact on family incomes, which illustrates the importance of women's skills and ability to earn extra money. This income would not be 'pin money' for housewives, but for some would be an essential contribution to ensure the family's survival during the height of the economic depression. Again, in such circumstances these activities, which assisted in the identification of 'good womanhood', were empowering.

At the Rurals' conference in 1934 Miss Simpson, the organiser of the English Institutes, gave an address on 'market stalls', which she suggested was another way of selling goods produced by members. She insisted that all kinds of products could be sold on such stalls, and argued that 'there was no denying that these stalls were a great success in fulfilling a

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<sup>84</sup> *Scottish Home and Country*, September 1928.

<sup>85</sup> SWRI, *Yearly Central Council Meetings*, 30 November 1932.

<sup>86</sup> *The Scotsman*, 29 November 1932, p. 6.

great want and need'.<sup>87</sup> Simpson also suggested that such market stalls would provide a good opportunity for subsistence farmers who could sell any surpluses. She argued that once established the unemployed could staff these stalls. Therefore, as well as providing an outlet for the work of its members, such stalls would be beneficial to the wider community.

The Rurals had increasingly become concerned with unemployment in rural areas.<sup>88</sup> The central council agreed to assist the Scottish National Development Council in its 'survey of unemployment in Rural Districts' in 1932 by sending a circular to the federations.<sup>89</sup> It received a 'great deal of information' in response. As a result it sent a resolution to the Ministry of Labour, which requested that 'consideration' be given to 'the possibility of modifying the regulations governing unemployment and transitional benefit'.<sup>90</sup> This was accompanied by the following statement:

We the Scottish Women's Rural Institutes, are most anxious to contribute as far as we can to the reduction of unemployment in rural areas by helping to find work for unemployed or partly-employed men and women, especially in making goods which are, or have been, imported from abroad. In any attempt to do this we should act as advisers and helpers to the workers, not the employers. All profits would go to the workers and the SWRI would not benefit in any way.<sup>91</sup>

Not only does this statement address the issue of unemployment in rural areas among men and women, but points to the Rurals' role as a facilitator in achieving national efficiency, in helping to replace foreign produced goods, with home made and home grown produce. The latter point provided justification for its demands, as well as its involvement in public life, and highlighted the role that the Rurals could play in solving this problem. The central council later noted that the Ministry of Labour 'modified two of the most difficult rules governing unemployment benefit', with it arguing that 'these improvements' were 'due in part at least to the rigorous action taken by the SWRI'.<sup>92</sup>

In 1936 a scheme of 'wayside market stalls' was adopted in parts of Scotland. Mrs Young of Berwickshire stated at a federation meeting in Dumfries that although she had been sceptical of the value of such market stalls at first, she had been converted from 'doubt to

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<sup>87</sup> Ibid, 1 November 1934, p. 11.

<sup>88</sup> The economic depression also affected the agricultural sector. Thus rural communities in Scotland experienced poverty and unemployment as a result of falling prices and the contraction of the economy. Yet Finlay suggests that the 1931 census highlights that agriculture had the lowest rate of registered unemployment in Scotland. R. Finlay, *Modern Scotland, 1914-2000*, Profile Books, London, 2004, p. 150.

<sup>89</sup> SWRI, *Yearly Central Council Meetings*, 30 November 1932.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid, 22 November 1933 and 14 March 1934. The central council remained concerned with unemployment, 'co-operating in the work undertaken' by the Personal Service Scheme of the Red Cross Society. It was also represented on the Scottish Council for Community Service during Unemployment, as were the Guild. Given the tendency for Rurals to have titled patrons, this 'charity' work could be described as paternalistic. Nevertheless the Rurals co-operation with the Red Cross Personal Service League, which provided clothing for the unemployed and their families, was similar to the Guild's charitable donations made through the Red Cross to the miners and their families during the strikes of the 1920s.

enthusiasm'.<sup>93</sup> She outlined the financial help provided by such stalls to 'women of small means' who were able to sell their produce at current market prices. Young argued that the wayside market stall was 'doing splendid community service' by preventing waste in the cottage garden and making the 'good things of the countryside' more accessible to the town dweller.<sup>94</sup> Again the benefit to the community was stressed as justification for the Rurals' actions, rather than an overt emphasis being placed on the financial advantages for the members.

The sale of the products of such rural or home industries raised a debate within both the leadership and membership of the Rurals. While there were those who believed that members should attend demonstrations and classes purely for educational reasons, there were others who wished to use this education to produce goods for sale. This conflict was most pronounced in relation to handicrafts classes, although it was also evident in discussions of the agricultural classes.

In both cases it would appear that there was a differentiation between goods destined for competitive exhibition and work of general utility, or for financial return. As a rule, working-class members generally participated in handicrafts or agricultural classes where they would learn skills that would enable them to produce goods that would be used in their homes, or could be sold in the market place, whether this be a trade exhibition or 'wayside market stall'. In this instance the education provided by the Rurals was used to provide additional income for the family where possible. Moreover working-class members would have found it difficult to justify expenditure on materials for producing handicrafts or agricultural goods purely for exhibition. In contrast there were those members, of more significant means, who could afford to produce goods as a 'means of self expression'. It followed that these members were more likely to enter competitive exhibitions. Such individuals were able to attend additional specialised classes, often at a distance from their homes, as they had more free time and money. In addition these members were more likely to become demonstrators themselves as a result of the time they had to devote to their chosen craft or agricultural pursuit. Competitive exhibitions could be viewed as 'a specialist area' for those members who viewed agricultural and especially handicrafts in terms of skill or as 'a creative outlet for their talents'.<sup>95</sup>

Nevertheless many working-class members did enter their work in competitive handicraft exhibitions or local and national shows of Agricultural and Horticultural Societies.<sup>96</sup> This illustrates their sacrifice in terms of their time and resources, and thus their dedication to

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<sup>93</sup> *Scottish Home and Country*, November 1936.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>95</sup> Blair, *Rural Journey*, p. 74.

<sup>96</sup> SWRI, *Handbook*, 1928, Carnegie United Kingdom Trust, *Rural Development Committee: Scottish Women's Rural Institutes*, 1928-1929, File 3, GD281/82/219. The Rurals had its own special classes with in the industrial section at many of these agricultural shows.



the Rurals. Admittedly winning prizes was a reward of its own, and gave women a sense of self worth and confidence in their abilities, similar to that of selling their work in the economic market place. Such benefits may have been worth the expenditure for some members. Competitions for collective work, such as quilts or hand painted china tea sets, were also less costly for individual members. The central council encouraged Rurals to enter these as they were seen to promote 'team building' and 'community spirit'.<sup>97</sup> The collective work completed by Rurals was highly praised. In 1931 'the woman correspondent' from *The Scotsman* singled out the collective competition for special mention in her report of the Highland Show.<sup>98</sup>

In addition, local and national exhibitions, both for crafts and agricultural produce, celebrated the skills involved in women's work within the home and on the farm and were therefore a validating experience for many individuals.<sup>99</sup> Andrews argues that at such events women's craftwork, which generally operated within the confines of the home, was placed in a public arena. She suggests that this allowed women to communicate through their work and gave them a voice outside their homes that could 'penetrate and influence the dominant sphere of cultural exchange'.<sup>100</sup> Such agricultural shows and exhibitions also provided members of the Rurals with another arena in which to sell their produce.<sup>101</sup>

In contrast, many members of the central council believed in 'art for art's sake'. Mrs Gooch suggested that the fundamental idea of the handicrafts movement within the Rurals was 'to make the home happy', with handicrafts doing 'a great deal in the development of character'.<sup>102</sup> This was because 'a busy woman was a happy woman' and handicrafts 'occupied their minds'.<sup>103</sup> Emphasis was also placed upon 'beautifying the home', this being accompanied by the Rurals' motto 'the call to make beautiful the home for those she loves'.<sup>104</sup> Thus the education provided by the Rurals was linked explicitly to an ideal of female domesticity. Miss Baxter, president of the Fife federation and convener of the handicrafts section, was more explicit in an address to the EWCA. She insisted that the development of handicrafts within the Rurals was 'not a commercial movement', but rather 'articles were made for the pleasure of doing them with the object of developing craftsmanship'.<sup>105</sup> Elaborating

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<sup>97</sup> *The Scotsman*, 25 June 1931, p. 15.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.* She stated that all of the work submitted by the Rurals was of 'such a high standard', that its members won most of the competitions in the Rural Industries Section.

<sup>99</sup> M. Andrews, *The Acceptable Face of Feminism: The Women's Institute as a Social Movement*, Lawrence and Wishart, London, 1997, p. 71.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>101</sup> The Mak' Merry pottery studio often sold pieces in this way with Catherine Blair eventually organising a thriving export trade. Appendix 5a provides an example of a Mak' Merry craft display. The photograph of Catherine Blair and her colleague Betty Wight shows them holding toby jugs produced in the Mak' Merry workshop.

<sup>102</sup> *The Scotsman*, 25 March 1935, p. 11.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>104</sup> Blair, *Rural Journey*, p. 44.

<sup>105</sup> *The Scotsman*, 10 February 1936, p. 7.

further, she stated that the chief aim of the Rurals was to create a very high standard of work, with the development of handicrafts being 'a means of self-expression' as 'most people wished to create beautiful things'.<sup>106</sup>

In spite of this ongoing debate, a wide range of classes and demonstrations was provided for members. Practical classes, which focused on items of utility that could also be sold, were prominent on the programmes of the Rurals. Leather craft, basket making, embroidery, and rug making were all popular with members. Simultaneously, the education provided by the Rurals was increasingly supplemented by lectures from art schools tutors. The director of the Edinburgh College of Art, Mr F Morley Fletcher, was particularly supportive of the Rurals' work, and was of the opinion that it could help in 'encouraging and stimulating a true idea about art'.<sup>107</sup> He was also impressed by the opportunities already provided by the Rurals for 'craft study', and was 'astonished by the number of crafts that had already been attempted'.<sup>108</sup> In addition the Edinburgh School of Art often provided tuition in a range of handicrafts and the Glasgow School of Art organised classes for members of the Rurals.<sup>109</sup>

Education in handicrafts was further formalised by the central council in 1926 with the formation of the Handicrafts Guild. This provided specialist classes that were available to all members and introduced a grading system. Members gained certificates of competence in a given discipline on completion of a course, which also recorded the quality of their work. The central council envisaged that such certification would improve the overall standard of work produced by members of the Rurals in a range of crafts through a process of quality control. This would also provide standardisation throughout the Rurals in Scotland. By ensuring the quality of work the central council argued that it would be easier to market to potential buyers, as Rural produce as a brand would be well regarded. This process would also enable items that met the standards to be sold at a uniform price throughout Scotland. As an article in *Scottish Home and Country* argued

The various handicrafts are now mostly practiced as artistic hobbies, and can seldom be made a financial success. If, however, a good standard can be established, handwork may again find an economic place in the industrial market.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> Ibid. Given the largely middle-class membership of the EWCA it is possible that Miss Baxter was attempting to emphasise the skill involved in handicrafts rather than the financial possibilities, especially since this address coincided with the formation of a handicrafts section within the EWCA.

<sup>107</sup> *The Scotsman*, 8 June 1922, p. 2.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid, 6 May 1921, p. 8. The central committee encouraged each institute to send representatives to such classes, and met the costs of students on the condition that they would pass on what they had learned to their fellow members. In 1938 Miss Thomson of Glasgow School of Art gave an address to Mauchline rural entitled 'Colour Harmony' which considered colour, balance and proportion in embroidery and in house furnishing. Representatives from the Glasgow School of Art also visited Rurals in Stirlingshire with Miss Arthur giving a demonstration entitled 'Art Needlework' to the Kippen SWRI. Mauchline SWRI, *Minutes*, Acc 1196, Box 2/4, 20 June 1938. Kippen SWRI, *Record of Meetings*, PD 97/1/1, 26 May 1922.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

Thus the Handicrafts Guild introduced professionalism, which it was argued would enable members to increase sales. This could be perceived as an attempt by the Rurals to empower its members by, not only enabling them to earn their own money and gain, albeit limited, economic independence, but also helping to increase such earnings. Andrews argues that the economic power women gained through such activity provided validation within the capitalist system through the marketplace, and gave women's work a value.<sup>111</sup> In this way women's work within the home could be seen as skilled, and by extension women could be situated as skilled workers. Through the formation of the Handicrafts Guild the central council therefore provided validation of its members skills. This ensured the loyalty of the membership, with it being noted in 1927 that there was 'growing appreciation of the tests and classes arranged by the Guild' with membership increasing.<sup>112</sup>

The Rurals' educational programme was also extended in ways that would provide social facilities for the wider community. Again this had the dual objectives of providing opportunities for its members and also addressing rural depopulation. Indeed the Scottish Council of Agriculture had suggested at the Rurals' inception that the Rurals provision of a centre for social intercourse 'could scarcely be established at a more opportune moment' as a means of arresting depopulation. The lack of social life in rural areas was often cited as a major cause of depopulation by social commentators and in government reports throughout the interwar years. The Departmental Committee for the Settlement of Soldiers and Sailors suggested that this was 'one of the chief impediments' of the government's 'back-to-the-land policy'.<sup>113</sup> Sir Horace Plunkett of this Committee stated that British agriculture could only be developed satisfactorily if the standard of social life in the country was raised.<sup>114</sup> He also suggested that a great deal of local latent talent and initiative would be developed through the Rurals, which could be 'employed in the service of home and country'.<sup>115</sup> Consequently the Rurals' provision of social facilities could be viewed as part of the project, not only to limit depopulation, but also to aid the development of the agricultural industry, and by extension national efficiency.

In its applications for funding the central council emphasised this role in providing social facilities for rural communities. The Committee on Women in Agriculture in Scotland had first suggested in 1920 that the Rurals should approach educational authorities or other

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<sup>111</sup> Andrews, *The Acceptable Face of Feminism*, p. 70.

<sup>112</sup> SWRI, *Yearly Central Council Meetings*, 5 May 1927 and 20 November 1930. The membership of the Handicrafts Guild was 280 in 1927. This figure had risen to 'just over 600' by 1930, although the central council argued that the membership had 'not increased so much as it might'.

<sup>113</sup> *The Scotsman*, 20 April 1917, p. 3.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid. Burchardt also discusses Plunkett's views with regard to the improvement of the quality of rural social life and its effects on the economic health of agriculture. J. Burchardt, 'Reconstructing the Rural Community: Village Halls and the National Council of Social Service, 1919 to 1939', *Rural History*, 1999, Vol. 10, No. 2, p. 197.

<sup>115</sup> *The Scotsman*, 12 September 1917, p. 3.

bodies for the 'educational facilities desired by their members'.<sup>116</sup> As a result the central council organised 'an educational conference' in 1924, to which the Scottish Education Department, as well as a wide range of educational organisations and other bodies were invited.<sup>117</sup> The central council took full advantage of the advice given to ensure that its applications would be successful. This involved aligning its aims to those of the government, especially in relation to addressing rural depopulation by targeting the isolation of members of rural communities.

The central council later approached the Rural Development Committee of the Carnegie Trust stating that it was 'anxious to promote, in all possible ways' adult education.<sup>118</sup> It focused on gaining funding for classes in dramatic art and acting, folk dancing and choir singing. Performances by the Arts League of Service and the Village Concert Parties had stimulated interest in these subjects, and while the Rurals had organised its own classes, these were by no means extensive 'owing to lack of funds'.<sup>119</sup> These classes had been popular with members, and the application suggested that 'more thorough educational training' would be beneficial, not only to members of the Rurals, but also to the whole community. It was argued that such educational classes would result in a 'great development of artistic and intellectual interest' in rural districts.<sup>120</sup> Thus the central council explicitly situated the Rurals as 'a useful agency for the promotion of adult education in rural areas'.<sup>121</sup> In order to strengthen its case it stated that it would seek the assistance of the Scottish Association of Music Festivals in order to 'maintain a high standard of work'. It also aimed to obtain 'competent teachers' from the Scottish Country Dance Society and the Scottish National Theatre Society.

In justifying its application further the central council stated that 'at present, help for classes of this kind cannot be expected from the authorities, but we hope that, if they were convinced of the educational value of the work done, they would, in the future, be willing to assist it'. Thus the grant requested from the Carnegie Trust was viewed as a short-term solution, with the Rurals ultimately hoping to receive support from local authorities. The Trustees also took this view. Initially an 'experimental grant' of £550 was awarded to the

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<sup>116</sup> Ibid, 15 September 1920, p. 8.

<sup>117</sup> SWRI, *Yearly Central Council Meetings*, 31 October 1924 and 26 February 1925. This included the Scottish Association of Musical Festivals, Scottish Folk Dance Society, Carnegie Trust Music Department, the Arts League of Service Scottish National Theatre Society and Scottish Verse-speaking Association. Representatives from the Schools of Art in Glasgow and Edinburgh, colleges of agriculture and domestic science throughout Scotland, Workers Education Association and Scottish Farm Servants Union also attended.

<sup>118</sup> Carnegie United Kingdom Trust, *Rural Development Committee: Scottish Women's Rural Institutes*, National Archives of Scotland, GD281/82/217, 1924-1927, File 1, 13 December 1924.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

North-eastern federation for a year 'pending a decision on the wider issue'.<sup>122</sup> The Trustees immediately began making enquiries to local education authorities to determine whether there was an interest in financially supporting these classes. The response was less than favourable, with it often being argued that the classes were 'too short' and the standard 'too elementary' to merit inclusion in the programme of 'continuation classes'.<sup>123</sup> In addition the Trustees felt that the early organisation of music classes was disappointing with limited use being made of the grant awarded.

In contrast the report submitted to the Carnegie Trustees by the central council indicated that the classes had been 'uniformly successful'.<sup>124</sup> The testimonies from teachers outlined the 'enthusiasm shown by the students and to the quality of the work done'.<sup>125</sup> One of the instructors, Alfred Dinsdale, a Fellow of the Royal Organists and singing master in Dingwall and Invergordon Academies, stated that while 'he had never attempted to train choirs in such an elementary stage before', he had acquired 'much useful knowledge' which he suggested would be 'valuable if the scheme continued for at least a few years'.<sup>126</sup> More importantly he stated that there was no doubt that 'some good seed has been sown amongst the people connected with these choirs'.<sup>127</sup>

Altogether thirty-two classes in choir singing and twelve in dramatic art were arranged using the original grant.<sup>128</sup> Again the Trustees noted that the reports from teachers and the secretaries of the Rurals were 'uniformly enthusiastic' especially 'in regards to choral work'.<sup>129</sup> Attendance was also good, ranging from twenty people to nearly one hundred, with this being generally well maintained. These classes were attended by both women and men and were therefore judged to be of benefit to the community as a whole. In addition Caithness Education Authority assisted financially by 'giving free use of schoolrooms' which the Trustees viewed as a 'very positive development'. The success of the classes was further illustrated at the Wick musical festival where Rural choirs gained the first three places.<sup>130</sup>

In 1927 the central council resubmitted its application for funding, which would enable it to organise classes in choral singing, dramatic art and folk dancing throughout Scotland. The

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<sup>122</sup> Ibid, 15 October 1925. It was estimated that this sum would be 'sufficient to cover teachers' fees at 10s a lesson and their travelling expenses'. This was the most isolated area of Scotland and was therefore perceived to be most in need of social facilities such as these classes.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid, 11 March 1926. This response ignored the significance and tradition of choirs and folk dancing in working-class communities, with such activities providing a communal activity in which everyone could participate. It was argued that the educational classes provided by the Rurals would stimulate such communal activity, and would therefore encourage members of the community to become involved in adult education. See J. Strong (ed.), *The Education (Scotland) Act, 1918*, Oliver and Boyd, Edinburgh, 1919, p. 36-48 for further information regarding the regulations governing 'continuation classes'.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid, 18 November 1926.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid, 10 December 1926.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid.

Carnegie Trustees awarded a grant of £15,000, which would fund an estimated 526 classes for a period of five years.<sup>131</sup> This was ‘subject to satisfactory assurance’ from the Scottish Education Department that the local authorities be encouraged to subsidise the classes, and that inspectors would report upon the their efficiency.<sup>132</sup> The Trustees stated that ‘the underlying idea’ was that the classes would be ‘taken over as part of the Continuation Class programme of county education authorities’.<sup>133</sup> However Sir George Macdonald of the Education Department, stated that it was ‘not very keen on the type of class’ and did ‘not wish to exert influence upon the local authorities’.<sup>134</sup> He stated that the local authorities were ‘not as yet convinced of the desirability of supporting classes in these subjects’, and were of the opinion that five hundred classes in such subjects was ‘out of proportion’ as compared with the ‘distinctively vocational classes’ that were subsidised by local authorities.<sup>135</sup> More importantly he was not satisfied that the classes proposed by the Rurals conformed to the ‘regulations laid down in the code that governed the continuation classes’. Macdonald argued that ‘there was little justification for the hope that a five-year grant would result in the proposed classes becoming a permanent factor in Scottish rural life’.<sup>136</sup> This was out of line with the recommendations of the government appointed committee for the consideration of adult education, which recommended in its 1919 final report that the ‘varied needs and tastes of the people’ should be catered for by authorities, which included drama.<sup>137</sup>

The Carnegie Trustees agreed that Macdonald’s ‘deductions were probably sound’ in that the Scottish Department and local authorities were unsupportive. It decided that in ‘such circumstances’ it should assist a less ambitious scheme than that provisionally approved. While the grant in the North Western area of £550 was renewed for a period of three years, the grant awarded to the rest of Scotland was reduced, with it being specified that no more than five classes should be organised in each county. The secretary was directed to emphasise to the central council that ‘the continuance of these cultural classes depended very largely upon the local authorities’.<sup>138</sup> Thus the organisers and teachers of the classes had to ensure that the classes conformed ‘as closely as possible’ to the Scottish Education Department’s code. The Rurals were also to use ‘all means in their power to convince authorities and inspectors of the efficiency and the educational value of the work’.<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>131</sup> Carnegie United Kingdom Trust, *Rural Development Committee: Scottish Women’s Rural Institutes*, GD281/82/218, 1926-1928, File 2, 10 March 1927 and 13 May 1927. Also see *The Scotsman*, 10 December 1927, p. 9.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid, 13 May 1927.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid.

<sup>137</sup> Kelly, *A History of Adult Education in Great Britain*, p. 267.

<sup>138</sup> Carnegie United Kingdom Trust, *Rural Development Committee: Scottish Women’s Rural Institutes*, GD281/82/218, 1926-1928, File 2, 13 May 1927.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid. The Trustees also stated that it would ‘communicate direct with the Authorities in whose areas classes were formed, and invite their interest and sympathy’.

The central council accepted this grant and issued a set of conditions that each class would have to follow and satisfy.<sup>140</sup> County federations in receipt of grants were under obligation to 'enlist the help' of the county education authorities and employ education authority teachers or teachers approved by the Scottish Education Department. 'Every effort' was also to be made to secure the free use of schoolrooms, and also invite education authority inspectors to visit and report on the classes. It was hoped that more than one member of each class would train as a tutor, and 'carry on the work' and 'give instruction' to other Rurals at the termination of the class. All Rurals receiving instruction were also encouraged to enter the Musical Festivals as this 'set a standard to work to' and also provided evidence that 'satisfactory work was being done'.<sup>141</sup> In order to make the best use of the grant, the individuals enrolled were to understand that it was 'their duty to attend regularly' and to 'realise that the first purpose' was to 'benefit the community as a whole'.<sup>142</sup> Thus the central council was again justifying its provision of educational classes through the positive effects these would have for the wider rural community in providing a social facility for all.

The central council continued to send progress reports to the Carnegie Trustees, which were largely considered 'satisfactory'.<sup>143</sup> Yet, there were instances where it sent reports of the 'unsympathetic attitudes' displayed, especially in northern areas, by the members of some education authorities. It singled out the case of Sutherland where a request for the use of the school gymnasium for folk dancing was considered 'most ridiculous'.<sup>144</sup> At a meeting of the authority, Mr Murray stated that he thought one of the functions of the Rurals was to 'improve the mind of the young of the district', and he 'failed to see' the improvement that dancing would bring. He insisted that the application was 'a downright piece of impertinence'. Mr McNaughton agreed arguing that 'we should not give over school property for anything that comes under the name of dancing'.<sup>145</sup> Such attitudes were in direct contrast to the 1919 report of the Committee on Women in Agriculture in Scotland, which recommended that schools should be made available for social purposes, such as classes organised by the Rurals, where other suitable accommodation was not available.<sup>146</sup> This committee also suggested that parish councils could be 'empowered' to incur expenditure on the provision of village halls and institutes for these purposes.<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>140</sup> Ibid, 7 October 1927.

<sup>141</sup> *The Scotsman*, 19 July 1926, p. 4.

<sup>142</sup> Carnegie United Kingdom Trust, *Rural Development Committee: Scottish Women's Rural Institutes*, GD281/82/218, 1926-1928, File 2, 7 October 1927.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid, 9 December 1927.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid, 9 March 1928.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid.

<sup>146</sup> *The Scotsman*, 15 September 1920, p. 8.

<sup>147</sup> The Rurals were instrumental in the construction of such village halls. After raising £233 in donations from 'householders in the district, fundraising efforts by the Institute and also other Rurals in Ayrshire', Auchencloigh SWRI opened its own hall. Much of the construction work was voluntarily and in this respect 'the help of the men folk was instrumental in having the hall built'. The Ayrshire Federation, *The Best of the Old, The Best of the New*, p. 53.

In spite of such opposition, the classes organised by the Rurals in folk dancing, drama and choir singing classes continued to receive praise from official sources, as illustrated in the 'strictly confidential' reports by HM inspectors to the Scottish Education Department.<sup>148</sup> The opinions of the Department's inspectors were 'uniformly favourable' with several indicating the 'desirability of future support'.<sup>149</sup> On Arran and Bute, Mr Andrew insisted that country dancing 'helped to brighten village life in the localities concerned'.<sup>150</sup> Mr Wedderspoon, the inspector for Fife stated that what he found 'truly valuable and original' about the classes was the conservation of what was 'original in the individualism of country people, for the good of the nation'.<sup>151</sup> Similarly Mr Barron, argued that the classes in Caithness had a 'distinct educational value for the many to whom continuation classes make no appeal', and also suggested that they promoted 'harmony and good feeling in rural districts'.<sup>152</sup> Mr Watson, inspector in Ross-shire, stated that not only did such classes provide women in rural areas with a 'diversion from the ordinary domestic routine' but also argued that such 'healthy and elevating activities' represented 'emotionally and intellectually, what the cinema and the theatre are to the town dweller'.<sup>153</sup> He also argued that because the students attending these classes gave public exhibitions, these were therefore beneficial to the whole community.

The Trustees were convinced that local education authorities would be interested in becoming involved with the classes. Many authorities had already given the classes official support or were contemplating it.<sup>154</sup> However this enthusiasm was largely confined to classes in choir singing. It was found that many local educational authorities were 'not willing to assume responsibility' for classes in folk dancing and dramatic art, as they were not 'quite ready to admit the educational value of these two subjects'.<sup>155</sup> This may be attributed to the fact that choir singing was already established in many rural communities, had associations with the church, and could therefore be positioned as a 'respectable' and 'rational' form of education and leisure. The support given to choir singing classes, as opposed to folk dancing and drama, may also have been a reflection of the governments increasing involvement in the

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<sup>148</sup> Sir George Macdonald later specified that neither the Rurals nor County Authorities should be sent these reports. Carnegie United Kingdom Trust, *Rural Development Committee: Scottish Women's Rural Institutes*, GD281/82/218, 1926-1928, File 2, 6 July 1928.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid, 9 March 1928.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid. Voters in Fife elected the first Communist Party MP in the interwar years. The provision of these classes could therefore be seen as encouraging class consolidation and were an attempt to appease the working classes.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid. Again the classes could be seen as an attempt to counter the effects of the growth of trade unionism in this area, by promoting 'harmony and good feeling'.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid. Mr Watson's use of the term 'healthy and elevating' may highlight the increasing emphasis on the promotion of health and fitness for women in the interwar years especially in relation to their roles as mothers. On the other hand he may simply be making a distinction between the 'healthy and elevating' activities provided by the Rurals as opposed to those available in urban areas.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid, 7 December 1928. This included Stirlingshire, Perthshire, Kinross-shire, Kirkcudbrightshire, and Selkirkshire.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid, 7 March 1929.



provision of rational recreations, which was a response to what it felt was a vacuum created by 'the fragility of the voluntary sector'.<sup>156</sup>

Classes in choir singing also provided 'wholesome' leisure for a variety of members of the community, which united them in a shared activity, and may also have helped to build 'community spirit'. Indeed Robert McLeod, lecturer in Music at Moray House College in Edinburgh, stated that while conducting 'community sing-songs' in Rurals he had been 'impressed with the power of song to unify, uplift and generate human kindness among the members of the audience'.<sup>157</sup> He argued that the shy, backward ploughman, the middle-aged demure spinster, the old man or woman who feels 'out of it' all 'respond to the infectious mirth or contemplative sadness of a well chosen programme of folk song'.<sup>158</sup> It would appear that male participation was higher in the choir singing classes, thus these may have been more acceptable as it they were more inclusive.<sup>159</sup> The Trustees reported in 1929 that in some areas the education authority had agreed to fund these classes following the termination of the Carnegie Grant.<sup>160</sup>

Nevertheless, by November 1928 the Rurals had established two classes in folk dancing, three in choir singing and seventeen in dramatic art. This amounted to a total of twenty-two classes in ten counties throughout Scotland, in which three hundred students from seventy-five Rurals were enrolled.<sup>161</sup> While the Trustees remained doubtful of the central council's 'organising powers', it stated that 'there can be little doubt that the classes actually arranged have been successful and greatly appreciated'.<sup>162</sup> Local newspapers were also supportive of the classes provided by the Rurals, with the central council forwarding articles to the Trustees. One such report in *The Dumfries and Galloway Standard* drew particular attention to drama, arguing that this was 'fast assuming a salient position' in the 'many useful arts and crafts' which were 'fostered by the Women's Rural Institutes'.<sup>163</sup> This was because the female players 'brought a large measure of that enthusiasm which characterises all their activities'.<sup>164</sup> The author was particularly impressed with the 'rural dramatists unique facility for independence' in that 'manpower' was 'totally dispensed with' with women portraying male roles.<sup>165</sup> Yet the drama subcommittee of the central council suggested that plays with 'at

<sup>156</sup> C. G. Brown, 'Popular Culture and the Continuing Struggle for Rational Recreation', in T. M. Devine and R. J. Finlay (eds.), *Scotland in the Twentieth Century*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 1996, p. 226.

<sup>157</sup> *Scottish Home and Country*, October 1928.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid*, August 1928.

<sup>159</sup> The reports of the inspectors discussed above only mention the attendance of men at Choir singing classes and not drama or folk dancing.

<sup>160</sup> Carnegie United Kingdom Trust, *Rural Development Committee: Scottish Women's Rural Institutes*, GD281/82/218, 1928-1929, File 3, 7 March 1929.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid*, 7 December 1928.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid*, 7 March 1929.

<sup>163</sup> *Dumfries and Galloway Standard*, 30 March 1929.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid*. Photographs were often published in the *Scottish Home and Country* that showed such theatrical parties, both all female and more inclusive drama groups. See appendix 5b and 5c.

least as many women as men' should be chosen in an effort to increase the participation of men. However owing to either a lack of male enthusiasm, or a desire by the members of some Rurals for female independence, many women made convincing, farmers, police officers and a range of male characters.<sup>166</sup> This was largely as a result of the effort that members put into the staging of dramatic sketches, especially with regard to the costumes.<sup>167</sup>

Some members explicitly opposed the inclusion of men in Rural drama groups. In a letter published in *Scottish Home and Country* one such member stated that

This cairry-on aboot needin' men in oor dramatic society is juist a caper o' the young yins that's wantin' a click. We've had men in oor Dramatic for a year noo, and whit's happened? We used to go a' roon the countryside wi' dramatic ploys, singin' in the buses comin' hame, and getting a tea set doon to us at a' the places that tasted better nor onything I ever had in a' ma' days. There's somethin' in bein' in a play, and then getting' an awfu' guid tea, and then comin' hame singin' in a bus – it's nice. And whit guid was the men? We couldna sing the same because haulf o' the lassies was geeglin' and fechtin' to sit in the back seats o' the buses wi' the lauds. And some o' the men bodies thocht naething o' haein' their usual refreshment at an inn, and that's a'e thing you'll no' be bothered wi' when the women bodies are their lane. Ye need the men, says some, to lift heavy weichts. Twa women can lift as heavy a weicht as ony one man, and that's the answer to that. Ye need the men, says ithers, to put on plays mair natural, but I think there's as muckle fun in plays wi' just women, and that's a' I'm carin' for.....<sup>168</sup>

This letter not only illustrates her independence in questioning the need for men for the physical strength, or to play male roles, but also questions the use of these drama groups as a place where young women and men can meet.<sup>169</sup> For her that was not the purpose of the group and this ruined it for her, as the young girls were more concerned with impressing the men than joining in on the fun. Rather the drama group was a place where she could go 'to get rid o' ma hoose and ma man and ma weans. For just a'e nicht'.<sup>170</sup> Thus there was a conflict within the membership with regard to expectations of these classes. While the central council encouraged the participation of men the author of this letter contradicted this. She stated that

Men should bide oot the Rural a'thegither. I go to the Rural to get rid o' them. There's a kind o' satisfaction in turnin' at the door and seein' Tam sittin' readin' his paper and smokin' and no' able to go oot o' the hoose because I'm awa' and the weans is sleepin'. I think when I'm goin' along to the hall that he's safe and they're safe and I'm goin' to enjoy masel.<sup>171</sup>

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<sup>166</sup> Again see appendix 5b and 5c.

<sup>167</sup> SWRI, *Yearly Central Council Meetings*, 14 March 1934. The drama sub-committee recommended that when entering drama competitions, teams should make their own costumes and settings, with regular articles appearing in *Scottish Home and Country* illustrating how to do so.

<sup>168</sup> *Scottish Home and Country*, March 1932.

<sup>169</sup> This is what she means when she uses the term 'click'.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid.

There can be no doubt that she was not alone in this sentiment. In this respect, like the monthly Rural meeting, the drama group provided women with a space outside of their homes in which to enjoy each others company, learn and generally escape the responsibilities associated with their homes and families. In particular the author of this letter took satisfaction in the fact that her husband did not have the freedom to leave the house when she was away, which suggests a reversal of their usual roles. Thus the facilities provided by the Rurals through its meetings and classes enabled members to question the gender relations within their homes, even for just one night.

The Rurals' Carnegie Grant expired in 1930, with the Trustees confidently hoping that the Rurals would be able to 'carry on their work' and 'maintain the high standard which they have already reached'.<sup>172</sup> The Rurals had received a total of £5500 for its educational classes.<sup>173</sup> In its final report to the Trustees the central council stated that the classes 'cannot be continued on anything like the same scale in future', although it was optimistic that members who had attended the classes would train as tutors and 'give instruction to the members of their own Institutes'.<sup>174</sup> Reports of the efforts of Rurals in drama, folk dancing and singing appear in *Scottish Home and Country* throughout the 1930s, which would suggest that it was successful in this aim. Members even began to produce, direct and write their own plays, with the Anstruther-Gray Challenge Cup being introduced in 1930 for excellence in drama. Rurals continued to compete in the Scottish Community Drama Association's National Festival and 118 drama teams were represented in the finals in 1931 and 1932.

Therefore just as the Handicrafts Guild, and involvement in co-operative production and marketing, facilitated women's participation in the public sphere by selling and exhibiting their work and produce, the drama, choir singing and folk dancing classes gave women the confidence to perform in public. This enabled women to transcend the boundary of the 'private sphere' of the home and family to participate in the public life of the community. In many cases the performances of Rural drama and folk dancing groups, and choirs became important social events for all. While this does not equal the formal political representation encouraged by the GSEC, the EWCA and the Guild for their members, such opportunities and involvement in the community was nonetheless significant in broadening the scope of women's lives in rural Scotland.

The grants provided by the Carnegie Trust were successful in helping the Rurals to establish adult education more extensively in rural areas and assisted in making these classes a

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<sup>172</sup> Carnegie United Kingdom Trust, *Rural Development and Social Services Committee: Scottish Women's Rural Institutes*, GD281/82/220, 1929-1947, File 4, 17 July 1930 and 12 December 1930.

<sup>173</sup> SWRI, *Yearly Central Council Minutes*, 20 November 1930. The central council honoured this decision, stating in *Scottish Home and Country* that no further funds were available from this source in any area of Scotland. *Scottish Home and Country*, October 1931

<sup>174</sup> Carnegie United Kingdom Trust, *Rural Development and Social Services Committee: Scottish Women's Rural Institutes*, GD281/82/220, 1929-1947, File 4, 11 December 1931.

feature of rural life. The reports from the government inspectors, as well as praise from other sources, confirmed the central council's initial assertion that the provision of such educational classes would not only benefit those individuals attending, but would bring life to the whole community. Indeed Catherine Blair argued that community drama made 'immense strides' after the formation of the Rurals. Courtney confirms this assertion stating that 'a really important contribution has been made to the general revival of community drama and music through the involvement of the Rurals'.<sup>175</sup> Again the central council hoped that the provision of such classes would stimulate rural life, acting as a social facility for young and old. In particular the folk dancing classes, and the associated social dances, would result in a place where young people could meet friends and socialise. The central council envisaged this, and other events such as choir recitations and drama performances, as attractions that would rival those of the city.

Yet in spite of its efforts, and those of the government, depopulation continued to be a problem in rural communities. The loss of young people from rural areas also led to fears concerning the decline of the quality of the remaining population in rural areas.<sup>176</sup> It was suggested that this would have adverse effects on agricultural productivity and by extension national efficiency. Again this accounts for the level of support given to the Rurals by the government in Scotland in establishing rural adult education and encouraging women to become involved in co-operative production and marketing of agricultural produce and handicrafts. While the central council emphasised the importance and benefits of the countryside, people and especially young people, continued to be drawn to the city as a result of the 'social and economic bankruptcy of rural life'.<sup>177</sup>

This divide between urban and rural areas may also have been a barrier to co-operation between the Rurals and other women's organisations based in urban areas. In 1921 Miss Campbell, the Rurals' government appointed organiser, suggested that it should keep in touch with 'the two great town associations', the Women's Citizens Associations and the Scottish Women's Co-operative Guild.<sup>178</sup> However some members, while not opposed to co-operation, argued in letters to *The Scotsman* that the problems of town and country differed considerably, with housing being given as an example.<sup>179</sup> In fact the concerns of the Rurals and the Guild were similar in many respects. However this statement illustrates the perceptions of the Rurals' members. The author of one letter in particular argued that women's duties to their

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<sup>175</sup> Courtney, *Countrywomen in council*, p. 140.

<sup>176</sup> See chapter two for further discussion of the Rurals' use of imperialist discourses in relation its role in improving national efficiency.

<sup>177</sup> F. G. Thomas, *The Changing Village, An Essay on Rural Reconstruction*, Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd, London, 1939, p. 63. Emigration to the former dominions of America, Canada and Australia also remained a popular in the interwar years.

<sup>178</sup> *The Scotsman*, 18 June 1921, p. 7.

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid*, 6 October 1924, p. 9.

communities in the countryside were distinct from those of women in the city.<sup>180</sup> In addition, in 1924 the secretary was instructed to write to all Rurals stating that it was ‘inadvisable for Institutes to affiliate, as corporate bodies, with other organisations’, although ‘complete freedom’ was given to individual members.<sup>181</sup>

Nevertheless, the central council responded favourably when the EWCA began showing an active interest in the work of the Rurals in 1927. Miss Nannie Brown accepted an invitation to speak at a meeting of the executive.<sup>182</sup> She gave an account of the movement’s attempts to arrest depopulation by bringing more interests into country life and to combat isolation by establishing centres for social intercourse, recreation and local activities.<sup>183</sup> She also discussed the demonstrations and lectures given to members including the many addresses on education, citizenship, housing, and child welfare.<sup>184</sup> Brown also gave an address at a meeting of the EWCA in honour of Mrs Corbett Ashby, president of the NUSEC, to ‘consider the educational work, social and political, of women’s societies’.<sup>185</sup> In her speech she described the ‘silent revolution’ that had been taking place in the social life of the countryside. She argued that the Rurals were becoming a ‘force in their national life’ and stated that they were doing more than any other society for adult education in the country.<sup>186</sup>

These invitations from the EWCA illustrate that there was some kind of dialogue between the two organisations. There were similarities in their objectives. Both shared an interest in educating women and securing welfare reforms, which would improve the lives of their members. The Guild were also concerned with these issues. Given the fact that the membership of both the Rurals and the Guild were largely working-class housewives, it is surprising that there was not more co-operation between the organisations. This was especially true in relation to the improvement in housing conditions and the provision of child welfare facilities, with both organisations having very similar concerns. However there were differences in the approach taken by the Rurals, with its geographical location, relationship with the Scottish government and largely ‘non-political’ status all playing a role.

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<sup>180</sup> The author of this letter does not elaborate on this statement further.

<sup>181</sup> SWRI, *Yearly Central Council Meetings*, 24 June 1924, 26 October 1926 and 30 November 1932. The central council advised against affiliation to the Scottish Mother’s Union, Alliance of Honour and also declined an invitation from the National Council of Women to appoint a representative to serve on their Council in 1932.

<sup>182</sup> Edinburgh Women Citizen’s Association (EWCA), *Seventh Annual Report – Tenth Annual Report*, 1924-1925 – 1927-1928, GD333/2/6-9.

<sup>183</sup> EWCA, *Ninth Annual Report*, 1926-1927, GD333/2/8. Miss Evelyn Baxter, Hon. Secretary of the Central Area of the SWRI, also gave an address to the EWCA in 1928 entitled ‘The Development of Women’s Rural Handicrafts in Scotland’, EWCA, *Eleventh Annual Report*, 1928-1929, GD333/2/10.

<sup>184</sup> This would have been of interest to the EWCA, which also prioritised such concerns. There should have been significant opportunity for co-operation with the EWCA. However as discussed in chapter three this was limited.

<sup>185</sup> *The Scotsman*, 19 October 1929, p. 15. Also see EWCA, *Twelfth Annual Report*, 1929-1930, GD333/2/11.

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid.*

### Housing and Child Welfare

Miss Agnes Campbell, the government appointed organiser of the Rurals, stated in 1921 that the Rurals' work was based on knowledge of five things, health, food, home crafts such as clothing and furnishings, the house, and education. Therefore, for her, the 'primary and rational work' of women 'lay in home-making in the biggest sense'.<sup>187</sup> Campbell argued that the most important work of women was 'the bringing up of children to make them good men and women'. As a result 'an advanced civilisation' required 'a great deal of knowledge on the part of mothers'.<sup>188</sup> She stated that the health of the family was 'entirely in the hands of women'.

Campbell explicitly disseminated discourses relating to scientific motherhood, which were influential from the early twentieth century. The advice of professionals on nutrition, and the spiritual, physical and psychological needs of children, was particularly significant in the formation of such discourses.<sup>189</sup> The government was supportive of such advice. As a result the relationship of the state and the family became increasingly public, with the introduction of child welfare clinics to monitor the health of children. Such discourses were also linked to fears concerning national efficiency and the health of the population, with the reduction of infant mortality being prioritised.<sup>190</sup> The elevated status given to mothers, and the government's emphasis on women's responsibilities in the home and in caring for children was part of its aim to improve the health of the nation.<sup>191</sup> Campbell, as a government employee, also clearly identified women with the home and motherhood. Yet the responsibility given to women as mothers by the government could also be seen as empowering, as the future of the nation depended on their skills. The Rurals employed these discourses to their advantage, to elevate the status of its members in society.<sup>192</sup>

Yet, Catherine Blair criticised Campbell arguing that she 'showed little knowledge and less appreciation of the life and work of rural women'.<sup>193</sup> She mainly took issue with

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<sup>187</sup> Ibid, 18 June 1921, p. 7.

<sup>188</sup> Ibid.

<sup>189</sup> For further discussion of the development of discourses relating to scientific motherhood see R. D. Apple, 'Constructing Mothers: Scientific Motherhood in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries', *Social History of Medicine*, 1995, p. 161-178.

<sup>190</sup> As discussed in chapter three, the government largely attributed high rates of infant mortality to the 'ignorance and fecklessness of mothers'. Its solution was therefore to provide mothers with education in how to care for their children, which could include classes in domestic science or 'house craft'. Infant welfare clinics were established in order to disseminate such advice, with this often being accompanied by a home visitation scheme. Yet, in reality the provision of such services was dependent on the resources available to the municipal authorities. See J. Lewis, *The Politics of Motherhood, Child and Maternal Welfare in England, 1900-1939*, London, Croom Helm, 1980, chapters 2 and 3, and L. Marks, *Metropolitan Maternity: Maternal and Infant Welfare Services in Early Twentieth Century London*, Rodopi B. V., Amsterdam, 1996, p. 177-190 for a case study of implementation of such services in London.

<sup>191</sup> Lewis, *The Politics of Motherhood*, p. 108-109 and p. 117.

<sup>192</sup> The Guild also placed an emphasis on the importance of motherhood in its gendered definition of citizenship as discussed in chapter two.

<sup>193</sup> *The Scotsman*, 25 June 1921, p. 10.

Campbell's claim that the health of the family was 'entirely in the hands of women', as 'damp houses, smoky chimneys, absence of sanitary arrangements, distance of water supply, lack of facilities for drying clothes' were 'powerful handicaps to the most capable of women'.<sup>194</sup> It followed that for many women living in rural areas 'keeping the house clean was an unending task', with such domestic labour being 'time consuming and arduous'.<sup>195</sup> Blair also criticised Campbell for stating that women should be 'able to tell in looking at a house if it is the best kind of house, both as regards of site and outlook'. She suggested that Campbell seemed 'to be unaware of the fact that country women have no choice' and 'have to occupy the houses provided, whether farmhouse or cottage, school house or manse'.<sup>196</sup> Furthermore Blair stated that many cottage women were 'not only alive to the evils of the present housing conditions' but 'they have very clear ideas as to how to remedy them'.<sup>197</sup> The condition of rural housing was clearly identified as an issue that some members of the Rurals had a special knowledge of and thus would have an expertise in solving.

In June 1922, and perhaps as a consequence of Blair's criticism, Campbell had altered her position on women's role in society. She argued that women's activities must extend beyond the home as 'there was a vast amount of work in which their special facilities might be usefully employed'.<sup>198</sup> Campbell suggested that women's 'special knowledge and skills' could be employed in 'tackling such national problems as defective housing and ill health among children'. As discussed government ministers and reports targeted these issues in the interwar period as perceived threats to national efficiency.<sup>199</sup> Therefore it was not surprising that Campbell encouraged the Rurals to become involved with improving housing conditions and the health of the next generation. She concluded by stating that the scope of women's work lay in the direction of housing, child welfare, education and 'moral problems' that could only be solved by insisting on 'the value of the home as the foundation of all good rational life'.<sup>200</sup> While Campbell suggested that the sphere of their activities should be widened through

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<sup>194</sup> Ibid. Alan Campbell also suggests that drying clothes was a particular problem in mining areas, with one Fife miner recalling that his wife 'had to get up as often as six or seven times in the night-time and turn my clothes when I was working in a wet place, and we had to inhale the steam rising from these clothes all night'. He argues that Miners' rows were regarded as 'being the worst examples of Scottish housing during the nineteenth century'. Overcrowding and a lack of basic amenities continued to be problems in the interwar years. A. Campbell, *The Scottish Miners, 1874-1939, Volume One: Industry, Work and Community*, Ashgate, Aldershot, 2000, p. 213-214, 221 and 224.

<sup>195</sup> Ibid. p. 225. The same was true for working-class housewives in urban areas.

<sup>196</sup> *The Scotsman*, 25 June 1921, p. 10.

<sup>197</sup> Ibid.

<sup>198</sup> Ibid, 20 June 1922, p. 6.

<sup>199</sup> The Guild and the EWCA shared these concerns. The ILP, Labour Party and Communist Party women's sections and trade union women also targeted national efficiency and worked towards achieving and improving this through their 'politics of the kitchen'. In addition, more conservative women's organisations such as the Guild of Empire considered such issues and used similar justification for its involvement in public work. Thus the boundaries of this discourse were fluid and were appropriated by women's organisations of differing political persuasions. See chapters three and four for further analysis of contemporary concerns relating to infant and maternal mortality and housing.

<sup>200</sup> *The Scotsman*, 20 June 1922, p. 6.

involvement in solving social problems, women remained very much associated with the home.<sup>201</sup>

Colonel Mitchell of the Carnegie Trust also encouraged the members to take a greater role in public life. Again this was connected to women's roles and duties associated with the private sphere of the home and family. He suggested that 'the advance of civilised society may increase indefinitely the public responsibilities of women', although women 'will presumably always have for themselves the incalculably important function of home-making'.<sup>202</sup> As a result Mitchell argued that the members 'must fit themselves for the double task' or they would 'have little pleasure or success in either sphere'.<sup>203</sup> He congratulated the Rurals' leaders on the fact that it was its policy to 'encourage self and team development from both points of view'. Mitchell suggested this was 'all round development both as the vital centre of a home and as a competent member of an intelligent self-governing community'.<sup>204</sup> He therefore acknowledged the fact that women had a double burden in taking a role in public life as well as completing their work in the home, but warned against neglecting one for the other.

The central council followed Mitchell and Campbell's advice, and throughout the interwar years encouraged its members to take an interest in public affairs. For the Rurals women's influence in public life was firmly based upon their role in the home and family. As a result its conception of citizenship was gendered, as was its members involvement in public life. Housing and child welfare played a prominent role in its demands for social reforms, which were limited in comparison to those of the Guild, the EWCA and also the GSEC, as the Rurals were not as active or overtly politically motivated. The Rurals rarely employed the campaigning strategies used by these organisations, such as forming resolutions and organising deputations. Nevertheless, it was a political organisation in that its members were interested in social issues and improving the material conditions of their lives and those of their families, and more importantly made efforts to achieve these aims.

Catherine Blair had suggested from its inception, that the Rurals were not to 'confine themselves to matters of a purely domestic character'. Instead she envisaged that Rurals would become educational centres where countrywomen would be 'brought into direct touch with the foremost movements of the day'. She hoped that the Rurals would also provide countrywomen with an opportunity to voice their concerns over life in rural areas, with housing and sanitation both being 'prominent talking points'. Blair also suggested that the 'future life of their country

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<sup>201</sup> The Guild also positioned women in relation to the home, as a result of its own and the views of the wider Co-operative movement. The EWCA took a similar view, with women's role in public life being related to women's duties in the private sphere of the home and family. In this way both organisations employed a gendered citizenship as discussed in chapter two. Also see chapters three and four for further details. In this sense the Rurals also viewed women's citizenship as gendered.

<sup>202</sup> Carnegie United Kingdom Trust, *Rural Development and Social Services Committee: Scottish Women's Rural Institutes*, GD281/82/220, 1929-1947, File 4, 19 November 1930, Carnegie Trust Files.

<sup>203</sup> Ibid.

<sup>204</sup> Ibid.



depended on agricultural development' and in turn this depended 'very largely' on better housing and social conditions.<sup>205</sup> She argued that such improvements could only be achieved through the work of women, and specifically the work of the Rurals. Local government representatives encouraged the Rurals' involvement in the improvement of rural housing. Mr Cruikshanks, the county clerk of Haddington, emphasised 'the responsibility that rested upon the women of the country to bring about an improvement in the standard of housing'.<sup>206</sup> Housing was clearly defined as a female issue, an assertion that the Rurals, like the Guild, accepted, as it was believed their members had a special knowledge of this issue and thus could provide solutions.<sup>207</sup>

The Rurals' focus on improving housing intensified with Blair's involvement in the 1919 memorandum on Rural Housing, which was commissioned by the Board of Agriculture as part of a wider investigation into housing conditions in rural areas. This was specifically concerned with the opinions of women involved in Scottish agriculture, and the commission's remit was to consider the economic role women could take in the development of agriculture. Evidence was heard in Edinburgh, Inverness and Fort William and local inquiries were carried out in Aberdeenshire, Berwickshire, Dumfriesshire, Inverness-shire, and the mining areas of Fife, North Lanarkshire, and Midlothian. Therefore attempts were made to be inclusive of women's experiences throughout rural Scotland.<sup>208</sup> The Board actively sought the opinions of the wives and daughters of men engaged in agriculture, as their work in their homes and on the farms was 'an integral part of the economy of rural life'.<sup>209</sup> The evidence given by Catherine Blair, as well as other women, was instrumental in influencing the commission's findings and recommendations. Blair argued that 'discontent among women' with regard to housing was increasing, and she added that they were 'becoming more articulate'.<sup>210</sup>

The prevention of further rural depopulation was again one of the main aims of this inquiry, with the Board of Agriculture stating that this was an 'urgent problem of national welfare'.<sup>211</sup> It came to the conclusion that the migration of women from rural areas was largely attributable to the deficiency of housing in these districts. A major concern was the migration of young female farm servants as a result of 'poor living arrangements'. The commission observed that agriculture was being deprived of a valuable source of labour, with

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<sup>205</sup> *The Scotsman*, 28 June 1917, p. 3. Blair was again reiterating the importance of improved housing and social conditions in achieving agricultural development, which was linked closely to improved national efficiency.

<sup>206</sup> *Ibid.*, 18 March 1918, p. 6.

<sup>207</sup> As discussed in chapter four, the Guild positioned its members as the 'chancellors of the exchequer of the home' and elevated the status of women by emphasising the importance of their knowledge and responsibilities connected to the private sphere of the home. The women of the ILP also used this 'politics of the kitchen' to highlight the need for female expertise in the consideration of housing conditions.

<sup>208</sup> *The Scotsman*, 15 September 1920, p. 8.

<sup>209</sup> Housing Files, Rural Housing, *Memorandum by the Committee on women in Agriculture in Scotland on the subject of Rural Housing*, National Archives of Scotland, West Register House, DD6/1027, 1919.

<sup>210</sup> *Ibid.* A report of Blair's findings were also reproduced in *The Scotsman*, 25 September 1920, p. 7.

<sup>211</sup> *The Scotsman*, 15 September 1920, p. 8.

the young women ‘born and reared in the country’ being ‘lost to rural life’.<sup>212</sup> Teenage girls were forced to leave home and seek employment, often in urban areas, due to the inadequacy of ordinary farm workers houses, which were too small and overcrowded to efficiently provide accommodation for grown up children.<sup>213</sup> This situation was further exacerbated by the ‘deficiency’ of the accommodation provided for ‘live in’ farm servants, which made this an unattractive occupation for such teenage girls. Mrs Houison Crauford, of the Scottish Chamber of Agriculture, described such accommodation as ‘none too good’, with few farms having cottages available for women workers and the rooms provided within the farmhouse often being viewed as substandard.<sup>214</sup> Miss Evelyn Baxter, a gang-leader of arable workers in Largo, Fifeshire, stated that such ‘out-and-in’ workers, who lived on farms, usually had a very small room to themselves and farm cottages only had a ‘but and ben’ and scullery.<sup>215</sup> She suggested that in order to encourage ‘the daughters of ploughmen’ to remain on the land, housing conditions should be improved.<sup>216</sup> Miss Nellie Cairns, a sheep farmer from Belhie, Auchterarder, and the Secretary of the Scottish Farm Servants’ Union, Mr Duncan, both shared this assertion arguing that better housing would be ‘an inducement to young girls to remain on the land’, which would ‘increase the supply of female casual workers’.<sup>217</sup>

The improvement of rural housing conditions was viewed as the key to preventing rural depopulation and this was among the Board’s strongest recommendations for improving rural life. It insisted that measures be taken by local authorities to provide increased housing for rural workers ‘with all possible speed’. As a result of Blair’s evidence that ‘efforts at co-operation and community life’ were ‘frustrated’ by the isolated nature of many rural houses, the commission suggested that where possible new houses should be built in villages and groups.<sup>218</sup> Blair argued that this would ‘make family life materially easier in many ways’.<sup>219</sup> It was also suggested that facilities be granted within the Housing Bill to enable local authorities to work in conjunction with public utility societies, owners of agricultural land, and land-holders, for the provision, improvement, upkeep and management of housing on agricultural holdings.

The ‘tied’ house was also the focus of much dissatisfaction and complaints from those giving evidence. Under this system accommodation was provided for the worker as part of the

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<sup>212</sup> Housing Files, Rural Housing, *Memorandum by the Committee on women in Agriculture in Scotland on the subject of Rural Housing*, DD6/1027, 1919.

<sup>213</sup> Ibid.

<sup>214</sup> Ibid.

<sup>215</sup> Ibid.

<sup>216</sup> Ibid.

<sup>217</sup> Ibid.

<sup>218</sup> This was an assertion shared by the Labour Party, which suggested that ‘the old patterns of isolation’ should not be replicated with houses being built in groups as opposed to ‘dotted in ones and twos’. In this way ‘the planning of publicly funded housing might contribute to building community’. Griffiths, *Labour and the Countryside*, p. 294.

<sup>219</sup> Housing Files, Rural Housing, *Memorandum by the Committee on women in Agriculture in Scotland on the subject of Rural Housing*, DD6/1027, 1919.

wage contract, a fact that ‘deepened the sense of hardship’ when accommodation was below standard. Insecurity was also a feature of this type of housing as employees had to vacate the premises when their contract expired. The commission argued that this prevented the house from ‘being regarded as a home’.<sup>220</sup> Griffiths also suggests that the ‘tied’ house was ‘the most infamous control over political activity in the countryside’.<sup>221</sup> She states that the fear of victimisation by employers and resulting eviction were the main reason inhibiting support for the Labour Party in the countryside.<sup>222</sup> Moreover Sprott argues that agricultural employees were reluctant to complain about the inadequacy of the housing provided by their employers under such circumstances, again for fear of losing their jobs. He states that in this situation ‘women were often the agents of domestic change’ as ‘women bore the burden of poor housing’.<sup>223</sup> Sprott suggests that such demands for change were organised by the formation of the Rurals.

In all cases the Commission suggested that local women should be given an ‘important input’ on housing developments such as the site of new construction. As Blair argued in her evidence, the sites of houses were often ‘ill chosen’ and the ‘outlook depressing’. In particular, women were to be given input into the internal arrangements of new houses. Hunt and Hughes argue that ‘the degree to which women can influence their own home environment surely reflects how societies value the hidden area of domestic work’, and by extension ‘how they value women themselves’.<sup>224</sup> In this sense, the commission’s acknowledgement of the suggestions given by female respondents illustrates that, in this case, women’s opinions were valued and respected. Thus as Hunt and Hughes insist ‘women were not simply the passive recipients of the products of planners’.<sup>225</sup> The Commission recommended an increase in the provision of four roomed homes largely as a result of the evidence given by women. In her statement Blair had insisted that, not only were condemned houses being occupied, but also she highlighted the fact that overcrowding and dampness was leading to rheumatism and

<sup>220</sup> Ibid. Respondents to a questionnaire issued by Pedley in the interwar years also made similar statements suggesting that ‘the tied cottage is a bad system; a man has no feeling of security’, and ‘living in a tied house restricts a man’s social, political and economic activities and produces an inferiority complex’. W. H. Pedley, *Labour on the Land, A Study of the Developments Between the Two Great Wars*, P. S. King and Staples Limited, London, 1942, p. 17.

<sup>221</sup> Griffiths, *Labour and the Countryside*, p. 63.

<sup>222</sup> Griffiths states that as a result of such fears ‘there were limits to what could be expected from many members of Labour organisations in rural areas’. Supporters would not display signs in their windows at election times, some would not participate in other electioneering activities such as door-to-door canvassing, and any literature sent by headquarters would be in unmarked envelopes. In fact she argues that when Labour supporters actively displayed their allegiance it was often interpreted as ‘a sure sign’ that they were being evicted and ‘had nothing to lose’. The Labour Party responded by declaring that ‘the scandal of the tied cottage must go’ suggesting in its campaign literature of the early 1920s that ‘if you want to feel secure in your home, Vote Labour’. Griffiths, *Labour and the Countryside*, p. 63 and 296.

<sup>223</sup> G. Sprott, ‘Lowland Country Life’, in T. M. Devine and R. J. Finlay, (Eds.) *Scotland in the Twentieth Century*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 1996, p. 174.

<sup>224</sup> A. Hughes and K. Hunt, ‘A Culture Transformed? Women’s lives in Wythenshawe in the 1930s’ in A. Davies and S. Fielding (eds.), *Workers’ Worlds, Cultures and communities in Manchester and Salford, 1880-1939*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1992, p. 75.

<sup>225</sup> Ibid, p. 76.

influenza.<sup>226</sup> She insisted that in two roomed houses ‘there was no possibility of separating the sick from the well, or the living from the dead’.<sup>227</sup> Thus she demanded that houses with ‘a living room and parlour, two or even three bedrooms, scullery, and bathroom’ should be constructed.<sup>228</sup> Blair’s thorough report was instrumental, and reiterated common housing complaints such as the lack of running water, no washing or drying facilities, ‘objectionable’ open ashpits, and inconveniently situated, primitive, and sometimes non-existent sanitary conveniences.<sup>229</sup> The commission made recommendations based directly on her evidence suggesting that ‘all new houses and existing cottages should be supplied with good water, sanitary and washing conveniences and sufficient storage accommodation’.<sup>230</sup> Again, as Kelly also argues, the opinions of members of Women’s Institutes were respected in such matters.<sup>231</sup>

The Royal Commission on Housing was published in 1919. Robert Munro, the Secretary for Scotland, described this as ‘one of the most poignant and damning documents of our time’.<sup>232</sup> In this report housing conditions in many parts of Scotland were deemed to be a ‘menace to health and an affront to decency’.<sup>233</sup> He argued that the nation would not be a ‘healthy and virile race’ or a ‘moral and contented people’ until the ‘people of the land were provided with sanitary and decent conditions’.<sup>234</sup> Yet, while Munro insisted that ‘the people’s demands for healthy houses’, ‘houses which would be worthy of the name homes’, were now being heard, he also stated that the housing problem in rural areas was a ‘complicated one’.<sup>235</sup> As a consequence of the ‘varied nature of rural areas’, ‘a uniform solution could not be put into practice’, as one policy could not cater for the small village, the groups of unattached cottages, and crofting and small holding areas. Munro suggested that in every locality land owners and farmers would have to ‘consider carefully how far they could secure the advantage of the terms which were open to local authorities and public utility societies’.<sup>236</sup>

The leadership of the Rurals encouraged its members to ensure that improvements were made to housing in country areas through the exploitation of legislation passed.<sup>237</sup> This

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<sup>226</sup> Campbell, *The Scottish Miners, 1874-1939, Volume One: Industry, Work and Community*, chapter 5 ‘Housing, women’s work and gender relations’, especially p. 227-228.

<sup>227</sup> Housing Files, Rural Housing, *Memorandum by the Committee on women in Agriculture in Scotland on the subject of Rural Housing*, DD6/1027, 1919.

<sup>228</sup> Ibid.

<sup>229</sup> Ibid.

<sup>230</sup> Ibid.

<sup>231</sup> Kelly, *A History of Adult Education in Great Britain*, p. 302.

<sup>232</sup> *The Scotsman*, 19 April 1919, p. 5.

<sup>233</sup> Ibid.

<sup>234</sup> Ibid. The standard of housing conditions were directly related to national efficiency, with his references to the health and virility of the population suggesting demographic concerns, which as discussed were heightened following the loss of life in the First World War. Arguably he also situates improved housing as a consolidation for this loss, this being evident in his use of the term ‘contented’ which may have related to the government’s declaration that it would provide ‘homes fit for heroes’.

<sup>235</sup> Ibid.

<sup>236</sup> Ibid.

<sup>237</sup> The 1924 Housing (Financial Provisions) Act extended the subsidies for the construction of municipal housing in rural areas and the Housing (Rural Workers) Acts of 1926 provided grants and loans to workers

included becoming involved in local government. However, unlike the Guild and the EWCA, members were not explicitly encouraged to stand as candidates for election to these bodies. Instead, as Miss Haldane suggested, members could make use of the education provided by the Rurals to ‘help in guiding local government in such matters as housing’.<sup>238</sup> In this statement there was the suggestion that the Rurals were preparing its members for a role in public life. Yet, this was not as forcefully stated than in the cases of the other organisations, where education was often provided with the express purpose of facilitating member’s entry into positions in local and sometimes national government. Involvement in public life was also connected to women’s roles in the private sphere of the home and family in Haldane’s statement, with involvement in housing being positioned as an extension of these roles into the public sphere.<sup>239</sup>

In a similar address in 1924 Mrs Morrison Millar, a Ballie in Edinburgh, stated that there was ‘a great need for women to take an intelligent interest in public affairs and understand public work and the functions of public services’.<sup>240</sup> Like Colonel Mitchell of the Carnegie Trust, she emphasised that the members should not neglect their homes for this work. This was because women brought a ‘special usefulness’ to the council through their experience as homemakers. She described public work as ‘only an extension of the work of the home’ with ‘housing, water, light and transport’ being ‘women’s concerns’.<sup>241</sup> Morrison Millar encouraged the members of the Rurals to take an interest in public health services, which included housing, maternity and child welfare departments, clinics for children and expectant mothers, sanitation and the treatment of venereal diseases.<sup>242</sup> She therefore explicitly linked women’s experience and special knowledge of the private sphere to their work in the public sphere. While this limits women to participation in a fairly limited range of activities in local government, it also empowers women by giving them a voice on issues that were related to their own lives. Thus members of the Rurals could use their experience and ‘special knowledge’ of the home to argue for improvements in housing and in public health care, which would have direct benefits for their families and themselves.

Housing remained a concern of the Rurals throughout the 1930s. This could largely be attributed to the fact that, as Sprott argues ‘although the evidence suggests that conditions

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from local authorities for the reconstruction and repair of housing. R. Roger (Ed.), *Scottish Housing in the Twentieth Century*, Leicester University Press, Leicester, 1989, p. 240.

<sup>238</sup> Perth and Kinross Federation of the SWRI, *Executive Committee Minute Book*, MS161, 29 November 1922.

<sup>239</sup> As discussed in chapters three and four the EWCA and the Guild asserted a similar gendered citizenship to justify their member’s involvement in public life through the demand of housing improvements, and also campaigns relating to health and education.

<sup>240</sup> Perth and Kinross Federation of the SWRI, *Executive Committee Minute Book*, MS161, 14 November 1924. See chapter six for further details of Councillor Morrison Millar’s relationship with the EWCA and work as a Progressive representative of Edinburgh Education Authority and Town Council.

<sup>241</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>242</sup> The EWCA and the Guild also encouraged its members to become involved in such areas of activity, as did the Guild. See chapters three and four.

improved over the years, this occurred so slowly that it made little difference to country dwellers'.<sup>243</sup> Housing conditions were a 'continual complaint for farm servants' and the Rurals provided a voice for female grievances. Again the main problems were lack of access to water, inadequate sanitary arrangements and damp. In spite of the results of the Board of Agriculture's memorandum on Rural Housing, and the Royal Commission on Housing, both published in 1919, as well as addition legislation in 1924 and 1926 to increase the quantity of rural housing, it was estimated that in the 1930s a third of lowland country dwellings had no sanitary conveniences at all and only a quarter of houses had flushing water closets by 1936.<sup>244</sup> Sprott argues that 'the approach of public health officials was dominated by the mentality of poor law administration' which often considered that 'the open life of the country' made the provision of sanitary conveniences unnecessary.<sup>245</sup> He states that while this may have been the case on an isolated farm, in closely populated areas in country towns a lack of sanitation would have been inadequate and degrading for the occupants.<sup>246</sup> Even where toilets were provided, these were shared between several households as in urban tenements. Similarly often where water was supplied this was in the form of standpipes and wells rather than internal piped running water.

As a consequence of the prevalence of such conditions in rural Scotland the president of Glamis SWRI argued in 1935 that there was 'no more burning question today than the housing problem' and suggested that all Rurals should 'fearlessly tackle' it.<sup>247</sup> In particular members of the Rurals were to 'bring forward a corporate plan for more space and greater comfort in their homes'. She insisted that women should 'satisfy their legitimate demands for betterment' by arriving 'at a general working plan of house construction'.<sup>248</sup> It was argued that such 'betterment of the home life' would have practical results, in that the 'rural worker' would be happier, her work would be easier, and 'her heart would be lighter'.<sup>249</sup> Auchterarder SWRI shared these concerns. It elected a housing committee from among its members, which was approached by the town council to co-operate in its housing scheme. This involved giving evidence at meetings and making recommendations. In particular it was asked to 'advise as to the provision of facilities for the interiors of the houses'.<sup>250</sup> Again as Hunt and Hughes argue, the consultation of women, in this case the members of the Rural, suggests that women and women's work in the home was valued. Rathven SWRI was also proactive and following a

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<sup>243</sup> Sprott, 'Lowland Country Life', p. 172.

<sup>244</sup> Ibid, p. 173.

<sup>245</sup> Ibid.

<sup>246</sup> This was also true in mining areas. Campbell partially attributes the high levels of infant mortality in such areas to poor sanitation. Campbell, *The Scottish Miners, 1874-1939: Volume 1*, p. 228.

<sup>247</sup> Courtney, *Countrywomen in Council*, p. 19.

<sup>248</sup> As discussed in chapter four, members of the Guild were also encouraged by its central council and leadership of the Co-operative movement to make their opinions known on the ways in which their houses could be improved.

<sup>249</sup> Courtney, *Countrywomen in Council*, p. 19.

<sup>250</sup> Ibid, p. 32.

‘lecture on reconstruction’ resolved to ‘begin in our own corner’ by sending a letter to the local MP ‘with regard to the rural housing problem in our district’.<sup>251</sup>

In 1936 the central council responded to the concerns shown by Rurals by issuing a questionnaire to the federations, which asked for information on rural housing. In Perth and Kinross six Institutes responded. The findings, as discussed by the federation executive, were very much the same as those outlined in 1919 memorandum on Rural Housing. The federation stated that there was a decided shortage of houses for all rural workers in country districts.<sup>252</sup> Tied houses were also deemed to be undesirable, although it was suggested that the ‘key’ men on farms, such as stockmen, should be accommodated in houses situated as near the farm as possible. Finally it was suggested that the provision of ‘a much needed water supply’ in all country districts should be ‘an obligation’.<sup>253</sup>

The central council later compiled the information received from all the federations, producing a report that was forwarded to the Scottish Housing Advisory Committee, at its request.<sup>254</sup> The central council’s findings reflected those of the Perth and Kinross federation, which suggests that the concerns of the members were fairly uniform throughout Scotland. Its report also considered the distance of houses from the place of employment. It stated that the general opinion was that farm servants, ‘owing to the nature of their work’, could not be ‘conveniently housed in centres or groups’.<sup>255</sup> Thus, taking account of the ‘present shortage of houses for farm workers’ many of the federations regretted that the ‘system of ‘tied’ houses could not be dispensed with’, as it was ‘essential that workers on farms should be accommodated as near the farm buildings as possible’.<sup>256</sup> The central council’s report stated that these houses be used to accommodate ‘key’ men to ‘ensure the proper supervision of stock’. However at least ‘one reply’ indicated that as ‘cottar houses’, in which such workers were housed, were ‘not always very near the steading’, the ‘advances of good houses and more amenities might outweigh the inconvenience of having to travel to work’. This included the provision of an adequate water supply to all rural housing, both on ‘new and existing sites’, which was considered ‘one of the most important points in connection with the questions raised’.<sup>257</sup> Again many Rurals argued that this should be a ‘national obligation’.<sup>258</sup>

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<sup>251</sup> Ibid, p. 30.

<sup>252</sup> Perth and Kinross Federation of the SWRI, *Executive Committee Minute Book*, MS161, 5 May 1936.

<sup>253</sup> Ibid.

<sup>254</sup> SWRI, *Report regarding housing conditions in rural areas*, uncatalogued archives held at SWRI headquarters, 42 Heriot Row, Edinburgh, April 1936.

<sup>255</sup> Ibid.

<sup>256</sup> Griffiths argues that while the ‘tied’ house system was condemned by unions in England, ‘the greater isolation of many Scottish farms made the provision of such housing more necessary’. John Duncan, secretary of the Scottish Farm Servants Union, therefore accepted its existence, as did the Rurals. Griffiths, *Labour in the Countryside*, p. 201.

<sup>257</sup> SWRI, *Report regarding housing conditions in rural areas*, April 1936. The central council argued that ‘there are still far too many cottar houses where water has to be carried, sometimes from a considerable distance’. Where water was provided this often took the form of ‘leading a pipe into the scullery’. Even this basic set up was judged to be of ‘inestimable value to the housewife’.

This report also considered the failure of landlords in agricultural areas to provide houses without government subsidies. It stated that it had found that the rent received from tenants was 'not sufficient to permit improvements' and thus landlords had to seek assistance.<sup>259</sup> The central council therefore recommended that the 'conditions of qualification' to receive such grants be amended in order that 'the best possible use be made of existing accommodation', which involved landlords bringing their properties 'up to modern standards'. This included making improvements such as damp proofing and piping in clean water.<sup>260</sup> It argued that it was 'practical', with the aid of grant assistance, to 'make good houses of existing cottar houses'. The report also suggested that the government should provide funding for the erection of municipal housing, on new sites if necessary, with water and sanitary arrangements. The federations insisted that such houses should be of a 'standard size' of at least three rooms with scullery.<sup>261</sup>

Overall the report suggested that 'more elasticity' was 'required in the application of housing regulations in rural districts'.<sup>262</sup> The central council, drawing on the opinions of the federations, suggested that this appeared to be 'the only way to check rural depopulation'. It followed that government assistance had to be given to 'landed proprietors' who 'could not face' the expense of improving their properties, in order that young married people and elderly retired people would remain in rural communities. The housing shortage in rural districts was attributed as the main factor causing such individuals, 'who might otherwise remain in the country', 'to leave for the towns and villages'. The report also stated that the provision of 'new two-apartment houses' would 'meet the needs of such cases'.<sup>263</sup>

The findings of the Scottish Housing Advisory Committee were published as *The Report on Rural Housing in Scotland* in July 1937.<sup>264</sup> This committee's main aim was to improve the conditions in which agricultural workers lived, ensuring the provision of a 'decent and healthy house'.<sup>265</sup> Its report focused upon 'improved inspection of housing, special surveys of farm servants' houses and crofter's houses, and action to secure that good use was made of the expenditure under the Housing (Rural Workers) Acts'.<sup>266</sup> Sprott states that while this Act, as well as other government grants, made funds available to improve sanitation, such opportunities were 'rarely taken up because of the requirement of the farmers to provide an

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<sup>258</sup> Ibid.

<sup>259</sup> Ibid. The report suggested that while the existing legislation had been useful to landlords who were able to find the money to make the improvements required, many were 'not financially in a position to avail themselves of the preferred assistance'.

<sup>260</sup> Ibid.

<sup>261</sup> Ibid.

<sup>262</sup> Ibid.

<sup>263</sup> Ibid.

<sup>264</sup> *The Scotsman*, 10 November 1937, p. 7.

<sup>265</sup> Ibid.

<sup>266</sup> Ibid. The Housing (Rural Workers) Acts were passed in 1926.



equal contribution of funding'.<sup>267</sup> In addition he argues that 'the social ills of rural areas were better concealed than those of the city, as the inspection of houses by health authorities was irregular at best'.<sup>268</sup> Not only was the size of the inspectorate ineffectual, but Sprott also maintains that 'inspectors were reluctant to use closing orders for fear that this would further exacerbate the situation'. As a result many rural inhabitants continued to live in poor housing. *The Report on Rural Housing in Scotland* was 'severely critical of this failure to follow government guidelines' and stated that 'the owner's financial embarrassment was no excuse for not complying with the law'.<sup>269</sup> It also found that three quarters of houses inspected were unfit for human habitation'.<sup>270</sup> The Secretary of State for Scotland, Mr Elliot, stated that the recommendations made in this report 'dealt directly with Scottish problems'.<sup>271</sup> He also reiterated the sentiments that his predecessor Robert Munro had made in 1919, suggesting that the 'essence of the rural housing problem was its variety'.<sup>272</sup> The Housing (Agricultural Population)(Scotland) Act, was passed in 1938 as a result of this report, and provided higher rates of subsidies for the replacement of 'unfit farm housing'.<sup>273</sup> Yet where funds were made available for the provision of rural housing, this often did not fulfil the demands. In 1936 there were 30,000 applications for new buildings and enlargement, only a quarter of which were completed.<sup>274</sup>

The Rurals were not as politically motivated in its demands for improved housing as the GSEC, the EWCA and the Guild. Yet the members were able to voice their concerns through the activities of prominent members, such as Catherine Blair, or the central council in liaising with the government by giving evidence in commissions or compiling reports. The fact that the opinions of the Rurals were requested and acknowledged by government agencies suggests that the views of rural women were valued. In this case, speciality in issues relating to the private sphere of the home was empowering for the members of the Rurals. It allowed women to make their views known; gain acknowledgement of the importance of their role as mothers, wives and homemakers; and fundamentally improve their standard of living.

The Rurals also focused its energies on considering issues relating to child welfare throughout the interwar years. This reflected government concerns relating to high levels of infant mortality, and the poor health of the next generation, both of which were viewed as a threat to the future of the nation.<sup>275</sup> By addressing such issues the central council was aligning itself to the aims of the government in improving national efficiency, as it had also done in its

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<sup>267</sup> Sprott, 'Lowland Country Life', p. 173.

<sup>268</sup> Ibid.

<sup>269</sup> Ibid.

<sup>270</sup> Finlay, *Modern Scotland*, p. 153.

<sup>271</sup> *The Scotsman*, 10 November 1937, p. 7.

<sup>272</sup> Ibid.

<sup>273</sup> Rodger, *Scottish Housing in the Twentieth Century*, p. 240.

<sup>274</sup> Finlay, *Modern Scotland*, p. 154.

<sup>275</sup> See chapters three and also four for further discussion of infant mortality and its relation to national efficiency.

justification of its provision of educational classes for its members.<sup>276</sup> However child welfare was not as prominent on the agenda of the Rurals as the other organisations under consideration. This may be attributed to the fact that infant mortality was found to be lower in rural areas than urban centres, being 92 per thousand compared to 129 per thousand in large towns.<sup>277</sup> Loudon states that this lower infant, and also maternal mortality, was 'rather vaguely' attributed to 'fresh air, better food, less overcrowding and thus exposure to infection, and better sanitation'.<sup>278</sup> Yet the evidence given by members of the Rurals, and the findings of official government reports, contradict such reasoning.<sup>279</sup>

Child welfare was the topic of Lady Leslie Mackenzie's address at the Rurals' first annual conference in 1918.<sup>280</sup> She suggested that the Rurals might 'take up part of this work', and 'do it very thoroughly', because 'they had the mothers with them'.<sup>281</sup> Mackenzie argued that the Maternity and Child Welfare Act of 1918 made 'it possible for mothers to have their infants saved to them'. She stated that 'we in Scotland hardly recognise and realise that not only has the life of the child to be protected but the life of the mother also has to be protected and saved in every way, and not only her life but her health'.<sup>282</sup> Thus Mackenzie was an early advocate of the prevention of maternal mortality and morbidity at a time when the government was more concerned with the prevailing high rates of infant mortality.<sup>283</sup>

Mackenzie's main suggestion in her address was that the halls in which the Rurals met could be used as clinics or centres where nurses could visit mothers and babies.<sup>284</sup> By bringing all of the mothers together in one location, the district nurses could visit more regularly as this would solve the problem of the isolated nature of many countrywomen's houses. After the conference Mackenzie sent the central council a copy of her 'Report of Scottish Mothers and Children'. In this she stated that the Rurals had assured her that it would 'become a centre of instruction in maternal and child welfare' and she felt that they would be 'most effective centres for local study'.<sup>285</sup> Mackenzie also informed the central council that under the revised

<sup>276</sup> See chapter two for more detailed discussion of the Rurals' use of such discourses to justify its claims on the state, and its own actions in providing education and entertainment for its members.

<sup>277</sup> D. Kemmer, 'Investigating Infant Mortality in Early Twentieth Century Scotland Using Civil Registers: Aberdeen and Dundee Compared', *Scottish Economic and Social History*, Vol. 17, No. 1, 1999, p. 1.

<sup>278</sup> I. Loudon, 'On Maternal and Infant Mortality, 1900-1960', *Social History of Medicine*, Vol. 4, No. 11991, p. 54.

<sup>279</sup> Blaikie's research into the causes and incidence of infant mortality in rural Scotland also remains inconclusive. Using what he describes as a 'microhistorical' approach to community reconstruction he finds that 'the well being of infants depended on negotiations between families, households and parish relief'. A. Blaikie, 'Unhappy After Their Own Fashion: Infant Lives and Family Biographies in Southwest Scotland, 1855-1939', *Scottish Economic and Social History*, Vol. 18, No. 2, 1998, p.110.

<sup>280</sup> Lady Leslie Mackenzie was the chairman of the EWCA and was also actively involved in various philanthropic and social organisations concerning child welfare.

<sup>281</sup> SWRI, *Yearly Central Council Meetings*, 28 June 1918.

<sup>282</sup> Ibid. Mackenzie stated that she found that a 'number of unhealthy mothers, women with all kinds of minor ailments, are unable to do all that is necessary in a one or two roomed house with sometimes as many as 11 or even 14 of a family'.

<sup>283</sup> See chapter three for further discussion of the governments changing priorities in the 1920s and 1930s.

<sup>284</sup> *The Scotsman*, 29 June 1918, p. 7.

<sup>285</sup> SWRI, *Yearly Central Council Meetings*, October 1918.

regulations of the Treasury, local authorities were entitled to a grant to fund 'instruction in the general hygiene of maternity and childhood'. She hoped that county health authorities would provide such instruction and co-operate with the Rurals in ensuring that 'women received the help available to them'.

It is unclear whether the Rurals fulfilled the role envisaged by Mackenzie, although the central council continued to encourage members to take an interest in child welfare. As a result Rurals often invited doctors to give talks at monthly meetings, with infant and child welfare being a popular topic. Indeed suggested lectures, listed in the 1928 handbook, included care of children, health, sick nursing and child welfare.<sup>286</sup> These lectures were largely 'open meetings' and members were encouraged to invite friends and neighbours who they thought would benefit. Such meetings often attracted a large attendance. The Rurals were therefore providing education not only for their own members, but also for all local women wishing to attend. In this respect these meetings were a community resource, and acted as a forum where mothers could gain information relating to child welfare.<sup>287</sup>

The central council also recommended books in *Scottish Home and Country* which it thought would be of use to rural mothers. In 1926 it was suggested that a published collection of talks given by Mrs Isa Kelsall to the Scottish Mother's Union should be 'in the hands of every mother in Scotland'.<sup>288</sup> Each paper was described as 'touching on a subject vital to the happiness and harmony of life', and included discussions of 'social conscience, personal responsibility, courage, and service'.<sup>289</sup> A series entitled 'Practical Mothercraft' by Sister J B N Paterson also appeared in 1930, which suggested that 'all mothers want to do the best for their children; they only require to be shown how'.<sup>290</sup> This was the objective of these articles, with breastfeeding and the avoidance of childhood diseases by vaccination featuring heavily. The responsibility placed on mothers for the care of their children in these articles and publications reflects the government's reaction to persistently high rates of infant mortality, which was to focus on educating mothers rather than address housing conditions and other standards of living.<sup>291</sup>

This was further illustrated at the annual conference in 1934, when Miss Goodeve, head dietician of the city of Montreal, gave an address entitled 'Heath and Diet'. This largely considered the health of children, with special emphasis being placed on mothers' responsibility for 'taking an interest in such matters' and ensuring that their children were

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<sup>286</sup> In one such lecture to the Southwick SWRI on 'the dietary treatment of infants' Dr Fulerton of Manisriddle gave in depth information on the qualities and quantities of the food to be used until a child was able to take solids. Southwick SWRI, *Minute Book*, GGD521/12/1, 26 September 1922.

<sup>287</sup> Such lectures remained popular throughout the period and were advertised in *Scottish Home and Country*.

<sup>288</sup> *Scottish Home and Country*, October 1926.

<sup>289</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>290</sup> *Ibid.*, June-November 1930.

<sup>291</sup> Again see chapter three for further discussion.

healthy.<sup>292</sup> Goodeve even suggested that the nutritionist was simply ‘a practical housewife with a scientific point of view’. In addition, she strongly recommended that ‘nutrition clinics’, like those in Canada, should be established to ‘tell mothers what to do – what food to buy and how to prepare it’.<sup>293</sup> Again women were given responsibility for caring for their children. The members of the Rurals were inspired by this address and the central council received requests from the federations for speakers on child welfare and diet.<sup>294</sup>

Therefore the Rurals did not make demands for improved childcare facilities to the same extent as the Guild and the EWCA. While it would appear that there was an early acceptance of a role as facilitators of child welfare clinics and educational centres for rural women in child care practices, it is unclear whether this was realised. In addition later interest and discussions of child welfare, including articles in *Scottish Home and Country*, indicate that the Rurals and its members readily accepted the responsibility placed on mothers by the state in the improvement of child health. Admittedly the Rurals worked closely with government agencies in Scotland, therefore the implicit support given to government recommendations and discourses was not surprising. The Guild and the EWCA used the responsibility placed on mothers to elevate the status of mothers and make demands of the state based upon this role. These organisations asserted a gendered citizenship, which demanded acknowledgment of their views in the public sphere as a result of its member’s special knowledge as women. In contrast it would appear that the Rurals made no such demands in relation to the provision of state funded child welfare facilities, instead requesting the ‘education for mothers’ advocated by the government.

### Conclusion

Pugh divides the activities of the Women’s Institutes in England into three categories, its attempts to revive handicrafts, its work in producing and marketing agricultural produce and its provision of entertainment through music, drama and dancing.<sup>295</sup> He associates these activities with the ‘grassroots’ membership, while ‘feminist’ politics dominated the concerns of the leadership, with political questions affecting women such as housing being given as a prominent example.<sup>296</sup> Such ‘grassroots’ activities, although not necessarily ‘feminist’, were empowering for the members of the Rurals in Scotland. All of these activities enabled women to transcend and challenge the boundaries of the private sphere of the home and family and participate in public life, through the production of craft goods or agricultural produce that

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<sup>292</sup> *The Scotsman*, 1 November 1934, p. 11.

<sup>293</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>294</sup> Perth and Kinross Federation of the SWRI, *Executive Committee Minute Book*, MS161, 4 August 1934.

<sup>295</sup> M. Pugh, *Women and the Women’s Movement in Britain 1914-1959*, Macmillan, Basingstoke, 1992, p. 228-229.

<sup>296</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 229.

could be exhibited and sold for a profit. In addition the involvement in choir singing, drama and folk dancing, and the resulting public performances, also clearly placed women at the centre of the community.

In addition, the 'feminist' politics of housing were not merely concerns of the central council. As discussed the membership of the Rurals also demanded improvements in rural housing. Such political involvement was not as overt as that practiced by the Guild, the EWCA and the GSEC in the sense that members did not seek election to local municipal government. Instead the members of the Rurals voiced their concerns through the central council, when government agencies solicited its opinions. Local branches were on occasion invited to participate in investigations by municipal bodies in rural areas. As Hunt and Hughes suggest, this illustrates the fact that women's opinions on housing were valued. Thus like the Guild and the EWCA, the Rurals' members were able to use their roles associated with the private sphere of the home and family to carve out a space to make their opinions known in the public sphere of municipal and national politics. In contrast the Rurals did not make demands on the state in relation to the provision of child welfare facilities. Instead it accepted discourses perpetuated by the government that child health and the reduction of infant and maternal mortality was a mothers' responsibility, with the Rurals adopting the emphasis placed on 'education for mothers'. Yet the Rurals viewed this, like all of the education provided for its members, as empowering as it would enable women to improve their lives and those of their families.

Undoubtedly the Rurals' close relationship with government agencies in Scotland shaped its behaviour as an organisation. Not only was this influential in the way it justified its formation, as a help in food conservation following the war, but also helped frame its requests for funding for educational classes, its demands for improved housing and its interest in child welfare. In all cases the Rurals' role in improving national efficiency and reducing rural depopulation were emphasised. Its efforts in improving rural housing, for example, addressed the Rurals' dedication to 'strengthening the nation through the home', as it was argued that the improvement of housing conditions would arrest depopulation. In addition the central council was also addressing the material needs of its members, to have a warm, dry, comfortable house with running water, electricity and sanitation. Similarly its efforts in relation to child welfare were linked to women's duty to the nation in preventing the 'wastage and damage of child life' in order to 'save the youth of the country'. Indeed the Board of Agriculture stated that through its work, the Rurals had 'helped to stem the migration from the country to the overcrowded towns' and it insisted that 'they had done something of real value for the nation'.<sup>297</sup>

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<sup>297</sup> *The Scotsman*, 19 Oct 1929, p. 15.

Thus the central council was not only strategic in aligning its aims to those of the government, but the imperialist discourses employed by the Rurals illustrated its patriotism.<sup>298</sup> This involved fulfilling its duties to both 'home' and 'nation' with women's perceived duties in the home being directly related to the fate of the nation. Such attitudes helped to elevate the status of women's roles associated with the private sphere of the home and family to be of national importance. Again this was empowering in giving the members of the Rurals a responsibility in their communities, which facilitated women taking a greater role in rural life. This remains the case in the present day, with Helen McAdam of Minishant SWRI arguing that 'the significant impact made by Women's Institutes in rural communities throughout the world arises from women uniting and working 'For Home and Country''.<sup>299</sup>

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<sup>298</sup> Again see chapter two for further discussion of the Rurals use of imperialist discourses.

<sup>299</sup> The Ayrshire Federation, *The Best of the Old, The Best of the New*, p. 10.

## CHAPTER SIX

'A Change that was Overdue': The Representation of Women in Municipal Government

In the interwar years women in Scotland arguably had more success in gaining representation to education authorities. This was because the work of these authorities was seen as being connected to women's inherent caring role in society. Innes and Rendall argue that, in the late nineteenth century, the 'designation of education, social care, health care and moral guidance as female spheres of influence became an opportunity for some women to develop public careers in those areas'.<sup>1</sup> Hollis develops a similar theory. She suggests that the movement to appoint women to school and poor law boards was, in the words of a Birmingham clergyman, 'intended to put them in exactly the place for which their special facilities and their womanly instincts fitted them'.<sup>2</sup> For Hollis these 'special facilities' were based upon women's roles associated with the private sphere of the home and family. She argues that women viewed themselves as 'state housekeepers' and considered their duties to be 'wholesale housekeeping'. In addition Innes and Rendall suggest that in the Victorian period women employed 'a language of female duty and service, drawing on Christian ideals'.<sup>3</sup> Such notions of women's Christian duty to help others, and especially those less fortunate than themselves, have a long tradition and were especially prominent in the philanthropy movement of the 1870s and 1880s. Hollis argues that women often gained entry to local government through the world of philanthropy, with personal philanthropy being considered a woman's profession.<sup>4</sup> Therefore Innes and Rendall suggest that 'women were neither challenging contemporary gender ideologies nor competing for power in a male sphere', instead they were 'extending their familial responsibilities within civil society towards a broader terrain of social and national welfare'.<sup>5</sup>

In addition, Hollis argues that in England in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, 'women found it hard to be selected for council seats and even harder to win them'.<sup>6</sup> Even if they were elected 'they also found it harder to make the impact that women of their distinction had done on school and poor law boards'. As the work of the school board became part of the overall work of the Council it followed that such women often sought to join the

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<sup>1</sup> S. Innes and J. Rendall, 'Women, Gender and Politics', in L. Abrams, E. Gordon, D. Simonton and E. J. Yeo (eds.) *Gender and Scottish History since 1700*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 2006, p. 59-60.

<sup>2</sup> P. Hollis, *Ladies Elect, Women in English Local Government, 1865-1914*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1987, p. 247.

<sup>3</sup> Innes and Rendall, 'Women, Gender and Politics', p. 59-60.

<sup>4</sup> Hollis, *Ladies Elect, Women in English Local Government*, p. 11. Moore also suggests that in the twentieth century 'in view of the philanthropic evangelical role that many women had previously undertaken, it was not surprising that women were generally were seen as useful advisers on the moral environment of schools, girls' education and their domestic-economy curriculum'. L. Moore, 'Education and Learning', in L. Abrams, E. Gordon, D. Simonton and E. J. Yeo (eds.) *Gender and Scottish History since 1700*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 2006, p. 127.

<sup>5</sup> Innes and Rendall, 'Women, Gender and Politics', p. 59-60.

<sup>6</sup> Hollis, *Ladies Elect, Women in English Local Government*, p. 422.

committees and authorities that considered education.<sup>7</sup> By serving on such committees women could use their expertise, prove that they had a role in municipal government, and continue to ensure that the reforms that women sought would be realised. This may have been an empowering choice, as their skills, which had been honed through work on the old school boards, would give such individuals influence on the new committee. However, such specialisation in committees relating to women's 'special facilities' often limited the sphere of women's activities in municipal government. Undoubtedly many women would have been anxious to serve on other committees where entry was not dependent on their special female attributes.

Such strategies, which asserted women's special knowledge and skills, often associated with women's roles relating to the private sphere of home and family, remained useful, as well as limiting, for women in the interwar years.<sup>8</sup> Lady Leslie Mackenzie argued that 'the whole of our city organisation is really domestic economy on a great scale'.<sup>9</sup> Given her insistence that the family was 'the centre of society', combined with women's essential role in the family, it followed that, for her, women 'ought to take' a prominent role in local government. Mackenzie insisted that 'the place of women is in the home' and this meant that her place was also in the different authorities that carry out the functions of the city 'which is a congeries of homes'.<sup>10</sup> For her, women were particularly suited to work in the education authorities as 'there are many social and homelike activities suited to women', and although they might not be 'educational experts' in her view 'commonsense' was 'always required'.<sup>11</sup> Mackenzie's view equates women with roles associated with the private sphere of the home and family. While this could be limiting, it could also empower women. She suggests that although women do not have the same 'educational expertise' as men, women have unique skills that would be of particular use the work of the educational authority. This not only justifies the representation of women on the authority, but also makes it a necessity.

The following case studies will examine the extent to which such arguments relating to female expertise in education, in relation to their roles as wives and mothers, were employed by the women represented on municipal authorities in Glasgow, Edinburgh and Perth. These

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid, p. 424.

<sup>8</sup> The assertion of women's special role in society as a justification for entry to the public sphere in terms of greater political or other public representation is discussed in greater detail in chapter two, where each organisation's conception of citizenship as gendered is considered. Also see chapters three to five for the ways in which this informed the campaigns and issues which each organisation became involved in.

<sup>9</sup> Scottish Council of Women Citizen's Associations (SCWCA), *Handbook*, National Library of Scotland, QP1.81.293, 1923, p. 11. Mackenzie also had close connections to the EWCA as discussed in chapter three.

<sup>10</sup> This view was also held by the EWCA, and to an extent the GSEC, as discussed in chapters two and three. However, the Guild and the Rurals also justified women's involvement in public life through their role within the private sphere of the home and family. The Guild, and also the Rurals, sought to elevate women's roles as wives and mothers in society, in order that their skills in such roles would gain recognition, with this enabling women to take a greater role in determining their own futures, through some form of representation in the public sphere.

<sup>11</sup> SCWCA, *Handbook*, 1923, p. 14.



cities are chosen as representative as the GSEC, the EWCA and the Guild were active in Edinburgh and Glasgow, while the Rurals' central office was located in Perth from 1928. These case studies will largely focus on women's involvement in the education authorities, although consideration will be given to involvement in the wider city and county councils where applicable. In addition, the political composition of each locality will be discussed, as will the influence of the GSEC, the EWCA, and the Guild where appropriate. This will determine whether these organisations were successful in achieving greater political representation of women in the public sphere, or whether this could instead be attributed to the broader political circumstances of the interwar years, with regard to the changing influences of the political parties. As the Rurals did not explicitly promote the political representation of its members, its relationship with the women represented in Perthshire will be considered. Finally the case studies will also examine whether the organisations under consideration influenced, either directly or indirectly, the issues that female representatives prioritised once elected to the education authority and other municipal bodies, where possible.<sup>12</sup>

First it would be prudent to provide an outline of the development of the education authorities under consideration. The Munro Education (Scotland) Act of 1918 established education authorities throughout Scotland to replace the municipal school boards, with the duties of the newly formed authorities becoming a branch of the activities of municipal or county councils.<sup>13</sup> The geographical area of each educational authority was larger, with several school boards being consolidated under the new centralised authority. The administrative strength and overall influence of the education authority was therefore greater than the school boards these had replaced. This was accompanied by increased responsibility and costs. The Munro Act comprised of both essential and permissive reforms that were to be enacted by the authority. This included the compulsory extension of the school leaving age to fifteen, with the government also suggesting that children should be encouraged to attend continuation classes until the age of eighteen.<sup>14</sup> The administration and control of voluntary schools also came under the remit of the education authorities, and provision was to be made for the extension of nursery schools for children aged between two and five.<sup>15</sup> In a period of unprecedented economic uncertainty, such reforms were not always palatable to the councillors who served on the authorities. Therefore, there was great debate over any proposed measures that would involve expenditure, which made the education authority an important sphere of municipal government.

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<sup>12</sup> In some cases information relating to an individual and her involvement in the education authority is limited.

<sup>13</sup> J. Strong (ed.), *The Education (Scotland) Act, 1918*, Oliver and Boyd, Edinburgh, 1919, see p. v-vii for a brief overview.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid*, see p. 33-48 for discussion of the extension of the school leaving age and establishment of continuation classes.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid*, p. 16-20 and p. 50-57.

## Glasgow

The female electorate in Glasgow increased from around 37.3 percent in 1918 to approximately 52.8 percent in 1931, which mirrors the national statistics.<sup>16</sup> Burness states that at the 1918 general election women accounted for 39.6 percent of the British electorate and after the extension of the franchise in 1928 this increased to 52 percent.<sup>17</sup> In Glasgow in 1918 the percentage of women electors was highest in Hillhead and Pollok, both distinctly middle to upper-class areas at this time, thus more women would have qualified to vote in terms of ownership of property.<sup>18</sup> At the other end of the scale the largely working-class areas of Govan and Tradeston had the lowest percentage of the female electorate in 1918. This remained fairly consistent throughout the period with other working-class areas having below average percentages. There was a definite correlation between class and the level of the female electorate in a given ward of Glasgow.

In spite of such differences within the city it could be assumed that the overall increase in the female electorate in Glasgow would translate into increased female representation in both national and municipal politics. Yet, while female representation in Glasgow rose in the interwar years, this was relatively small and in no way proportional to the female electorate. The most obvious reason for this, as Burness suggests, was the lack of support given to female candidates by the main political parties. She argues that while the political parties began to focus upon gaining women's votes, this did not result in the parties providing female electors with female candidates to vote for. Instead Burness argues that the interwar years were characterised by a period of intense conflict between the major political parties.<sup>19</sup> This resulted in the growth of the Labour Party and demise of the Liberal Party with the Unionists reaping the benefit as the major opposition to the perceived threat of socialism. Burness states that female party activists became embroiled in this struggle with Unionist women's anti-Bolshevik, anti-Socialist stance, finding its equally fervent opposition in the determination of Labour women to prevent 'the reaction' gaining women's votes.<sup>20</sup> Therefore, women divided along party lines rather than working in unity for the increased representation of women. This reflects the divided nature of the women's movement in Glasgow in the interwar years.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> See appendix 6c, table 1.

<sup>17</sup> C. Burness, 'The Long Slow March: Scottish Women MPs, 1918-1945' in E. Breitenbach and E. Gordon (eds.) *Out of Bounds, Women in Scottish Society, 1800-1945*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 1992, p. 151. Similarly Innes and Rendall state that the female electorate in Scotland was 40.5 percent in 1921 and 53 percent in 1928. Innes and Rendall, 'Women, Gender and Politics', p. 68.

<sup>18</sup> Under this legislation one of the conditions of a woman's qualification for the parliamentary franchise was that she had to be the occupier or joint occupier of a house, flat, land, shop or building of the yearly value of not less than £5 for each occupier.

<sup>19</sup> Burness, 'The Long Slow March: Scottish Women MPs, 1918-1945', p. 151.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> As discussed in greater detail in chapters two, three and four.

The politics of interwar Glasgow became increasingly polarised along class lines.<sup>22</sup> The formation of 'centre-right' coalitions of local Unionist and Liberal Parties, which had the dual objective of preventing the middle-class vote being spit and opposing the growth of the labour movement, was at least partially responsible. Both male and female candidates campaigned under the banner of the 'Moderates'. This development exacerbated tensions and divisions between working-class female activists connected to the labour movement and the largely middle and upper-class membership of explicitly feminist organisations such as the GSEC.<sup>23</sup> This was particularly apparent in the policies adopted by both groups of women when elected to the education authority.

As a result of the 1919 Education (Scotland) Act, the new Glasgow educational area was the largest outside of London in terms of population.<sup>24</sup> It was estimated that the school population itself would be at least a quarter of a million children between the ages of five and fifteen. Therefore the financial implications of increased municipal expenditure by this authority would have been of interest to both the labour movement and Moderates. The increased school population would immediately demand greater expenditure, and while the labour movement supported municipal spending on education, the Moderates called for 'economy'. The pattern of political struggle between the Moderates and the labour movement not only determined the appointment of women to the education authority throughout the interwar period, but also influenced the policies that such women adopted and campaigned on behalf of once elected.

### Moderate women

Of the five women serving on the newly elected education authority of Glasgow in 1919, it would appear that Miss Kathleen Bannatyne was the only Moderate.<sup>25</sup> While her political affiliation is unclear, the assumption that she was a Moderate can be made for three reasons. Firstly she represented Central and Kelvingrove, a middle to upper-class area of Glasgow where it can be assumed that the Unionist or Liberal Party was popular, as opposed to the political parties representing the labour movement. Secondly she did not have a party affiliation listed against her name in election results published in *The Herald* and *The Scotsman*. Baxter suggests that where this information was absent, 'the evidence indicated' that such candidates were the equivalents of Moderates or Progressives.<sup>26</sup> Finally, and

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<sup>22</sup> See chapter three for more in-depth discussion of political developments in interwar Glasgow.

<sup>23</sup> The class composition of the membership of the GSEC is discussed in chapter one.

<sup>24</sup> It accounted for roughly one and a quarter million people, which was around a quarter of the inhabitants of Scotland. *The Glasgow Herald*, 15 March 1919, p. 9.

<sup>25</sup> The other four members included three ILP women, who will be discussed below, and a Roman Catholic representative.

<sup>26</sup> K. Baxter, '*Estimable and Gifted*? Women in Party Politics in Scotland c1918-c1955', PhD thesis, University of Dundee, 2007, p. 101.

possibly more conclusively, the GSEC supported Bannatyne's campaign for re-election in 1922. It had strong connections to the Good Government League, a coalition of the Liberal and Unionist parties, formed to support municipal candidates of these two parties.<sup>27</sup> Yet this was the only evidence of a connection with the GSEC.

In addition, it would appear that Bannatyne was opposed to municipal expenditure, possibly another indication of her Moderate affiliation. She was very vocal in her opposition to the extension of the city's nursery classes in 1917. Bannatyne suggested that 'they had not the accommodation nor the organisation' to do so.<sup>28</sup> It is possible that it was the additional funding required that caused her disapproval of the scheme. Such was her influence on the school board that on her advice the motion was withdrawn completely. The fact that Bannatyne served on the overall standing committee, which meant that she was a member of all fourteen standing committees, was also indicative of her influence. She was the only woman to hold this position in the entire interwar period and played an active part in the proceedings by submitting and seconding resolutions.<sup>29</sup> Bannatyne had previously been the vice-president of the School Board for Glasgow before the formation of the education authority.<sup>30</sup> She also held the position of vice-convenor of the Secondary Education Sub-Committee, which would have given her a great deal of influence over the organisation and running of the city's extended number of secondary schools.

Bannatyne took a great interest in educational matters and her work on the education authority was supplemented by giving educational addresses, which generally related to the work of the authority. In 1921 she spoke on the 'inadequate supply of teachers' at a conference held by the Association of Women Graduates at Glasgow University. Bannatyne insisted that this was a serious problem and argued that unless the situation was improved she 'could not see where they were going to get an adequate supply of teachers during the next few years'.<sup>31</sup> She also chaired a session at the triennial conference of the Reformer and Refuge Union in 1924 giving an account of the authority's work in relation to juvenile offenders.

The second election of an education authority took place in 1922 and was marked by 'a phenomenal increase in the number of voters' and a 'considerable overturn in the balance of representation'.<sup>32</sup> This included twenty new representatives, five of whom were women. There was also a significant change in the representation of women on the education authority with all six women now being Moderates. This included Miss Bannatyne, Miss Cunningham,

<sup>27</sup> GSEC, *Executive Committee Minute Book*, SR 187/891036/1/5, 4 September 1922.

<sup>28</sup> *The Scotsman*, 14 September 1917, p. 8.

<sup>29</sup> Glasgow City Council, *Minutes of the Education Authority for the Burgh of Glasgow*, Glasgow City Archives, D-ED 2/1/1, 5 June 1919, 7 June 1919, 9 June 1919, and 26 February 1920.

<sup>30</sup> See appendix 6b, where biographies of selected female members of the Education Authority are listed.

<sup>31</sup> *The Scotsman*, 18 January 1921, p. 6. Bannatyne stated that the number of trainee teachers had decreased by 260 in the last year, 180 of this loss being women. In Glasgow there were only 780 student teachers when 1200 were required.

<sup>32</sup> Glasgow City Council, *Education Authority of Glasgow Annual Reports*, Glasgow City Archives, DE-D 9/1/36, 1921-1922.

Miss Hamilton, Mrs Hourston, Mrs MacGregor, and Mrs Smellie.<sup>33</sup> This was the highest number of women who would serve on the authority in the interwar years, with the proportion of women rising to 13.3 percent from 11.1 in 1919, as table 1 illustrates, and may be a reflection of the Moderates success in holding control of the council throughout the 1920s.<sup>34</sup>

Table 1- Representation of Women in local government in Glasgow

<b>Date</b>	<b>No. of Women on Education Authority</b>	<b>Political breakdown</b>	<b>Proportion of women</b>
1919	5	3 ILP, 1 Roman Catholic, 1 Moderate	11.1%
1922	6	6 Moderate	13.3%
1933	4	3 ILP, 1 Moderate	8.2%

Source: Education Authority of Glasgow, Annual Reports, 1919/1920 – 1938/1939, DE-D 9/1/33, Glasgow City Archives, Education Authority of Glasgow, Minutes for the Burgh of Glasgow, D-ED 2/1, Glasgow City Archives, and *The Herald*.

Bannatyne's appointment to the overall standing committee was unique, as her Moderate contemporaries in 1922 were all given very specific duties on the education authority. Smellie was allocated as representative to the Glasgow Council of Juvenile Organisations and also the Glasgow and West of Scotland College of Domestic Science along with Hourston.<sup>35</sup> MacGregor was allocated to the Adult Education Joint Committee for Glasgow, the Federated Council of Glasgow Societies for the Care of Women and Girls and the Glasgow Association for the Care of Feeble-Minded Children.<sup>36</sup> Therefore in 1922 the female representatives were entrusted with duties that fell within the remit of women's special roles associated with the private sphere of home and family.

The feminist movement in Glasgow, as represented by the GSEC and Glasgow Women Citizens Association (GWCA), supported the candidature of four of the five newly elected female Moderate representatives.<sup>37</sup> Both organisations were a leading influence in the Women's Local Representation Joint Committee, an umbrella organisation for women's organisations to pool suitable female candidates for national and local elections. It was hoped that this would prevent splitting the vote between female candidates and therefore increase the chances of women becoming elected. The Joint Committee theoretically supported women of all political parties if they were deemed to be 'suitable candidates'. In reality, the female candidates supported for election to the education authority were all Moderates. This would

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> See table 1 above and chapter three for further details.

<sup>35</sup> Glasgow City Council, *Minutes of the Education Authority for the Burgh of Glasgow*, Glasgow City Archives, D-ED 2/1/1, 11 April 1922.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid, 11 April 1922, 1 February 1923, and 15 March 1923.

<sup>37</sup> The exception being Mrs Smellie, representing the third division of Central and Kelvingrove, who was well known in Masonic circles, and held the rank of the 'Most Worthy Grand Matron of the Order'. She did not receive any support from the GSEC, which highlights the fact that women did not necessarily need the support of the feminist movement to be successful. See *The Herald*, 21 March 1922, p. 9.

suggest that the Joint Committee, or the women's organisations represented upon it, had connections to the Unionist and Liberal Parties.<sup>38</sup> Yet the GSEC advised branches against holding meetings in properties owned by these political parties, thus affiliations were not explicit.<sup>39</sup>

The GWCA supported Margaret Cunningham in her candidature in the second division of Camlachie and Sprinburn in 1921.<sup>40</sup> There is no evidence that she was a member of this organisation, though she may have had some direct connection with the GSEC. In 1922 she replied to a letter from the executive of the latter on 'the compulsory retiral of women teachers on marriage', which drew 'attention to the injustice of the principle'. Cunningham promised 'to support the principle whenever an opportunity had occurred'.<sup>41</sup> Her father was a prominent and respected member of the Glasgow parish council. It may have been the case that through her father's influence she was adopted as a Moderate candidate, or she may have been a member of the coalition herself.

Alison McGregor was a member of the GWCA and was therefore supported by the Women's Local Representation Joint Committee in her candidature in the sixth division of Govan, Tradeston and Pollok in 1922 and in subsequent years. Through the GWCA she assisted in the district administration of war pensions. As noted she was also the education authority's representative to the Glasgow Association for the Care of Feeble-Minded Children, which would have been particularly influential during the Scottish Council of Women Citizens Association's (SCWCA) campaign for the 'the permanent care of the feeble-minded'.<sup>42</sup>

Margaret Hourston was also a member of the GWCA, becoming its president in 1939, and was therefore supported by the GSEC throughout the 1920s. She was the representative for the third division of Central and Kelvingrove. Hourston was also a member of the Pollokshields and District Women's branch of the Pollok Division of the Unionist Association, which may also indicate the political views of the members of Glasgow's feminist movement. She was also honorary treasurer of the British and Foreign Sailors' Society Ladies Guild and received an OBE for her patriotic duties during the First World War.<sup>43</sup>

Finally Isabel Hamilton, representative for Maryhill, was a member of the executive committee of the GSEC, and therefore received the full support of the society, which

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<sup>38</sup> In response to an inquiry from members as to whether the GSEC would support a woman standing 'in the Labour interest as a Co-operative woman's nominee', the executive stated that 'the policy of the society had been never to oppose a woman candidate, and never to actively support the opponent of a woman candidate unless in exceptional circumstances'. However, it was pointed out that when the advisory Election Committee was formed to help forward the candidature of women all the women's organisations in the city had been asked to join and none of the Labour women's organisations had replied. GSEC, *Executive Committee Minute Book*, SR 187/891036/1/5, 4 June 1923.

<sup>39</sup> GSEC, *Executive Committee Minute Book*, SR 187/891036/1/5, 5 November 1923.

<sup>40</sup> GWCA, *Forth Annual Report*, 1921-1922, GD1/1076/4/3.

<sup>41</sup> GSEC, *Executive Committee Minute Book*, SR 187/891036/1/5, 19 June 1922.

<sup>42</sup> See chapter three for further details.

<sup>43</sup> For further information see appendix 6b.

encouraged her to stand.<sup>44</sup> She later resigned her position on the executive in 1925, attributing this to her increased responsibilities on the education authority. Hamilton took an active interest in women's involvement in education as a profession, which gave her an arena to advocate her interest in female equality. She spoke at a meeting held by the Women's Educational Union in Edinburgh in 1920, advocating equal pay for equal work in the teaching profession. Her resolution that 'no scale of salaries would be ultimately approved which did not embody the principles of equal pay' was unanimously adopted.<sup>45</sup> As a member of the GSEC executive, she opposed the compulsory retirement of women teachers on marriage.<sup>46</sup> Hamilton also demanded equality in the representation of women in Scottish education authorities at the annual conference of the SCWCA in 1927. In an address entitled 'Women in Education' she stated that 'the time had come when 'the Women Citizens' should consider what could be done to increase the influence of women in the Scottish Education Department'.<sup>47</sup> Hamilton emphasised that this was 'a change that was overdue' as in ten of the thirty-seven Scottish education authorities there was 'no woman member' and in nine there was only one member in each.<sup>48</sup> Thus of 986 members of authorities only 65 were women.<sup>49</sup>

Hamilton also lent her support to a range of other organisations. In 1921 she gave a lecture as part of series organised by the Scottish Home Rule Association, which she became a vice president of in 1925.<sup>50</sup> In this lecture entitled 'Scottish Ideals in Education, Past and Present' she suggested that this movement was 'a chance of educational renaissance in Scotland', which she viewed as a solution to the negative influence of London on the Scottish Education Department.<sup>51</sup> Hamilton also had connections to the Camlachie Unionist Association in Glasgow, giving an address on 'Health and Happiness for the Children' in 1927. This gave an intimate account of the work of schools in Glasgow in relation to medical examination, in caring for children with special needs, and she also discussed the necessitous children's holiday fund which she appealed to 'every thoughtful citizen' to support.<sup>52</sup>

In spite of her Moderate affiliation, Hamilton was particularly concerned with the reduction of juvenile unemployment in 1927. This was surprising considering that juvenile unemployment was also a working-class concern, which was often accompanied by the

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<sup>44</sup> The Women's Local Representation Joint Committee also supported her candidature.

<sup>45</sup> *The Scotsman*, 18 September 1920, p. 7. Equal pay for equal work was one of the main points in the aims of the GSEC and the feminist movement more generally.

<sup>46</sup> GSEC, *Executive Committee Minute Book*, SR 187/891036/1/5, 19 June 1922.

<sup>47</sup> *The Scotsman*, 23 May 1927, p. 8. SCWCA, *Annual Conference Programmes and Notices*, National Archives of Scotland, GD1/1076/3/4, 1927.

<sup>48</sup> *The Scotsman*, 9 February 1925, p. 9.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.* The EWCA completed a survey of the number of women serving on Local Boards in Scotland a year later in 1928. It could not find information relating to town councils, but found that there were 184 women serving on the parish councils of 8013 members. Similarly there were only eighty-two women members of approximately a thousand on Local Education Authorities. EWCA, *Tenth Annual Report*, National Archives of Scotland, GD333/2/9, 1927-1928.

<sup>50</sup> *The Scotsman*, 27 April 1925, p. 5.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 19 May 1921, p. 5.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, March 1927, p. 9.

demand for public expenditure to allow for an extension of the school leaving age to sixteen.<sup>53</sup> Hamilton was instead particularly interested in providing a centre for vocational training for 'those juveniles, both male and female, between the ages of fourteen and eighteen, who had some permanent physical defect, or who were undersized, and at whom employers of labour would not look'.<sup>54</sup> She justified her suggestion of municipal expenditure by stating that although the education authority 'had no statutory right to look after them' she asked 'were they going to stand by and do nothing?' Hamilton also suggested that ultimately such children 'would be chargeable to the rates' anyway. The matter was remitted to the Special Schools Committee and an investigation was commissioned.

### Female labour activists

In 1933 the Labour Party took control of Glasgow City Council.<sup>55</sup> Women had a prominent role in Labour's successes throughout the interwar years until 1933. However women involved in the labour movement on Clydeside received little reward in terms of political representation both national and municipal. Cairns suggests that the labour movement on Clydeside sidelined women, stating that it was a 'patriarchal hegemony'. He also argues that the labour movement's commitment to gender equality was 'chiefly a matter of rhetoric'.<sup>56</sup> Of the eighteen Labour and ILP MPs elected for Glasgow seats in the interwar period, there was only one woman, Agnes Hardie.<sup>57</sup> Such low representation was not confined to the labour movement in Scotland. Burness states that only eight women were returned to parliamentary seats in the period 1918-1945 throughout the whole of Britain, although after 1923 she argues that the Scottish pattern of women's representation was marginally better than the UK average.<sup>58</sup>

This only serves to accentuate the achievements of those ILP and Labour women who did gain national recognition in the interwar years. In addition to Agnes Hardie, Clarice

<sup>53</sup> See chapter four for discussion of the Guild's views on juvenile unemployment and possible solutions.

<sup>54</sup> *The Scotsman*, 21 October 1927, p. 10.

<sup>55</sup> The success of the Labour Party in this election can be attributed not only to its own efforts in politically organising the working-classes, but also to increasing tensions between the Liberal and Unionist parties and subsequent disbandment of the Moderate coalition in Glasgow. Smyth has also suggested that Scottish Protestant League played a role in the defeat of the coalition. J. J. Smyth, 'Resisting Labour: Unionists, Liberals, and Moderates in Glasgow between the Wars', *The Historical Journal*, 46, 2, 2003, p. 395.

<sup>56</sup> D. Cairns, *Women in the Clydeside labour movement*, M Phil thesis, University of Strathclyde, 1996, p. 4.

<sup>57</sup> Hardie first became involved in politics in 1893 when she helped organise the Scottish shoe workers later becoming the first female organiser of the shop assistants' union. She was also a member of the ILP and in 1907 became a platform speaker who was described as gifted 'in unfolding practical Socialism to women taking up politics for the first time'. In around 1909 she was elected to the Glasgow School Board and became the first female member of Glasgow Trades Council. In 1919 Agnes Hardie was appointed as Women's Organiser for the Labour Party in Scotland. On her husband's death in 1937 she replaced him as Labour MP for Springburn at the age of sixty-three. See E. Ewan, S. Innes, S. Reynolds and R. Pipes (Eds.) *The Biographical Dictionary of Scottish Women*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 2006, p. 159.

<sup>58</sup> Burness, 'The Long Slow March: Scottish Women MPs, 1918-1945', p. 151 and p. 169.



McNab Shaw and Jennie Lee also rose to positions of national prominence.<sup>59</sup> However, Cairns argues that such women ‘operating at the highest level were exceptions’. He suggests that the reason that there were so few was not that women were not involved in lower levels, but rather that they found it ‘extremely difficult to make the leap from one level to the other’. Cairns intimates that this was because ‘they seem to have been unwilling to come into open confrontation with the male dominated higher echelons of the labour movement’.<sup>60</sup> There were many prominent labour women represented on Glasgow city council who had no success in gaining national election.

There seems to be a certain level of debate over whether or not the ILP was more ‘woman friendly’ than the Labour Party. As stated Cairns argues that the labour movement in Glasgow and the surrounding areas was ultimately a ‘patriarchal hegemony’. He argues that there was a far greater likelihood of candidates being men than women, stating that in the whole period only thirty women stood for election to the council and only twelve were elected. While not debating these figures, Hughes contests his claim. She argues that women were influential in the formation and development of the ILP, suggesting that the very nature of the ILP as an umbrella organisation facilitated influences from other sections of the labour movement. Thus female members often had numerous political affiliations, which included the Co-operative Women’s Guild and the Socialist Sunday School movement. Prominent female members of the ILP such as Janie Allan, Jessie Stephen, Helen Crawford and Agnes Dollan were also members of the radical suffrage movement. The belief in female equality would arguably have in some way permeated the ILP ideology.<sup>61</sup>

Hughes states that the Women’s Labour League even suggested that ‘women held sufficient voting power in two-thirds of Glasgow’s municipal constituencies to alter the fortunes of the ILP’.<sup>62</sup> Not only did women have voting power at a municipal level, but Hughes also argues that women had ‘penetrated the social area of politics’ by ‘embracing the

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<sup>59</sup> McNab Shaw was an early member of the Glasgow Socialist Sunday School and the Women’s Labour League, which led to her membership of the Labour Party. She was elected to Leith town council in 1913, being the first female Labour member of a town council in Scotland. In the early 1930s she became chairman of the Scottish Labour Party, and a member of the Scottish Committee of Co-operative, Labour and Trade Union Women, which she helped form in 1934. Her commitment to the Labour party was eventually rewarded in 1945 when she was elected MP for Kilmarnock. Lee represented North Lanarkshire from 1929. She was an MP at twenty-four, and was the youngest woman elected in the interwar period. Hollis suggests that Lee ‘always reduced political issues to class issues’ as a result ‘she was dismissive of feminism, which she thought was a middle-class women’s issue’. P. Hollis, ‘Lee, Janet [Jennie], Baroness Lee of Asheridge (1904-1988)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004, [http://www.oxford.com/view/article/39853, accessed 7 March 2007].

<sup>60</sup> Cairns, *Women in the Clydeside labour movement*, p. 110.

<sup>61</sup> As a result of her involvement in the rent strikes of 1915 and the anti-war movement, Crawford came into close contact with other Clydeside socialists and Marxists. By the end of the First World War she had established herself as a national political figure and was appointed vice-chairperson of the Scottish Divisional Council of the ILP in 1918. Dollan’s political career took a similar path, although she became more involved in municipal politics than Crawford as will be discussed.

<sup>62</sup> A. Hughes, *A Rough Kind of ‘Feminism’: The formation of working-class women’s political identity, Clydeside, c. 1919-1939*, University of Strathclyde PhD thesis, 2001, p. 119.

moral causes of philanthropy'. Therefore labour women in interwar Glasgow were employing the tactics of their Victorian counterparts as described by Hollis. This involved a focus upon women's special qualities and knowledge in the areas of housing and healthcare. The women of the labour movement in Glasgow positioned their politics as 'commonsense demands' for a better standard of living for the working classes. Hughes argues that this 'ethical politics' worked well with the 'ILP's heritage of radical liberalism and its focus on social reform'. This provided 'scope for working-class women to enter the formal world of labour politics'.<sup>63</sup>

In addition male candidates often focused upon women's concerns in their election campaigns, and often prioritised housing reform. In areas where the ILP was dominant candidates also sought female support. This involved enlisting women in electioneering duties as well as gaining their votes. Hughes argues that working-class women exploited this interest by male candidates and made their presence felt by responding and making their own demands.<sup>64</sup> As a result 'women's issues' became prominent on the labour movement's agenda.

However Hughes states that the ILP's disaffiliation from the Labour Party in 1932 resulted in an immediate decline in the proportion of female councillors affiliated to the labour movement. The number of female councillors as a proportion of the total number of Labour Councillors fell from 15.0 percent in 1932 to 11.5 percent in 1933, continuing to decline thereafter only recovering in 1936.<sup>65</sup> It would seem that there was less opportunity for women within the Labour Party with the loss of the ILP's emphasis on municipal socialism and the local issues that were the specialisation of women. This was replaced by a focus on unemployment, often designated as a masculine concern.<sup>66</sup> In this sense the Labour Party could be considered more patriarchal than the ILP. Nevertheless, the number of female councillors remained the same throughout the 1930s, and increased by one in 1938.

The female members of the education authority who were affiliated to the ILP prioritised improvements in the conditions of schooling and health care for working-class children. The education authority was an important arena of municipal government for the ILP and its programme of 'municipal socialism' included securing representation on this body. Hughes suggests that the ILP encouraged women to stand for election, arguing that 'the work of education administration will never be adequately or efficiently under-taken ... until there is a considerable proportion of women'.<sup>67</sup> Prominent male members of the ILP, such as James Maxton the MP for Bridgeton, also stood as candidates for the education boards. This confirms the importance of the education authority. The men and women of the ILP worked together to secure reforms. Yet, education was largely designated as an area of women's special expertise within ILP. While this could be seen as restrictive, as women often were

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> See appendix 6c, table 2.

<sup>66</sup> Hughes, *A Rough Kind of 'Feminism'*, p. 119.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid, p. 129.

limited to the spheres of education, health and housing, it could also be viewed as a compliment given the importance of education in the ILP's programme.

There was a strong tradition of female activism within the ranks of the ILP. In 1919, the three women elected as representatives of the ILP to the newly formed education authority, Mrs Agnes Dollan, Mrs Mary Laird and Mrs Mabel Allan, all had previous connections to the labour movement in one form or another.<sup>68</sup> Unfortunately there is a significant lack of information relating to the public, and private, life of Mabel Allan. She was a widow in 1919, her husband James A Allan being described by *The Herald* as the 'millionaire socialist'. Allan was also formerly a member of the school board. Both of which indicates a previous connection to the labour movement before the First World War. Allan was appointed to the special schools sub committee, which considered the treatment of physically and mentally disabled children. In the interwar years there was a definite move in Glasgow council towards improving the provision of special schooling. Given the calls for economy in all areas of education by the Moderates, the issues discussed by this committee would have been controversial. It follows that it would have been an important committee to serve upon.

In contrast much more is known of Agnes Dollan's life.<sup>69</sup> She was a member of many organisations related to the labour movement in the pre-war period including the ILP, which she joined in 1905, the Kinning Park branch of the Co-operative Women's Guild, the Socialist Sunday School movement, and the Women's Labour League. Her marriage to Patrick Dollan in 1913, then a prominent member of the ILP, was influential in her future political involvement. Although Harry McShane argues that her marriage led to a decline in her political activity, she took an active role in the organisation of the rent strikes and thereafter the Women's Peace Crusade.<sup>70</sup> In the interwar period she became increasingly involved in municipal politics, serving on the education authority from 1919, although she retired in 1928 due to ill health. Dollan served on several standing committees, including the medical inspection and treatment of necessitous children, which considered provision of free meals as well as childcare for impoverished children. She was also appointed to the Continuation Classes, Physical Training, Industrial Schools, and Special Schools standing committees.

Dollan was also a town councillor for Springburn from 1921-1924. While she was unsuccessful in regaining her seat, she continued to be a prominent member of the Labour Party National Executive, a position she had held since the mid 1920s. Representing this body in 1925 she addressed a conference in Glasgow on 'Socialism' held by the women members of the Scottish Council of the Labour Party. After alluding to various crises in industry, she

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<sup>68</sup> This can be seen clearly in both appendix 6a and 6b.

<sup>69</sup> See appendix 6b for further biographical information.

<sup>70</sup> McShane was a contemporary of Agnes Dollan and was a prominent ILP activist and leader of the Scottish branch of the National Unemployed Workers' Movement (NUWM).

declared that ‘the greatest crisis of all was found in the homes of the working classes’.<sup>71</sup> She insisted that ‘the greatest industry in the country’ was ‘the industry of the housewives’.<sup>72</sup> The concerns of working-class housewives were often her main priority. In this same address she criticised a recent speech by the Duchess of Atholl, Unionist MP for Kinross and West Perthshire.<sup>73</sup> The latter had stated that one of the most remarkable things in the recent election was the growth of the Socialist vote. The Duchess had argued that while there were many forms of socialism ‘the believers in every one of them wished at the earliest opportunity to get rid of private ownership’.<sup>74</sup> Dollan corrected this statement stating that ‘there was only one form of Socialism, and that was precisely the form which she (the Duchess) and her class feared’.<sup>75</sup> Amid applause from the audience, Dollan stated that they did not deny the fact that ‘Socialism ultimately meant getting control of the sources of the raw materials needed to supply the wants of the people of this and other countries’.<sup>76</sup> Her address illustrates the growing class antagonisms present in interwar Scotland, with the Duchess of Atholl’s statement exemplifying the fear of socialism by the other two political parties.

Mary Laird also had strong connections to the wider labour movement in Glasgow through her intimate involvement in the rent strikes of 1915 as president of the Glasgow Women’s Housing Association.<sup>77</sup> She later became treasurer of the Scottish Labour Housing Association in 1922. Through her membership of the Glasgow Women’s Labour League she became a member of the Glasgow Trades Council in 1926. This body had an equal representation of men and women, with the examination of unemployment and housing being prominent on the agenda.<sup>78</sup> It was also an accepted route into public life for women involved in the trade union movement. While serving on this body Laird argued that, with regards to retraining, unemployed women ‘should be able to choose whatever they felt to be appropriate employment training, rather than having training foisted upon them’.<sup>79</sup> Her demands were in direct opposition to the council’s policy of retraining unemployed women in domestic service. This was a loathed profession among working-class women, and as a result there was a shortage of domestic servants, this being problematic for the many middle-class women who required this service. The GSEC favoured such retraining, which may have been divisive and prevented co-operation with working-class female activists.

As representative for Hillhead and Partick on the education authority, Laird was appointed to the property, physical training, and industrial schools sub committees and she was

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<sup>71</sup> *The Scotsman*, 9 February 1925, p. 9.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>73</sup> The Duchess of Atholl’s political career will be discussed.

<sup>74</sup> *The Scotsman*, 9 February 1925, p. 9.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>77</sup> *The Herald*, 21 March 1922, p. 9. Also see Hughes, *A Rough Kind of ‘Feminism’*, p. 78 and Cairns, *Women in the Clydeside labour movement*, p. 182.

<sup>78</sup> Hughes, *A Rough Kind of ‘Feminism’*, p. 77.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 148.

also the vice-convenor of domestic science.<sup>80</sup> All of these committees considered the welfare, education and environment of working-class children. She was also the authority's representative to the Women's Advisory Committee, where 'she conferred and advised them on matters relating to Child Welfare'.<sup>81</sup> Laird was particularly vociferous on the education authority and in 1919 protested against the increased cost of milk. She argued that this was 'prejudicial to child welfare and educational efficiency'.<sup>82</sup> She demanded that the council should remedy the situation by establishing a municipal milk supply, and Agnes Dollan seconded her motion.<sup>83</sup> Attempts were later made to realise her demand, with discussions taking place between the representatives of the various committees and a meeting being arranged at the City Chambers.<sup>84</sup> Laird was also elected to the town council for Partick East in 1924.

The Moderates maintained control of the council throughout the 1920s. The influence of Dollan, Laird and Allan on the education authority was therefore relatively short lived.<sup>85</sup> However, and in spite of the fact that the representation of women on the education authority had declined from six to four, three ILP women came to the fore when Labour took control of the council in 1933.<sup>86</sup> Like their predecessors, Mrs Kate Beaton, Mrs Helen Gault, and Mrs Laura McLean, had similar concerns relating to the education of working-class children.

Kate Beaton had been involved in the labour movement before the First World War, joining the Women's Labour League in 1908. She was also a member of the National Federation of Women Workers (NFWW), representing this organisation on the Glasgow Trades Council in 1909, thereafter becoming a representative in her own right.<sup>87</sup> In the pre-war period she was also a member of the parliamentary committee of the Scottish Trades Union Congress (STUC). Beaton first stood for election to the town council in 1920 contesting Sandyford for the ILP, she was unsuccessful and was also defeated again in 1921.<sup>88</sup> However she became the ILP town councillor for Hutchesontown unopposed in 1923 and was re-elected in 1925. She held the seat until 1949 when she chose to stand down.

Beaton was vocal in her criticism of the male leadership of the labour movement. In 1924 she argued that

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<sup>80</sup> Glasgow City Council, *Minutes of the Education Authority for the Burgh of Glasgow*, D-ED 2/1/1, 5 May 1919.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid, 4 March 1919.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid, 4 December 1919.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid, 15 January 1919.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid, 18 January 1923.

<sup>85</sup> Again for further details of the wider political context of Glasgow in the interwar years see chapter three.

<sup>86</sup> See table 1 above for statistics.

<sup>87</sup> G. Rawlinson, 'McLean, Catherine (1879-1960)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/articles/54413>, accessed 7 March 2007] Notably Beaton held this position for six years. In addition, she was a very active organiser on behalf of the NFWW in Scotland, and was involved in recruiting members and forming branches. She also often acted as an advocate for women workers in labour disputes.

<sup>88</sup> *The Scotsman*, 2 November 1921, p. 10.

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.<sup>89</sup>

It was not surprising that she held such views, especially considering her first two attempts at gaining entry to municipal government were in Sandyford, a safe seat for the Moderates. In contrast ILP men were often put forward in safe seats where there was significant support for the labour movement. By appealing to her fellow working-class women for an increase in the number of female representatives, and describing several male representatives as 'duds', Beaton was definitely not afraid to come into conflict with the leaders of the labour movement. Such outright criticism does not seem to have affected her municipal career. Within the council and the education authority she served in nearly all of the committees by the time of her retirement, and she was also elected a bailie and became a JP in 1934.<sup>90</sup>

In addition Beaton was involved in the Co-operative movement, joining the St. George society in 1921. She quickly rose through the ranks from delegates' secretary being appointed director in 1929; by 1931 she was vice president. This culminated in her appointment as the first female president in 1949. Yet Beaton had limited connection with the Scottish Co-operative Women's Guild.<sup>91</sup> In contrast, Helen Gault was a prominent and vociferous member of the Guild and was president of the Knightswood West branch. On occasion her opinions proved to be contentious, with her opposition to the central council's resolution that all branches should affiliate to the Co-operative Party being particularly notable. Gault argued at the annual meeting in 1932 that the Co-operative Party was 'a waste of money', especially through election expenses.<sup>92</sup> In spite of the fact that she was very much a dissenting voice

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<sup>89</sup> Hughes, *A Rough Kind of 'Feminism'*, p. 170.

<sup>90</sup> Glasgow City Council, *Education Authority of Glasgow Annual Reports*, DE-D 9/1/46-47, 1933-34 and 1934-1935. Also see G. Rawlinson, 'McLean, Catherine (1879-1960)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/articles/54413>, accessed 7 March 2007].

<sup>91</sup> While it would appear that Beaton was not a member of the Guild, on one occasion at least she gave an address to St. Georges Guild on the work of the Parish Council. On this occasion she spoke against Moderate calls for economy, giving 'one or two cases of how anxious our opponents are to save the rates'. She described how a £28,000 quote was accepted for insurance for the Kelvin Hall instead of a lower quote of £23,000. She also drew attention to the fact that £1,500 had be spent on portraits of the lord provost when the 'same amount was grudged to poor mothers and children for an outing'. St. Georges, Glasgow, *Women's Guild Minute Books*, Glasgow Regional Archives, CWS1/33/21/65, 17 December 1925.

<sup>92</sup> Scottish Co-operative Women's Guild (SCWG), *Thirty-ninth Annual Report*, Glasgow Regional Archives, CSW1/39/6/39, 1932-1933. See chapter four for further details. In 1935 a further resolution was passed stating that all members who held office should be members of the Co-operative party. Again Mrs Gault opposed this measure arguing that any branch of the Guild should be free to affiliate to any working-class organisation.

within the Guild she continued to be president of Knightswood, passing resolutions on behalf of the branch on such issues as the reduction of war propaganda in schools.<sup>93</sup>

Gault was a prominent ILP propagandist, which accounts for her opposition to the Guild's affiliation to the Co-operative Party. In fact she wrote a women's column for *Forward* for a few months in 1925. Like Beaton she was openly critical of the male leadership of the ILP and on one occasion used her column to articulate this view in an article entitled 'For Women Only'. She argued that 'among socialists the belief in equality' was 'only skin deep'.<sup>94</sup> She also explicitly criticised men stating that

So long as women is a bundle of sex she meets with the approval of the great majority of men. Let her cultivate her mind and the circle of her devotees narrows immediately. So long as he cannot visualise the women of the future man retards their onward march.<sup>95</sup>

This was strong criticism, and surprisingly it received no reply on the letters page, although it is possible that any responses to her column were simply not printed.<sup>96</sup> Such views may account for Gault's active involvement in the Women's Advisory Council of the Glasgow ILP, where the women of the ILP could be organised against such inequality. Indeed she ran a series of women's speakers' classes in 1926.<sup>97</sup> Such separate women's organisations within the labour movement may have restricted women's political activity to a perceived 'female sphere'. However such conferences gave women the opportunity to formulate their ideas and take their demands to the men of the movement. The first conference of the Women's Advisory Council in 1925 considered the high cost of living. Gault moved a resolution that suggested that all working-class women should campaign against the high price of foodstuffs and 'adopt all means in their power' which included organising boycotts of products 'that can be more easily dispensed with'.<sup>98</sup> It was hoped that if enough women supported this movement it could be 'the direct means of reducing the high cost of living'.

Laura McLean presided over this conference arguing that 'the Government were not only taxing the food of the people, but their clothing also, as could be seen from the Budget'.<sup>99</sup> She was elected the ILP town councillor for Kingston comparatively early in 1926, joining her

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<sup>93</sup> SCWG, *Fortieth Annual Report*, CSW1/39/6/40, 1932-1933, p. 20. Gault also addressed branches of the Guild in her capacity as a member of the Glasgow and District Conferences Association. She discussed the need for education, and the way in which 'the money for education should be spent'. St. Georges, Glasgow, *Women's Guild Minute Books*, Glasgow Regional Archives, CWS1/33/21/65, 25 October 1923.

<sup>94</sup> Cairns, *Women in the Clydeside labour movement*, p. 120.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid, p. 114.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid, p. 120. It is probable that these classes were like those offered by the Guild, which had the aim of giving women confidence in their own views and opinions.

<sup>98</sup> *The Scotsman*, 4 May 1925, p. 5

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

husband Neil McLean who was the ILP MP for Govan.<sup>100</sup> In 1928 the West Perthshire Divisional Party asked her to address a conference regarding the selection of a socialist candidate to oppose the Duchess of Atholl at the general election. McLean declined, instead choosing to continue her municipal work in Glasgow, becoming a JP in 1935.<sup>101</sup> Through her work on the education authority she took an active interest in the welfare of children. She spoke at the annual meeting of the Glasgow Infant Health Visitors' Association in 1935. At this event the association was celebrating the decline in Glasgow's infant mortality and outlining its aims to keep this rate low by 'helping to educate mothers, and teaching them, as far as possible, the ethics of cleanliness and hygiene'.<sup>102</sup>

In Glasgow the representation of women on the education authority, and indeed the council more generally, was very much affected by the political situation in the city. In the early years of the 1920s ILP women made up the greater proportion of female membership of the education authority, arguably because of their previous involvement in the labour movement and in particular the rent strikes of 1915. These women had proved themselves as capable of holding a position in municipal politics. Shortly afterwards the Moderate coalition's anti-socialist campaign gathered pace and it held control of the council throughout the remainder of the 1920s and early 1930s. As a result all of the female members of the education authority in this period were Moderates. However the feminist movement in Glasgow, as represented by the GSEC and the GWCA, did not have connections with all of these women and one gained her position by other means. In spite of this the GSEC's policy to encourage the election of female candidates could be judged successful. This organisation largely supported women who had established contacts with them, and more often were members. Consequently it did not support any of the ILP women who were appointed in the interwar years, which again reflects the polarised nature of Glasgow's politics. When Labour took control of the council in 1933, and although the proportion of female members of the education authority declined, three of the four were ILP women. The GSEC lost its influence when the Moderates became the minority in the council, and the fact that the organisation folded in 1934 confirms this assertion.

The issues considered and supported by female representatives largely reflected their political affiliation. Where information is available, it would appear that the Moderate women generally reiterated the Unionist and thus Moderate belief in economy in public expenditure.

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<sup>100</sup> Ibid, 3 November 1926, p. 9.

<sup>101</sup> Glasgow City Council, *Education Authority of Glasgow Annual Reports*, DE-D 9/1/46-47, 1933-34 and 1934-1935.

<sup>102</sup> *The Scotsman*, 13 February 1935, p. 8. The emphasis placed on educating mothers reflects the government's aim to situate infant mortality as a problem that could be reduced by more responsible motherhood, rather than an improvement of environmental and living conditions in working-class areas. It is unclear whether McLean would have supported this view, given her involvement in ILP politics with its emphasis on improving housing. See chapter three.



Hamilton was a possible exception as she showed an interest in reducing juvenile unemployment, although this was clearly framed in terms of reducing the strain placed on the rates. The female Moderate representatives also exhibited an interest in female equality, with those candidates who were supported by the feminist movement generally supporting the GSEC's and the GWCA's demand for equality in the teaching profession. In contrast, the female labour activists largely supported the programme of the ILP in relation to its 'municipal socialism', with many of the women having a background in either trade union politics, the rent strikes of the pre-war period, and pacifist campaigns. These interests were evident in their contributions to the municipal government of Glasgow in the interwar years. Such women continued to place an emphasis on improving the conditions of working-class standards of living, generally through demands for better housing and education for working-class children. Three of the women, Dollan, Barbour and Gault, had connections to the Guild with its emphasis on improving working-class housing conditions and welfare provisions for working-class women being evident.

Ultimately, the representation of women of both political persuasions on the education authority remained comparatively small throughout the period. Moreover it declined after 1933 under a Labour administration. This simply does not equate with the ILP's ideology which stressed the equality of the sexes and the special role that women could play in public life. As discussed Hughes attributes this decline to the disaffiliation of the ILP from the Labour Party, and the loss of its focus on municipal socialism, which provided women with an avenue into public life. The women who gained, and retained, positions in Glasgow's municipal government, both Moderate women and female labour activists, should therefore be praised for negotiating and overcoming the societal barriers to their entry to formal political life.

### Edinburgh

There was a dramatic increase in the number of female voters in Edinburgh throughout the interwar years, especially in the case of the potential electorate for local government elections. Throughout the period the female electorate was proportionately high rising from 44.9 percent in 1921 to 56 percent in 1938 for parliamentary elections.<sup>103</sup> Similarly the female electorate for municipal elections was also high being 54.1 percent in 1921 and peaking at 56 percent in 1935.<sup>104</sup> The parliamentary statistic given for 1921 was significantly higher than the national average of 39.6 percent for 1918, and also the figures provided for Glasgow above.<sup>105</sup> The

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<sup>103</sup> See appendix 6c, table 3.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

larger proportion of women eligible to vote reflects the class composition of the city of Edinburgh, which had a much larger middle and upper class population than Glasgow.<sup>106</sup>

This had important implications for the political situation in Edinburgh, with enduring support for the Progressive coalition ensuring that it remained in control of the council throughout the interwar years.<sup>107</sup> However, while the influence of the labour movement was not as pervasive in Edinburgh, the ILP and Labour Party secured a level of influence, especially in relation to housing and health reforms for the working classes. The emphasis placed on such issues may have facilitated the entry of female labour activists into political life in Edinburgh given women's speciality in such matters. Indeed this was a prominent argument of such individuals. As in Glasgow, debates on Edinburgh town council centred around municipal expenditure, with the Progressive's encouraging 'economy' measures, while the labour movement's representatives, both male and female, demanded improvements in the city's housing stock and educational provisions for working-class children. Thus, as in Glasgow there was a definite tension between representatives of the labour movement and the Progressive majority.

Naturally the political composition of Edinburgh affected the representation of women in municipal government, especially in terms of their political affiliations. As in Glasgow, the overall increase in the female electorate, in both parliamentary and municipal terms, resulted in increased female representation. Yet, the representation of women on both the council and education authority remained low and was definitely not proportional to the number of women voters, especially in the early 1920s. Indeed, in spite of the differing nature of Edinburgh's politics, the pattern of women's representation in terms of numbers was strikingly similar to that in Glasgow as table 2 illustrates.

Table 2 – Representation of Women in local government in Edinburgh

<b>Date</b>	<b>No. of Women on Town Council</b>	<b>Political breakdown</b>	<b>No. of Women on Education Authority</b>	<b>Political breakdown</b>	<b>Proportion of women</b>	<b>No. of Women on Parish Council</b>	<b>Proportion of women</b>
1919	2	1 Independent, 1 Progressive	2	1 Independent, 1 Progressive	6.25%	-	-
1921	2	1 Independent, 1 Progressive	3	3 Progressive	9.38%	-	-

<sup>106</sup> As noted middle and upper-class women were more likely to have more significant means in terms of property ownership and thus could satisfy the conditions of the legislation enabling women to vote.

<sup>107</sup> The Progressives were Edinburgh's equivalent of the Moderates in Glasgow. The support for the Progressives can be explained by the greater middle-class and upper-class population in Edinburgh, and also the success of the city's economy in avoiding the worst of the recession in the 1920s and subsequent depression of the 1930s, as it was largely based upon the service and financial sectors. As such the Progressive's calls for economy were largely supported by the electorate and there was less pressure on municipal resources given the city's comparatively healthier economy.

1922	2	1 Independent, 1 Progressive	4	3 Progressive, 1 Unionist	12.5%	10	22.2%
1925	3	1 Independent, 1 Progressive, 1 ILP	4	3 Progressive, 1 Unionist	12.5%	9	20%
1930	4	1 Independent, 1 Progressive, 1 ILP, 1 Co- operative	5	3 Progressive, 1 Unionist, 1 ILP	15.63%	11	24.4%
1935	7	1 Independent, 3 Progressive, 3 ILP	3	1 Independent, 1 Progressive, 1 ILP	9.38%	-	-
1938	10	6 Progressive, 3 ILP, 1 Protestant Action Society	4	3 Progressive, 1 ILP	12.5%	-	-

Source: *City of Edinburgh Diaries*, SL 70/1/1, Edinburgh City Archives, and *The Scotsman*.

### Progressive women

As a consequence of the Progressive's control of the council, and the relative weakness of the labour movement, the female representatives on the town council and education authority were either Progressives or independents in the early 1920s. In 1920 there were only two female councillors serving on the Edinburgh Town Council: Mrs Euphemia Somerville an independent and Mrs Ella Morison Millar a Progressive.<sup>108</sup> They served together on many of the Council's standing committees including, among others, public health, public parks and housing and town planning.<sup>109</sup> Therefore many of the councillors' responsibilities were confined to areas traditionally related to women, as was also the case in Glasgow.

The women's movement in Edinburgh, which included the EWCA and the Edinburgh branch of the National Council of Women (NCW), actively supported both women. In fact Somerville, who was first elected in 1908 as the independent town councillor for Merchiston, was one of the first candidates to be supported by the Edinburgh Local Elections Committee.<sup>110</sup> The EWCA argued that the committee, 'by focussing the work of the various women's associations in the city' was 'mainly responsible' for her 'return'.<sup>111</sup> Somerville was the chairman of the Executive Committee of the EWCA. As a result she was a regular speaker in its branches, providing addresses on housing and the work of the council and education authority. Somerville also helped arrange visits for EWCA members to various municipal

<sup>108</sup> Edinburgh City Council, *City of Edinburgh Diaries*, Edinburgh City Archives, City Chambers, SL 70/1/2, 1920.

<sup>109</sup> See table 2a in appendix 6a. Somerville was appointed to the venereal diseases sub-committee of public health and the reconstruction sub-committee of Housing and Town Planning. Morison Millar was appointed to the Maternity and Child Welfare sub committee of Public Health and the new housing sub committee of the Housing and Town Planning. She also served on the Public Libraries Committee and was the Council's representative to the Edinburgh College of Art and Edinburgh School of Cookery and Domestic Economy.

<sup>110</sup> For further information relating to the formation of this committee and its objectives see chapter one.

<sup>111</sup> EWCA, *Second Annual Report*, National Archives of Scotland, GD 333/2/1, 1919-1920.

bodies, and later housing schemes, through her role as convenor of the housing sub-committee of the town council.<sup>112</sup> The EWCA honoured her work of ‘reform and reconstruction’ through her role as convenor of this sub-committee at a social and musical evening at which Mrs Morison Millar was given similar praise.<sup>113</sup> Somerville became Edinburgh’s second woman magistrate in 1932.<sup>114</sup> On her death three years later she was remembered by *The Scotsman* ‘as a pioneer in public health and child welfare’, who demanded improved housing for the working classes, ‘playing an important part in awakening public conscience to this matter’.<sup>115</sup> She was also the chairman of the Scottish Federation of Mother and Child Welfare.<sup>116</sup>

Morison Millar, the Progressive councillor for Morningside, was also involved in the women’s movement in Edinburgh as vice-president of the Edinburgh branch of the NCW throughout the 1930s.<sup>117</sup> She argued that such was the influence of the NCW that she was convinced that the recent Act of Parliament legalising Child Adoption in Scotland ‘would never have been passed but for the amount of work done by the National Council of Women and other societies in educating public opinion’.<sup>118</sup> The Edinburgh branch of the NCW was closely linked to the EWCA, especially through its work for improved maternity provision in Edinburgh.<sup>119</sup> Morison Millar also had direct connections with the EWCA. She spoke at a joint meeting of these organisations on the subject of child outrage, appeared as a speaker for branches of the EWCA, and helped Somerville in the organisation of municipal visits for members of the EWCA.<sup>120</sup> In addition Morison Millar was involved in the campaign for the removal of the double standard inherent in Solicitation Laws, which was organised by the Association of Moral and Social Hygiene. In 1928, and as a result of a ten-year campaign, she was appointed to the departmental committee of enquiry that was formed to consider the matter.<sup>121</sup> This was a prominent demand of feminist organisations in the interwar period and one which the EWCA and the GSEC shared.<sup>122</sup>

The EWCA continued to support female candidates throughout the interwar period, if not directly, through its involvement on the Edinburgh Local Elections Committee. In 1921 it promoted the candidature of four women for election to the education authority, Mrs Alice Ross, Miss Minnie Galbraith Cowan, Mrs Isobel Morgan and Miss Mary G. Williamson.

<sup>112</sup> See chapter three for further discussion of Somerville’s instrumental role in the EWCA’s ‘Voluntary Housing Crusade’, its campaign to improve Edinburgh’s housing stock.

<sup>113</sup> *The Scotsman*, 28 February 1928, p. 10 and EWCA, *Tenth Annual Report*, GD 333/2/9, 1927-1928.

<sup>114</sup> Morison Millar was the first woman to hold the office of magistrate in Edinburgh, and in 1928 spoke of this work ‘as one of great responsibility’ as a Magistrate ‘was dealing with the lives of others’. *The Scotsman*, 28 February 1928, p. 10.

<sup>115</sup> *The Scotsman*, 28 September 1935, p. 11.

<sup>116</sup> SCWCA, *Scottish Women Citizens Yearbook*, GD1/1076/16, 1923, p. 23

<sup>117</sup> *The Scotsman*, 14 November 1930 and 27 March 1936.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid*, 14 November 1930, p. 5.

<sup>119</sup> As discussed in chapter three the two organisations formed a joint committee to discuss and campaign on behalf of this issue.

<sup>120</sup> EWCA, *Third Annual Report*, GD 333/2/1, 1920-1921.

<sup>121</sup> *The Scotsman*, 29 September 1928, p. 13.

<sup>122</sup> See chapter three for further details.

Alice Ross, a prominent member of the EWCA, was the Progressive town councillor for St. Bernard's. One of the main planks of her campaign was the demand for increased open spaces for children to play, including the opening of school playgrounds at all times. Although a Progressive councillor, she objected to 'economy', and stated that municipal expenditure in education especially was essential to the good of the country. Women of the labour movement often made similar justifications to demand the extension of municipal expenditure. Ross also argued for a reduction in class sizes from sixty to forty, which would have involved significant municipal expenditure in providing increased school accommodation and teaching staff.<sup>123</sup> In addition she vehemently opposed the religious sectarianism which arose when Catholic schools came under the remit of the education authority in 1919.<sup>124</sup>

The EWCA continued to support Ross' candidature at every election, when she was a regular speaker at branches of the organisation.<sup>125</sup> The EWCA honoured her work on the education authority at the social and musical evening in 1928, as well as at a luncheon hosted in conjunction with the Edinburgh branch of the NCW in 1934. Ross was also an active member of the latter which illustrates the shared membership of these two organisations.<sup>126</sup> At a conference entitled 'Insurance and Equal Pay' organised by the Edinburgh branch of the NCW in 1936 she passed a resolution advocating equal pay for equal work in the civil service.<sup>127</sup> She argued that 'they all knew the arguments commonly levelled against the plea for equal pay for women who were doing the same work as men'.<sup>128</sup> Ross also criticised the contention that men were paid more because they had dependents to support, stating that a recent enquiry revealed that 'there was practically no difference between men and women in this respect' with fifty-one percent of men and forty-nine percent of women supporting dependents.<sup>129</sup> She argued that this was a 'matter of elementary fair play'.<sup>130</sup> While Ross opposed economy in education like the women of the labour movement, her demand for equal pay was at odds with many working-class female activists support of the labour movement's campaign for a 'living wage' for men.<sup>131</sup> Her demands for equality were reiterated a year later when she criticised the new Factories Bill. Ross argued that this still classed women 'for many

<sup>123</sup> *The Scotsman*, 5 March 1925, p. 9.

<sup>124</sup> The opposition to 'Rome on the rates' appears to have continued throughout the 1920s as it also did in Glasgow, with the municipal funding of separate Catholic schools, arguably becoming a focus for religious tension in both Edinburgh and Glasgow.

<sup>125</sup> *The Scotsman*, 14 October 1936, p. 17, 29 October 1936, p. 9, and 5 November 1936, p. 16.

<sup>126</sup> Ross was also president of the Women's Freedom League from 1934.

<sup>127</sup> *The Scotsman*, 27 March 1936, p. 15.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>131</sup> The labour movement's demands for a 'living wage' generally suggested that men should be paid more as a result of having dependents. The support given to this by women of the labour movement caused a significant divide between middle-class and working-class feminists. See chapter four for details of the Guild's view on the 'living wage' and feminist demands for equal pay.

purposes with young persons', suggesting that legislation should be based on the conditions and nature of the work, not the sex of the worker.<sup>132</sup>

Minnie Cowan was a Unionist member of the education authority, representing East Edinburgh.<sup>133</sup> She did not stand under the coalition banner of 'Progressive' at any time in the interwar years. In fact in 1935 she stood for re-election as a 'national government candidate'. In 1931 a national government based on a coalition of Unionist and a small number of Labour representatives came to power in the United Kingdom succeeding the Labour government. By pooling resources with the Liberals, the Unionists ensured that they remained in power. Cowan actively supported this strategy, arguing that it would encourage a 'restoration of trade and the maintenance of peace' and was the best option for the 'stability of national life, and for the betterment of the conditions of the people'.<sup>134</sup> In the face of the growing appeal of the labour movement to the working classes in Edinburgh she argued that the social conditions of the people were in 1935 'four times better than four years ago' and that this 'improvement had been built on the capitalist system'.<sup>135</sup> Thus Cowan criticised the manifesto of the 'socialist party' in Edinburgh, and supported the introduction of the household means test insisting that 'it was just and right that this system of national assistance should be in relation to family income'.<sup>136</sup> Yet, in spite of being a Unionist or 'national government' representative, Cowan shared Mrs Ross' emphasis on the need for smaller classes and also a variety in curriculum, both of which would have required an extension of municipal expenditure.<sup>137</sup>

The Edinburgh local elections committee had supported Cowan's re-election to the education authority in 1921. She had close connections to the women's movement throughout the interwar years, becoming chairman of the Edinburgh branch of the NCW in 1934.<sup>138</sup> Cowan was described as a 'leading member and dominant personality' in the Edinburgh education authority, which was not surprising given that she was the convenor of the higher education committee. This post involved managing the city's nine secondary schools.<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> *The Scotsman*, 18 March 1937, p. 18.

<sup>133</sup> For further bibliographical information see appendix 6b.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>135</sup> *The Scotsman*, 2 November 1935, p. 19.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.* 'Socialist' was the term often used in Edinburgh to describe all of the constituent members of the labour movement including the ILP, Labour Party and Socialist Democratic Federation. The household means test, which regulated unemployment assistance, was vehemently opposed by the female representatives of the labour movement on Edinburgh Council. Also see chapter four for further discussion of the Guild's opposition to the means test.

<sup>137</sup> *The Scotsman*, 20 April 1921, p. 10.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, 27 March 1936, p. 15. Cowan later became the National President of the NCW in 1946, and also held the post of International Vice-President. Ewan, Innes, Reynolds and Pipes (Eds.) *The Biographical Dictionary of Scottish Women*, p. 81.

<sup>139</sup> See appendix 6b for further details. Cowan's demands for smaller class sizes and a more varied curriculum may have been realised given her possible influence on the education authority as a result of this position. Again such municipal expenditure would have conflicted with the Unionist emphasis on economy.

Cowan stated that 'education was her first love' as it was 'the foundation of all progress'.<sup>140</sup> She was also member of the National Committee for the Training of Teachers.

In contrast Isobel Morgan appears to have had no direct connection to the EWCA although the Edinburgh Local Elections Committee supported her candidature in 1921. At a meeting held by this committee she argued that women should be represented on public bodies and especially the education authority as a 'good deal remained to be done in the education of girls in domestic economy'. She suggested that while boys study for one profession, girls 'must be prepared at any time to take up the management of a home and a family'.<sup>141</sup> This clear demarcation of the educational needs of boys and girls was at odds with the emphasis on female equality by the EWCA. Yet, on a questionnaire issued by the committee Morgan stated that she was in favour of equal opportunities for boys and girls in all subjects, including technical education.<sup>142</sup> Therefore her position on equality was unclear, which may explain why she was not further involved with the feminist movement. Her political affiliation was also unclear, although she may have been a Progressive.<sup>143</sup>

Similarly Mary Williamson's only contact with the feminist movement was through the Edinburgh Local Elections Committee. Her political affiliation was also unclear, although again it could be presumed that she was a Progressive. Williamson's class background was certainly evident in her expression of regret that there was no schools in the North of the city where parents 'who wished to pay a small fee could do so'.<sup>144</sup> She was also a History lecturer at the University of Edinburgh, a position that would itself require a university education, this was not only rare for women, but was relatively unheard of for working-class women. It can therefore be safely assumed that she was middle or even upper-class.<sup>145</sup> In addition Williamson suggested that increased facilities should be made available for organised games, which would 'benefit physical development and training in character'.<sup>146</sup>

In the interwar period the EWCA also had close connections with two female members of the parish council, Miss Sara L Munro and Miss Mabel E J Cornwall.<sup>147</sup> Sara Munro was the chairman of the Edinburgh branch of the Women's Freedom League in the pre-war period and was involved in the formation of the EWCA in 1919. She later became a joint convenor of its local government committee, as well as a vice president, and also held a seat on the

<sup>140</sup> *The Scotsman*, 19 July 1935, p. 9.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid*, 20 April 1921, p. 10.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>143</sup> Again this is based on Baxter's assertion that on occasion contemporary newspapers 'did not indicate any label for candidates of the right', while at the same time labelling representatives of the labour movement as 'socialist'. He argues that the evidence indicates that the majority of these candidates were the equivalents of Moderates and Progressives. Baxter, *'Estimable and Gifted'? Women in Party Politics in Scotland c1918-c1955*, p. 101

<sup>144</sup> *The Scotsman*, 20 April 1921, p. 10.

<sup>145</sup> Arguably Williamson's candidature would have been sympathetically received by the EWCA, whose membership was largely middle class. See chapter one for further details.

<sup>146</sup> *The Scotsman*, 20 April 1921, p. 10.

<sup>147</sup> See table 2 above for statistics relating to the representation of women on the parish council in Edinburgh.

executive until her death in 1935. The EWCA and the Edinburgh Local Elections Committee ‘wholeheartedly’ supported Munro at each municipal election.<sup>148</sup> She was also a regular speaker on the programme of branches of the EWCA. Her addresses often drew upon her own teaching experience, and focused upon the need for reforms in education. Munro was first elected to the parish council in 1906 following her retirement from the teaching profession. She also became involved in a range of philanthropic activities, especially relating to the ‘care of poor children’. This work continued into the interwar period and including involvement in various voluntary committees, including the Adoption Committee, the Children’s Shelter and Jubilee Nurses’ Association. Munro was also involved in establishing the first nursery school for necessitous children in the city.

Mabel Cornwall was elected to the Parish Council in 1930 and represented Haymarket.<sup>149</sup> She was involved in the feminist movement in Edinburgh as joint honorary secretary of the EWCA.<sup>150</sup> Within the association she was particularly vociferous in demanding the improvement of the city’s housing stock. Cornwall argued that it seemed that ‘an unlimited amount of public money was spent on an unlimited number of museums in Edinburgh’.<sup>151</sup> Instead she suggested that what was required was increased public expenditure on housing for the workers in the centre of town as ‘there was great discontent among those who were transplanted to the outskirts’.<sup>152</sup> She insisted that there should also be increased provision of community centres for the people relocated to the new housing centres that were being built at the edge of the city. Cornwall stated that ‘it was not sufficient just to dump them down in a far away suburb where they were absolutely bored, had to pay a higher rent and to accommodate themselves to a higher standard of life’.<sup>153</sup> Her demands were reflective of the EWCA’s housing policy.<sup>154</sup> In fact she later became the Hon. Rent Collector and Supervisor of the houses built under the ‘Edinburgh Welfare Housing Trust’, with such expertise resulting in her appointment as convener of the EWCA’s Housing and Town Planning Committee in 1939.<sup>155</sup>

In addition, Cornwall was actively involved in the Edinburgh branch of the Women’s Peace Crusade and was part of deputation to the Solicitor-General in 1932, proposing two resolutions on the reduction of armaments.<sup>156</sup> Cornwall was the EWCA’s resident expert on

<sup>148</sup> *The Scotsman*, 20 April 1921, p. 10.

<sup>149</sup> Edinburgh City Council, *City of Edinburgh Diaries*, SL 70/1/12, 1930. Cornwall was one of eleven female members of the Parish Council, which had forty-five members overall.

<sup>150</sup> *The Scotsman*, 5 July 1930, p. 1 and 6 April 1933, p. 14.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*, 18 March 1937, p. 18. Cornwall made these statements at the annual meeting of the Edinburgh branch of the NCW, which again illustrates this organisations close relationship to the EWCA and its members.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*, 27 March 1936, p. 15.

<sup>154</sup> See chapter three for further information.

<sup>155</sup> The Edinburgh Welfare Housing Trust was formed in 1929, with the EWCA playing an influential role through the leadership of Councillor Somerville. Again see chapter three.

<sup>156</sup> *The Scotsman*, 10 December 1932, p. 11.



the activity of the League of Nations Advisory Commission, often giving accounts at meetings of the executive. She supported the work of the League in its campaign 'against vice and the enslavement of women in all parts of the world' and was entrusted with liaising with the Edinburgh Branch of the League of Nations Union.<sup>157</sup> She also reported on her visits to 'the School of International Relations' at Geneva.<sup>158</sup> Cornwall's pacifism and demands for housing reform were notable as these were also issues prioritised by working-class feminists such as the Guild or ILP women. This highlights possible ground for coalition between the members of largely middle-class organisations such as the EWCA and working-class women.<sup>159</sup>

The EWCA supported the candidature of a further two women, Miss Agnes Harrison and Mrs Jane M J Bowie. Both women were elected to the town council in 1936.<sup>160</sup> Harrison, a committee member of the EWCA, became the Progressive councillor for Merchiston, replacing the late Bailie Mrs Somerville.<sup>161</sup> Bowie was an Independent councillor for George Square, and although not a member of the EWCA, received support in her candidature and gave an address to the association at this time.<sup>162</sup> Both women had a background in nursing and both served on the council's public assistance committee, as well as the education authority.<sup>163</sup> *The Scotsman* described Harrison as 'well known for her fine record of social service in the city' which specialised in child welfare, and Bowie was 'well known for her activities on behalf of many social organisations'.<sup>164</sup>

### Female labour activists

As stated the Progressive coalition retained control of Edinburgh town council throughout the interwar period. Consequently there was only five 'socialist' female councillors in the whole period, Mrs Eltringham Millar the ILP councillor for Gorgie from 1924, Mrs Swan Brunton who became the Co-operative representative for St. Giles' in 1928, Mrs Mary Graham ILP councillor for Dalry from 1930 and Mrs Barbara Woodburn who was elected for Central Leith in 1937.<sup>165</sup>

Like her fellow female councillors of the early 1920s, Mrs Somerville and Mrs Morison Millar, Eltringham Millar served on several sub committees, including housing and

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<sup>157</sup> EWCA, *Annual General Meetings*, National Archives of Scotland, GD333/3, 31 January 1928.

<sup>158</sup> EWCA, *Ninth Annual Report*, GD333/2/8, 1926-1927.

<sup>159</sup> As discussed in chapters three and four, such co-operation was limited, as such the feminist movement in Scotland was fragmented. See chapter four for further details of the Guild's pacifist campaigns as well as its demands for improved housing.

<sup>160</sup> Edinburgh City Council, *City of Edinburgh Diaries*, SL 70/1/20, 1938.

<sup>161</sup> Harrison topped the poll with a majority of 1451 over Mr Williamson S. Allison, who was also a Progressive candidate. *The Scotsman*, 4 December 1935, p. 9.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid*, 14 October 1936, p. 17, 29 October 1936, p. 9 and 5 November 1936, p. 16.

<sup>163</sup> Edinburgh City Council, *City of Edinburgh Diaries*, SL 70/1/20, 1938. Also see *The Scotsman*, 15 September 1936, p. 7. Harrison's duties on the Public Assistance Committee included the trinity hospital and general purposes committee.

<sup>164</sup> *The Scotsman*, 4 December 1935, p. 9. These articles do not elaborate further.

<sup>165</sup> Mary Ingles an ILP representative succeeded Swan Brunton. No further information can be found relating to this individual. See table 2 above for further details of female representation.

town planning and public health.<sup>166</sup> Both of these were important committees for an ILP woman to serve on, as they considered two of the main planks of the ILP's 'municipal socialism'.<sup>167</sup> In addition as an ILP representative, Eltringham Millar actively opposed the 'economy' measures proposed by the Progressive coalition in relation to housing, healthcare and education. Her sense of injustice on behalf of her constituents increased with the discussion of the household means test in a meeting of the council in 1931.<sup>168</sup> She argued that this measure 'to put further degradation on their fellow-citizens was to ask for trouble'.<sup>169</sup>

The labour movement was gaining strength on Edinburgh town council in the early 1930s and was becoming increasingly vociferous in its demands for social justice. In 1932 the ILP councillor for Leith, Mr Paton, demanded that more ILP members should be appointed to the public health committee, as he was determined 'not to have the door of the committee slammed' in his face as it was being 'slammed in the face of the North Leith ward'.<sup>170</sup> In the same session the lord provost denied entry to a deputation of housing tenants on the subject of rent restrictions, as well as a deputation by the Edinburgh branch of the National Unemployed Workers' Movement. The ILP councillors supported both deputations, and when the latter was denied, 'angry scenes' erupted in the gallery. This resulted in protests from the ILP councillors against forcible removal of the responsible individuals by the police, with Eltringham Millar 'vocally opposing the use of violence'.<sup>171</sup>

Eltringham Millar also objected to a proposal by fellow members of the council to sell council houses, arguing that there remained significant demand for such housing among working-class members of the community. She also questioned the validity of this proposed scheme stating that while houses built under the 1919 housing acts could be sold, this 'to her understanding' was not applicable to those constructed under the 1924 Act.<sup>172</sup> Following her statement the treasurer decided to 'take the matter back'. Arguably her involvement and knowledge in this matter was influential in ensuring that council housing remained available for those requiring it.

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<sup>166</sup> Eltringham Millar was also a member of the Salaries and Wages Committee, one that would not usually be associated with women. She was also the Council representative to the Royal Maternity and Simpson Memorial Hospital, a position that was continuously appointed to women throughout the period.

<sup>167</sup> Improvements in housing conditions and health provision for the working classes were central to the ILP's programme in the interwar years, which the leadership described as 'municipal socialism'. See chapter four for further details.

<sup>168</sup> Again see chapter four for further information relating to working-class women's opposition to the household means test.

<sup>169</sup> *The Scotsman*, 27 October 1931, p. 7.

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid*, 18 November 1932, p. 6.

<sup>171</sup> After lunch it was decided that while the gallery should be open to the public, the 'disruptive element' should not be admitted. Eltringham Millar demanded that the gallery should be open to all. *The Scotsman*, 18 November 1932, p. 6. A month later plain-clothes police officers were installed in the public gallery, on a day in which unemployment relief proposals would be a prominent feature of the discussion. The ILP councillors urged their colleagues not to conduct their business 'under the eyes of police spies'. *The Scotsman*, 2 December 1932, p. 6.

<sup>172</sup> *The Scotsman*, 2 December 1932, p. 6.

Similarly Eltringham Millar opposed the public assistance committee's recommendation that residential qualification be imposed in cases of applications for public assistance relating to extra winter allowance. This measure was to dissuade people from migrating to Edinburgh in order to receive extra allowance. She argued that the council 'had no right to impose any qualification', arguing that 'you could come from Timbuctoo if you liked and still be the recipient of able bodied relief'.<sup>173</sup> Eltringham Millar concluded by insisting that the Emergency Act of 1921 was passed for the benefit of people 'who through no fault of their own' were unemployed and argued that her colleagues 'should not be so narrow in their outlook'.<sup>174</sup> Her fellow ILP councillors Mr Paton and Mr Cunningham supported her views. Thus Eltringham Millar, and her ILP colleagues, were again attempting to protect the interests of working-class constituents.

Her opposition in both cases, the sale of council housing and the imposition of residential qualifications, highlights the differing interests of the ILP and other working-class representatives to the 'economy measures' pursued by the Progressive majority. For Eltringham Millar, like her female counterparts in Glasgow, this included demands for improved housing for the working classes. She argued in her electioneering material in 1933 that within her ward, Gorgie, the housing situation 'was very grave', with a 'great deal of leeway to be made up in the matter of overcrowding'.<sup>175</sup> The increase in population in Gorgie was 'larger than any of the other twenty-two wards of the city'.<sup>176</sup> She stated that it was her aim to build new houses 'until the supply was greater than the demand'.<sup>177</sup> Eltringham Miller also called for an increase in public assistance allowances. As a result she was described in *The Scotsman* as a 'friend of the down and out'.

Swan Brunton became the fifth female member of the town council in 1928. During one of her campaign speeches she argued that 'it was nice to have a change' and suggested that 'they should have a woman on the town council, such as herself'.<sup>178</sup> She stated that 'they had only one real Labour woman in the council, Mrs Eltringham Millar', and 'she was lonely and wanted someone to back her up'.<sup>179</sup> Swan Brunton argued that their town councillors required somebody like herself 'to advise them and keep them straight', a statement which was greeted with 'much laughter' from the audience.<sup>180</sup>

She also drew attention to the poor condition of Edinburgh's working-class housing stock. Swan Brunton criticised the council's advice that people should move to the new

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<sup>173</sup> Ibid.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid, 24 October 1933, p. 20.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid.

<sup>178</sup> Ibid, 27 October 1927, p. 10. Swan Brunton was unsuccessful in this campaign in 1927 as the Co-operative candidate for Broughton.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid.

housing areas and questioned whether the rents in these areas were ‘what they ought to be for these people’.<sup>181</sup> She argued that ‘we are the producers of wealth and we have a right to the best’.<sup>182</sup> This sentiment was often used within the Co-operative movement, and illustrates her involvement as a director of the St. Cuthbert’s Society.<sup>183</sup> She was also a prominent member of St. Giles branch of the Guild, and represented it at the annual conference in 1926.<sup>184</sup> Housing was again her main concern on this occasion. She drew attention to the ‘urgent necessity of providing adequate housing accommodation’ and protested against ‘the building of steel houses for the working people’, which ‘leaked and rattled’. Swan Brunton believed that ‘the workers, who are good enough to build a mansion of brick and stone for those in possession of wealth, have a right to decent house of brick and stone themselves’.<sup>185</sup> Therefore, like Mrs Eltringham Millar, she prioritised the needs of the working classes. When elected for St. Giles’ she was appointed to serve on the cleaning and lighting and public health committees and was also a member of the education authority. On her death in 1932 she was described as ‘a typical representative of a typical Scottish working-class district’ who was ‘sincerely interested in education, housing, and all public health questions’.<sup>186</sup>

Mary Graham was also concerned with measures that would improve the lives of the working-class people she represented.<sup>187</sup> She was appointed to the public health committee and public assistance committee and was therefore well placed to articulate demands for the improvement of health care and unemployment benefit. Interestingly at a council meeting in 1938 she called for measures that would keep the rates low, a concern usually reserved for the Progressive members. Her reason was that ‘she remembered the unemployed and old age pensioners with limited incomes’.<sup>188</sup> The council treasurer agreed stating that low rates ‘were of paramount importance to those nearest the poverty line’.<sup>189</sup>

In 1937 Barbara Woodburn was elected to the town council.<sup>190</sup> Her husband was secretary of the ILP in Scotland, and she herself was actively involved in the Labour College. In contrast to the other ‘socialist’ women represented on the council, she did not prioritise housing and other welfare issues, but rather unemployment. She criticised the government’s claim that this had been reduced by one million, stating that there remained two million

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<sup>181</sup> Ibid.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid.

<sup>183</sup> See chapter four for further discussion of Co-operative ideology.

<sup>184</sup> Indeed the Guild’s president congratulated Swan Brunton on her election, although she argued that ‘our Co-operative candidates did not obtain the support of Co-operators in the various wards which might have been expected’. SCWG, *Minute Books of the Central Council*, Glasgow Regional Archives, CWS1/39/1/7, 27 November 1929.

<sup>185</sup> SCWG, *Thirty-second Annual Report*, CSW1/39/6/32, 1925-1926.

<sup>186</sup> *The Scotsman*, 14 March 1932, p. 11.

<sup>187</sup> Edinburgh City Council, *City of Edinburgh Diaries*, SL 70/1/17, 1935. See appendix 6a and 6b for further details.

<sup>188</sup> *The Scotsman*, 26 July 1938, p. 8.

<sup>189</sup> Ibid.

<sup>190</sup> In 1937 there were a record ten female councillors. See table 2 above.

unemployed. Woodburn argued that 'it was becoming more and more apparent that there was no cure for unemployment under the present system'.<sup>191</sup> She also suggested that the figures of those on poor relief were even more alarming in Scotland and had increased by ninety-three percent since 1931.<sup>192</sup> Her appointment to the public assistance committee would have given her opportunity to voice these concerns.<sup>193</sup> Woodburn was also a pacifist and argued that 'the people of this country were definitely desirous of peace'.<sup>194</sup> She suggested that the national government was paying 'only lip service to peace and the League of Nations'.<sup>195</sup>

While Woodburn's concerns reflected those of the labour movement, she also appealed for female equality arguing that traditionally 'men were more fortunate in regard to their political education than women'; women on the other hand 'with the exclusiveness of their home life, had little time for politics'.<sup>196</sup> Therefore she praised the great development of women's movements and paid tribute to the various women's sections, guilds and citizens' associations that 'were seeking to develop women's interest in the outside world'.<sup>197</sup> This statement may suggest a greater co-operation between the women of the differing political parties than would be thought possible considering the deep political divisions of the interwar years.

In the interwar period the female members of Edinburgh town council represented each of the main political parties, as well as more marginal interests.<sup>198</sup> However it is clear that the vast majority of Edinburgh's female councillors and members of the education authority fell into two categories. Firstly there were those individuals supported by or originating in the women's movement, who were mostly Progressives. The EWCA and the Edinburgh branch of the NCW were influential especially under the umbrella organisation of the Edinburgh Local Elections Committee. This first group made early gains with its members being elected in the 1920s. Such women built upon their previous experience of public work in the city, and on behalf of the women's movement as well as political parties. The representation of Progressive women on the town council and education authority remained fairly constant throughout the period. The second group of women originated in, and had the support of, the labour movement in Edinburgh. For these 'socialist' women, largely representatives of the ILP, membership of the education authority and town council came later in the 1930s. These individuals were often well placed as members of the public health and assistance committees,

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<sup>191</sup> *The Scotsman*, 1 November 1935, p. 8.

<sup>192</sup> *Ibid.*, 31 October 1935, p. 8.

<sup>193</sup> Edinburgh City Council, *City of Edinburgh Diaries*, SL 70/1/20, 1938.

<sup>194</sup> *The Scotsman*, 31 October 1935, p. 8.

<sup>195</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.*, 7 November 1935, p. 8.

<sup>197</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>198</sup> There was one female representative of the Protestant Action League. See table 2 above, for an illustration of the change in female representation throughout the interwar period.

which enabled them to voice their concerns on issues relating to working-class housing, health care and unemployment.

While the political circumstances in Edinburgh in the interwar years guided the appointment of women to the council and education authority, the political affiliations of such individuals may have been comparatively less influential in determining the issues that they prioritised, than was the case in Glasgow. In spite of the political differences between the two groups of female representatives, there were some similarities in their aims to improve the welfare of the community. It is true that female members of the town council and education authority disagreed over important and controversial issues such as the implementation of the means test. This was largely related to the debate concerning municipal expenditure and the Progressives emphasis on economy. But the breadth of political opinion evident in the EWCA suggests that often the women councillors supported by this organisation had opinions, views and intentions that were not that divergent from those of the 'socialist' women. Mabel Cornwall, the parish councillor, although perhaps an extreme example, actively campaigned for improvements in facilities for working-class people resident in the new housing areas as well as the provision of reconditioned inner city housing.<sup>199</sup> These were concerns that the female ILP representatives shared. Similarly the majority of both groups of female councillors were actively involved in child welfare. Therefore it would appear that the political situation in Edinburgh, which was not as divided along class lines than in Glasgow, was less of an impediment to possible co-operation between Progressive and ILP women.

Nevertheless tensions remained between such women as a result of the Progressive coalition's overwhelming control of the council throughout the period. As stated this was accompanied by a generally successful programme of 'economy' measures which were in direct conflict with the demands of the labour movement and its female representatives, especially in terms of improved housing, healthcare and education for the working classes. Therefore while the proportion of female members of the education authority steadily increased throughout the period, female representatives of the labour movement remained in the minority. Yet, the overall number of women of both groups represented on Edinburgh's education authority remained low throughout the period.

### Perth

Perth, while taken as representative of rural Scotland as the location of the Rurals' headquarters from 1928, was not wholly representative of the Scottish rural experience in the interwar years. Scottish agriculture can be broadly categorised into two sectors in this period. First there were the relatively prosperous lowland agricultural areas in Perthshire, Dumfries,

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<sup>199</sup> Again Miss Cornwall's concerns with these issues reflected the EWCA's 'housing crusade' as discussed in chapter three.

Ayrshire and Lanarkshire which benefited from being close to the urban populations in Glasgow, Edinburgh and other large towns. In contrast traditional crofting and sheep farming areas in the Highlands, which were more remote and peripheral, had suffered as a result of mass depopulation and were largely reliant on subsistence agriculture. Thus the use of Perthshire, a particularly affluent area in terms of the wealth of the local landowners, can only provide an example of the first broad category of Scottish rural experience in the interwar period. The wealth and therefore influence of the upper or ruling classes in such areas arguably led not only to the continuity of a traditional social hierarchy, but also to the dominance of conservative politics.

The political composition of rural Scotland in the interwar years has largely been neglected by historians, especially in comparison to its urban counterparts, most notably Glasgow and Edinburgh. The political situation in rural areas is often described in relation to developments in urban areas. Finlay describes rural Scotland as an important target for the Unionists in the interwar period as the Labour Party and other socialist influences were confined to densely populated urban areas.<sup>200</sup> In addition he suggests that when the Labour Party made attempts to unionise farm labourers, the Unionists took the opportunity to ‘sow the seeds of class tension’.<sup>201</sup> They argued that socialism was urban, industrial and therefore alien, and had ‘no place in the countryside’. Similarly Griffiths’ in depth study of the development of the Labour Party’s electoral campaigning policy with regard to the British countryside suggests a failure to successfully appeal to the working classes in rural areas.<sup>202</sup>

Such failed attempts to organise the working classes in rural areas supports the assertion that there was a greater degree of continuity in the social hierarchy, with the traditional relationship between landowners and tenants persisting in the interwar period. The acceptance of this by agricultural workers and their families, in spite of their continuing hardship and poverty, was significant and highlights the influence of such class relationships in rural areas. Thus the local landowner or lord, and their wives, were influential in rural

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<sup>200</sup> Finlay suggests that about a fifth of all Scottish land changed hands between 1918 and 1921. This rapid and dramatic change gave tenant farmers the opportunity to buy their own land, which in turn facilitated the formation of a new class of farmers who he argues were ‘a ready made clientele for the Conservative Party’. In 1924 the Unionists won twenty-two seats from the Liberals. While this may indicate that the Unionist campaign against the labour movement was successful, this could also be seen as an outcome of Liberal decline as a result of divides within the Party. R. Finlay, *Modern Scotland, 1914-2000*, Profile Books, London, 2004, p. 60.

<sup>201</sup> The Scottish Farm Servants’ Union, formed in rural Scotland immediately before the First World War by Joseph Duncan an ILP organiser, was also not very successful in organising farm workers. Griffiths states that ‘even with Duncan’s best efforts, the union was bankrupt by 1933’. It has also been estimated that ‘the union can never have incorporated more than a third of employed farm workers in Scotland, and its membership was usually far lower’. See C. V. J. Griffiths, *Labour and the Countryside, The Politics of Rural Britain, 1918-1939*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2007, p. 199 and E. A. Cameron, ‘The Modernisation of Scottish Agriculture’ in T. M. Devine, C. H. Lee and G. C. Peden (eds.), *The Transformation of Scotland. The Economy Since 1700* Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 2005, p. 191.

<sup>202</sup> Griffiths, *Labour and the Countryside*. See references to Griffiths work in chapter five, especially in relation to the Scottish Farm Servants Union and its acceptance of tied housing.

communities and local government bodies. This appeared to be the case in Perth.<sup>203</sup> In the interwar years this was a large town, which served as the regional centre. Many agricultural organisations and events were based in Perth such as the Scottish Agricultural Organisation Society and the Perthshire Agricultural show. Moreover, the railway, and increasingly the car, made this a convenient location for central meetings for the Rurals and other organisations. The municipal administration of Perthshire, centrally located in Perth, was less extensive than that of Glasgow and Edinburgh simply as a result of the lower population density.

Adherence to traditional social hierarchy in the Perthshire education authority was illustrated by the appointment of the Duchess of Atholl and Miss Elizabeth Haldane, whose family owned a countryseat at Cloan. By contrast little is known of its other three female members Mrs MacLagan of Williamston, Mrs Bruce and Miss Robertson of Cupar, appointed in 1922, 1927 and 1928 respectively, although all three appear to have taken an active role in the education authority.<sup>204</sup>

Katherine Ramsay, the Duchess of Atholl, played a prominent role in the Perthshire education authority throughout the interwar period. She was also elected as a MP in 1923 for Kinross and West Perthshire and was the first woman member of a Scottish constituency.<sup>205</sup> The Duchess was persuaded to stand by prominent members of the Unionist Party even though she opposed women's suffrage. She later criticised the extension of the franchise in 1928. In 1924 she was appointed as the Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Education. The Duchess' experience serving on Perthshire education authority and the Association of Education Authorities in Scotland was cited as one of the reasons for her appointment. The Prime Minister, Stanley Baldwin, believed that her loyalty to the Unionist Party was supported by her explicit criticism of the nature of socialism.<sup>206</sup>

In spite of such increased responsibility within the government the Duchess remained involved in her local constituency helping to form Perthshire Musical Festival, attending openings of memorials and performing numerous duties expected of Parliamentary representatives. On the education authority the Duchess was the chair of the Religions and Moral Instruction and a member of the Medical Inspection Committees throughout the early

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<sup>203</sup> The organisational structure of the Rurals reflected such tradition, with many institutes appointing the local lady, countess or duchess as its honorary president. Arguably such support from the upper classes provided an endorsement of its activities in the community. In addition other prominent figures in the community such as the minister's wife, doctor's wife, or local schoolmistress, were also approached to take on the role of treasurer or secretary, again reflecting the accepted social hierarchy, which was in part based upon class distinctions.

<sup>204</sup> For information regarding the sub-committees that these women served on see table 3, appendix 6a.

<sup>205</sup> See appendix 6a and 6b for further bibliographical information, including political background and affiliations.

<sup>206</sup> As discussed the Duchess had argued that 'there were many forms of socialism' and 'the believers in every one of them wished at the earliest opportunity to get rid of private ownership'. However, relations between the Duchess and the Unionist Party were later to become strained as a result of her support for what were perceived to be controversial issues. For further details see appendix 6b.



1920s.<sup>207</sup> The latter considered the feeding and clothing of necessitous children, mental deficiencies, nursing arrangements and medical inspection. The Duchess was also the president of the Perthshire Federation of District Nursing Associations and the chairman of the Highlands and Islands Consultative Council of the Board of Health.<sup>208</sup> As a result of such commitment, Dr G F Barbour of the Education Committee for Perth and Kinross County Council stated in 1937 that ‘no feature of the work of the first Education Committee for Perthshire which held office in 1919-1922 was more remarkable than the contribution of its two women members Miss Haldane and the Duchess of Atholl’.<sup>209</sup>

In contrast, it would appear that Miss Haldane’s involvement in the education authority, and municipal politics more generally, was not motivated by party politics. Her elder brother, Richard Haldane, who was later to become Viscount Haldane, was an active politician. In his lifetime, her politics mirrored his, and while he was a member of the Liberal Party, she supported suffrage as a member of the Women’s Liberal Federation. Later, when he changed allegiance to Labour, becoming a member of its 1924 Government, she would undoubtedly have been influenced.<sup>210</sup> After his death in 1928 she took a largely non-political stance, arguing that ‘she was not really a very good party man, or rather woman, as her sympathies were with all parties – Liberal, Conservative and Labour’.<sup>211</sup>

Instead her work for the education authority can best be described as in the tradition of Victorian philanthropy. When she died in 1937 her obituary in *The Scotsman* described education as her ‘very special concern’. Indeed her particular area of interest was the rural libraries committee, which she was the chair of for several years. In 1913 Haldane had been appointed by her neighbour Andrew Carnegie as one of the original members of the board of the United Kingdom Trust. Through her work for this organisation she helped to establish school libraries throughout Scotland. Haldane was also influential in the establishment of Aucherarder free library, which she was honorary secretary of for fifty-three years. This interest was mirrored in her work for the education authority, which she ensured was ‘in the forefront of British rural areas in library development’, being the first to introduce the travelling van at her suggestion.<sup>212</sup> She also helped found the first hostel for girls attending the McLaren High School in Callander, which enabled girls to obtain secondary education.

Haldane was represented on both the agricultural and continuation classes’ sub-committees of the education authority where she was instrumental in establishing a scheme of

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<sup>207</sup> Perthshire Education Authority, *Minutes of Religion and Moral Instruction Committee*, Perth and Kinross Regional Archives, CC1/5/22, 1920-1925 and Perthshire Education Authority, *Minutes of Medical Inspection Committee*, Perth and Kinross Regional Archives, CC1/5/2/23, 1920-1925.

<sup>208</sup> Burness, ‘The Long Slow March: Scottish Women MPs, 1918-1945’, p. 162.

<sup>209</sup> *The Scotsman*, 25 January 1938, p. 10.

<sup>210</sup> For further details, see appendix 6b

<sup>211</sup> *The Scotsman*, 15 October 1936, p. 12.

<sup>212</sup> *The Scotsman*, 25 January 1938, p. 10.

agricultural classes and first aid and hygiene classes.<sup>213</sup> The latter were organised by the Red Cross Society, of which she was president of the Perthshire branch.<sup>214</sup> Adult education was therefore another of Haldane's main concerns. In a talk given for the BBC in 1935 entitled 'Our Children's Scotland' not only did she argue for improved schooling for children which would 'remedy the dreadful lag in education which had taken place during the past years' but also envisaged a time when 'the mother would have time for reading and doing fancy work'. She also hoped that women 'might undertake some home industry' as a result of the proliferation of labour-saving devices.<sup>215</sup> Haldane argued that this would be facilitated by countrywomen attending Rural Institutes, where women would be educated by its classes and enjoy its amusements, while putting 'her husband in charge of the home'.

Haldane was very supportive of the education provided by the Rurals and argued that women's access to such education was important and should be employed by women in 'guiding local government'.<sup>216</sup> She gave addresses to local branches emphasising this point. Haldane was also represented on the Rurals' national Publications Committee and the Perth and Kinross Federation.<sup>217</sup> Moreover, she helped to establish Perthshire Musical Festival, which was an annual feature of the programme of this Federation.<sup>218</sup> Her 'special interest' in the Rurals was also illustrated in a programme for the BBC in which she suggested that through 'home industry' the housewife and mother's 'status as an earner would be recognised'.<sup>219</sup> Haldane also supported the work of the Rurals in an earlier broadcast in 1926 entitled 'Education and the Institutes'.<sup>220</sup> When she died in 1937, the Auchterarder Institute choir, 'in which Miss Haldane took a special interest', performed alongside the church choir at her funeral.<sup>221</sup>

Representation of women on Perthshire education authority was also comparatively small and was influenced by an adherence to a traditional social hierarchy in which the views of the local landowners in municipal affairs were significant. Perthshire was a stronghold of conservative politics as a result of the failure of the labour movement to organise the working classes in such rural areas. The Unionists were successful in portraying socialism as alien to

<sup>213</sup> She also served on the Agricultural Committee. Perthshire Education Authority, *Minutes of the Agricultural Committee*, Perth and Kinross Regional Archives, CC1/5/2/26, 1925-1930.

<sup>214</sup> Perthshire Education Authority, *Minutes of Continuation Classes Committee*, Perth and Kinross Regional Archives, CC1/5/22, 2 September 1920.

<sup>215</sup> *The Scotsman*, 27 November 1935, p. 14.

<sup>216</sup> SWRI, Perth and Kinross Federation, *Executive Committee Minute Book*, Perth and Kinross Regional Archives, MS161, 29 November 1922. Also see *Scottish Home and Country*, December 1926.

<sup>217</sup> She also represented the Rurals' education sub-committee at the County Library Conference in London in 1924. SWRI, *Yearly Central Council Meetings*, uncatelougued archives held at SWRI headquarters, 42 Heriot Row, Edinburgh, 31 October 1924.

<sup>218</sup> Perthshire Musical Festival Association, *Programmes*, Perth and Kinross Regional Archives, MS198, 1921-1938.

<sup>219</sup> This was one of the main objectives of the central council of the Rurals in establishing the Handicrafts Guild, as well as some of its other endeavours. *The Scotsman*, 27 November 1935, p. 14, and 29 November 1937, p. 10.

<sup>220</sup> *Scottish Home and Country*, December 1926.

<sup>221</sup> *The Scotsman*, 29 November 1937, p. 10.

the interests of the countryside, a strategy not employed by the Liberal Party, which experienced a sustained decline in both urban and rural Scotland in the interwar years. It was therefore not surprising that the Duchess of Atholl was returned for this area throughout the interwar period. Miss Haldane, on the other hand, represented a well-established tradition of female philanthropy among the upper classes. Improvements in education, including the establishment of school and rural libraries, as well as adult education classes, were her concerns on the education authority, rather than party politics. In this respect her work mirrored that of the Rurals, and it was significant that she had close connections with the Perth and Kinross Federation. However both women, as members of the elite and ruling classes, which were dominant in rural life, gained comparatively easy access to public life. As little is known of the other female representatives of Perthshire education authority, conclusive statements cannot be made concerning the women who served on Perthshire education authority. Moreover it cannot be assumed that the Duchess of Atholl and Miss Haldane were more influential in their work for the authority simply because of their social status as compared with that of Mrs MacLagan, Mrs Bruce and Miss Robertson.

### Conclusion

Burness suggests that the relatively small representation of women as MPs in the interwar period could be accounted for by 'the deep antipathy to women moving outside the domestic sphere'.<sup>222</sup> She adds that 'the barriers which faced women with the temerity to want to play the 'men's game' of party politics were formidable'.<sup>223</sup> Cairns also suggests that the reason why there were so few women operating at the 'highest level' was because women found it difficult to 'make the leap' from municipal to national government. However, as has been illustrated, women were able to gain positions of influence on the municipal authorities. Admittedly the representation of women in Glasgow and Edinburgh remained proportionately small considering the increase in the female parliamentary and municipal electorate, and it can be assumed that the same was true in Perth.

The political situation in each location was influential on the representation of women in municipal government. In both Glasgow and Edinburgh this was characterised by, to varying extents, the polarisation of class as represented by the rising strength of the labour movement and the reaction of the Progressives and Moderates. In each city the political party that was in control of the council largely determined the number and political composition of female representatives. The same was true in Perth, where the domination of a system of social hierarchy ensured that women of the upper classes were influential in municipal politics. In each location throughout the interwar period, and in spite of political affiliations, women

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<sup>222</sup> Burness, 'The Long Slow March: Scottish Women MPs, 1918-1945', p. 151

<sup>223</sup> Ibid.

represented on the council and education authority were largely assigned positions on sub committees that considered housing, health and welfare. Although this was a restriction on the sphere of women's activities within local government, in reality such appointments reflected prior experience, involvement and interests in philanthropy, social work or political activism. The women discussed generally prioritised issues related to women's special qualities with regard to the private sphere of the home and family. Housing for example, although a prominent issue among the women of the labour movement, was also an area of concern for Moderate and Progressive women. While not ignoring the different political affiliations of these women, which resulted in divisions concerning the demand for municipal expenditure or economy, ultimately women were influential in municipal government, bringing forth the concerns of their constituents. Women of the labour movement, in particular, were successful in voicing the demands of working-class women for improvements in their standard of life.

Therefore, although the representation of women in municipal politics was proportionately small throughout the interwar years, the dedication and hard work of these women for the welfare of their constituents undoubtedly paved the way for all the women who would follow them through the halls of municipal and increasingly parliamentary government. It was not a failure for women in the interwar period to have had such small representation in spite of all of their efforts; they were after all attempting to reverse a trend that had been predominant for hundreds of years. In this respect such female representatives were successful in illustrating that women were able to take a productive role in the administration of local government, in many cases bringing added female expertise to the job. Women in Scotland have still not achieved equal representation in public life. In 1998 Breitenbach, Brown and Myers argued that 'women are underrepresented in public life and in decision- and policy-making bodies throughout Scottish Society'.<sup>224</sup> In the Scottish Parliament election of 2007, of the 129 MSPs elected 43 or 33.3 percent were women.<sup>225</sup> Thus equality is still to be realised in Scottish political life.

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<sup>224</sup> E. Breitenbach, A. Brown and F. Myers, 'Understanding Women in Scotland', *Feminist Review*, No. 58, Spring 1998, p. 58.

<sup>225</sup> S. Herbert, R. Burnside, M. Earle, T. Edwards, T. Foley, and I. McIver, *Election 2007*, Scottish Parliament Information Centre, SPICe briefing, 07/21, 8 May 2007, p. 3. The representation of women has actually declined from the previous election in 2003 where 51 or 39.5 percent of MSPs were women. In 1999 when the first Scottish Parliament met 37 percent of its members were women. Innes and Rendall, 'Women, Gender and Politics', p. 45.

## CONCLUSION

The history of the feminist movement is often popularly characterised by two waves of activity, the suffrage era of the early twentieth century and the re-emergence of a second wave of feminism in the mid 1960s, which lasted for approximately twenty years until the 1980s. Such interpretations are not only simplistic but are vastly inaccurate. However early gender historians, generally writing in the late 1970s or 1980s, often reinforced this view by suggesting that feminist activity declined following the enfranchisement of women in 1918 as the women's movement no longer had a unifying shared objective. In addition, the interwar years were portrayed as an era in which societal discourses encouraging domesticity and a return to 'separate spheres' suppressed feminism. Again such interpretations are overly simplistic. Recent research has highlighted the diversity of the interwar women's movement and feminism by including the activities of working-class women's organisations and also those considered more mainstream or conservative in their outlook. Historians have also recently questioned the pervasive influence of such societal discourses as the 'ideology of domesticity' in the interwar years.

This thesis contributes to these recent additions to the historiography by providing an account of the diversity of women's organisations and feminism in the interwar years in Scotland. By doing so it also challenges the double marginalisation of Scottish women, in accounts of feminism in the interwar years and in Scottish history. Within the historiography of the interwar women's movement and feminism 'British' often signifies 'English'. Accounts often focus on the national movement based in London as represented by national bodies such as the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship, or national figures such as Eleanor Rathbone or Vera Brittain. Developments in Scotland and the experience of Scottish women rarely feature comprehensively in such studies. While there are exceptions, especially within more recent research, when Scottish women are considered they are often used as a comparative example rather than being included fully in the analysis. The same is true within the Scottish historiography where women are also marginalised, their contributions to and experiences of Scottish society often being discussed in designated case studies or chapters.

Thus, in this thesis, the activities of four women's organisations from a variety of political and geographical backgrounds are analysed to provide an in-depth account of the women's movement and feminism throughout Scotland in the interwar years. These organisations, the Glasgow Society for Equal Citizenship (GSEC), the Edinburgh Women Citizen's Association (EWCA), the Scottish Co-operative Women's Guild (Guild) and the Scottish Rural Women's Institutes (Rurals), shared some of their objectives in terms of improving the lives of their members and empowering them. In addition each organisation provided an opportunity for women to interact, discuss their concerns, both political and those

relating to their own lives, and basically find time and space of their own outside of their homes. However, there were also significant differences in their aims, and also in the ideologies that shaped their behaviour.

Such similarities and differences were evident in the ways in which each organisation defined 'citizenship' and the influence that 'motherhood' had on its activities. Each of the four organisations under consideration understood 'citizenship' as gendered, although there was a distinction between the attitudes of the GSEC and all of the other organisations. For the GSEC 'citizenship' was a status which women were entitled to as a result of the extension of the franchise in 1918. This highlights the GSEC's belief that women were or should be viewed as equal to men in society, although at times it did acknowledge women's roles in society as mothers. The other three organisations' understanding of citizenship was more complicated and more comprehensively gendered in that it involved a more explicit conception of women's identities being shaped by the private spheres of home and family. Each of these three organisations, the EWCA, the Guild and the Rurals, to differing extents, developed an analysis of citizenship in which women's entitlement to equality was based upon the unique qualities related to their roles as wives and especially mothers. Such arguments enabled the EWCA to negotiate the boundaries of the private sphere and use women's 'private' identity and associated 'special qualities' to justify an involvement in public life, such as serving on local councils and education authorities. The Guild and the Rurals used a similar strategy, although their understandings of citizenship were also affected by other factors. For the Guild, Co-operative ideology and working-class concerns shaped its conception of citizenship. Similarly the Rurals' belief in women's duty to the nation, which was related to women's roles within the private sphere as wives and mothers, influenced the way in which it defined citizenship.

Each organisation's conception of 'citizenship', and the extent to which it used 'motherhood' to justify its members' involvement in public life, was in turn an illustration of each organisation's 'feminism'. This was also influential in the way in which 'feminism' was practiced in its political activities and campaigns. These are considered in order to determine the nature of feminism and feminist activity in interwar Scotland. The starting point of this analysis is the formulation of a working definition of feminism, based upon theoretical definitions used in the interwar years. In this thesis feminism is strictly defined, drawing upon Offen's three-part definition.<sup>1</sup> This states that a 'feminist' is a person female, or male, who recognises 'the validity of women's own interpretations of their lived experience and needs' and 'acknowledges the values women claim publicly as their own in assessing their status in society relative to men'. In addition such a person exhibits 'consciousness of, discomfort at, or even anger over institutionalised injustice toward women as a group by men as a group in a

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<sup>1</sup> K. Offen, 'Defining Feminism: a comparative historical approach', *Signs*, Vol. 14, No. 1, 1988, p. 152.

given society'. Finally a 'feminist' advocates 'the elimination of that injustice by challenging, through efforts to alter prevailing ideas and /or social institutions and practices, the coercive power, force or authority that upholds male prerogatives in that particular culture'. Offen's definition is useful as this considers the development of feminism in historical contexts. Not all of the organisations considered fully satisfied the conditions of this definition, which highlights the diversity of the women's movement in interwar Scotland as well as the complex nature of feminism in this period.

The GSEC and the EWCA were self-defined 'feminist' organisations. The actions of both organisations were 'feminist'. Each organisation encouraged 'active citizenship' amongst its members. This became a guiding principle of the 'citizenship education' provided by both organisations. It was hoped that this would equip members with the skills required to become politically active, whether this be within the organisation, becoming involved in the campaigns and issues promoted, or by standing as candidates in local and municipal elections. The political campaigning of each organisation can be broadly divided into two types, those of an on-going legislative nature and those that were a prominent concern of a given period. A variety of strategies and methods were employed in both types of campaign, which enabled the members of each organisation to effectively lobby local and national government, as well as individuals in positions of influence. Such political campaigning provides an illustration of each organisation's feminism, as members were encouraged to adopt their own 'active citizenship' and voice their concerns in order to challenge women's unequal position in interwar society.

Both organisations employed strikingly similar campaigning strategies, largely to demand equality for women in the public sphere. Each organisation also promoted legal equality for women as both individuals and also in their roles as wives and mothers, although the latter was more a feature of the EWCA's work. For both the GSEC and the EWCA this was accompanied by demands for legislative measures that would protect children. The recognition of women's role, both literally and symbolically, as mothers and protectors was to some extent prominent in the campaigning work of both organisations. Consequently the campaigns and issues supported by the GSEC and the EWCA, which included legislative reform such as equal treatment for women in the professions and welfare reforms such as improved health care for women, were guided by the gendered conception of citizenship employed by each organisation. Therefore each organisation's feminism cannot be narrowly defined according to the 'equality/difference' dichotomy.<sup>2</sup> Rather both organisations

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<sup>2</sup> As discussed in the introduction and chapter two, early historians of the interwar period, writing in the 1980s, became preoccupied with defining the feminism espoused by women's organisations as either 'equality' or 'difference' in nature. 'Equality' or 'old' feminism represented a belief that women should be equal to men in society in spite of biological differences. In contrast proponents of 'difference' or 'new' feminism acknowledged the differences between men and women and suggested that women should demand

demanded equality for women as individual citizens, which, to differing extents for the GSEC and the EWCA, encompassed recognition of women's specific roles in society as women, notably as mothers. Undoubtedly this gendered citizenship would have shaped the feminism adopted by its members and would also have guided their involvement in the organisation's campaigns and thus their 'active citizenship'.

The Guild can also be described as a 'feminist' organisation. However its relationship and involvement in the wider Co-operative movement, and its working-class identity, was influential in the campaigns and issues it chose to support and promote. The central council acknowledged that its members had a dual identity as women and as members of the working class. Its 'Co-operative', 'political' and 'social' propaganda reflected this. The Guild did not prioritise class before gender or accept the status quo in gender relations in the working-class home or broader society. Rather it negotiated the discourses available and employed strategies that would allow its members to make their voices heard on a series of issues of importance to them as working-class women. In this sense, the Guild's involvement in the Co-operative movement, or in working-class politics, did not place limitations on its feminism and feminist activity. Rather the Guild used Co-operative ideology which, like the municipal socialism of the ILP, stressed the importance of housing and health, to support its claims for an improved standard of living for working-class women and their families. In other words guildwomen were determined to improve 'their present conditions through the principles and practice of Co-operation'.

However the Guild operated within a restricted sphere in the Co-operative movement. Women were largely assigned to positions and duties associated with motherhood and the private sphere of the home and family, as it was perceived that this was their area of expertise. The Guild embraced its 'special role' within the Co-operative movement and used it to its own advantage. It emphasised the importance of motherhood and elevated the status of the wife and mother in order to gain recognition of its campaigns and demands. Ultimately this strategy of the 'assertion of the feminine', and use of 'the language of their oppressors', was successful in ensuring that the Guild and its members gained a voice in the Co-operative movement. Nonetheless the restricted nature of the Guild's role undoubtedly made it difficult to directly challenge the sexual division of labour within working-class homes, where women nurtured and cared and men were 'breadwinners'. As a result, prominent members of the Guild periodically voiced their concern that, while women were gaining 'responsible positions' within the movement and in local government, these were often in areas associated with women's expertise as mothers such as housing and health. Such women felt that guildwomen 'could do more if given the chance'. Thus elections of guildwomen to 'positions of influence'

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'real equality' in society, based on their needs as women. Women's organisations in reality rarely supported either type of feminism exclusively.



on boards of management of local Co-operative wholesale societies or within the Co-operative Party were celebrated.

Yet in spite of such inequalities the Guild was able to put forward its agenda, which encompassed 'political', 'social' and 'Co-operative' propaganda. While the Guild had to accommodate its restriction in a sphere of activity based upon women's 'special role', largely based upon motherhood, it was able to negotiate and use this to carve out a space within the Co-operative movement that was dominated by women and their concerns. It was in this way that the Guild employed its 'gendered' citizenship and practiced its feminism. Its members were able to challenge the inequalities that working-class women experienced, through demands for improved healthcare and housing, as well as legislative equality such as an extension of the franchise, all the time highlighting the benefit of this for the Co-operative movement. In addition, the campaigns included in the Guild's 'Co-operative propaganda' for the improved political and economic strength of the Co-operative movement would also be beneficial for guildwomen as members of the Co-operative Wholesale societies. Therefore the Guild's political activities, the campaigns it supported and promoted, and its negotiation of the discourses available to it within the Co-operative movement and wider labour movement in Scotland, were feminist and employed strategies that could be described as feminist.

In contrast to the other organisations considered, the Rurals explicitly disavowed a feminist identity and classified itself as a strictly non-political organisation. Nevertheless the Rurals' activities were often political in a broad sense, as its demands for improved housing in rural areas of Scotland illustrates. This was not only a concern of the central council but was also a popular topic of discussion amongst the membership. Admittedly such political involvement was not as overt as that practiced by the Guild, the EWCA and the GSEC, in the sense that members did not seek election to local municipal government. Instead the members of the Rurals voiced their concerns through the central council, when government agencies solicited its opinions, and local branches were on occasion invited to participate in investigations by municipal bodies in rural areas. In such enquiries the Rurals' members, like those of the Guild and the EWCA, used their roles associated with the private sphere of the home and family as wives and mothers, and their expertise as women, displayed in their knowledge of housing conditions, to carve out a space to make their opinions known in the public sphere of municipal and national politics.

The Rurals' close relationship with government agencies in Scotland was influential in guiding its activities, and to an extent the campaigns it became involved in. As a result the Rurals' roles in improving national efficiency and reducing rural depopulation were emphasised and used as justification for its actions. Its efforts in improving rural housing, for example, addressed the Rurals' dedication to 'strengthening the nation through the home', as it was argued that the improvement of housing conditions would arrest depopulation. This may

have been strategic as this allowed the central council to address the material needs of its members, in this case to have a warm, dry, comfortable house with running water, electricity and sanitation. Similarly the central council employed imperialist and nationalist discourses to illustrate its patriotism, again to justify its actions and achieve improvements for its members. At a practical level this involved fulfilling duties to both 'home' and 'nation', which arguably helped to elevate the status of women's roles associated with the private sphere of the home and family to be of national importance.

However, in spite of using such strategies, similar to those employed by the Guild and the EWCA, the Rurals cannot be described as feminist. This is both as a result of its own disassociation with feminism, and also because of the nature of its activities.<sup>3</sup> The other organisations under consideration challenged the inequality of women in society both socially and politically employing a variety of strategies. While the Rurals also asserted a gendered citizenship similar to that of the Guild and the EWCA, in the sense that women's special roles in society were emphasised and used as justification, for example during its establishment and to secure funding for educational classes, it did not fully question the unequal nature of gender relations in rural Scotland. The Rurals provided women with the opportunity to voice their concerns and provided validation of 'women's own interpretations of their lived experience and needs', and to an extent enabled its members to assert their values and 'assess their status in society relative to men'. However as an organisation it rarely went further than acknowledging women's relative inequality in society as compared to men. It certainly did not mount a comprehensive challenge to the 'prevailing ideas and /or social institutions and practices, the coercive power, force or authority that upholds male prerogatives', although admittedly its very existence and its actions challenged male dominance within rural communities.

Moreover the Rurals' actions did empower its members. The activities and education provided by the Rurals enabled women to physically transcend and challenge the boundaries of the 'private sphere' of the home and family and participate in public life. This is highlighted by the production of craft goods or agricultural produce that could be exhibited and sold for a profit. Such education, which enabled extra money to enter the home, provided a degree of economic independence for members of the Rurals. This also created an opportunity for such women to enhance their material and financial circumstances, which in turn could improve their lives and those of their families. In addition the involvement of members in choir singing, drama and folk dancing, and the resulting public performances, clearly placed women at the centre of the community. The strategic use of discourses, which elevated the status of its members as wives and mothers, was also empowering. This gave women responsibility, and

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<sup>3</sup> As discussed in the introduction, arguably it is problematic to define historical actors as 'feminists' if they themselves did not adopt this identity or actively denied it. Historians cannot force the beliefs and behaviour of women in the past to fit current definitions and theoretical models.

raised their profile, within rural communities, which in turn facilitated women taking a greater role in rural life.

The varying circumstances of each organisation and the extent to which its activities can be termed 'feminist' again highlights the diversity of the women's movement and 'feminism' in interwar Scotland. Each of the organisations, with the exception of the Rurals, prioritised the political representation of its members in public life. As discussed the GSEC and the EWCA provided 'citizenship education' with a view to encouraging members to stand as candidates in municipal and national elections, and the same was true of the education provided for members of the Guild. In addition, each of the organisations, the Rurals included, enabled its members to participate politically in public life.

The GSEC, the EWCA and the Guild had a degree of success in supporting their members, or other acceptable female candidates, to gain election to education authorities. This sphere of political activity was more accessible for women, as education was characterised as a sphere of female influence and 'social', if not actual, motherhood. The political situation in each location was influential in the representation of women and largely determined the number and political composition of women members. In particular, representation of women on Perthshire education authority was influenced by an adherence to a traditional social hierarchy, in which the views of the local landowners in municipal affairs were significant. However, the level of female representation on the education authority in Glasgow, Edinburgh and Perth remained disproportionately small throughout the interwar years.<sup>4</sup> In spite of this, women were able to gain positions of influence. Yet in all three authorities women were generally assigned to positions on sub committees that considered housing, health and welfare. This often reflected prior experience, involvement and interests in philanthropy, social work or political activism. Nevertheless it remained a restriction on the sphere of women's activities within local government. As a result the women, of all political backgrounds, elected in Glasgow, Edinburgh and Perth largely prioritised issues related to women's 'special' qualities within the private sphere of the home and family. Housing was an issue prioritised by the conservative Moderate and Progressive women in Glasgow and Edinburgh and also women of the labour movement in these locations.

The political persuasion of the female representatives affected the support given to specific measures, such as expenditure on municipal housing, with Progressives and Moderates supporting 'economy' while women of the labour movement demanded expenditure. The same was true in Perthshire as the Duchess of Atholl was a Unionist representative, and therefore supported 'economy'. In contrast Miss Haldane, an independent, prioritised improvements in education, including the establishment of school and rural libraries, as well as

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<sup>4</sup> These cities are chosen as representative as the GSEC, the EWCA and the Guild were active in Edinburgh and Glasgow, while the Rurals' central office was located in Perth.

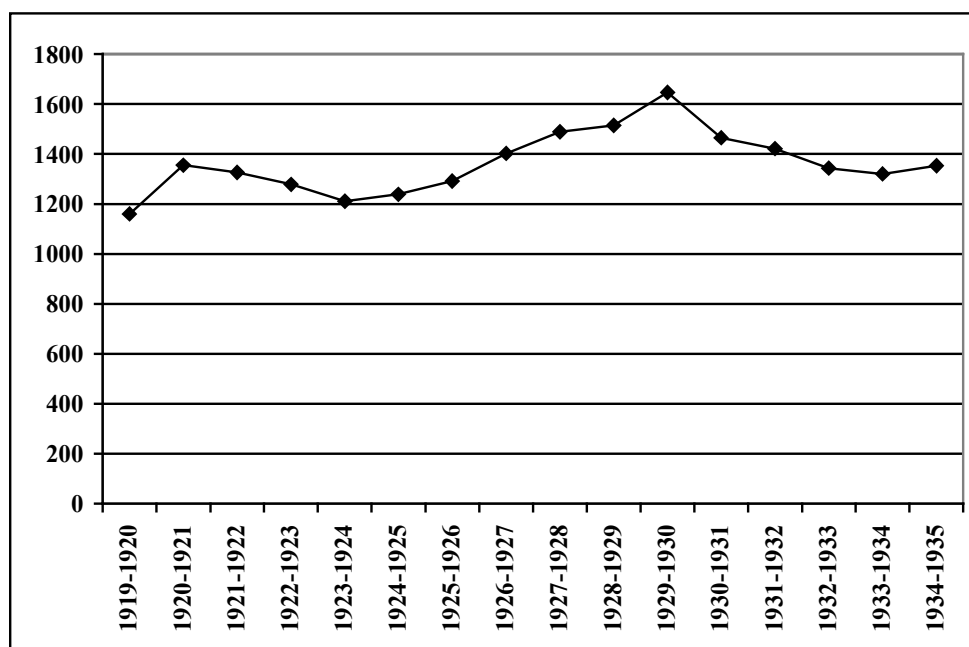
adult education classes. The Rurals shared these concerns and it is notable that Miss Haldane was a member of the Perth and Kinross Federation executive. On the other hand, in Glasgow and Edinburgh, female representatives often had to find a compromise between the feminist views of the women's organisation that they were affiliated to and the political party that they represented. Thus the feminist concerns of the GSEC, the EWCA and the Guild were to an extent realised by the female representatives on the education authorities in Glasgow and Edinburgh.

Ultimately this thesis reveals the diversity and complexity of the interwar women's movement, and the ways in which feminism was practiced, in a Scottish context. Fundamentally it highlights the fact that feminism was far from moribund in this period in Scotland. While there were similarities and differences between the organisations considered, politically, ideologically and geographically, which all affected their activities, political or otherwise, each organisation empowered its members and provided them with a voice in Scottish interwar society. For the GSEC, the EWCA and the Guild, this voice was explicitly feminist and challenged the inequality of women by demanding political representation, legislative changes and welfare reforms. The way in which these organisation defined 'active citizenship' was instrumental in the way each practiced its feminism, which involved providing political education and encouraging members to stand as candidates in local and national elections in order to enact change. In contrast the Rurals cannot be described as feminist. As an organisation it did not explicitly or comprehensively challenge inequality to the same extent as the other organisations under consideration. The Rurals did employ a gendered definition of citizenship, in its case accompanied by imperialist and nationalist ideology, to justify its activities in rural communities. By doing so it elevated the status and responsibilities of women and enabled rural women to voice their concerns regarding welfare reform. However this does not necessarily fully equate with feminism, especially as the Rurals explicitly denied this identity.

The diverse nature of the women's movement and feminist activity in interwar Scotland highlights an important continuity with the pre-war period and suffrage movement. Feminism as a political movement has experienced divisions between its supporters throughout its history, and the same was true in interwar Scotland. The four organisations considered in this thesis were not united in every aim and in each of their campaigns. However the presence of these women's organisations in Scottish political life in the interwar years provides evidence to suggest that the entrenched historiography of feminism requires re-evaluation. The interwar years was not a period of inactivity, and feminism was not moribund in interwar Scotland.

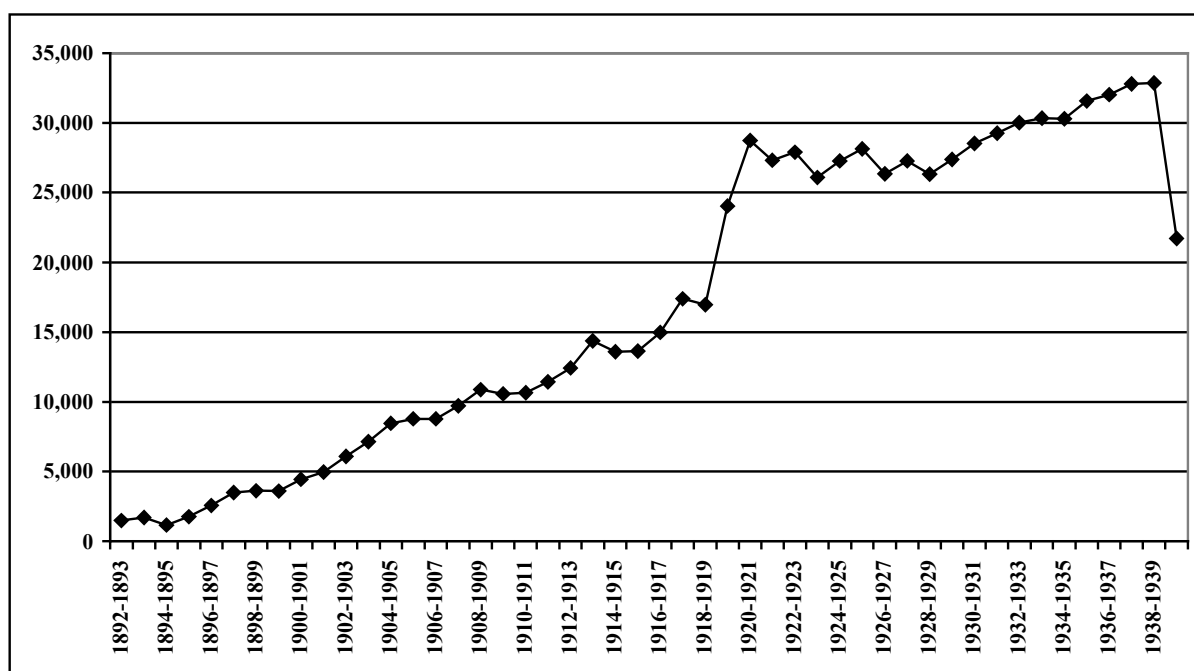
## APPENDIX 1a

Graph 1 – Membership of the Edinburgh Women Citizens Association, 1919-1935



Source: EWCA, *Second Annual Report - Seventeenth Annual Report*, National Archives of Scotland, GD333/2/1-16, 1919-1920 - 1934-1935.

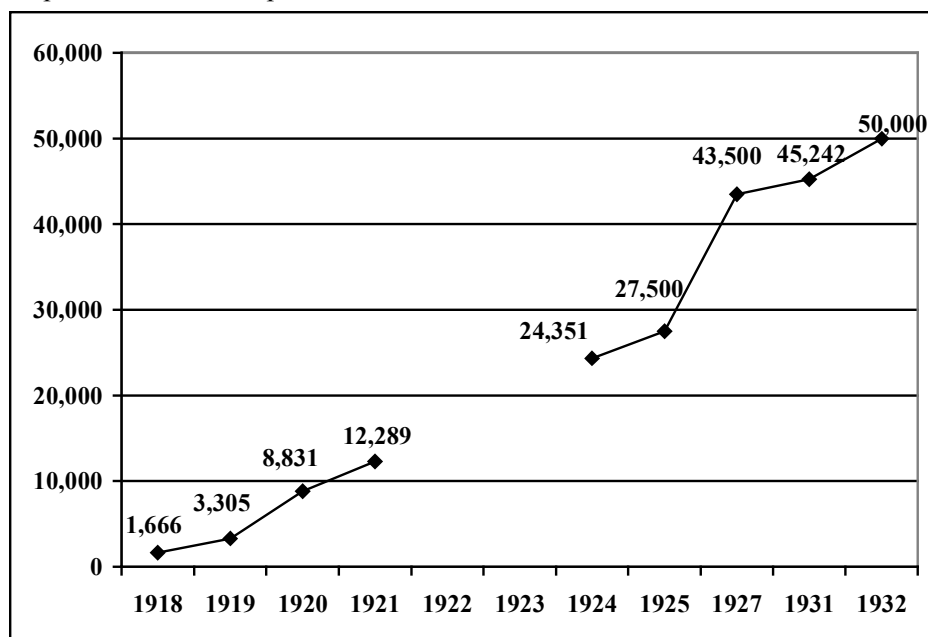
Graph 2 – Membership of the Scottish Co-operative Women's Guild, 1892-1940



Source: Callen, p. 31-32.<sup>1</sup>

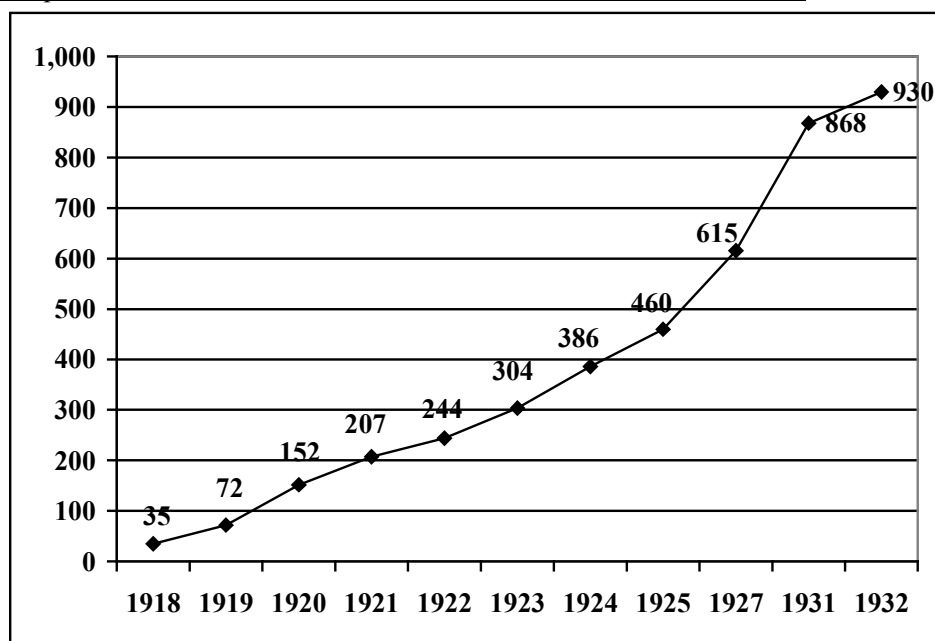
<sup>1</sup> K. M. Callen, *History of the Scottish Co-operative Women's Guild: Diamond Jubilee 1892-1952*, Scottish Co-operative Wholesale Society, Glasgow, 1952, p. 31-32.

Graph 3a – Membership of the Scottish Women's Rural Institutes, 1918-1932



Source: Scott, p. 282, 1927 and 1932 figure, Courtney, p. 132, and 1931 figure from SWRI records.<sup>2</sup>

Graph 3b – Number of Scottish Women's Rural Institutes, 1918-1932



Source: Scott, p. 282, 1927 and 1932 figure, Courtney, p. 132, and 1931 figure from SWRI records.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> J. W. R. Scott, *The story of the Women's Institute Movement in England and Wales and Scotland*, Idbury, Kingham, Oxon., 1925, p. 282, and J. E. Courtney, *Countrywomen in council. The English and Scottish Women's Institutes*, Oxford University Press, London, 1935, p. 132. SWRI, *Reports from Areas, Federations and Council Office for years to 30 September 1931*, uncatalogued archives held at SWRI headquarters, 42 Heriot Row, Edinburgh.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

## APPENDIX 1b



Figure 1: 'First Women's Guild, 1890', source: Callen, *History of the Scottish Co-operative Women's Guild*, SCWS, Glasgow, 1952.



Figure 2: 'Women's Guild Presidents, June 1921', source: Callen, *History of the Scottish Co-operative Women's Guild*, SCWS, Glasgow, 1952.

## APPENDIX 1c

Sample six-month syllabus

C. Blair, *Rural Journey, A History of the S.W.R.I from Cradle to Majority*, Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd, Edinburgh, 1940, p. 67-69.

February 13<sup>th</sup>

*'Till man tae man the world o'er shall brithers be for a' that'*

Address: 'The League of Nations' by Miss Liliias Mitchell

Exhibit: Some Crafts from Other Lands.

Roll-Call: The Foreign Country which attracts me most.

Demonstration: Dressing a Fowl, by Miss Duncan

March 19<sup>th</sup>

*'There are duties we owe the race, outside our dwelling place'*

Address: 'Our Position and Powers as Voters' by Miss Bury

Talk: 'Lacis Work' (Illustrated) by Mrs Smith, President, Blackwood W.R.I.

Roll-Call: Hints for Spring Cleaning.

March 28<sup>th</sup>

Leap Year Dance, 8pm to 2am

April 16<sup>th</sup>

*'A gangin' fit is aye gettin''*

Cookery Demonstration: 'A Plain Dinner with Pastry' by Mrs Orr.

Talk: 'France, Forestry, and Frocks' by Mrs Smith, President, Blackwood W.R.I.

May 14<sup>th</sup>

*'We shall have plenty of black at our funerals, so do let us have some colour while we may.'*

Address: 'Recollections of an Old Playgoer' by Mrs Wilson, President, Elvanfoot W.R.I.

Talk: 'The Value of Colour'

Demonstration: Rug-making, by three members.

June 25<sup>th</sup>

*'Count your Blessings'*

Birthday Party: 'Just our ain Folk' by request. Showers of Flowers and Home-made Cakes.

Exhibit and Story: 'Something of Interest from my Home' by members.

July

*'And the road before me'*

Picnic



Arnprior Women's Rural Institute – Programme December 1938 to November 1939  
 PD 192/2/5 Stirling Council Archive Services

Arnprior Women's Rural Institute

*'For Home and Country'*

Programme - December 1938 to November 1939

December 1938

*'A child's smiling face is the truest portrait of Happiness'*  
 Open night: *Christmas Party, singing and recitations*

January 1939

*'Some hae Meat'*  
 Open night: Address on Burns, Scottish songs  
 Competition: knitting yarn wool with two matches, Tea and music

February 1939

*'Mak' new freens but keep the auld'*  
 A talk on: How to keep the rural friendly  
 Competition: Lemon curd, and Jelly Marmalade, Tea and Music

March 1939

*'If you know a good thing, pass it on'*  
 A talk on: The Trials of Bulb Growing  
 Competition: Hyacinths

April 1939

*'A moment of time is a moment of mercy'*  
 Demonstration on: *How to Bandage, Hints on First Aid*  
 Competition: The 12 best articles in the Medicine Chest  
 Eggs for Royal Infirmary, Suggestions for Picnic.

May 1939

*'I love everything old, old friends, old times, old manners, old books, old wine'*  
 Demonstration: Upholstery  
 Exhibition: Something of my Grandmothers, tea and eightsome reel.

June 1939

*'Share your joys and you'll enjoy them more'*  
Picnic

September 1939

*'The proof o' the pudding is the preen o''t'*  
*Demonstration – Cookery*  
*Competition: Gridle scones, Tea and Music*

October 1939

*'When Freens meet herts warm'*  
Open Night  
*Lecture: Tradition of Arnprior*  
*Competition: Something to eat, to wear, to play with for 1/-*  
Put life and mettle in their heels, Annual Dance  
Hornpipes, jigs, struthpeys and reels

November 1939

*'Put your best foot foremost'*  
*Business Meeting, Hat Night*

### APPENDIX 3

Table 1.1 – Addresses from representatives of local authorities and other public bodies, GSEC

Date	Name	Organisation represented	Title of address / issue
16 Jan 1922	Councillor Mrs Mary Barlow	Glasgow Town Council	Women in Industry
	Dr Norrie	Ex-Assistant Medical Officer of Health (child welfare) corporation of Glasgow	Women in the Professions
22 Oct 1923	Mrs Wintringham	MP	Women in Public Life (notices placed in the Glasgow press and <i>Woman's Leader</i> , and press tickets sent to all the newspapers with a request sent to the <i>Daily Record</i> for a flash light photographer)
Autumn school 1924	Miss Kidd	Advocate	The Legal Position of Women, and the Taxation of Married Women
24 Nov 1926	Dr Watson	Chief Sanitary Inspector, Glasgow	Diet and Sunshine
	Mr Ritchie	Scottish Board of Health	Food Handling and its Hygiene Aspects
	Mr Reynard	Clerk to Glasgow Parish Council	Aliment for the Illegitimate Child
Oct 1927	Mr George Troup	Not listed	Report on the Committee on Juvenile Offenders
	Mr Burns	Departmental Clerk to the Education Authority	The Forward Policy of the Glasgow Education Authority

Source: GSEC, *Executive Committee Minute Book*, SR 187/891036/1/ 5-6.

Table 1.2 – Addresses from representatives of local authorities and other public bodies, EWCA

Year	Name	Organisation represented	Title of address / issue
1919-1920	Lady Leslie Mackenzie	Town Council	Some Laws administered by the Town Council
	Miss Muriel Ritson	Scottish Board of Health	Future Health Developments
	Sir Leslie Mackenzie	Scottish Board of Health	Town and Area Planning
1922-1923	Dr Robertson	Medical Officer of Health, Scottish Board of Health	How Edinburgh is tackling its Housing Problems

1923-1924	Mr J T Edwards Bailie R C Buchanan Colonel Young Miss Anne Ashley	Manager, Edinburgh Labour Exchange Edinburgh Town Council Chairman, Edinburgh Parish Council Edinburgh Council of Social Service	Unemployment as it affects the City of Edinburgh and the measures taken for its relief.
	Sir George Beatson	Consulting Surgeon to the Glasgow Western Infirmary	Scottish Hospitals: should they be voluntary or state aided and rate aided?
1924-1925	W M McAlister, Esq. MA MB	Deputy Superintendent of the Royal Hospital, Morningside, and Assistant to the Professor of Psychiatry, Edinburgh University	The Treatment of Mental Disorders
1925-1926	M A Reynard Esq	Inspector and Clerk of the Glasgow Parish Council	Some Present Day Aspects of the Poor Law
	A Horsburgh Campbell Esq	Burgh Engineer and Master of Works for the City of Edinburgh	Smoke Abatement as it would Affect the City of Edinburgh
1926-1927	Miss Lilian C Barker CBE JP	Governor HM Borstal Institution, Aylesbury	Juvenile Delinquency
1927-1928	Miss Muriel Ritson	Member of the Scottish Board of Health	Widows', Orphans', and Old Age Contributory Pensions, Act, 1925
1928-1929	Sheriff George Morton Esq	Chairman of the Departmental Committee	Protection and Training
	John Gray, Esq, MD	Depute Medical Officer of Health, and Tuberculosis Officer for the City	Some Aspects of Food and Diet
1929-1930	Councillor Mrs Spalding	Dalkeith county council	The Experiences of a Woman Councillor in a Country Burgh
1930-1931	Miss Spence Allan	Department of Health for Scotland	Social Insurance and what it means
1931-1932	Councillor Gilzean	Edinburgh Town Council	Are we getting the best results from our Education System?
	Miss Jean M Thompson	Rotherham Borough Estate Manager	Should Women Managers be adopted for Municipal Houses?

Source: EWCA, *Second Annual Report–Fourteenth Annual Report*, 1919-1920 – 1932-1933, GD333/2/1-13 (broken series).

Table 2.1 – Visits from prominent individuals from the women’s movement, GSEC

Date	Name	Organisation represented	Title of address / issue
24 Nov 1921	Mrs Mary Stocks	Member of the executive of the NUSEC	Women’s Position – Has recent legislation improved it?
26 Jan 1922	Mrs Margery Corbett Ashby	Member of the executive of the NUSEC, later president of the Townswomen’s Guilds in England	(advertisement in <i>Herald</i> )
16 Oct 1922	Lady Frances Balfour	NCW	
20 Nov 1922	Miss Eleanor Rathbone	NUSEC	Why a Woman’s movement is still needed
18 Dec 1922	-	-	Conference – that marriage should not be a bar to employment
15 Feb 1923	-	-	Meeting – women and their work
15 Oct 1924	Councillor Miss Eleanor Rathbone JP	Vice-President, Family Endowment Society, London	Widows’ Pension
28 Oct 1924	Mrs Bethune Baker	NUSEC, executive	Equal Moral Standard – Solicitation laws and the reasons against Compulsory Notification of Venereal Disease
28 Oct 1924	Councillor Miss Eleanor Rathbone JP	Vice-President, Family Endowment Society, London	Legal and Economic Status of Women, with special reference to Questions of Maintenance and Family Endowment
6 Nov 1924	Dame Edith Lyttleton	League of Nations Union	Some International Social Problems – Traffic in Women and Children, and Drug Traffic (300 people present)
7 Oct 1925	Mrs Eva Hubback	NUSEC executive	Widows’, Orphans and Old Age Contributory Pensions Bill
4 Feb 1926	Mrs Mary Corbett Ashby	NUSEC executive	The Task of Women in Europe
16 Dec 1926	Councillor Miss Eleanor Rathbone JP	Vice-President, Family Endowment Society, London	Some Burning Questions of the Moment
27 Oct 1926	Reception to Lady Balfour of Burleigh	-	158 members present

24 Nov 1926	Mrs Aldridge	NUSEC	(Conservative, Labour, ILP, Liberal Associations and also the Secretary of Women's Co-operative Guild, all invited)
Oct 1927	Miss Macadam	NUSEC organiser	Some Aspects of Social Work
	Lady Astor	-	(resolution on equal franchise passed at this meeting sent to the Prime Minister, Home Secretary, Secretary of State for Scotland, and all MPs in Glasgow)

Source: GSEC, *Executive Committee Minute Book*, SR 187/891036/1/5-6.

Table 2.2 – Visits from prominent individuals from the women's movement, EWCA

<b>Year</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Organisation represented</b>	<b>Title of address / issue</b>
1921-1922	Mrs Mary Stocks	Member of the executive of the NUSEC	Is Family Endowment Desirable?
1924-1925	Viscountess Rhondda	Vice-chairman, Time and Tide Publishing Company, Ltd.	Women and the Press: an Experiment in Journalism
1925-1926	Mrs Corbett Ashby	President, International Woman Suffrage Alliance	'World Opinion and National Armaments'. (This meeting was organised jointly with the Edinburgh branch of the League of Nations Union and the Edinburgh Society for Equal Citizenship)
	Councillor Miss Eleanor Rathbone, JP	Vice-President, Family Endowment Society, London	Family Allowances and the Need for a Living Wage
1926-1927	Councillor Miss Eleanor Rathbone, JP	Vice-President, Family Endowment Society, London	Should there be Family Allowances? (Public Discussion)
1928-1929	Mrs Pethick Lawrence	NUSEC, Open Door Council, Six Point Group	Enfranchisement Celebration. Notably Miss Jennie Lee MP was also a guest of honour.
1929-1930	Mrs Corbett Ashby Mrs Ryland Miss Nannie Brown	President of the International Alliance of Women for Suffrage and Equal Citizenship Hon. Secretary of the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship Ex-Organiser and Hon. Advisor to the South-East Area, Scottish Women's Rural Institutes	Conference – The Educational Work – Social and Political – of Women's Societies

Source: EWCA, *Forth Annual Report – Twelfth Annual Report*, 1921-1922 – 1929-1930, GD333/2/3-11 (broken series).

Table 3.1 – Visiting speakers, perceived to be ‘experts’ in their field, GSEC

<b>Date</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Organisation Represented</b>	<b>Title of address</b>
16 April 1923	Dr Douglas White	-	Some aspects of the Equal Moral Standard with special reference to the question of compulsory notification.
23 Sept 1924	Lady Leslie Mackenzie	-	Care of the Feeble Minded
28 Oct 1924	Dr Clarkson	Larbert	Mental Deficiency and its treatment
24 Nov 1926	Professor Bowman	-	Personality and Citizenship
16 Nov 1931	N/a	Eugenics Society	Hereditary and Sterilization

Source: GSEC, *Executive Committee Minute Book*, SR 187/ 891036/1/5-6.

Table 3.2 – Visiting speakers, perceived to be ‘experts’ in their field, EWCA

<b>Year</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Organisation Represented</b>	<b>Title of address</b>
1919-1920	Miss Tancred	Director, Scottish Training School for policewomen and petrols	The existing law dealing with offences against women and girls
	Miss M. T. Rankin	Assistant to the Professor of Political Economy, University of Edinburgh	Social Schemes and taxation
	Miss Nora Milnes	Director of the School of Social Study, University of Edinburgh	Citizenship: Its Rights and Duties
1920-1921	Mrs Kennedy Fraser	Edinburgh School of Art	The Citizen’s Attitude to Art
1921-1922	J. F. Rees Esq MA	-	Social and Industrial Ideals
	Miss S Margery Fry	-	Treatment of the Young Offender
	The Hon Lord Salbesen	-	Reform of the Public House
1922-1923	Miss Clara Andrew	Hon Director and Founder of the National Children Adoption Association	The Law and the Adoption of Children
	D. Kennedy Fraser Esq	Lecturer on Education, Edinburgh University	Psychological Tests in Education
1923-1924	Mary S Allen	Women’s Auxiliary Service, London	The Women Police Movement
	Mrs Boyd Dawson	Temperance Legislation League	The Public Ownership of the Liquor Traffic, with special

			reference to the Carlisle Experiment'
	Mrs R K Hannay OBE JP	Member of the Committee of Enquiry into domestic service	The Future of Domestic Service
	Mr Alexander Morgan MA DSc	Director of Studies, Edinburgh Provincial Training College	Educational Developments
1924-1925	A P Laurie MA DSc	Heriot Watt College	The Problem of Unemployed Youth
	Dame Edith Lyttelton JP	British Substitute Delegate to the Forth Assembly of the League of Nations	The League of Nations and International Social Problems
	W. Brownhill Smith Esq. OBE	Member of the Departmental Committee on Smoke Abatement	The Cost of a Smoky Atmosphere
	Ernest W Mundy Esq BA	Hon Secretary of the Labour Co-partnership Association, London	Co-partnership in Industry
1925-1926	Mrs Garden Blaikie	Lady Warden of Edinburgh University	China of To-Day
	C D Carus-Wilson Esq	Instructor in Design and Composition and Lecturer in the School of Architecture, Edinburgh College of Art	The Appreciation of Art and its Effect upon the Lives of the Citizens
1926-1927	Captain Reiss,	Chairman of the Garden Cities and Town Planning Association, London	The Present Position as regards Housing
	Mrs Chalmers Watson CBE MD	Fenton Burns	The Cow Milk and the Public
	Dame Adelaide Anderson OBE	Formerly HM Principal Lady Inspector of Factories, Home Office	Factory Labour and our World Citizenship in the Industrial Era
	Miss Nora Milnes BSc	Director School of Social Study and Training, University of Edinburgh	The Hospital Patient; before Treatment and after.
1927-1928	Mrs C D Rackham MA JP	Fellow and Associate of Newnham College, at present Magistrate, Cambridge Bench.	The Young Offender
	David Cleghorn Thomson, Esq	Northern Area Director of the British Broadcasting Corporation	Broadcasting as a Factor in the National Life
	Miss Eleanor Stewart	Organiser, Workers' Union Glasgow	The Welfare of the Shop Assistant
1928-1929	Douglas J MacAndrew, Esq	Member of the Committee of Management, Church Army Housing, Ltd, London	Houses for our Poorer Neighbours
1929-1930	W Weaver, Esq BSc	Chief Chemist, Birmingham Town Council	The Cleansing of a City



1930-1931	Lady Simon	Edinburgh Branch of the League of Nations Union	Slavery in the World of To-day
	Professor Delisle Burns MA	University of Canterbury	Social Services and Civilisation
1932-1933	David C Henderson Esq MD	Professor of Psychiatry, University of Edinburgh	Nervous and Mental Illness as a Public Health Problem
	John Boyd Orr Esq DSO	Director of the Rowett Research Institute, Aberdeen	An Adequate Diet for the Community
1933-1934	G C M McGonigle Esq MD	Medical Officer of Health, Stockton-on-Tees	General Aspects of Nutrition
	John Grierson, Esq	Late Chief of the Empire Marketing Board Film Department	The Film as a Creative Art
	F A E Crew Esq MD	Professor of Animal Genetics, University of Edinburgh	Science and the State
1934-1935	Alfred T. Pike Esq	Alderman of Finchley Council and Secretary of the Garden cities and Town Planning Association, London	The Housing Problem: Would a National Housing Board Solve It?
	A. E. Haswell Miller Esq.	Keeper of the National Gallery of Scotland	The National Galleries of Scotland'
	Melville Dinwiddie Esq DSO	Scottish Regional Director, British Broadcasting Corporation	British Broadcasting'

Source: EWCA, *Second Annual Report–Seventeenth Annual Report*, 1919-1920 – 1934-1935, GD333/2/1-16 (broken series).

Table 4 – Civic visits organised for the members of the EWCA

Year	Institutions visited
1920-1921	'municipal institutions' – no specific example given
1921-1922	Visits to 'typical' institutions concerned in the educational activities of Edinburgh
1922-1923	Visits to Parish Council Institutions
1924-1925	Visits to various Public and Philanthropic Institutions
1925-1926	Reconstructed and Condemned Houses, Public Washhouse, Cleansing and Lighting Departments of the city (both Gas and Electricity), and to Institutions for the Care of the Feeble Minded.
1926-1927	May - Central Police Chambers, Sheriff Court, Court of Session, Remand Home for Delinquent Children and Edinburgh Rescue Shelter, Dean Terrace.

	June – ‘punative and reformatory institutions’ – Wellington Reformatory, Penicuik, Dr Guthrie’s School for Boys, Dr Guthrie’s School for Girls, Church of Scotland Home for Girls, Loanhead
1927-1928	Usher Institute of Public Health, central premises of the Edinburgh and Dumfriesshire Dairy Co., Ltd, the Port Hamilton Bakery of St. Cuthbert’s Co-operative Association, Ltd, McEwan’s Brewery, Paper Mills of Messrs John Galloway & Co Ltd, Printing Works of Messrs Thomas Nelson & Son Ltd, <i>Scotsman</i> office, Messrs Munro & Co Hosiery Factory, Restalrig
1928-1929	Homes for the Aged – Powfoulis House, near Larbert (Church of Scotland), Aged Christian Friends’ Homes for Aged People at Ivanlea, Polton, and at Colington, Craiglockhart and Seafeld Hospitals (Edinburgh Parish Council). Continuation Classes for Apprentices, Ramsay Technical Institution, Tollcross School, London Street, and Leith Academy.
1929-1930	Maternity and Child Welfare Centres. In addition to the Local Institutions the Centres at Shettleston, Motherwell, and Wishaw were visited.
1930-1931	Edinburgh Craftsmen – Stained Glass, Cut Glass Work, Sculpture, Cabinet Making, Metal Crafts, Scottish Folk Fabrics, Bookbinding, Hand Spinning and Weaving, The Edinburgh College of Art, and Lady Haig’s Poppy Factory
1932-1933	A large party of members, accompanied by Officials from City Departments, made an extensive tour to a number of the Corporation Housing Areas.
1933-1934	Edinburgh Room of the Public Library

Source: EWCA, *Third Annual Report–Sixteenth Annual Report*, 1920-1921 – 193-1934, GD333/2/2-15, (broken series).

Table 5 – expansion of the EWCA’s ‘Panel of speakers’.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of Speakers</b>	<b>Number of meetings</b>
1920-1921	12	-
1921-1922	11	-
1922-1923	9	-
1923-1924	21	70
1924-1925	26	92
1925-1926	35	146
1926-1927	41	167
1928-1929	58	191
1929-1930	65	182
1930-1931	65	180
1931-1932	77	190

1932-1933	51	136
1933-1934	54	135
1934-1935	59	115
1939	60	130

Source: EWCA, *Third Annual Report–Seventeenth Annual Report*, 1920-1921 – 1934-1935, GD333/2/2-16, and EWCA, *Souvenir of Coming-of-age 1918-1939*, GD1/1076/19/1, p.12.

Table 6 – Topics considered on the EWCA’s ‘Panel of speakers’.

Year	Topics
1919-1920	Housing, Art and the Home, the need for policewomen, child welfare, mental deficiency act, the aims and objectives of the Labour Party, the making of a citizen, civic responsibility, Temperance (Scotland) Act 1913
1920-1921	Councillor Mrs Somerville, ‘The Work of a Town Council’; Lady Leslie Mackenzie, ‘Housing’; Mrs J. F. Rees BA, ‘Employment of Children’ and ‘The League of Nations’; Dr Aimee Gibbs and Miss Bury, ‘Widows’ Pension’, Sub-Inspector More Nisbett, ‘The Work of the Women Police’; Miss S. L. Munro, ‘The Education of the Child’; Mrs Morley Fletcher, ‘Art in the Home’; Mrs M. Gray, ‘Citizenship’; Miss Ireland, ‘Girls and their Leisure’; Councillor Mrs Millar, ‘Cleaning of Streets and disposal of refuse’; Miss Cameron, ‘The Future of domestic service’.
1921-1922	Miss Ashley MA ‘Women’s Responsibility in Public Affairs’; Dr Garden Blaikie ‘The Fathers and Mothers of the Future’ and ‘Mental Deficiency in Scotland’; Miss Hannay OBE, Miss Rees and Miss Liliias Mitchell on different aspects of the League of Nations; Miss A B Jack ‘Women’s Responsibility in Public Affairs’; Miss Lockie ‘The Aims and Objectives of a Women Citizens’ Association; Miss L Innes Lumsden LLD, ‘Women’s Responsibility in Public Affairs’; Lady Leslie Mackenzie ‘Some Aspects of Local Government’; Miss Liliias Mitchell ‘Openings for Young Girls’; Miss S L Munro ‘Citizenship’, ‘Women; her duty in the community in which she dwells’ and ‘an ideal young woman’; Inspector Primrose WAS ‘Work of Women Police’; Councillor Mrs Somerville ‘The Woman as Town Councillor’
1922-1923	Miss Ashley MA ‘The Discouraged Citizen’; Mrs Bruce, ‘Temperance (Scotland) Act 1913 and ‘The Woman’s Vote for an Ideal Home’; Miss Cameron, ‘The City, the Larger Home’; Mrs Locke, ‘The Mother as Citizen’; Miss Nora Milnes, ‘Citizenship’; Miss Liliias Mitchell, ‘Citizenship’, ‘No More War’, and ‘League of Nations’; Miss S L Munro, ‘Citizenship’ and ‘The Work of a Parish Council’; Miss Ross BA, ‘Citizenship’; Councillor Mrs Somerville ‘The Woman as Town Councillor’;

Source: EWCA, *Second Annual Report–Fifth Annual Report*, 1920-1921 – 1922-1923, GD333/2/1-4.

Table 7.1 Questions for candidates standing in elections for the Town Council , GSEC

<b>Date</b>	<b>Questions</b>
8 Nov 1920	Questionnaire sent out to all non-party candidates – questions not listed.
16 Jan 1922	Questionnaire to all candidates in Glasgow, possibly arrange deputations and meetings – questions not listed
8 Dec 1923	Equal Franchise, Equal Guardianship of Infants, Widows' Pensions (meetings with Unionist, Liberal and Labour candidates held separately – findings reported back to the Executive Committee)
12 May 1924	Enfranchisement of Women, State Pensions for Widows with dependent Children, Equal Guardianship of Children, the Equal Moral Standard, The Bill to Amend the Status of the Illegitimate Child, the question of the Care of Mental Defectives.
27 Oct 1926	Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act, 1919, Opposition to Marriage Bar, Equal Pay for Equal Work and Equal Opportunities of training, entry and promotion for all men and women employees of the Council, Women Police, Adequate Representation of Women on all committees and sub-committees on the Council
17 Nov 1930	Employment of Married women, Octavia Hill System of Property and House Management (83 questionnaires sent out – 51 replies of which 37 were in total or general agreement with the policy of the GSEC and GWCA)
16 Nov 1931	Employment of married women, Housing (most candidates who replied to the questionnaire in general agreement with the policy of the society – good response)

Source: GSEC, *Executive Committee Minute Book*, SR 187/891036/1/ 4-6.

Table 7.2 Parliamentary Election questions, EWCA

<b>Year</b>	<b>Questions</b>
1918	Housing Reform, Temperance, Ministry of Health, Poor Law Reform, Penal Reform, Demobilisation Questions, Adequate Representation of Women on Governing Bodies and Government Committees and Commissions, Legal Questions, League of Nations, Public Morals, Equality of Opportunity and Equal Pay for Equal Value
1919-1920	League of nations, temperance, housing , public morals, poor law reform, state pensions for widows, equality of opportunity, equal pay for work of an equal value, equal franchise
1926-1927	The Age of Marriage, The Low Paid Wage-Earner in the Catering Trade, Disarmament, Reconditioning of Houses, Intestate Succession,
1927-1928	Housing, Offences Against Children, Illegitimate Children in Scotland, Women Police, Mental Deficiency, Child Adoption, Age of Marriage, Cinemas, Smoke Abatement, Limitation of Armaments, Venereal Disease, Married Women Employment Bill
1928-1929	Registration of Illegitimate Births, Inclusion of Scotland in the Government Inquiry into Police Methods, Report of the Ceylon Commission, the

	Local Government (Scotland) Bill, The Treatment of Young Offenders and Street Offences.
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Source: EWCA, List of Proposed Questions to Parliamentary Candidates, 1918, GD333/46/6, and EWCA, *Second Annual Report–Eleventh Annual Report*, 1919-1920 – 1928-1929, GD333/2/1-10, (broken series).

Table 8 – Municipal Policy, EWCA

Year	Issues
1922-1923	Women Police, a pure milk supply, the Housing question, smoke abatement
1924-1925	Humane Slaughtering of Animals, Smoke Abatement, Women Rent Collectors, The need for more Women Police. (The annual report from this year indicates ‘considerable opposition’ to the latter two points ‘due probably to a misunderstanding of the problems involved.’)
1925-1926	The Need for more Women Police, Smoke Abatement, Equal Pay for Work of Equal Value in the Clerical Department of the Corporation, Women Rent Collectors, Humane Slaughter of Animals
1926-1927	Housing – Homes for Aged Persons, The low paid wage earner with family and his rent problem, Women Rent Collectors, Toddlers’ Playground; Equal Pay for Equal Work for Women Clerical and Technical Assistants, Women Police, Smoke Abatement and Smokeless Fuel, Pure Food and Legislation, The Elsie Inglis Memorial Maternity Hospital, and Grants for Venereal Disease.
1927-1928	Housing – Homes for Aged Persons, The low paid wage earner with family and his rent problem, Equal Pay – Equal Annual Increments for men and women clerical and technical assistants in the service of the Corporation, Women Police
1928-1929	Housing – Homes for Aged Persons to be established by the Town Council, Women Rent Collectors, Equal Pay and Opportunities for Men and Women in the Service of the Town Council, The Appointment of More Policewomen, Cleansing of the Streets
1929-1930	Women Rent Collectors, Homes for Aged Persons, Equal Opportunities for Promotion of Men and Women in the Employment of the Town Council, Women Police, Municipal Cleansing of Common Stairs, Smoke Abatement, Nursery Schools, the Co-option of Persons of Experience, including women, to the new statutory Committees of the Council.
1930-1931	Housing, Hostels for the Aged, Rent Rebates for Children, Women House Property Managers, Equal Pay and Opportunities for Men and Women in the Service of the Town Council, Employment of School Children, Women Police, Cleansing of the Streets, Smoke Abatement and Admission of the Public to the Education and Public Assistance Committees of the Town Council.
1931-1932	Housing, Women House Property Managers, Cleansing the City, Smoke Abatement, Admission of the Public to Committees of Town Council, Training of Local Government Officials, Women Police.
1932-1933	Housing – ‘Untidy Corners’ and ‘Social Centres in new Housing Areas’, Cleansing the City, Smoke Abatement

1933-1934	Sewage, Cleansing, Smoke Abatement, Home Helps, Scheme for the Collection of Household Refuse, Mental Deficiency, the Poor Law (Scotland) Bill, 1933, and the Training and Recruitment of Local Government Officers.
1934-1935	Housing, Sewage, Smokeless Fuel, collection of Household Refuse, Neglected Open Spaces, Safety Crossings for Pedestrians

Source: EWCA, *Fifth Annual Report–Seventeenth Annual Report*, 1922-1923 – 1934-1935, GD333/2/4-16, (broken series).

## APPENDIX 4a

Table 1: Attendance at two-day schools for Women Co-operators

Date	Location	Attendance	Location	Attendance	Total
30 July 1924	Alloa	73	Glasgow	37	645
	Irvine	60	Eastern	69	
	Leven	22	Portobello	73	
	Dalkeith	55	Aberdeen	45	
	Paisley	93	Motherwell	45	
	Edinburgh	25	Barrhead	48	
30 June 1926	Montrose	63	Greenock	65	382
	Motherwell	44	Glasgow	59	
	Edinburgh	33	Aberdeen	46	
	Musselburgh	72			
29 June 1927	Larkhall	76	Markinch	45	917
	Broxburn	50	Glasgow	43	
	Leith	61	Edinburgh	51	
	Musselburgh	94	Kilmarnock	84	
	Greenock	96	Aberdeen	91	
	Cowdenbeath	157	Barrhead	35	
	Dysart	34			
28 August 1929	Dalkeith	91	Paisley	145	770
	Leith	72	Alloa	89	
	Edinburgh	60	Larkhall	68	
	Bathgate	74	Broxburn	25	
	Dunfermline	38	Aberdeen	79	
	Glasgow	29			
25 June 1930	Kilmarnock	86	Dunfermline	51	858
	Alloa	94	Paisley	182	
	Edinburgh	64	Leith	98	
	Port Glasgow	136	Clydebank	73	
	Perth	74			
13 August 1930	Glasgow	40	Kilwinning	94	371
	South	70	Purnpherston	40	
	Aberdeen	89	Falkirk	38	
	Dalkeith				
5 Aug 1931	Alloa	104	Perth	43	1103
	Edinburgh	60	Leith	41	
	Clydebank	57	Pumphaston	34	
	Renfrew	164	Kilwinning	81	
	Port Glasgow	111	Dalkeith	95	
	Dunfries	57	Dunfermline	37	
	Markinch	91	Glasgow South	50	
	Alexandria	78			
3 Aug 1932	Renfrew	168	Port Glasgow	120	914
	Alexandria	76	Dunfermline	51	
	Kilwinning	67	Glasgow North	75	
	Markinch	52	Pumphaston	30	
	Clydebank	38	Leith	52	
	Dalkeith	90	Perth	50	
	Edinburgh	45			

Source: SCWG, *Minute Books of the Central Council*, Glasgow Regional Archives, CWS1/39/1/7-9

## APPENDIX 4b

Table 1: Co-operation of the Guild with other women's organisations

Organisation	Date	Details
GWCA	23 April 1918	Letter from the secretary of the Glasgow Women's Citizens' Association desiring representatives to a conference to be held in the Central Hall Bath St. on Tuesday 30 <sup>th</sup> April. <b>After discussion it was decided not to be represented.</b>
	5 March 1919	Letter from secretary of Glasgow Women's Citizen's Association re meeting on Feb 27 <sup>th</sup> to discuss putting forward women candidates for local public bodies. <b>No action taken.</b>
	3 September 1919	Letter was read from the Glasgow Women's Citizens' Association asking us to sign a petition to the Board of Directors of the Royal, Western and Victoria Infirmarys to urge them to make further provision for the treatment of venereal disease both for men and for women, for indoor as well as outdoor treatment and further to establish evening clinics in the outpatient departments of the general infirmaries. Agreed that we sign the petition.
	2 November 1921	Letter from the Women's Citizens Association with draft of memorial to be sent to the Prime Minister in favour of limitation of armaments. Agreed that we sign the memorial.
EWCA	1 February 1922	Request from Edinburgh Women's Citizens Association for list of addresses of branch secretaries was discussed and it was remitted to the secretary to deal with when reports were printed.
	24 November 1926	Letter from Edinburgh Women's Citizens Association re proposed conference on 11 Feb subject solicitation laws. <b>Agreed we do not be represented.</b>
GSEC	8 October 1923	Letter and leaflet from Glasgow Society for Equal Citizenship announcing a meeting at which Mrs Wintringham MP would speak on Women in Public Life and inviting our president to the platform. After a full expression of opinion it was agreed that <b>we do not be officially represented</b> but local guildwomen requiring tickets could be supplied through secretary.
	24 November 1926	Letter from Glasgow Equal Citizenship society re conference for discussion of Restrictive legislation fro women. <b>Agreed that it be left to option of Council member to attend.</b>
	27 August 1928	Letter and leaflet from Glasgow Society for Equal Citizenship re Autumn's School. <b>Agreed we not be represented.</b>
ESEC	7 June 1922	Letter from secretary of Edinburgh Society for Equal Citizenship re proposal to put forward Mrs More



		Nisbett as an independent candidate for parliament. <b>Agreed we take no action.</b>
SCWCA	1 April 1925	Letter from Scottish Council of Women's Citizens Association re their speakers at Guild meeting. Secretary to reply that we are taking up the special subject ourselves (Permanent Care of the Feeble Minded).
Scottish Federation of Societies for Equal Citizenship	29 December 1926	Letter from Scottish Federation of Societies for Equal Citizenship wishing representatives for the Council to the Legislative committee in Edinburgh and Glasgow. The purpose of this committee being to draft bills for proposed legislation. Mrs McNair and Mrs Moody appointed.
	26 Jan 1927	Letter from Scottish Federation of Societies for Equal Citizenship re representation on Scottish Legislation Committee and intimating lecture by Mrs Aldridge on the subject of legislation for women in industry.
	30 March 1927	Request from the Scottish Federation of Societies for Equal Citizenship for our support in an appeal to the secretary for Scotland to have representatives from Scotland on special committees to investigate solicitation Laws and their working. Agreed that request be granted.
	30 November 1927	Circular letter from Scottish Federation for Equal Citizenship requesting our support to protest against proposed Parliamentary Bill. Agreed that president sign appeal.
	16 April 1928	Letter from Scottish Federation of the Equal Citizenship Society requesting us to communicate with local MP asking him not to support Edinburgh Corporation Bill. Mrs Rennie moved and Mrs Shaw seconded that we <b>take no action.</b>
	8 May 1928	Invitation from Scottish Federation of Societies for Equal Citizenship to attend Annual Meeting. <b>Agreed that we do not be represented.</b>
	28 November 1928	Copies of resolutions passed at Conference of Scottish Federation of Societies for Equal Citizenship at Falkirk in reference to the Local Government (Scotland) Bill. Mrs Rennie representative of the central council at conference supplemented the information in the letter.
	30 April 1930	Invitation to Annual Meeting of Scottish Societies for Equal Citizenship. Agreed that we be represented. Also that Mrs Hendry represent the Central Council at meeting held in Glasgow and Miss Formby meeting held in Falkirk.
	30 Dec 1931	Scottish Federation of Societies for Equal Citizenship intimating that the Secretary of State for Scotland had agreed to receive a deputation from organisations interested in the New Children's Bill to be introduced in Parliament in February. Mrs Inglis represented the Guild on the deputation and reported that it was stated that some local authorities were already acting on the provisions of the Bill, and an earnest endeavour would be made to get the other local authorities to take action.

NCW	3 October 1923	Circulars and letter from National Council of Women referring to their annual meeting and conference 16-22 Oct. Agreed to take no action.
NUSEC	1 October 1919	Circular and leaflets announcing a programme for series of conferences under the auspices of the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship. Agreed not to take part officially.
	4 August 1920	Letter and programme of lectures from the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship. Secretary instructed to order some pamphlets.
	25 August 1926	Letter from National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship with receipt for affiliation fees and enclosing copies of pamphlet
	27 October 1926	Letter from secretary of National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship intimating acceptance of our affiliation.
	31 August 1927	Circular from National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship re Press Campaign. Agreed we take no action. Although reaffiliated – fee £1.1
	26 September 1928	Letter from Equal Citizenship Society intimating that affiliation fees were due. Mrs Callen moved that fee of £1-1 be sent. Mrs Wilson seconded.
	28 November 1928	Monthly circular letter from the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship and enclosing pamphlet entitled ‘Justification required by voters’. Agreed that additional copies be secured.
	26 December 1928	Letter from National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship suggesting that resolution passed at congress be submitted for agenda of annual council meeting in March. Agreed this.
	30 January 1929	Letter from National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship with agenda for annual council meeting. Mrs Moody appointed to attend and move the resolution sent in by the Guild.
	26 June 1929	Circular letter from the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship enclosing copies of leaflet giving reasons why women are required on local councils.
	17 September 1930	Circular letter from the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship with leaflets entitled ‘Town Councils their power and duties’. Agreed that we order 300 copies.
	1 April 1931	Letter from NUSEC with copies of Adoption Bill (Scotland). Agreed that additional copies be secured for Central Council.
Women’s Educational Union	5 June 1918	Letter from women’s educational union asking us to send representatives to preliminary meeting on 15 <sup>th</sup> June to consider the question of Equal Pay for Equal work for women and for men. Agreed to send one representative - Mrs Macdonald appointed.
Women’s Freedom League	6 November 1918	Letter from Women’s Freedom League asking our co-operation in forming a deputation to the Glasgow Town Council re regulation 40D. Mrs Campbell and Mrs Strong appointed.

Scottish Eastern Association of Medical Women	2 April 1919	Circular was read for Scottish Eastern Association of Medical Women asking our co-operation in forming a deputation to wait on the Secretary for Scotland in order to press for the appointment of a sufficient number on the Board of Health for Scotland and to support amendments regarding the constitution of the Board, and the powers of the Board and consultative council of women. Agreed to co-operate.
Working-class women's organisations	5 October 1921	Invitation to attend a joint conference of the women's sections of the Trade Union, Labour and Co-operative movements. Mrs Foster and Mrs Ritchie appointed.
	1 March 1933	A deputation from the Organising Women's Committee of the Trade Union Congress was admitted to the meeting. Miss B Jobson, chairman, appealed for closer co-operation between the Co-operative Women's Guild and the Women's Trade Union movement, and offered to address branch meetings in Section quarterly meetings on the subject of 'Women in Trade Unions'. Several questions were asked and Miss Eleanor Stewart augmented the appeal of Miss Jobson. The council agreed to the request and the branches are recommended to take advantage of having a speaker from the Women's Trade Union movement during the next session. It was argued that we recommend Miss Barker's name to be placed on the Speakers Panel of the Co-operative Party.
	1 November 1933	Report was submitted of preliminary meeting of Scottish Committee of Co-operative, Labour and Trade Union women, at which Mrs Watson was appointed to be vice president and a sub committee had been appointed to draft the constitution. Suggested committee be appointed by three representatives for each organisation including the secretary of the organisation. After consenting to the proposals it was agreed that the representatives from the central council be Mrs Lappin, Miss Cuthbert and the general secretary.
	20 June 1934	Referring to the recently formed Scottish Committee of Co-operative, Labour and Trade Union Women, the president said they would find this committee useful in keeping the Guild informed of the provisions of certain acts of Parliament in relation to trade union and social questions.

Source: Scottish Co-operative Women's Guild, *Minute Books of the Central Council*, Glasgow Regional Archives, CWS1/39/1/6-9.

APPENDIX 5a



Figure 1: Catherine Blair and Betty Wight.  
Source: East Lothian Museums Service



Figure 2: SWRI craft presentation. SWRI 'Mak Merry' wares.  
Source: East Lothian Museums Service

## APPENDIX 5b



Figure 1: Members of the Reston SWRI in 'The Muckle Sumph', *Scottish Home and Country*, July 1930, p. 195.



Figure 2: Kilbarchan SWRI in their presentation of 'The Family Group', *Scottish Home and Country*, August 1930, p. 219.

## APPENDIX 5c



Figure 1: Cast of a play put on by Lilliesleaf SWRI, Roxburghshire, c. 1935. Source: National Museums of Scotland, Scottish Life Archive, SLAW610306.



Figure 2: Dunbar SWRI Dramatic Society performing 'Scrape o' the Pen'. Source: Dunbar and District History Society.





Figure 3: Dunbar SWRI Dramatic Society, performing 'The Lady from Edinburgh'. Source: Dunbar and District History Society.

## APPENDIX 6a – Representation of women in Municipal Government

Table 1a - Glasgow

Name	Political affiliation	Municipal Body	Year elected/ honours	Standing Committees served on	Other organisation affiliations
Miss Kathleen Valentine Bannatyne	Moderate?	School Board, Education Authority	1919	Vice-chairman School Board for Glasgow, overall standing committees – all fourteen committees, Vice-Convenor of the Secondary Education	Association of Women Graduates, Reformatory and Refuge Union, GSEC
Mrs Agnes Dollan	ILP Springburn	Education Authority and Town Council	1919 (education authority), 1921 (town council)	Continuation Classes, Physical Training, Industrial Schools, Special Schools, Medical Inspection and Treatment, Necessitous Children	Women's Labour League, WSPU, Socialist Sunday School movement, Kinning Park branch of the Scottish Co-operative Women's Guild, Women's Peace Crusade, Labour Party National Executive
Mrs Mary Burns Laird	ILP Partick East	Education Authority and Town Council	1919 (education authority), 1924 (town council)	Property, Physical Training, Industrial Schools and she was Vice-Convenor of Domestic Science, Women's Advisory Committee	Scottish Labour Housing Association, Glasgow Trade Council
Mrs Mabel Nora Allan	ILP Shettleston and Bridgeton	Education Authority	1919	Convenor special schools	
Miss Margaret Hamilton Cunningham	Moderate Camlachie and Springburn	Education Authority	1922	-	Glasgow Women's Citizens' Association supported her candidature for the town council in 1921



Miss Isabel Campbell Hamilton, LLA, FEIS	Moderate Maryhill	Education Authority	1922	Secondary Education, Glasgow Central Employment Committee	GSEC Executive Committee, Women's Educational Union, Scottish Council of Women's Citizens' Associations, a vice president of the Scottish Home Rule Association, Camlachie Unionist Association, Glasgow YWCA
Mrs Margaret Anne Hourston, OBE	Moderate Central and Kelvingrove	Education Authority	1922	Glasgow Central Employment Committee, Glasgow and West of Scotland College of Domestic Science.	Pollokshields and District Women's branch of the Pollok Division of the Unionist Association, honorary treasurer of the British and Foreign Sailors' Society Ladies Guild, president of the Glasgow Women's Citizens' Association (1939), GSEC.
Mrs Alison Josephine McGregor	Moderate Govan, Tradeston and Pollok	Education Authority	1922	Adult Education Joint Committee for Glasgow, Federated Council of Glasgow Societies for the Care of Women and Girls, Glasgow Association for the Care of Feeble-Minded Children, Glasgow Central Employment Committee	Glasgow Women's Citizens' Association
Mrs Agnes Smellie	Moderate Central and Kelvingrove	Education Authority	1922	Glasgow Council of Juvenile Organisations, Glasgow and West of Scotland College of Domestic Science	Masonic order
Mrs Laura McLean JP	ILP Kingston	Town Council Education Authority	1933	Became a JP in 1935	Women's Advisory Council of the Glasgow ILP, Glasgow Infant Health Visitors' Association.
Mrs Helen E Gault	ILP Calton	Town Council Education Authority	1933		Women's Advisory Council of the Glasgow ILP, <i>Forward</i> , Scottish Co-operative Women's Guild

Mrs Kate Beaton	ILP Hutchesontown	Town Council Education Authority	1933	Bailie, JP, convener of the welfare committee, Deputy Convenor of the Parks Committee	Women's Labour League, NFWW, Glasgow Trades Council, STUC, St. George Co-operative Society
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Source: Education Authority of Glasgow, Annual Reports, 1919/1920 – 1938/1939, DE-D 9/1/33, Glasgow City Archives, Education Authority of Glasgow, Minutes for the Burgh of Glasgow, D-ED 2/1, Glasgow City Archives, and *The Herald*.

Table 2a - Edinburgh

<b>Name</b>	<b>Political affiliation</b>	<b>Municipal Body</b>	<b>Year elected/ honours</b>	<b>Standing Committees served on</b>	<b>Other organisation affiliations</b>
Miss Sara L Munro	N/a St. Giles	Parish Council, later town council when the two bodies merged in 1919	1906 1930 became a JP	Co-opted to Public Assistance sub-committee of Town Council in 1919, Adoption Committee, the Children's Shelter and Jubilee Nurses' Association, Burgh Health Insurance Committee, Milk Consumers' Committee for Scotland	Edinburgh branch of the Women's Freedom League, various positions on the EWCA including chairman, vice-president, and convener of the Local Government Committee.
Mrs Euphemia Somerville	Independent Merchiston	Town Council and Education Authority	1908 (school board) Magistrate 1932	Public health (venereal diseases), Public Parks, Housing and Town Planning (reconstruction) National Health Insurance Committee	EWCA – supported in her candidature by the EWCA, regular speaker and advisee
Mrs Ella Morison Millar	Progressive Morningside	Town Council and Education Authority	1919 Edinburgh's first female magistrate	Public Health (Maternity and Child Welfare), Public Parks, Housing and Town Planning (new Housing).	NCW – Vice President throughout the 1930s, EWCA – supported in her candidature by EWCA
Mrs Alice M Ross	Progressive St Bernards	Education Authority	1921		EWCA – supported her candidature at every election, NCW, President of Women's

					Freedom League from 1934
Mrs Isobel Morgan	Progressive?	Education Authority	1921		EWCA supported her candidature
Miss Minnie Galbraith Cowan	Unionist East Edinburgh	Education Authority	1914 (school board), 1919 (co-opted member), 1921 (direct election)		EWCA, NCW
Miss Mary G Williamson	Progressive?	Education Authority	1921		Edinburgh Local Elections Committee
Mrs Eltringham Millar	ILP Gorgie	Town Council and Education Authority	1924	Housing and Town Planning, Public Health, Salaries and Wages, Royal Maternity and Simpson Memorial Hospital	Independent Labour Party (ILP)
Mrs Swan Brunton	Co-operative St. Giles	Town Council and Edinburgh Authority	1928	Cleaning and Lighting, Public Health Committees, Continuation Classes.	Independent Labour Party (ILP), Co-operative Movement
Miss Mabel E J Cornwall	N/a Haymarket.	Parish Council	1930		Joint Honorary Secretary of the EWCA, member of the NCW, actively involved with the Edinburgh branch of the Women's Peace Crusade
Mrs Mary Graham	ILP Dalry	Town Council and Education Authority	1930	Public Health Committee (Hospitals and Housing and Sanitary sub-committees), Public Assistance Committee (Institutions, Assistance and General Purpose), Public Libraries, Queen Victoria Institute for Nurses	ILP
Miss Agnes Harrison	Progressive Merchison	Town Council and Education Authority	1936	Trinity Hospital Committee, the General Purposes Committee and	Committee member of the EWCA

				the Public Assistance Committee	
Mrs Jane M J Bowie	Independent George Square	Town Council	1936	Public Health Committee	Supported in her campaign for election by the EWCA
Mrs Barbara Woodburn	ILP Central Leith	Town Council and Education Authority	1937	Public Assistance Committee	ILP

Source: *City of Edinburgh Diaries*, SL 70/1/1, Edinburgh City Archives, and *The Scotsman*.

Table 3 – Perth

<b>Name</b>	<b>Political affiliation</b>	<b>Municipal Body</b>	<b>Year elected/ honours</b>	<b>Standing Committees served on</b>	<b>Other organisation affiliations</b>
Katherine Ramsay, Duchess of Atholl	Unionist	Education Authority (MP for Kinross and West Perthshire)	1919	Religions and Moral Instruction, Medical Inspection	Chairman of the Highlands and Islands Consultative Council of the Board of Health, the president of the Perthshire Federation of District Nursing Associations, National Council of Women, Perthshire Musical Festival, Red Cross, British League for European Freedom
Miss Elizabeth Sanderson Haldane	Not clear – Liberal then non-party ?	Education Authority	1919	Rural Libraries, Continuation Classes, Agricultural	Carnegie United Kingdom Trust, president of the Perthshire Red Cross Society, a manager of the Edinburgh Royal Infirmary, a governor of both Birkbeck College and the London School of Economics, BBC, SWRI, Perthshire Musical Festival, council of the Magistrates' Association of England and Wales

Mrs MacLagan	Not known	Education Authority	1922	Rural Libraries, Medical Inspection and General Welfare, Agricultural, Coordination of Medical Services, Primary Schools	
Mrs Bruce	Not known	Education Authority	1927	Medical Inspection and General Welfare	
Miss Robertson	Not known	Education Authority	1928	Medical Inspection and General Welfare, Continuation Classes, Library and Property, Works Committees.	

Source: Perthshire Education Authority, CC1/5/22.

## APPENDIX 6b

The following biographies are arranged by location and are listed in chronological order.

### Glasgow

#### Miss Kathleen Valentine Bannatyne

Kathleen Bannatyne was an original member of the new Glasgow Education Authority for Central and Kelvingrove, and had previously been the vice-chairman of the School Board for Glasgow. She was appointed to the overall standing committees, which meant that she served on every one of the fourteen committees. She was also Vice-Convenor of the Secondary Education Standing Committee. Miss Bannatyne also had interests out with the Education Authority, for example in 1921 she spoke at a conference at Glasgow University held under the auspices of the Association of Women Graduates on the 'inadequate supply of teachers'. She also chaired a session of the triennial conference of the Reformer and Refuge Union in 1924.<sup>1</sup> Miss Bannatyne's political affiliation is unclear, although it is more than likely that she was a Moderate.<sup>2</sup>

#### Mrs Agnes Dollan

Agnes Dollan was born Agnes Johnstone Moir in Springburn on the 16 August 1887. She was one of eleven children and as a result of family poverty, left school at eleven to work in a factory and later a telephone exchange. Through her experiences of the working world she became radicalised. Dollan joined several organisations in her youth including the Women's Labour League. She worked closely with Mary Macarthur, a prominent trade unionist, in an attempt to organise female post office workers into a single trade union.<sup>3</sup> She also joined the WSPU and was involved with the Socialist Sunday School movement. Through this organisation she encountered the ILP, which she joined about 1905. Dollan was also a member of the Kinning Park branch of the Scottish Co-operative Women's Guild. This is significant as it is often argued that the Rent Strikes movement of 1915 originated with the women of this organisation. It is notable that Mary Barbour was also a member of the Kinning Park Guild. Both women are very much identified with the Rent Strikes, and by association 'Red Clydeside' and the rise of the labour movement in Glasgow's municipal politics. Indeed Agnes was the treasurer of the Glasgow Women's Housing Association.

On the 20 September 1912 she married Patrick Dollan, who was a prominent member of the ILP and a journalist for Tom Johnstone's socialist weekly paper *Forward*. He would later become leader of the Labour Party on Glasgow Corporation and Lord Provost of the City in 1938. Agnes and Patrick had one son, James, born in 1913, who became a successful journalist. Like many other members of the ILP, including her husband, during the First World War Agnes' pacifist streak came to the forefront of her politics. It is notable that Patrick was even ensconced in Wormwood Scrubs in 1917 as a conscientious objector.<sup>4</sup> Dollan focused her energies on organising women against war. Along with her friends Helen Crawford and Mary Barbour, both of whom she had worked with in the campaign against rent increases, she was instrumental in the formation of the Women's Peace Crusade in 1916. All three women became well-known figures in the Labour movement as a result of their campaigning for rent reductions and peace. Dollan remained very involved in municipal politics in the interwar years.<sup>5</sup> She was a member of the Education Authority for Springburn

<sup>1</sup> *The Scotsman*, 5 June 1924, p. 7.

<sup>2</sup> See chapter six for further explanation.

<sup>3</sup> H. Corr, 'Dollan, Agnes Johnstone (1887-1966)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/articles/54413>, accessed 7 March 2007].

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> E. Ewan, S. Innes, S. Reynolds and R. Pipes (Eds.) *The Biographical Dictionary of Scottish Women*, EUP, Edinburgh, 2006, p. 98.

from 1919 till 1928 when she retired through ill health. Throughout her time serving on the Education authority she sat on several Standing Committees including Continuation Classes, Physical Training, Industrial Schools, Special Schools, Medical Inspection and Treatment and Necessitous Children.<sup>6</sup>

During the Second World War Agnes and Patrick rejected their pacifist stance as a result of the rise of fascism. As she argued at the Scottish Labour Party Women's Conference in 1939 'it was all very well to theorise under normal conditions but we were not living under such conditions today'.<sup>7</sup> Her war efforts with the women's volunteer service were rewarded with an MBE in 1946. This was closely followed by Patrick's knighthood in the early 1950s. Around this time Agnes also formally converted from 'free-thinking' to Catholicism, largely influenced Patrick's return to Catholicism. Agnes died on the 16 July 1966 at the age of seventy-eight from cardiac failure at the Victoria Infirmary in Glasgow.

### Mrs Mary Burns Laird

Mary Laird was an original member of the Education authority in 1919 for the fifth division, Hillhead and Partick. In 1924 she was also elected as an ILP Town Councillor for Partick East. Mrs Laird was a member of various Standing Committees, including Property, Physical Training, Industrial Schools and she was Vice-Convenor of Domestic Science.<sup>8</sup> She was also appointed by the Authority as their representative to the Women's Advisory Committee.<sup>9</sup> Laird had strong connections to the wider labour movement in Glasgow. Not only was she president of the Glasgow Women's Housing Association, which she helped form in 1913 but in 1922 she became the treasurer of the Scottish Labour Housing Association. She was also a member of the Glasgow Women's Labour League, which in turn led to her appointment to the Glasgow Trade Council in 1926.<sup>10</sup>

### Mrs Mabel Nora Allan

Mabel Allen was the widow of James A Allan, who the *Herald* describes as popularly known as the 'millionaire socialist'. She was a former member of the school board for many years, and in 1919 was elected to the newly formed Education Authority for the First Division of Shettleston and Bridgeton. Mrs Allan was appointed convenor of the Committee on special schools.

### Miss Margaret Hamilton Cunningham

Margaret Cunningham was the daughter of Mr James Cunningham a prominent and respected member of the Glasgow Parish Council. According *The Herald* she was an active social worker who had travelled widely.<sup>11</sup> She stood as a moderate candidate in the 1922 Education Authority Election in the second division Camlachie and Springburn. Miss Cunningham lived in Dennistoun.

### Miss Isabel Campbell Hamilton, LLA, FEIS

Isabel Hamilton, of Kelvinside Gardens, stood as a Moderate candidate in the 1922 Education Authority Elections for Maryhill. *The Herald* described her as 'coming forward with the

<sup>6</sup> Glasgow City Council, *Minutes of the Education Authority for the Burgh of Glasgow*, Glasgow City Archives, D-ED 2/1/1, 1919-1920.

<sup>7</sup> Corr, 'Dollan, Agnes Johnston (1887-1966)', 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/articles/54413>, accessed 7 March 2007].

<sup>8</sup> Glasgow City Council, *Minutes of the Education Authority for the Burgh of Glasgow*, 5 May 1919.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid*, 4 March 1919.

<sup>10</sup> A. Hughes, *A Rough Kind of 'Feminism': The formation of working-class women's political identity, Clydeside, c. 1919-1939*, PhD thesis, University of Strathclyde, 2001, p. 77 and 78.

<sup>11</sup> *The Herald*, 21 March 1922, p. 9

backing of the various women's non-party organisations in the city'.<sup>12</sup> Indeed Miss Hamilton was a member of the Executive Committee of the GSEC. Consequently the society vigorously supported her campaign in 1922, actively encouraging her to stand. The organisation continued to assist her throughout the 1920s receiving letters of thanks from her.<sup>13</sup> In 1925 she resigned from the Executive Committee as a result of her increasing duties at the Education Authority.<sup>14</sup> This involved serving on the Secondary Education Standing Committee.<sup>15</sup> She was appointed in 1922 to the Glasgow Central Employment Committee to sit on a sub-committee to consider women's work.<sup>16</sup> In addition she supported the work of a range of other organisations including the Scottish Home Rule Association, Camlachie Unionist Association, and Glasgow YWCA.

#### Mrs Margaret Anne Hourston, OBE

Margaret Hourston, of Bellahouston, stood as a Moderate candidate in the 1922 Education Authority election in the third division of Central and Kelvingrove. She was a member of the Pollokshields and District Women's branch of the Pollok Division of the Unionist Association, and also an honorary treasurer of the British and Foreign Sailors' Society Ladies Guild. Notably she was also the president of the Glasgow Women's Citizens' Association in 1939. Mrs Hourston, like Miss Hamilton, was appointed as an additional representative to the Glasgow Central Employment Committee by the Education Authority in 1924. She was also one of the Authority's representatives to the Glasgow and West of Scotland College of Domestic Science.

#### Mrs Alison Josephine McGregor

Alison McGregor, of Shields Road, was a Moderate candidate for the 1922 Education Authority election. She stood in the Sixth division of Govan, Tradeston and Pollok. She was a member of the Glasgow Women's Citizens' Association (GWCA) and through this organisation assisted in the district administration of war pensions. Mrs McGregor was the Authority's representative to the Adult Education Joint Committee for Glasgow, the Federated Council of Glasgow Societies for the Care of Women and Girls and the Glasgow Association for the Care of Feeble-Minded Children.<sup>17</sup> She was also appointed as an additional representative in 1924 to the Glasgow Central Employment Committee.

#### Mrs Kate Beaton

Kate Beaton was born Catherine McLean in 1879 in Glasgow, the fourth of six children. She became very involved in the labour movement, joining the Women's Labour League in 1908. Beaton was also a member of the National Federation of Women Workers (NFWW). She represented this organisation on the Glasgow Trades Council in 1909, later becoming a representative in her own right.<sup>18</sup>

#### Mrs Helen E Gault

Helen Gault was a prominent ILP propagandist, she even wrote a women's column for *Forward* for a few months in 1925. She was also involved in Women's Advisory Council of the Glasgow ILP. She was elected to the Town Council for the first time in 1932, representing

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> GSEC, *Minutes of the Executive Committee*, Glasgow Regional Archives, SR 187/891036/1/5, 24 April 1922, 24 March 1925.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, 24 March 1925.

<sup>15</sup> Glasgow City Council, *Minutes of the Education Authority for the Burgh of Glasgow*, 31 March 1922.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, 21 December 1922.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, 11 April 1922, 1 February 1923, and 15 March 1923.

<sup>18</sup> G. Rawlinson, 'McLean, Catherine (1879-1960)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/articles/54413>, accessed 7 March 2007].



Calton. In addition to her membership of the ILP she was also a prominent and vociferous member of the Scottish Co-operative Women's Guild, representing the Knightswood West branch at Annual Meetings. While the central council of the Guild sent its congratulations to Mrs Gault on her election in 1932, at times she proved to be a thorn in its side, opposing its directives. However her opposition did not prevent her from passing resolutions, most notably on the reduction of war propaganda in schools.<sup>19</sup>

#### Mrs Laura McLean, JP

Laura McLean was the wife of Mr Neil McLean, ILP MP for Govan. In 1926 she became the ILP Town Councillor for Kingston, along with Jean Roberts.<sup>20</sup> In 1925 she presided over the first conference of the Women's Advisory Council of the Glasgow ILP, which considered the high cost of living. She was also involved with the Glasgow Infant Health Visitors' Association.<sup>21</sup> In 1935 Mrs McLean became a JP for the city of Glasgow.<sup>22</sup>

### **Edinburgh**

#### Miss Sara L Munro

Sara Munro was born in Edinburgh and educated at the Edinburgh Ladies' College. She later trained as a teacher and returned to the Ladies' College. She was described in her obituary in the *Scotsman* as having 'a natural aptitude' for teaching and took a wide interest in 'the science of teaching' making many journeys abroad to attend conferences on modern methods.<sup>23</sup> She became involved in public and philanthropic work after her retirement and took particular interest in the care of poor children. She represented St. Giles on the Parish Council from 1906, and when this body was merged into the Town Council she was co-opted onto the Public Assistance Committee. Munro was also involved in various voluntary committees concerned with the care and supervision of children, including the Adoption Committee, the Children's Shelter and Jubilee Nurses' Association. In 1930 she was made a JP for Edinburgh. In the pre-war years Munro was chairman of the Edinburgh branch of the Women's Freedom League, and was also involved in the establishment of the EWCA. She later became vice-president, and held a seat on the executive throughout the interwar years until her death in 1935. Munro was described in her obituary as 'a well-known educationalist and administrative worker, who has given valuable service in Edinburgh over a long period'.<sup>24</sup>

#### Mrs Euphemia Somerville

Euphemia Somerville was first appointed to Edinburgh Town Council in 1908. She represented Merchiston Ward as an Independent candidate from 1918 until her death in 1935. Somerville had a very solid background in social work even before her election in 1919. In her election material she cited her thirteen and a half years experience of study under the Medical Officers of Health for the Town Councils of Glasgow and Edinburgh. In this work she had helped to organise visitation schemes in areas where infant mortality were 'exceptionally high'. As a result of her work for the city, she became Edinburgh's second woman magistrate in 1932. In her obituary, published in *The Scotsman* in 1935, it was stated that she would be

<sup>19</sup> SCWG, *Fortieth Annual Report*, Glasgow Regional Archive, CSW1/39/6/40, 1933-1934, p. 20.

<sup>20</sup> *The Scotsman*, 3 November 1926, p. 9.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid*, 13 February 1935, p. 8.

<sup>22</sup> Glasgow City Council, *Education Authority of Glasgow Annual Reports*, Glasgow City Archives, DE-D 9/1/46-47, 1933-34 and 1934-1935.

<sup>23</sup> *The Scotsman*, 31 January 1935, p. 8.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid*.

remembered ‘as a pioneer in public health and child welfare’, ‘pressing the claims of the slum dwellers to decent houses’.<sup>25</sup>

#### Mrs Ella Morison Millar

Ella Morison Millar was the Progressive Councillor for Morningside Ward from 1919 throughout the interwar years. As well as her municipal duties, Millar was very active in the feminist movement in Edinburgh. She was a member of the Edinburgh Branch of the National Council of Women (NCW) and was its Vice-President throughout the 1930s. Through her work for the NCW she campaigned vigorously for the passing of an Act of Parliament that legalised Child Adoption in Scotland. Again through this organisation she worked closely with the Association of Moral and Social Hygiene in Edinburgh for the removal of the double standard inherent in Solicitation laws. As a result of her active social work, Mrs Millar was the first woman to hold the office of magistrate in Edinburgh.

#### Mrs Alice M Ross

Alice Ross was a member of Edinburgh Education Authority from its inception and was the Progressive Councillor for St. Bernard’s ward. She lost her husband in the Great War, and had three small children. However as Sir Alexander Stevenson stated at a luncheon organised by the EWCA to celebrate the involvement of women in Edinburgh’s municipal government, ‘she did not sit down, fold her arms, and bemoan her fate’ instead she decided to ‘take her full part in the world’s work’.<sup>26</sup> She was a prominent member of the EWCA, which had first supported her candidature in 1921 as part of the Edinburgh Local Elections Committee. Ross continued to be supported at every election by her fellow members throughout the interwar years. She also frequently addressed meetings, especially at election time.<sup>27</sup> Her active role in the feminist movement in Edinburgh is further illustrated by her membership of the Edinburgh branch of the NCW. Mrs Ross was also President of the Women’s Freedom League from 1934.

#### Miss Minnie Galbraith Cowan

Minnie Cowan was born in Belmont, Paisley on the 1 May 1878, into an eminent legal family and was educated in Hendon, Glasgow followed by Girton College Cambridge. She was an early student for the social science diploma in Edinburgh, where she shared a New Town flat with her brother. As an educated woman she created a semi-professional career in public life, mixing elected office and committee appointments.<sup>28</sup> In 1912 she embarked upon a study tour of India resulted in her publishing a book which argued for ‘solutions on Indian and womanly lines’.<sup>29</sup> She was first elected to the Edinburgh School Board in 1914 and in 1919 became the first convenor of the statutory local advisory council of the Education Authority. She was eventually elected directly to the Education Authority in 1921 as the Unionist candidate for East Edinburgh. The Edinburgh Local Elections Committee also supported Miss Cowan in her candidature. The EWCA also honoured Cowan at a musical evening in 1928 and a luncheon in 1934. At the latter event Mr Donald McLean described her as a leading member and dominant personality in the Edinburgh Education Authority. In addition Cowan was a member of the Edinburgh branch of the NCW, representing this body at its national conference in 1937, later becoming national president of the NCW in 1946 and international vice-president.<sup>30</sup> She was also a member of the National Committee for the Training of Teachers, the National Advisory

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, 28 September 1935, p. 11.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, 14 May 1934, p. 16.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, 14 October 1936, p. 17, 29 October 1936, p. 9, and 5 November 1936, p. 16.

<sup>28</sup> Ewan, Innes, Reynolds and Pipes (Eds.) *The Biographical Dictionary of Scottish Women*, p. 81.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> *The Scotsman*, 12 October 1937, p. 11. Also see Ewan, Innes, Reynolds and Pipes (Eds.) *The Biographical Dictionary of Scottish Women*, p. 81.

Committee on Juvenile Employment and the Women's Local Employment Committee. She received an OBE in 1928.<sup>31</sup> She twice stood unsuccessfully for parliamentary election, as a Unionist candidate in 1929 in Paisley and as a National Government candidate for Edinburgh East in 1935.<sup>32</sup> Cowan died on the 8 July 1951 with one obituary recalling her 'unflagging enthusiasm in causes that were often difficult to initiate and . . . to sustain'.<sup>33</sup>

#### Mrs Isobel Morgan

Isobel Morgan's political affiliation was unclear, although it was more than probable that she was a Progressive.<sup>34</sup> The Edinburgh Local Elections Committee supported her in 1921. The EWCA also supported her candidature through electioneering work.

#### Miss Mary G Williamson

The Edinburgh Local Elections Committee also supported Mary Williamson MA in 1921. Again her political affiliation was also unclear, although it may be assumed that she was a Progressive. She was a lecturer in History at the University of Edinburgh.

#### Mrs Eltringham Millar

Mrs Eltringham Millar was first elected to Edinburgh Town Council in 1924 as the ILP representative for Gorgie Ward.<sup>35</sup> She served on the Housing and Town Planning, the Public Health and Salaries and Wages Committees. She was also the Council representative to the Royal Maternity and Simpson Memorial Hospital. Mrs Eltringham used her position on the council to oppose measures she felt were unjust, such as the Means Test. She also prioritised the needs of her working-class constituents, focusing upon housing and public health.

#### Mrs Swan Brunton

Mrs Swan Brunton became the Co-operative councillor for St. Giles ward in 1928. She was appointed to serve on the Cleaning and Lighting and Public Health Committees and was also a member of the Education Authority where she was a member of the committee for Continuation Classes. She was described in her obituary in the *Scotsman* as being closely associated with the Co-operative and Labour movements. In fact she collapsed and died on the steps of the Co-operative Wholesale Societies headquarters on the way into a meeting. She was a director of St. Cuthbert's Association, one of the most successful in Scotland. *The Scotsman* also described her as 'a persistent advocate of the interests of those who for several years had returned her for St. Giles' Ward'. It is notable that after her death in 1932, the voters of St. Giles' Ward elected another female ILP Councillor, Mrs Mary Ingles.<sup>36</sup>

#### Miss Mabel E J Cornwall

Mabel Cornwall was the representative for Haymarket on the parish council.<sup>37</sup> She was also a Joint Honorary Secretary of the EWCA as well as an active member of its Dramatic and

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<sup>31</sup> *The Scotsman*, 19 July 1935, p. 9.

<sup>32</sup> Ewan, Innes, Reynolds and Pipes (Eds.) *The Biographical Dictionary of Scottish Women*, p. 81.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> This contention is supported by the fact that in *The Scotsman* she did not have a party affiliation listed against her name in its coverage of election results, which as discussed Baxter has argued indicates a Progressive affiliation, as opposed to a Socialist affiliation. K. Baxter, 'Estimable and Gifted'? *Women in Party Politics in Scotland c1918-c1955*, PhD thesis, University of Dundee, 2007, p. 101.

<sup>35</sup> Edinburgh City Council, *City of Edinburgh Diaries*, Edinburgh City Archives, City Chambers, SL 70/1/7, 1925.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid, 1930.

Musical Section.<sup>38</sup> In her work with the EWCA she prioritised two concerns, housing and peace. In particular she focused on the provision of community centres in new housing schemes. She was also the EWCA's representative to the Edinburgh Branch of the League of Nations Union and was actively involved in the Edinburgh branch of the Women's Peace.<sup>39</sup>

#### Mrs Mary Graham

Mary Graham was appointed the ILP councillor for Dalry in 1930. She was appointed to the Public Health Committee including the Hospitals and Housing and Sanitary sub-committees. She also sat on the Public Assistance Committee where she was a member of all three sub-committees, Institutions, Assistance and General Purpose.<sup>40</sup> Graham's other duties involved the Public Libraries Committee, and she was the Council's representative on the Queen Victoria Institute for Nurses.<sup>41</sup>

#### Mrs Barbara Woodburn

Barbara Woodburn was appointed as ILP Councillor for Central Leith in 1937.<sup>42</sup> She was married to Mr Arthur Woodburn, secretary for the ILP in Scotland, and was actively involved in the Labour College. Her duties on the Town Council included sitting on the Public Assistance Committee, where her priorities included addressing the issue of unemployment.<sup>43</sup> She was also a member of the Education Authority. In addition, Woodburn focused her energies on promoting peace, insisting that 'the people of this country were definitely desirous of peace'.<sup>44</sup>

#### Miss Agnes Harrison

In 1936 Agnes Harrison was elected to the town council as the Moderate councillor for Merchison, replacing the late Bailie Mrs Somerville.<sup>45</sup> Harrison had a 'long municipal connection in her family', as her grandfather was a former Lord Provost of Edinburgh and her father was an active member of the Town Council for many years.<sup>46</sup> During the First World War she was a nurse, both home and abroad. Miss Harrison's duties on the council involved serving on the Education Authority, on the Trinity Hospital Committee, the General Purposes Committee and the Public Assistance Committee.<sup>47</sup>

#### Mrs Jane M J Bowie

Jane Bowie was also elected in 1936 as an independent candidate for George Square.<sup>48</sup> Bowie was also a nurse, and was described in *The Scotsman* as well known for her activities on behalf of many social organisations.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> *The Scotsman*, 5 July 1930, p. 1 and 6 April 1933, p. 14.

<sup>39</sup> EWCA, *Annual General Meetings*, National Archives of Scotland, GD333/3, 31 January 1928. Also see *The Scotsman*, 10 December 1932, p. 11.

<sup>40</sup> Edinburgh City Council, *City of Edinburgh Diaries*, SL 70/1/17, 1935.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid, 1938.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> *The Scotsman*, 31 October 1935, p. 8.

<sup>45</sup> Edinburgh City Council, *City of Edinburgh Diaries*, SL 70/1/20, 1938.

<sup>46</sup> *The Scotsman*, 4 December 1935, p. 9.

<sup>47</sup> Edinburgh City Council, *City of Edinburgh Diaries*, SL 70/1/20, 1938.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> *The Scotsman*, 15 September 1936, p. 7. Also see Edinburgh City Council, *City of Edinburgh Diaries*, SL 70/1/20, 1938.

## Perth

### Katherine Marjory Stewart Murray, Duchess of Atholl

Katherine Ramsay was born on the 6 November 1874; her father was Sir James Ramsay 10<sup>th</sup> Baronet of Bamff Perthshire. She was educated at Wimbledon High School and the Royal College of Music, like her mother Charlotte Fanning she was a talented musician. In 1899 she married John, Lord Tullibardine, Unionist MP for West Perthshire for the period 1910-1917, after which point he became the 8<sup>th</sup> Duke of Atholl. Her marriage made her more interested in public life, initially to aid her husband's political career.<sup>50</sup> Although she soon became involved in politics in her own right.

The Duchess of Atholl first stood in 1923 as the Unionist candidate for Kinross and West Perthshire and when successful became the first woman member of a Scottish constituency. However she can best be described as an exceptional case. Not only was she standing in the seat that her husband had held until he ascended to the peerage in 1917, but she had an extensive range of aristocratic social and political connections. Indeed she was persuaded to stand as a candidate by 'a powerful combination of leading Unionists'.<sup>51</sup> Burness describes her as active in Scottish Unionist circles, and she knew many of the party leaders personally. Ironically the Duchess of Atholl had opposed women's suffrage, voting against the extension of the franchise. Her biographer Sheila Hetherington even described her as 'an anti-feminist' who broke 'the mould so effectively' and trailblazed 'almost by accident certainly never by design'.<sup>52</sup> In 1924 she was appointed the Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Education, a position she held until 1929. Her appointment over Lady Astor was accounted for by her experience as a prolific public servant, who sat on no less than twenty-five committees', which included Perthshire education authority and the Association of Education Authorities in Scotland. Therefore her knowledge of education and Stanley Baldwin's feeling that she would be 'loyal and decorous' secured her the position.<sup>53</sup>

The Duchess of Atholl was to fall from grace within the Unionist Party for supporting what were perceived to be controversial issues. This included opposition to female circumcision in Kenya and 'die hard' opposition to the Simon report on the future government in India, she did not support self-government which she felt would lead to civil war. When the India Act was discussed in parliament the Duchess resigned the Conservative whip for several months in protest. In addition she criticised Stalin's forced labour camps and drew attention to the Civil War in Spain, which she associated with the rise of fascism. The Duchess' views on Spain were the final straw for the Unionist leadership. She was deselected in 1938 and was dubbed the 'Red Duchess' by her opponents within the party.<sup>54</sup> Notably the Duchess regained her seat in 1939, standing as an independent candidate, although she rejoined the Unionists in 1940 when Winston Churchill became Prime Minister. Her husband died in 1942, and for the duration of the war she worked intensively for the Red Cross. At the end of the war her concern over the Soviet Union resurfaced and in 1945 she became chairman of the British League for European Freedom. She died in 1960 after a fall.

During the interwar years, the Duchess was also chairman of the Highlands and Islands Consultative Council of the Board of Health, the president of the Perthshire Federation of District Nursing Associations, and was a member of the National Council of Women.<sup>55</sup> She remained involved in her local constituency helping to form Perthshire Musical Festival, attending openings of memorials and performing numerous duties expected of Parliamentary representatives. The Duchess also played a prominent role in the Perthshire education

<sup>50</sup> Ewan, Innes, Reynolds and Pipes (Eds.) *The Biographical Dictionary of Scottish Women*, p. 19.

<sup>51</sup> C. Burness, 'The Long Slow March: Scottish Women MPs, 1918-1945' in E. Breitenbach and E. Gordon (eds.) *Out of Bounds, Women in Scottish Society, 1800-1945*, EUP, Edinburgh, 1992, p. 162.

<sup>52</sup> Hetherington quoted in Burness, *ibid*, p. 163.

<sup>53</sup> Burness, *ibid*, p. 163.

<sup>54</sup> Ewan, Innes, Reynolds and Pipes (Eds.) *The Biographical Dictionary of Scottish Women*, p. 19.

<sup>55</sup> Burness, *ibid*, p. 162.

authority throughout the interwar period. She was the chair of the Religions and Moral Instruction and a member of the Medical Inspection Committees throughout the early 1920s.<sup>56</sup>

### Miss Elizabeth Sanderson Haldane

Elizabeth Haldane was born in Edinburgh on the 27 May 1862 into a well-established Perthshire family. Her obituary in *The Scotsman* stated that she was ‘one of the most representative figures of her time’.<sup>57</sup> It describes her early years as sheltered with family life being typical of the Victorian age, characterised by religious and social commitment. She was the only daughter and was taught at home by tutors with her brothers, and in her early teens she began attending classes for girls in Edinburgh. Haldane was described in this obituary as ‘shy and frustrated’ by her upbringing, which prompted her to ‘revolt against the narrowness of social outlook which was a feature of her environment’. Moreover the author argues that she was assisted in doing so through the political contacts she made through her eminent brother Richard Haldane, six years her elder, who was later to become Viscount Haldane and a member of the Labour government in 1924. Among such contacts, who were frequent visitors to the Haldane house, were Gladstone, the Asquiths and later Sidney and Beatrice Webb. Therefore Haldane was exceptionally well placed for a role in public life. In addition, she was a supporter of suffrage through the Women’s Liberal Federation. Through a meeting with philanthropist Octavia Hill in London she also initiated the building of a housing scheme in Edinburgh.<sup>58</sup> Haldane also embarked upon a literary career that began with what would become a three-volume translation of Hegel’s *History of Philosophy*, along with Frances H Simson, which was published in 1892. This was the first of her twelve published books, which involved such topics as Victorian women writers, nursing and Scotland’s history and gardens.

Her obituary in *The Scotsman* described her as having an active life in which she ‘rendered great public service’ especially in the ‘area of educational advancement’. She was particularly involved in the Auchterarder free library, which she was the honorary secretary for fifty-three years. Haldane was also appointed by her neighbour Andrew Carnegie as one of the original Trustees of the United Kingdom Trust in 1913. She used her position on this trust to establish school libraries all over Scotland. This reflects her active involvement with the Rural Libraries Committee of the Perthshire Education Authority, which she was chair of throughout the period.<sup>59</sup> She was also described as the ‘prime mover in starting the scheme of agricultural classes in Perthshire’ as a member of the Authorities Continuation Classes Committee where she also helped organise classes in First Aid and Hygiene organised by the Red Cross Society.<sup>60</sup> Haldane also served on the boards of other charitable and municipal bodies, she was vice-president of the Perthshire branch of the Red Cross Society and a manager of the Edinburgh Royal Infirmary. She also was a governor of both Birkbeck College and the London School of Economics. In addition she was the first woman in Scotland to be appointed a Justice of the Peace in 1920. She was also elected a member of the council of the Magistrates’ Association of England and Wales in 1926, and was influential in the formation of an annual women’s conference.

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<sup>56</sup> Perthshire Education Authority, *Minutes of Religion and Moral Instruction Committee*, Perth and Kinross Regional Archives, CC1/5/22, 1920-1925 and Perthshire Education Authority, *Minutes of Medical Inspection Committee*, Perth and Kinross Regional Archives, CC1/5/2/23, 1920-1925.

<sup>57</sup> *The Scotsman*, 27 December 1937, p. 8.

<sup>58</sup> Ewan, Innes, Reynolds and Pipes (Eds.) *The Biographical Dictionary of Scottish Women*, p. 155.

<sup>59</sup> Perthshire Education Authority, *Minutes of Rural Libraries Committee*, Perth and Kinross Regional Archives, CC1/5/22, 1920-1925, CC1/5/3/25, 1925-30 and *Minutes of the Continuation Classes and Library*, CC1/5/3/25, 1930-1935

<sup>60</sup> Perthshire Education Authority, *Minutes of Continuation Classes Committee*, Perth and Kinross Regional Archives, CC1/5/22, 2 September 1920.

## Appendix 6c

Table 1 – Women Electors as a percentage of Total Parliamentary Electorate

Division	1918	1921	1922	1924	1931
Bridgeton	36.9	36.8	37.8	40.2	50.5
Camlachie	37.7	40.0	38.5	43.0	52.7
Cathcart	39.2	42.2	41.3	47.3	55.8
Central	33.6	38.7	39.8	40.6	49.4
Gorbals	36.2	39.2	38.7	40.5	50.9
<i>Govan</i>	<i>35.5</i>	<i>38.5</i>	<i>37.4</i>	<i>40.8</i>	<i>50.4</i>
<i>Hillhead</i>	<i>40.0</i>	<i>45.4</i>	<i>51.8</i>	<i>49.7</i>	<i>60.0</i>
Kelvingrove	37.0	40.5	31.7	45.1	53.9
Maryhill	38.2	41.0	40.2	43.7	52.9
Partick	37.5	40.1	39.2	44.5	52.8
<i>Pollok</i>	<i>41.0</i>	<i>44.0</i>	<i>43.0</i>	<i>49.3</i>	<i>57.8</i>
St. Rollox	36.6	39.3	38.4	41.3	50.9
Shettleston	37.0	39.7	33.7	41.4	51.7
Springburn	37.0	39.3	37.7	41.8	51.2
<i>Tradeston</i>	<i>35.2</i>	<i>38.8</i>	<i>36.7</i>	<i>41.1</i>	<i>50.5</i>
<i>Average</i>	<b>37.3</b>	<b>40.2</b>	<b>39.1</b>	<b>43.4</b>	<b>52.8</b>

Source: D. Cairns, *Women in the Clydeside labour movement*, M Phil thesis, University of Strathclyde, 1996, p. 93.

Table 2 – Representation of Labour women on Glasgow Town Council 1920-1938

Year	No. of Labour Women Councillors	Location	Proportion of Total No. of Councillors	Proportion of No. of Labour Councillors
1920	2	Fairfield (Barbour) and Maryhill (Stewart)	1.8%	4.8%
1921	2	Fairfield (Barbour) and Springburn (Dollan)	1.8%	5.3%
1922	2	Fairfield (Barbour) and Springburn (Dollan)	1.8%	5.6%
1923	3	Hutchesontown (Beaton), Fairfield (Barbour) and Springburn (Dollan)	2.7%	7.9%
1924	3	Hutchesontown (Beaton), Fairfield (Barbour) and Springburn (Dollan)	2.7%	7.0%
1925	2	Hutchesontown (Beaton), and Fairfield (Barbour)	1.8%	4.9%
1926	3	Hutchesontown (Beaton), Fairfield (Barbour) and Kingston (McLean)	2.7%	6.4%
1927	3	Hutchesontown (Beaton), Fairfield (Barbour) and Kingston (McLean)	2.7%	7.3%
1928	3	Hutchesontown (Beaton), Fairfield (Barbour) and Kingston (McLean)	2.7%	7.1%
1929	4	Hutchesontown (Beaton), Fairfield (Barbour) and 2 in Kingston (McLean)	3.6%	10.0%
1930	4	Hutchesontown (Beaton), Fairfield (Barbour) and 2 in Kingston (McLean)	3.6%	10.3%
1931	6	Calton (Gault), Hutchesontown (Beaton),	5.4%	16.2%

		Parkhead, Provan (Mann) and 2 in Kingston (McLean and Roberts)		
1932	6	Calton (Gault), Hutchesontown (Beaton), Parkhead, Provan (Mann) and 2 in Kingston (McLean and Roberts)	5.3%	15.0%
1933	6	Calton (Gault), Hutchesontown (Beaton), Woodside, Provan (Mann) and 2 in Kingston (McLean and Roberts)	5.3%	11.5%
1934	6	Calton (Gault), Hutchesontown (Beaton), Woodside, Provan (Mann) and 2 in Kingston (McLean and Roberts)	5.3%	10.3%
1935	6	Calton (Gault), Hutchesontown (Beaton), Woodside, Provan (Mann) and 2 in Kingston (McLean and Roberts)	5.3%	9.5%
1936	6	Calton (Gault), Hutchesontown (Beaton), Woodside, Provan (Mann) and 2 in Kingston (McLean and Roberts)	5.3%	10.2%
1937	6	Calton (Gault), Hutchesontown (Beaton), Woodside, Provan (Mann) and 2 in Kingston (McLean and Roberts)	5.3%	10.0%
1938	7	Calton (Gault), 2 in Hutchesontown (Beaton), Woodside, Provan (Mann) and 2 in Kingston (McLean and Roberts)	6.1%	12.1%

Source: D. Cairns, *Women in the Clydeside labour movement*, M Phil thesis, University of Strathclyde, 1996, p. 95.

Table 3: Edinburgh Register of Voters 1921-1938 (incomplete series)

<b>Year</b>	<b>Parliamentary</b>		<b>Percentage of women</b>	<b>Local Government</b>		<b>Percentage of women</b>
	Men	Women		Men	Women	
1921	83,585	68,017	<b>44.9</b>	65,114	76,698	<b>54.1</b>
1922	110,721	90,047	<b>44.9</b>	90,307	101,806	<b>53.0</b>
1925	114,317	96,679	<b>45.8</b>	98,367	111,763	<b>53.2</b>
1930	126,763	160,065	<b>55.8</b>	105,927	133,824	<b>55.8</b>
1935	133,351	170,382	<b>56.1</b>	112,372	142,926	<b>56.0</b>
1938	138,956	176,839	<b>56.0</b>	119,252	131,143	<b>52.4</b>

Source: Edinburgh City Council, *City of Edinburgh Diaries*, Edinburgh City Archives, SL 70/1/3-20, 1921-1938 (incomplete series).



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