DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

'There is only one P in Perth - And, it stands for Pullars!'
the Labour, Trade-Union, and Co-operative Movements in Perth, c. 1867 to c. 1922

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Abstract

In recent years a number of studies within Scottish labour history have added to the discipline's understanding and knowledge of the history of the labour and trade-union movements of several Scottish towns/cities hitherto neglected by a historiography traditionally dominated by research into the West-Central Belt. These studies, of which this thesis forms part, provide data against which generalising narratives which purport to describe the development of the labour and trade-union movements in Britain can be read - a process which ultimately must improve these now orthodox narratives or see them replaced. The thesis also provides a historical description of the progress of the labour and trade-union movements in Perth, *c. 1867* to *c. 1922*. This study of Perth is unique in that Perth's labour and trade-union movements have been almost entirely neglected and thus the thesis provides a substantial body of fresh observations and data in the form of a critical and comparative history of the Perth labour and trade-union movements, *c. 1867* to *c. 1922*. Comparative considerations within the thesis revolve around existing studies of the labour and trade-union movements of Scotland's main industrial towns/cities/areas including Paisley and the Vale of Leven which shared common features with Perth. In gathering evidence use has been made of an array of primary sources. Both qualitative and quantitative methods feature throughout the thesis which is arranged using a thematic and chronological structure. The thesis also examines the Perth co-operative movement and the city's working-class housing, in so far as they offer an understanding of the reasons for the historical development of working-class consciousness and support for Labour in Perth. The thesis provides an example of a development of class consciousness and support for Labour that shows strong deviation with those (according to conventional Scottish labour history) found in many other parts of Scotland. In particular, the thesis considers why a significant proportion of the Perth working class either remained loyal to Liberalism or shifted allegiance to Conservatism in the very early 1920s at which point the death agony of the Liberal Party had become deafening and the rise of Labour inexorable. In addition, the thesis examines the slow development of trade unionism in Perth and its failure to make any substantial headway until almost the conclusion of the Great War. The thesis when placed alongside studies such as Catriona Macdonald's work on Paisley adds to the case for a fragmented development of class and trade-union consciousness across Scotland in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The motor for the deviation between Perth and elsewhere is shown to be due to a 'local identity' - in particular a lingering and powerful industrial paternalism, the absence of a sizeable and powerful branch of the Independent Labour Party, and an insular craft-union dominated trades council. Additionally, the Perth working class is shown to have played a significant role in its own subordination going so far as to act to maintain the local industrial order even as Perth's industrial paternalists and Liberal elites were abandoning the consensus upon which it was built.

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<u>Acknowledgements</u>

List of Abbreviations, Acronyms, and Truncations

ADGP - Aberdeen, Dundee, Glasgow, and Paisley

AKB - AK Bell Library, Perth

ASCJ - Amalgamated Society of Carpenters & Joiners

ASDBFKT - Amalgamated Society of Dyers, Bleachers, Finishers & Kindred Trades

ASE - Amalgamated Society of Engineers

AUCE - Amalgamated Union of Co-operative Employees

Bells - Arthur Bell & Sons Ltd

BGA - Barcardi Global Archive

BSP - British Socialist Party

BTSOPCSB - Building Trades of Scotland Operatives' Wages & Conditions Service Board

Campbells - P & P Campbell

CPCS - City of Perth Co-operative Society

CUL - Co-operative Union Ltd

CWS - Co-operative Wholesale Society

DiA - Diageo Archive

DCL - Dundee Central Library

DDJFWU - Dundee & District Jute and Flaxworkers' Union

DDMFOU - Dundee and District Mill & Factory Operatives' Union

Dewars - John Dewar & Sons Ltd

DTC - Dundee Trades Council

DTU - Dundee Tramway Union

Eastmans - Eastman & Sons Ltd

FKLA - Fife & Kinross Labourers' Association

FPCCA - Forfarshire & Perthshire Co-operative Conference Association

General Accident - General Accident, Fire & Life Assurance Association, Ltd

GTAS - General Typographical Association of Scotland

HCPP - House of Commons Parliamentary Papers

ILP - Independent Labour Party

IOGT - Independent Order of Good Templars

JDSA - John Dewar & Sons Ltd Archive (Barcardi Global Archive), Glasgow

LHASC - Labour History Archive & Study Centre, Manchester

LRC - Labour Representation Committee

LSE - London School of Economics

MEA - Municipal Employers Association

N. A. - No Author Specified

n.d. - no date specified

n.p.n. - no page number

NCP - No Conscription Fellowship

NEDCAC - North-Eastern District Co-operative Association Conference

NFWW - National Federation of Women Workers

NLS - National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh

NR - Not Recorded

NPRP - National Prohibition & Reform Party

NUR - National Union of Railwaymen

PASE - Perth branch of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers

PASW - Perth branch of the Amalgamated Society of Woodworkers

PAUCE - Perth branch of the Amalgamated Union of Co-operative Employees

PDLP - Perth District Labour Party

PDMMA - Perth District Master Masons' Association

PILP - Perth branch of the Independent Labour Party

PKCA - Perth & Kinross Council Archive, Perth

PLPAA - Perth Landlords & Property Agents' Association

PMAG - Perth Museum & Art Gallery

PMBF - Perth Master Bakers' Federation

POBSNFU - Perth branch of the Operative Bakers of Scotland National Federal Union

PTC - Perth & District Labour and Trades Council

PTS - Perth Typographical Society

PULA - Perth United Liberal Association

Pullars - John Pullar & Sons Ltd

PWCA - Perth Working Men's Conservative Association

PWMA - Perth Working Men's Association

RPI - Retail Price Index

SCWS - Scottish Co-operative Wholesale Society

SDF - Socialist Democratic Federation

SFSU - Scottish Farm Servants' Union

SHMA - Scottish Horse & Motormen's Association

SLP - Scottish Labour Party

SPAT - Scottish Printing Archival Trust

STA - Scottish Typographical Association

STDA - Scottish Traders' Defence Association

Shields - John Shields & Company Ltd

Smiths - Smith & Sons

SPP - Scottish Prohibition Party

TUC - Trades Union Congress

UDA - University of Dundee Archive, Dundee

UOMAS - United Operative Masons' Association of Scotland

WCG - Women's Co-operative Guild

WEC - Workers' Election Committee

WYB - West Yorkshire Archive, Bradford

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Chapter 1 - *Introduction*

William Kenefick's *Red Scotland!: The Rise and Fall of the Radical Labour Left, c. 1872 to 1932* conjures up in its title an image of the locus of the political progress of what he terms the '[Scottish] Radical Labour Left' as a function of time - an image akin to the result of an application of geometry: the establishment of the graph of a plane curve defined within a particular domain.[1]

To sketch a plane curve a number of features of its algebraic function are typically determined. These include the location and nature of any critical points (such as local and global maximum and minimum points) and any axis interceptions. In an analogous way, the majority of contributions to the historiography of the development of the labour movement[2] in Scotland (including Kenefick's *Red Scotland*) have made use of 'gradients' of progress and those points of maximum and minimum activity or success (be they measures of industrial militancy or electoral performance).[3]

The position (and existence) of extreme values within any closed bounded space is exigent in this area of mathematics and consequently as the

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[1] William Kenefick, *Red Scotland!: The Rise and Fall of the Radical Labour Left, c. 1872 to 1932* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007).

[2] The term 'labour movement' has been employed throughout this thesis to refer to the 'labour and trade union movements'. The term 'Labour' has been employed throughout this thesis to refer to all the political groupings of the labour (and socialist) movements and not just the Labour Party.

[3] Even 'revisionist' strains within labour historiography, of which Eugenio F. Biagini and Alastair J. Reid's 'Currents of Radicalism, 1850-1914', in Eugenio F. Biagini and Alastair J. Reid (eds.), *Currents of Radicalism: Popular radicalism, organised labour and party politics in Britain, 1850-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991) is a prime example, are no exceptions. Biagini and Reid's replacement of 'critical points' with notions of 'gradualism' and 'continuity' to account for the growth of the Labour Party fits within the geometrical analogy. Biagini, *Currents of Radicalism*, pp. 1-19.

choice of boundaries can change the values of the global *extrema*, their selection must be considered prudently. Kenefick has elucidated his choice of *c. 1872* as the lower boundary of the temporal domain of his study by noting the year marked the appearance of 'the first tentative steps towards industrial political action during the 1870s.' The upper boundary, he has explained, was chosen because it was the year the Independent Labour Party (ILP) disaffiliated from the Labour Party (July 1932) effectively marking the decline of the '[Scottish] Radical Labour Left'. In addition, Kenefick has implicitly made a case for the 1922 general election (in which 'of the forty-three candidates run by Labour in 1922, forty were sponsored by the ILP') to be considered the global *maxima* of the ILP as a political force.[4]

The temporal domain of this thesis - *c. 1867* to *c. 1922* - too requires explanation. The lower boundary corresponds with the creation of a space in which trade unions in Britain could operate without the severe restrictions of the past and importantly lies around the date of the earliest surviving Perth trade-union branch records. The upper boundary is a bit more problematic in that unlike the success of Labour on the national stage, the labour movement in Perth achieved little in the way of an electoral breakthrough in 1922. Nonetheless, as this thesis is concerned as much with the similarity in the loci of the development of Labour across and elsewhere in Scotland and that of Perth, as it is with their difference, 1922 offers an alternative *extremum* - one based on dissimilarity.

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[4] Kenefick, *Red Scotland*, p. 191.

Occasionally there has been a need to augment the chronological domain of this thesis slightly so as to allow coherence in the narrative. For example, whilst 1922 marked the breakthrough of Labour in Scotland and a critical point in the demise of the Liberal Party, it would be a failing not to mention (as is done in Chapter 5) the electoral resurgence of Liberalism in Perth in 1923.[5]

For Kenefick the geographical domain of *Red Scotland* requires no formalising statement outside its title. This is not the case with this thesis. Although it has been the intention as much as possible to concentrate on the city of Perth, consideration and engagement with the County of Perth (Perthshire or the County of Perthshire) has been undertaken when doing so shone some light on the development and actions of the Perth labour movement, but disregarded when doing so distracted from the main questions at hand.[6] In Chapter 3, for example, an argument is made for the exclusion of agricultural and mining trade unionism from this research study as they belong more fully to the history of the County of Perth. In contrast, in Chapter 5, a consideration of the electoral success of the Liberal and Conservative parties

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[5] The matter of how much 1922 represented a breakthrough for Labour in Scotland (and the geographical extent of the breakthrough) is considered later in this chapter.

[6] Throughout this thesis mention has been made of city of Perth, the Burgh of Perth, and the County of Perth. It is perhaps useful to provide some historical background for the latter two geographical spaces. Perth's burgh status dates from the early 1200s and was granted by David I of Scotland. A Perth Burgh parliamentary constituency was created in 1708. The County of Perth was a huge area of Scotland occupying some 2,500-3,000 square miles and taking in part of the southern Highlands. Between 1890 and 1929 the governance of the county was provided by Perthshire County Council. The Royal Burgh of Perth as well as several other burgh towns (including Alyth, Auchterarder, Blairgowrie, Crieff, and Coupar Angus) were administered independently from Perthshire County Council.

includes all the 'Perth' parliamentary constituencies because of the interrelation of Burgh and County 'party' organisations.

1.1 *Historiographical Starting Points*

Research on the evolution of the English labour movement has in recent decades broken out of the geographical confines set by an earlier historiography. Investigations and analyses of the labour history of towns/cities other than London and the main industrial areas of the north of England have added to the knowledge base and to the case for an even wider regional scrutiny. These studies include several unpublished theses: J. Hill (Lancashire, 1969), Francis W. Carr (Coventry, 1978), Helen Elisa Mathers (Sheffield, 1979), Catherine Burke (Sheffield, 1983), Robert Brian Perks (West Riding of Yorkshire (Huddersfield), 1985), Mairie Dickie (Northampton, 1987), Raymond David Dalton (Leeds, 2000), Graham Philip Heaney (Southampton, 2000), and Tanya Sinnett (Bristol, 2006).[7]

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[7] J. Hill, 'Working Class Politics in Lancashire, 1885-1906: A Regional Study in the Origins of the Labour Party' (University of Keele: unpublished PhD thesis, 1969); Francis W. Carr, 'Engineering Workers and the Rise of Labour in Coventry 1914-1939' (University of Warwick: unpublished PhD thesis, 1978); Helen Elisa Mathers, 'Sheffield Municipal Politics 1893-1926. Parties, Personalities and the Rise of Labour' (University of Sheffield: unpublished PhD thesis 1979); Catherine Burke, 'Working-Class Politics in Sheffield, 1900-1920: A Regional Study in the Origins and Early Growth of the Labour Party' (CNAA: unpublished PhD thesis, 1983); Robert Brian Perks, 'The New Liberalism and the Challenge of Labour in the West Riding of Yorkshire 1885-1914 with Special Reference to Huddersfield' (Huddersfield Polytechnic: unpublished PhD thesis, 1985); Mairie Dickie, 'Town Patriotism and the Rise of Labour: Northampton 1918-1939' (University of Warwick: unpublished PhD thesis, 1987); Raymond David Dalton, 'Labour and the Municipality: Labour Politics in Leeds 1900-1914' (University of Huddersfield: unpublished PhD thesis, 2000); Graham Philip Heaney, 'The Development of Labour Politics in Southampton 1890-1945' (University of Southampton: unpublished PhD thesis, 2000); Tanya Sinnett, 'The Development of the Labour Party in Bristol, 1918-1931' (University of the West of England: unpublished PhD thesis, 2006).

The expression 'English labour movement' as employed in the previous paragraph was used to denote very specifically the labour movement located within the geographical confines of the country of England which comprises part of the United Kingdom. This is not the case with the majority of UK labour historiography which has in the main either employed the term 'British' to include Scotland but with the exclusion of Scotland as a separate entity and with its general omission, or employed the term 'English' as something also encompassing Scotland whilst at the same time excluding it as a separate entity and with its general omission. Paul Adelman's *The Rise of the Labour Party 1880-1945* provides an example of the former; Simon Maccoby's *English Radicalism* offers an example of the latter.[8] That this approach is a source of methodological weakness has generally been established and is confirmed by the creation of a distinct Scottish labour history.

As Kenefick has argued, the homogenisation of English and Scottish Labour history is problematic, not the least due to their 'clear and discernible paths' caused by significantly different economic structures.[9] For James D. Young this differing economic development resulted in a divergence in the employer-employee relationship. Young, for example, has claimed Scottish workers and Scottish industrialists developed a more confrontational approach than their counterparts in England.[10] The stark differences between Scotland and England in the history of religious organisation, in the reception and

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[8] Paul Adelman, *The Rise of the Labour Party 1880-1945* (London: Addison Wesley Longman Ltd, 1996); Simon Maccoby, *English Radicalism* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1953).

[9] Kenefick, *Red Scotland*, p. 21.

[10] James D. Young, *The Rousing of the Scottish Working Class* (London: Croom Helm, 1979), pp. 104-06.

transmission of socialist ideology, and in the experience of working-class emigration and immigration, all reinforce the failure of a universal UK narrative to account for the history of the Scottish labour movement.

Scottish labour history has its own homogenising minefield - one resulting from the assumption of a geographically wide synchronous working-class political development. The danger here of course is that by extrapolation this argument suggests an invalidation of all labour histories other than those considered local. This is not the intention. It is really a question of requiring the test of generalising conclusions against all available data. The process described in the opening paragraph of this chapter in regard to England and that which has occurred within Scottish labour history as considered in the next paragraph (of which this thesis forms part) is an attempt to expand the data available so as to promote a critique of existing generalising narratives and assist the creation of new 'better' narratives. The expansion and proliferation of research into the labour movements of the myriad of UK towns, cities, and other areas of population concentration (hereafter towns/cities/areas) can only add to our understanding of regional and national development and in so doing allow for detailed scrutiny and testing of historical descriptions of the English and Scottish labour movements.

Studies of militant trade unionism and Labour politics within the industrial regions of the West-Central Belt such as Iain McLean's *The Legend of Red Clydeside* have in the past dominated traditional Scottish labour historiography. This is not to say that other geographical areas have been completely ignored. Aberdeen (Kenneth D. Buckley, 1955; C. W. M. Phipps, 1980),

Dundee (William M. Walker, 1979; Alan R. A. Bell, 1999), Edinburgh and Leith (J.

A. K. Holford, 1983), the Fife coalfields (Suzanne Najam, 1988), Neilston (Bill

Knox and Helen Corr, 1996), the Vale of Leven (Roddy Gallacher, 1982), and

Paisley (Catriona Macdonald, 1995) have all come under historical scrutiny.[11] As

Kenefick has argued, it is only in recent years that labour historiography has

been significantly advanced by wider geographical examinations: 'since 1996, a

growing body of work has examined the social, political, religious, and gender

aspects of Scottish working-class lives. With some exceptions, this has almost

entirely focussed on Glasgow and west Scotland, until very recently there were

very few studies of other major industrial centres.'[12] These recent studies, which

include Ann Petrie's *The 1915 Rent Strikes: an East Coast Perspective* and Sian

Reynolds's *Britannica's Typesetters: Women Compositors in Edwardian Edinburgh*,

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[11] Iain McLean, *The Legend of Red Clydeside* (Edinburgh: John Donald, c. 1983); Kenneth D. Buckley, *Trade Unionism in Aberdeen, 1878 to 1900* (Aberdeen: Oliver & Boyd for the University of Aberdeen, 1955); C. W. M. Phipps, 'Aberdeen Trades Council and Politics 1900-1939: The Development of a Local Labour Party in Aberdeen' (University of Aberdeen: unpublished Master of Letters dissertation, 1980); William M. Walker, *Juteopolis: Dundee and its Textile Workers 1885-1923* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1979); Suzanne Najam, 'A Radical Past: The Legacy of the Fife Miners' (University of Edinburgh: unpublished PhD thesis, 1988); Alan R. A. Bell, 'Glorious Lesson in Solidarity? The Dundee Carters' Strike 1911' (University of Dundee: unpublished MA (Honours) dissertation, 1999); J. A. K. Holford, 'Consciousness, Organisation, and the Growth of Labour: Edinburgh 1917-1927: A Study in Political and Industrial Motivation' (University of Edinburgh: unpublished PhD thesis, 1983); Bill Knox and Helen Corr, 'Striking Women': Cotton Workers and Industrial Unrest *c.* 1907-1914', in William Kenefick and Arthur McIvor (eds.), *Roots of Red Clydeside 1910-1914?: Labour Unrest and Industrial Relations in West Scotland* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1996); Roddy Gallacher, 'The Vale of Leven 1914-1975: Changes in Working Class Organisation and Action', in Tony Dickson (ed.), *Capital and Class in Scotland* (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers Ltd, 1982); Catriona M. M. Macdonald, 'The Radical Thread: Political Change in Scotland. Paisley Politics 1885-1924' (University of Strathclyde: unpublished PhD thesis, 1995).

[12] William Kenefick, 'An Effervescence of Youth: Female Textile-Workers' Strike Activity in Dundee, 1911-1912', *Historical Studies in Industrial Relations*, 33 (2012), pp. 191-92.

have offered the opportunity for Kenefick to make a case for a widespread Scottish radicalism: a 'Red Scotland'.[13]

In the same way that there has existed a west of Scotland bias in the study of many of the critical points in Scottish labour history such as the 'labour unrest' of 1910-1914, the historiography has also failed until recently to fully consider the role of women workers. Eleanor Gordon's *Women and the Labour Movement in Scotland 1850-1914,* Julie Arnot's 'Women Workers and Trade Union Participation in Scotland 1919-1939', and Kenefick's 'An Effervescence of Youth: Female Textile-Workers' Strike Activity in Dundee, 1911-1912' exemplify this recent work.[14]

It is not the intention of this thesis to offer a direct critique or validation of Kenefick's arguments for the existence of a pan-Scottish 'Radical Labour Left', *c. 1872* to 1932, operating synchronously in several 'nerve centres of discontent' as presented in his *Red Scotland.* This thesis is however intended to be more than another regional study to add to the corpus. It is of course a study of the Perth working class and their interactions with the labour movement bodies that operated within the city and its district, but also an uncharted terrain whose scrutiny provides a canvas against which established accounts of the rise of socialism and Labour in Scotland can be placed. Despite the occasional reference to Perth within Scottish labour historiography, its labour

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[13] Ann Petrie, *The 1915 Rent Strikes: an East Coast Perspective* (Dundee: Abertay Historical Society, 2008); Sian Reynolds, *Britannica's Typesetters: Women Compositors in Edwardian Edinburgh* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1989).

[14] Eleanor Gordon, *Women and the Labour Movement in Scotland 1850-1914* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991); Julie Arnot, 'Women Workers and Trade Union Participation in Scotland 1919-1939' (University of Glasgow: unpublished PhD thesis, 1999).

movement has remained little studied. In other words, as well as offering a history of the Perth labour movement (*c. 1867* to *c. 1922*), this thesis provides, as has already been stated, a resource by which generalising elaborations of homogeneity in the history of the Scottish labour movement can be tested through counter-example and counter-argument, and hence offers the potential to undermine (or support) those generalising elaborations.

The raison d'être of this thesis arises from the knowledge that the historiography of the Perth labour movement as known prior to the commencement of this thesis demonstrates that the development of the Perth labour movement does not tally with generalising histories of the growth of class consciousness and support for Labour in Scotland; and hence suggests that any generalising models of the progress of the Scottish labour movement must include the notion of fragmentation and fracture. Perth does not stand alone in offering an example suggesting a fragmented development of class consciousness across Scotland in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In Paisley, for example, the development of class politics as detailed by Macdonald diverged from that found just a few miles away in Glasgow. It is for this reason that Macdonald drawing on the work of Susan Hanson and Geraldine Pratt has posited the notion of a 'geography of class' and the role of localism.[15] For Macdonald:

> Geography, gender and heritage of the community all had their part to play in moulding a fragmented class ideology which was only in part translated into active political involvement. It follows, therefore, that the

[15] Susan Hanson and Geraldine Pratt, *Gender, Work and Space* (London: Routledge, 1995), pp. 50-51, 76-78, 186-87.

> nature of the evolution of Scotland's "Radical Tradition"
> must be called into question.[16]

In Macdonald's model it is the gendered division of labour that provides the primary displacement from the generalised labour narrative and its consequent spatial variability. It is from the starting point of spatial variability that this thesis examines the particularism of the constraints and influences on the Perth labour movement. It is however the nature of the Perth 'local identity' as a whole that has been employed to explain the deviation of the locus of development of the Perth labour movement narrative from generalising models and not solely gender.

1.2 *Methodology*

In an attempt to construct a historical narrative of the Perth labour movement this thesis has utilised qualitative and quantitative approaches. Quantitative work has taken the form of the collection and display of relevant discrete data and the simple manipulation of that data. Calculations have been no more complex then the determination of averages. No attempt to calculate statistical significance in trends has been made and the level of statistical literacy required to engage with this quantitative analysis is low. The link between qualitative commentary and quantitative findings has been maintained throughout the thesis. As much as possible a chronological method has been employed in each chapter.

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[16] Catriona M. M. Macdonald, 'Weak Roots and Branches: Class, Gender and the Geography of Industrial Protest', *Scottish Labour History*, 33 (1998), p. 25.

The primary evidential sources upon which this thesis has been drawn are the records of the Perth labour movement housed in the Perth & Kinross Council Archive (PKCA) together with those in the Local Studies section of the AK Bell Library, Perth (AKB) and Perth Museum & Art Gallery (PMAG). The most important of these effectively original archival materials (original in the sense that they have been little employed elsewhere) are the minute books of several Perth trade-union branches including the Amalgamated Society of Engineers (ASE), the Amalgamated Society of Dyers, Bleachers, Finishers & Kindred Trades (ASDBFKT), and Perth Typographical Society (PTS); and the minute books of Perth & District Labour and Trades Council (PTC).

Attempts to trace the records of the Perth branch of the ILP and those of the District Labour Party (for the time period under scrutiny) have been unsuccessful. Local Liberal Party and Conservative Party/Scottish Unionist Party branch records are available in a range of archives including PKCA and these have been employed as needed.[17]

The City of Perth Co-operative Society Ltd (CPCS) is also well served by several Scottish archives: a range of primary and secondary 'Co-operative Society' source materials are housed within PKCA, the Mitchell Library, Glasgow (ML), and the University of Dundee Archive, Dundee (UDA). These comprise CPCS, Scottish Co-operative Wholesale Society (SCWS), and North-Eastern District Co-operative Association Conference (NEDCAC) records respectively. In addition, a substantial number of CPCS publications

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[17] For the sake of simplicity the Scottish Unionist Party has been referred to throughout this thesis as the Conservative Party. Where the term Unionist is employed it has been done so in reference specifically to the Conservative & Liberal Unionists.

(pamphlets, conference handbooks, annual reports, etc.) are located within the AKB.

Business archives form a large part of the holdings of PKCA. These include many of Perth's former major employers. In most cases such as the records of General Accident, Fire & Life Assurance Association, Ltd (General Accident) and Pullar & Sons Ltd (Pullars), the records provide information as to the running of the company and the attitude of management to their workforce.

Several of the companies which have been considered by this thesis are still in business, albeit now generally as part of corporations whose ownership and management structures are unrecognisable from their original organisations. In the main these companies maintain private, nonetheless accessible, archives. Unfortunately, industrial relations, whilst a concern of all major commercial enterprises, finds little place in the majority of the records of these firms - of which John Dewar & Sons Ltd (Barcardi Global Archive (BGA)) and Arthur Bell & Sons Ltd (Diageo Archive, Menstrie (DiA)) are but two examples.

Not all the key archival sources required for this thesis are located in Scotland. The vast majority of papers of the Independent Labour Party (ILP), for example, are housed in either the Labour History Archive & Study Centre, Manchester (LHASC) or in the ILP Collection of the London School of Economics (LSE). In these cases, research has been conducted by use of online catalogues and in consultation with individual archivists. It is not envisaged that this approach has in any way limited the horizon of research.

As with the employment of all archival sources caution is required. Bias can arise from what is not in an archive just as it can from what it does contain. Bias, inaccuracy, and omission can be introduced by the efforts of the enterprise of which the archive is a record and by the efforts of the archival process. Ensuring no over-reliance on any one archival source assists to reduce this factor and such an attitude has been taken in this thesis. The collection of strike data - Table A3.1 (Appendix 3) - that underpins Chapters 3 and 4 offers an exemplar of this method. Its entries have been amassed from a wide range of primary and secondary sources; the bias, inaccuracies, and omissions inherent in some of which are considered in the early part of the chapter.

Of the contemporary newspapers available the most important were *Forward*, *Labour Leader*, the *Perthshire Advertiser*, and *The Scotsman*. Bias, editorial prejudice, and in the case of the *Perthshire Advertiser* a vestige interest as an employer of a unionised and militant workforce all make the use of newspapers fraught with difficulty. The detail of reports of political and trade union meetings in the *Perthshire Advertiser* and the other contemporaneous local press (*Blairgowrie Advertiser*, *Dundee Advertiser*, *Dundee Courier*, and the *Perth Constitutional* included), often verbatim, however make their use, despite the reservations outlined, essential.[18]

Finally it needs to be noted that the vast array of records and data produced/collected by local and national governmental bureaucracies have been used wherever appropriate. These include minutes of Town Council meetings, reports of local government officers such as the City of Perth Sanitary

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[18] Page references to newspaper articles are given where available.

Inspector, and parliamentary sessional papers and committee documentation available through the House of Commons Parliamentary Papers online portal (HCPP).

It was noted earlier that the Perth labour movement has featured little in Scottish labour historiography. Whatever, the reasons for this omission, and no attempt has been made to fathom them, it is not a result of the lack of primary source material. The very existence of this thesis is testament to the sufficiency of primary documentation relating to the Perth labour movement.

In its approach to power relations, government, management, and dissent, this thesis privileges the Marxist concept of hegemony - the manner in which a ruling class establishes and maintains its rule - as developed by Antonio Gramsci. The Marxist concept of hegemony is outlined in Section 1.5 of this chapter.

Several of the strikes within the Perth textile industry exposed gendered divisions within the workforce in regard to the relationship with company management and the textile trade unions. These have been examined. In their consideration however no use of feminist theory or any other approach within the field of women's studies has been made.

A thematic structure has been adopted in the arrangements of chapters. As well as four chapters detailing and contrasting the loci of the labour movement in Perth with those outwith, this thesis also includes a chapter on the co-operative movement, which as a working-class organisation eclipsed the labour movement in terms of membership, size, support, and importance to the

everyday lives (economic and social) of the communities it served. In addition, in the penultimate chapter, housing, which acted as an indicator of working-class material advancement and as a source of social discontent and alienation, has been examined inso far as it moved within the orbit of the Perth labour movement. Each chapter begins with the posing of the key question(s) under consideration. Finally, the culminating findings/conclusions of this thesis are proffered in Chapter 9.

1.3 *Perth: Geography, Economics, and Commerce*

The body of research that is this thesis is an examination of the role of a localism (and 'local identity') in the underlying economic, political, and social structure of Perth as a key influence in determining the historical trajectory of progression of its labour movement. This is especially so in regard to the rise of Labour and the decline of the Liberal Party.

Chapter 2 begins with a brief examination of the economy of Perth between the 8th (1871) and 13th (1921) decennial census of the population of Scotland, information from which has been used extensively throughout the thesis. Detailed and capacious studies of the economic history of Perth do not exist. Regional and national studies by their very nature lack the detail required to disassemble their component parts, so that it is to more local/specific studies that this thesis has turned to gain an understanding of the development of the economic life of Perth. These include A. M. Carstairs' data rich summaries of the Tayside economy between 1911 and 1951 as well as the geographical studies of the textile mills located in and around Perth produced by W. H. K. Turner in the

late 1950s.[19] Chapter 2 introduces the major commercial activities of Perth whose associated company archives, records, and histories have provided useful research data. A good starting point for engaging with some of these industries is *Perth: a Place in History* edited by David Strachan - several chapters of which contain 'potted' histories of the key players within the Perth economy including Susan Payne, 'Risky Business: a History of General Accident'; Jacqui Seargeant, 'Dewar's Perth Whisky: the Origins of a Global Brand'; and Alia Campbell, 'The History and Legacy of Arthur Bell and Sons'.[20]

Pullars whose name features in the title of this thesis stood above all other commercial enterprises in Perth in terms of importance and size. Albert Harding has provided a popular description of the company's history - *Pullars of Perth* - and a more detailed consideration in 'War and Social Change: A Study of a Royal Burgh 1910-1922'.[21] Harding is not neutral in his attitude to either the Perth labour movement (to which he is sometimes hostile) or in his approach to Perth Town Council (to which he is sometimes rather partisan). With this in mind a certain degree of caution has been adopted in any engagement with Harding's otherwise meticulous and detailed descriptions of strikes and labour

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[19] A. M. Carstairs, *The Changing Character and Distribution of the Industrial Population in the Tayside Area, 1911-1951* (Dundee: University of Dundee, 1973); A. M. Carstairs, *The Tayside Industrial Population 1911-1951* (Dundee: Abertay Historical Society, 17, 1974); W. H. K. Turner, 'The Textile Industry of Perth and District', *Transactions and Papers of the Institute of British Geographers*, 23 (1957); W. H. K. Turner, 'The Significance of Water Power in Industrial Locations. Some Perthshire Examples', *Scottish Geographic Magazine* 74, 2 (September 1958).

[20] David Strachan (ed.), *Perth: a Place in History* (Perth: Perth & Kinross Heritage Trust, 2011).

[21] Albert W. Harding, *Pullars of Perth* (Perth: Perth & Kinross Libraries, 1991); Albert Harding, 'War and Social Change: A Study of a Royal Burgh 1910-1922' (Open University: unpublished MPhil thesis, *c. 1998*).

relations in the immediate pre-war and postwar periods. Far better as a resource for examining the interactions of the labour movement with Pullars is John McG Davies's 'Social and Labour Relations at Pullars of Perth 1882-1924'.[22]

Whilst Perth and Paisley differed in many regards (such as demographic make-up) they shared certain features that justify their comparison. This is particularly so in regard to the dominance of textiles to the local economy. (In the case of Paisley, cotton thread was the mainstay of textile production; for Perth dyeing and later drycleaning occupied the local economy's centre stage.) Macdonald, who has produced the most important study of the Paisley labour movement, employed what statistically is an unconventional methodological approach in labour history, drawing (though not exhaustively) on post-structuralist discourse theory and linguistic analysis. Her choice of what is colloquially called the 'linguistic turn' led her unavoidably it could be argued to conclusions for which language and image appropriation were the central tenets. The strength of Macdonald's arguments and the validity of her conclusions aside, the choice in this thesis to use the tools of more typical historical scholarship makes it difficult to fully use Macdonald's study as a benchmark against which to consider the development of the Perth labour movement. Macdonald's research findings as opposed to her conclusions nonetheless provide a substantial resource. Other comparator towns/cities/areas also feature in this thesis. These include Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow, and the Vale of Leven.

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[22] John McG Davies, 'Social and Labour Relations at Pullars of Perth 1882-1924' (University of Dundee: unpublished PhD thesis, 1991).

1.4 *the Marxist Concept of Hegemony and Paternalistic Industrial Relations*

Antonio Gramsci has postulated that a dominant group within a society exercises power by a combination of force (or threat of force) and consent. Gaining and maintaining power requires the would-be dominant group to organise consent to its rule. Hegemony is the organisation of this consent - a key aspect of which is complicity of the subordinate group in its own domination. The mechanism by which the dominant group constitutes and maintains hegemony involves a movement beyond its direct (narrow) economic-corporative concerns, an application of moral and intellectual leadership over, and a willingness and ability to ally other groups. The hegemonic group does this in part by offering an ideological vision of the world (rooted in the ideas, values, and practices associated with the organisation of production) which is appealing to those groups with which it wishes to form alliances. The sharing of this conception of the world produces a unified and broad bloc for which the hegemonic class is its universal representative. This historic bloc embodies the fabric of hegemony, its basis of consent for the social disposition, and a cycle of reproduction of consent through all social relations and constructs. Granting reforms and compromises (replacing some of its own interests with those of the subordinate group) is essential to hegemony.

Hegemonies are not temporally unique nor ever completely successful: the creation of hegemony is a dynamic process; alliances are constantly renegotiated and remade, or undone.[23] Conjunctural episodes (those that 'do

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[23] T. J. Jackson Lears, 'The Concept of Cultural Hegemony: Problems and Possibilities', *The American Historical Review*, 90, 3 (1985), pp. 573-74.

not have any far-reaching historical significance' but merely 'give rise to political criticism of a minor, day-to-day character') punctuate the historical periods within which a hegemonic class attempts to maintain its rule by restructuring its alliances with subordinate groups, renegotiating concessions, and even restructuring the political forces upon which it has depended.[24] If a historical crisis is deep, it may develop into an organic crisis 'in which the historic bloc begins to disintegrate, creating an opportunity for a subordinate class to transcend its corporate limitations and build up a broad movement capable of challenging the existing order and achieving hegemony.'[25]

In 'real' terms the hegemony of many of Perth's large employers especially within the textile industries was created and maintained through the application of paternalistic industrial relations. Chapter 2 offers a consideration of paternalism as a tool for examining the labour movement and industrial relations. This is not a new approach: Macdonald and Gallacher in their aforementioned studies of Paisley and the Vale of Leven have employed the concept of hegemony in their respective arguments as to why political change among the working class of both industrial communities proceeded at a slower rate than elsewhere. This thesis has attempted to understand why as a cultural practice and ethos, paternalism lingered in Perth long after it had been superseded elsewhere by newer more remote and professional management approaches. The reasons for this resilience which lie in the lack of factors that

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[24] Quentin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith, (ed.), *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci* (New York: International Publishers, 1971), pp. 177-78.

[25] Roger Simon, *Gramsci's Political Thought: An Introduction* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1985), p. 40.

account for its demise elsewhere have been employed to explain (at least in part) why Labour politics in Perth deviated from that experienced in many other parts of Scotland.

1.5 *the Trade-Union Movement in Perth*

Chapter 3 begins with the first actions of a newly legalised trade-union movement operating within an expanding franchise and with Chapter 4 examines the trade-union movement in Perth up to the first few years of the interwar period. Throughout Chapters 3 and 4 the development of trade unionism in Perth is compared to the narrative of the movement's national development as articulated by contemporary and earlier economic and social historians.

The description 'new unionism' to describe the unionisation of unskilled workers in the late 1880s/early 1890s, which features heavily in this thesis, has its origins in the work of Sidney and Beatrice Webb.[26] The Webbs research into the early history of the trade-union movement in Britain provides the lower temporal bookend of the historiography of British trade unionism. Various unified accounts of the British trade-union movement have appeared in the decades since the Webbs first published their seminal works and these have offered useful overviews. Among these are included work by G. D. H. Cole, Hugh Armstrong Clegg (*et al.*), W. Hamish Fraser, Keith Laybourn, and Henry

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[26] Sidney J. and Beatrice Webb, *The History of Trade Unionism: by Sidney and Beatrice Webb (Revised Edition, Extended to 1920)* (London: Longmans Green & Company Ltd, 1926), pp. 355-431; Sidney J. and Beatrice Webb, *Industrial Democracy by Sidney and Beatrice Webb: Edition of 1920 with new Introduction* (London: Longmans, Green & Company Ltd, 1926), p. 147.

Pelling.[27] Of these the most important contributions to the background reading required for this thesis were Fraser, who has provided an engagement with the historiography as it existed at the time of his writing as well as an assessment of how that historiography evolved,[28] and Pelling, in whose section of four chapters (Part Two), 'The Consolidation of Labour' it is argued that trade unionism in Britain advanced further between 1880 and 1926 than it had done in two centuries of its prior existence.[29]

As stated in the section on methodology (Section 1.3), use has been made of individual trade-union histories as well as the sizeable records and archives of the trade-union movement as appropriate. Complementing these sources with the surviving archives of the Perth trade-union branches and other contemporaneous material such as local newspaper articles has allowed the voice of the rank and file trade unionist to be heard louder than its muffled cry in the earlier historiography.

In examining the similarities and differences between trade unionism in Perth, elsewhere, and in generalising narratives, consideration has been given to key themes and critical points in trade-union history such as the struggle for 'Shorter Hours' that began in the early 1870s and the development in the late

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[27] G. D. H. Cole, *A Short History of the British Working-Class Movement 1789-1947* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1948); Hugh Armstrong Clegg, Alan Fox and A. F. Thompson, *A History of British Trade Unions Since 1889. Volume 1 1889-1910* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964); Hugh Armstrong Clegg, *A History of British Trade Unions Since 1889. Volume 2 1911-1933* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985); W. Hamish Fraser, *A History of British Trade Unionism 1700-1998* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999); Keith Laybourn, *A History of British Trade Unionism c. 1770-1990* (Stroud: Alan Sutton Publishing Ltd, 1992); Henry Pelling, *A History of British Trade Unionism* (London: Penguin Books, 1992).

[28] See for example Fraser on the concept of 'A Labour Aristocracy?', Fraser, *History of British Trade Unionism*, pp. 33-35.

[29] Pelling, *History of British Trade Unionism*, pp. 79-172.

1880s/early 1890s of what became known as 'new unionism', which is considered by Pelling and others as marking a paradigm shift in trade-union militancy and in the proletarinisation of the working class.[30] In the case of the former, it has been shown that trade unionism in Perth in the 1870s moved at a tempo that was very much in sync with the rhythm of national developments. Its characteristics have also been shown to share much in common with the wider trade-union movement. 'New unionism' however was absent in Perth, the reasons for which are enunciated in Chapter 3. The absence from Perth of this critical point found in other labour movement narratives has been used to help to explain why the Perth working class deviated so dramatically from these narratives in its development of a class consciousness and why it offered for so long little challenge to the hegemony of Perth's ruling industrial and political elites.

As stated in Section 1.4, comparison has been made in this thesis with certain reference Scottish cities/towns/areas including Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Paisley, the Vale of Leven, and in particular Perth's nearest city neighbour - Dundee. William Walker's *Juteopolis: Dundee and its Textile Workers 1885-1923*, despite a weakness caused by its over-reliance for source material on the Dundee press (with its heavy anti-union bias), has provided great detail as to the conduct and performance of the various jute unions including their interactions with Perth. Newer research on the Dundee labour movement found in the works of Kenneth Baxter, William Kenefick, and Jim Tomlinson offer

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[30] Pelling, *History of British Trade Unionism*, pp. 86-90.

analyses based on a broader primary source base and these have been used where appropriate.[31]

Individual trade-union histories have been utilised where these provide either useful background material or include details of a Perth branch. One such history is Sarah Gillespie's *A Hundred Years of Progress: The Record of the Scottish Typographical Association, 1853-1952*.[32]

In summary, the interplay between the organisations of the Perth trade-union movement and the working class of the city and district are examined in Chapters 3 and 4 in order to understand why that movement failed to make any substantive progress until almost the end of the Great War.

1.6 *Liberal, Conservative, and Labour Politics in Perth*

Working-class attachment to Liberalism in Perth which showed great resilience throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries forms a focus of two chapters on politics and the labour movement (Chapter 5 and Chapter 6). Central to these chapters is an attempt to understand why when in the early 1920s the Liberal Party as a national political force was in free fall, a sizeable element of the Perth working-class electorate remained Liberal voters. Alongside lingering working-class support for the Liberal Party was the slow emergence of a Labour politic and the postwar advent of an increasingly

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[31] Jim Tomlinson and Christopher A. Whatley (eds.), *Jute No More. Transforming Dundee* (Dundee: Dundee University Press, 2011) which includes William Kenefick and Kenneth Baxter, 'Labour Politics and the Dundee Working Class *c*. 1895-1936'.

[32] Sarah C. Gillespie, *A Hundred Years of Progress: The Record of the Scottish Typographical Association, 1853-1952* (Glasgow: Maclehose & Company Ltd, 1953).

dominant Conservative Party - a narrative that stands counter to many accounts of the Liberal decline and the Labour breakthrough of 1922.

The debate around the decline of the Liberal Party is substantial and includes the much maligned account by George Dangerfield, *The Strange Death of Liberal England*,[33] which forms part of what Macdonald has described as one of the five elements present in the debate historiography imbued as it is by an 'appeal to inevitability' - the other elements being franchise reform, class, regionalism, and syntheses of national and regional arguments.[34] Macdonald's engagement with this historiography whilst perspicuous relies, as noted earlier, heavily on matters of language and representation.[35]

Nigel Thomas Keohane has examined the debate historiography with a conventional emphasis on the socio-economic and identified a common trait: an assessment of the strength of Liberalism in July 1914 and the effect of the Great War on the party. T. A. Jenkins in contrast has gone as far back as 1886 to find the seminal roots of the loss of Liberalism's ascendancy. For Jenkins from that point onwards Liberalism and its post-1906 relaunch as what has been called 'New

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[33] George Dangerfield, *The Strange Death of Liberal England* (London: Serif, 1997), pp. 7-29 *ff.*

[34] Macdonald, 'Radical Thread', pp. 9-15.

[35] That is not to say that there is a homogeneity of approach within the rest of the corpus, that is certainly not the case. I. G. C. Hutchison, for example, has taken a top-down approach to the Liberal Party and this is reflected in his methodology and the dominance of the manuscripts, letters, and political papers of the Liberal elite (leadership, chief parliamentarians, and benefactors) as primary sources. I. G. C. Hutchison, *A Political History of Scotland 1832-1924. Parties, Elections and Issues* (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers Ltd, 1986), *numerous pages.*

Liberalism' became increasingly irrelevant to the working class (and indeed the British business class).[36]

Laybourn who in his *The Rise of Labour: the British Labour Party 1890-1979* interlinked the advance of Labour with the decline of Liberalism has argued the Great War was not the trigger for Liberal decline but rather a positive catalyst speeding up a process that had begun earlier. Laybourn, drawing on regional research and evidence from the grassroots, has also claimed that Liberal misfortune and inner-party turmoil in the postwar period was not a factor in the growth of working-class support for Labour: it was for him labour and trade-union links that mattered.[37]

John Belchem and P. F. Clarke have argued independently that it was class politics that ultimately destroyed the Liberal Party.[38] Ross McKibbin, Laybourn, and Jack Reynolds have all made similar claims for 'the inexorable political growth of Labour' due to the emergence of class politics.[39] Patrick Joyce has added a regional aspect to this argument by claiming that, 'because of their different industrial structures and political histories the transition to class-based

[36] T. A. Jenkins, *The Liberal Ascendancy, 1830-1886* (Hampshire: The Macmillan Press Ltd, 1994), p. 210 *ff*.

[37] Keith Laybourn, *The Rise of Labour: the British Labour Party 1890-1979* (London: Edward Arnold, 1988), pp. 30-31, 45-46.

[38] John Belchem, *Class Party and the Political System in Britain 1867-1914* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990), p. 88; P. F. Clarke, *Lancashire and the New Liberalism* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1971), pp. 398-400, 403-06.

[39] Keith Laybourn, 'Recent Writing on the History of the ILP, 1893-1932', in David James, Tony Jowitt, and Keith Laybourn, *The Centennial History of the Independent Labour Party: a collection of essays* (Halifax: Ryburn Publishing Ltd, 1992), p. 327; Keith Laybourn and Jack Reynolds, *Liberalism and the Rise of Labour 1890-1918* (London: Croom Helm, 1984), p. 243; Ross McKibbin, *The Evolution of the Labour Party, 1910-1924* (1974), pp. 142, 173.

Labour Party politics, and the outcome of that transition' differed regionally.[40]

Such locally contingent class politics stand counter to the more 'national'

descriptions of J. J. Smyth[41] and others.[42]

Keohane has made a case for the interdependence of Liberal,

Conservative, and Labour fortunes in the decline of Liberalism (and indeed the

rise of Conservatism and Labour).[43] The lack of other studies employing this

approach is very evident in the historiography. Hutchison's failure to explain the

growth of support for the Labour Party, for example, is perhaps due in part to

his attempt to solve the question as one dimensional (i.e., with high Liberalism

as his only variable) rather than as the many-bodied problem that Keohane has

described.

The chief focus of this thesis is the labour movement in Perth and as

such the narrative of the development of a Labour politic is one of its primary

tasks. This thesis is not an addition to the Liberal decline historiography (nor for

that matter directly concerned with the relationship between the working class

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[40] Patrick Joyce, *Work, Society and Politics - The Culture of the Factory in Later Victorian England* (London: Methuen & Company Ltd, 1982), p. 331.

[41] Smyth has made the case that the manner in which the Liberals and Lloyd George governed Britain during the First World War did much to lose the allegiance of the working class upon which they depended. A process that was accentuated in areas experiencing the highest growth of working-class electors: 'The action of the Liberal Government stretched the loyalty of skilled workers (a crucial constituency) to the limits ... ordinary tenants had been persecuted during the rent strike and throughout the war large numbers appeared before munition tribunals. Many working class people had been brought in to direct conflict with the state, had been made criminals, technically, and often labelled as an enemy within, or as shirkers and drunks.' J. J. Smyth, *Labour in Glasgow 1896-1936: Socialism, Suffrage, Sectarianism* (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 2000), pp. 86-87.

[42] See for example Kenneth O. Morgan, *The Age of Lloyd George* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1971).

[43] Nigel Thomas Keohane, 'The Unionist Party and the First World War' (Queen Mary College, University of London: unpublished PhD thesis, 2005), pp. 13-14, 20-23 *ff*.

and the Conservative Party). With the points made in the previous paragraph in mind however, consideration of the electoral success of Labour follows a consideration of the historical narrative of Conservative and Liberal fortunes insofar as they illuminated the accession/failure of Labour as a political force in Perth and provided an acknowledgement of their interdependency.

In examining Labour politics in Perth (Chapter 6) this thesis endeavours to scrutinise the role of the Perth branch of the ILP (PILP), a political organisation that failed to emulate the success and actions of the national body of which it formed a minuscule part. It also examines PTC, an organisation which like the Perth working class in general exhibited a strong and temporally resilient attachment to the Liberal Party and a resistance to the development of a class politic.

1.7 *the Co-operative Movement in Perth*

Retail co-operatives,[44] which like trade unions formed part of the nineteenth-century development of working-class organisations, played a central role in the social, economic, and cultural life of Victorian and Edwardian Scottish working-class communities.[45] As Macdonald has argued:

> [Co-operators] were at the interface of significant economic and ideological debates that dominated both the labour movement and radical politics at the key stage of their development at the beginning of the twentieth century ... The

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[44] While Scottish co-operation included productive and distributive societies as well as agricultural and credit banks, co-operative enterprise in Perth was manifest almost entirely in the retail section.

[45] Dick Geary, *European Labour Protest 1848-1939* (London: Methuen & Company Ltd, 1981), p. 41.

> membership and collective resources [of which] eclipsed
> anything the trade unions or the Labour Party could muster.[46]

For a large proportion of the Scottish population and thousands of Perth's dwellers the co-operative movement sat at the hearth of the household. In Perth, the Co-operative Hall was used for Labour Party, ILP, trade union, Fabian Society,[47] and trades council meetings and lectures before and increasingly after the Great War. In addition, Perth's co-operative stores provided a large section of the city's working-class population with their staple requirements.[48]

In the introduction to his *Co-operative Culture and the Politics of Consumption in England, 1870-1930*, Peter Gurney provides not only a comprehensive review of the co-operative movement's historiography but also exposes the paucity of that historiography and the neglect of the subject by business and labour historians alike.[49] His work and that of Nicole Robertson (such as Robertson's *The Co-operative Movement and Communities in Britain, 1914-1960: Minding their Own Business*) has in recent years corrected these failings. In particular, Robertson's examination of the co-operative movement during the interwar years and the period after the Second World War has explored the

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[46] Catriona Macdonald, 'A Different Commonwealth: The Co-operative Movement in Scotland up to 1924', in M. A. Mulhern, John Beech, and Elaine Thompson (eds.) *Scottish Life and Society. The Working Life of the Scots. A Compendium of Scottish Ethnology, Volume 8* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 2008), p. 461.

[47] Although a branch of the Fabian Society was formed in Perth 2 July 1907, scant evidence of the activities of this organisation has been unearthed by this study.

[48] See for example *Forward*, 16 February 1907 (ILP), 11 January 1908 (Fabian Society), 15 September 1917 (1917 Pullars strike).

[49] Peter Gurney, *Co-operative Culture and the Politics of Consumption in England, 1870-1930* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), pp. 195-225.

relationship between retail co-operative societies and the labour movement. Her work has included a consideration of the co-operative movement's support of striking workers, the co-operative movement as an employer of labour, and the labour movement's support of the institutions of co-operation.[50] Macdonald too has intervened in the debate around the relationship between the co-operative and labour movements. In her consideration of the Paisley co-operative movement, Macdonald has argued the duality of interests between employee and employer meant that co-operation occupied a 'frequently contradictory position in the town's labour history during the Edwardian period.'[51]

Gurney too has explored the complex relationship between labour and co-operator and in particular the role of the Great War in the politicisation of the co-operative movement.[52] Gurney's study concentrates on the north of England and as such has little to say of the attempts by private traders to counter the development of co-operative enterprise in Scotland had in pushing the Scottish societies into municipal politics and into partnership with the labour movement. (A push that eventually resulted in the establishment of the Co-operative Party in 1918.)

Chapter 7, after a brief chronological narrative of the development of retail co-operation in Perth, examines how the attacks by private traders and their municipal allies led the CPCS to seek direct representation at the

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[50] See for example, Nicole Robertson, *The Co-operative Movement and Communities in Britain, 1914-1960: Minding their Own Business* (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Ltd, c. 2010).

[51] Macdonald, 'Radical Thread', p. 152.

[52] Peter Gurney, 'Co-operation and the "new consumerism" in interwar England', *Business History*, 54, 6 (October 2012), p. 918.

municipal level in alliance with the local labour movement and explores the reasons for that alliance.

The CPCS appears infrequently in the historiography of the Scottish co-operative movement which has allowed a reading of some aspects of Scottish co-operative history in the light of the Perth experience. Beginning with the issue of strike solidarity, Chapter 7 examines the Perth experience of co-operation against the backdrop provided by Robertson's national, Gurney's English, and Macdonald's local (Paisley) observations.

1.8 *the Housing of the Perth Working Class*

The second half of the nineteenth century was marked by an increasing public awareness not only of the extent and depth of poverty among the British working class (rural and urban) but also its pew-fellow poor housing and the fluctuations in fortune caused by variations in unemployment, wages, and prices. From that point onwards and throughout the course of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries housing as a political issue moved steadily into the foreground of Labour politics becoming as David McCrone and Brian Elliott have argued a class issue which 'helps to explain why landlords found their hold on Britain's towns draining away so quickly after 1915.'[53]

In the run up to and during the early years of the Great War discontent over poor housing and rents led to a series of conjunctural crises. In Dundee, for example, threats by landlords in January 1912 to raise rents by up to 10% were

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[53] David McCrone and Brian Elliott, 'The decline of landlordism: property rights and relationships in Edinburgh', in Richard Rodger (ed.), *Scottish Housing in the Twentieth Century* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1989), p. 225.

met with unified response from tenants, the city's trade unions, DTC, and the city's socialist political party branches. Buoyed on by the success of synchronous labour unrest the threatened rises were seen off. Three years later Glasgow was witness to a rent strike movement involving upwards of 20,000 people which formed part of a major political crisis on the Clyde.

James Young has made the case for the Great War as a watershed in the significance of the 'housing question' to the labour movement. In his argument, Young drew upon the *Report of the Royal Commission on the Housing of the Industrial Population of Scotland Rural and Urban* (1917): 'Before the war the demand for better housing had become articulate; today after three years of war, it is too insistent to be safely disregarded any longer.' Young has said little about housing in general, his text does not belong to the historiography of working-class housing in Britain but rather lies within Scottish labour history. His concern with the housing issue is as it relates to the actions of the labour movement and especially the growing militancy over the cost of living and rising rents that occurred on the Clydeside which he has pointed out was led by a labour movement alongside a large number of 'independent working class women.'[54] McLean's earlier mentioned study, *Red Clydeside,* also interacts with the matter of working-class housing only when it becomes the focus of working-class political activity:

> Independently of the industrial unrest that had been building
> up during the year, agitation over rises in the cost of living in
> general and against rent increases in particular had been one

[54] Royal Commission on Housing in Scotland: *Report of the Royal Commission on the Housing of the Industrial Population of Scotland Rural and Urban* (HCPP, C8731, 1917-1918), p. 346; Young, *Rousing of the Scottish Working Class*, p. 190.

of the principal activities of the "official" bodies of Labour
opinion in the Glasgow area - the Glasgow Trades Council, the
Glasgow Central Labour Party, and the Glasgow Federation of
the ILP.[55]

Kenefick is no exception to this action-driven approach to working-class
housing. His *Red Scotland* makes little mention of housing issues outside the
pan-Scottish rent strike actions. Chapter 8 does not deviate from this approach.

Some background to the 'housing question' has by necessity been
provided in Chapter 8 but only so far as it is required to provide context. Only
brief mention has been made of the work of reformers, campaigners,
government bodies, and the mountain of parliamentary housing legislation
passed during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Enid Gauldie
whose *Cruel Habitations* belongs properly in the working-class housing
historiography of this period provides a good starting point for this contextual
narrative. Her text offers a concise though summarised history of the relevant
parliamentary Acts, an account of working-class housing in England, Scotland,
and Wales over a 138-year period, and says much about how middle-class
perspectives influenced and indeed drove the 'housing question'. Gauldie also
provides a useful description of the 'spectrum' that was working-class house
provision from the dwellings of the respectable artisan class through to the slum
dwellings of the poor - one that has proven useful to explain the causes for the
paucity of labour movement housing activity in Perth.[56]

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[55] McLean, *Legend of Red Clydeside*, p. 19.

[56] Enid Gauldie, *Cruel Habitations. A History of Working-Class Housing 1780-1918* (London:
George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1974), pp. 73-100, 239-310.

Other important works within the working-class housing historiography include *A Social History of Housing 1815-1970* by John Burnett, which draws not only on a historical methodology but also encapsulates architectural, economic, and sociological consideration.[57] Mark Swenarton encapsulates many of Burnett's themes but brings in the political and ideological factors at play in the development of 'social' housing.[58] Swenarton has argued the postwar housing programme was a concession to the British working class who the state feared could become an insurrectionary mass of strikers and former soldiers. Seen in the context of a Gramscian reformulation of the hegemony of the capitalist state, this perspective has been adopted by this thesis in its consideration of the period after the Great War.[59]

Perth as might be expected appears rarely in the historiography of working-class housing and no study has looked at this subject directly. Jean Kay Young's 'From "laissez-faire" to "Homes fit for Heroes": Housing in Dundee 1868-1919' provides some information about the lack of local government housebuilding initiatives in Perth in contrast to that promoted elsewhere. Young's study of housing as an urban social issue also provides useful contextual background for a period that matches closely with that of this thesis.[60]

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[57] John Burnett, *A Social History of Housing* (Newton Abbott: David & Charles, 1978).

[58] Mark Swenarton, *Homes fit for heroes: the politics and architecture of early state housing in Britain* (London: Heinemann Educational, 1981).

[59] Swenarton has also made a case for the political importance of the struggle between architects and architectural schools of thought in the design of the 'homes fit for heroes'. This aspect of working-class housing however falls outside the remit of this thesis and as such is not considered further.

[60] Jean Kay Young, 'From "laissez-faire" to "Homes fit for Heroes": Housing in Dundee 1868-1919' (University of Dundee: unpublished PhD thesis, 1991).

Chapter 8 utilises the method of contrast and comparison employed in preceding chapters so as to not only provide a brief description of the development of working-class housing in Perth (*c. 1867* to *c. 1922*) especially in regard to the efforts of the city's labour movement, but also to understand the absence in Perth of yet another critical point found in the locus of the history of the wider Scottish labour movement: the rent strikes of 1915.

In order to tackle these tasks, working-class housing in Perth has been examined quantitatively (i.e., as an issue related to population growth, housebuilding, homelessness, overcrowding, rent, the cost of living, etc.) and qualitatively *apropos* the type and nature of available housing in Perth.

1.9 *the 1922 General Election and Labour 'Breakthrough'*

To attempt to deny that 1922 was a breakthrough for Labour in Scotland (and UK-wide) would be folly. As Feargal McGuinness has stated:

> Labour became the main opposition party at the 1918 General Election as a consequence of a Conservative-Liberal coalition, and by 1922 Labour had supplanted the Liberals as the Conservatives' main challenge.[61]

The 1922 general election clearly marked a major achievement by Labour. The question to answer is how much of an achievement was 1922 and how geographically wide was Labour's reach. To deal with this question a number of features of the 1922 general election are collated in Table A1.1 (Appendix 1)

The oft-repeated fact that in the 1922 general election the Labour Party secured 29 Scottish seats does not give full justice to the Labour achievement.

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[61] Feargal McGuinness, 'UK Election Statistics: 1918-2012', *House of Commons Library Research Paper,* 12/43 (8 August 2012), p. 1.

An additional two candidates - Edwin Scrymgeour for the Scottish Prohibition Party (SPP) in Dundee and Walton Newbold for the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB) in Motherwell - also won seats taking the Labour tally to 31 of the 71 Scottish seats available. The Labour Party had candidates in 43 seats in Scotland so that the achievement of a 29:43 seat:candidate ratio (or a 67% success rate) (31:45 for Labour - a 69% success rate) was vastly superior to that of the Conservative Party (at 36%) and Liberal parties (at 38%).[62] These figures however fail to provide a full picture in themselves.

Table A1.1 (Appendix 1) provides detail of the Labour vote secured in contested constituencies where the seat was not won by a Labour candidate. In seven of these constituencies the Labour vote was over 40%; in a further three it was above a third of the overall vote i.e., at or above the overall Labour vote in Scotland. (It is worth noting that of all the constituencies contested by Labour in 1922, the lowest vote achieved was in Perth.)

Table 1.1 (overleaf) details the aggregate number of votes for each party in Scotland in the 1922 general election.

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[62] The respective ratios of seats:candidates for Conservative and Liberal parties were 13:36 and 27:81, the final figure reflecting the split in Liberalism and the presence of multiple candidates under a 'Liberal' flag.

Table 1.1 *the 1922 General Election in Scotland - Aggregate Number of Votes*

	Vote (thousand)	Proportion of Vote (%)	Average Vote per Candidate (thousand)
Conservative Party	379.4	24.2	10.5
Liberal Party	617.2	39.3	8.6
Labour Party	**501.3**	**31.9**	**11.8**
Other	71.5	4.6	N/A

(**Source:** McGuinness, 'UK Election Statistics: 1918-2012', p. 11)

If the SPP (16,289 votes) and CPGB (23,944 votes) support is factored into the Labour total, then in the 1922 general election, Labour obtained around 541,500 votes (or 34.5% of the vote at an average of around 12,000 votes per candidate).[63]

Figures 1.1 to 1.4 (below and overleaf) provide a pictorial representation of the pro-Labour geographical spread:[64]

Figure 1.1 *Constituencies Won by Labour in 1922*

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[63] The constituencies shown are based upon the 1918 parliamentary boundaries for Scotland (as used for the 1922 and 1923 general elections) with the Glasgow and Edinburgh constituencies inset. F. W. S. Craig, (ed.), *British Parliamentary Election Statistics 1918-1968* (Glasgow: Political Reference Publications, 1968), p. 3.

[64]
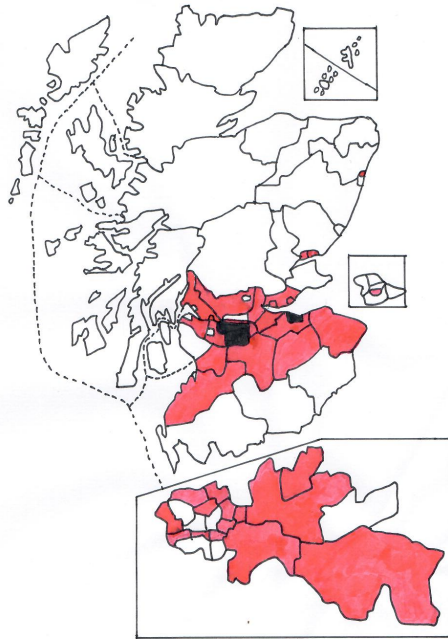
Figure 1.2 Constituencies where the Labour Vote in 1922 was Greater than 33%

Figure 1.3 *Constituencies Won by Labour in 1923*
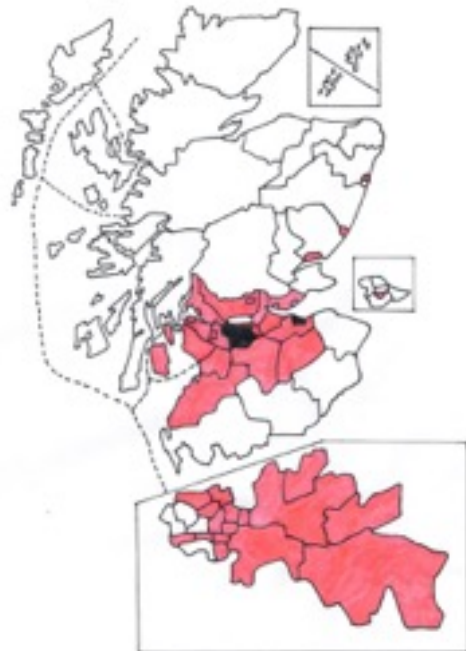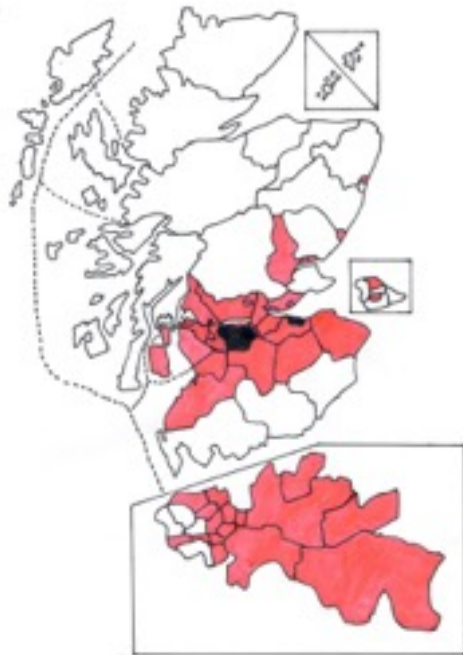
Figure 1.4 *Constituencies Contested by Labour in 1922*

The obvious observation is that if judged only by the election of 31 MPs, the 1922 general election whilst undoubtedly a breakthrough for Labour appears to have had a rather scattered geographical reach. Once those maps that detail the constituencies in which Labour secured 33% or more of the vote and those constituencies in which a Labour candidate contested the seat are included the achievement of 1922 appears far more geographically significant - it is the former of these maps that provides the most startling result. (The 1923 seat distribution is very similar to Figure 1.2 so that the success of Labour that year can be viewed as a consolidation of the success achieved in 1922.) Even a cursory consideration of the 1922 general election provides sufficient evidence to argue that the Labour breakthrough of 1922 was a major change in the political identity of a large

swathe of Scotland albeit one that as expected included (and was concentrated within) almost all the major industrial and coal mining areas of the country.

Now that it has been established that the electoral performance of Labour in the 1922 general election was far more of a breakthrough then the securing of 31 parliamentary seats, the imperative to understand why Labour in Perth failed to emulate this success in 1922 or indeed in 1923 is advanced. The reasons for this failure form part of the general narrative of the history of the Perth labour movement and as such add to the case for a fragmented and fractured growth of Labour in Scotland.

This chapter has set out a route map by which the loci of the development of the labour, trade union, and co-operative movements in Perth, c. 1867 to c. 1922 will be explored and has provided an indication of the key episodes in Scottish labour history that will form the basis of a comparison of progress of the labour and trade-union movements in Perth with elsewhere in Scotland. In the next chapter two of the key aspects of Perth's 'local identity' will be examined. The first will set the socio-economic scene of Perth for the period 1871 to 1921 and will be followed by brief summaries of the Marxist concept of hegemony, paternalism, and paternalistic industrial relations. The aim of which is to provide the conceptual tools required to provide fresh insight into the Scottish labour and trade-union movements in the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries through the example of Perth.

Chapter 2 - *Perth: Geography, Economics, Commerce, and Paternalism*

In the first chapter of his novel *The Fair Maid of Perth*, which is set in Perth at the end of the fourteenth century, Walter Scott extols the virtue of Scotland's longest and most powerful river, the Tay, making claim for its ascendance over Rome's Tiber.[1] Whether Scott's remark is justified is more a matter of taste than potamology. He was however correct to acknowledge the importance of the Tay to Perth. The river was crucial to the local economy. Perth, lying some 20 miles upstream of its mouth, was and is both navigable to the sea and at its founding in the early medieval period situated at the river's lowest bridgeable point. Perth's location on the east coast of Scotland and its proximity to Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Stirling also played a part in its economic (and indeed political) development. In particular, as Turner has argued, Perth was 'receptive to influences radiating principally from the growing commercial centres of Glasgow and neighbouring Dundee,' so 'the shifting allegiance of Perth district was thus an expression of regional change.' As well as being responsive to the changing economies of its regional neighbours, Perth maintained a degree of autonomy being the 'principal market and river port for the large area of which it is a natural centre.'[2]

Dundee of all the Scottish cities was by its proximity to Perth the most influential politically providing on numerous occasions succour and/or stimulus to the labour movement of its Tayside neighbour. This relationship had its ups and downs and as will be seen in Chapters 3 and 4 the trades councils of the two

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[1] Walter Scott, *The Fair Maid of Perth* (London: Macmillan & Company Ltd, 1907), p. 15.
[2] Turner, 'Textile Industry of Perth and District', pp. 124, 135-38.

cities at times found themselves at loggerheads. Before considering external influences however it is the economy of Perth that must be considered first.

2.1 *the Perth Economy, 1871-1921*

Dundee's economic history has been pithily defined by the three Js of 'jute, jam, and journalism.' If an equivalent ditty was to be created for Perth, the key contestants for inclusion would be agriculture, textiles, transport (especially the railways), insurance, bleaching, drycleaning and dyeing, and whisky blending. Table 2.1 (overleaf) details the importance of the top seven employment areas in the County of Perth (including the city of Perth) between 1881 and 1911.

Table 2.1 *Importance of the Top Seven Areas of Employment in the County of Perth, 1881-1911[3]*

Rank	1881	1891	1901	1911
1	Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing 16,522	Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing 13,420	Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing 11,998	Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing 12,071
2	Textile Fabrics 8,010	Textile Fabrics 8,012	Domestic & Services 9,074	Domestic & Services 8,980
3	Domestic & Services 6,794	Domestic & Services 7,178	Textile Fabrics 7,176	Textile Fabrics 6,815
4	House & Building 4,176	Metals, Minerals & Machines 3,888	House & Building 5,275	Clothing 4,844
5	General & Unspecified 3,985	Clothing 3,675	Transport 4,049	Transport 4,294
6	Clothing 3,637	House & Building 3,343	Food, Tobacco, Drink & Lodging 3,737	Food, Tobacco, Drink & Lodging 4,250
7	Metals, Minerals & Machines 3,565	Transport 2,234	Clothing 3,324	Professional Occupations & Subordinate Services 2,599

(**Source:** *Census of Scotland* 1881-1911, *numerous pages*)

Figure 2.1 (overleaf) details the distribution of employment within the County of Perth (including the city of Perth) by economic sector between 1881 and 1911. It confirms that for this period Perth was very much an industrial city with a large working-class workforce.

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[3] The given figures are total numbers occupied in each area of employment.

Figure 2.1 *Distribution of Employment within the County of Perth, 1881-1911*

Legend:
- Professional Occupations & Subordinate Services
- Commercial
- Industrial & Manufacturing
- Agricultural, Forestry & Fishing
- Domestic & Services

1881
- 16,522
- 3,257
- 3,801
- 6,794
- 27,694

1891
- 13,420
- 4,383
- 3,781
- 7,178
- 29,458

1901
- 11,998
- 4,342
- 3,530
- 9,074
- 26,203

1911
- 12,071
- 5,164
- 4,130
- 8,980
- 25,917

(**Source:** *Census of Scotland Taken 1871: Eighth Decennial Census of the Population of Scotland Taken 3rd April 1871, With Report. Volume I* (HCPP, C. 592, 1872); *Census of Scotland Taken 1871: Eighth Decennial Census of the Population of Scotland Taken 3rd April 1871, With Report. Volume II* (HCPP, C. 841, 1873); *Census of Scotland Taken 1881: Ninth Decennial Census of the Population of Scotland Taken 4th April 1881, With Report. Volume I* (HCPP, C. 3320, 1882); *Census of Scotland Taken 1881: Ninth Decennial Census of the Population of Scotland Taken 4th April 1881, With Report. Volume II* (HCPP, C. 3657, 1883); *Census of Scotland Taken 1891: Tenth Decennial Census of the Population of Scotland Taken 5th April 1891, With Report. Volume I* (HCPP, C. 6755, 1892); *Census of Scotland Taken 1891: Tenth Decennial Census of the Population of Scotland Taken 5th April 1891, With Report. Volume II* (HCPP, C. 6936,1893-1894); *Census of Scotland Taken 1901: Eleventh Decennial Census of the Population of Scotland Taken 31st March 1901, With Report. Volume I* (HCPP, Cd. 1257, 1902); *Census of Scotland Taken 1901: Eleventh Decennial Census of the Population of Scotland Taken 31st March 1901, With Report. Volume II* (HCPP, Cd. 1481, 1903); *Census of Scotland 1911: Preliminary Report on the Twelfth Census of Scotland* (HCPP, Cd. 5700, 1911); *Census of Scotland 1911. Report on the Twelfth Census of Scotland. Volume II* (HCPP, Cd. 6896, 1913) ; *Census of Scotland 1911. Report on the Twelfth Census of Scotland. Volume III* (HCPP, Cd. 7163, 1914); *Census of Scotland 1921. Preliminary Report on the Thirteenth Census of Scotland* (HCPP, Cd. 1473, 1921); *Census of Scotland 1921: Report on the Thirteenth Census of Scotland Volume I Part 28, County of Perth* (London: HMSO, 1923), all *numerous pages*)

During the three decades 1881-1911 'Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing' and 'Textile Fabrics' provided for the bulk of employment in and around Perth. Between 1881 and 1911 there was a decline in employment levels within the two biggest economic sectors - 'Agricultural, Forestry & Fishing' and 'Industrial & Manufacturing' - of 27% and 6% respectively. The decline in these two sectors went hand-in-hand with an expansion in the 'Professional Occupations & Subordinate Services', 'Commercial', and 'Domestic & Services' sectors of 9%, 59%, and 32% respectively. Despite these developments, the relative importance of each economic sector remained unchanged. 'Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing' in spite of a significant reduction in its workforce remained in 1911 the single biggest occupation in the County of Perth where 'highly capitalized mixed farms'[4] were prevalent.[5]

After 1911 Perth experienced a major reduction in 'Industrial & Manufacturing' particularly 'Textile Fabrics', a decline accompanied by an increase in employment in the 'Service & Infrastructure' sector. Between 1881 and 1921 little 'Heavy Engineering' industry existed within Perth. In addition, the 'Lighter Engineering' industries associated with 'Metals, Minerals & Machines' experienced a reduction of 38% of their workforce, so that by 1911 this

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[4] Christopher Harvie's reference is made to the east of Scotland of which the rich straths of the County of Perth formed part. Christopher Harvie, *No Gods and Precious Few Heroes: Scotland, 1914-1980* (London: Arnold, 1981), p. 2.

[5] This local decline in 'Agriculture' was part of a historical trend that continued during the next 40-year period. S. B. Saul has identified a number of factors at play within British agricultural at that time: 'the pull of competing occupations with higher wages and less exacting hours,' 'a fall in the demand for labour arising out of the introduction of machinery,' and 'the switch to less labour-intensive forms of production.' S. B. Saul, *The Myth of the Great Depression 1873-1896 Second Edition* (London: Macmillan Education Ltd, 1985), p. 35.

sector was no longer one of the top seven employment areas in Perth. After 1911 'Metal Manufacturing Engineering' grew locally. In the earlier part of the nineteenth century 'Shipbuilding' was an important industry in Perth declining rapidly after that time. There was no Perth 'Steel' industry of note in the period of study of this thesis.[6] As well as the industrial areas outlined above, a number of smaller industries contributed to the Perth economy some of which are examined next.

Albeit a small area of employment (around 500 workers in 1881), the 'Books, Paper, & Printing' industry experienced a 42% rise in employment between 1881 and 1911. This industrial sector, which proved to be a rich vein for the Perth trade-union movement, continued to grow for several decades after 1911. Between 1881 and 1911 there was a 33% increase in the number of workers employed in the 'Clothing & Footwear' industry in Perth so that by 1911 it was the fourth biggest area of employment at some 6% of the total, and after 'Textiles' the key manufacturing industry. After 1911 the 'Clothing & Footwear' industry declined steadily as a source of employment mainly due to mechanisation. Between 1881 and 1911 the numbers working in 'Governmental' employment more than doubled; that within 'Commerce' increased as was stated earlier by 59% - a rise associated with the growing use of female labour in this sector.[7] In the same period the 'Professions' experienced a 9% rise; and, the numbers employed in 'Domestic & Services' rose by 32%, so that by 1911 this

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[6] Carstairs, *Industrial Population in the Tayside Area*, pp. *vi*, 88.

[7] In 1901 the number of females employed as commercial or business clerks was zero, a decade later it was higher than male employment in that area (727 female; 527 male). *Census of Scotland* 1901-1911, *numerous pages.*

sector was the second highest employer in Perth. After 1911, in line with Scotland-wide changes, the 'Infrastructural & Service' sector in Perth (public utilities; communication, electricity, gas, transport, and water industries; and banking, commerce, finance, and insurance services) grew significantly especially within public administration. In 1911 'Glass & Glass Bottle' manufacturing accounted for 2% of Perth employment. After 1911 the 'Glass & Glass Bottle' industry declined.[8]

A key commercial development for Perth in the later nineteenth century was the establishment of General Accident, Fire & Life Assurance Association, Ltd (General Accident). Founded to offer insurance to cover agricultural labourer compensation as required by the Employers' Liability Act 1880, General Accident traded in Perth from 1885 until 2001. Despite being a limited company with a board of directors, 'for eighty years General Accident was dominated by one family – the Norie-Millers, father and son.'[9] In 1929 General Accident employed around 2,000 staff.[10] Two major governmental institutions, Perth Barracks and Perth General Prison also made contributions to the Perth economy.

Over the period 1867-1918 there was a 44% increase in the numbers employed in the 'Food, Drink, Tobacco & Lodgings' industry locally so that by 1901 it was the sixth largest employer within Perth. It is in the area of whisky blending that Perth excelled commercially - the nineteenth century witnessing

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[8] Carstairs, *Industrial Population in the Tayside Area*, pp. 86-88.

[9] Susan Payne, 'Risky Business: a History of General Accident', in Strachan, *Perth,* p. 95.

[10] John Gifford, *Perth and Kinross: The Buildings of Scotland (Pevsner Architectural Guides: Buildings of Scotland)* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), p. 569.

the growth of a number of substantial concerns, many with an eventual international presence. Perth's whisky blenders utilised the railways to take delivery of whisky from a geographically wide range of distilleries, and then after blending and bottling, to supply retailers across the UK and overseas. Perth's main whisky blender was Arthur Bell & Sons Ltd (Bells) - established as whisky and spirit merchants in Perth in 1825 - which by 1895 was exporting whisky to 'Australia, Tasmania, New Zealand, Ceylon, India, Italy and France.'[11] The company operated a bonded warehouse, bottling plants, offices, and other premises in Perth. The city's other major whisky blenders included: Matthew Gloag & Son (*est.* 1800), J. & T. Currie (*est.* 1824), Peter Thomson (Perth) Ltd (*est.* 1908), and John Dewar & Sons Ltd (Dewars - *est. c.* 1846):

> [Dewars] expanded massively between the 1880s and early 1890s ... [by] 1897, they had property at Glasgow Road, a bonded warehouse at Newtown Road and a bonded warehouse, stores and dwelling-house at Speygate and Canal Street. ... By 1913, [Dewars'] turnover and profits were more than four times those of 1897 and yet still the company continued to expand. There were nearly 300 staff in Perth alone by the 1920s, the majority of whom lived locally.[12]

The growth of the UK railway system and the development of Perth General Railway Station as a hub of the Scottish main rail lines was (as has just been mentioned in regard to Perth's whisky blending industry) another major

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[11] Alia Campbell, 'The History and Legacy of Arthur Bell and Sons', in Strachan, *Perth*, p. 82.

[12] Jacqui Seargeant, 'Dewar's Perth Whisky: the Origins of a Global Brand', in Strachan, *Perth*, pp. 87-99.

influence on Perth's industrial profile.[13] Drycleaning, dyeing, and whisky blending, for example, which grew to become central to the Perth economy, all relied heavily on a growing railway network. Perth's role as the principal market town for its agricultural hinterland was also facilitated by its extensive rail links. A livestock mart with associated auctions opened close to the railway station in 1875. The combination of improved preservation techniques and railway transport also gave a vital boost to the salmon fishing industry throughout Tayside from the 1850s onwards. Fish netted from the Tay could easily and profitably be on sale at London's Billingsgate Market the following morning.[14]

Perth railway station's link with Queen Victoria's Highland journeys added to its prestige and according to O. S. Nock: 'it was probably this Royal patronage that caused Perth station to be the first on the Caledonian Railway to be modernized.'[15] Between 1881 and 1911 Perth's transport industries experienced a 98% rise in their workforce so that by 1901 transport was the fifth biggest employer within Perth. John Gifford has calculated that in 'the late nineteenth century the railway companies provided the town's largest single source of

[13] 'In 1847 the Dundee & Perth Railway was opened and, the next year, three further lines, the Scottish Central Railway to Stirling, the Edinburgh & Northern Railway to North Queensferry and, running north east of Perth, the Scottish Midland Junction to Coupar Angus, Forfar, and Dundee. The railways to Stirling and Dundee were extended to Glasgow and Aberdeen in 1850 and a line to Dunkeld opened in 1856 which was extended to Aviemore and Forres in 1863 and to Inverness in 1898. These placed Perth at the nodal point of the Scottish railway system.' Gifford, *Perth and Kinross*, p. 568. 'Perth is the nearest Scottish parallel to York or Crewe. With its one big station, in the middle of Scotland, Perth might be compared to a hand grasping a bunch of reins, the reins being the converging main lines of central Scotland.' [*N. A.*], 'Perth General Station. The Hub of the Scottish Main Lines', *Railway Wonders of the World,* 2, 27 (2 August 1935), *n.p.n.*

[14] Iain A. Robertson, 'The Tay Salmon Fisheries in the Nineteenth Century' (University of Stirling: unpublished PhD thesis, 1989), pp. *ii, 347 ff.*

[15] O. S. Nock, *The Caledonian Railway* (London: Ian Allen Ltd, 1963), p. 105.

employment.'[16] The growth of the railways brought significant unionised employment to Perth.

2.2 *Trade Unionism within the Perth Economy*

The trade-union movement in Perth developed around the artisan craft unions and only slowly made inroads among textile workers. By the time textile trade unionism was fully established in Perth, the industry which Christopher Harvie has described as 'the motor of early industrialization' was in decline everywhere.[17] Whisky blending, insurance, and the growing service sector were even later comers to the trade-union fold, and so it is the amalgamated craft unions of Perth's artisans, the railway unions, and those bodies that struggled to organise within the textile industry that form the principal aspect of this study.

In 1921 an article in the *Perthshire Advertiser* made the very poignant point that, Perth was 'in the unfortunate position of having only one large industry and when there is a crisis connected with it the whole city is naturally affected.'[18] The dominance of textiles to the Perth economy extended also to the trade union and labour movements. Without an organised textile workforce trade unionism in Perth remained the practice of an elite group of skilled artisans and Labour politics struggled to see the light of day. After trade unionism became fully established among the textile workers, it was this group that inhibited (as will be argued) the development of a Labour politic.

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[16] Gifford, *Perth and Kinross*, p. 568.

[17] Harvie, *No Gods,* p. 3.

[18] *Perthshire Advertiser*, 3 December 1921, p. 7.

2.3 *the Textile Industry in Perth*

The importance of the textile industry to Perth cannot be overemphasised, neither can the susceptibility of Perth to the exigencies of neighbouring larger industrial centres of textile production: Edinburgh, Glasgow, and to a lesser extent Dundee. Geography has played a major part in the changing nature of Perth's textile industry. The availability of a source of water power - the Tay and its large tributaries - and Perth's proximity to textile centres to the east (linen) and west (cotton) have all acted upon the economy of Perth. In the eighteenth century linen manufacture was introduced to Perth as an extension of the Edinburgh linen industry. Subsequently external and technological influences and changes acted upon these linen manufacturers so that by 1810 linen manufacture in Perth was dwarfed by a cotton-weaving expansion driven by the highly profitable Glasgow cotton trade: 'the metamorphosis of Perth from linen- to cotton-working town was furthered by the simultaneous impact made by mill spinning and printing, which spread from the west and were first developed at points where water power was most abundant.' By the end of the nineteenth century, spinning mills at Stanley, Cromwellfield, Luncarty, Stormontfield, (all lying close to Perth) and those within the city itself took the number of looms operating in and around Perth to over 1,500. Turner has argued that by the nineteenth century Perth was 'the most important cotton-manufacturing town of eastern Scotland' with 'over 60 textile manufacturers, who employed most of the looms within a radius of 20 miles.' The Napoleonic War affected the industry greatly to its detriment. In addition, Glasgow's shadow over the Perth textile industry and the superiority of its manufactured products resulted in a

decimation of the latter. In 1901 a mere score of cotton weavers remained in Perth. In contrast, linen manufacture which had dwindled during the eighteenth century returned to the fore: 'power-loom weaving of linen began in Perth in 1851;' and linen manufacture held its own for many years in many parts of Perth.[19]

Jute, wool manufacture, and wool-spinning have all had a presence in Perth albeit one dwarfed by both linen and cotton production. In the case of wool-spinning the industry was a traditional activity carried out in rural (especially Highland) areas. Alongside the development of a textile industry, Perth slowly grew to become a major centre of bleaching, dyeing, and finishing, and eventually 'the most important linen-bleaching centre in the country.' Initially only involved with linen, Perth's bleachfields evolved and expanded rapidly as modern synthetic dyeing processes became available during the early decades of the nineteenth century and fashion shifted to muslin and silk fabrics.[20]

The final development in the history of the Perth textile industry was the introduction of drycleaning (*c.* 1870):

> In 1848 the dyeing firm of John Pullar & Sons … opened the huge North British Dye Works in Kinnoull Street to which cloth was sent from all over Scotland, the works' success helped by the introduction of a cheap parcel postal rate in 1851. About 1870 Pullars expanded into dry-cleaning, the garments also brought to and from Perth by the railway-borne postal service. By 1900 the firm employed about 2,000 workers.[21]

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[19] Turner, 'Textile Industry', pp. 124-27.
[20] Turner, 'Textile Industry', p. 123.
[21] Gifford, *Perth and Kinross*, p. 568.

Pullars (dyers and drycleaners) was established *c.* 1819 with a half-dozen employees as a small linen works in Perth's Little Pomarium district and grew to become the largest of all British drycleaning firms. From a base of six employees Pullars expanded to 1,900 in 1888, and 2,818 by 1909. The firm became internationally renowned for their use of synthetic dyes and drycleaning of garments shipped to Perth by agents across the UK.

The earliest sections of the Pullars' dye-works underwent construction in 1864 with additional buildings added up to 1896.[22] Along with its North British Dyeworks, Pullars operated facilities at Tulloch (built in 1883) on the north-western outskirts of the city. The firm entered the second decade of the twentieth century as Perth's main employer with a workforce approaching 10% of the city's citizens.[23] In 1918, after the largest strike in Pullars' history, Eastman & Sons Ltd of Acton Vale, London (Eastmans) took over the business.

Situated in the heart of the city centre, Pullars' huge North British Dyeworks - a monument to modernist industrial architecture - dominated Perth's cityscape diminishing the power and meaning of the medieval and Georgian buildings in its proximity physically and symbolically. Dundee with its massive textile industry was also dominated by textile factory architecture, the difference in Perth being that the Pullars' dye-works (and to a much lesser degree those of other textile firms such as John Shields & Company Ltd's (Shields') Wallace Works and P & P Campbell's (Campbells') Balhousie Works

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[22] Paul Philippou and Roben Antoniewicz, *Perth: Street by Street* (Perth: Tippermuir Books Ltd, 2012), p. 264.

[23] Davies, 'Pullars of Perth', p. *ix.*

stood not in direct relation to each other as in Dundee but in direct relation to the past.[24] Architecturally commanding, Pullars' buildings symbolised the expression of modern urban factory order as a triumph over the past. The moral authority of Perth's textile employers as will be seen was manifest not only through the monumentality of their commercial buildings and enterprise but also through the public institutions they supported.

Besides the mills in and around Perth, a sizeable textile industry (Indian-imported jute and locally sourced flax) employing several thousand workers developed along the banks of the River Ericht by the then separate Burgh of Blairgowrie, a small town lying 16 miles from Perth.[25] Erichtside was the larger of the two mills with some 700 employees. Ericht Linen Works employed about half that number. Together they accounted for 42% of the area's millworkers.[26] With the development of alternatives to water power and the regional decline in textile manufacturing, the mills along the Ericht having no other locational advantage apart from the proximity of an established centre of population began to close, so that by 1910 mill employment had dropped to around a thousand.

[24] Built in 1868/9 for Shields (founded in Perth as a textile weaving business in 1851) the Wallace Works contained around 900 looms in 1900. Philippou, *Perth*, p. 67; Campbells was a much smaller concern than either Pullars or Shields employing 150 dye-workers in 1895. Harding, *Pullars of Perth*, p. 71.

[25] David Moody, 'The Mills of Ericht', *The Scots Magazine* (October 1979), p. 42; Peter S. Dawson, *The Mills on the Ericht* (Blairgowrie: Blairgowrie Library, 1950), p. 1 *ff*.

[26] Dawson, *Mills on the Ericht*, pp. 3, 7; Moody, 'Mills of Ericht', pp. 39-42.

In the 1880s Dundee suffered a decline in its linen industry and this was experienced in Angus and in Perth.[27] The 1890s saw the textile trade fluctuate up and down. Between 1881 and 1911 employment within the textile industry of Perth fell by 15%. Despite this, in 1911:

> Textile industries provided the largest single source of employment for both male and female labour in manufacturing industry [in Perth] ... the distinctive feature of the textile industry in Perth was the concentration there of the finishing trades - bleaching, calendering and above all dyeing. These account for three-quarters of male employment and two-thirds of female employment in textiles in Perth.[28]

In 1911 textiles accounted for 20% of total employment, 33% of female employment and 12.5% of male employment in Perth. After 1911 textile employment in Perth especially in the dyeing, bleaching, and finishing sectors declined significantly. Central to the management of the 'Textile Fabrics' industry in Perth were as will be seen paternalistic industrial relations.

2.4 *Paternalism, Welfarism, and Industrial Relations*[29]

A key issue at play in the Perth economy over the late Victorian/Edwardian period was the dominance of a number of large businesses (major employers) - companies, in the main, owned, run, and managed by a single family or family-type structure - located within certain sections of the Perth economy: textile

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[27] Bruce Lenman, Charlotte Lythe, and Enid Gauldie, *Dundee and its Textile Industry 1850-1914* (Dundee; Abertay Historical Society Publication No. 14, 1969) p. 34.

[28] Carstairs, *Industrial Population in the Tayside Area*, p. 87.

[29] Paternalism when employed as a concept in this thesis, unless otherwise stated, should be understood to follow the definition provided by Nicholas Abercrombie and Stephen Hill: [Paternalism is] 'primarily an economic institution concerned with the manner of organising a productive unit and regulating relationships between subordinates and the owner of the means of production or their agents.' Nicholas Abercrombie and Stephen Hill, 'Paternalism and Patronage', *British Journal of Sociology*, 27, 4 (December 1976), p. 413.

fabrics, whisky blending, and later insurance - for which paternalistic labour relations were suited and employed.

Paternalism represented one response to the challenges of industrialisation and to the discipline of labour.[30] Paternalism was not suited to all situations: the possibility of and success of paternalism was dependent on political and economic conditions. Paternalistic managerial relations, for example, were not, according to Arthur McIvor, commonly employed by Clydeside's industrial class due to the scale of productive activity: 'in large urban centres the relation between employer and employee was based on the cash nexus and the sheer variety of occupations and opinions to be found in such places made all attempts at social control by the employers problematic.'[31]

Paternalism as a commonplace, meaningful, and documented practice dates from classical antiquity. In Ancient Rome the custom of *pater familias* was an obligation on the head of a household to care for and be responsible for the needs, behaviour, and morality of his family and dependents. During the period of early (British) capitalism (from the second half of the fifteenth through to the end of the eighteenth century) paternalism mediated social and employment relations between the classes.[32] These relations, Mary Rose has argued, were 'embodied by the apprenticeship system.'[33] For Reinhard Bendix 'the prevailing

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[30] Rose, 'Paternalism', p. 115.

[31] Arthur McIvor, 'Were Clydeside employers more autocratic?: Labour management and the "labour unrest", c.1910-1914', in Kenefick, *Red Clydeside*, p. 57.

[32] Mary B. Rose, Firms, *Networks and Business Values - The British and American Cotton Industries since 1750* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 121.

[33] Mary B. Rose, 'Paternalism, Industrial Welfare and Business Strategy in Britain to 1939', in Erik Alerts (ed.), *Liberalism and Paternalism in the Nineteenth Century - Tenth International Economic History Congress* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1990), p. 117.

view of the English aristocracy [in the eighteenth century] was to assert that the higher classes were obliged to think for and protect the poor, while the latter had to be submissive depending on their betters.'[34]

Company paternalism first appeared in the seventeenth century. Thereafter it became common in the labour practices of industrialists (Arkwright, Dale, Owen, Peel, and Salt included).[35] F. M. L. Thompson has described the 1840s as 'followed by a revival of the patriarchal authority and paternalist behaviour of the employing class, regrouped and redefined in terms of the new factory environment.'[36] This revival has been studied by Kim Lawes and by David Roberts, the latter of whom has argued that in early Victorian England, 'no social outlook had deeper roots and wider appeal' than the paternal.[37] Joseph Melling has found evidence to suggest that the success of the new paternalism was assisted by 'the extremely protracted transition from feudal society and the continuing influence of landed society.'[38] Historians disagree as to whether the paternalist revival was an evolutionary or revolutionary change. Lawes, for example, has argued that:

> Paternalists were not necessarily seeking to turn the clock
> back and arrest the pace and scope of change. Rather, they

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[34] Reinhard Bendix, *Work and Authority in Industry: ideologies of management in the course of industrialization* (New York: Wiley, 1956), cited in Rose, 'Paternalism', p. 115.

[35] Robert Fitzgerald, *British Labour Management & Industrial Welfare 1846-1939* (London: Croom Helm, 1988), p. 9.

[36] F. M. L. Thompson, 'Social Control in Victorian Britain', *Economic History Review, 24,* 2 (May 1981), p. 205.

[37] Kim Lawes, *Paternalism and Politics: The Revival of Paternalism in Early Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Gordonsville, VA: Macmillan, 2000), p. 1 *ff.*; David Roberts, *Paternalism in Early Victorian England* (London: Croom Helm, 1979), cited in Lawes, *Paternalism and Politics*, p. 5.

[38] Joseph Melling, 'Scottish Industrialists and the Changing Character of Class Relations in the Clyde Region *c.* 1880-1918', in Dickson, *Capital and Class*, p. 102.

> sought to restore a balance between the interests of the old world of agriculture and landed property and the new world of manufacturing and commerce.[39]

This is not a position taken by Abercrombie and Hill for whom the new paternalism was a solution to the then nascent challenge of moulding a pre-industrial working class into a dependent and controlled workforce necessitated by the arrival of the factory and large-scale production.[40] Melling's view as to the objectives of the new paternalistic strategy resonates with this opinion: 'to regulate and improve labour supply'; 'to maximise worker efficiency'; 'to promote labour discipline'; and 'to enhance managerial control over the workforce.'[41] Rose has cast her net wider by viewing the new paternalism as a solution to structural contradictions: 'the basis of the idea for a paternalist revival or transformation is, that so great was the upheaval both social and economic, created by the industrial revolution, that a response was necessary to prevent a collapse of society.'[42]

Whilst the rationale for company paternalism was located firmly in the economic, secondary motivating factors such as genuine benevolence, humanity, inter-company rivalry, philanthropy, ethics, and religious ideals existed. The last one of these factors is particularly applicable to Perth whose association with key points in the history of Scottish Protestantism (especially

[39] Lawes, *Paternalism and Politics*, p. 8.

[40] Abercrombie, 'Paternalism', p. 417 *ff*.

[41] Joseph Melling, 'Employers, Industrial Welfare and the Struggle for Workplace Control in British Industry, 1880-1920', in Howard F. Gospel, and Craig R. Littler (eds.) *Managerial Strategies and Industrial Relations - An Historical and Comparative Study* (London: Heinemann Educational Books, 1983), p. 57.

[42] Rose, 'Paternalism', p. 118.

Presbyterianism) such as John Knox's sermon against idolatry at St John's Kirk of 11 May 1559 that marked 'the beginning of the armed struggle which culminated in the establishment of Protestantism and the prohibition of the mass in Scotland in August 1560,' and the major schism within the Church of Scotland of 1843 (commonly know as the Disruption) that led to the establishment of the Free Church of Scotland, is well documented.[43] Perth throughout the period of study of this thesis was dominated by a Protestant culture and religious practice. Many of the city's employers were informed (to some degree) by a religious viewpoint. This was certainly the case at Pullars whose Baptist owners frequently articulated their desire to improve the moral character of their employees.

Seen in Gramscian terms paternalism was one response to the organic crisis created by the second wave of industrialisation in early nineteenth-century Britain - one that required the creation of a societal arrangement better suited to the exigencies of a modern, urban, industrial capitalism. The formation of this new hegemony required a different vision of the world, one matched to the new socio-economic arrangements: 'owners needed an ethos of work, order and discipline in order to commit workers to their firms and inculcate the attitude appropriate to factory organisation of work.' Once hegemonic, the new ideology permeated all aspects of social activity so that the industrial firm came 'to dominate the employees' lives inside and outside work.'

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[43] Douglas Somerset, 'John Knox and the Destruction of the Perth Friars in 1559', *Scottish Reformation Society Historical Journal*, 3, (2013), p. 1; James McCosh, *The Wheat and the Chaff Gathered into Bundles; A Statistical Contribution Towards the Recent Disruption of the Scottish Ecclesiastical Establishment* (Perth: James Dewar, 1843), p. 62 *ff*.

The provision of monetary and non-monetary rewards (including employment security, housing, education, medical facilities, and social amenities) formed part of the concessions yielded by the factory owners to their workers as the adhesive of the alliance in which the workers committed themselves to the company.[44]

Paternalism contained and transmitted the hegemonic ideology that it supported. Roberts has identified several traits of paternalistic relations - authoritarian, hierarchic, organic, pluralistic, subordinate, and reciprocal - that acted to shore up the relations of production within the new industrial order. Moral leadership - a relationship between ruler and ruled - was provided by paternalism's doctrine of mutual duties within which the factory owner's obligation to his workers was mirrored by their obligations of 'conscientious service, promptness, politeness, and deference.'[45] Monetary and non-monetary rewards greased the paternal relationship: 'the paternalist provides resources which subordinates would be unable to find on their own, which is the basis of their dependence. ... The emphasis in paternalistic ideology, on obedience to patriarchal authority formally recognises this dependence.'[46]

The paternalistic employer, Günther Schulz has argued 'claimed diligence, good conduct, loyalty and obedience,' for which 'he offered social security by means of employer's individual benefits – at his own will, without

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[44] Abercrombie, 'Paternalism', pp. 417-18.
[45] Roberts, *Paternalism in Early Victorian England*, pp. 2, 6.
[46] Abercrombie, 'Paternalism', p. 418.

fixed rules, revocable, as a reward – not as worker's right.'[47] In this manner

paternalism created a mutual interest between the worker's needs (health, well-

being, benefits, and security) and the goals of the company (the maintenance

and regulation of a stable, maximally efficient, healthy, docile, harmonious,

loyal, and compliant workforce; the domination of the labour market; and the

safeguarding of unquestionable management rule) and a dependency.[48] The

role of the working class in their own subordination became manifest in the

obedience and loyalty aspect of the paternal relation. Paternalism relied just as

much on the receivers as the givers for its existence.

It is, as Gramsci has argued, the 'prestige which the dominant group

enjoys because of its position and function in the world of production'[49] that

assists in the creation and maintenance of its hegemony. Religious, political, and

charitable involvement adds to this prestige and the ability to exercise moral

and political leadership: for paternalism to succeed as a managerial relationship

the employer has 'to seem to be a man of good will, who ... [wishes] ... the

people well.'[50] Roddy Gallacher's study of the Vale of Leven provides a good

illustration of this process:

> The owners and managers [of the Vale of Leven's large firms] ...
> lived close to their factories and were intimately involved in
> the locality, influencing political, cultural and social life. ...
> They were elders in the kirk, patrons of the many societies

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[47] Günther Schulz, 'Industrial Patriarchalism in Germany', in Alerts, *Liberalism and Paternalism*, p. 62.

[48] Of this list of requirements, the dominant motive remained 'the promotion of discipline within the workforce.' Helen Jones, 'Employers' Welfare Schemes and Industrial Relations in Inter-war Britain', *Business History*, I, XXV (March 1983), p. 63.

[49] Hoare, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, p. 12.

[50] A. P. Thornton, *The Habit of Authority - Paternalism in British History* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1966), p. 237.

which proliferated in the area, providers of educational facilities and donors of public halls, reading rooms and a public park.[51]

Supporting institutions permeated with and promoting the hegemonic ideology assisted the powerful and influential local elites in the continuous re-establishment of patterns of social conformity in and out of the workplace. This control of the factory and its vicinity created a totality of influence over the factory worker, made 'territory and localism central to the success of paternalism,' and inhibited the development of counter hegemonies: 'though never complete, this capacity to delimit the horizons of people's lives meant that the factory worker knew his place: the ties of dependency and hierarchy were everywhere apparent, and deference was seen to be the natural exchange for paternalism.'[52]

Perth was ideally suited to the exercise of paternalism and paternalistic managerial relations. Size was a key factor. Dundee its industrial neighbour had experienced a population expansion of geometric proportions rising from 64,704 in 1851 to *c.* 175,000 in 1918. Despite having grown between 1887 and 1921 by 61%, Perth remained to all intents and purposes a large town - one with a population around 36,000 in 1911. Both Dundee and Perth were dominated by large family firms, but the scale of production in Dundee rendered paternal industrial relations unlikely to be effective thus making it easier for counter hegemonies to take root and develop.

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[51] Roddy Gallacher, 'The Vale of Leven 1914-1975: Changes in Working Class Organisation and Action', in Dickson, C*apital and Class*, pp. 187-88.

[52] Joyce, *Work*, p. 94.

Another key feature of company paternalism was 'an emphasis on continuing personal contacts between master and men,'[53] for as Joyce has argued deference, subordination, and dependency were more easily maintained when they are given not to an abstraction but directly to their personification.[54] In Perth, the Pullars, the Norie-Millers and many other industrialists chose to live in close proximity to their factories and offices creating what Rose has described elsewhere as 'an almost squirearchical and certainly a hierarchical relation between employer and the employed.'[55] An observation that resonates with Sidney Pollard's point that 'the efforts to reform the whole man were ... particularly marked in factory towns and villages in which the total environment was under the control of a single employer.'[56]

Paternalism was central to labour relations in many of Perth's large concerns, especially in the textile industry. At General Accident the price of paternalism was an existence within a very rigid authoritarian structure: they 'followed a strict regime ... strict rules were laid down for staff behaviour ... senior managers only were allowed to use the front door or the lift ... staff were not allowed to make tea.' In addition, the General Accident worker was required to adhere to a strict dress code and a patriarchal promotion system. General Accident's in-house company magazine, *The General's Review*, from its first edition in January 1906 raged an unrelenting ideological rant in promotion of its interests, some examples of which are reproduced in Table A2.1 (Appendix 2).

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[53] Melling, 'Scottish Industrialists', pp. 101-02.

[54] Joyce, *Work*, pp. 135-36.

[55] Rose, 'Paternalism', p. 118.

[56] Sidney Pollard, 'Factory Discipline in the Industrial Revolution', *The Economic History Review*, New Series, 16, 2 (1963), p. 267.

The following account of the first strike to take place at General Accident

offers a good illustration of life within that company and the company's success

at undermining trade unionism:

> When some staff wanted to organise a union in 1920 the dispute went on for nine months and the company refused to let an outside body mediate. One hundred and thirty-three staff withdrew their labour and there were two rallies in Westminster. ... One nationalist journalist in *The Economist* described the General Accident management action as an "indefensible act of tyranny." Publicly Francis [the General Manager of General Accident, Francis Norie-Miller] blamed the affair on two women "who had little to do." He called it a storm in a teacup and said the publicity was good for the company. Yet he felt it keenly. He announced that no striker would ever work for the General Accident. Allegedly a black book[57] was kept which recorded all their names and then was burned when Francis died.[58]

As well as being contingent on circumstances, paternalism was not

applied as a unified set of principles: it 'did not exist as a set of definite, logical,

and clearly defined axioms. ... It formed instead a set of varying attitudes and

beliefs.' Moreover, paternalism, Roberts has argued, was a spectrum, which

could be applied in measures and was 'often mingled with strands from other

social outlooks.'[59] Paternalism, as outlined earlier, entailed the provision of

benefits, improved working conditions, control of the external and internal

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[57] This 'blacklisting' was an informal activity and there is no evidence to suggest any association with the Economic League; an organisation founded at the end of 1919 'by a group of right-wing industrialists and financiers, in collaboration (possibly uniquely so) with military intelligence experts, with the object of putting the case for capitalism before the British public, thus rolling back socialist and communist influence amongst the working class.' The League where it did operate in Scotland did so, as might be expected, primarily in the industrial areas of the west of the country. Arthur McIvor, ' "A Crusade for Capitalism": The Economic League, 1919-39', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 23, 4 (October 1988), pp. 634, 644.

[58] Payne, 'Risky Business', pp. 96-97.

[59] Roberts, *Paternalism in Early Victorian England*, pp. 1, 8.

labour market, wage rises, and perks outside the normal wage relation and employment contract. These provisions included accident benefits, company housing, discretionary pensions, sickness benefits, and a range of cultural, leisure, and social activities (such as amenities, canteens, classes, clubs, libraries, outings,[60] gardens, soirées, and recreational, social, and sports facilities). Pullars operated a comprehensive and non-contributory pension fund, an informal financial lending system, social and sport provision, sickness benefit,[61] and company housing; all of which reinforced the link between loyalty and preferential treatment. The situation was similar at General Accident where sports and social activities[62] were supported by the building of substantial facilities;[63] and at Dewars where 'early in the company history numerous benefits were established for staff, including outings, sports and perhaps more importantly pensions and care for retired staff.'[64]

Face-to-face management styles, the dominance of the local employment market, and the ability to offer relatively well-rewarded[65] 'jobs for life' assisted Perth's large employers in their operation of highly authoritarian paternalistic practices. Pullars, where the owners 'attached great importance to personalised

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[60] For example, General Accident's annual outing of 2 August 1909 involved 300 members of staff visiting Murthly Castle.

[61] A sick society was established at Pullars in the 1880s.

[62] General Accident ran or supported many outings, clubs, and associations for its workforce - athletics, cricket, football, golf, and music (a Philharmonic Society and an orchestra). Anniversaries and promotions were also celebrated at the workplace. General Accident did not provide a canteen, rather gave on one-and-a-quarter hours for lunch so that employees could go home to eat.

[63] Payne, 'Risky Business', p. 95.

[64] Sports activity at Dewar's included fishing, cricket, and a women's football team; Seargeant, 'Dewar's', p. 94.

[65] This was not always the case: as Payne has noted, Pullars' 'workforce was not always well paid, yet it was loyal and it was hard working.' Payne, 'Risky Business', p. 96.

wage settlements, which kept workers divided and isolated' and where, labour and social relations were informed by considerations of loyalty, behaviour, quiescence, gratitude, obligation, and performance, is a case in point.[66]

The desire for a 'job for life' was intimately wound up with the desire for security. A. P. Thornton's aphorism 'what the other ranks wanted, and all they wanted, was security'[67] becomes a truism when set alongside the following tale of 'the Trade Union official who visited Blairgowrie to advise the workers to organise so as to secure better conditions of employment':

> Addressing one man, he asked, "How much pay do you get weekly?" "18/- a week," was the reply. On hearing which the Trade Union official exclaimed, "18/- a week. My God, that's starvation." "Aye," said the worker. "I ken, but its' constant."[68]

A primary element of paternalism was the allocation of company housing. This was as true for other parts of Scotland as it was for Perth where Pullars built and allocated a range of housing units for its workers. Davies has suggested that Pullars regarded the housing initiative as an investment that yielded a harmonious, efficient, and loyal workforce.[69] The effectiveness of company housing provision for the delivery of the goals of paternalistic practice

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[66] Davies, 'Pullars of Perth', p. 254.

[67] Thornton, *Habit of Authority*, p. 358.

[68] Andrew George Cairns, *A Short History of the Scottish Co-operative Movement in Blairgowrie & District* (Blairgowrie: Blairgowrie Co-operative Society Ltd, 1967).

[69] In practice the provision of housing placed a strain on the relationship between the tenant-worker and the landlord-employer. This was particularly the case at Pullars where management exercised a high degree of personal influence in the allocation of housing and its maintenance. As time passed, Pullars reduced their compliance with tenant requests for repairs and redecoration, so that tenants began to seek legal redress for the failures of their landlord. Nevertheless, housing was for decades a potent tool in the managerial arsenal of Pullars.

was boosted in Perth by deficiencies in the quality of working-class housing - an issue looked at in detail in Chapter 8.

In the opinion of PTC, not only did Perth have more slums than Edinburgh or Glasgow, the city's working-class housing was 'wretched.' Whether this was true at the time is not known. Equally how Perth compared with Dundee a town which according to Gauldie had a need for improvement that was 'enormous even by the measure of other slum towns' also remains untested. It is sufficient to say that the housing situation in Perth was in a very sorry state .[70]

Thompson has argued that where factory paternalism was strong 'an employer's influence extended far outside the mill into the entire institutional structure and equipment of the local community: houses, schools, church, chapel, Sunday Schools, playing fields, and (over them all) local government.'[71] Thus it can be argued that 'strong' paternalism not only constructed the factory order but also (to a certain degree) that of society as well.

In Perth, this wider employer influence was extensive. The political and social culture of Perth was dominated by two members of the Pullar family for half a century. John Pullar (1803-1878) served as a (Radical Liberal) Perth town councillor (1847-1851) and as Lord Provost (1867-1873).[72] Robert Pullar, (1828-1912), his son, became chairman of the Perth Liberal Committee *c.* 1880 and after a lifetime commitment to that party locally was elected unopposed as the Liberal

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[70] PTC, *Minute Book*, 17 February 1906, 16 February 1907.

[71] Thompson, 'Social Control', pp. 204-05.

[72] *Perthshire Courier*, 12 November 1867.

MP for Perth Burgh in 1907.[73] Robert Pullar's welfare work included involvement with the Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor, Perth City Mission, Perth Working Boys' and Girls' Religious Society, the Society for the Relief of Indigent Old Men, and the Society for the Relief of Incurables and the Chronically Sick.[74] Francis Norie-Miller (General Manager of General Accident) served for many years as chairman of the Perth School Board. Vice Chairman of the Unionist Association in 1918, he stood for the parliamentary seat of Perth in 1929 and 1931 as a Liberal, being placed second to the Conservative Party candidate on both occasions. He received the 'Freedom of the City of Perth' in 1933. The 1935 parliamentary election saw Norie-Miller returned as the National Liberal MP for Perth in an election in which he publicly declared his support for Ramsay MacDonald's National Government.[75]

Despite its extensive welfare provision, benevolence, and the fostering of loyalty and obligation, company paternalism could not ultimately maintain consensus and sublimate conflict; demands for wage increases and reduction in working hours (the primary concern of workers)[76] continually surfaced. Pullars' industrial relations strategy, for example, began to fail in the 1910s as economic developments reduced demand and rises in the cost of living placed demands on wages so that paternalistic ties were strained to breaking point:

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[73] *Perthshire Constitutional*, 12 January 1888, 21 February 1888; *The Scotsman*, 22 March 1880, p. 7.

[74] Davies, 'Pullars of Perth', pp. 22-23.

[75] Payne, 'Risky Business', pp. 95-96.

[76] Joseph Leslie Melling, 'British Employers and the Development of Industrial Welfare, *c.* 1880-1920: an Industrial and Regional Comparison' (University of Glasgow: unpublished PhD thesis, 1980), p. 206.

> Familiar strategies proved incapable of containing the new pressures. As management trimmed overheads by reducing commitment to the less popular aspects of welfarism and refusing to negotiate over wages, workers embraced trade unionism and the principle of representative bargaining. Attempts to divide the workforce by appealing to old loyalties, failed, and the Pullars withdrew from Perth's industrial scene amid bitterness and recriminations.[77]

Neither, as Christopher Whatley has pointed out, could paternalism 'soften the harsh realities of working-class life: period unemployment, injury, sickness, old age ... poor and overcrowded housing and polluted, inadequate water supply.'[78]

Paternalism acted as a veil over the interest-conflict between the subordinate worker and the dominant employer so as 'to obscure economic and power relations and, where possible convert them into moral relations.'[79] Through the cooperation of workers who agreed to and supported the company's right to manage and make changes that affected them in return for benefits outside the cash nexus, paternalism limited the influence of trade unionism and curtailed industrial militancy by dealing with individuals at the shop-floor level. Nonetheless, as Davies has argued, 'the working-classes generated their own attitudes to life continually testing and challenging 'the limits of employer interference.'[80]

The ability of firms to offer *ex gratia* provision was affected by economic factors, a consequence of which was that paternalism was 'cast aside' during

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[77] Davies, 'Pullars of Perth', p. *v*.

[78] Christopher A. Whatley, *Scottish Society 1707-1830: Beyond Jacobitism towards industrialization* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), p. 86.

[79] Gospel, 'Managerial Structure', p. 16.

[80] Davies, 'Pullars of Perth', pp. 95, 115.

economically critical moments.[81] This was especially so during business downturns. As Pelling has argued, 'welfarism shares in the growth and suffers the contradictions of its capitalist base. When services are needed during depression and unemployment, the firm is least able to provide them since it is the root of the business *malaise*.'[82] Towards the end of the nineteenth century, many firms responded to economic difficulties by curtailing the level of their paternal benevolence. Wage demands also challenged the hegemony of the factory order and assisted the decline of paternalism. Other factors also took their toll. For example, leisure activities developed independently outside company provision, so that workers had alternatives to amenity welfarism. In addition, employment and factory reforms introduced by various Liberal and Coalition governments removed many workplace injustices and made improvements to working conditions. Whilst much of this legislation did resolve likely causes of industrial agitation, it inevitably elevated expectancy for increasing welfare provision.[83] The gap between realisation and expectation lay open to be addressed and filled by the counter-hegemonic ideas of the labour movement, which according to Melling offered a 'clear statement of community welfare and moral wellbeing' and 'a community of the working-class rather than one set against their particular needs and interest.'[84]

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[81] Abercrombie, 'Paternalism', p. 420.

[82] Joseph Melling, 'Industrial Strife and Business Welfare Philosophy: The Case of the South Metropolitan Gas Company from the 1880s to the War', *Business History Review*, XXI, 2 (July 1977), p. 164.

[83] Chris J. Wrigley (ed.), *A History of British Industrial Relations 1939-1979 - Industrial Relations in a Declining Economy* (Cheltenham: Edward Elger, 1996), p. 178.

[84] Melling, 'Scottish Industrialists', pp. 104-05.

Joyce has located the demise of paternalism as early as the 1870s 'when the spread of limited companies rendered it unworkable.'[85] Thompson has explained the end of paternalistic industrial relations in the 1890s as a consequence of 'the rise of large firms lacking intimate employer-worker relations, and the increasing independence, organisation, militancy, and class consciousness of the workforce.'[86] McIvor suggests a similar timescale.[87] Studies of Paisley and Neilston view a series of industrial conflicts between 1907 and 1914 as resulting in a passive workforce, previously uninterested in and unorganised by trade unionism, undergoing a major shift in ideological outlook resulting in the demise of paternalism.[88] Rose, on the other hand, has argued 'that it was more resilient that might be supposed' - a position supported by this thesis as regards Perth, but also by studies of Paisley, Neilston, and the Vale of Leven.[89]

The information and analysis provided in the first part of this chapter has demonstrated that the city of Perth was for many years 'a one industry town'. This dominance of the commercial life of the city of Perth by the 'Textile Fabrics' industry meant that the development of trade unionism among textile workers was central to the development of an effective Labour politic and as such justifies the examination of textile trade unionism that features in Chapter 4. Other groups of workers played a significant role in the economy of Perth: those employed in 'Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing' and in the 'Domestic & Services' sectors, but for reasons elucidated in the

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[85] Joyce, *Work*, p. 340.

[86] Thompson, 'Social Control', p. 205.

[87] McIvor, 'Clydeside employers', p. 57.

[88] Knox, 'Striking Women', p. 107.

[89] Rose, 'Paternalism', p. 122.

Chapter 3 they do not feature in this thesis. Whilst smaller than many other parts of the Perth economy, the 'Building & Housing', 'Metals, Minerals & Machines', and later 'Transport' sectors were responsible for supplying the vast majority of labour and trade-union movement activists in Perth and it is for this reason that the trade unionism of these skilled workers forms the starting point and main theme of Chapter 3.

As has been argued earlier, the particularisms of Perth's 'local identity' made paternalistic industrial relations not only viable but allowed them to thrive. In addition, as McIvor has argued paternalism 'had the effect of inducing worker quiescence and constraining industrial militancy.'[90] The acceptance of these arguments means that the exploration of hegemony and paternalistic industrial relations that was the second part of this chapter provides useful conceptual tools with which to examine the historical development of trade unionism, working-class consciousness, and support for Labour in Perth. The first of these, trade unionism, is the subject of the next two chapters.

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[90] McIvor, 'Clydeside employers', p. 56.

Chapter 3 *- the Trade-Union Movement in Perth I*

If the period 1889-1891 is correctly termed the time of the 'new unionism' then the corollary must be that prior to the upsurge in militancy and general unionism of these few years, it was the time of the old unions. As will be seen, in the 1870s and 1880s the loci of the development and activity of these old unions in Perth (those that represented the artisan trades) dovetailed with that of the national trade-union movement.[1] The struggle for the reduction in the working week which spread from the industrial north east of England and infected much of Scotland with its demands for 'Nine Hours' is a case in point and will be considered later in this chapter.

Such a coalescence in activity between Perth and Scotland was not maintained. Perth did not experience the energy of 'new unionism'. For the Perth working class the shaping of a class identity proceeded at a different rate to elsewhere in Scotland; and indeed was only partially realised by 1922. It was not until almost the end of the Great War that Perth's local press could announce the 'great awakening' of trade unionism in Perth, and even then, as will be argued, the transformation proved ephemeral.[2] This and the next

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[1] The masons of Perth and district who even by March 1870 when they began the first of six local strikes which involved their trade in the 1870s had had a lengthy history in Perth, were typical of the Perth first trade-union branches. (The strike of 1870, a claim for an advance in wages of ½d per hour to 6d per hour, was followed by one exactly two years later over the employment of non-union workers.) By 1898 the Perth branch of the United Operative Masons Association of Scotland (UOMAS) constituted the largest group of workers affiliated to PTC (with a membership of 159). Jack Kelly, 'Trade Union Activities in Perth and District 1849-1926' (Perth: unpublished essay [pamphlet], 1994), p. 2; *Dundee Courier*, 31 March 1870, 27 February 1878, 10 October 1879, p. 3; *The Scotsman*, 18 March 1872, p. 3, 9 October 1874, p. 5, 21 January 1875, p. 6, 1 March 1875, p. 5, 1 April 1878, p. 6; PTC, *Minute Book*, 20 February 1898, 17 March 1898.

[2] Harding, 'War and Social Change', p. 139.

chapter have as their aim to understand why this was, and to examine how in the decades after 1891 (through to 1922) the Perth trade-union movement developed in sometimes similar and other times contrary ways to those elsewhere in Scotland. At the heart of the answer to this question lies the experiential as a primary factor; and one for which 'local identity' was the defining influence. The traditions and culture of Perth especially in regard to paternalistic management within the factory and paternalistic influence within the locality impacted greatly on the development of trade unionism in Perth. In utilising the tool of 'local identity', Hanson and Pratt's observation that 'local identity' was always a dynamic process will be borne in mind.[3]

In order to undertake these tasks, the history of the trade-union movement in Perth requires elucidation especially in regard to critical points in the development of trade unionism in Scotland. In addition to the production of this history, comparison will be made with national narratives and with comparator towns/cities/areas when applicable.

3.1 *Historical Starting Points*

With the passing of the Trade Union Act 1871, which prevented the criminalisation of unions over restraint of trade, a secure legal framework for trade-union activity in Britain was established; although the Criminal Law Amendment Act 1871 maintained restrictions on striking.[4] Perth's boot and shoemakers provide an illustration of the watershed that was the Act. In April

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[3] Hanson , *Gender, Work and Space*, p. 18.

[4] Douglas Brodie, *A History of British Labour Law 1867-1945* (Portland: Hart Publishing, 2003), p. 10.

1871 six of their number were convicted under the law of conspiracy for staring at another shoemaker who remained working during a strike. A year later the same shoemakers successfully struck twice for wage advances.[5]

It was not until the passing of the Conspiracy and Protection of Property Act 1875 (which legalised peaceful picketing), and the Employers and Workmen Act 1875 (which ended the master and servant laws) did unions attain full legal legitimacy. The Employers' Liability Act 1880 completed what David Powell has described as 'the mid-Victorian settlement'.[6]

When the 1871 Act came into force trade unionism had already made inroads into Perth with the city's artisans - masons, carpenters and joiners, printers, and engineers included - operating societies providing benefits to their members. A Perth branch of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers (*est.* 1851 - PASE), for example, had existed since *c.* 1853. Strikes too had featured in the city's history. The carters, for example, struck for a day (17 May 1849) in protest over income loss due to the railways.[7] (It is worth noting that the earliest recorded mention of trade unionism in Perth dates from 1834: in commenting on an attempt to organise the districts' farm workers in the Whitsun term of 1834,

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[5] *The Scotsman*, 8 April 1871, p. 5, 22 March 1872, p. 6, 2 April 1872, p. 6, 4 April 1872, p. 6; Amalgamated Society of Engineers: *Perth Branch Records* (1860-1965) - *Minute Books* (1860-1957) (PKCA, MS42/1, 1860-1965), 20 June 1872.

[6] Clegg, *History of British Trade Unions*, pp. 44-46; Norbet C. Soldon *Women in British Trade Unions 1874-1976* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan Ltd, 1978), p. 2; David Powell, *British Politics and the Labour Question, 1868-1990* (London: The Macmillan Press Ltd, 1992), p. 11.

[7] The earliest surviving minute books of PASE date from 1860 but the branch was active in the early 1850s. (PKCA, MS42, 1860-1960); Humphrey Southall, 'Towards a Geography of Unionization: The Spatial Organization and Distribution of Early British Trade Unions', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, New Series, 3, 4 (1988), p. 478.

the *Perthshire Courier* claimed that the effort had occurred 'under the instigation of the leaders of the town unions.'[8])

Table A3.1 (Appendix 3), which has been compiled using an extensive range of primary and secondary sources (including formal governmental statistics provided by the Board of Trade, national and local newspaper reports, and the records of the trade-union movement (local and national)), lists chronologically those strikes that occurred in Perth between 1867 and 1922. No distinction between a strike and a lockout has been made in Table A3.1, because as Kenneth Knowles has argued, 'sometimes, it is impossible to say even whether a dispute should be formally called a strike or lockout, some disputes are both, successively or simultaneously', and because after 1893 the Board of Trade ceased to record them separately.[9]

Table A3.1 falls into two sections, 1867-1887 and 1888-1922 - the period before 1888 and the period in and after 1888, the year in which the bureau established by the Board of Trade began to collect strike data.[10] The information available prior to 1888 is consequently less reliable and comprehensive than that of the period that follows.

One primary source that covers part of the first period is the research by G. Philips Bevan who in 1880 published an aggregate of UK strikes for 1870-1879. Bevan did not detail his sources so that as Table 3.1 (overleaf) suggests, his

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[8] *Perthshire Courier*, 26 June 1834, cited in George Houston, 'Labour Relations in Scottish Agriculture before 1870', *Agricultural Historical Review*, VI, 1 (1958), pp. 37-38.

[9] Kenneth G. J. C. Knowles, *Strikes – A Study in Industrial Conflict With Special Reference to British Experience Between 1911 and 1947* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1952), p. 300.

[10] Quentin Outram, 'Early British Strike Statistics', *Historical Studies in Industrial Relations*, 25/26 (Spring/Autumn 2008), p. 177.

observation that in this period Perth experienced 14 strikes predominantly involving trades associated within 'dyeing and woollens' is at odds with the 42 strikes detailed in Table A3.1 for that period.

Table 3.1 *Strikes in Perth by Trade, 1870-1879*

	Number of Strikes
Boot and Shoemakers	8
Textile Workers	8
Carpenters and Joiners	7
Masons	6
Engineers	3
Printers	2
Wagon Wrights	2
Plasterers	1
Railway Porters	1
Rope and Twine Makers	1
Seamen	1
Slaters	1
Tailors	1

(**Source:** Table A3.1 (Appendix 3))

Thomas Johnston has also imparted information concerning the early strike history of Perth. Johnston has claimed that for 1870-1880, 'Perth had 14 dyeing and woollen disputes.' This claim is problematic. If correct, then Table A3.1 is shy four strikes. Johnston, however, does not provide sources for his data and his description of '14 dyeing and woollen disputes' suggests a misinterpretation of Bevan's study.[11]

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[11] Thomas Johnston, *The History of the Working Classes in Scotland* (Yorkshire: EP Publishing Ltd, 1920), p. 314.

The second period (1888-1922) draws heavily on data collected by the Board of Trade which whilst generally rigorously compiled nonetheless suffers from an element of bias and incompleteness. Bias has been identified within the Board of Trade's data collection 'against small or short strikes,' both through a policy introduced in 1897 that excluded 'short or small strikes involving less than ten workers or lasting less than a day ... except where the total number of working days lost was more than 100' and through 'unintended bias arising from the probability of larger or longer strikes coming to the notice of the Department.'[12] Research by the Glasgow Labour History Workshop has confirmed under-representation of strikes due to 'deliberate underestimation' through application of the inclusion policy as well as due to under-recording by employers.[13]

Despite some problems with the comprehensiveness of the major strike data sources, their supplementation from an extensive trawl of primary and secondary sources provides a strong degree of confidence in the veridicality and completeness of the strike data that is Table A3.1 which allows it to be utilised to compare the pattern of striking in Perth with that of the UK. Figure 3.1 (overleaf) drawn from Table A3.1 displays the annual aggregate of strikes in Perth for 1867-1922. Table A3.2 (Appendix 3) offers a comparison between these figures and those for the UK as a whole, 1888-1922. The tables indicate some periods of correspondence in strike patterns between Perth and the UK.

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[12] Andrew Charlesworth, David Gilbert, Adrian Randall, Humphrey Southall and Chris Wrigley, *An Atlas of Industrial Protest in Britain 1750-1990* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1996), p. 126; Outram, 'Strike Statistics', pp. 186-87.

[13] Glasgow Labour History Workshop, 'The labour unrest in West Scotland, 1910-14', in Kenefick, *Red Clydeside*, p. 24.

Figure 3.1 *Annual Aggregate of Strikes in Perth, 1867-1922*

(**Source:** Table A3.1 (Appendix 3))
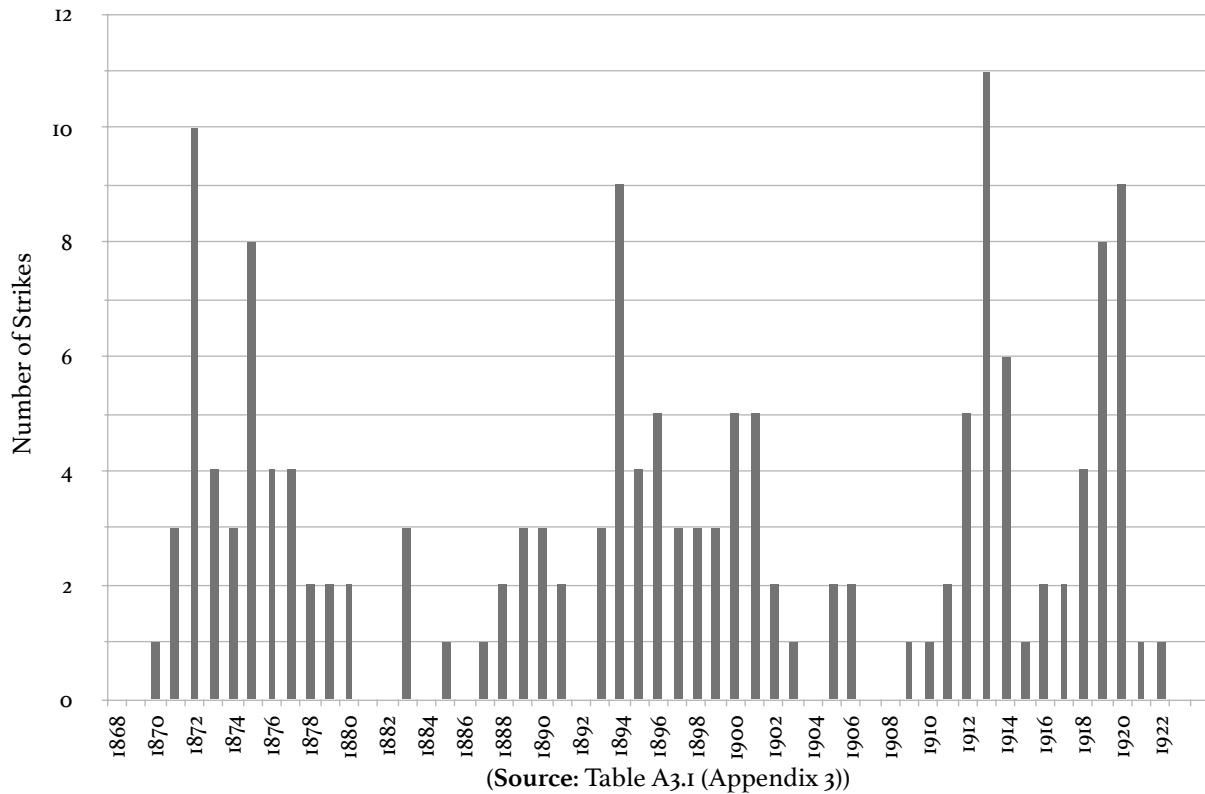
Before examining the development of the trade-union movement in Perth and exploring strike activity in Perth in more detail two strands of trade unionism - 'Agricultural, Forestry & Fishing' and 'Mining' - will be excluded from this study. In addition, a major area of employment - 'Domestic & Services' - will also be excluded. The rationale for each of these exclusions is explained below.

In the mid-nineteenth century unions representing agricultural workers became established in several parts of Scotland; the dynamism to do so was driven in part by the upbeat economic circumstances of the time when real wages were 'rising considerably' and unemployment was 'gradually decreasing'.[14] The Farm Servants' Union, for example, was formed in Dunbar *c.*

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[14] Burnett, *History of the Cost of Living*, p. 25; Mitchell, *British Historical Statistics*, p. 65.

1860. Five years later a Farm Servants' Protection Association was formed in Mid-Lothian. By July 1866 Perth had been brought into the fold: local societies were formed in the 'counties of Kinross, Forfar, Perth. Kincardine, Stirling, Clackmannan, Peebles, Roxburgh, Berwick, and East Lothian.' The Association lasted until *c.* 1872.[15] Another union, the Fife & Kinross Labourers' Association (FKLA), for which correspondence with PASE exists from at least 1874, was particularly active in its demands 'for increased wages, shorter hours, and fortnightly payments.'[16] Overall however as George Houston has argued 'trade unions among farm workers were particularly difficult to organize and the sporadic attempts at combination before 1870 produced weak and generally short-lived organizations.'[17]

Other than the Alyth Ploughmen's Club & Socialist Union, which played a part in the evolution of the Scottish Labour Party, agricultural trade unionism in and around Perth had little success.[18] PTC in its *Annual Report* for 1913 commenting on its collaboration with the Scottish Farm Servants' Union (SFSU), noted a paucity of recruitment amongst agricultural workers: 'the membership is by no means indicative of the numbers involved in agricultural work.'[19] The strike of farm labourers at Aberuthven in August 1914 over pay and housing conditions which was supported by the Auchterarder branch of the

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[15] Ian MacDougall (ed.), *Labour in Scotland: a pictorial history from the eighteenth century to the present* (Edinburgh: Mainstream Publishing, 1985), p. 110; Houston, 'Labour Relations in Scottish Agriculture', p. 39.

[16] PASE, *Minute Book*, 26 February 1874; Johnston, *Working Classes in Scotland*, pp. 355-56.

[17] Houston, 'Labour Relations in Scottish Agriculture', p. 34.

[18] For further information on the Alyth ploughmen see Mary Dempster Hewitt, 'Robert Dempster 1849-1906. A Family History' (Ilkley: unpublished manuscript, November 2008), p. 12-28.

[19] *Perthshire Advertiser*, 18 February 1914, p. 6.

SFSU might appear to suggest some progression in the development of agricultural trade unionism in the County of Perth, but the strikers were in fact young transient workers recruited from the Glasgow area for seasonal berry picking.[20] In the following years PTC participated in the organisation of the district's ploughmen - a viable union of whom affiliated to the trades council in March 1917.[21]

These developments apart, and despite a reference by the Webbs to a 'Ploughmen's Union' operating in Perthshire in 1834 (one that however collapsed soon after), and Christopher Whatley's claim that, 'Perthshire provides most of the early instances of agricultural trade unionism in Scotland' - an avowal supported by a report in the *Edinburgh Evening Courant* of a failed attempt to form a combination of farm workers in the Carse of Gowrie (a few miles from Perth) in 1805 - the history of agricultural trade unionism in Perth belongs more fully to the County of Perth and will not be appraised further.[22]

Scotland's coalfields are found along an East-West plane stretching from the Firth of Clyde to the Firth of Forth. Between 1867 and 1922 the principal mining areas within this zone lay in the Clyde Basin, Lanarkshire, Ayrshire, and after 1911 also in Fife and Clackmannan. Although in 1901 coal mining in Britain employed almost one million workers and the County of Kinross, lying a few miles from Perth, contained several mines (owned by either the Fife & Kinross

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[20] *Forward*, 1 August 1914, p. 8.

[21] PTC, *Minute Book*, 7 March 1917.

[22] *Poor Man's Guardian*, 26 July 1834, cited in Webb, *History of Trade Unionism*, p. 134; Christopher A. Whatley, 'An Uninflammable People?', in Ian Donnachie and Christopher A. Whatley, *The Manufacture of Scottish History* (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1992), p. 58; *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, 10 August 1885, cited in Houston, 'Labour Relations in Scottish Agriculture', pp. 34-35.

Coal Company or the Fife Coal Company), coal mining in the County of Perth was insignificant.[23] It is for this reason mining trade unionism will not feature further.[24]

Table 2.1 (Chapter 2) details the top seven areas of employment in the County of Perth, 1881-1911. These include 'Agricultural, Forestry & Fishing' (discussed above) and the manufacture of 'Textile Fabrics' whose industrial relations - alongside those manufacturing industries that fell under the labels 'Metals, Minerals & Machines', 'Clothing & Footwear', 'House & Building', and 'Transport' - form a key focus of this and the next chapter. Workers in the growing 'Professional Occupations & Subordinate Services' and 'Food, Tobacco, Drink & Lodging' sectors will be considered by this thesis indirectly. Chapter 7, for example, which examines the co-operative movement in Perth is in part concerned with a group of workers in the 'Food, Tobacco, Drink & Lodging' sector of the economy.

The large group of workers (almost 9,000 in 1911) employed in the 'Domestic & Services' sector is a difficult body to examine. Few studies of domestic servants in Scotland (or in the UK for that matter) as a body of workers exist despite the fact that as Selina Todd has argued, domestic servants 'constituted [in 1910] the largest single group of working people in Britain' and as Arnot has detailed, domestic service was 'one of the lowest paying occupations' even in the interwar years.[25] Jan Merchant's study of the Dundee maidservants

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[23] Carstairs, *The Tayside Industrial Population*, p. 20.
[24] Charlesworth, *Industrial Protest in Britain*, p. 60.
[25] Selina Todd, *The People: The Rise and Fall of the Working Class, 1910-2010* (London: John Murray, 2014), p. 14; Arnot, 'Women Workers', p. 64.

agitation of 1872 and Pamela Horn's *The Rise and Fall of the Victorian Servant* are notable exceptions.[26] The main reason for this lack of consideration is the almost complete absence of collective struggle or trade-union activity within this employment sector, which Horn has explained (in part) as due to 'the diffused nature of domestic service' and domestic servants' fear of losing employment. Apart from the aforementioned maidservants' agitation of 1872 and the establishment in Glasgow in 1911 of a trade union for domestic servants, which although it never grew significantly, nonetheless succeeded in winning a number of concessions including higher wages and increased free time, no serious attempt to unionise domestic servants in Scotland was made until the 1930s; and even then the initiative floundered.[27] In conclusion, despite the high proportion of workers employed in the 'Domestic & Services' sector in Perth between 1867 and 1922, domestic service will receive no further scrutiny in this thesis which turns next to the first critical point in the development of British trade unionism after 1867.

3.2 *the 1870s*

At the start of the 1870s national poverty levels were 'falling' from a local *maxima* (1869), wholesale prices were not just 'rising fast' but had hit their highest point since the late 1830s, money wages were 'rising significantly' and real wages were

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[26] Jan Merchant, 'The Dundee Maidservants' Agitation 1872', *Scottish Archives*, 1 (1995); Jan Merchant, 'An Insurrection of Maids: Domestic Servant and the Agitation of 1872', in Louise Miskell, Christopher A. Whatley, and Bob Harris (eds.), *Victorian Dundee: Image and Realities* (East Lothian: Tuckwell Press, 2000); Pamela Horn, *The Rise and Fall of the Victorian Servant* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1975).

[27] Greater success was had in London where the London & Provincial Domestic Servants' Union was founded in June 1891, but even that body could only muster 562 members at its apogee in 1895. Horn, *Victorian Servant*, pp. 157-58; Arnot, 'Women Workers', pp. 112.

'rising fast', industrial production (excluding building) was approaching its decade peak, and 'labour was in extreme demand ... and as a matter of wage, men could get pretty well what they liked to ask within reasonable limits,' and unemployment was 'falling fast' and approaching its decennial low.[28] This economic boom and period of low unemployment coincided with the removal of the legal obstacles to trade unionism. In this period trade unions expanded rapidly undergoing a membership 'explosion' between 1871 and 1873.[29] Between 1872 and 1880 strike activity in the UK maintained a level six-to-eleven-fold that of 1870.[30]

In 1871 the rate of poor per thousand of population in Perth hit a local *maxima* of 39.4 (941 people registered as poor relieved during the year) and stayed high for the following two years when UK-wide poverty levels were

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[28] The number of registered poor relieved during the year ended 14 May in Scotland for 1866 were 97,166, 100,756, 104,511, 105,384, 104,274, 103,334, 99,329, and 95,271 respectively corresponding to a rate of poor per thousand of population of 31.7, 32.9, 34.1, 34.4, 34.1, 30.8, 29.6, and 28.4 respectively. Unemployment rates for 1867-1879 were 7.4, 7.9, 6.7, 2.9, 1.6, 0.9, 1.2, 1.7, 2.4, 2.7, 4.7, 6.8, and 11.4 per cent. *Census of Scotland* 1861-1871, *numerous pages.;* John Burnett, *A History of the Cost of Living* (Middlesex: Penguin Books Incorporated, 1969), p. 254; Saul, *Myth of the Great Depression*, pp. 29, 31; Mitchell, *British Historical Statistics*, pp. 65, 272; Bevan, 'Strikes of the Past Ten Years', pp. 37-38.

[29] The union membership 'explosion' of 1871-1873 was not the first or last experienced in Britain - Eric Hobsbawm has catalogued others: 1833-1835, 1838-1842, 1889-1891, and 1911-1913. E. J. Hobsbawm, *Labouring Men: Studies in the History of Labour* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1964), pp. 126-27.

[30] Aggregate strike figures for the UK for the period 1870-1879 were 30, 98, 343, 365, 286, 245,229, 180, 268, and 308 respectively. Bevan, 'Strikes of the Past Ten Years', p. 37.

falling.[31] This poverty seems to have been associated with unskilled labour rather than the city's craft workers who represented by national amalgamated unions were involved in the majority of the 35 strikes of 1870-5, which in the main secured wage rises.[32]

Whilst formal UK unemployment figures exist only from 1922, trade unions furnished central government with unemployment data from as early as 1851. Scrutiny of this data provides no specific information as to unemployment levels in Perth. Anecdotal evidence however suggests that in the first few years of the 1870s, skilled workers in Perth had access to employment opportunities elsewhere.[33] In 1872, for example, workers struck at C. D. Young's engineering works threatening to leave should their demands not be acceded. When the company refused to negotiate, its employees secured positions in Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh, and Glasgow.[34]

Strike activity in Perth for 1871-1873 corresponds well with the UK picture of an upsurge in militancy led by craft unions operating within a climate of high

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[31] The poverty rates for 1867-1873 were 32.9 (798), 32.6 (791), 35.4 (833), 35.9 (845), 37.9 (890), 39.4 (941), 38.1 (910), and 37.8 (903) respectively. *Census of Scotland 1861-1871*, *numerous pages.*; *Twenty-first Annual Report of the Board of Supervision for the Relief of the Poor in Scotland* (HCPP, 3764, 1867); *Twenty-second Annual Report of the Board of Supervision for the Relief of the Poor in Scotland* (HCPP, 3957, 1867-1868); *Twenty-third Annual Report of the Board of Supervision for the Relief of the Poor in Scotland* (HCPP, 4095, 1868-1869); *Twenty-fourth Annual Report of the Board of Supervision for the Relief of the Poor in Scotland* (HCPP, C. 5, 1870); *Twenty-fifth Annual Report of the Board of Supervision for the Relief of the Poor in Scotland* (HCPP, C. 236, 1871); *Twenty-sixth Annual Report of the Board of Supervision for the Relief of the Poor in Scotland* (HCPP, C. 462, 1872); *Twenty-seventh Annual Report of the Board of Supervision for the Relief of the Poor in Scotland* (HCPP, C. 681, 1873), all *numerous pages.*

[32] Table A3.1 (Appendix 3).

[33] Mitchell, *British Historical Statistics*, p. 57; Board of Trade, *Report on the Strikes and Lock-outs of 1890 by the Labour Correspondent of the Board of Trade* (HCPP, C. 6476, 1890-1891), pp. 3-4.

[34] *The Scotsman*, 9 February 1872, p. 3, 23 February 1872, p. 5.

employment. As to trade-union growth levels in Perth, it is difficult to ascertain whether they matched the UK-wide upsurge. Several Perth trade unions recorded attendance at their meetings. PASE, for example, minuted meeting turnout for the early 1870s of between 16 and 32, but these offer no indication of recruitment trends.[35]

Perth Typographical Society (PTS), a printing union whose lineage can be traced back to the General Typographical Association of Scotland (GTAS - *est*. 1836) and whose Perth branch was formed *c.* 1837, provides an example of industrial militancy in Perth in the 1870s.[36] In June 1870 PTS presented a memorial to the city's master-printers requesting an 'advance of wages, the reduction of the hours of labour, and shortening of the period of apprenticeship.' All but one establishment agreed to a 2s weekly rise, with the proviso 'it not be opposed by any of their number,' which was the case. Samuel

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[35] PASE, *Minute Book*, 11 January 1870, 17 December 1874.

[36] GTAS amalgamated with the National Typographical Association in 1844; collapsed in early 1848) maintained a branch in Perth from 1 April 1855. PTS formed part of the Scottish Typographical Association (STA) which had been founded in 1853 and afterwards grew steadily in numbers, though not rapidly, from 2,100 in 1857 to 3,000 in 1892. In 1898 STA membership passed 3,500; it stood at 4,700 in 1910. In the early 1870s PTS had members in the *Perth Advertiser*; *Perthshire Courier*; *Dundee, Perth & Forfar People's Journal,* and the *Perth Constitutional* and in many other printing establishments. These would eventually include Mitchell & Company, Young & Sons, Smart & McKinlay, Leslie, Miller & Smout, Taylor & Company, David Wood & Son, Henry Munro Ltd, Farquhar & Son Ltd, and Milne Tannahill & Methven.) PTS, *Minute Book*, 26, 29 April 1872, 9 May 1873, 9 December 1876, 25 September 1905 (PKCA, Perth Typographical Society: *Society Records (1868-1976) - Minute Books*, MS40/1, 1872-1905); *The Scotsman*, 29 April 1872, p. 6; Paul Philippou and Rob Hands, *Born in Perthshire* (Perth: Tippermuir Books Ltd, 2012), p. 61; Arthur Marsh and John B. Smethurst, *Historical Directory of Trade Unions. Volume 5* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 2006), pp. 90-94; Gillespie, *Hundred Years*, 1953), pp. 27, 33, 44; David Finkelsten, *Tramping Typographers and Traditional Labour Mobility in the Scottish Printing Trade, 1850-1900* (Scottish Archive of Printing and Publishing History Records) www.sapphire.ac.uk [Accessed 14 March 2015], p. 3; Scottish Printing Archival Trust, *A Reputation For Excellence* (Edinburgh: Merchiston Publishing, 1996), p. 23; Correspondence with Alan J. MacGregor, Farquhar & Son, 11 November 2013.

Cowan, managing director of Cowan & Company Ltd (printers, book publishers, and owners of the *Perthshire Advertiser* (*est. c.* 1829)) refused. Cowan was a pre-eminent local figure. His civic career spanning many years saw him as a councillor, magistrate, historian, and author. Cowan's intransigence set a precedent that emerged as a *leitmotif* throughout his relationship with PTS. Eventually a 1s per week rise was agreed - a settlement which caused a rupture within PTS between a militant majority and a conservative minority. This division became more apparent throughout the 1870s as the *Perthshire Advertiser* trade-union chapel continued to make representation on wages.[37]

On 31 July 1876, for example, a dozen *Perthshire Advertiser* printers called upon the PTS leadership to put in for a 4s a week advance and higher overtime payments. The leadership advocated caution due to 'the state of trade,' however, an amendment to reduce the demand to 2s garnered only three votes and the full claim was carried by a large majority. This decision pitted PTS against the STA executive who mindful of the disastrous Edinburgh printers' strike of 1872-1873, which left the STA with debts of £6,620, rejected the proposal.[38] Refusing to acquiesce, PTS resubmitted the resolution later that year; that time successfully. Although the executive agreed to the memorial, PTS was soon embroiled in a dispute with the STA when after the *Perthshire Advertiser* 'refused to give any advance whatever,' PTS brought out both unionised and non-unionised printers. (PTS had more luck with the *Perthshire Constitutional* and the *Perthshire Courier* both of whose management propounded a 3s advance, which

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[37] PTS, *Minute Book*, 17 June 1870, 7 October 1870, 3, 10 November 1870.
[38] Reynolds, *Britannica's Typesetters*, p. 46.

was accepted.) The strike at the *Perthshire Advertiser* took its toll. Several printers left the town and as was traditional went on the 'tramp' seeking work elsewhere.[39] This left PTS diminished. To 'resuscitate the branch and encourage them to go on as usual' a delegation of the STA executive came to Perth in late March 1877. Reports of subsequent meetings suggest the intervention was successful.[40]

Whilst wage issues were the cause of the majority of strikes in Perth in the first six years of the 1870s (as they were for the entire period 1867-1922), 20% of the strikes in the early 1870s were demands for reductions in the working week.

3.3 *the Struggle for Shorter Hours*

By the 1860/1870s increases in the intensity of the labour process resulted in demands by craft unions to renegotiate the terms of the factory hegemony as 'working days of ten hours or more were becoming unacceptable.'[41] This struggle for a shorter working day began on Tyneside in the early 1870s as an unofficial movement of engineers - the Nine Hours' League. Lasting about six months, the campaign involved some 10,000 workers and 'secured notable

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[39] Tramping was a system by which journeymen members of a typographical society travelled between branches seeking employment. At each location, the member would either seek work themselves or ask for the assistance of the local branch secretary. If no work was forthcoming the member was entitled to receive financial assistance from the local branch. 'The purpose of the tramping system was to ensure that journeymen printers would not depress wages locally competing for jobs in one pace. There would be a strict circuit which they had to follow - on foot - and their membership had to be in good order.' http://www.wcml.org.uk/our-collections/working-lives/graphical-trades/typographical-unions/typographers--the-manchester-typographical-society/ [Accessed 9 June 2015].

[40] PTS, *Minute Book*, 31 July 1876, 29 August 1876, 20, 29 November 1876, 9, 15, 30 December 1876, 26 March 1877.

[41] Southall, *Industrial Protest*, p. 83.

victories … by uniting various grades of workers, unionized and non-unionized, skilled and unskilled' and 'stimulated an explosion of demands for a shorter working day' throughout the UK, which in the main involved the building, engineering, craft, and printing unions demanding a 51-hour week.[42] From 1870 PASE was corresponding on this issue other ASE branches. In January 1872 PASE looked to organise a Nine Hours' League committee in Perth communicating to that end with similar committees in Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh, Greenock, Kilmarnock, Leith, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and Port Glasgow:[43]

Campaigning in Perth involved engineering firms, railway companies, as well as carpenters and joiners, and typographers. The operative cabinetmakers, for example, applied in early 1872 for a 6-hour reduction to 51 hours per week, eventually achieving a 54-hour week.[44]

The carpenter and joiners' struggle for 'Nine Hours' which began in Edinburgh in 1862 became Scotland-wide after 1870. The carpenters and joiners' 51-hour target was effectuated in Perth and in most Scottish towns by 1877 as Table 3.2 (overleaf) confirms.

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[42] John Belchem, *Industrialization and the Working Class: The English Experience, 1750-1900* (Aldershot: Gower Publishing Company Ltd, 1991), p. 184. See also Acting Committee of the Nine Hours' League (22 May 1871), cited in J. T. Ward and W. Hamish Fraser (eds.), *Workers and Employers: Documents on Trade Unions and Industrial Relations in Britain Since the Eighteenth Century* (London: The Macmillan Press Ltd, 1980), pp. 102-03; John Burnett, *The Nine Hours' Movement. A History of the Engineers' Strike in Newcastle and Gateshead* (Newcastle-on-Tyne: John W. Swanston, 1872); K. McClelland, 'Time to Work, Time to Live: Some Aspects of Work and the Reformation of Class in Britain, 1850–1880', in Patrick Joyce (ed.), *The Historical Meanings of Work* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 202.

[43] PASE, *Minute Book*, January-February 1872; *The Scotsman*, 19 November 1872, p. 5; Lenman, *Dundee and its Textile Industry*, p. 70.

[44] *The Scotsman*, 9 February 1872, p. 3.

Table 3.2 *Length of the Working Week of Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners (ASCJ) Members, 1867 and 1877*

	1867	1877
Aberdeen	57	51
Clyde	57	51
Dumfries	57	51
Dundee	51	51
Edinburgh	51	51
Glasgow	57	51
Greenock	57	51
Kilmarnock	57-58	51
Inverness	57	51
Perth	57	51
Stirling	57	51
Wishaw	60	54

(**Source:** ASCJ, *Annual Report* 1877, cited in *The Scotsman*, 24 December 1877, p. 6)

By 1872 the 51-hour prize had been procured by Meigle and Alyth's slaters and plasterers. Things were more difficult for the district's masons and *The Scotsman* reported, 'the masons' movement has for the present collapsed,' although no reason was given. As UOMAS were recruiting heavily and growing steadily across Scotland at this time (assisted by the national boom in construction), it may be surmised that the issue was a local one.[45]

In September of 1872 a group of 3,000 members of the Iron Moulders' Association of Scotland (their wives, families, and friends) rallied in Perth so as 'to congratulate themselves on the success of the 51-hours movement.' Towards

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[45] *The Scotsman*, 1 April 1872, p. 5.

the end of 1872 with a strike of 600 engineers in Glasgow for 51 hours in full swing, a 'mass meeting of the ironworkers of Perth' took place in Perth with speakers from the Glasgow Short Time League. The passing only of a resolution in support of the Glasgow strikers and the lack of mention of their own struggle in newspaper reports suggests that the 51-hour issue had been secured in Perth by that time.[46]

PTS became involved in the 'Shorter Time' movement in the spring of 1872 issuing a memorial for 'a reduction of the working hours to 51 per week' as well as a weekly advance of 2s. Most master-printers responded negatively - some contemptuously. This hardened the printers' resolve who issued an ultimatum calling for all firms to agree terms or face strike action. Most employers agreed; the exceptions being Cowan and Mitchell & Company. After a further ultimatum, a strike began on 22 April 1872. At the end of April *The Scotsman* reported 'the master-printers in Perth, with one exception have complied with the request of their employees for the 51-hours limit.'[47] Perth was not alone in securing 51 hours. In 1872 Aberdeen, Dumbarton, and Dundee were all operating at this level, but Edinburgh and Glasgow were not. In securing 51 hours in advance of Scotland's main cities, PTS proved themselves a militant and recalcitrant body.

The UK-wide explosion in union militancy of the early 1870s sent shock waves into Perth where the city's artisan unions, with a bargaining strength provided by their skill and control of the craft and taking advantage of a strong

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[46] *The Scotsman*, 2 September 1872, p. 3, 15 November 1872, p. 5.
[47] PTS, *Minute Book*, 30 March 1872, 4, 26, 29 April 1872.

economy, made the best of the favourable circumstances. Perth's employers were forced to make concessions. Whilst wage demands dominated, the national cry for reduced working time was echoed in Perth. The established unions went about their business professionally maintaining communications with other branches and movements looking to turn the old slogan 'a fair day's work for a fair day's pay' into reality.[48] In this they achieved the success of other Scottish towns/cities/areas where the average working week had been reduced from 60 to 54-56½ hours.[49]

The struggle for shorter time in Perth was not confined to unionised artisans. Perth's non-unionised textile workers sought increased wages, longer meal breaks, and a reduced working week. When the engineers struck in Perth, they did so knowing that employment could be found elsewhere and knowing that they had a strong degree of mastery of the labour process. For Perth's textile workers, their demands were set against a backdrop of a factory system over which they had little control and few alternative employment options - and yet they were still successful.

While the craft unions led the charge for reduced working time through industrial disputes, in textiles (which primarily employed females and children) and in other poorly unionised industries, it was parliamentary legislation, albeit alongside worker militancy, that ultimately reduced the working week.[50]

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[48] 'This has now been the motto of the English working-class movement for the last fifty years.' Friedrich Engels writing in *The Labour Standard*, 7 May 1881, p. 1.

[49] James Arrowsmith, 'The Struggle over Working Time in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Britain', *Historical Studies in Industrial Relations*, 13 (Spring 2002), pp. 84, 87, 95.

[50] Arrowsmith, 'Working Time', p. 95.

Agitation and lobbying by reformers such as the Liberal MP, A. J. Mundella, and the Factory Acts Reform Association[51] touched Perth in the form of meetings such as that of male factory workers from Coupar Angus and Blairgowrie in May 1872.[52] How far this political input from outwith influenced Perth's textile workers is difficult to judge but it does seem that they were caught up in the national movement for reduced time. The strikes of October 1871 at Luke & Company's Ericht Linen Works and MacIntyre & Company's Erichtside Works, which centered on the length of meal breaks and which were eventually settled to the advancement of the workers, provide some corroboration of this assertion. At the Ericht Linen Works, power-loom weavers negotiated 'an advance of 1d per cut,' 'a full hour … for dinner and fifty minutes for breakfast,' and 'weekly payment of wages'. W. A. MacIntyre, owner of Erichtside was not initially as amenable as his business rival, James Luke owner of Ericht Linen Works, nonetheless, after a 'concession on the dinner hour,' the strikers resumed work whilst continuing to negotiate.[53]

In Perth, several textile firms extended meal breaks and reduced hours. Pullars granted a full hour for dinner in January 1872, and in 1873 after the threat of strike action and after other employers had made similar concessions the

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[51] Mundella's parliamentary work led to the 'the Factories (Health of Women) Act [1874] which restricted women's factory labour to 56 hours a week'.' Mary Lyndon Shanley, *Feminism, Marriage, and the Law in Victorian England, 1850-1895* (London: I. B. Taurus & Company Ltd, 1989), p. 94. See also B. L. Hutchins and A. Harrison, *A History of Factory Legislation* (London: P. S. King & Son, 1926), p. 173.

[52] *The Scotsman*, 13 May 1872, p. 6.

[53] *Blairgowrie Advertiser*, 28 October 1871, p. 2.

company reduced the working week from 57 to 51 hours (with increased pay).[54]

Both Campbells and Shields granted the full dinner hour:

> Yesterday morning, the female workers, numbering upwards
> of 600, in Messrs Shields & Company's weaving factory, Perth,
> struck as their demand of a rise in their wages of 10 per cent
> was not acceded to. The firm offered a rise of 5 per cent on the
> wages but it was refused. About three weeks ago, the workers
> obtained the full hour on their meals.[55]

How much backing Shield's women workers received from their male colleagues is unknown but the gender division of the strike is worth noting.

Not all of the district's textile workers showed a willingness to strike. Bleachers at Almondbank split on strategy, some threatened to leave their masters' employ whilst others were adamant that they would not strike.[56]

Trade unionism in Perth in the early 1870s appears to have been in phase with the cadence of UK-wide developments and to have shared the characteristics of the Scottish trade-union movement as a whole. Its craft unions were willing and able to successfully organise its members in pursuit of improvements to pay and working conditions and its textile workforce though aloof from trade unionism, nonetheless, was willing to act militantly when necessary. More will be said of Perth's textile workforce's proclivity to non-institutionalised protest (and spontaneous strikes) as a way of dealing with grievance later in the chapter.

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[54] *The Scotsman*, 15 March 1873, p. 5; Davies, 'Pullars of Perth', p. 19.

[55] *The Scotsman*, 31 October 1871, p. 2, 17 November 1872, p. 6.

[56] *Perthshire Courier*, 12 March 1872, p. 3.

Perth's artisan unions proved capable of defending the concessions made during the militancy of the early 1870s. In May 1878, when their colleagues on the Clyde were working 54 to 57 hours a week, PASE with the assistance of its central council saw off 'an encroachment on the hours of labour' and moderated 'a reduction in wages.' When in 1888 the ASE campaigned nationally for 53 hours most engineers in Perth were employed on 51-hour contracts.[57]

3.4 *the 1880s, the 'New Unionism' of 1889-1891, and the Period to 1897*

The decline in the trade-union movement that took place in the second half of the 1870s continued into the 1880s.[58] Facilitated by the Trade Union Acts, newspaper coverage of labour issues, wider acceptance of trade unionism, and examples of victory, trade unionism, fed by 'nearly stationary' money wages, 'rising' real wages, 'falling' prices and 'low' employment,[59] revived and expanded towards the end of the decade.[60] This augmentation comprised large numbers returning to the craft unions as well as the establishment of new bodies of previously unorganised workers embracing militant tactics - a 'new unionism' fed by an improving economic climate but also to a certain degree influenced by socialism.[61] As with the early 1870s this upsurge ran parallel with a strike wave.

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[57] PASE, *Minute Book*, 22, 28 May 1878, 22 June 1878, 29 October 1888; W. Hamish Fraser, *Trade Unions and Society: The Struggle for Acceptance 1850-1880* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1993), p. 40.

[58] Despite a low level of militancy the 1880s were, nonetheless, a time of high union density; and the emergence of socialism and independent labour representation - an issue examined in Chapters 3 and 4.

[59] Unemployment levels in 1879-1891 were 5.5, 3.5, 2,3, 2.6, 8.1, 9.3, 10.2, 7.6, 4.6, 2.1, 2.1, 2.1, and 3.2 per cent respectively. Burnett, *History of the Cost of Living*, p. 254; Saul, *Great Depression*, p. 29.

[60] TUC, *23rd Annual Report - Report of Parliamentary Committee (1890)*, cited in Ward, *Workers and Employers*, p. 118; *Report on the Strikes and Lock-outs of 1890*, pp. 3-4.

[61] Kenefick, *Red Scotland*, p. 4.

The upsurge was particularly marked in Scotland which alongside the industrial north of England was ahead of all other UK regions when the number of trade disputes per million workers for 1888-1893 is calculated.[62]

Figure A3.1 (earlier) and Table A3.2 (Appendix 3) suggest the trade-union vitality of the 1870s and the industrial relations tranquillity of the 1880s were experienced in Perth. It is the upsurge linked to the 'new unionism' of 1889-1891 that was missing. The absence of those sectors considered the backbone of the 'new unionism' - gas workers, dock labourers, seamen, and carters - from Table 3.3 (overleaf), which details the trade breakdown of strikes in Perth for 1889-1898, confirms the absence of 'new unionism'. (It would not be until the early 1900s, for example, that a branch of the National Union of Gasworkers & General Labourers was set up in Perth and not until 1913 before it organised its first strike.[63])

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[62] Southall, 'Geography of Unionisation', pp. 478-49.

[63] John B. Smethurst and Pete Carter, *Historical Dictionary of Trade Unions Volume 6* (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 2009), pp. 47-48; *Perthshire Advertiser*, 22 January 1913, p. 5.

Table 3.3 *Aggregate Number and Trade Breakdown of Strikes in Perth, 1889-1898*

	Number of Strikes	Trade		Number of Strikes	Trade
1889	3	Textile Workers (3) - Bakers	1894	9	Carpenters and Joiners (2) - Plasterers - Plumbers - Textile Workers (4) - Slaters
1890	3	Carpenters and Joiners - Textile Workers - Railway Workers	1895	4	Masons - Plasterers - Carpenters and Joiners - Textile Workers
1891	2	Textile Workers - Railway Workers	1896	5	Textile Workers (2) - Slate Quarry Workers - Railway Workers (2)
1892	1	Printers	1897	3	Textile Workers (2)
1893	4	Slate Workers - Painters - Coal Miners - Tailors	1898	3	Textile Workers - Masons - Bakers

(**Source***:* Table A3.1 (Appendix 3))

Why Perth appeared to evade 'new unionism' and what effect this had on the labour movement in Perth are questions to address.

Low employment levels offers a partial explanation to the first question. The Perth Gas Light Company, for example, had few employees in 1889-1891 and in 1901 the city had a mere 116 registered gas workers.[64] Unlike the gas workers, Perth's carters were a sizeable workforce, the census of 1891 detailing 639 of their number, more than enough to form a union.[65] Yet, no attempt to organise them was made until early 1898. That initiative failed. The following year an attempt was made to recruit carters in the Town Council cleansing department. In both cases 'indifference' on the part of the workforce resulted in failure.[66]

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[64] *Census of Scotland* 1901.

[65] *Census of Scotland* 1891.

[66] PTC, *Minute Book*, 30 March 1898; *Annual Report*, 9 November 1899.

The growth of 'new unionism' depended on support from the wider labour movement. In Glasgow for example, as Kenefick has argued, the development of general unionism among the city's dockers was assisted by the actions of the Glasgow Trades Council and the Seamen's Union. In Aberdeen, again according to Kenefick, a link existed between Aberdeen Trades Council and the Shore Workers' Union.[67]

A combination of the lack of those industries from which 'new unionism' could develop, a resistance to be unionised by those within what 'new unionism' industries that did exist (the previously non-unionised and 'unskilled'), and the disinterest at that time from the already organised Perth workforce in expanding trade unionism outside the established amalgamated societies (ostensibly those in the artisan trades) resulted in the complete absence from Perth of this critical point in UK-wide trade-union development. It will be argued that Perth's established unions were more than passively indifferent to the expansion of trade unionism and the development of general unionism: they acted, in fact, as a check on its expansion - as a conservative elite guarding the *status quo* - and in so doing limiting, restricting, and inhibiting, as will be seen in Chapters 5 and 6, the political development of the Perth working class. While 'new unionism' bypassed Perth, the city's artisan unions went about their normal business and again the printers provide a useful illustration.

Sarah Gillespie has described the 1880s as 'essentially a defensive period' during which the STA 'fared relatively well.' She goes on to explain, 'a few local

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[67] William Kenefick, *'Rebellious and Contrary' The Glasgow Dockers, 1853-1932. Scottish Historical Review Monograph Series No. 10* (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 2000), pp. 182, 186.

disputes occurred over attempts to increase hours or pay less than the recognised wage, but such encroachments were in general successfully resisted.' The 1887 Perth printers' strike illustrates this successful resistance well. In the early months of that year discontent at the *Perthshire Advertiser* ran high and several PTS members working in the newspaper's machine-room were openly defiant of management. The main issues at play were attempts to increase the working week to 54 hours, the running of machines during meal breaks, and the employment of two female compositors (recruited from Edinburgh[68]). Despite the mood of the branch, the STA General Secretary, John Battersby, 'counselled moderation and caution during these dull times when unemployed men were plentiful.' Eventually, the dispute was settled advantageously: the 'bold stand for the 51 hours' bore fruit facilitated in part by the support of the two female print workers,' both of whom as women were excluded from membership under STA rules.[69] Whether the support given by the female compositors was given freely remains unknown. Whatever the truth, unity of action aided the male workforce in the pursuit of their demands.

Before the end of 1887 Cowan again advocated a 54-hour week despite an agreement made in March 1886 not to do so for three years. Intelligence gathered by branch members intimated that Perth's other master-printers would follow suit if Cowan achieved his aim. (Cowan acted for many years as an

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[68] The Edinburgh print industry had maintained its competitive advantage for many years by employing female compositors. Eleanor Gordon and Esther Breitenbach, *The World is Ill Divided. Women's work in Scotland in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1990), p. 53.

[69] PTS, *Minute Book*, 24 February 1886, 23 June 1886, 2 November 1886, 6 December 1886, 8 , 12, 15 January 1887.

unofficial vanguard of the city's master-printers, who looked to him to advance their cause.) Several delegations of STA officials visited Cowan and each found him intransigent. At a fully attended branch meeting on 18 November 1887, with the support of the STA, PTS resolved to withdraw its members from the *Perthshire Advertiser* the following day. Within a week, with '19 journeymen, compositors and machinemen and 15 apprentices' on strike, and only 'the female compositors and a few apprentices' still in post, Cowan capitulated.[70]

PTS's ability to defend 51 hours suggests something of its strength and resolve, for by 1891 the Edinburgh and Glasgow societies were still working a 52½ week. Even after a national campaign was initiated in 1901, and Glasgow achieved 50 hours, the Edinburgh workforce (the main printing force in Scotland and the centre of print trade unionism) could still not reach the 51-hour target.[71] By January 1902 a working week (among printers) of 48 hours was the norm in Perth.[72] The ascertainment by PTS of better working conditions than Edinburgh and Glasgow was not however due to union penetration as Table 3.4 (overleaf) illustrates.

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[70] PTS, *Minute Book*, 5 March 1886, 9, 18 November 1887.
[71] Gillespie, *Hundred Years*, p. 67.
[72] PTS, *Minute Book*, 27 January 1902.

Table 3.4 *STA Membership, 1890 and 1891*

	Number of Journeymen Printers 1890|1891	Number of Apprentice Printers 1890|1891
Aberdeen	172|182	61|50
Dundee	173|182	23|22
Edinburgh	675|701	36|56
Glasgow	1,045|1,050	31|41
Paisley	32|29	5|4
Perth	**29|33**	**5|4**

(**Source:** Board of Trade, *Report on the Strikes and Lock-outs of 1891 by the Labour Correspondent of the Board of Trade* (HCPP, C. 6890, 1893-1894), p. 495)

PTS never commanded a large army of activists. Its 37 members in 1891 represented only 16% of the Perth print-force. Even in 1898 the union could only claim a membership of 68 (23% of all printers - a level of membership higher than the 66 of 1915), but what it achieved was penetration and control.[73] As long as PTS could challenge the hegemony within the print shops through strike action and control entry into the workforce, it could maintain advantageous terms. Female employment and the 'apprentice question' which are considered in Section 3.5 challenged matters.

In 1892 PTS submitted a memorial requesting a 3s advance with a *pro-rata* piece-rate improvement, to bring wages into line with Edinburgh. The response had all the elements of Nietzschean eternal recurrence. First, all the masters apart from Cowan agreed. This triggered a strike at the *Perthshire Advertiser;* the issuing of redundancy notices (to six printers); deputations of STA leadership; Cowan agreeing terms then reneging; a wildcat strike; the

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[73] PTC, *Minute Book*, 20 February 1898; PTS, *Minute Book*, 16 June 1915.

admonishment of strikers by the STA executive; before Cowan agreed to the claim.[74]

It would seem that trade unionism among the traditional artisan craftworkers in Perth had in the 1870s and 1880s developed along similar lines to that witnessed UK-wide. 'New unionism' as was argued earlier did not emerge in Perth, so that what remains to be seen of trade unionism in the period to the close of the nineteenth century are those industries outside the remit of the national amalgamated unions and the sphere of influence of 'new unionism'. In quantitative terms these industries were the source of employment for the vast majority of the Perth working class for whom union membership was a possibility, and qualitatively these were the textile industries.

Table A3.1 (Appendix 3) demonstrates the volatility and preparedness for striking within the Perth textile industry. Despite this appreciable worker militancy, no significant trade-union structures existed within the textile industry until 1918. The four-day strike at Smith & Sons (Smiths) of Alyth in February 1887 and that of the following year, considered next, provide exemplars from the 1880s of textile worker militancy and their resistance to joining a trade union.

Almost all of Smiths' workforce came out in February 1887 for an advance in wage. Only 20-30 workers, the entire male workforce, remained at work. The strike was notable for the support given by the local community and for the presence of a detachment of constables sent to police the dispute.

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[74] PTS, *Minute Book*, 21 December 1891, 9 May 1892, 11, 18, 20, 21 June 1892, 11 July 1892.

Several arrests were made during the picketing of the factory resulting in the prosecution of five women at the Sheriff Court for breach of the peace. All received fines of 5s. In settling, the company's spinners attained a 3d per week advance and its weavers 5% on rates.[75] In December of the following year Smiths' workforce struck again. That strike collapsed early and just before the arrival of Reverend Williamson, a Radical Unitarian Minister who had in 1885 founded the Dundee and District Mill & Factory Operatives' Union (DDMFOU).[76] Williamson later returned:

> Blairgowrie mill workers, on strike for a 5 per cent increase, were strongly advised by Williamson to return because of their "want of organization," that is, they did not belong to a union. They chose to ignore his advice, sent another deputation to the employers, and received replies from two that they are willing to grant the full increase.[77]

Williamson's demand that the mill workers return to work because they were not in a trade union is rather ironic given that DDMFOU was a 'no-strike union'. The experience in Perth at this time was by no means atypical of the textile industry nationally for which a large proportion of its workforce were non-unionised.[78] The matter of textile trade unionism in Perth will be addressed again later in this chapter, before doing so it is necessary to consider the establishment of what became after 1897 the epicentre of formal trade unionism in Perth, the trades council. This will be undertaken in Section 3.6.

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[75] *Dundee Courier*, 10 February 1887, 11 February 1887, 15 February 1887.

[76] *Dundee Courier*, 22 December 1888, 24 December 1888.

[77] *Glasgow Weekly Herald*, 16 February 1889, cited in Gordon, *Women and the Labour Movement*, p. 125.

[78] Fraser posits a figure of 25% for the level of unionisation amongst cotton workers in the 1890s for example. Fraser, *British Trade Unionism*, p. 73.

3.5 *Female Employment and Apprenticeships in the Printing Industry in Perth*

Employing female compositors yielded two financial advantages to employers: the ability to pay them at a lower rate than their male colleagues and the lack of an apprenticeship period for female compositors as opposed to the seven years required of the male journeyman.[79] Some degree of training was still required for female compositors, although as L. Barbara Bradby and Anne Black observed in 1899 it was much less than that required by their male counterparts

> For the girls there is no regular system of apprenticeship, and the length of their training varies. Usually it lasts for three or four years, occasionally they are put on piece-work after three months ... Thus, though never as completely trained, they become full wage earners at a much earlier period of employment than their contemporaries among men.[80]

In 1900, the female question exploded over the growing recruitment of female compositors (many recruited from Edinburgh) at the *Perthshire Advertiser* despite Cowan's promise, a couple of years earlier, to the STA General Secretary John Templeton not to do so, and within other local printing firms, and culminated in a five-month long strike by members of PTS.[81] In examining the female question in the Perth printing industry the Scottish Printing Archival Trust (SPAT) makes the claim: 'at one time he [Cowan] employed around 100 compositors, many of them women.' Unfortunately, no precise figure is given for the number of females on the *Perthshire Advertiser* workforce, nor is any reference provided by

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[79] Reynolds has identified other (though less common) reasons for female employment in the Scottish print industry such as a response to 'the efforts of philanthropists and defenders of women's rights.' Reynolds, *Britannica's Typesetters*, p. 23.

[80] L. Barbara Bradby and Anne Black, 'Women Compositors and the Factory Acts', *The Economic Journal*, 9, 34 (June 1899), p. 265.

[81] PTS, *Minute Book*, 26 September 1898.

SPAT for their assertion. However, the figure must have been substantial enough in 1900 to act as a catalyst for the long strike of that year.[82] Table 3.5 (below) details the gender breakdown within the Perth printing workforce, 1871-1911.

Table 3.5 *Gender Breakdown within the Perth Printing Workforce, 1881-1911*

	Number of Male Printers	Number of Female Printers	Proportion of Female Printers (%)
1881	140	24	14.6%
1891	197	33	14.3%
1901	201	96	32.3%
1911	220	74	25.2%

(**Source:** *Census of Scotland* 1881-1911)

Female recruitment into the Perth printing industry grew rapidly between 1891 and 1901. In that decade the male workforce increased by only 2% whilst the female workforce almost tripled in size so that in 1901 virtually one printer in three was a woman. The claim by the SPAT of around 100 female compositors at the *Perthshire Advertiser* (at peak female employment) is not undermined by the census return for 1901.

On Saturday 23 June 1900 notices were handed in to the four Perth printing firms about their employment of female labour. The situation at three of these companies was described in detail by the *Dundee Courier* at the time.

> One of the offices concerned has employed a very large number of female compositors for upwards of thirty years and although one or two efforts have been made during that time by means of strikes to get the female labour displaced the Typographical Society has been invariably unsuccessful. Another of the firms has employed one or two girls for the past three years, but during that time no active measures were

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[82] SPAT, *Reputation For Excellence*, p. 27.

> taken by the Society. About six months ago a third firm introduced three girls to take the place of apprentices, of whom there is at present an absolute dearth.[83]

It was when the fourth firm chose to introduce 'one or two' female compositors that PTS resolved to act. On 11 June 1900 PTS issued a written statement to the master printers of Perth requiring of them within a month either 'to displace the women or to come to some amicable arrangement.'[84]

(Cynthia Cockburn has argued that the female question was just that, a question over the employment of females.

> Had nothing but class interest been at stake, the men would have found women compositors acceptable as apprentices, would have fought whole-heartedly for equal pay for women and for the right of women to keep their jobs at equal pay. ... As it was, the men and their unions sought to have the women removed from the trade.[85]

Reynolds has addressed what she describes as a mythology permeating the popular history of the Scottish print unions that it was female 'rat labour' that broke the Edinburgh strike of 1872-1873.[86] Her research has undermined this version of events demonstrating successfully that it was male strike-breakers who damaged the union and helped the print masters win the strike. Nonetheless, Reynolds does point out that because of the defeat of the print union, large-scale female employment (as compositors) in Edinburgh's print

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[83] *Dundee Courier*, 25 June 1900, p. 3.

[84] *Dundee Courier*, 25 June 1900, p. 3.

[85] Cynthia Cockburn, *Brothers: Male Dominance and Technological Change* (London: Pluto Press, 1983), pp. 150, 151.

[86] Gillespie, *Hundred Years*, p. 105.

offices became a growing reality. By 1875, the Edinburgh 'print workforce'

comprised 114 females and 928 males.[87]

Female compositors outside Edinburgh were a rarity, and outside

Scotland even rarer, being virtually unknown in London due to the enforcement

of a gender barrier by the London print unions.

> There were certainly women employed in Aberdeen, and
> instances were also reported in Falkirk and Glasgow in the
> 1880s, and in Perth in the 1890s, where the number of women
> were at least such to be "reduced by seventeen". In 1908
> women were still being employed in both Perth and
> Aberdeen.[88]

Gillespie has also found cases of female printers employed in Dundee.[89] Given

that pay rates in the printing trade were on the whole higher in Glasgow and

Edinburgh than elsewhere in Scotland, it would not be an unreasonable to

assume that Cowan & Company was paying above the 'female' market rate.)

Initially the printing masters agreed to negotiate with the union.

> There was a subsequent request made to them [Messrs Cowan
> & Company] to allow the girls of the jobbing side of the works
> to die out and to get married.[90] He [Cowan] declined to agree
> that. The result of this was a strike, and all the men went out
> except three.[91]

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[87] Reynolds, *Britannica's Typesetters*, p. 45.

[88] Reynolds, *Britannica's Typesetters*, pp. 47-48.

[89] Gillespie, *Hundred Years*, p. 201.

[90] In her investigation of female compositors working in the Edinburgh printing industry, Reynolds studied the those '844 women still in the trade at the end of the year 1910.' As part of her research, Reynolds examined the marriage patterns among this group concluding 'those who did marry all left the trade, except for a few cases.' The proposal for the diminution of the female workforce through marriage, when place in the context of Reynolds' work, is likely to have been effective. Reynolds, *Britannica's Typesetters*, pp. 88, 105-11

[91] *Dundee Courier*, 22 August 1900, p. 7.

After the failure of those negotiations, the firm's male compositors (34 letterpress printers in two shops) struck work on 9 July 1900,[92] having given in their notices two weeks previous. By early August 1900 both PTC and the national print union had become closely involved in the dispute at the *Perthshire Advertiser*: 'Mr. Templeton[93] of the Printers being present gave a short report of the dispute at present going on amongst them here and explained that the executive intend to carry it on.'[94] Support for the strike did cause the STA national leadership some concern and a degree of reflection:

> [The dispute] put the Association in something of a 'dilemma', since they had so recently given financial support to the Edinburgh Female Compositors Society whose members certainly did not receive the full journeymen wage. It was decided, however, to adhere to the former decision to admit women provided they were employed under the same conditions as men, but to oppose under paid female labour. Edinburgh was by the size of its problem recognized as a special case.[95]

Before the 1900 dispute at the *Perthshire Advertiser*, the newspaper's columns had consistently offered detailed reports of PTC meetings (to which local journalists were admitted freely) and provided sometime verbatim reports of speeches and discussions. This practice of open meetings was ended as a response to both the *Perthshire Advertiser* breaking from this custom during the printers' strike and in protest to hostile newspaper reports of the strike, so that PTC only admitted to their future meetings journalists who they knew to be trade unionists. The printers' strike entered its twentieth week on 22 November

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[92] *The Scotsman*, 25 June 1900, p. 9; PTC, *Minute Book*, 19 July 1900.

[93] John Templeton was General Secretary of the STA from 1893 to 1911.

[94] PTC, *Minute Book*, 9 July 1900.

[95] Gillespie, *Hundred Years*, p. 107.

1900 at which time, in response to an appeal by the printers for financial support, PTC set up a voluntary subscription in their name. By mid-December, the strike to prevent the employment of female compositors at the *Perthshire Advertiser* was over – the union had lost.[96]

Volume I of the *Minute Book* of PTS covers the period 1868-1899, Volume 2 begins at the start of March 1901 – there are no entries for the year 1900 nor for the first two months of 1901, and no explanation for the gap. No other break in the minutes exists in the coverage of the remaining five volumes of the PTS *Minute Book*, which runs from 1868 to 1976. Such speculation as might the mysterious absence of the 1900 minutes inspire is not the place of this research. That comment withstanding, the following entry from the minutes of the Annual General Meeting of PTS of 4 March 1901 tempts conjecture. 'It was agreed to read minutes from the last quarter meeting only.'[97] It is unfortunate that the printers' own words do not exist to describe the 1900 dispute. Of equal importance, is the lack of the female voice. This is especially so as the strike took a somewhat acute turn in August 1900. The *Dundee Courier* reporting on disturbances outside the premises of Cowan & Company and police involvement described the scene:

> At one of the printing establishments violence had been repeatedly reported to, and bricks and stones have been flung at the windows and much damage has been done. The windows had to be barricaded, and a number of male printers have had to sleep on the premises. Exciting scenes are witnessed nightly, and the effigy of the proprietor of a local newspaper was burned one night.[98]

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[96] PTC, *Minute Book*, 20 December 1900.
[97] PTS, *Minute Book*, 4 March 1901.
[98] *Dundee Courier*, 11 August 1900, p. 6.

Although not the only firm affected by the strike, Cowan's Tay Street and

Watergate premises were the principal works affected by picketing and

according to the *Perthshire Advertiser's* own reports were 'beset night and day,'

'badly damaged,' and experienced window smashing as a 'nightly occurrence.'[99]

As a result of events during one of these disturbances, John Bridges (President of

PTS) and Thomas Henshelwood (printers' machine-man) found themselves

before Sheriff-Substitute J. D. Sym on 21 August 1900 charged with contravening

the Conspiracy and Protection of Property Act 1875.[100]

> The complaint being that on 11th August, at the office of Cowan
> & Company, printers, Tay Street, the accused with a view to
> compelling a number of Messrs Cowan's workmen to abstain
> from working, intimidated them, and beset the office in which
> they were then working.[101]

Sym pronounced guilty verdicts on both defendants, fining Henshelwood 2

guineas and Bridges £10. This inflamed the central union leadership. John

Templeton, the General Secretary of the STA speaking to PTC at one of their

meetings declared the intention of his union's executive to pursue the 'wrongful

prosecution' of Bridges and Henshelwood to the Court of Session: 'if justice was

to be got they would have it at any cost.'[102]

Sheriff Sym had passed judgment in a very similar case a week earlier. In

that case, John Montgomery, a member of the painters' union and a delegate to

PTC, stood in court charged with intimidation and attempting (with a group of

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[99] *Perthshire Advertiser*, 5 September 1900, p. 5.
[100] *Perthshire Advertiser*, 22 August 1900, p. 5.
[101] *The Scotsman*, 22 August 1900, p. 8.
[102] PTC, *Minute Book*, 9 July 1900.

10-14 others, none of whom were similarly charged) to stop two 'outside' painters from undertaking work about 14 weeks in to the strike. After pronouncing Montgomery guilty of the charges, Sheriff Sym went on to show some leniency and understanding of the frustrations of a long strike. Notwithstanding his own observation, 'the offence even to the extent he had it proved was a very serious one, and one of which an eminent judge had expressed the opinion that such an offence ought never to be punished except by imprisonment,' Sym went on to accept the existence of 'circumstances of extenuation' and fined Montgomery £5.[103] In an interesting epilogue to the trial, the *Perthshire Advertiser* reporting on the violent demonstrations at its own offices, referred to Montgomery as being wanted in that connection and for a similar charge to that he had been convicted previously, and having disappeared as a consequence.[104]

A few weeks after his conviction, Thomas Henshelwood was back in court (before Bailie Wood), this time alongside co-defendants, Edward McLean (labourer), Charles Brown (machine-man), John Murie (compositor), and William Crowe (compositor). Again the charge related to the Conspiracy and Protection of Property Act 1875 and attempting to compel Cowan's employees of to abstain from their work. Bailie Wood remitted the men to the Sheriff.[105] Brown, McLean, Crow, and Dunn appeared before Sheriff Sym in November 'charged with having on several dates in September and October, intimidated several of the employees of Cowan & Company.' The case lasted some eight hours, before a crowded court room; the Sheriff conferred guilty verdicts on all

[103] *Perthshire Advertiser*, 13 August 1900, p. 3.
[104] *Perthshire Advertiser*, 5 September 1900, p. 5.
[105] *The Scotsman*, 10 October 1900, p. 10.

four of the defendants – Charles Brown received 30 days, McLean, Crow, and Dunn 20 days each.[106]

The catalyst for the violence outside the *Perthshire Advertiser* was Cowan's decision to employ non-union printers as replacements for his striking workforce. Early on in the strike, 15 such non-union men were recruited, but these soon left Perth after what the *Dundee Courier* described as intimidation. Cowan managed to recruit a further 8-10 printers to replace the first cohort, but many of these men also left Perth as a result of being pressurised to do so. To safeguard those few printers who remained in his employ, Cowan boarded and lodged them at his premises: 'he was badly off for room, and he gave them his own room, the reporters' rooms and the counting-house.'[107] It was these men that the Perth printers were charged with intimidating.

The strike eventually culminated in Cowan raising an action for damages against John Templeton (STA General Secretary), James Brown (PTS Secretary), and eight striking printers at Perth Sheriff Court in front of Sheriff-substitute Sym in December 1900. The principle charge brought was that:

> The union had conspired to compel the pursuers to cease their employment; that their property had been injured and their employees intimidated by the defenders. They had also offered bribes to the pursuers' servants ... the funds being supplied by the Association. By these illegal means the defenders had induced forty-five employees or intending employees of the pursuers to leave or not to enter their employment.[108]

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[106] *Dundee Courier*, 12 November 1900, p. 7.
[107] *Dundee Courier*, 22 August 1900, p. 7.
[108] *The Scotsman*, 13 December 1900, p. 8; *Perthshire Advertiser*, 12 December 1900, p. 5.

Eventually, 'the former decision to admit women provided they were employed under the same conditions as men, but to oppose underpaid female labour, was upheld,' and the *Perthshire Advertiser* men returned to work without realising their ambition of a male only print workforce.[109] At a special meeting of PTS and those from across Perth's labour movement, the printers 'who served a term of imprisonment for intimidation while the strike was in progress were each presented with a silver watch and chain from the other printers.'[110]

The issue of calling for equality of pay between the sexes in the nineteenth-century print industry has been examined both by Sian Reynolds[111] and by Cynthia Cockburn who drawing upon work by Sidney Webb and Amy Linnett[112] makes a claim of 'studied hypocrisy' by the male print unions.

> The compositor could rest assured in the knowledge that no employers would take on women at equal pay with men, "with the limitations that the Factory Acts place on her ... some possible hostility of the men and other considerations," that her working with the men might introduce.[113]

The key pieces of legislation for this period are the Factory Act 1878, which consolidated and unified previous Acts most notably those of 1844, 1847, and 1850, and the Factory Acts (Extension) Act 1867 (a result of the Children's Employment Commission 1862-1866), which applied to a range of factories not just those in the textile industry. Under the provisions of the Factory Acts:

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[109] SPAT, *Reputation For Excellence*, p. 23.

[110] *The Scotsman*, 25 December 1900, p. 7.

[111] Reynolds, *Britannica's Typesetters*, p. 73.

[112] Sidney Webb and Amy Linnett, 'Women Compositors', *Economic Review*, II, I, (January 1892).

[113] Cockburn, *Brothers*, p. 34.

> A woman as a rule, may only work from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., or 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., or 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., with 1½ hours off for meals. During 30 nights in the year (more than three of which must not come in the same week) she may work for two hours overtime, provided that the overtime is never earlier than 6 a.m. or later than 10 p.m., and that two hours are allowed for meals.[114]

Cockburn's argument that the stipulations of the Factory Acts ultimately stood in the way of equal pay might apply to large newspapers printing offices where the Factory Acts prevented female compositors from undertaking night shifts and indeed women were rarely employed by such firms, and it might apply to journeymen employed on stab or time rates of pay,[115] but for the majority of woman working in book printing (and to a lesser extent local newspapers such as the *Perthshire Advertiser*) as piece workers or linesmen, there was no reason why both male and female piece rates could not be the same. Bradby and Black considered 'the restrictions imposed on women compositors by the Factory Acts' at the turn of the nineteenth century and concluded in neither of the trade's two branches, book work and printing, did factory legislation significantly affect the numbers of women employed nor their wages, 'except in a few small houses.'[116] Printers in Perth had secured a 51-hour week as early as 1872 and so it is difficult to see how factory legislation can have played any part in denying equal treatment to female compositors. As for evening and night work, the practice of the Perth-based newspaper firms involved utilising apprentices to undertake those out-of-hour tasks associated with regional

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[114] Bradby, 'Women Compositors', p. 263.

[115] The stab rate was paid to the most skilled printers undertaking work at an established wage level.

[116] Bradby, 'Women Compositors', pp. 261-66.

newspaper production such as awaiting the arrival of the capital's newsprint, *The Times* and *Park Lane Express* included, on the London mail coach.

If Cockburn is correct in her argument that the pursuit of equal pay was not a heartfelt aim of the print unions, rather their aim was the removal of females from their craft, then the 1900 typographical strike in Perth was a complete failure for it did not end the employment of women at the *Perthshire Advertiser*. There is no evidence to suggest that in the aftermath of the strike the female compositors received an advance in wages commensurate with their male colleagues and so the equal-pay settlement should be viewed as simply a face-saving exercise.

The female question continued to vex the STA in the first decade of the twentieth century especially after its Glasgow branch failed in 1903-1904 to secure a wage increase through arbitration due to its exclusion of women; the arbiter arguing that the exclusion affected competition with Edinburgh firms. A special delegate meeting to examine the employment of women within the industry was consequently instigated by the Glasgow branch (in 1905). That meeting included branches in which women had been admitted as union members and those (including Glasgow) where male exclusivity was still maintained. Motions attempting to open STA membership to both genders[117] were defeated at the conference of delegates and instead:

> A resolution was passed forbidding any further introduction
> of women into any department of any Branch from that date,
> but it was left to the Branches concerned to take the initiative,

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[117] Under the supervision of the STA an Edinburgh Female Compositors' Society came into being in 1911. Aberdeen followed suit in 1918. Gillespie, *Hundred Years*, p. 206.

as opportunity presented itself, to deal with the existing problem.[118]

True to the terms of the resolution individual branches pursued their own path. Aberdeen's printers attained an agreement in 1907 with their local print masters to end female recruitment into any skilled role, but only after a bitter 15-week strike. In Dundee negotiations reduced the number of female printers to two, also in 1907. Edinburgh succeeded in the summer of 1910[119] in ending female recruitment but it had been a long and hard struggle to that end.

When the *Perthshire Advertiser* was sold in early 1909, the new proprietor declared that he 'intended retaining the females, although he had made preparations for the introduction of machines at a future date.'[120] A few months later, another Perth printing firm, Wood & Sons, began negotiations with PTS over becoming a union-recognised establishment. (Attaining union recognition made business sense: PTS's ability to apply pressure on local government, church, and other organisations such as the CPCS to place their printing work with union-recognised print shops was well developed and long-standing. Wood & Son lost their printing contract with the CPCS in 1905 after a prolonged campaign by PTS to persuade the directors of the CPCS to move their printing to a unionised establishment, in this case Smart & McKinlay's).[121] At first the line pursued in negotiations by the Executive of PTS involved obtaining 'an agreement to the effect that when any of the females who were at present

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[118] Gillespie, *Hundred Years*, p. 204.

[119] The female question was not addressed in Edinburgh until 1909.

[120] SPAT, *Reputation For Excellence*, p23; PTS, *Minute Book*, 1 February 1909.

[121] PTS, *Minute Book*, 29 July 1905.

employed with him [Mr Wood], left, whatever may be the reason, no further introduction [of female labour] would be made.'[122] This approach fell up against the membership who were determined to see the complete removal of female compositors from the Perth print trade. Forced to respond to their members' strength of feeling, the executive took up the demand for the removal of female labour at Wood & Son with a vigour that was in due course successful. At a special meeting of PTS in mid-October 1909 it was reported that Wood & Son had contracted to dispose of all female labour.[123]

According to Gillespie PTS could report to the STA in 1909 'the end of underpaid female labour in the area.'[124] This claim requires further examination. In the calendar year after PTS declared pay equality, the managing director of Cowan & Company was not only continuing to maintain a female workforce, but when attacked by the PTS leadership for doing so offered in his own defence the argument: 'as he was the only printer in Perth who competed for the London book trade he was compelled to employ females.'[125] It is not too much of a deductive leap to conclude from this statement that Cowan & Company were still employing cheap female labour in 1910.

Apprenticeship density was another key area of struggle in the craft industries. Apprentice ratios were a matter of worker control over entry into the workplace and control of the labour market as a means of maintaining and improving wages and conditions. The very power of the artisan stemmed from

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[122] PTS, *Minute Book*, 9 August 1909.

[123] PTS, *Minute Book*, 20 October 1909.

[124] Gillespie, *Hundred Years*, p. 204.

[125] PTS, *Minute Book*, 29 March 1910.

the trade's ability to act as gatekeeper to the profession and arbiter of practice.[126]

As Richard Price has argued, 'typographers in particular were markedly successful in restricting apprenticeship.'[127]

At the end of 1891 PTS voted on its focus for 1892, and although many members abstained, the vote split 14 for the 'wage' issue and 13 for apprentice numbers. The ballot result suggests that despite problems with apprentice-journeyman levels, it was not a major threat to employment in Perth.[128] In fact, Perth's master-printers sometimes struggled to find sufficient apprentice recruits.[129]

3.6 *1897 to 1913 - the Establishment of Perth Trades Council*

As has been shown, trade unionism in Perth in the 1870s and 1880s developed along similar lines to its counterparts across Scotland sharing the membership and strike activity bursts experienced nationally. 1889 marked a departure from this commonality of development, 'new unionism' being absent from Perth. This absence proved telling.

Economic depression, 'rising' prices, a period of high unemployment (1903-5), and generally 'falling' real wages and rising poverty ushered in another spell of industrial relations peace nationally (1898-1907), which saw the aggregate strike levels for 1903-5 falling to 30% of that of 1899. Between 1909 and 1913 there was an amelioration in the economy and trade unions expanded in

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[126] Gillespie, *Hundred Years*, p. 190.

[127] Richard Price, *Labour in British Society. An Interpretative History* (London: Croom Helm, 1986), p. 81.

[128] PTC, *Minute Book*, 21 December 1891.

[129] *Dundee Courier*, 25 June 1900, p. 3.

membership and militancy.[130] Increasingly influenced by socialist and in some cases syndicalist ideas, trade unionism in the pre-war period formed part of an upsurge in social unrest.[131] The significance of this pre-war militancy is contested. Pelling was not alone in arguing for continuity with traditional struggles for higher pay, recognition, and better conditions. Hobsbawm, on the other hand, claimed that the upsurge of 1911 (and indeed 1889) went beyond the narrow confines of the craft unions and so proletarianised the masses.[132] (A further upsurge in industrial unrest occurred during 1918-1921.)

Figure A3.1 and Table A3.2 (both Appendix 3) show a similarity between Perth and the UK narrative: the slowdown in militancy in the first years of the nineteenth century, the upsurge before the Great War that persisted to 1914, the subsequent lull, and the postwar increase in strikes are all suggested. This quantitative correspondence, however, masks significant deviations from the trade-union history of Dundee and elsewhere, particularly, as will be seen in the next section, in regard to the district's trades council.

Trades councils assumed a greater importance in Scotland than in the rest of the UK due to the localised and federal structure of Scottish unions and the general weakness of Scottish trade unionism. Alan Clinton has made a case for the active role of trades councils in the 'expansion and development of trade

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[130] Between 1897 and 1900 real wages 'rose'. Unemployment which had stood at 7.8% and 7.7% in 1907 and 1908 respectively dropped to 2.1% in 1913. Mitchell, *British Historical Statistics*, p. 65.

[131] Kenefick, *Red Scotland*, p. 4; Fraser, *History of British Trade Unionism*, p. 105.

[132] Pelling, *History of British Trade Unionism*, p. 132 *ff.*; Hobsbawm, *Labouring Men*, p. 318.

unionism.'[133] In addition, he has argued that trades councils 'until the 1918 Labour Party Constitution, they were nearly always of greater importance locally than similar organisations devoted to purely electoral matters.' As well as electoral, political, and trade-union work, trades councils involved themselves in a variety of 'representative and quasi-representative functions ... work on judicial benches, education committees, and in various aspects of the administration of both public and private welfare services.'[134] As will be seen later, not all of the trade unions that comprised PTC were content to see this widening of the trades councils' sphere of influence.

The first tentative moves to set up a trades council in Perth were made by PTS as early as 1872. Despite these efforts, PTC was not established until 12 October 1897.[135] Table 3.6 (overleaf) places the formation of PTC in a Scotland-wide context. Whilst post-dating the large Scottish cities, PTC's formation was, as can be seen, not an outlier.

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[133] Alan Clinton, *The Trade Union Rank and File. Trades Councils in Britain, 1900-40* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1977), p. 4.

[134] Alan Clinton, 'Trade Councils During The First World War', *International Review of Social History*, 15, 02 (August 1970), pp. 202-03.

[135] PTS, *Minute Book*, 30 November 1872, 14 December 1872; PTC, *Minute Book*, 12 October 1897.

Table 3.6 *Growth of Trades Councils in Scotland, 1850-1920*

Year of Formation	Trades Council
1850s	Glasgow
1860s	Aberdeen, Edinburgh
1870s	/
1880s	Arbroath, Dundee, Greenock, Kilmarnock
1890s	Dunfermline, Falkirk, Govan, Inverness, Montrose, Paisley, **Perth**, Vale of Leven, Wishaw
1900s	Clydebank, Cowdenbeath, Hawick, Leith, Motherwell, Renfrew, Rutherglen, Sterling
1910s	Alloa, Barrhead, Bathgate, Bo'ness, Bothwell, Burntisland, Cambuslang, Carstairs, Coatbridge, Dumbarton, Dumfries, Galashiels, Gretna, Hamilton, Johnstone, Kilsyth, Kinross, Kirkcaldy, Peterhead, Waterside
1920s	Airdrie, Brechin, Elgin, Grangemouth, Stornoway

(**Source:** Clinton, *Trade Union Rank and File*, pp. 193-94)

Fraser has noted that, 'trades councils depended for the core of their membership on the small craft societies and the larger national societies tended to hold aloof from them. ... Neither the boilermakers nor the miners bothered with councils,' a situation replicated in Perth in 1897-1898 as Table 3.7 (overleaf) confirms. The dominant artisan membership of PTC is also evidenced by Table 3.7.[136]

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[136] Fraser, *Trade Unions and Society*, p. 46.

Table 3.7 *PTC Trade Union Affiliation and Membership Levels, 1898*[137]

Trade	Trade Union	Membership in 1898
Amalgamated Joiners	Amalgamated Society of Carpenters & Joiners	48
Associated Joiners	Associated Carpenters & Joiners	95
Bakers	Operative Bakers of Scotland National Federal Union	87
Blacksmiths	NR (Possibly the Associated Blacksmiths of Scotland)	17
Brassfounders	Perth Operative Brassfounders' & Finishers Society	15
Carpet Weavers	NR	26
Coachbuilders	Society of Coachbuilders	NR
Engineers	Amalgamated Society of Engineers	NR
Labourers	NR	30
Masons	United Operative Masons Association of Scotland	159
Painters	Scottish Amalgamated Society of House & Ship Painters	20
Plasterers	Scottish National Operative Plasterers' Federal Union	26
Plumbers	United Operative Plumbers' Association of Scotland	31
Printers	Scottish Typographical Association	68
Railway Workers	Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants	75
Slaters	Amalgamated Society of Slaters	21
Tailors	Scottish Amalgamated Tailors' Association	80

(**Source**: PTC, *Minute Book*, 20 February 1898, 17 March 1898)

Total affiliation to PTC in 1898 was around 800. By 1903 PTC had shrunk from 15 societies to 13 and from 800 members to 700.[138] How PTC affiliation levels compared with other trades councils is revealed by Table 3.8 (overleaf).

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[137] NR = Not Recorded.

[138] PTC, *Minute Book*, 29 January 1903.

Table 3.8 *Aggregate Affiliation of Scottish Trades Councils, 1906-1910*

	1906	1907	1908	1909	1910	Number of Affiliated Unions in 1910
Aberdeen	7,500	8,988	6,893	5,835	5,428	33
Dundee & District	15,000	15,958	17,000	17,487	16,500	35
Dunfermline & District	9,875	9,323	9,375	10,100	9,503	16
Edinburgh & District	8,700	11,550	12,021	12,000	11,176	50
Glasgow	45,000	47,500	47,500	50,500	50,000	90
Paisley	3,681	4,000	4,000	3,437	4,415	27
Perth & District	**750**	**1,100**	**1,045**	**782**	**945**	**17**

(**Source:** Board of Trade - Labour Department, *Report on Trade Unions in 1908-1910* (HCPP, Cd. 6109, 1912-1913), p. 128)

Even given population and economic differences and its later date of formation, PTC stands out from its comparators remaining throughout its lifetime a small body.[139]

The ability of PTC to grow depended on two factors: its ability to recruit and maintain established trade-union branches as members, and the effectiveness of those branches in recruiting and maintaining members; and its ability to establish and ally new trade unions especially amongst the unskilled or those working in traditionally non-unionised industries.

In regard to the first factor, it needs to be noted that established trade-union membership levels were low, for example the *Subscription Book* of the Perth branch of the Scottish National Operative Plasterers' Federal Union

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[139] Aberdeen too stands out: the figures suggesting a decline in the influence of trade unionism in that city between 1907 and 1910.

(PSNOPFU) details 14 members in July 1916 and 26 in January 1920.[140] PTC and the craft unions struggled to understand the causes of low membership. At a meeting of PASE in late 1888 a question was posed as to why so many workers eligible to join the union had not done so despite unionised wage rates being 4s a week higher than non-unionised wage rates. A decade later PTC attempted to understand the exiguous unionisation of painters when the number of unionised painters stood at a mere 20. In both cases, no elucidation was forthcoming. Even by 1908 *Forward* reporting on a dispute between the Scottish Amalgamated Society of House & Ship Painters and the Perth Master Painters' Association noted 'that the Painters' Society was not nearly as strong as it should have been.'[141]

PTC's approach whereby it barred unions whose membership encroached on existing affiliates - as in the case of the Perth branch of the Amalgamated Society of Woodworkers (PASW)[142] - or refused entry because of size - as in the case of the Amalgamated Society of Tailors whose application was opposed because it had only four members and because of opposition from the Scottish Amalgamated Tailors' Association (a PTC affiliate) - hindered growth.[143] Perth's carters, who as noted earlier, had resisted unionisation in 1898 and who were (unusually as compared to the national picture) in 1906 still badly organised provide another example.[144] Attempts by Dundee Tramway Union

[140] PSNOPFU, *Subscription Book* (PMAG, Acc. 898, 1916-1926).

[141] PASE, *Minute Book*, 29 October 1888; PTC, *Minute Book*, 30 June 1898, 22 January 1908.

[142] PASW was established in Perth in 1895. Amalgamated Society of Woodworkers, *Perth Branch Records* (PKCA, MS45, 1895-1964).

[143] PTC, *Minute Book*, 6 January 1898.

[144] *Forward*, 22 June 1907.

(DTU) to recruit the carters of Perth in 1906 and the city's tramway workers in 1910 were resisted by PTC which caused a rift with DTC.[145] The sticking point was the existence in Perth of the Municipal Employers Association (MEA) that the PTC leadership felt the carters and tramway workers should join.[146] This case provides good evidence of the conservatism of PTC and its desire to maintain and control the *status quo*; or at the very least to regulate change and see it unfolded on its terms.

Davidson has argued, 'the strength of organisation in Dundee played a vital role in the co-ordination of Perth workers' offering the example of the Dundee carters being 'instrumental in organising Perth carters'.[147] If this was the case, the success was ephemeral. Attempts were still being made in 1916 to get the Corporation carters into a union. Even by 1926 PTC was forced to concede in a reply to a questionnaire sent out by the Labour Research Department after the General Strike that the city's 'transport workers very poorly organised.'[148] The most startling aspect of the lack of unionisation among the Perth tramway workers in 1916 is that there had been a failure to capitalise on the success of the Dundee carters and dockers strike of December 1911.

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[145] This was not the first time other trade councils had played a role in the Perth trade-union movement. DTC was involved in the formation of branches of the Operative Bakers of Scotland National Federal Union and the Operative Brassfounders' & Finishers' Society in 1897 and 1898 respectively; and GTC in the setting up of PTC. PTC, *Minute Book*, 12 October 1897, 9 December 1897, 6, 20, 21 January 1898, 31 May 1899; *The Scotsman*, 30 March 1899, p. 9, 1 April 1899, p. 11.

[146] PTC, *Minute Book*, 27 June 1906, 11, 25 May 1910.

[147] Catrina Davidson, 'Perth 1910-1922, The Sleepy Hollow of the Proletariat?' (University of Dundee: unpublished MA dissertation, 2001), pp. 46-48.

[148] PTC, *Minute Book*, 17 May 1916; Emile Burns, *The General Strike May 1926: Trades Councils in Action* (London: Labour Research Department, 1926) p. 159.

Initiatives by PTC to set up trade-union branches for other workers often foundered on disinterest. These failures did not prevent attempts to unionise the city's glaziers, sawmill operatives, postal clerks, Corporation workers, glassblowers, and furniture makers, nor did it put off requests for assistance to do so from the Amalgamated Society of Musicians (1900), the Amalgamated Society of Dyers, Bleachers, Finishers & Kindred Trades (ASDBFKT - 1911), and the Paper Workers' Union (1915). Even when PTC was successful in establishing trade-union branches, they often proved short-lived and/or minuscule organisations. Examples of such include the sawmillers, whose membership, though sufficient for representation to PTC, remained low for years; the glaziers whose branch collapsed shortly after its establishment; and a branch of the Amalgamated Union of Shop Assistants, Warehousemen & Clerks which operated dysfunctionally for several years after it was founded (in 1905).[149]

PTC also experienced a degree of 'coming and going' of affiliates, caused in some cases by disagreement with the trades council's increasing political activity. The brass workers, for example, criticised PTC in March 1907 claiming it 'had apparently lost their interest in the unions they represent, and turned to matters of no importance.'[150]

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[149] PTC, *Minute Book*, 13 October 1898, 9 November 1898, 16 March 1899, 20 July 1899, 3 August 1899, 28 September 1899, 12 October 1899, 23 November 1899, 14 June 1900, 7 November 1900, 31 October 1901, 27 February 1902, 17 July 1902, 6 November 1902, 18 October 1905, 22 June 1907, 5 February 1911, 5 May 1915; *Forward*, 22 June 1907.

[150] PTC, *Minute Book*, 6 March 1907.

3.7 *Summary Remarks*

Perth's craft unions despite low membership were part of significant and redoubtable national bodies. This allowed them to 'punch above their weight'. They did so in part by controlling entry into the craft and workplace, resisting dilution of their skills, and importantly when necessary allying or providing leverage over non-unionised workers. In this they were assisted by scale. Perth was home to a small population of artisans from which employers sourced their workers, labour from outwith the district by and large being unavailable. And, whilst Perth experienced population growth throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the craft unions were unaffected. Skilled labour, in the main, did not travel to Perth, but when required it could leave for jobs in the major Scottish cities. Consequently, amongst the skilled, labour relations were defined by the normal balance of conflict and consensus. In the print industry the employment of female compositors went some way to undermine the dominance of the male craft union and was consequently a site of intense struggle.

Perth's stable population profile and minuscule levels of Irish migration (looked at in more detail in Chapter 5) reinforced the hegemony of the city's industrial class - a hegemony augmented by paternalistic industrial relations. In addition, unlike the artisans whose challenge to employers was assisted by dominance of the labour market and the absence of alternative labour supplies, the majority of workers in Perth competed for employment with an army of reserve labour in a local economy dominated by a few employers.

The lack of 'new unionism', the absence of the strike fusillade of 1889-1891, and the failure to organise workers outside the traditional artisan crafts, suggests that those trade unions that formed PTC in 1897 formed a detached minority section of the Perth working class unable to challenge the existing industrial hegemony beyond their immediate and direct interests; and both unable and unwilling to provide intellectual and moral leadership to that class. PTC and the artisan unions of Perth pursued their interests well but their's was an exclusive agenda.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries trade-union penetration of the Scottish workforce correlated strongly with support for the labour movement and the electoral fortunes of the Labour parties. In Perth, the ghettoisation of the trade-union movement proved telling and as will be seen in Chapters 5 and 6, Labour failed to offer any sizeable political challenge in Perth at any point in its history. Even by 1914 neither Labour nor the trade-union movement had made much headway in Perth:

> An interesting discussion took place on the question whether the Labour Movement in Perth should take steps to run a Labour candidate at the General Election. ... the general opinion was that until we had properly organised the workers it would be futile to attempt anything of the nature indicated.[151]

This picture of trade unionism in Perth in the late Victorian and early Edwardian periods of low levels of trade-union participation, a small 'elitist' trade-union branch base, and an involvement in national struggles often markedly different from elsewhere fits in with a description of Perth as the

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[151] PTC, *Minute Book*, 20 May 1914.

'Sleepy Hollow of the Proletariat' - a description that Catrina Davidson has argued was valid until 1910:

> The period 1910-1914 saw the awakening of working class attitudes in Perth and the realisation of the need to bargain collectively for improvement of their grievances. This change in the popular opinion of the proletariat would be consolidated in the aftermath of the First World War in the years up until 1922.[152]

Davidson's claim that in the immediate postwar period the locus of development of trade unionism in Perth once again was in sync with that experienced generally will be examined in Chapter 4, first by reference to the struggle to establish trade unions within the Perth textile industries, and second by examining strike activity in Perth between 1910 and 1918.

Chapter 4 continues to examine the development of trade unionism in Perth up to 1922 with the aim of explaining why the trade-union movement in Perth, during several periods of time and at key critical points, deviated in its development and growth from trade unionism in many other parts of Scotland. Whereas Chapter 3 began with the already organised artisans represented by national amalgamated craft unions and with a degree of control over their workplace, Chapter 4 takes as a starting point the modally important textile workforce with little in the way of influence over working conditions or employment.

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[152] Davidson, 'Sleepy Hollow', p. 6.

Chapter 4 - *the Trade-Union Movement in Perth II*

4.1 *Textile Trade Unionism in Perth*

4.1.1 *to 1913*

The British textile industry in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries differed from most other industries in that women and children formed the greater part of its workforce. This meant that gender was a factor in the development of textile trade unionism. Despite William Walker's argument to the contrary, Eleanor Gordon has shown that notwithstanding 'their numerical predominance, women in jute occupied jobs deemed "unskilled", and this was reflected in their much lower wages' - a situation, as will be seen, which was duplicated in Perth across all textile industries.[1] Gordon and others have employed the subordination of women within the labour process to explain as a matter of alternative organisation and priority the weakness of female textile trade unionism. As Valerie Wright has argued: 'the majority of the [Dundee] female jute workforce did not join trade unions. Their militancy was unrestricted by attempts to establish collective bargaining and strike committees. Women chose spontaneous self-organised strike action to address their grievances.'[2]

Wright's description of the Dundee female workforce is accurate only of the period before 1906. After that date trade unionism began to make serious

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[1] William M. Walker, 'Dundee's Jute and Flax Workers 1885-1923' (University of Dundee: unpublished PhD thesis, 1976), pp. 21, 32; Gordon, *Women and the Labour Movement*, pp. 147-51, cited in Valerie Wright, 'Juteopolis and after: Women and Work in Twentieth-Century Dundee', in Tomlinson and Whatley, *Jute No More*, p. 133.

[2] Wright, 'Women and Work', p. 140.

advances into that sector so that by 1912, as Kenefick has argued, '45% of all the women working in the jute industry in Dundee were union members. ... a level of union penetration unheard of in any other sector of the economy in Scotland employing women and [one that] paralleled that of the cotton unions in England.'[3]

Several disputes in Perth fit in with Wright's description, and whilst these support the tendency for female textile workers to be unrestricted by union organisation, they also demonstrate that in Perth female textile workers were willing to embrace trade unionism if the situation required. What they were not willing to do, at least until 1913, was to maintain trade-union structures

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[3] Using estimates made by Walker (Walker, *Juteopolis*, pp. 49, 148-52), Kenefick has calculated that in 1912 female membership within the Dundee & District Jute and Flaxworkers' Union (DDJFWU) stood at around 7,200 and that of the DDMFWU at around 4,200. Kenefick, 'Effervescence of Youth', p. 217.

outside the conjunctural crises that led to their creation, as the case of Shields, which is examined next, exemplifies.[4]

Around 1890 Shields operated 650 looms at its Wallace Works which was situated a couple of miles from the centre of Perth. Not including its 22 management, office, and warehouse staff, the firm employed 126 male and 598 female workers.[5] In common with most other textile manufacturers in Britain, female workers at Shields earned less than males performing the same task.[6] Shields' 422 female weavers worked a 56-hour week for a mean salary of 9s week - a rate of pay well below national rates.

[4] This is by no means the only example. In May 1894 1,500 flax and jute spinners in Alyth and Blairgowrie were placed on short time. The following month one of the Alyth mills imposed a wage cut of 10%. At first the workers agreed to a 5% reduction. Subsequently they struck to restore their pay to its original level but with no success. A report in *Labour Leader* described the textile workers' reluctance to join a union, their inability to maintain a union once formed, and the gender division in attitude to the labour movement: 'The factory workers at Blairgowrie, who have been out on strike, have resolved by a majority at a big meeting to go in upon the proposed reduction. In meantime they are to form a local union called "Blairgowrie & Rattray Workers Federation"... The Alyth factory workers by being upon strike for the past week have again formed a union. The last time they united, the union formed was a total failure in a few weeks. The women have joined in large numbers this time. .... The men folk who earn their living at factory work have with but few exceptions, have during the past decade jeered and sneered at the Labour movement.' These new trade unions appear to have gone the way of previous attempts. *Labour Leader* just two weeks after the establishment of the new unions reported that the Blairgowrie & Rattray Workers Federation had set up a meeting in Blairgowrie but very few workers had turned up to take part. (In 1895 some 195 workers formed the Alyth Mill & Factory Workers' Union. However, the union was not destined to grow: its membership stood at 31 males and 78 females in 1901, a year before its' demise.) *Labour Leader*, 30 June 1894, 14 July 1894; Marsh, *Historical Directory of Trade Unions Volume 4*, p. 289.

[5] *The abstract wages showing amounts paid for two weeks or 112 hours to various classes of staff and total wages paid for past year, and the total value of cloth produced in the year.* John Shields & Company Ltd, Textile Manufacturers, Wallace Works, Perth, *Company Records* (PKCA, MS25/8, 1882-1899).

[6] Lex Heerma van Voss, Els Hiemstra-Kuperus, and Elise van Nederveen Meerkerk (eds.), *The Ashgate Companion to the History of Textile Workers, 1650-2000* (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Group, 2010), pp. 241-42.

On 1 June 1891 a deputation of Shields' female operatives requested an advance in pay, the result of which was a few employees received a rise. Discontent within the works continued to intensify until reaching boiling point at which time all but 20 of Shields' female weavers struck. With few employees at hand, the factory managers closed the works. They also refused to negotiate until all strikers had returned to work. The non-striking women were sent home. This action proved volatile: 'while the workers who were prepared to continue at their work were being led out by the office door, several of the strikers gave chase, and they had to take refuge in a house in Dunkeld Road.'[7] At the time of the strike, the Reverend George Farquhar served on the Canonry and Precentorship of St Ninian's Cathedral. A prolific writer, Farquhar left 16 volumes of diaries covering his 46 years in Perth. Farquhar's entry for 1 June 1891 describes the events of that day: 'Outside my window, as I write, there is a mob of women out on strike running up and down the Dunkeld Road and howling at those who want to work.'[8]

Soon after the strike started, Reverend Williamson, Honorary President of the DDMFOU received word requesting his presence.[9] Williamson's address to the several hundred Shields workers pointed out that at the Wallace Works

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[7] *Perthshire Courier*, 2 June 1891, p. 2.

[8] The Very Reverend George T. S. Farquhar, Dean of the Diocese of St Andrews, Dunkeld & Dunblane: *Personal Papers - Diaries Volumes I-XVI* (1881-1927) (PKCA, MS181/1, 1 June 1891).

[9] In 1891 the DDMFOU claimed a 'total union membership of 5,945' of whom 12%, were men - 'with the exception of 500 persons in Perth' who worked in the linen trade, the majority worked in the Dundee, Montrose, and Barrow-in-Furness jute industries. Royal Commission on Labour, *Digest of the Evidence Taken Before Group C of the Royal Commission on Labour. Volume I. Textile* (HCPP, C. 6708-III, 1892), p. 32; Marsh, *Historical Directory of Trade Unions Volume 4*, p. 292.

two women were doing the work of three, and detailed how the paired pay of broadloom weavers was 8-10s for 56 hours when 11s a week was considered a liveable wage. In highly unionised Lancashire, the equivalent pay was 15s and in Dundee 14s-15s. Narrow-loom weavers, he added, were running six looms. In Williamson's opinion, the workers' wages were being 'screwed down to starvation point.'[10] Williamson advised the strikers to go back to work, join the DDMFOU, and organise a mass meeting a month hence.

Evidence given to the Royal Commission on Labour of 1892 confirms that wages paid by Shields were indeed lower than in Dundee where only a weak trade-union structure existed at that time and where according to David Lennox, the wages paid in the jute industry were the 'root cause' of a great deal of the city's distress.[11] John Henry Walker, a member of the Dundee Chamber of Commerce and owner of a jute spinning firm, for example, claimed in a statement to the Royal Commission that the weekly wage of 'Female Weavers (single loom)' was 13s-17s and that of 'Female Weavers (double loom)' was 17s-20s.[12]

Bruce Lenman has argued DDMFOU was not 'an effective weapon in the struggle to improve working conditions and acted more to control and subdue discontent then to remove its causes.'[13] This certainly seems to be the case in Perth. Newspaper reports suggest that Williamson came close to being

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[10] *Perthshire Courier*, 2 June 1891, p. 2.

[11] David Lennox, 'Working Class Life in Dundee 1878-1905' (St Andrews University: unpublished dissertation, *c.* 1906), *n.p.n.* (St Andrews University Library, MS DA 890 D8L2, *c.* 1906), cited in Walker, *Dundee's Jute and Flax Workers,* p. 87.

[12] Evidence given by John Henry Walker, *Royal Commission on Labour 1892*, pp. 12, 31.

[13] Lenman, *Dundee and its Textile Industry*, p. 73.

physically attacked for suggesting the strikers should return to work. The women did, nevertheless, return and despite the factory master, calling in his male workers, and demanding that they keep the women in order or else he would close the factory, 350 women workers joined the DDMFOU.[14]

The vitality for trade unionism did not last. On 20 June 1891 a meeting of the new trade union took place, but coinciding with the weekend, good weather, and several trips from Perth, attendance was poor. Workers at Shields had already received a 5% pay rise.[15] The need for a trade union had passed.[16] The 1891 dispute at Shields shared a narrative found in other Perth textile strikes. For years discontent grew until erupting in a moment of spontaneous worker militancy and violence.[17] External elements of the trade-union movement seeing the potential to organise an important section of the Perth working class entered the frame, and for a brief time, were successful. Typically, as in the case of Shields, once management had yielded concessions, the energy for militancy dissipated and factory life returned to normal. This 'steam venting' might usefully be considered analogous to the patterns of rioting common to Scotland in the eighteenth century as described by Whatley; and as Kenneth Logue has

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[14] *Perthshire Courier*, 9 June 1891, p. 3.

[15] *The Scotsman*, 2 June 1891, p. 5, 3 June 1891, p. 8; *Strikes and Lock-outs of 1891*, p. 503; *Perthshire Courier*, 23 June 1891, p. 2.

[16] Williamson and the DDMFOU had even less success with Pullars' 1,700 female workers. The company's hegemony proved unassailable even to what Harding has described as 'a full-scale Union onslaught in 1892-1893 with a considerable amount of accompanying violence and visits from Tom Mann and Ben Tillett.' Harding, *Pullars of Perth*, p. 70.

[17] In November 1871 around 500 women workers at Shields struck for a week in pursuit of a 10% increase in pay, but despite a wage reduction imposed in 1884 little was heard of the Shields' workforce until the 1891 dispute. *Perthshire Courier,* 8 January 1884, p. 8.

claimed, no stranger to Perth.[18] Such an analogy does not require a major

juxtaposition, for as James Cronin has argued 'strikes gradually superseded food

riots and similar crowd actions' - the point of rupture being located by Cronin as

occurring *c.* 1871-1873.[19]

By 1911 Shields' workers were complaining that not only had they not

had a pay rise in 20 years, but in a few cases, wages had dropped. Discontent

with pay and intensifying work practices had slowly fermented since the 1891

dispute. Again, the labour movement outwith Perth became involved. In May

1911 Kate Maclean, Scottish organiser of the National Federation of Women

Workers (NFWW) - a union that had been and continued to be very active

among the textile workers of Neilston, Paisley, and the Vale of Leven - recruited

over 400 workers at Shields.[20] The local press applauded Maclean's 'tact',

'consideration', and ability to recruit.[21] Just over two years later the NFWW

threatening strike action put in a demand for a 10% rate rise and 2s per week for

workers with set wages. Management refused to negotiate and sent dismissal

notices to all its workers. The local press reported: 'the girls are more

determined than ever to see that their demands meet a reasonable response' ...

'the gauntlet had been thrown down and Miss Sloan [of the NFWW] expressed

her firm determination that a strike would take place, although she was

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[18] Whatley, 'An Uninflammable People?', p. 66; Kenneth J. Logue, *Popular Disturbances in Scotland 1780-1815* (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers, 1979), pp. 6-7, 48.

[19] Cronin, *Industrial Conflict*, pp. 45-47.

[20] The NFWW, by this stage in its existence, had organised workers at Neilston and Paisley with some success. It would go on to organise textile workers in the Vale of Leven and at Kilbirnie. As well as visiting Shields, Maclean and the other representatives of the NFWW spent time at Pullars and Campbells.

[21] *Perthshire Advertiser*, 17 May 1911, p. 5.

sanguine that it would not last long.' The NFWW had not been expeditious in their decision to strike. The first communication with the directors of Shields had been sent 12 months previous. That letter and a subsequent one (two months later) were ignored. Even after Sloan met with the owner, Mr Shields, no offer could be elicited, though Shields maintained, 'he had no objection to a recognition of the union.' A second meeting produced a promise 'that the weavers' rate would be considered by the directors in October and a definite reply given before the end of October.' This promise failed to satisfy Shields' female workforce, and so the NFWW organised a strike ballot, the result of which was a majority in favour (332 to 57). Speaking at a meeting of strikers, William Rushworth, of the ASDBFKT which represented Shields' male workforce expressed his support saying, 'if he were a girl he would fight to the last ditch and would not surrender.' Whilst his members 'did not feel it was the best time to strike' they nonetheless stated, 'they had gone so far that they were not going to turn their backs on the girls.' Before the expiration of strike notices (19 September 1913) an agreement was reached.[22]

The women's resolve to strike and the solidarity shown by their male colleagues won the day. The women attained a 5% advance and the establishment of a worker-management committee. The creation of a works committee is significant in that it heralded a watershed in industrial relations at the Wallace Works, where after decades of authoritarian management, both the company and the female workforce accepted the worth of working with a trade

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[22] *Perthshire Advertiser*, 13 September 1913, p. 5, 17 September 1913, p. 5; Davidson, 'Sleepy Hollow', p. 31.

union and conceded the demand for collective bargaining.[23] The question to be asked is what was different in 1913.

The first issue to consider is the national heightening of social and industrial unrest during 1910-1913. This was a time of a general climactic in industrial militancy and major national disputes involving dockers, railway workers, and seamen. In Dundee a strike by 600 carters and 700 dockers eventually saw 30,000 textile workers bring the city to a standstill.[24] In Perth, textile workers employed in an industry dependent on rail transport could not be blind to the way in which the rail unions whose strike of August 1911 effectively closed the city down, saw *c.* 2,500 workers idle, and whose triumph was considered a great victory even if Perth's rail workers were reticent about striking; or how the miners' strike of the following year saw the workforce of Pullars and Campbells laid off due to coal shortages.[25]

Second, it was a time of an augmented cost of living and increasing food prices. In 1912 the Board of Trade conducted an enquiry into working-class rents, retail prices, and wages in a number of UK industrial towns. The enquiry's report provides detail of a 'Retail Price Index' (RPI), relative levels of rents, and

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[23] The arrival of collective bargaining at Shields lagged behind its emergence elsewhere. Williams has argued that from 1900 'most employers signalled their willingness to work with trade unions and to establish permanent collective bargaining structures.' Chris Williams, 'Britain', in Stefan Berger and David Broughton, *The Force of Labour. The Western European Labour Movement and the Working Class in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford: Berg Publishers Ltd, 1995), p. 112.

[24] William Kenefick and Kenneth Baxter, 'Labour Politics and the Dundee Working Class *c.* 1895-1936', in Tomlinson and Whatley, *Jute No More*, p. 201.

[25] *Perthshire Courier*, 22 August 1911.1, 28 August 1911, p. 1; *Perthshire Constitutional*, 21 August 1911, p. 2; *Perthshire Advertiser*, 9 March 1912, p. 5.

selected retail prices for a number of industrial towns of the UK. Table 4.1
(below) reproduces this data for several Scottish towns/cities.

Table 4.1 *Cost of Living in Certain Industrial Scottish Towns, 1912*[26]

	RPI	Rents including Rates	Rents Change between 1905 and 1912 (%)	Meat	Other Food	Total Food	Coal	Food and Coal	Rents and Retail Prices Combined
Aberdeen	101	61	-1	110	101	103	86	101	93
Dundee	104	67	Nil	114	102	105	97	104	97
Edinburgh and Leith	103	70	-1	110	105	107	79	103	96
Falkirk	101	61	+3	113	101	104	79	101	93
Galashiels	107	46	+7	117	108	111	82	107	95
Glasgow	99	67	Nil	106	101	108	71	99	93
Greenock	104	70	+8	115	106	109	76	104	97
Kilmarnock	100	62	-1	115	100	104	70	100	92
Paisley	99	61	+1	108	101	103	73	99	91
Perth	**108**	**55**	**+3**	**118**	**109**	**111**	**88**	**108**	**97**

(**Source:** Board of Trade, *Cost of Living of the Working Classes. Report of an Enquiry by the Board of Trade into Working-Class Rents and Retail Prices, together with the Rates of Wages in Certain Occupations in Industrial Towns of the United Kingdom 1912* (HCPP, Cd. 6955, 1913), pp. 266-85)

The RPI for Perth was the highest in the UK. It had increased 16% since 1905. In addition, the cost of basic foodstuffs in Perth stood in advance of almost every town/city in Scotland. The 'Rent and Retail Prices Combined' index for Perth was the highest in Scotland (alongside Dundee and Greenock) and only surpassed by London. Housing in Perth differed significantly from many Scottish towns/cities (an issue explored in Chapter 8) and as can be seen local

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[26] The RPI was created by recording the level of prices in each location for a sample set of articles comprising a substantial part of the average working-class consumption for a family of two adults and three/four children and comparing with London in 1912. All indices are comparisons with London (Middle Zone) = 100.

rents were much lower than elsewhere. High living costs in themselves are not necessarily a problem if wages match them and it is this issue which is considered next. The 1912 enquiry also provides information as to relative wage levels - an extract from which is reproduced in Table 4.2 (below).

Table 4.2 *Relative Wage Levels in Certain Industrial Scottish Towns, 1912*[27]

	Building (Skilled Men)	Building (Labourers)	Printing (Compositors)
Aberdeen	81	71	88
Dundee	90	79	90
Edinburgh and Leith	88	79	87
Falkirk	85	86	77
Galashiels	75	76	69
Glasgow	92	81	92
Greenock	89	80	92
Kilmarnock	85	74	86
Paisley	89	86	92
Perth	**82**	**79**	**83**
Scotland	86	79	86

(**Source:** *Cost of Living of the Working Classes 1912,* pp. *xxvi*, *xxxvi*, 1, 266-85)

Despite the strength and effectiveness of Perth's craft unions, skilled wage levels in Perth in the building trades and printing lagged behind almost every other Scottish town/city. This is certainly suggestive of wages in Perth being at the time generally inferior to Perth's comparators. Assessment of the wage levels in the Perth textile industry can be inferred by first assuming that within the industry wage variation between companies was minor (and there is no evidence to counter this assertion) and then examining data produced by Davies

[27] (London (Middle Zone) = 100).

who has made a comparison of wage levels in dyeing and minor textiles at Pullars with elsewhere ('Scotland and Districts'). This analysis leads to the conclusion that prior to the second decade of the twentieth century pay rates at Shields 'were broadly in line with others in the same trade.' Davies, however, failed to note that his own figures show that by 1906 female wage rates at Pullars and by inference at Shields had slipped behind average national rates whilst male rates had overtaken them.[28]

In 1912 money wages were 'rising' nationally but due to 'increasing' prices this translated into 'stable' real wage levels. Perth offered an outlier to this. The rising cost of living coupled with declining absolute and relative wage levels meant that for a large section of the Perth working class life was wretched. This is confirmed by a report by the Perth Medical Officer for Schools whose findings concluded that not only were 'poverty and disease rampant in Perth,' but that wages were so low in the city people could not feed their children properly.[29] (All of these economic and social difficulties had been experienced in Perth before. In 1909, for example, during the economic downturn of 1907-1909 - a particularly difficult time for the trade-union movement with national unemployment hitting 9% - when the Perth Medical Officer reported that children where attending school barefooted in temperatures below freezing

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[28] Davies, 'Pullars of Perth', p. 253.
[29] *Perthshire Advertiser*, 25 October 1912, p. 5.

point, the year had witnessed only one industrial relations episode of note, an unsuccessful strike by bakers.)[30]

Unemployment fails to explain the success of the NFWW in 1913. Despite UK unemployment having fallen from 1908 and in 1911-1913 averaging only 2.8% amongst unionised workers, this was far from the situation experienced by Perth's unskilled workforce.[31] In other words, low unemployment fails to explain why Perth's textile workers in 1911-1913 proved to be more willing to join a trade union than in the past.

So what else was different in 1911-1913? It was the role of the wider labour movement, which descended upon Perth in the form of nationally known leaders responding to a report at the STUC detailing the victimisation of female textile workers in Perth for attempting to form a trade union.[32] Such episodes in external influence were not confined to Perth. Knox and Corr, for example, have claimed 'the stability of industrial relations in the Paisley thread trade was threatened in the first decade of the twentieth century by the interference of outside forces' – the NFWW and ILP.[33]

Results (in Perth) appeared immediately. Maclean's NFWW within weeks, with the assistance of PTC, had recruited a large proportion of Campbells' female operatives. So successful was recruitment, a second branch

[30] J. H. Treble, 'Unemployment in Glasgow 1903 to 1910: Anatomy of a Crisis', *Scottish Labour History Journal*, 25 (1990), p. 12, cited in Kenefick, *Rebellious and Contrary*, pp. 206-07; PTC, *Minute Book*, 2 February 1910; PBNFUS, *Minute Book*, 21 April 1909, 12 May 1909; *Perthshire Courier*, 9 August 1910.

[31] Mitchell, *British Historical Statistics*, p. 65.

[32] *Perthshire Constitutional*, 12 January 1910, *supplement* p. 1; *Perthshire Advertiser*, 1 June 1912, p. 5, 29 April 1911, p. 5.

[33] Knox, 'Striking Women', p. 113.

was founded. By mid-June four to 500 workers had been enrolled. By the end of that year the NFWW was the largest of all the city's unions. Among male operatives the ASDBFKT also made progress. George Dallas and Joe Hayhurst working with PILP helped establish a branch of the dyers' union which by June 1912 claimed 200 members.[34]

The key to textile trade unionism in Perth remained Pullars about which the *Perthshire Courier* claimed '*There is only one P in Perth - And, it stands for Pullars!*' Industrial agitation at Pullars in 1873 for a reduced working week was examined earlier in this chapter. This example of militancy was certainly not typical of Pullars' employees. The next episode of industrial unrest at Pullars took place more than three decades later when in 1906 - a small group of female employees struck over a demand for a pay grievance to be heard but returned to work when threatened with dismissal.[35]

This long period of industrial relations tranquillity was due in the main to the established and extensive paternalism practised by the firm. The Pullar family had woven their hegemonic weave well, portraying an image of a model employer paying decent wages - an image challenged by *Forward* in 1907: 'The girls are only in receipt of 10s and 11s per week. The work is hard, heavy, work fit only for men. The hours are long, and they have to dress well ... The pay and treatment in the best of those works is shameful.'[36]

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[34] PTC, *Minute Book*, 26 April, 10 May 1911; *Perthshire Constitutional*, 17 February 1912, p. 4, 12 June 1912, p. 3; *Perthshire Advertiser*, 17 May 1911, p. 5, 1 June 1912, p. 5.
[35] *Perthshire Courier*, Christmas Edition 1913; *Perthshire Advertiser*, 29 January 1906, p. 4.
[36] *Forward*, 23 March 1907.

For decades Pullars had operated an individual wage bargaining system. Decisions of which were invariably based on subjective factors such as 'considered enthusiasm for work'. Arrogance or a hint of demand from those looking for a pay advance not only resulted in denial but in some cases dismissal. The system was also gendered - typically only male workers made approaches. As well as being divisive, the system resulted in stagnation of pay for many, primarily female employees, which became particularly relevant during times of rising living costs. In some cases wages remained static for ten to twenty years.[37] As a tool of hegemonic control individual wage bargaining worked very well for many years but during the conjunctural crisis of 1911-1913 when economic factors opened up the factory consensus to be challenged, it struggled to maintain order against an increasing willingness of employees to act collectively. In addition, 'welfarism' had become expensive and increasingly less effective at a time when Pullars were struggling with profitability, competitiveness, and capital turnover.[38]

The point of rupture was the failure to pay the annual June rise in 1912, which resulted in around 200 employees beginning a wildcat strike. Initially Pullars responded in their normal authoritarian manner, dismissing the grievance. The workers acquiesced and returned to work. However, abandoning the patterns of deference and subordination of the past, they raised their grievance again, this time in writing, giving the company an hour to assent to

[37] Pullar & Sons Ltd, Dyers and Cleaners, Perth: *Company Records - Control Department Books - Wages Office Report Books - Wage Allowance Books* (1882-1899)

[38] Pullars at this time began to withdraw aspects of welfarism such as their Sickness Benefit Society.

demands. This was met with the immediate dismissal of those involved, an action that resulted in a walkout at Pullars' Tulloch works. A quickly-organised mass meeting saw the election of a strike committee, the organising of pickets, and a resolution calling for the rehiring of all sacked workers as well as a fixed pay structure (6s per week for 14-year olds with annual rises to 30s for male employees by age 30). The strike was a shock to the Pullars family who as *Forward* remarked had 'pursued a policy of "do what we like" for so long that it was taken for granted that the workers would never dare to strike.' Despite their lack of organisation and funds, the striking Pullars workers arranged pickets, approached the ASRS with the request that they refuse to handle outgoing goods, and with the assistance of PTC and PILP set up meetings with Kate MacLean (NFWW), Robert (Bob) Stewart (National Prohibition & Reform Party - Dundee), and George Dallas, William Rushworth, and Mr Stewart (Scottish District Officer, Organising Secretary, and Scottish Organiser of the ASDBFKT respectively).[39]

When the Pullars' management met with the strikers' representatives two days later (at which point the strikers numbered 500) they did not capitulate and by offering a compromise divided the strikers and undermined their resolve. After a split vote (151 to 50), the strikers returned to work - the low poll suggesting that many had already returned.[40] The gender division of the strike was significant. Harding has claimed only one male dyer struck in 1912.[41]

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[39] *Forward*, 3 June 1912, 12 June 1912.
[40] *Perthshire Courier*, 4 June 1912, p. 5, 11 June 1912, p. 4.
[41] Harding, *Pullars of Perth,* p. 46; Davies, 'Pullars of Perth', p. 264.

The 1912 strike at Pullars suggests a growing trade-union consciousness and working-class identity among the Pullars workforce. This was not the case. Joyce's maxim, 'the habits of more than one lifetime were difficult to break,'[42] fits in well with the post-strike situation in Pullars where after the steam-venting of 1912 and the return home of the labour movement firebrands, Pullars' workforce returned to established norms and abandoned collectivity. As for PTC, even in the face of victimisation of those that had taken part in the dispute, its leadership remained ambivalent about protest.

Rather than offering a challenge to the hegemony of the Pullar family, the events of 1912 can be viewed as an attempt by the Pullar workforce to solve the conjunctural crisis caused by the economic situation by re-establishing the factory hegemony on its original terms. Had Pullars simply offered a small pay increase it is likely given the behaviours of the past that the matter would have been settled quickly and easily. The point was made in Chapter 2 that paternalism was a two-way process relying as much on the receivers as the givers for its existence. Such a subordination to paternalist hegemony appears naked in the 1912 strike at Pullars; the counter-hegemonic alternatives proffered by the labour movement maintained influence just so long as the 'labour leaders' maintained proximity and the grievance in question was 'live'.

It would be wrong however to argue that nothing had changed by 1912 in Perth. There had been adjustments at Shields with the establishment of a works committee but overall the development of trade unionism in Perth was still Protean; an image encapsulated by PTC's annual report for 1913:

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[42] Joyce, *Work*, p. 333.

> While there is much to rejoice over in the spread of the Trade Union spirit in Perth, we cannot be otherwise than greatly concerned at what is taking place in that young and vigorous Union - not yet two years old, and numbering close on 600 members - the Dyers' Union. Whatever may be the outcome of the present strife, let us hope that it will leave its members more convinced than ever it is only by being combined that they can hope to improve the conditions of labour for themselves and their fellow-men.[43]

It would not be until after 1913 that a new paradigm in industrial relations was born in Perth.

4.1.2 *1913 to 1922*

As with the events of 1912, the 1917 strike at Pullars occurred at a time of nationally rising food prices and a general increase in the cost of living (increases of 62% and 87% respectively between September 1914 and December 1916) which had overtaken money wages so that real wages in 1917 had lost nearly a third of their pre-war value. Estimates of rises in Perth put the cost of living increase from August 1914 to 1917 as 89% and rising at 2%-5% per month.[44] Unlike previous increases in living costs, that of the war years received a political response locally: a conference in February 1915, for example, instigated by PTC to demand a central government response to rising food costs; and a year later a major demonstration against spiralling food prices - an economic phenomenon experienced fairly widely across Scotland.[45]

Pullars had struggled during the war with declining demand and higher costs. In addition, 40% of its male workforce had left for war-related activity. An

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[43] *Perthshire Advertiser*, 18 February 1914, p. 6.

[44] Harding, 'War and Social Change', p. 5.

[45] *Perthshire Advertiser*, 10 February 1915, p. 4, 2 August 1916, p. 3.

arbitration decision against 10 large Scottish dyers was implemented in all but Pullars where the wage situation became critical and about which Rushworth ASDBFKT Organising Secretary claimed 'employees had become the lowest paid workers in Scotland.'[46] In Perth, the bakers, coopers, printers, engineers, and many other unionised sectors had all won arbitrated advances in salary while at Pullars wages had remained the same throughout the war. This was a point made by J. M. Rae, Secretary of PTC, who addressing a rally on 8 June 1917 claimed 'all 23 trades in the [Perth] Trades Council have been given rises of 4s to 5s since 1914.'[47]

This moment can perhaps be viewed as critical in the ending of the Pullar family hegemony and the ability of paternalistic industrial relations to maintain the *status quo*. The aforementioned arbitration decision (in the Scottish dye industry) demonstrated that the existing management practice within Pullars was no longer viable. Even if Pullars' workforce in any post-strike settlement wished once more to return the employer-employee relationship to that which it had been before, it could no longer do so - the Pullar family's style of management was now a historical anachronism that could not survive the changes occurring nationally.

The ASDBFKT with support from PTC and the Perth branch of the NUR set about recruiting members in early 1917. So successful was this initiative, that in May 1917 the largest ever demonstration of workers in Perth took place. The

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[46] Harding, 'War and Social Change', p. 136; William Rushworth, *Letter to Pullar & Sons Ltd*, 30 April 1917, Pullars, *Company Records* (PKCA, MS51/5, 30 April 1917).

[47] *Perthshire Courier,* 9 June 1917, p. 1.

spark for the 1917 strike at Pullars was the decision to award 'Parcel Post' workers

a 2s a week pay rise whilst refusing to entertain the request for an advance by

workers in the Dry Cleaning Department. A refusal the following week to

advance the wages of 72 female warehouse workers inflamed matters. Refusing

to negotiate, the company took its case to the local press whose pages became

filled with verbatim reports of correspondence between the two sides. During

this period, unionisation continued apace with hundreds of workers signing up.

Pullars made repeated attempts to divide the workforce - without success. On 28

August 1917, when ASDBFKT membership had reached 1,400, a strike began.[48]

Rushworth detailed the level of support and the mood of the workers

just before the strike:

> Tremendous enthusiasm prevails, at our meeting on
> Wednesday we had 2,000 present ... The workers are just at
> the pitch that they will break windows ... Every Trade Union
> in Perth was represented on our Platform on Wednesday
> night.[49]

The *Perthshire Courier* claimed the 1912 strike had shaken 'Perth's long

continued industrial peace.'[50] The 1917 strike went much further and roused a

revolutionary mood leading to the violent confrontation between strikers and

police. *Forward* covered the strike with articles whose titles made great play of

'industrial ferment': 'Wild Scenes in Perth' and 'Mounted Police Ride Down

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[48] The dyers success in recruitment was not restricted to Pullars, they also enrolled a large part of Campbells and Luncarty Bleach Works' workforce. Harding, 'War and Social Change', p. 139.

[49] National Union of Dyers, Bleachers & Textile Workers: *Records* (1894-1980), William Rushworth, *Letter to Alderman Hayhurst*, 21 July 1917, *Records* (WYB, 5D82, 6D82 - 23/2/3/1/19, 21 July 1917).

[50] *Perthshire Courier*, 4 June 1912, p. 5.

Strikers' being but two examples.[51] Pullars were at the time undertaking 'war work' - dyeing uniforms and cleaning blankets - which placed the firm under the Munitions of War Act 1915 so that disputes required compulsory arbitration.[52]

The striking workers were not alone. Pullars, Rushworth claimed, 'were employing all weapons usable, but the strikers had the whole city behind them.'[53] Not only were the paternalistic authoritarian industrial relations at Pullars unable to contain the crisis they were now adding to it by creating conflict - the hegemonic cohesion at Pullars was being pulled apart.[54]

Reporting to the ASDBFKT leadership in mid-July 1917 Rushworth argued: 'my whole business is to break down the power of Pullars among their workers.' In his acknowledgement, 'I am not much concerned about this victory, so much as I am of our future organisation.'[55] Rushworth seemed minded that the strike was a matter of paramountcy - a war for the loyalty of the Pullars' workforce. Slowly the trade union progressed inspired by success in getting the management of Campbells to agree to arbitration in a similar dispute. And, whilst Perth's textile workers appeared to embrace trade unionism fully, Pullars refused to negotiate and continued, in vain, to attempt to reassert control on the basis of increasingly defunct social relations.

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[51] *Forward*, 15 September 1917.

[52] Harding, 'War and Social Change', p. 95.

[53] Davies, 'Pullars of Perth', p. 278.

[54] The political outlook of the Pullar family had at this point undergone a change: the Radical Liberalism of its founders had been replaced by an active Conservatism. This issue is explored in more detail in Chapter 5.

[55] Rushworth, *Letter to Alderman Hayhurst*, 21 July 1917.

At that point the Ministry of Labour stepped in, calling Albert Pullar and the unions to London for a conference to be chaired by the Duke of Atholl. Despite the workforce agreeing to return to work, Pullars refused to cooperate, a reluctance manifest in their refusal to recognise the ASDBFKT; and almost rekindled the strike with an inflammatory notice declaring the reopening of the factory under existing conditions. Just before the scheduled conference date Rufus Pullar died. Shaken by his death the Pullar family promulgated their intention to sell the business or close it down if a buyer could not be found.

The conference delayed by the family tragedy eventually took place. The dispute ended with a pay deal short of demands, a commitment by Pullars to sell the business, and an air of uncertainty until the announcement in early 1918 of the purchase of the company by Eastmans. Within two days of the takeover a claim for 20s advance over pre-war rates of pay was submitted, which was put forward to one of the new Joint Industrial District & Works Councils, a national industrial relations initiative set up by the Liberal government. A new era in conciliatory and consensual industrial relations had dawned at Pullars:

> Eastman's brought hopes for industrial quietude, as management emphasised the need to maintain tradition and continuity and employees spoke of their willingness to co-operate. Much was achieved. Embracing the spirit of industrial democracy, the new Works Council approached problems of working conditions and amenities positively, and unlike the Pullar & Sons Ltd, management readily accepted calls for representative bargaining and arbitration as a means of settling grievances over wages and hours.[56]

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[56] Davies, 'Pullars of Perth', p. 322.

The validity of Davidson's claim for the 'awakening of working class attitudes,' 1910-1914, and its consolidation over the next eight years remains to be answered. Certainly, both the 1912 and 1917 strikes fit in with Kenefick's description of the pre-war 'labour unrest' as 'a fresh upsurge in unionism and militancy that far outstripped anything achieved at the time of the new unionism.'[57] But, there is no evidence to suggest that either strike was in anyway different from any earlier episode of industrial militancy; and no evidence to suggest that socialism had made any inroads into the Pullar workforce psyche. As will be seen in Chapter 6, Labour made little impact on the political life of Perth before the Great War.

The First World War was a defining moment in the history of the trade-union movement. In order to wage 'world war' the British State was forced to interact (and cooperate) with trade unions at a national level through collective bargaining and compulsory arbitration. The committees, national bargaining agreements, and centralised dispute mechanisms which were formed to that end placed the British trade-union leadership in partnership with the state. Trade unionism became an instrumental part of the social fabric - a development which extended to Perth as Table A3.3 (Appendix 3), which offers details of a number of arbitration cases and non-strike settlements related to Perth for 1917-1922, confirms.[58]

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[57] Kenefick, *Red Scotland*, p. 21.

[58] John Lovell, 'British Trade Unions 1875-1933', in L. A. Clarkson, *British Trade Union and Labour History A Compendium* (London: Macmillan, 1990), p. 114; Anthony John Adams, 'Working Class Organisation, Industrial Relations and the Labour Unrest 1914-1921.' (University of Leicester: unpublished PhD thesis, 1988), p. 5.

During the years 1918-1920 trade-union activity in Perth peaked before a lull during 1921-1922. Industrial relations in Perth in this period underwent a significant change in control with national trade-union structures taking the lead in organising strikes and submitting cases to arbitration.

It is true, that as Davies has described, the arrival of Eastmans witnessed a new industrial relations framework at Pullars, but whilst Davies's view that this was a sea-change in the cultural and political outlook of the Pullar employee is accepted, something else was also at play.

The realignment in the employer-employee relationship at Pullars (and across the Perth textile industry) was a consequence of structural changes that had occurred in British society catching up with Perth, a process made possible once the barrier to change that was paternalistic industrial relations such as that practised by the Pullar family no long functioned. The correction when it came arrived from outside in the same way that much of the stimulus for industrial militancy in the pre-war period among Perth's textile workers had come to Perth - from outwith. Major social and political changes forced this emendation in the trajectory of Perth textile trade unionism - the critical point that was a national realignment of the hegemonic relationship between labour, the state, and capital which occurred during the war acted like a 'black hole' dragging the organisations of the Perth working class and the city's major textile employers into its orbit.

4.2 *1910-1918 - Trade Unionism and Labour Unrest in Perth*

In common with the national strike wave of 1889-1891, that of 1910-1913 was dominated by wage demands and occurred during a period of 'low and decreasing' unemployment, 'rising' prices, 'rising' money wages, and 'stable' real wages.[59] Whilst the earlier wave involved a wide range of workers, that of the pre-war years entailed on average larger strikes perpetrated by 'semi- or unskilled labour organised, or just being organised in industrial or general unions, i.e., miners, textile operatives, dockers and railwaymen' and represented, Cronin has argued, 'a new stage in the consolidation of class loyalties and antagonisms.'[60] This surge in trade-union membership and truculence surpassed previous *maxima*. Both in the UK and in Perth, 1913 was an all-time high for strikes as Table 4.3 (overleaf) confirms.

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[59] Mitchell, *British Historical Statistics*, p. 65; Saul, *Great Depression*, pp. 29-31.
[60] Cronin, *Industrial Conflict*, pp. 49-52.

Table 4.3 *Strikes in Perth by Industry or Trade, 1910-1914*

	Number of Strikes 1910-1914	Number of Strikes 1913
Painters	3	2
Railway Workers	4	0
Tailors	1	0
Gas Workers	2	1
Paper Mill Workers	1	1
Textile Workers	4	2
Farm Workers	1	0
Bakers	1	1
Plumbers	2	2
Carpenters and Joiners	3	1
Coopers	1	1
Shop Assistants and Message Boys	2	0

(**Source:** Table A3.1 (Appendix 3))

In early 1914 the Secretary of PTC, reviewed the trade council's progress since 1897 concluding that the organisation had 'advanced in power and utility.' Affiliation in 1914 stood at 23 unions - the latter two years having witnessed several new unions joining PTC. In addition, he claimed 'that in almost every union membership has been increased, while one union at least has more than doubled its roll of members.'[61] If the trades council's own assessment is to be believed, PTC and its affiliate unions were in the months proceeding the Great War effective and healthy organisations that had developed organisationally, politically in the case of PTC, and strategically in adapting to new forms of wage

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[61] *Perthshire Advertiser*, 18 February 1914, p. 6.

bargaining including arbitration and joint action. Harding is an agreement with this assessment holding great store with the success of trade unionism in Perth in the pre-war years:

> The years 1910-1914 saw a strenuous effort made by the trade unions to get a hold in Perth. In 1910 they succeeded with the Municipal Employees' Association and the Perth Shop Assistants' Union, but failed with the Upholsterers' Union.[62]

Alongside textile workers the railwaymen were the most strike prone group in Perth between 1910 and 1914. Moreover, by 1917 not only were the railwaymen highly organised and militant, they had proven themselves willing to undertake solidarity actions in concert with other workers such as the striking Pullar employees during their dispute of 1917: 'we [the ASDBFKT] have practically arranged with the Railway men, who are organised to a man, not to handle any of our work, should a strike take place.'[63] The railway union stuck to their agreement: 'the entire industrial population of Perth, led by the Railwaymen, are on the side of the strikers.'[64] Such a show of militancy and solidarity by the ASRS (later the National Union of Railway (NUR)) had not always been the case.

The Perth branch of the ASRS had played a reluctant part in the Great 'Scottish Railway Dispute' of December-January 1890-1891 that at its peak saw 8,000 workers on strike: 'The railway strike remains unsupported by the Perth men although two Glasgow pickets were at Perth yesterday urging them to join the movement. At a meeting held last night, only 40 out of over 200 men

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[62] Harding, 'War and Social Change', pp. 42-43.

[63] Rushworth, *Letter to Alderman Hayhurst*, 21 July 1917.

[64] *Forward*, 15 September 1917.

attended. Forty were willing to strike, if assured that the majority at Perth would come out.' Lasting six weeks, the strike ended in complete defeat for the union. Very little was then heard of the railway workers in Perth until the major dispute of December-January 1896/7, which engaged large numbers of ASRS members employed by the North British Railway Company. The next major episode for the Perth railway workers was the national dispute of 19-23 August 1911, which saw the military called out, involved 16,000 Scottish railway workers and 54,000 working days lost, and the railway firms forced by the government to recognise the rail unions. According to *The Scotsman*, when the 300 railway workers at Perth received notification from the ASRS and ASLEF calling upon them to strike, the majority expressed an indisposition to do so. Despite this reluctance, the strike resulted in the commercial life of the district being brought to a standstill. In an ironic post-script, September of the following year saw the Perth railway workers on the defensive striking against a reduction in wages. As to levels of unionisation within the Perth railway workforce the available evidence is scant.[65] Nonetheless, there is evidence of a significant railway union membership by and after the last quarter of 1907: at a meeting of PTC in September 1907 it was announced that due to growth the ASRS were entitled to nine delegates; by early 1914 the *Perthshire Advertiser* could report 'the growth of

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[65] A visit by Tom Bell in February 1907, for example, was followed by rallies and demonstrations. May saw the enrolment of 66 new members, whilst the recruitment drive of August was a failure. PTC, *Minute Book*, 18 September 1907.

the Union [the NUR] has been most remarkable, and to-day the membership of the Perth Branch is exceedingly high.'[66]

Two decades after 'new unionism' had failed to emerge in Perth industrial relations and strike activity among the traditional artisan unions in Perth appeared to be inline (once more) with the national narrative. PTC and its affiliate trade-union branches approached realignment with the national narrative of trade-union development from its deviation caused by absence of 'new unionism' asymptotically, so that by 1918 the loci of Perth and Scottish trade-union progress were fast approaching convergence. This realignment was not exclusive to the artisan unions, for as will be shown next, trade unionism in Perth had made inroads into the newer industries and among workers such as the carters who as a body had for so long remained unresponsive to the call for organisation.

Table 4.4 (overleaf) which details those strikes and actions short of a strike in Perth by industry/trade for 1914-1918 is evidence of 'business as usual' for the long-established PTC affiliates as well as militancy from the newer trade unions representing gas workers, municipal employees, shop assistants, and carters. It is evident that PTC had by 1918 broken out of the ghetto it had occupied for so long. 'New unionism' had finally arrived in Perth.

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[66] *The Scotsman*, 6 January 1890 p. 9, 25 August 1890 p. 8, 6 October 1890 p. 8, 17 November 1890 p. 10, 24 November 1890 p. 4; 15 December 1890 p. 9, 31 December 1890 p. 8; *The Times*, 23 December 1890, p. 5); Board of Trade: *Report on the Strikes and Lock-outs of 1891 by the Labour Correspondent of the Board of Trade* (HCPP, C. 6890, 1893-1894), p. 8; Kenefick, *Red Scotland*, p. 46; Harding, 'War and Social Change', p. 40; *Perthshire Courier*, 22 August 1911, p. 1, 28 August 1911.1; *The Scotsman*, 19 August 1911, p. 10, 18 August 1911, p. 6, 28 August 1911, p. 8; *Perthshire Advertiser*, 14 September 1912, p.5, 18 February 1914, p. 6; PTC, *Minute Book*, 18 September 1907.

Table 4.4 *Strikes and Actions Short of a Strike in Perth by Industry or Trade, 1914-1918*

	Number of Strikes	Number of Actions Short of a Strike
Painters	/	1
Railway Workers	1	/
Tailors	1	/
Gas Workers and Municipal Workers	3	2
Bakers	2	/
Farm Workers	1	/
Carpenters and Joiners	1	/
Textile Workers	3	3
Shop Assistants	1	/
Slaters and Plasterers	1	1
Sawmill Workers	/	1
Carters	1	4
Glass Workers	/	1
Boot and Shoemakers	/	1

(**Source:** Table A3.1 (Appendix 3))

The city's gas workers, for example, after a long-running grievance struck in January 1918. The strike which included about 120 municipal employees (work and paving, fire and lighting, street sweeping, as well as gas workers and carters) lasted three days, 'plunged the city into darkness and cut off the engines at Pullars and Campbells.'[67] Over the war years the gas workers, municipal employees, and the carters (with the assistance of Hugh Lyon the Scottish Horse & Motormen's Association (SHMA) General Secretary) also won a number of

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[67] *Perthshire Courier*, 7 January 1918.

arbitration cases for advances in pay and war bonuses as well as taking part in strike action against the Town Council Corporation (see Table A3.3 (Appendix 3)). In this they were supported by PTC which had its own battles with the Town Council over the use of municipal property for rallies and meetings.[68]

Perth's organised working class did relatively well during the war years with higher wages the yield of membership of strong trade unions tied into national negotiating machinery and arbitration mechanisms. Those outside fared less well. As the national economy plunged into recession in the 1920s pay cuts became a constant feature of working life in Perth. The dyeing industry was especially hard hit between 1921 and 1922.

4.3 Summary Remarks

Throughout the 1870s and 1880s trade unionism in Perth shared much in common with the trade-union movement nationally. Its artisan unions repeatedly challenged their employers and attained improved wages, and conditions of service - especially in regard to the length of the working week. By the late 1880s however the particularities of the Perth economy, the insularity of the established craft-union branches, and a widespread resistance to unionisation resulted in the absence of the 'new unionist' upsurge in militancy and trade-union recruitment that was so important across Scotland in developing working-class political identity. Despite the establishment of PTC in 1897, the trade-union movement in Perth continued to struggle (through resistance and design) to extend its boundaries of operation. Trade-union

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[68] *The Scotsman*, 21 May 1918, p. 4; Harding, 'War and Social Change', pp. 167-69; PTC, *Minute Book*, 28 February 1918, 12 August 1918; Davidson, 'Sleepy Hollow', pp. 82-83.

development foundered on 'indifference' and the specificities of PTC's attitude to expansion such as its approach whereby new trade unions deemed as potential interlopers were kept at arms' length. Firmly attached to Liberalism until the late 1910s, PTC and the majority of its affiliated trade-union branches did much to slowdown the development of a local Labour politic.[69] After 1910 PTC and its affiliates increasingly moved towards realignment with the locus of development of the wider labour movement. Trade unionism nonetheless remained until the Great War very much a concern of the small body of Perth artisans and skilled workers, who advantaged by a privileged position in a field little threatened by 'other labour', operated within strong but small trade-union branches and an active trades council that ensured their wages and conditions stood well in advance of the vast majority of Perth's workers.

Within the textile industry - the central industrial activity of Perth - trade unionism took decades to counter the habitual attitudes of its thousands of workers (some 8,000 of them in 1881 - just under 7,000 in 1911) to move beyond the notion of a trade union (or a strike) as simply a conjunctural construction to establishing permanent forms of resistance. The paternalistic Liberal employer provided the unifying ideology that maintained in the non-unionised Perth working class a resistance to any permanent institutional opposition to their hegemony. For the majority of the Perth working class, spontaneous strikes, trade unions, and speeches by labour orators were tools with which to maintain the *status quo* when for whatever reasons the normal political and industrial life of the city broke down and not ones with which to build an alternative to that

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[69] *Perthshire Courier*, 17 December 1917.

normality. This pattern of trade-union development was not unique to Perth and shared some similarities with the Vale of Leven where until the interwar period a fragmented working class 'was primarily characterised by the absence of significant collective working-class organisation and action.'[70] Kenefick has noticed a similar phenomenon in Dundee among female textile workers in a number of disputes - notably 1893, 1895, 1899, and 1906. In Dundee, however, as Kenefick and William Walker (before him) have independently argued the existence of an active and powerful labour movement - 'Dundee Trades Council, Dundee Labour Representation Committee, Dundee Independent Labour Party, Dundee Social Union, Dundee Women's Trade Union League' - ensured that from 1906 onwards trade unionism took root among Dundee's women workers.[71] So successful were the Dundee trade unions and labour movement in this that by 1912 around 45% of the city's female jute industry workforce were in a trade union. Perth's lack of what Walker has described as a 'web of progressive forces' helps explain the failure of textile trade unionism in Perth to establish itself until after the Great War.[72] Another factor present in Dundee but absent from Perth was the presence of a large number of Irish workers (specifically female spinners in Lochee) who Walker has argued 'had traditionally been the most strike-prone in the city' - a phenomenon he explained as cultural.[73] (The

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[70] Gallacher, *Vale of Leven*, p. 189.

[71] To this list should be added the Socialist Labour Party and the British Socialist Party both of which were important players in the labour movement in some parts of Scotland - in particular in Glasgow and Clydeside. Kenefick, *Red Clydeside*, p. 5.

[72] Kenefick, 'Effervescence of Youth', pp. 194, 217; Walker, *Juteopolis*, pp. 200-02.

[73] Walker, *Juteopolis*, p. 143, cited in Kenefick, 'Effervescence of Youth', p. 200.

question of Irish immigration and its effects on social and political relations is considered in more detail in Chapter 5.)

In 1922 Perth was no longer the 'Sleepy Hollow of the Proletariat'. Paternalistic industrial relations finally ran their course in Perth. The new paradigm that came to replace them however owed more to the major structural changes in British society that came about due to the conduct of 'total' war and the need for the state to make concessions to the British working class and offer the trade unions a seat at the table of government, than anything particular to the conduct of the Perth labour and trade union movements.

Labour activism and working-class consciousness is not merely associated with strikes and trade unionism, it is fundamentally political. And whilst politics is more than political parties and elections, scrutiny of such in Chapters 5 and 6 offers an insight into the political development of the Perth working class and its associated labour movement.

Chapter 5 - *Liberal and Conservative Politics in Perth*

The general election of November 1922 is generally considered the breakthrough for Labour in Scotland. In Scotland Labour candidates captured 31 of the 45 seats contested with a tally of over a half a million votes; some 34.5% of the vote.[1] Dundee saw approaching half of its voters support a 'Labour, Prohibitionist or Communist' candidate.[2] This major success was not experienced in Perth where the Labour Party and ILP did not contest a parliamentary election until 1922 and 1931[3] respectively and where in 1922 the Labour Party secured just 18.9% of the vote in the Perth constituency; the worst performance for Labour in Scotland.[4]

Both within the city of Perth and across much of its county, the Liberal Party, which having secured working-class political allegiance early in the nineteenth century, maintained dominance of Perth's political culture until at least 1922, at which point having lost a degree of its support to the Labour Party, it was succeeded not by Labour as in many other parts of Scotland but by the Conservatives. Perth was the Conservative's only gain in the 1922 general election.

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[1] The success of 1922 was followed a year later by the Labour Party winning 191 seats nationally - 34 in Scotland with 35.9% of the vote. Labour's advance in Scotland continued until the disastrous general election of 1931 at which point its parliamentary representation was reduced to seven.

[2] Kenefick, 'Dundee Working Class', pp. 191-201.

[3] Independent Labour Party: *Papers c. 1888 - c. 1975: Parliamentary Election Addresses Scotland* (1900-1941) *Perthshire & Kinross-shire Perth Division - Mrs Helen E. Gault, General Election 1931* (LHASC, ILP/6/20/26, 1931).

[4] McGuinness, 'UK Election Statistics: 1918-2012', p. 1; Craig, *British Parliamentary Election Statistics 1918-1968*, p. 3.

Municipal politics were no more successful for the Perth labour movement. When in 1919 every ward in Dundee (apart from the two in Broughty Ferry) elected at least one Labour Party councillor, Labour had yet to make any serious encroachment into the Perth municipal chamber.

Perth was not unique in deviating from the national trend. The challenge by Scottish Labour in the early twentieth century was widespread, nonetheless, local and contingent. Matthew McDowell, for example, has in his review of Labour politics in Dumbartonshire noted:

> The Independent Labour Party was nowhere to be seen in Dumbartonshire parliamentary elections up to 1914, and would not run in the Kilmarnock Burghs constituency (including Dumbarton, Kilmarnock, Renfrew, Port Glasgow, and Rutherglen) until 1911. In the Vale's [Vale of Leven] case, this was in stark contrast to parliamentary and municipal politics in other textile communities in the west of Scotland: Paisley for instance.[5]

Nonetheless, in 1922 Dumbarton District of Burghs was one of the 29 seats that went to candidates of the Labour Party; 45.3% and 49.5% of voters in Kilmarnock and Paisley respectively plumped for Labour.[6]

This and the next chapter aim to examine (and detail) the particularism of Perth political Labour history in order to understand the local and contingent causes of its deviation from that experienced in other parts of Scotland and in so doing will call into question generalising narratives of the development of Labour that fail to acknowledge variability in that development. This

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[5] Matthew Lynn McDowell, 'Social physical exercise?: Football, industrial paternalism, and professionalism in west Dunbartonshire, Scotland, *c.* 1870-1900', *Labor History* (October 2014), p. 4.

[6] Craig, *British Parliamentary Election Statistics 1918-1968*, p. 3.

examination begins with the reform activity of the early 1830s and includes those political parties that vied for the support of Perth's working class - the Liberal, Conservative, and Labour parties. The former are considered in this chapter. Labour politics *per se* is left until Chapter 6. Municipal politics too is left until the next chapter. Because of the interrelation of Liberal, Conservative, and Labour politics, some of the summary remarks for Chapter 5 are incorporated into those of Chapter 6. The starting point for any discussion of electoral politics in the nineteenth century is electoral reform.

5.1 *Electoral Reform and the Franchise*

In his study of post-Chartist radicalism in Dundee, Michael St John has argued that Perth 'despite consistently returning Liberal MPs since 1832, could not claim the same radical tradition as Dundee.' According to St John, 'before the peak of parliamentary reform activity between 1866 and 1868 Perth rarely flirted with politics' remaining remote from the reform campaigning of its county - notably Alyth,[7] Blairgowrie, Coupar Angus, and Crieff - where prior to 1866 reform meetings had become common.[8] Perth was not entirely devoid of reform campaigning. In 1831 some 7,000 demonstrators - in the main local industrial workers - marched through Perth in support of the Reform Bill. The following year a rally on Perth's South Inch witnessed Adam Anderson, Rector of Perth Academy and a Liberal make the case for electoral reform. After the passing of

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[7] Alyth would prove to be a centre of radicalism especially among the ploughmen of the district who formed Alyth Ploughmen's Club & Socialist Union and published a socialist newspaper, the *Labour Leaflet*.

[8] Michael St John, '"The Demands of the People Will Rise": Post-Chartist Radicalism in Dundee, *c*. 1850-*c*. 1885' (University of Dundee: unpublished MPhil thesis, 1995), pp. 141-42.

the Representation of the People (Scotland) Act 1832 celebrations took place in Perth at which pride of place went to 'a hydraulic exhibition - four dolphins sprouting jets of water which set wheels in motion all embellished with reform slogans.'[9] In addition, whilst Perth never experienced the level of Chartist agitation of Dundee, the Perth Chartist Association was active 1839-1842 marshalling support for male suffrage at meetings, processions, and rallies, some of which were attended by several hundred 'friends of liberty.'[10]

Key to the early development of Perth working-class politics were Dundee's (Liberal) Radicals who assisted in the setting up (in 1869) of the Perth Working Men's Association (PWMA), which unified Liberal activity across county and city. Despite the involvement of Dundee, Perth's Radicals remained detached from national Liberal activity, and according to St John 'hindered the reform effort of the county as a whole.' PWMA did not last long - the 1871 municipal elections marked its last breath.[11]

Changes to electoral law in the later nineteenth century impinged on the Perth electorate. These changes, like those of 1832 and 1868, were preceded by political agitation; and, whilst Perth was far from the eye of the reformist storm, it nonetheless witnessed Liberal organised demonstrations in favour of franchise extension and equality between Burgh and county:

> The huge demonstration in Perth Burgh, although spoiled by
> inclement weather, was the culmination of a summer of

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[9] http://madeinperth.org/1832-reform-act-and-associated-agitation-in-perth/ [Accessed 24 December 2014].

[10] *Perthshire Courier*, 20 June 1839, 6 February 1840, 5 November 1840, 31 December 1840, 6 January 1842, 3 November 1842.

[11] St John, 'Demands of the People', pp. 141, 146.

> agitation in the county. Preceded by a massive procession through the streets with pro-reform contingents ranging from 20 from Kinfauns to 500 from Auchterarder, the demonstration used three platforms and heard speeches from both the Burgh and county members.[12]

The Representation of the People Act 1867 and the Representation of the People (Scotland) Act 1868 saw the enfranchisement of *c.* 1.5 million males - a 200% increase in the Scottish Burgh electorate (55,000 to 152,000) and a 50% increase in the county franchise (50,000 to 75,000) - and culminated in the urban male working class numerically dominating the British electorate.[13] Parliamentary legislation in the decades that followed the Acts expanded the political space available to the working class. Notably, the Ballot Act 1872, which provided for the use of secret ballots, together with the Corrupt and Illegal Practices Act 1883, reduced bribery and the influence of landlords employers. The Representation of the People Act 1884 enfranchised (male) rural labour increasing the Scottish electoral roll by about 200,000, which Thomas Johnston has argued meant 'Labour representation upon public bodies became a question of prime importance.'[14] The Parliament Act 1911 introduced a stipend for elected representatives. The Representation of the People Act 1918 gave the vote to women over the age of 30 cleared up anomalies within male suffrage by the abolition of more or less all property qualifications, and extended the franchise to 74% of the adult population.[15]

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[12] St John, 'Demands of the People', pp. 157-58.

[13] Neil Johnston, 'The History of the Parliamentary Franchise', *House of Commons Library Research Paper*, 13/14 (1 March 2013), p. 31.

[14] Thomas Johnston, *The History of the Working Classes in Scotland* (Glasgow: Unity Publishing Company Ltd, 1946), p. 263.

[15] Johnston, 'Parliamentary Franchise', p. 1.

Robert McKenzie and Allan Silver have claimed the mid-1880s to be the 'true' beginning of full male suffrage in Britain, arguing that by 1885 the male working class could outvote all others.[16] The validity of McKenzie and Silver's argument notwithstanding, the complexities of registration (especially residency qualifications) still disenfranchised many. Neal Blewett has determined that in 1885 'less than 30 per cent of the adult population' were on the electoral register.[17] Matters were worse in Scotland where male enfranchisement was prior to the 1918 Act below that of England and Wales. In 1911, for example, '69.9 per cent of adult males in English county seats had the vote, in Scotland only 62.5 per cent had, and in burghs the respective figures were 59.8 per cent and 57.3 per cent.'[18]

Despite these problems, electoral reform led to an upsurge in electoral activity as established parties vied to gain the support of the 'newly enfranchised' and to the formation of Labour and socialist parties that made an increasingly successful bid for the political loyalty of the working class. This advance was far slower in Scotland than in England where in 1906 supported by the Lib-Lab pact (of 1903) Labour had made an electoral breakthrough with 27 LRC candidates returned as opposed to only two in Scotland. Of the 42 Labour MPs who took up seats in December 1910 only three were in Scotland. A similar

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[16] Robert McKenzie and Allan Silver, *Angels in Marble – Working Class Conservatives in Urban England* (London: Heinemann, 1968), p. 9.

[17] Neal Blewett, 'The Franchise Factor in the United Kingdom 1885-1918', *Past & Present*, 32 (December 1965), p. 27.

[18] I. G. C. Hutchison, 'The Impact of the First World War on Scottish Politics', in Catriona M. M. Macdonald and E. W. McFarland (eds.), *Scotland and the Great War* (East Linton: Tuckwell Press Ltd, 1999), p. 285.

disjuncture existed within local government where few Labour representatives had secured places on town/parish councils or on school boards by 1910.

The particularities of the British 'first-past-the-post' parliamentary system meant that constituency boundaries were (and still are) factors in electoral politics. The study of such is however outside the remit of this thesis. Nonetheless, it is important to establish the landscape against which Perth's parliamentary electoral battles took place. This is provided in Section 5.2 which offers a very brief account of Perth's parliamentary constituencies between 1832 and 1922 and some background on the early electoral contests for the associated parliamentary seats.

5.2 *Perth Parliamentary Constituencies*

The 1832 Act created two Perth constituencies: Perth Burgh, and Perthshire Counties. Under the Redistribution of Seats Act 1885, Perthshire Counties was divided into Eastern Perthshire and Western Perthshire. The boundaries of Perth Burgh and the two county constituencies were maintained until redrawn in 1918 as Perth,[19] and Kinross & Western Perthshire; the boundaries of which remained unchanged until 1950 and 1983 respectively.

Table A5.1 (Appendix 5) provides details of parliamentary elections held in all Perth constituencies for 1832-1945. In the 14 parliamentary elections for Perth Burgh 1832-1868 (9 contested by one candidate), a Liberal was returned every time. Apart from a sojourn caused by an internal split (1892-1895), Perth Burgh remained a bastion of Liberalism for every general election between 1832

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[19] From 1832-1918 Perth was a Burgh constituency. After 1918 (until being renamed in 1950) it was a county constituency.

and the Great War. Between 1832 and 1868 Perthshire Counties experienced 12 parliamentary elections (6 contested by one candidate). A Liberal held the seat for 1832-1834 and 1835-1837; a Conservative for 1834-1835 and 1837-1868.

The two Perth Burgh by-elections of 1852 were defined by major in-fighting within the Liberal camp. Before the February by-election, the sitting MP, Fox Maule was challenged for the Liberal nomination by Charles Gilpin who claimed the backing of some 150-200 local Radicals. Despite strong support, Gilpin withdrew when it became known 'that at a public meeting of Conservative electors of the city … it was unanimously agreed that on the present occasion they would support his right honourable opponent against him.'[20]

In May 1852 Gilpin stood unsuccessfully against the official (Whiggish) Liberal candidate, Arthur Kinnaird.[21] When Gilpin appeared at the hustings of 10 May 1852 he was accompanied by two bands and a crowd of placard waving supporters who delivered an overwhelming show of hands in his favour. Kinnaird, 'received a good many votes from the Tory party' and won by 325 to 225 in an election devoid of a Conservative.[22]

After 1841 no Conservative candidate contested Perth Burgh until 1874, when, according to their official history, they 'had begun to find their feet … had opened a club in a humble way … [and] had been making an attempt at

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[20] *The Scotsman*, 4 February 1852, p. 2, 11 February 1852, p. 4.

[21] J. Bridges, 'Parliamentary Elections in Perth', in A. R. Urquhart, *Auld Perth. Being the Book of the Faire in Aid of the City and County Conservative Club* (Perth: John Macgregor, 1906), p. *xx*.

[22] *The Scotsman*, 15 May 1852, p. 3; Hutchison, *Political History of Scotland*, p. 67.

organisation.'[23] The candidate that year was Charles Scott, an Edinburgh radical who advanced social reform.[24] As the Conservatives had left Perth Burgh unchallenged, the Liberals did likewise for Perthshire Counties allowing Henry Home-Drummond, a Peelite and free-trader to run unopposed in 1840, 1841, and 1847.[25]

Whether the Conservative and Liberal parties' decisions not to contest their rival's seat was a matter of agreement or simply pragmatism is unknown. There certainly appears to have been some sort of collusion not only to secure a seat each but also to maintain Whiggish dominance over the Radical elements within the Perth Liberal Party. As the Second Reform Act came into law, neither of Perth's two parties had done much to test the other - though both had displayed a determination to oppose Perth's Radicals. This opposition to the Radicals would be seen periodically for decades.

From 1868 until 1885 Perthshire Counties was held by a Liberal for 1868-1874 and 1880-1885; and by a Conservative for 1874-1878 and 1878-1880. Between 1885 and 1918 the two new county constituencies diverged. Eastern Perthshire returned a Liberal in every parliamentary election whilst in the more rural Western Perthshire a period of Liberal Unionist dominance was followed by the election of the Marquess of Tullibardine for the Conservative Party. In 1922 when Labour was making advances across Scotland, Perth returned a

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[23] Bridges, 'Parliamentary Elections in Perth', p. 89.

[24] Charles Scott, *What Should the Working Man Do With His Voice? A lecture delivered by request to the Working Classes of Edinburgh by Charles Scott in the Queen's Hall, on Tuesday 25 January 1867* (Edinburgh: 1867).

[25] Hutchison, *Political History of Scotland,* p. 88.

Conservative MP while the Kinross & Western Perthshire seat went to an unopposed National Liberal. The Labour Party is a twentieth-century construction. Prior to its establishment the electoral support of the working class in Perth was a matter of concern to the Conservative and Liberal parties. Sections 5.3 and 5.4 provides a respective engagement with Conservative and Liberal organisation and rivalry in Perth.

5.3 *Conservative Party Organisation in Perth*

Between the 1832 and 1884 Reform Acts the UK electorate only in 1868 and 1874 put the Conservatives in power. The Corn Laws, free trade, agricultural protectionism, and periods of economic growth, John Charmley has argued, kept them in opposition.[26] Moreover, Conservative electoral performance in Scotland for 1832-1868 was dismal. In the two Perth constituencies the Conservative Party could muster a mere single election victory in the entire period between the First and Third Reform Act.

In the last quarter of the nineteenth century the Conservative Party achieved political dominance over many English cities. A development explained by Jon Lawrence as due to a popular (and as Pelling has argued, pragmatic) Toryism.[27] McKenzie and Silver have concurred arguing that Disraeli of whom *The Times* claimed, 'in the inarticulate mass of the English populace, he discerned the Conservative working man as the sculptor perceives the angel

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[26] John Charmley, *A History of Conservative Politics, 1900-1996* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1996), p. 2.

[27] Lawrence, 'Class and Gender', p. 629; Henry Pelling, 'Working Class Conservatives', *The Historical Journal*, 3, 2 (June 1970), p. 340.

prisoned in a block of marble,'[28] understood the Conservatives needed to convince the urban working class their welfare lay more safely in their hands than those of the Liberals. The Conservative Party thus set about the creation of organisational structures and a propaganda to this end.[29] Internecine warfare within the Liberal Party did much to facilitate Conservative success in this period. This contrasted with Scotland where only the 1900 election saw the Conservative Party attain a majority of MPs.[30]

When in 1874 Disraeli swept to victory with 350 seats, only 19 were Scottish seats (predominantly in western and southern Scotland). Basil Crapster has argued, 'this was indeed an improvement over the seven Scottish Conservatives returned in 1868, but it indicated that unless something was done Scottish Conservatism was condemned to remain a permanent minority.'[31] The response came in the form of a committee established to examine the state of the Conservative Party in Scotland. The committee included Dr Alexander Mackie, newspaper proprietor and self-styled 'Liberal-Conservative.'[32] Dundee-born Mackie, who later stood for Perth Burgh (1878), was sent in 1876 'on a fact-finding tour covering in the main northeastern and highland Scotland ... accompanied by Horace Skeete, a solicitor and Conservative political agent from Perth.' Skeete and Mackie's work exposed several failings and made three major proposals all of which were acted upon by Disraeli's government of 1874-1880:

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[28] *The Times*, 18 April 1883, p. 11.

[29] McKenzie, *Angels in Marble*, pp. 37, 43.

[30] Jon Lawrence, 'Class and Gender in the Making of Urban Toryism, 1880-1914', *The English Historical Review*, 108, 428 (July 1993), p. 629.

[31] Basil L. Crapster, 'Scotland and the Conservative Party in 1876', *Journal of Modern History*, 29, 4 (1957), p. 355.

[32] *The Scotsman*, 17 January 1878, p. 6.

Scottish reform legislation, improved party organisation, and improved links to the aristocracy.[33]

Skeete as a local activist had already done much to ameliorate Conservative Party organisational effectiveness in Perth by introducing professional and fixed organisational structures: 'a central committee was created to keep organisation functioning continuously between the 1868 and 1874 elections, which it did mainly by establishing 12 district committees with local agents and squads of enthusiastic local workers.'[34] Whilst the Scottish National Constitutional Association (SNCA) was established in October 1867 to facilitate the party's organisation in Scotland, it did not make any real impact until the 1880s.[35] Skeete's reforms, which included the creation of a 'Local Constitutional Association', stood in advance of SNCA designs.[36]

Nowhere else in Scotland according to Martin Pugh, experienced 'such intensive aristocratic involvement'[37] as the Perthshire Conservative

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[33] Crapster, 'Scotland and the Conservative Party', pp. 356, 360.

[34] *Horace Skeete to William Stirling-Maxwell* (7 November 1873, 6, 14, February 1874); *R. C. Chapman to Stirling-Maxwell*, 13 February 1874 (Strathclyde Regional Archives Office, Glasgow, Stirling of Keir MSS., T-SK 29/83/85/9102, 29/84/20, 13 February 1874), cited in Hutchison, *Political History of Scotland,* p. 112.

[35] A founder member of the National Conservative Constitutional Association was the then MP for Perthshire Counties, Sir William Stirling-Maxwell. *Scottish National Constitutional Association* (PKCA, MS169/8/8/1 (271)).

[36] *Circular from the SCNA to Sir Peter Murray Threipland* (28 January 1868) (PKCA, MS169/8/8/1 - 268, 28 January 1868).

[37] Martin Pugh, *The Tories and the People 1880-1935* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd, 1985), pp. 130-31.

associations.[38] The city's Conservatives nonetheless increasingly flexed their own muscles in opposition to the lairds. The establishment *c.* 1880 of what became a very active body - the Perth Working Men's Conservative Association (PWCA) - was undertaken despite opposition from Lord Stormont a significant local landowner.[39] Perth was not alone in this development: working men's Conservative associations already existed in Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Greenock; Dundee's association was formed in 1869.[40]

Conservative Party support grew in the city of Perth during the 1880s in marked contrast to the failure of other urban Conservative associations.[41] This growth coincided with the resurgence of the Loyal Orange Institution of Scotland (LOI) over the issue of Irish Home Rule. Orangeism in Scotland could trace its origins back to the 'Williamite period'. Organised originally within the Grand Lodge of England, the Scottish 'brethren' established their own Grand Lodge in Glasgow in 1836 which grew as a result of the influx of skilled workers from Ulster into the Clyde shipyards in the years before and after 1900. Generally considered a west coast organisation ('Glasgow, Ayrshire,

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[38] From what time this high level of aristocratic involvement dates from is difficult to say. Henry Home-Drummond, Conservative MP for Perthshire Counties, 1840-1852, for example, remarked in 1843, 'the expense and trouble of preserving the Conservative interest in Perthshire have chiefly fallen on a very limited number of private gentlemen ... the aid given by the Aristocracy was comparatively small.' *Henry Home-Drummond to Sir J. Graham,* 7 July 1843 (draft)), pp. 209-11 *ff.* (Scottish Record Office, Abercairney MSS., GD, 24/1/535/2, 209-11 *f.f.,* 7 July 1843)*; 'Meeting of Gentlemen connected with Conservative interest in Perthshire,'* 6 July 1841 (Scottish Record Office, Abercairney MSS., GD, 24/1/1068, 7 July 1843). Both cited in Hutchison, *Political History of Scotland,* p. 9.

[39] *Rules of the Dundee Working Men's Conservative Association* (PKCA MS169/8/8/1 - 81).

[40] *Perthshire Advertiser,* 31 August 1900, p. 3; Hutchison, *Political History of Scotland,* p. 118.

[41] Samuel Chapman, 'The History of the Conservative Club', in Urquhart, *Auld Perth,* p. 98.

Renfrewshire, and Argyllshire'), the LOI as Kevin Haddick-Flynn has argued also 'put down strong roots in central and eastern Scotland' - including Perth.[42]

As E. C. MacFarland has argued the LOI was linked in an 'indirect way to the Scottish ruling class bloc through its general support of the Conservatives in Scotland' - a support that was however conditional and dependent upon a coalescence of the aims of the two bodies.[43] In other words, Orangeism in Scotland assisted in the development of working men's Conservative associations and in expanding Conservative working class electoral support in parliamentary and municipal contests. This was particularly true of Glasgow according to Gerry P. T. Finn who has argued that the Glasgow Conservative Working Men's Association (GWMA) - an organisation he deemed a 'cross-class alliance' - 'married politics to Protestantism and received considerable support from the Orange Order.'[44] A 'key member' of the GWMA had been Alexander Whitelaw, Conservative MP for Glasgow (1874-1879) - 'the first Tory MP to be elected in Glasgow since 1832'.[45] His son William Whitelaw who became the MP for Perth Burgh in 1892 was alongside James Bain and Archibald Campbell the advance guard of British Orange MPs. Given Whitelaw's pedigree and his own major involvement in the LOI - at one time an Orange Lodge Grand Master - it is

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[42] Kevin Haddick-Flynn, *Orangeism. The Making of a Tradition* (Dublin: Wolfhound, Press Ltd, 1999), p. 398.

[43] E. F. McFarland, 'The Loyal Orange Institute in Scotland 1799-1900' (University of Glasgow: unpublished PhD thesis, 1986), pp. 263, 281.

[44] Gerry P. T. Finn, 'Scottish Myopia and Global Prejudices' in Gerry P. T. Finn and Richard Giulianotti (eds.), *Football Culture: Local Conflicts, Global Visions* (London: Frank Cass & Company Ltd, 2000), p. 61.

[45] Matthew Lynn McDowell, 'Football, Migration, and Industrial Patronage in the West of Scotland, c. 1870-1900', *Sport in History*, 32, 3 (September 2012), p. 415; Finn, 'Scottish Myopia', p. 61.

not an unreasonable argument to suggest that Orangeism played a role in Whitelaw's election and in developing a Conservative political identity within a section of the Perth working class.[46] To what degree and how long this support lasted has not been ascertained. It is perhaps an area of potential research.

Disraeli's attempts to improve Conservative performance in Scotland floundered with the Liberal 353-seat landslide of 1880 in which they captured 50 Scottish seats.[47] Perth's Conservatives in 1880 might have been organisationally effective but this was not reflected in electoral performance. The Perth Burgh constituency remained Liberal and the county seat saw the sitting Conservative defeated by a Liberal in a close contest.

By 1885 Perth City & County Conservative Club was operating with some 1,006 members. Perth's Conservatives claimed the club played a role in the capture of the Burgh seat in 1892.[48] This Conservative victory was however in the main due to a split amongst Perth's Liberals - an issue addressed later in the chapter - for whilst the seat was not the safest of Liberal holdings, the vote suggests it would likely have been retained by a unified Perth Liberal Party.

Skeete's organisational improvements, the founding of a Conservative club, the existence of a large number of Primrose League 'Habitations' in the

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[46] E. W. McFarland, *Protestants First. Orangeism in Nineteenth Century Scotland* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1990), p. 193; Finn, 'Scottish Myopia', p. 62.

[47] The Conservative Party secured 238 seats nationally but only seven in Scotland. Jenkins, *Liberal Ascendancy*, p. 166.

[48] Conservative & Unionist Associations and Clubs: *Association Records* (1892-1985) - *Perth City & County Conservative Club Minute Books* (1892-1847) 1893 (PKCA MS152/15/1/1), 13 January 1893.

county associations,[49] and the substantial network of aristocratic lairds willing and able, as will be seen in the next section, to apply pressure on tenants and employees to vote Conservative all played their part in improving Conservative electoral performance in the Perth constituencies. Yet despite these features, even in 1912, the large West Perthshire Conservative Association was according to Katherine Atholl moribund and ineffective outside elections.[50]

Decades of organisational change and development did little in Perth to assist the Conservatives to encroach on the Liberal's working-class base. This meant that in the period up to the Great War the labour and trade-union movements in Perth operated within a political landscape almost entirely dominated by a Liberal Party with strong support among the city's working class.

5.4 *Liberalism vs Conservatism, Perth to c. 1907*

The capture in 1868 of Perthshire Counties from the (Conservative) MP, William Stirling-Maxwell, by Charles Parker, who according to the pro-Liberal (later Liberal Unionist) *Perthshire Advertiser,* was 'by no means an extremist Liberal,' ended a 31-year period in which the Conservatives held the constituency, 16 without opposition.[51] Parker joined on the parliamentary benches his fellow

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[49] Both Pugh and Diana Sheets have examined the 1899 'Rolls of Habitations'. Only eight Scottish constituencies - including Eastern Perthshire - contained five or more habitations; none could boast the ten of Western Perthshire. Pugh, *Tories and the People*, p. 246; Diana Elaine Sheets, 'British Conservatism and the Primrose League; the Changing Character of Popular Politics, 1883-1901' (University of Columbia: unpublished PhD thesis, 1986), p. 350.

[50] Katharine Atholl, *Working Partnership: being the lives of John George, 8th Duke of Atholl and his wife Katharine Marjory Ramsay* (London: Barker, 1958), pp. 47-48.

[51] *Perthshire Advertiser,* 15 October 1868, p. 2.

Liberal, Kinnaird, who over a long period had held the Perth Burgh seat unopposed. The *Perthshire Advertiser,* had been vocal in its support for Parker greeting his success as bringing 'Liberty' to the 'Helot County of Scotland' under 'eight and twenty years of Tory bondage.'[52] The victory was celebrated with a banquet for 500 guests beneath a large banner declaring 'Triumph of Liberal Principles in Perth'.[53]

Parker's success cannot simply be attributed to the 1868 Reform Act which had only really affected Perth Burgh, the county's working class, were in the main ineligible under the £50 a year property-value rule.[54] Under the Act, Perth Burgh's electorate increased from 982 to 2,801 - a far greater increase than experienced nationally. The Perthshire Counties electorate increased by only 41%.

Hutchison has examined the cause behind the Conservative's loss (or near loss) of so many rural Scottish seats, including Perthshire Counties in the 1865 and 1868 elections concluding that the cause lay with 'the disaffection of the tenant-farmers, who had two major grievances': the Game Laws and the right of Hypothec.[55] This crisis in the Conservative control in the Scottish counties was

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[52] The *Perthshire Advertiser's* stance suggests that the answer to the earlier question as to the reason why the Liberals failed to challenge for the Perthshire Counties constituency for so long lies in their pragmatic assessment of voting strength within the constituency.

[53] *Perthshire Advertiser,* 17 September 1868, p. 2; *Dundee Advertiser*, 31 August 1869.

[54] St John, 'Demands of the People', p. 150.

[55] Hutchison, *Political History of Scotland,* pp. 104-05.

particularly marked in Perthshire where, according to contemporaneous reports and observations, Parker, in his challenge, struck a chord with the electorate.[56]

Another factor was the role of Robert Pullar who played a significant role in campaigning for both Kinnaird and Parker. Pullar was eventually attacked publicly for directly influencing his sizeable workforce to vote Liberal - a very overt example of what Abercrombie and Hill have described as the industrial paternalist dominating and influence 'the whole man rather than his working self alone.'[57] Liberal Party organisation grew after Parker's 1868 victory with a Perth association founded in April 1874.[58]

The 1874 general election resulted in a Conservative majority, the first for decades. According to Fraser, the election 'revealed a clear disenchantment with the Liberal government on the part of many working men.'[59] Many of the lowland counties of Scotland were won by Conservatives in a major defeat for the Liberals. Conservative hegemony in the Perthshire Counties constituency was reestablished by a combination of improved organisation, and as a

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[56] *C. S. Parker to Lord Kinnaird*, 24 October 1868, *John Thoms to Lord Kinnaird* (30 October 1868) (PKCA, MS100/2/Bundle 830, 30 October 1868); *Perthshire Advertiser,* 12 November 1868, p. 3; *D. Williamson to William Stirling-Maxwell* (7 December 1873) (Strathclyde Regional Archives Office, Glasgow, Stirling of Keir MSS., T-SK 29/23/563, 7 December 1873), cited in Hutchison, *Political History of Scotland,* p. 111.

[57] *Perthshire Constitutional,* 3 February 1874; Abercrombie,'Paternalism', pp. 417-18.

[58] Associations were also founded in many of the towns and villages of the County of Perth including Auchterarder (*c.* 1873), Coupar Angus (March 1874), Alyth (April 1878), and Bankfoot (*c*August 1885). By 1885 the Liberals also claimed branches in Almondbank, Birnam, Blairgowrie, Callander, Crieff, Dunkeld, and Pitlochry. This distribution partly mirrors the 1868 election results in which Auchterarder, Blairgowrie, Bridge of Earn, Coupar Angus, Crieff, Dunkeld, Methven, and Perth produced Liberal majorities and Callander, Dunblane, Pitlochry, and Weem Conservative majorities. *Perthshire Elections, Election Results - Number of Votes, Perth & Kinross* (PKCA, MS100/2/ Bundle 830).

[59] Fraser, *Scottish Popular Politics*, p. 96.

consequence of the Liberal abandonment of its support of tenant farmers as electoral reform franchised agricultural labour.[60] Despite losing, Parker increased his vote slightly. Perth Burgh's sitting MP, Kinnaird in the first challenge to his seat in 22 years was re-elected with a majority of 708.

The loss of Perthshire Counties led to an upsurge in Liberal activity in Burgh and county seats. Nonetheless, much of the county, where the influence of the aristocracy and land owners over their tenants and employees was significant, remained a 'no-go' area for Liberalism.[61] The 'physical' ability of the county lairds to exercise this influence is confirmed by the scale of land ownership: in 1879, the top 10 landowners in Perthshire (by acreage) owned almost half of the county; the top 33 landowners (those with 10,000 acres or more) owned 71%; a further 20 lairds owned between 5,000 and 10,000 acres - the Earl of Breadalbane and the Duke of Atholl[62] owned 14.6% and 12.6% of the entire county acreage respectively.[63]

Even with this influence, the Liberals came close to winning - a performance linked to a successful unification of the Burgh and county Liberal associations after years of independent activity and the creation of local Liberal committees in all polling areas.

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[60] Pugh, *Tories and the People*, p. 109.

[61] *The Scotsman*, 4 February 1878, p. 3.

[62] Atholl's influence over his constituents was extensive. His family was 'firmly rooted in Scottish society and politics as landed aristocrats;' as a soldier, Tullibardine 'rose to the rank of brigadier-general in the Scottish Horse Imperial Yeomanry;' he had served on Perthshire County Council; and was Grand Master Mason of Scotland. Michael Dyer *Capable Citizens and Improvident Democrats: The Scottish Electoral System, 1884-1929* (Aberdeen: Scottish Cultural Press, 1996), p. 98.

[63] Perth & Kinross Fabian Society, *The Acreocracy of Perthshire. Who Owns Our Land?* (Perth: Perth & Kinross Fabian Society, *n.d.*), pp. 4-12.

Parker easily retained Perth Burgh despite Liberal disunity: the association had selected Parker whilst its Radical wing invited 'John Trayner, an Edinburgh advocate (afterwards Lord Trayner), to come to Perth in the advanced Liberal interest.' Defending claims he was 'there to spilt the Liberal party,' Trayner claimed his selection predated Parker's.[64] In his campaign, Trayner reached out to the working class while Parker campaigned on the then three planks of Liberalism: drink and temperance, disestablishment, and the 'Eastern Question'.[65] Trayner withdraw under pressure from the central party allowing Parker a straight run against the Conservatives.

When the Liberals reclaimed in 1880 those seats lost in 1874, Perthshire Counties, despite the influence of the aristocracy and landowners in Blair Atholl, Doune, Port of Monteith, and Pitlochry, and to a lesser extent in Bridge of Cally, Methven, and Muthill,[66] and what Derek Unwin has described as 'an ingrained attitude of deference,' was among the gains.[67] In the same election, Parker held on to Perth Burgh, attaining what would be his highest ever vote in that constituency.[68]

After 1880 Parker found himself continually in conflict with local Liberals over church disestablishment, Irish Home Rule, temperance (Parker

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[64] Bridges, 'Parliamentary Elections in Perth', p. 90.

[65] *The Scotsman*, 16 January 1878, p. 7, 17 January 1878, p. 6; Charles Stuart Parker, *Address to the Parliamentary Electors of the City of Perth* (14 January 1878) (PKCA, MS100/2/Bundle 830, 14 January 1878).

[66] *The Scotsman*, 5 April 1880, p. 5.

[67] Derek W. Unwin, 'The Development of the Conservative Party Organisation in Scotland until 1912', *The Scottish Historical Review*, 44, 138 (October 1965), p. 93.

[68] As in previous elections, Parker owed part of his success to the efforts and influence of Robert Pullar. *Perthshire Courier*, 14 June 1881.

who supported the 'local option' was very much out of kilter with those Perth Liberals who opposed the drink trade), and his decision to vote for the exclusion of Charles Bradlaugh MP who as an atheist had refused to take the oath.[69] Unhappiness with Parker resulted in a split between the Perth Liberal Committee which backed Parker and the Perth Liberal Association which opposed him. In May 1882, partly due to the efforts of Robert Pullar, the Committee and Association merged to form the Perth United Liberal Association (PULA) membership of which stood at 380 in 1883.[70]

The Redistribution of Seats Act 1885 split the Perthshire Counties constituency into Eastern Perthshire and Western Perthshire, whilst the boundaries of Perth Burgh remained unchanged.[71] Disunity continued to plague Perth's Liberals, a number of whom - advance PULA members - sought to replace Parker.[72] At an open meeting after intense discussion, Alexander McDougall, a Radical, won the selection. Refusing to accept the decision, Parker supported by Gladstone, the *Perthshire Advertiser,* and Robert Pullar (who had resigned from PULA over its opposition to Parker) won the election, defeating McDougall and the Conservative candidate.[73]

In 1885 Liberal Radicalism in Perth would seem to have been in a strong position holding sway amongst the party membership and capable of mustering

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[69] *Perthshire Advertiser,* 26 March 1884, p. 3; *Perthshire Courier*, 14 June 1881.

[70] *Perthshire Constitutional*, 26 March 1884; *Perthshire Courier*, 30 September 1884.

[71] In 1880 Perthshire Counties had 5,918 on its electoral roll. After the Act, the new seats of Eastern and Western Perthshire had electorates of 7,851 and 8,284 respectively.

[72] *Perthshire Constitutional*, 12 October 1885.

[73] *Dundee Advertiser*, 25 March 1885; G. R. Searle, *The Liberal Party: Triumph and Disintegration, 1886-1929* (London: Macmillan, 1992), p. 13.

a great deal of support amongst the electorate. This was a long way from the situation of the earlier part of the century when, as discussed earlier, Perth's Conservative and Liberal grandees appeared to work with a degree of unison to oppose the Radicals.

If Biagini and Reid are correct in their argument that the creation of the Labour Party should not be viewed as a new paradigm in political identity but instead as an evolution from a popular Radical tradition, then the position of Radicalism in Perth, is likely to have been a critical (though not determining) factor in Perth Labour politics.[74] Perth in 1885 would seem to have been poised for the development of a Labour politic. The failure of such to emerge might (if developed) offer a counter to Biagini and Reid's position.

The Radical Programme promoted in and after 1885 by the 'social imperialist' Joseph Chamberlain had little impact in Scotland. Partly, responsive to the development of socialism and the popularity of the land reformer Henry George, the Radical Programme in its attempt to outbid socialism was an endeavour to reconstitute a hegemony around new class alliances.[75] Chamberlain's initiative failed. The subsequent defection of the Whig aristocracy, Chamberlain, and other Unionist Radicals over Irish Home Rule in 1886 whilst having a major effect nationally (and almost destroying the Liberal Party) was seen off by the Liberals in two of the three Perth constituencies. Only

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[74] Biagini, *Currents of Radicalism*, pp. 1-20 *ff*.

[75] D. A. Hamer, *(Joseph Chamberlain & Others) The Radical Programme (1885)* (Sussex: The Harvester Press Ltd, 1971), p. *xii*.

in Western Perthshire was a Liberal Unionist returned despite Conservative backing of all three Liberal Unionist candidates.[76]

In late nineteenth-century Scotland two bodies strove for control of Liberalism: the Glasgow (Whig) Scottish Liberal Association and the Edinburgh (Radical) National Liberal Federation of Scotland. The two united in 1881 and on 16 October 1885 met at Perth, where with the assistance of Robert Pullar, Chairman of the Perth Association, the Radicals gained control.[77] Divisions however persisted so that in the election of November-December 1885 there were 27 double (rival) Liberal candidates (including Crofter Party candidates). At the start of 1886 the Whigs and Radicals reached an accommodation.

Robert Pullar's attitude to national Liberal politics appears very much at odds with his behaviour locally. His support of the Radicals within the Liberal Party stands in marked contrast to his opposition to the Radical elements within Perth Liberalism and his seemingly unwavering support of the anti-Radical Charles Parker, which, as will be seen next, continued for some years despite significant local opposition.

In 1887 Pullar formed the Perth Liberal Club with 60 members of PULA and the Perth Liberal Committee; and became its president.[78] Despite Pullar's efforts, Parker continued to alienate the city's Liberals especially over his opposition to 'Free Education'.[79] Matters came to a head in 1892 when the newly

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[76] Alyth & Meigle Conservative Party, *Constitutional Minute Book*, 17 June 1886; J. P. D. Dunbabin, 'British Elections in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries', *English Historical Review*, XCV (1980), p. 245.

[77] *The Scotsman*, 17 October 1885, p. 9.

[78] *Perthshire Courier*, 7 June 1887.

[79] *Perthshire Advertiser*, 2 May 1892, p. 3.

formed anti-Parker (Perth) Liberal & Radical Association put forward John Woollen as an Independent Liberal. Bridges has argued that Woollen whose speeches dealt chiefly with social questions - 'temperance, poor-law reform, labour, old age pensions, and religious equality' - was effectively a Labour candidate.[80] Indeed his candidature was backed by Keir Hardie and the Scottish Labour Party (SLP), which supported independent Liberals in seven Scottish constituencies that year.[81] No documentary evidence of SLP activity in Perth has however been found.[82]

The split in the Liberal vote at a time of decline in Liberal support in eastern Scotland saw the seat go to the Conservative William Whitelaw. This result was not repeated in 1895 when a unified Perth Liberal Association[83] successfully fielded Robert Wallace who Robert Pullar had sourced from London as a 'reconciliation candidate.' The Liberals kept the seat until the boundary changes of 1918. Pullar's handiwork was all over Wallace's 1895 success, slim though the majority was - he had purchased premises for the Liberal Club in Perth's Tay Street and had organised a rally of some 3,000 Liberal supporters.[84]

Despite Pullar's attempt at reconciliation, many of the city's Liberals were critical of Wallace and his close association with the Liberal Premier Henry

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[80] Bridges, 'Parliamentary Elections in Perth', p. 95.

[81] Dyer, *Capable Citizens*, p. 45.

[82] James Kellas, 'The Liberal Party in Scotland, 1885-1895' (University of London: unpublished PhD thesis, 1962), p. 303.

[83] The New Liberal Association was formed by Robert Pullar who became its first chairman.

[84] *Perthshire Advertiser*, 23 October 1893, p. 3; *Perthshire Courier*, 3 April 1894, 4 December 1894.

Campbell-Bannerman who they disliked (in spite of Wallace's successes in retaining his seat in 1900 and 1906).[85] When Pullar returned to Perth after a few years absence, not only were Perth's Liberals still divided into pro- and anti-Wallace factions, but, as Harding has argued, they also faced fierce and highly organised (and seemingly locally popular) Conservative opposition.[86] This was however not tested.

In February 1907, after his appointment as Chairman of Quarter Sessions for the County of London, Wallace resigned his seat after which the local Liberals and Conservatives forged an agreement[87] to allow Robert Pullar to stand unopposed according to 'a [never realised] compact whereby at the next election the Liberals' were 'to allow a similar privilege to the Tory nominee.'[88] Whilst Pullar's two years in the House of Commons were unremarkable, his tenure allowed the divisions within Perth Liberalism to be healed.

Macdonald has observed in Paisley the 'adaptability of pre-1914 Liberalism to the challenge of both left and right.'[89] She takes as a case in point the effective way Paisley's Liberals could embrace imperialism and social issues to retain the Paisley seat in the Khaki election of 1900. This 'Khaki' factor provides the theme of the next section.

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[85] *Perthshire Advertiser*, 17 February 1902; *Perthshire Courier*, 10 March 1903.

[86] Harding, *Pullars of Perth*, p. 161.

[87] It could be argued that this was more of a *fait accompli* than an agreement, Pullar's standing in Perth being such that any Conservative attempt against him would flounder. The question as to why the labour movement in Perth did not challenge Pullar is addressed in Chapter 6.

[88] *Forward*, 16 February 1907, 25 February 1907.

[89] Macdonald, 'Radical Thread', p. 161.

5.5 *the 'Khaki Factor' in Perth, 1895-1906*

Prior to the publication of Richard Price's *An Imperial War and the British Working Class*,[90] historians of the period claimed that the majority of the British working class supported Britain's imperial ventures in South Africa. Price challenged that view as superficial and relying for its conclusions on populist 'jingoist mob' responses to events such as the 'Relief of Ladysmith' and concluded that in the main the working-class view of the Boer War of 1899-1902 was indifferent and ambivalent. Price's conclusions have since come under criticism and certain local narratives, those of Dundee and Perth for example, suggest a different story.

Perth at the onset of Boer hostilities could claim a centuries-old tradition of military recruitment and was home to the Black Watch whose thousand-strong Second Battalion fought in South Africa.[91] Another military unit associated with Perth was the Scottish Horse whose two mounted Imperial Yeomanry regiments were closely associated with Lord Tullibardine (later the Fifth Duke of Atholl) - one of which recruited heavily in Perthshire.

Early on in the war a 'War Fund' was established by Perth Town Council, which eventually totalled £4,950. The first anniversary of the fund was celebrated in the Co-operative Society Hall. A year later the larger Perth City

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[90] Richard Price, *An Imperial War and the British Working Class: Working Class Attitudes and Reactions to the Boer War, 1899-1902* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1972).

[91] 'After landing at Cape Town, the battalion took part in a disastrous battle at Magersfontein Ridge where about a third of the contingent were either killed or wounded. Despite this setback, the Black Watch took part in many of the battles of the conflict.' Charles Grant, *The Black Watch – Osprey Man-At-Arms Series* (Berkshire: Osprey Publications Ltd, 1971), pp. 22, 29.

Hall drew a capacity crowd. On the platform of the gathering were many members of the district's political, industrial, and aristocratic elite. The *Perthshire Advertiser* described the pro-war sentiments in Perth as:

> One of the greatest features born of the struggle for the ascendency of British supremacy in the Transvaal has been the splendid Christian charity shown by the people of the county. ... That spring has been particularly strong and pure in our own Fair City – the headquarters of the noble old regiment, the gallant Black Watch, who has also sacrificed many of its members on the bloodiest fields of South Africa.

Fundraising for the dependents of soldiers on service in South Africa was so successful that at the time of the second anniversary gathering, the 'War Fund' could support '194 wives and other dependents and 205 children.'[92]

When news reached Perth of the end of the Boer War, the Town Council ordered the ringing of the bells of St John's and St Paul's. All public buildings raised the Union flag and there was a spontaneous decking of homes and businesses with patriotic bunting. Troops at the King's Barracks were given a general holiday.[93] Evidence certainly suggests strong working-class support of the Boer War in Perth and not the ambivalence and indifference of Price's argument. Whether this support was translated into an electoral surge for Unionism remains to be considered.

Despite the willingness of the British populace to take part in public displays of patriotism and despite 'the Conservative assault on the patriotism and loyalty of the considerable body of Liberals (and of course, almost all of the leaders of the emergent Labour Party) who were opposed to the war' which

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[92] *Perthshire Advertiser*, 10 January 1902.
[93] *Perthshire Advertiser*, 2 June 1902, p. 2.

resulted in 163 Conservatives winning uncontested seats,[94] as Hugh Cunningham has argued and Macdonald has observed in Paisley, such outward patriotism failed to be translated by the Unionists into a substantial 'pro-imperialist' vote in the 1900 election.[95] As Table 5.1 (below) illustrates there was very little change in either the number of seats won by the Conservative & Liberal Unionist alliance or their share of the vote from 1895.[96]

Table 5.1 *Electoral Performance of the Conservative & Liberal Unionist Alliance and Liberal Party in the General Elections of 1895, 1900, and 1906*

	Conservative & Liberal Unionist Total Votes	Conservative & Liberal Unionist Seats Won	Conservative & Liberal Unionist Proportion of Vote (%)	Liberal Party Total Votes	Liberal Party Seats Won	Liberal Party Proportion of Vote (%)
1895	1,894,772	411	49.1	1,765,772	177	45.7
1900	1,767,958	402	50.3	1,572,323	183	45.0
1906	2,422,071	156	43.4	2,751,057	399	49.4

(**Source:** Craig, *Parliamentary Election Results*, pp. 518, 555-56; Craig, *Electoral Facts*, p. 68)

Perth offers no outlier to this outcome as Table 5.2 and Table 5.3 (both overleaf) confirm.

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[94] McKenzie, *Angels in Marble*, p. 55.

[95] Hugh Cunningham, 'The Language of Patriotism, 1750-1914', *History Workshop* (1981), p. 25; Macdonald, 'Radical Thread', pp. 159-61.

[96] See for example, Price, *Imperial War*, Henry Pelling, *Social Geography of British Elections 1885-1910* (London: Macmillan, 1967).

Table 5.2 *Unionist Vote (and Turnout) in the Parliamentary Constituencies of Perth Burgh, Eastern Perthshire, and Western Perthshire for the General Elections of 1895, 1900, and 1906*

	Unionist Proportion of Vote in 1895 (%)	Unionist Proportion of Vote in 1900 (%)	Unionist Proportion of Vote in 1906 (%)
Perth Burgh	45.2	45.7	39.4
Eastern Perthshire	42.6	40.2	43.9
Western Perthshire	52.3	55.3	44.2
Turnout	*85.8*	*77.0*	*81.6*
UK Turnout	**78.4**	**75.1**	**83.2**

(**Source:** Craig, *Parliamentary Election Results*, pp. 518, 555-56; Craig, *Electoral Facts*, p. 68)

Table 5.3 *Results of the 1895, 1900, and 1906 General Elections in the Parliamentary Constituencies of Perth Burgh, Eastern Perthshire, and Western Perthshire*

	Perth Burgh	Eastern Perthshire	Western Perthshire
1895	Robert Wallace *Liberal* 2,137 (elected) William Whitelaw *Unionist* 1,763 (Electorate 4,456)	John George Smyth Kinloch *Liberal* 3,410 (elected) W. L. Boase *Unionist* 2,535 (Electorate 7,641)	Donald Currie *Liberal Unionist* 3,379 (elected) John Deans Hope *Liberal* 3,087 (Electorate 7,984)
1900	Robert Wallace *Liberal* 2,171 (elected) William Whitelaw *Unionist* 1,827 (Electorate 4,873)	John George Smyth Kinloch *Liberal* 3,185 (elected) J. G. Stewart *Unionist* 2,143 (Electorate 7,463)	John Stroyan *Liberal Unionist* 3,598 (elected) Charles Stuart Parker *Liberal* 2,913 (Electorate 8,078)
1906	Robert Wallace *Liberal* 2,875 (elected) S. Chapman *Unionist* 1,867 (Electorate 5,398)	Thomas Ryburn Buchanan *Liberal* 3,738 (elected) Marquess of Tullibardine *Unionist* 2,648 (Electorate 7,825)	David Charles Erskine *Liberal* 3,890 (elected) John Stroyan *Liberal Unionist* 3,087 (Electorate 8,401)

(**Source:** Craig, *Parliamentary Election Results*, pp. 518, 555-56; Craig, *Electoral Facts*, p. 68)

There was little deviation in the Unionist vote between 1895 and 1900. However, whilst there was a clear drop in the turnout for 1900, it remained high so that Cunningham's claim that apathy was the key feature of the 1900 election

is inapplicable to Perth.[97] The fall in Unionist support in Perth Burgh to below 40% in 1906 is worth noting. A comparison with the 1906 results is however difficult, due to machinations within the Conservative & Liberal Unionist alliance. The Marquess of Tullibardine who played a high-profile role in the Boer War and was likely to have a large personal support within Eastern Perthshire failed in 1906 to improve the Unionist vote sufficiently in an election which saw all three Perth constituencies go to the Liberals.

5.6 *Liberalism vs Conservatism, Perth from 1906*

As a whole 1906-14 was a difficult period for Conservatism. As Lawrence has argued: 'the twin factors of electoral failure and Liberal ideological innovation undermined the credibility of late Victorian "beer-barrel populism". The rejuvenation of a more collectivist Liberalism, the emergence of a substantial trade-union based labour party, and the waning influence of Nonconformity in politics, could all be said to have made old-style urban Toryism appear distinctly anachronistic.'[98] Against this background, in Western Perthshire where paternalistic feudalism and patriarchal authority employed not only

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[97] Cunningham, 'Language of Patriotism', p. 25
[98] Lawrence, 'Class and Gender', p. 648.

great influence but coercion as well, Conservatism succeeded in winning the elections of January and December 1910.[99]

The December 1910 election in Eastern Perthshire exposed a very different Conservatism at play. In that election Archibald Skelton, an advocate of 'Progressive Conservatism' took on William Young the eventual Liberal victor. Skelton a supporter of protection and tariff reform was very much to the left of his party so that his selection perhaps hints at the strength of Liberalism in the constituency.[100] Skelton could, nonetheless, only improve the Conservative vote by 33 in an electorate that had increased by 187. Perth Burgh was unchanging in its support of the Liberal A. F. Whyte.

As the Great War approached Liberal hegemony in the city of Perth and Eastern Perthshire remained unchallenged.[101] It was only Western Perthshire where a combination of, what Chris Williams has described elsewhere as, 'the persistence of "deferential" attitudes,' and coercion that Conservatism had

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[99] Evidence of coercive activity by the Conservative lairds during the 1910 elections is found in the records of the West Perthshire Liberal Association: *Lord Breadalbane (Aberfeldy) to R. MacGregor-Mitchell (28 January 1910) (PKCA, MS159/2/5, 28 January 1910)); J. Robertson-Coupar (Stirling) to R. MacGregor-Mitchell (25 January 1910) (PKCA, MS159/2/5, 25 January 1910); Charles D. M. Ross (Crieff) to R. MacGregor-Mitchell (22 January 1910) (PKCA, MS159/2/6, 22 January 1910); James Henderson (Kincardine) to R. MacGregor-Mitchell (29 November 1910) (PKCA, MS159/2/8, 29 November 1910); A. A. McGregor (Aberfeldy Liberal Association) to R. MacGregor-Mitchell (17 September 1910) (PKCA, MS159/2/7, 17 September 1910); Alexander Campbell (Loch Tay) to R. MacGregor-Mitchell (12 December 1910) (PKCA, MS159/2/10, 12 December 1910);* Chris Williams, 'Britain', in Stefan Berger and David Broughton, *The Force of Labour. The Western European Labour Movement and the Working Class in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford: Berg Publishers Ltd, 1995), p. 114.

[100] David Torrance, *Noel Skelton and the Property-Owning Democracy* (London: Biteback Publishing Ltd, 2010), *foreword; Election leaflet and General Correspondence,* Walter and Katharine Elliot Papers (NLS, Acc. 12267/28).

[101] A. F. Whyte having seen off Conservative challenges in both the January 1910 and December 1910 Perth Burgh elections.

wrested control from the Liberals. Importantly, Labour offered no challenge to the political *status quo*. The situation in Perth mirrored that in many parts of Scotland: 'the Liberal Party seemed in a virtually impregnable position.'[102] Dundee proved a notable exception.

The electoral and ideological turmoil of the pre-war years led to the adaptation of the Conservative Party into an organisation capable of establishing hegemony in a postwar society and an extended franchise. The First World War had a major impact on the Conservatives. Pragmatism and patriotism resulted in a national coalition that lasted, at first uneasily (1914 until May 1915), and then 'almost unchallenged' throughout the war through 'the Coupon Election of 1918 until the autumn of 1922.'[103] Post-war, the Conservative Party could act without the constraints of the shibboleths of opposition to Home Rule, franchise reform, and state intervention. The Government of Ireland Act 1921, the Anglo-Irish Treaty of December 1921, the Representation of the People Act 1918, the Welsh Church Act 1914 and the central role of the state during the war years, saw to that. The task for Conservatism in the immediate postwar period was to widen its appeal to the new larger electorate and to counter the development of socialism.

During the Great War Conservative and Liberal Parties operated together in an all-party coalition government that continued in some form until 1922. The spirit of coalition was evidenced briefly in Perth with the unopposed

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[102] Hutchison, 'Impact of the First World War', p. 36.

[103] John Stubbs, 'The Impact of the Great War on the Conservative Party' in Gillian Peele and Chris Cook, *The Politics of Reappraisal, 1918-1939* (London: The Macmillan Press Ltd, 1975), pp. 14-15.

election of Archibald Stirling for the Conservatives in the Western Perthshire by-election of February 1917. It did not last long. James Gardiner a Lloyd George Liberal defeated Stirling in the 'Coupon' Election of 1918 to join William Young an official Coalition Liberal who took the Perth seat.[104] Gardiner's victory over a serving soldier who held the 'Coupon' in a constituency dominated by Conservative lairds willing and able, as was seen in 1910 to use coercion and electoral impropriety to secure votes, albeit one redrawn under the 1918 Act as Kinross & Western Perthshire, in a general election considered a disaster for Liberalism requires consideration.

Stirling, whose father had held the Perthshire Counties seat for the Conservatives for 1857-1878, had had a notable military career - the pinnacle of which saw him as Brigadier-General of the Highland Brigade (1915-16).[105] If Stirling had earned the 'Coupon' so too had Perth where city and county military service had seen 3,997 and 11,357 men serving in the armed forces respectively. Daniel Coetzee has estimated that, '2,466,719 men, or 49.7 per cent of the total British armed forces during World War One enlisted voluntarily between 4 August 1914 and 31 December 1915.'[106] Coetzee has gone on to quantify

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[104] Gardiner had lost out narrowly to Stirling in the competition for Lloyd George's endorsement. His and his Liberal supporters' decision to oppose the 'Coupon' in 1918 was according to newspaper reports a response to what they considered Conservative dominance of the 'Coupon.' Whether his standing against Stirling was also reflective of Liberal-Conservative animosity in the county where the elections of 1910 retained a bitterness unsweetened by the unity of the war years and Stirling's year as MP for Western Perthshire or simply a reflection of Liberal self-confidence is unknown. *The Scotsman*, 30 November 1918, p. 8.

[105] http://www.thepeerage.com/p. 2728.htm [Accessed 29 December 2014].

[106] Daniel de Villiers Coetzee, 'Measures of Enthusiasm: New Avenues in Quantifying Variations in Voluntary Enlistment in Scotland, August 1914-December 1915', *Local Population Studies,* 74 (Spring 2005), p. 16.

the level of volunteer recruitment across the then 33 Scottish counties and found

that the 'percentage of county males of military age recruited between 4 August

1914 and 30 April 1915' was highest in the County of Perth where it was 67.8%, a

figure far in excess of its neighbours (and the national level): Aberdeen (39.7%),

Forfar (34.6%), Renfrew (22.4%), Dumbarton (29.5%), Stirling (34.2%), Lanark

(35.7%), Fife (36.2%), Clackmannan (41.3%), and Midlothian (51.8%) included -

only Sutherland at 65.8% came close to Perth.[107] Stirling's defeat was not an anti-

war vote.[108] Despite being willing to take the King's shilling when called, the

Perth working class appeared to be unswayed electorally in 1918 as in 1900 and

1906 by the appeal to 'Khaki'. (Gardiner had not donned a uniform - he had

served on the Potato Advisory Committee of the Ministry of Agriculture,

Fisheries and Food.)

Macdonald has considered the 1918 parliamentary election in Paisley, a

constituency which in that year was like Perth one of very few seats in which

Coalition candidates were defeated, 'as an expression of confusion on the part

of an electorate emerging from the abnormality of war into the yet as unclear

conditions of peace.'[109] A position though possibly applicable to Paisley seems

an unsatisfactory interpretation of the Kinross & Western Perthshire electorate

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[107] *Memorandum on Compulsory Service* 191 (PRO, WO 162/27), cited in Coetzee, 'Measures of Enthusiasm', p. 22.

[108] The issue of opposition to the war is considered in Chapter 4. It is suffice to say that at this stage that Perth experienced little in the way of anti-conscription or other oppositional politics. It did, however, experience anti-German riots despite the presence of a mere 14 'enemy aliens' in the city. This took place on 15 May 1915 - the day that the local press reported the heavy losses sustained by the Perth battalions of the Black Watch at Neuve Chapelle (10-13 March 1915). Macdonald, *Scotland and the Great War*, pp. 145, 156.

[109] Macdonald, 'Radical Thread', p. 196.

whose support of Gardiner in an election which saw 335 of 364 'Coupon' carrying Conservatives win, suggests something of the resilience of Liberalism. Those historians such as McKibbin[110] who have pin-pointed the demise of the Liberal Party in the period immediately before or during World War I would find little solace in this picture of a Liberalism dominating the city and county constituencies of Perth in 1918.[111] The explanation for this resilience, as will be seen next, lies in the absence from Perth of many of the factors that challenged the Liberal hegemony elsewhere.

In the postwar period in Perth the notion that Liberalism had had its day was publicly articulated - albeit it was Conservatism and not the Labour Party that was considered its nemesis: 'Generally the feeling in the city [Perth] was that the Liberals were running out of steam - there were no Pullar members in the Liberal Club - and that the Unionists were the coming men.'[112]

For 20 years the head of Perth's most important industry and the chief employer in the town was central to the machinery of Liberalism in Perth. Robert Pullar was not alone in this regard: many other members of Perth's industrial elite - Peter Campbell, John Alexander Dewar,[113] and James Coates included - were in the main Liberal Party members. Robert Wallace, a General Accident company director, was elected as Liberal MP for Perth Burgh in 1895,

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[110] McKibbin, *Evolution of the Labour Party*, pp. 90, 236-39.

[111] This is a description more akin to Michael Lynch's argument of Liberal resilience. Michael Lynch, *Scotland: A New History* (London: Barrie & Jenkins, 1992), p. 432.

[112] *Perthshire Constitutional*, 23 November 1921.

[113] Dewar became a Liberal town councillor in 1843, entered the Perth Guild of Merchants in 1856 (becoming Dean in 1862), and later joined the Police Commission. His son, John Alexander Dewar was the Liberals' only success in Scotland in 1900 when he was elected MP for Inverness-shire.

1900, and 1906.[114] (A similar group of industrialists, Archibald Orr Ewing (Archibald Orr Ewing & Company) and Alex Wylie (William Stirling & Sons) heavily influenced the political, religious, social, cultural, and charitable life of the Vale of Leven.[115]) Paternalism in Perth was as strong an influence on maintaining a docile compliant and non-unionised workforce as Gallacher and Macdonald have argued it was in the Vale of Leven and Paisley respectively. The difference in Perth was that paternalistic managerial relations were maintained in Perth for a longer time than in the Vale of Leven and Paisley.

By the 1895 general election, political differences in the Pullar family had, however, entered the public domain with Robert Pullar endorsing the candidature of Wallace and his brother, James (chairman of the Perth Conservative Club), his opponent.[116] By 1895, with the exception of Robert Pullar and his wife, the entire Pullar family had placed their political allegiance behind Perth's Unionists who in 1896 were able to attract 3,000 to a City Hall event and 5,000 to a Conservative rally at Huntingtower.[117] Differences centred on 'Free Trade' supported by Robert Pullar and 'Protectionism' supported by amongst others his brother Herbert Spindler Pullar a leading Unionist who warned 'that Free Trade was disastrous because of the dominance of

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[114] The General Accident board was split over Wallace's candidature in the 1906 general election, many preferring to support the Conservative S. Chapman. *The General's Review*, April 1906.

[115] Orr Ewing was the Conservative MP for Dumbartonshire, 1862-1892, Wylie held the seat for the Liberal Unionists, 1895-1906. Gallacher, *Vale of Leven*, p. 187.

[116] *Perthshire Courier*, 21 May 1895.

[117] So damaging were developments in Perth to the Liberal cause that Gladstone himself intervened directly by visiting Perth in 1897 to sort matters out. *Perthshire Constitutional*, 21 September 1896; *Perthshire Courier*, 31 November 1897, 3 October 1897.

Germany.'[118] Whilst contingencies particular to Pullars existed, namely rivalry with the German dyeing industry, this shift in political loyalty seems to fit in with Kenneth Morgan's argument that in the immediate postwar period 'the faces of [British] capital coalesced in self-protection and inevitably found its political voice in the Unionist Party'.[119] The leadership and the parliamentary ranks of the Liberal Party in Perth as it was across Scotland was dominated by men from the world of business whose interests in the last two decades of the nineteenth century were increasingly being met not by their 'own' party but by the Conservatives.

The shift in political outlook of the Pullar family was eventually accompanied by a shift from paternalistic managerial approaches in its works to an increasingly autocratic and authoritarian management style - as was detailed in Chapter 4. Pullars' flight from paternalism eventually coalesced in the family's physical flight from Perth as trade unionism within their works became increasingly confrontational. This process however did not reach its apex however until 1917/18.

An element examined by Macdonald in her engagement with 'Liberal decline' historiography was the Representation of the People Act 1918 which had resulted in a three-fold expansion of the electorate and a redrawing of constituency boundaries. The two Perth constituencies were affected by the Act differently. The new Perth constituency expanded four-fold to include not only the city of Perth but also the traditionally Liberal strongholds of Abernethy,

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[118] Harding, *On Flows the Tay*, p. 37.
[119] Morgan, *Age of Lloyd George*, p. 76.

Alyth, Blairgowrie, Coupar Angus, and Rattray. Whilst it is difficult to give a direct comparison between the former Western Perthshire Constituency and the new due to the complexity of the boundary changes, Kinross & Western Perthshire in 1918 was just two-and-three-quarters the size of the former Western Perthshire seat and included Aberfeldy, Auchterarder, Callander, Crieff, Doune, and Dunblane where the influence of Conservative lairds lingered.[120]

Many of the potentially enfranchised electorate remained absent from electoral registers in 1918 - this was especially true of members of the armed forces despite arrangements for an armed forces' postal vote. Given the high levels of military recruitment in Perth, it can be surmised that the Perth constituency electoral rolls were depleted in greater proportion than in many other areas. How this affected the 1918 result in Perth is difficult to say with any certainty, so that the real effects of franchise reform were not seen until 1922. Harvie has argued for the centrality of franchise reform to the Labour breakthrough in 1922 though with a rider: 'important though electoral reform was, it cannot be widely be viewed in isolation from overall trends like the breaking of Liberal ascendency.'[121] As will be seen next, the specificities of the 1922 elections in the two Perth constituencies do not lend themselves to test the significance of franchise reform.

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[120] The Conservative Party chose not to contest the 1918 election in Kinross & Western Perthshire allowing the National Liberal candidate William Young to win in an uncontested election. The only element of competition in that election was in the selection process which involved a postal ballot of the membership of the Perth Division Liberal Association (and in which Young beat A. F. Whyte by 504 votes to 235). *The Scotsman*, 4 October 1918, p. 3.

[121] Harvie, 'Before the Breakthrough', p. 32.

Gardiner retained his Kinross & Western Perthshire seat in 1922 in an uncontested election as a joint Liberal-Conservative candidate standing as a National Liberal (effectively a re-branded pro-Lloyd George Coalition Liberal).[122] Gardiner's candidature caused dissent within the West Perthshire Liberal Association whose chairman resigned after the decision by the Joint Committee of the Kinross and Perthshire associations not to support an Independent Liberal candidate. Despite the failure to field an Independent Liberal, the ability of a divided Perth Liberal Party to see their 'man' selected as a joint candidate, suggests once again the continued strength of that organisation in Kinross and Western Perthshire. It also says something of the continuity of a Conservative pragmatism that had continually demonstrated a willingness to support the more right-wing elements of Perth Liberalism.

In the re-drawn Perth (formally Perth Burgh) constituency the governmental dissenters were more forthright in their opposition, a situation compounded by the inability of the Conservatives and National Liberals to agree on a joint candidate.[123] The consequence was a four-way contest in which the Conservative Skelton beat an Independent Liberal, a National Liberal, and a Labour candidate, William Westwood (National Supervisor of the Ship Constructors' & Shipwrights' Association).[124]

Skelton's victory masks some very significant features of that election. First, the figures suggest that in a straight Liberal-Conservative contest the

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[122] *The Times*, 6 November 1922, p. 21.

[123] *The Scotsman*, 16 October 1922, p. 7; Torrance, *Skelton*, p. 22.

[124] *The Scotsman*, 25 January 1923, p. 8.

Liberals might have triumphed and indeed in 1923 the Liberals won such an election - evidence that would support M. Hart's argument for the retention of Liberal strength nationally at least until 1923.[125] Second, the Labour Party candidate secured 4,657 votes. Liberal dominance though not broken was diminished significantly by a sizeable shift to Labour. This was a double-edged sword, for while the Labour vote was too small to secure a seat it was sufficient in size to prevent a Liberal candidate defeating the Conservative whose proportion of the Perth constituency vote remained practically unchanged compared to that of 1910. What occurred in Perth in 1922 was in marked contrast to Glasgow where prior to the Great War the Conservatives triumphed at the expense of the Liberals and Labour in three-way contests, and where in the postwar period Labour advanced against competing Conservative and Liberal candidates.[126] As was argued in Chapters 3 and 4 the development of trade unionism in Perth at first in phase with national developments lacked the 'new unionism' of 1889-1891. It was only by 1918 that Perth could be said to have caught up with the trade-union movement as it was developing in Scotland's industrial areas and cities. Closely associated with the development of trade unionism was the growth of a Labour politics. The unevenness of trade-union growth and influence in Perth coupled with a number of other factors that will be posited later in this chapter and in Chapter 6, meant that whilst Labour had by 1922 made a challenge for the allegiance of the Perth working class, this challenge was insufficient to counter a persistent fidelity to Liberalism albeit

[125] M. Hart, 'The Liberals, the War and the Franchise', *English Historical Review*, XCVII (1982), pp. 821-22.
[126] Smyth, *Labour in Glasgow*, p. 94.

one that struggled against the fragmentation of the Liberal Party as an electoral organisation.

It is the contention of this thesis that lingering paternalism in Perth industrial relations acted as a negative catalyst in the development of class-based politics. To understand why paternalism continued to function in defining political identity in Perth long after its demise elsewhere it is necessary to consider the reasons for its expiration elsewhere - it is in the absence or negation of those factors responsible for its demise elsewhere that the reasons for its persistence are found. The Vale of Leven, one of the oldest industrial areas in Scotland, about which Gallacher has argued that four paternalistic textile manufacturers dominated the local economy, provides a useful resource in this regard. Dominance of the local labour market is an important feature of paternalistic industrial relations. Workers who can go elsewhere for employment are far less likely to be subservient. In the Vale of Leven the opening of Argyll Motors in 1906 paying national rather than local rates undermined the influence of the local employers. The situation in Perth was different. The town's primary employers did not just exist as oligopolies, but also as cartels of employment. Most workers in Perth did not have significant alternative employment opportunities, nor did the Great War bring opportunities through the government's temporary acquisition of war-related industries, so that Perth's main employers maintained control of the labour market. At the end of the war the Vale of Leven experienced an economic meltdown which led to rising worker militancy as unemployment rose. Perth's

labour market remained stable during and after the war, although wages did

drop as the British economy moved into a slump.

As was mentioned in Chapter 2 the move to limited company status had

the effect of making paternalism unworkable. As Joyce repeatedly stresses:

> [Towards the end of the nineteenth century] the hold of
> authority in work was loosened, and the *status quo* of
> patriarchy in work was disrupted. The coming of the limited
> company was of fundamental importance. It sundered the old
> bond of master and man, replacing the paternalism of the
> private family firm with a new anonymity and rationality in
> work organisation and method. The passing of the private firm
> meant the end of the local involvement of the patrician
> employers, and with it the end of the old order.[127]

In short, the move from owner-manager entrepreneur to large impersonal

corporations and joint stock companies opened up space between the shop-

floor and the factory office, signalling the decline of paternalistic industrial

relations. As employers and employees moved apart within the factory so their

social spheres shifted outside. The paternalistic employer living close to his or

her factory involved in the local community socially and altruistically, and more

importantly capable of significant influence within that community, became a

thing of the past.

Gallacher has cited 'the amalgamation of local firms and the resulting

displacement of employers with community ties from the locality' as one of the

four factors that influenced the political radicalisation of the Vale of Leven

working class.[128] In Perth, many of the city's large employers resisted

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[127] Joyce, *Work*, p. 342.

[128] The other three being: dissatisfaction with World War I and expectations of postwar
improvements, an expanding trade union membership, and rising unemployment.
Gallacher, *Vale of Leven*, p. 190.

incorporation until either the very late nineteenth or early twentieth century: General Accident was incorporated 23 February 1891; Dewars became a limited liability company of a private nature on 8 March 1894 and restructured as a public company 2 April 1897; Shields became a limited liability company in 1897; Pullars was incorporated 31 December 1910; Campbells became a limited liability company in 1912; Bells was not converted from a partnership to a private limited company until 1921.[129] Connected to the transition to limited company status was the issue of localism. Where employers with community links were replaced by professional management untied to the locality, factory paternalism withered, and in its place, class politics flowered. This was a process that Searle has cited as reducing the 'social and economic circumstances' favourable to 'the Liberal cause.'[130] There is scant evidence of this process in Perth. Even after Pullars was acquired by Eastmans and the company's local connection was replaced with a more professional and remote management, a great deal of the Pullar family's paternal provisions was maintained.

Joyce's observation of the 'passing of a distinct culture, and a unique chapter in the history of industrial civilisation,' seems somewhat premature in the case of Perth where unlike the factories of Lancashire and Yorkshire that form the backbone of Joyce's study, those in Perth maintained the old manner of doing things even into the twentieth century. Moreover, whereas in many places

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[129] Anna Stone, Aviva Group Archive, Norwich (1 April 2012); Jacqui Seargeant, John Dewar & Sons Ltd Archive (Barcardi Global Archive), Glasgow (9 April 2012); *Notes* compiled in 1967 by G. H. C. Fisher, Managing Director, Pullars (PKCA, MS51); Philippou, *Perth*, p. 263; *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography,* http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/50406?docPos=2 [Accessed 24 January 2015].

[130] Searle, *The Liberal Party*, p. 5.

industry and industrial technology rapidly approached what Joyce termed 'the modern condition' in Perth the shift from textile manufacture to drycleaning and dyeing required workers to undertake tasks such as ironing and folding that retained not diluted skill. In the new industries such as insurance (General Accident would be to Perth in the twentieth century what Pullars had been in the nineteenth century) individualised work practices maintained rather than diminished the effectiveness of paternalistic managerial approaches. [131]

Large-scale migration into industrial areas had a potentially profound effect on worker political consciousness in that the presence of a large influx of new people with alternative experiences and social outlooks challenged the *status quo*. Table 5.4 (overleaf) which details the birthplaces of people resident in the County of Perth and the Municipal Burgh of Perth for 1881-1911, provides evidence of the ethnic stability of the population of the Perth parliamentary constituencies.

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[131] Joyce, *Work*, pp. 336, 340.

Table 5.4 *Birthplaces of People Resident in the County of Perth and the Municipal Burgh of Perth, 1881-1911*[132]

	Proportion of Residents Born in Scotland (%)	Proportion of Residents Born in England (%)	Proportion of Residents Born in Ireland (%)	Proportion of Residents Born Abroad (%)
1881 (130,282 28,890)	96	1.8	1.6	0.56
	94	2.9	2.9	0.81
1891 (122,185 29,919)	96	2.0	1.4	0.59
	94	2.7	2.0	0.81
1901 (123,283 32,873)	96	2.3	1.1	0.66
	94	3.1	1.5	0.88
1911 (124,342 35,854)	95	2.7	0.98	0.87
	94	3.4	1.2	0.84

(**Source:** Craig, *Parliamentary Election Results*, pp. 518, 555-56; Craig, *Electoral Facts*, p. 68)

The ethnic make-up of the Municipal Burgh and County of Perth populations remained extremely stable over this period - the proportions of Scottish-born persons, for example, maintained a level of approximately 96% and 94% respectively.[133] The data also reveals a decline in the number of Irish-born citizens and a decline in the proportional significance of that ethnic group. Both the proportion and absolute number of English-born citizens increased during the same period, but as with the Irish-born population, these were

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[132] The figures in brackets under the year are the total population of the County of Perth and Municipal Burgh of Perth respectively. *Census of Scotland* 1881-1911, *numerous pages.*

[133] Harding has made the point, however, that, 'there was always a measure of fluctuation in the number of dyers, who provided the bulk of the working-population, came and went regularly in search of training. The bulk of the population was otherwise static.' Harding, 'War and Social Change', p. 24.

insignificant and far from the scale of Irish migration in the Vale of Leven, Dundee, and Paisley.[134]

In contrast to the Vale of Leven where, according to Gallacher, population changes played a strong role in affecting industrial relations and the development of a proletarian consciousness, those that occurred in Perth, are likely to have reinforced existing social outlooks. The growing population of the city of Perth sourced from within (i.e., born to the existing populace) existed within the established and largely unchallenged hegemony and so the ideology of the dominant class was more easily reproduced. Those sourced from within the county were likely to be drawn from an agricultural labour associated with aristocratic lairds, controlled tenancies, and deferential relationships. Unlike the Vale of Leven where Irish migration provided an ideological wedge of counter-hegemonic experience, in Perth population changes merely reinforced the existing order.

Macdonald has offered a challenge to the argument that a high level of Irish migration was 'a de-stabilising factor in paternalist relations.' In critiquing Knox and Corr's assumption of said in their study of cotton workers in Neilston, Macdonald has argued that Knox and Corr failed 'to ground their thesis that different processes of socialisation experienced by migrant workers were opening up alternative definitions of social position.' In other words she has claimed that the counter-hegemonic identity of Irish workers was a temporal phenomenon and that a process of absorption 'into the hegemonic relations

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[134] McDowell has noted Irish population levels for 1861/1901 in Dumbarton, Renton, and the Vale of Leven, for example, as 8,268/20,068, 2,891/5,067, and 4,242/8,007 respectively. McDowell, 'Social physical exercise', p. 3.

which underpinned' the local community would have undermined such an oppositional identity.[135] Macdonald's argument aside, the lack of significant Irish migration into Perth remained a factor in the stability and longevity of traditional social and political outlooks.

For much of the late Victorian and early Edwardian period Irish nationalism aligned Scotland's Irish Catholics with the Liberal Party. By the 1920s in a process accentuated by the extension of the franchise, the Irish Catholic vote had swung behind the Labour Party and in the case of Glasgow was partly responsible for the success of Labour in 1922.[136] This was not a factor in Perth where the Irish Catholic community though large enough to found a Redemptorist monastery in 1866 remained a very small proportion of the city's populace.[137] An indication of the political weakness of the Irish Catholic community in Perth is provided by propaganda material produced by the United Irish League (UIL) for the 1918 general election. The UIL published a list of the size of the Irish electorate in Scotland's parliamentary constituencies, which included a number of recommended 'pro-Irish Nationalist' candidate. An Irish vote of 15,000-16,000 was claimed for Dundee; half a million for Glasgow. Figures for the city of Perth and Western Perthshire were but 200 and 170 respectively. No recommended candidate was provided for either seat.[138] This was yet another factor missing from the process of proletarinisation

[135] Knox 'Striking Women', p. 114; Catriona M. M. Macdonald, 'Weak Roots and Branches: Class, Gender and the Geography of Industrial Protest', *Scottish Labour History Journal*, 33 (1998), p. 7.
[136] Gallacher, *Vale of Leven*, pp. 188-90.
[137] Richard B. McCready, 'The social and political impact of the Irish in Dundee, *c.* 1845-1922' (University of Dundee: unpublished PhD thesis, 2002), pp. 128, 295.
[138] *The Scotsman*, 9 December 1918, p. 5.

experienced elsewhere in Scotland. Gallagher, for example, has argued it was the 'Irish Question' that drew large numbers of unskilled workers into political activism and awareness - a process that occurred in Dundee, the Vale of Leven, in the Scottish coalfields, and elsewhere.[139]

Whilst Perth's Irish Catholics had little observable political influence or activity, a strong pro-Ulster presence existed through organisations such as the LOI and through commerce:

> [The East Perthshire] constituency includes a number of small manufacturing towns, some of which are in direct association with the North of Ireland in connection with the linen industry, and in that way they have been led to take a personal interest in the anti-Home Rule question - a circumstance that is hopeful for Unionist prospects.[140]

Linkage with the LOI and opposition to Home Rule is likely to have created what Kenefick has described as a 'distinctive political agenda, which found them allied to Scottish Conservatism.'[141] Harding has confirmed this development in Perth arguing that the city's Unionists were in the early 1890s invigorated by 'the "wave of deep and passionate feeling" over Ulster.'[142]

Throughout the Great War Perth was split into military districts and the city designated a 'war station': a military camp was established on the South Inch; practice trenches were constructed on the North Inch which was also used

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[139] Tom Gallagher, 'The Catholic Irish in Scotland: In Search of Identity' in Tom M. Devine (ed.), *Irish Immigrants and Scottish Society in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries. Proceedings of the Scottish Historical Studies Seminar, University of Strathclyde, 1989-1990* (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers Ltd, *c. 1991*), pp. 23-26 cited in William Kenefick, 'Irish Dockers and Trade Unionism on Clydeside', *Irish Studies Review*, 19 (Summer 1997), pp. 27-28.

[140] *The Scotsman*, 30 March 1914, p. 9.

[141] Kenefick, 'Irish Dockers', p. 24.

[142] Harding, 'War and Social Change', p. 37.

for cavalry drill; Kinnoull Hill overlooking the town was slowly depleted of its trees by the Canadian Forestry Corps; municipal and private buildings (including the City Halls, the Poorhouse, the Murray Royal Lunatic Asylum, and Friarton Isolation Hospital) were requisitioned to provide administrative offices (including a pay office, recruiting centre), billets, and medical facilities for the large numbers of troops and casualties accommodated in Perth - by 1916 the British Army operated 18 hospitals in the Perth area. Some 'war work' was undertaken by Perth companies: Pullars obtained a contract for the dyeing of uniforms and the cleaning of blankets; Monax North British Glassworks produced military grade glass.[143]

The Great War was a major upheaval in the European socio-economic order ushering in, as it did, social revolutions in several countries. In Gramscian terms:

> In periods of crisis, such as that of the First World War, the apparatus of hegemony tends to break down: parties tended to fragment; no group is able to obtain the consensus which would enable it to govern. The situation is ripe for a shift of power, for the creation of a new apparatus of hegemony and for the search for a new basis of consensus or else, presumably for a government of force.[144]

Harding has argued that, although volunteerism and conscription (which by 1918 was extended to include dye-workers) were high, and the city operated as 'the Aldershot of the North', for the vast majority of Perth's citizens there was little experience of what has been called 'total' war, and for many with relatively high levels of pay, such as the printers and bakers, life had not ever been so

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[143] Harding, 'War and Social Change', p. 95.

[144] James Joll, *Gramsci* (Glasgow: Fontana Paperbacks, 1983), p. 100.

good.[145] Walker's observation of a Labour Party in postwar Dundee 'capitalising upon feelings of revulsion against the war' is not one as will be seen in Chapter 6 applicable to Perth where the experience of war appeared to play only a minor role in changing working-class political identity - a feature not only of the postwar situation in Perth but also nearby in the parliamentary constituency of East Fife where the leader of the Liberal Party and former Prime Minister, H. H. Asquith, was unseated by Alexander Sprot, a Unionist. Stuart R. Ball in assembling a catalogue of potential factors explaining the loss of that seat to the Conservatives included popular disgruntlement with Asquith's 'wartime service ... in and our of office' and Sprot's 'gallant war service.' None of these were according to Ball the primary cause of Asquith's undoing - this he has argued was 'Asquith's neglect of the seat.'[146]

It remains only to be reiterated that antimilitarism was never an issue in Perth with its long martial history.[147]

5.7 *Summary Remarks*

Far from the great Scotland-wide Labour breakthrough that was the November 1922 general election (half a million votes, 34.5% of the vote, and 31 Labour victories), that election marked in Perth the first time a Labour candidate had

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[145] Harding, 'War and Social Change', p. 165.

[146] Stuart R. Ball, 'Asquith's Decline and the General Election of 1918', *Scottish Historical Review*, LXI, 1, 171, (April 1982), pp. 52, 53, 58.

[147] Around 1871 the Royal Highland Regiment (Black Watch) established a barracks in the centre of Perth and in 1882, the Forty-Second Regimental District set up a HQ which by 1904 operated as a regimental depot. During the Second Boer War (1898-1901), many troops passed through numerous military welfare facilities and accommodation units based in Perth. Between 1908 and 1920 the British Army Volunteer Reserve Force operated its Territorial Forces' offices. The Black Watch left for France on 19 August 1914.

stood for a seat in one of the area's parliamentary constituencies. Polling 18.9% - the lowest Labour vote in Scotland - Perth District Labour Party (PDLP) succeeded only in securing a proportion of the working-class vote most of whom either remained loyal to one faction of a split Liberal Party or voted Conservative. Other areas of Scotland had also been slow in developing a Labour politic. The ILP in Dunbartonshire for example offered no parliamentary challenge until 1914. The poverty of Labour politics in Perth even by 1922 was more than an issue of a differing velocity of development. It was a failure to thrive. This failure by Labour to challenge the local political order in parliamentary elections had its roots in the early nineteenth century.

Any timeline of electoral reform agitation and legislation in Britain must include the Reform Acts of 1832, 1867, and 1884 as well as the reformist campaigning that preceded them or in the case of Chartism a period of political struggle that laid the foundations for future franchise reform. Such a timeline would find Perth a poor source of examples. Though not without a degree of reformist zeal and energy, Perth's reformers were thin in deed as well as isolated from their more prolific Dundee counterparts and their national leadership/ organisations.

With the passing of the first three Reform Acts male adult working-class enfranchisement grew such that by 1885 that class had attained numerical superiority. Coupled with this growth was the development of socialist and other parties of labour which like the established parties vied for the support of the 'newly enfranchised'. In their attempts to secure working-class votes, Perth's Radicals were thwarted not only by their Whiggish Liberal colleagues but by an

equally pragmatic Conservatism. Perth politics in the mid-nineteenth century was defined by Liberal in-fighting and a Whig-Conservative synergy that ensured Perth's Radicals struggled to make progress.

Conservatism in the later nineteenth century fared poorly in Scotland in contrast to its successes in England. Not until the 1900 general election did the Conservative Party achieve a parliamentary dominance of Scottish seats on a par with its performance south of the border. Even great victories such as that by Disraeli in 1874 were achieved with few Scottish Conservative MPs entering the Commons. Nonetheless, the Perth constituencies had from the 1870s been on the leading edge of improvements in Conservative local organisation. This coupled with the establishment *c.* 1880 of the PWMCA (a manifestation of Disraeli's Popular Toryism), a local tradition of Protestantism and support for Orangeism, and business links with Ulster, helped to nurture and feed the development of a working-class Conservative political identity in Perth. Despite this progress, Conservatism struggled, in the late nineteenth and very early twentieth centuries, to displace the vast majority of the Perth working class from an attachment to Liberalism. Only Liberal disunity offered the Conservatives opportunities for success. The election of William Whitelaw for the Perth Burgh constituency in 1892 being a case in point, since Whitelaw's victory was achieved against a Liberal and Independent Liberal whose combined vote was almost 50% higher than his.

Central to the ability of Liberalism to maintain the support of the Perth working class was the involvement of paternalistic industrialists especially those associated with the city's textile and whisky industries - the firms of Pullars,

Coates, Campbells, and Dewars included. Robert Pullar played a pivotal role in the political and organisational life of the local Liberal associations. Despite constant improvements to Liberal Party infrastructure such as the unification of city and county organisations in the 1870s/1880s, political warring between Radicals and Whigs continued. As was mentioned earlier, this allowed in 1892 a Conservative usurpation of the city constituency. This hiatus in Liberal hegemony was short-lived and the seat returned to the Liberals in 1895 - remaining theirs until its disestablishment under the boundary changes of 1918.

In attempting to understand working-class attachment to Liberalism in Perth, a number of factors that that affected Conservative and Liberal electoral performance have been considered. These include the 'Khaki Factor' - working-class support for the second Boer War and its influence on the 1900 and 1906 general elections. During that war Perth witnessed a great deal of activity in support of the war and families with serving soldiers in South Africa. Irrespective of the pro-war sentiments among the Perth working class in line with what took place nationally, there was no measurable 'Khaki Factor' in either the 1900 or 1906 general elections in Perth.

The years 1906 to 1914 might have been a difficult time for Conservatism nationally but in the constituency of Western Perthshire tenacious differential attitudes to a paternalistic feudalism and patriarchal authority, and the ability of the aristocratic elite to coerce their tenants/employees, resulted in the displacement of Liberalism in 1910. In the other two Perth constituencies the Liberal Party like its national organisation gave the appearance of being in an almost unconquerable position. The strong showing by the Conservatives in the

Western Perthshire constituency however was very much a signpost to the future. The Liberal Party which would be so ungraciously destroyed as a national political grouping in the postwar years was threatened in Perth not by a Labour politic, as in Paisley and Glasgow, but by a Conservative Party that would reap the benefits of Liberal Party disintegration. By 1922 the Labour challenge in Perth for the political allegiance of the working class had come up short against a resilient attachment to Liberalism despite the fragmentation of that party organisationally and a growing attachment to a modern Conservatism.

A central tenet of this thesis has been the effect on the Perth labour movement of a lingering industrial paternalism. The reasons for this longevity lie in the dearth of crucial factors that saw to its *quietus* elsewhere. These include the slow alteration of the economic profile of Perth - especially the lack of new commerce and war-related industrial activity (as well as a continuity between the war and postwar periods) - the lack of traditionally militant industries such as coal and heavy engineering, and the slow emergence of limited company status. The latter was particularly important: the displacement from civil society and the local community of the paternalist Liberal employer provided a space for the growth of class-based political outlooks. Another factor was Perth's stable demographic profile. Perth's population pattern tended on the whole to reinforce the existing social order with inward migration from the county for example bringing in large numbers of rural labourers inculcated with deferential attitudes to their employers.

In contrast to what had occurred in many other parts of Scotland, by the early 1920s the Perth labour movement had failed to secure the electoral loyalty of a

significant proportion of the city's working class. In order to understand the reasons for this failure, the next chapter will provide a narrative of the development of Labour politics in Perth as well as an exploration of the electoral performance of Labour at the parliamentary and municipal level.

Chapter 6 - *Labour Politics in Perth*

Electoral reform and franchise extension in the nineteenth century resulted in the labour movement seeking direct political representation. The Labour Representation League (*est.* 1869) - one of the first proponents of such - ran 13 Lib-Lab 'worker' candidates in the 1874 general election - two successfully. Despite this success, the League ran out of steam by the end of the 1870s and it was not until the next decade that renewed efforts for direct labour representation were seen and socialism began to make an impact. F. Hall and W. Watkins have argued that this revival was linked to the push towards general unionism, the growing acceptability of socialism, an increased awareness of the level of poverty, and heightened labour militancy; and as such was a rejection of *laissez-faire* Liberalism's inability to counter insecurity and provide socially.[1]

A key influence on the nascent Scottish socialist movement was Henry George who in 1879 published *Progress and Poverty* a plea for land reform, land nationalisation, and a single-tax.[2] In Scotland, George's ethical socialism found a wide readership and was more influential than the Marxism and 'state socialism' of the Socialist Democratic Federation (SDF) which founded in 1881 by H. M. Hyndman, a Tory Radical, 'formed part of the socialist revival of the 1880s'; the first branches of which appeared in 1884.[3] In December 1888 a

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[1] F. Hall and W. P. Watkins, *Co-operation. A Survey of the History, Principles, and Organisation of the Co-operative Movement in Great Britain and Ireland* (Manchester: Co-operative Union Ltd, 1934), pp. 135-36.

[2] Henry George, *Progress and Poverty: An Inquiry into the Cause of Industrial Depressions and of Increase of Want with Increase of Wealth: The Remedy* (New York: Henry Appleton & Company, 1880).

[3] WCML, *Shelf Life*, 42 (Spring 2014); Kenefick, *Red Scotland*, pp. 24, 57.

number of SDF branches including that of Crieff together with some of the membership of the Scottish Land & Labour League - claiming opposition to autocracy within the SDF - formed the Scottish Socialist Federation.[4]

Christopher Harvie has argued that 'the moves towards independent representation in the 1880s had owed at least emotional force to the "new unionism" of unskilled workers such as dockers and gasworkers.'[5] The opposition to general unionism by the artisan unions who collectively formed PTC and the complete lack of the 'new unionism' and the upsurge in strike activity of 1889-1891 when placed against Hall and Watkins', and Harvie's arguments seem to offer a partial explanation for the labour movement's failure to achieve electoral success in Perth. The other contributory factors include: the demographic profile stability of the Perth populace i.e., the absence of large-scale Irish migration; the longevity of trade-union pro-Liberalism in Perth and the associated resistance by many trade unions to the formation of a Labour Party; the poor advancement of socialist ideas; and, the Perth labour and trade-union movement's failure to secure the wide support of the city's working class to challenge the factory hegemony.

6.1 *Early Labour Politics in Perth and the Establishment of the Perth Branch of the Independent Labour Party*

One of the first forays into parliamentary politics by the Perth labour movement took place in 1900 with PTC's decision to support Robert Wallace the (sitting) Liberal MP for Perth Burgh in that year's general election. This 'active role' in

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[4] No evidence of SDF activity in or around Perth has emerged in this study.

[5] Harvie, 'Before the Breakthrough', p. 12.

local political life is consistent with Clinton's study of British trades councils in the same period and Harvie's observation of trades council support for 'Liberals favourable to trade union legislation' in Glasgow and Edinburgh.[6] PTC had maintained communication with Wallace before 1900, for example, writing to him to successfully garner his opposition to the Fatal Accidents in Public Inquiry (Scotland) Act 1895, as well as supporting him at rallies.[7] The next 'step' in the development of a Labour politic in Perth was the establishment of a branch of the ILP.

James Kellas has argued that the arrival of the Scottish Labour Party (SLP) in 1888 was a response to the failure of the Liberal Party to secure labour representation.[8] The SLP ran 10 candidates in the 1892 general election, none of whom were successful. The party became part of the larger ILP in 1895, a branch of which (PILP) was established in Perth on 1 February 1904.[9] In the first few months of its existence PILP was boosted by the coming to Perth of prominent ILP speakers including Keir Hardie.[10]

In 1905 *Labour Leader* described PILP as comprising 'a sturdy band of henchmen, whose labours on Tayside, during the past have made militant

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[6] Clinton, *Trade Union Rank and File*, pp. 49-51; Chris Harvie, 'Before the Breakthrough', in Ian Donnachie, Christopher Harvie and Ian S. Wood, (eds.), *Forward! Labour Politics in Scotland 1888-1988* (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1989), p. 8.

[7] *Hansard*, House of Commons, 27 March 1896; PTC, *Minute Book*, 6 January 1898, 17 March 1898, 9 November 1899; *Perthshire Courier,* 2 October 1900.

[8] James G. Kellas, 'The Liberal Party in Scotland', *The Scottish Historical Review*, 44, 137 (April 1965), p. 5.

[9] The ILP was affiliated to the LRC from its formation in February 1900 and remained within the Labour Party until disaffiliation in August 1932. Four SDF and 28 ILP candidates contested the 1895 general election. Thornton, *The Habit of Authority*, p. 324.

[10] *Labour Leader*, 27 February 1904, 8 July 1904.

aggressive socialism possible in the future.'[11] PILP struggled to move far beyond

this description remaining throughout its lifetime a small group in the shadow

of the much larger Liberal and much later Labour Party orientated trades

council. The omission by PTC of PILP from a meeting to organise a major trade-

union demonstration in Perth in the summer of 1920 exposed the lack of

influence and significance of PILP even in the postwar period[12] at which point as

Kenefick has argued the ILP was the leading edge of the labour movement in

Scotland.[13]

In February 1907, after Wallace had resigned his Perth parliamentary seat

(see Chapter 5), *Forward* used the opportunity to launch a scathing attack:

> Our more recent mouthpiece - the carpet bagger one, whom
> Perth's working men used to sell themselves hoarse for - he is
> still a Liberal, it is evident, and his new constituents are not
> likely to forget it. He has just sentenced a reprobate gardener
> to six months *hard* for being where he didn't ought to.[14]

After Wallace's resignation the local Liberals and Conservatives forged an

agreement by which Robert Pullar would stand as a Liberal for the Perth Burgh

seat unopposed. This angered some Liberals and Conservatives: 'so far there has

been no real denial made and the more independent of the Tories and Liberals

are finding relief in the expressed thought that the Labour Party'll no lat them

cairry that ott [*sic*].'[15] PILP wrote to PTC in early 1907 to the end of finding a

candidate to stand against Pullar. As well as issuing a leaflet asking 'Are you in

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[11] *Labour Leader*, 6 June 1905.

[12] PTC *Minute Book*, 9 August 1920.

[13] The ILP comprised around 10,000 members in 201 branches across Britain in 1920. Kenefick, *Red Scotland*, p. 75.

[14] *Forward*, 16 February 1907.

[15] *Forward*, 25 February 1907.

favour of a Labour candidate being put forward at the forthcoming by-election in Perth,' PTC wrote to all its affiliates on a Labour candidacy. On a 56% turnout (that is 279 votes cast from an electorate of 500 within 13 trade-union branches), 147 voted 'For' Labour representation and 132 'Against'. Without the overwhelming support of the trade unions, the ASRS included, whose branch resolved 'it was inadvisable to put forward a 'Labour 'Candidate,' PILP could not mount a challenge to Pullar who was elected unopposed.[16] This episode highlights a key *leitmotif* in the relationship between PTC and its constituent trade-union branches. The leadership of PTC, as in this episode, were willing to countenance a Labour challenge to the political *status quo*, but were faced with a combination of opposition and indifference from the its membership. The issue of Labour representation is considered further in the section on municipal politics in Perth.

In January 1906 the LRC fielded 51 candidates nationally of which 30 were elected. It is understandable why PILP and PTC, the latter of which had been established just two years earlier, might have struggled to offer a candidate for Perth Burgh to compete in a two-way contest against a sitting Liberal MP supported by a number of trade-union branches. The failure to field a Labour candidate in 1907, however, in an election with only one other candidate begs a question.

As Adelman has argued, the leadership of the craft unions were committed to the Liberal Party and to the promotion of working-class representation under the aegis of Liberalism - a commitment that took a

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[16] PTC *Minute Book*, 6 February 1907.

considerable period of time to be broken.[17] Even within its own organisations, the labour movement' attachment to Liberal 'Radicalism' remained strong.[18] Bill Lancaster's observation of the inhibiting and stifling effect on Labour politics of 'trades councils dominated by a working class Liberal old guard' is sympathetic to the situation in Perth where in 1907 there existed continued opposition by a sizeable proportion of PTC and its affiliated unions to running a Labour candidate.[19] Pullar's central role within the Perth Liberal Party and the depth of his activity within Perth community life as outlined earlier is likely to have also played a role in inhibiting the desire among the Perth trade unions to challenge for the seat.

Despite the failure of PILP to offer a Labour candidature in 1907, the *Forward* editorial remained hopeful: 'with an energetic Executive, all of whom are real labour men, the fiasco of the by-election is not likely to be repeated, at least if the officials can prevent it'.[20] This, as has already been argued, was a central feature of Perth Labour politics. Even as the key cadres within PTC moved towards supporting Labour a significant number of its constituent trade-union branches (representing the skilled men of the artisan aristocracy) stood opposed. This failure to win the Perth unions to the cause of Labour at the pivotal point in its history was another factor in the failure of Labour to achieve any electoral success in Perth.

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[17] Adelman, *Rise of the Labour Party*, pp. 38-45.

[18] Maccoby, *English Radicalism*, pp. 421-22.

[19] Bill Lancaster, 'Breaking Moulds: The Leicester ILP and Popular Politics', in James, *Centennial History of the Independent Labour Party*, p. 75.

[20] *Forward*, 2 March 1907.

Disagreements and splits within political organisations can provide information as to the balance of political ideas within that organisation. They certainly provide more information than statements such as 'a long discussion took place as to the establishment of a Labour Representation Committee (LRC) in Perth, but it was agreed to raise the question again,' which pepper the minute books of PTC and provide no information as to the nature of the discussion or the political positions taken.[21] In the case of the falling out of PILP with the national ILP leadership in regard to the Dundee by-election of 1908, it also provides an opportunity to examine an organisation (PILP) whose records have not survived, but which corresponded with an organisation whose records are extant.

6.2 *the Dundee By-Election of 1908*

As required by the then electoral law, after appointment to the Cabinet in April 1908, Winston Churchill the then Liberal MP for Manchester North, stood for re-election. He was defeated narrowly by a Conservative. To return to the Commons, Churchill chose the double-member seat of Dundee. The sitting Liberal MP accepted elevation to the Lords creating the opportunity for Churchill to contest what was seen as a safe seat. At that time, Dundee's other parliamentary representative was Alexander Wilkie, Secretary of the Shipwright's Association, who had won Dundee for Labour in the 1906 general

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[21] PTC *Minute Book*, 19 February 1908.

election.[22] Wilkie's election marked the moment Liberal hegemony was broken in Dundee.[23]

After a degree of deliberation DILP selected G. H. Stuart, secretary of the Postmen's Federation, to fight the 1908 by-election. Supported by *Forward*, Stuart secured the backing of the Scottish Workers' Representation Committee (SWRC)[24], but not the national Labour Party[25] which alongside Wilkie and the DDJFWU vehemently opposed the contest as jeopardising 'Liberal acceptance of Wilkie.' The SWRC ignored Wilkie and the Labour Party leadership - Stuart contested the seat polling 4,370 votes to Churchill's winning 7,079 (24.9% and 44.0% of the vote respectively). It is worth pointing out that if Edwin

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[22] This was not the Labour's first attempt to win Dundee. James MacDonald contested it for the SLP in 1892 and 1895 obtaining 354 and 1,313 votes respectively. No Labour candidate stood in 1900. Walker, *Juteopolis*, p. 268.

[23] Wilkie's Labour credentials were a degree ambiguous. He refrained from using the term Labour anywhere within his 1906 election material. Moreover, not only did he retain membership of the Liberal Party until at least 1908, he had for many years acted to delay the establishment of an independent [*sic*] Labour party. In addition, Wilkie had his detractors in the Dundee labour movement who, as Hutchison has argued, were said to be in 'a state of "incipient revolt" because Wilkie's political ideas were so retrograde.' *Perthshire Advertiser*, 13 May 1908, p. 2; Labour Party, *Minute Book*, 29 January, 18 March 1908 (Labour Party Head Office, London (microfilm), Labour Party National Executive Committee MSS., 29 January, 18 March 1908), cited in Hutchison, *Political History of Scotland*, p. 261; G. D. H. Cole, *British Working Class Politics 1832-1914* (London: George Routledge & Sons, Ltd, 1941), p. 157; Hutchison, *Political History of Scotland*, p. 255.

[24] The SWRC had been formed in January 1900 as the Scottish Workers' Parliamentary Committee 'at a conference in Edinburgh of representatives of trade unions, trade councils, co-operative societies and socialist societies,' and renamed the SWRC shortly after. After the 1906 general election, the SWRC affiliated to the Labour Party as the Scottish Labour Party and three years later the two bodies merged.

[25] Labour Party policy concerning two-member seats, where the Labour and Liberal Party held one each, was very specific and pragmatic: 'both seats in double-barrelled constituencies should not be fought at present.' In 22 double-member constituencies south of the border, a Lib-Lab pact ensured that 11 Labour MPs sat in the Commons. The national Labour Party feared that the Liberals might 'regard developments in Dundee as justifying retaliatory moves in England.' Labour Party, *Minute Book*, 28 April 1908 (Labour Party Head Office, London (microfilm), Labour Party National Executive Committee MSS., 28 April 1908), cited in Hutchison, *Political History of Scotland*, p. 253.

Scrymgeour (SPP) had not stood in the by-election (he attained 655 votes), Stuart

might well have beaten the Liberal Unionist George Washington Baxter to

second place.[26]

In the aftermath of the defeat, DILP, the SWRC, and Stuart all attacked

Wilkie and the Labour Party for their lack of support.[27] Whilst other factors

were at play - Churchill's personality and charisma, the recent budget, and

Liberal Unionist voters who were happy to support Wilkie but not Stuart - the

recriminations centred on the Labour Party, which as the Perth press noted

provided limited resources to the campaign.[28] Wilkie published his reply in the

Dundee Advertiser and *Dundee Courier*. MacDonald in turn attacked Stuart for his

failure to stick to party strategy with two-member seats, accusing him of slander

and of only standing in Dundee as he was being bankrolled by his union.[29]

The counter positions over the 1908 by-election were on one hand a

manifestation of the serious tensions that existed between the SWRC and the

London-based Labour Party leadership especially in regard to finances; and

prompted calls locally for disaffiliation. Central to the financial health of the

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[26] *Forward*, 18 April 1908, 25 April 1908; *J. Carnegy and D. Turnbull to J. K. Hardie*, 12 March 1905, 17 May 1908 (British Library of Political and Economic Science, London, Francis Johnson MSS., 1905/23, 1908/180, 12 March 1905, 17 May 1908), cited in Hutchison, *Political History of Scotland*, p. 256; Walker, *Juteopolis*, p. 286; *People's Journal*, 16 May 1908; Hutchison, *Political History of Scotland*, pp. 253-55.

[27] Stuart's decision to utilise the Tory press to attack the Labour leadership did not go down well with the ILP who expressed their reservation over the event and agreed to reserve judgment until an inquiry into the matter could be made. *Forward*, 16 May 1908.

[28] *Forward*, 16 May 1908; *Dundee Advertiser*, 9 May 1908; *Perthshire Advertiser*, 1 May 1908.

[29] By the 1910 general election, the position of the ILP on Wilkie's standing had moved on from the acrimonious situation of 1908 - *Forward* commented of Wilkie that: 'he has gained the esteem and good wishes of all classes of the electorate'. In that election, Wilkie having entered into an agreement with the Liberal Party stood for his seat against only one Liberal candidate, Winston Churchill, who polled 9,240 votes to Wilkie's 8,957; both men being re-elected. *Forward*, 3 December 1910.

SWRC and equally to the national Labour Party was trade-union affiliation and the years 1906-1908 witnessed a battle for the affiliation fees of Scottish trade unions and increased 'antagonism between the Scottish Party and London.'[30] Matters came to a head after the Dundee by-election when the Labour Party leader Ramsay MacDonald informed the Scottish section of his intention of affiliating the Scottish societies and providing their own candidates. The SWRC dissolved itself soon after (February 1909).[31]

The first written mention of the dispute between Alexander Wilkie and George Stuart appeared in the 30 May 1908 edition of *Forward* in which it was suggested that a pact existed between Wilkie and the Liberals and the issue of the need for the independence of political parties was raised. That article and that of 13 June 1908 in which the PILP reported on its disagreement with the ILP District Federation and on its writing to Ramsay MacDonald in regard to the Dundee by-election (see below) suggests that PILP was in agreement with the Dundee branch and stood in opposition to an electoral agreement with the Liberal Party:

> As Perth [ILP] seemed to be considered practically of no importance (except financially) to the Scottish ILP we sever our connection with that organization. Amendment that we wait for a month received 18 votes against and 16 for secession. A copy of the protest put forward by this branch re the Dundee by-election had been sent to J. R. MacDonald MP.[32]

If PILP was politically orientated in opposition to any agreement with the Liberal Party and in favour of independent working-class representation, then

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[30] Fraser, *Scottish Popular Politics*, p. 149.

[31] Hutchison, *Political History of Scotland*, p. 253.

[32] *Forward*, 13 June 1908.

the fact that it did not put forward a candidate for any of the Perth parliamentary constituencies until 1931 is rather confirming of the weakness of PILP and its lack of support amongst Perth's working class. As to the disagreement with the District Federation, the issue in question is unclear, nonetheless, PILP's estrangement from the ILP and the split within the branch would not have assisted in the growth and influence of that organisation and points to something of the political make-up of the branch.

The ILP records held at the LHASC and those at the LSE are rather scant in regard to PILP. The LHASC, however, does include a file entitled *Perth Independent Labour Party: includes comments on splits and dissension,* which includes a letter from Andrew Bell of PILP:

> Comrade Valentine[33] has just handed me your note re dissension in Perth Branch, I should favour your suggestion to wait till the excitement blows over. The cause of the taking sides among the members was the issuing of a manifesto to the press concerning the running of Sunday C---[34] and opening in Reading Rooms etc. in Perth to which Comrade Valentine opposed thus giving the extremists another chance of attack. Comrade Valentine also contributed letters to the press on the matter and many of the members consider he had done a service to the Branch. His opponents however moved for his resignation and on the vote, resulted 19 to 16 for same. We consider Comrade Valentine one of our most valuable members especially as an administrator and worker. We look forward to the visit of Mrs. MacDonald and yourself[35] and trust to have good meeting. Your presence will go a long way in putting things as they should be.[36]

[33] George Valentine was at the time chairman of PILP.

[34] Although ineligible in original, this may possibly be concert as PILP had been involved before that time in organising Sunday musical events (as well as meetings and lectures) that had been stopped by the Town Council. *Forward*, 11 May 1907, 11 January 1908.

[35] Ramsay MacDonald spoke at a meeting in Perth on 14 April 1909, which was attended by members of PILP and PTC.

[36] Andrew Bell, *Letter to Ramsay MacDonald*, 26 March 1909 (LHASC, LP/MAC/ 08/1/200, 26 March 1909).

The disagreements within PILP described in this letter, suggest the dissension within PILP concerned a 'religious' rather than a directly political matter. PILP in 1909 was a tiny organisation split over rather minor spoils, far from the position of its Dundee counterpart which was large and strong enough to challenge that city's Liberal hegemony without the backing of the national Labour Party.

6.3 *Perth Labour Parliamentary Politics, 1909-1922*

As Reid and Pelling have argued, Gladstonian Liberalism and its 'settlement of the key issues of an extended parliamentary franchise, free collective bargaining, low indirect taxation, and non-denominational state education' left a deep imprint on the labour movement.[37] Liberal social reform had wedded Labour representatives to the Liberal Party and this hampered its progress. By 1914, however, Labour had made significant advances in many areas at the expense of Liberalism which had lost the majority of its support among the working class. The watershed in Scotland was the 1922 general election which Kenefick has argued represented a fundamental transfer in the electoral and political loyalty of the Scottish working class 'away from the politics of the Liberal Party towards the radical left in Scotland.'[38] As has been established, and reiterated several times, this was not the case in Perth.

Forward's hopefulness that the Perth labour movement's failure in 1907 would not be repeated was dowsed by the two general elections of 1910 when all

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[37] Alastair J. Reid and Henry Pelling, *A Short History of the Labour Party* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005). p. 1.
[38] Kenefick, *Red Scotland*, p. 4.

three Perth constituencies beheld two-horse races - the Liberal Party triumphing comfortably in Perth Burgh and Eastern Perthshire; and the Conservatives in Western Perthshire. The Perth labour movement's isolation was compounded by the decision of PTC not to support the city's Liberal Party nominee in the December 1910 election due to his position on the Osborne Judgement when Dundee, Glasgow, and Fife West were sending Labour MPs into the Commons in an election in which UK-wide the Labour Party won 7.1% of the vote and 42 parliamentary seats (3.6% of the vote and 3 seats in Scotland).[39] What is significant is that PTC had by 1910 made a break from Liberalism, a significant shift from 1907 when the trades council was split over a Labour candidate for the 1907 by-election. The advance to a full commitment to the Labour Party and running a parliamentary candidate was, however, still some way off.

A decade later, when PTC once again considered running a Labour candidate and despite input from Ben Shaw of the Scottish Advisory Committee on 'the best method of organising the labour forces in the city,' little progress was made. George R. Farquhar NUR delegate to PTC went so far as to bemoan 'the delaying policy of the Council' in regard to the formation of a Labour Party. This 'dilly-dallying' [Farquhar's comment] continued unabated. At a special meeting to decide on the formation of a Labour Party branch in Perth in January 1918 attended by just 40 of the 80 delegates to PTC, a motion to transform the trades council into a Labour Party branch was dropped and instead it was agreed to create a separate body to confer with other labour bodies in the city to

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[39] PTC *Minute Book*, 19 October 1910.

that end.[40] At some point between January 1918 and May 1918 PDLP was formed which despite its name did not then function outside the confines of the city of Perth.[41]

Chapters 3 and 4 have done much to demonstrate the difficulties faced by the trade-union movement in Perth including the lack of 'new unionism', the nature of the Perth economy and the absence of key industries, the longevity of paternalistic industrial relations, and the slow acceptance of the need for a Labour Party by the city's trade-union leadership. By the end of the First World War, matters had changed. PTC maintained a 'Labour attitude' to political representation even if had yet to contest a parliamentary seat, and the strength of the national trade unions and their key role during the war years had shifted the locus of trade-union action from local branches to national bodies negotiating and representing their membership as a whole. The somewhat retrograde position of the Perth textile trade unions, as discussed in Chapters 3 and 4, did however continue to act as a break on the radicalisation of the other trade unions in Perth.

Ultimately Labour in Perth made no headway prior to, in, or after 1922, something that would seem to support the assessment of *The Times* which argued at the time that Labour ascendency in Dundee, Glasgow, on Clydeside, and in Paisley, were not overnight phenomenon, rather 'the fruits of long years of propaganda and unremitting effort by the socialists.'[42] Perth was by no means

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[40] PTC, *Minute Book*, 28 November 1917, 25 December 1917, 9, 18 January 1918.
[41] *Perthshire Constitutional*, 29 May 1918, p. 5.
[42] *The Times*, 28 December 1922.

unusual in this regard. Studies by Bill Lancaster (Leicester) and M. C. Dyer (Kincardineshire) confirm a local fragmented Labour politics in the first two decades of the twentieth century.[43]

Duncan Tanner has argued:

> Municipal election results provide a potentially and almost national data base for the analysis of electoral change. Indeed, because the Labour Party before 1914, generally only attempted a parliamentary campaign after considerable municipal effort, municipal election results are a better indication of its popular support then the sporadic and limited Labour parliamentary and by-election campaigns of 1910-14.[44]

In the light of this argument and given that no Labour parliamentary candidate stood in Perth until 1922 a full understanding of Labour politics in Perth can only be ascertained by an examination of municipal political activity - a task undertaken in the next section.

6.4 *Labour and Municipal Politics, Perth to 1909*[45]

Under the Elementary Education Act 1870, the running of education passed to elected School Boards. Their establishment formed part of the state bureaucratisation of the counties and parishes and the usurpation of the power

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[43] Bill Lancaster, *Radicalism, Cooperation and Socialism: Leicester working-class politics 1860-1906* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1987), p. *xviii*; M. C. Dyer, 'The Politics of Kincardineshire' (University of Aberdeen: unpublished PhD thesis, 1973), cited in Macdonald, 'Radical Thread', pp. 27, 98.

[44] Duncan Tanner, 'Elections, Statistics, and the Rise of the Labour Party, 1906-1932', *The Historical Journal*, 34, 4 (December 1991), p. 893.

[45] It needs to be noted, as Tanner has explained, that as a result of differing franchise reforms the electorate in parliamentary and municipal elections differed albeit slightly. For example, 'some male parliamentary voters (overwhelmingly young men living in furnished rooms) could not vote at municipal level.' There is no evidence that this affected the Labour vote in Perth. Tanner, 'Elections, Statistics, and the Rise of the Labour Party', p. 906.

of the church and land-owning class. The Local Government Act 1888 and that

of 1894 continued this process. The Acts had a major effect on local

administration:

> [They] raised towns of over 50,000 inhabitants to the status of
> county boroughs, and set up county, district, and parish
> councils[46] to perform the administrative work previously done
> by Justices of the Peace, the vestry, and a number of special
> boards. These new councils were all elected by the ratepayers,
> and women were not disqualified from voting.[47]

Election to local government bodies was by means of triennial elections:

> Where there were two or more vacancies in a ward, voters had
> as many votes as there were places to be filled. In these
> circumstances, the required number of candidates would be
> elected, with the first candidate having to stand again in three
> years' time, and the runner-up having to seek re-election after
> two years, and so on. Additionally, some councillors holding
> high office such as the Lord Provost, did not face re-election
> during the period that they held that position, their place at
> the polls being taken by the councillor who was due to retire
> the following year. Burgh councils were elected in a similar
> manner.[48]

A new council once in place chose a Provost and Bailies, the latter of whom

served for two-to-three years at a time. Perth being a Royal Burgh required its

Bailies to be magistrates and members of the Perth Police Commission.

William Millar has argued that between the 1832 Reform Act and the

divisions within Liberalism of 1885-1886 over religion and Home Rule, 'city

politics was one party … Scottish politics was between factions in the Liberal

Party rather than between parties.' Both the early electoral history of Perth and

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[46] Parish councils were eventually abolished by the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1929.

[47] Hall, *Co-operation*, pp. 133-34.

[48] Kenneth J. W. Baxter, 'Estimable and Gifted?: women in party politics in Scotland *c.* 1918-1955' (University of Dundee: unpublished PhD thesis, 2008), pp. 101, 224.

the machinations within Perth Liberal Party throughout the Victorian and Edwardian period outlined earlier fit in well with this argument. Millar has also claimed that competitive politics between Liberal and Unionist after 1885 was primarily a parliamentary manifestation: 'municipal politics did not divide Liberals and Unionists. ... apart from Labour candidates the link between national and local politics was slight.'[49] John Kemp has observed such in Dundee:

> Until the advent of Labour and Prohibitionist candidates in the early 1900s, party politics were formally absent from Dundee municipal affairs. candidates did not usually stand with explicit party or faction labels attached.[50]

There is no evidence to suggest that Perth differed from this arrangement. Although no Labour challenge for council office was made in any city in Scotland until 1885, from as early as 1832 there existed an impetus for working-class representation - a response to what Kemp has described as 'a persistent level of unhappiness with the kind of people who sought to be candidates.'[51] Perth was no different in this regard.

In the municipal election of 1869 seven candidates were selected by PWMA in four wards and all were elected (five unopposed). The following year, four PWMA candidates stood; three were elected, two of whom topped the poll in their wards. This electoral success was not however, a signifier of growing

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[49] William Millar, 'Politics in the Scottish City 1832-1982', in George Gordon, *Perspectives of the Scottish City* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1985), pp. 180-81.

[50] John Kemp, 'Red Tayside? Political Change in Early Twentieth-Century Dundee', in Louise Miskell, Christopher A. Whatley and Bob Harris (eds.), *Victorian Dundee: Image and Realities* (Dundee: Dundee University Press, 2011), p. 220.

[51] Kemp, 'Red Tayside', pp. 220-21.

class-consciousness. A newspaper report at the time describes the 1870 municipal contest as 'most notable in its low turnout.' The article went on to state that the 'extension of the suffrage has not been followed, in Perth, at least, by any intensification of a desire to use it.' In October 1871 PWMA met to choose candidates for the forthcoming municipal election. Of the seven retiring councillors, four were endorsed by PWMA with adverts in the local press. Three were elected (two unopposed - the third topped his poll); the fourth candidate, mustered a mere 66 votes.[52]

Mirroring the demise of the Dundee association, PWMA did not last long and was replaced by a ratepayers association in 1871. In the two decades after the collapse of PWMA, the selection of worker candidates to contest municipal elections remained problematic until changes were made in property qualification rules.

From its establishment in 1897 PTC addressed the issue of candidature support in local elections. In the main, the orientation of candidates to the principles of trade unionism was pivotal in PTC's decision of whom to support. In the 1897 election PTC, angered by the Town Council's deletion of a 'Fair Wage Clause' in trading arrangements and the use of non-unionised and non-Perth labour in a contract for police uniforms, not only produced a list of pro-trade union candidates, it intervened directly by attempting to unseat Councillor P. Donnelly (Fourth Ward). Donnelly, a working-class councillor, was nonetheless re-elected.[53]

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[52] St John, 'Demands of the People', pp. 148-49.
[53] *Perthshire Courier*, 19 October 1897.

By January 1898 PTC was fully engaged with lobbying Perth Town Council on issues of interest to the working class, for example, in regard to the construction of social housing of moderate rent. When these housing proposals were rejected, PTC passed an unanimous motion of condemnation of the Town Council. Support of social housing and sanitary improvement soon became a test question in local elections. That same year, Perth's small traders were embroiled in a significant attack on the CPCS whose response included working in partnership with PTC to see to the election of pro-CPCS labour-orientated councillors (see Chapter 7).[54]

By the close of the nineteenth century, PTC had become a sophisticated organisation with committees overseeing parliamentary and local affairs, technical education, and general organising. The problem however for the Perth labour movement remained marginalisation. PTC was unable (and/or unwilling) to expand its sphere of influence very far. Many of its union affiliates and much of its leadership were for a long time wedded to Liberalism; its courting of the CPCS was, as will be seen in Chapter 7, unrequited; and its attempts to shift entrenched urban working-class attitudes of acquiescence to the city's paternalistic employers and rural deference to the county's lairds ended in failure. In the same way Perth never became a centre of reform, it also failed to be a node in the development of Labour politics akin to Dundee or Glasgow. And whilst other areas were slow to develop a Labour challenge, Vale

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[54] PTC, *Minute Book*, 9 December 1897, 6 January 1898, 20 February 1898, 13 September 1898, 9 November 1899.

of Leven, for example, Perth, as has been argued, never delivered any more than a piecemeal offering of Labour politics.[55]

The local constabulary clothing contract refused to go away as an issue and reappeared in the 1900 election. Originally placed locally, the contract had subsequently been given to a large London concern. Whilst the demand for a 'Fair Wage Clause' had been yielded by the Police Commission, PTC raised disquiet as to whether the clause was being carried out. Further unease centred on the failure of PTC endorsed councillors to ensure the contract was given to a unionised factory paying standard rates. Of the six candidates supported by PTC in 1900 five were returned despite the 'lightness of the poll.'[56]

The following year (1901) housing became the central Labour issue. In April of 1901 PTC set up a housing reform committee. The committee passed a resolution calling on the authorities to purchase properties to rent to workers, which after a set period they would own. The Town Council instead offered to construct housing at a site close to the city's gas works, sewers, and slaughter house - a proposal opposed by PTC. In August 1901 PTC supported by Councillor Keillor passed an unanimous resolution against the scheme. After the failure to illicit a positive response from the Town Council PTC organised a public meeting at which resolutions were passed and subsequently sent 'to Lord Balfour, the Secretary for Scotland, and which caused a fresh inquiry being made by the Local Government Board. After which they were again granted permission to build.' The electoral season gave PTC the opportunity to maintain

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[55] Matthew, 'Social physical exercise?', p. 4.
[56] PTC, *Minute Book*, 18 January 1900; *Perthshire Courier*, 10 November 1900.

the pressure. A crowded meeting of the Second Ward led not only to further condemnation of the Town Council, but also raised the question of the lack of working-class representation.[57]

The first attempt at direct representation in Perth involved the School Board elections of 1900 in which PTC working with the CPCS provided two candidates: Frank Simpson and a Mr White. Interactions with the School Board over technical training had been frustrating for PTC's technical education committee, and this may have been a motivating factor in the decision to contest the election. Simpson, a member of PTC accepted his nomination by declaring himself, to applause, to be a 'Labour candidate' depending entirely on a 'Labour vote.' Simpson's subsequent election to the School Board was greeted by PTC as just the start: 'the Council do not intend to stop here but in the time to come intends to have direct working representatives sitting in other Boards in connection with the City.'[58]

The meaning and rationale behind Simpson and PTC's articulation of the terms Labour and 'Working Representatives' require consideration. There does not appear to be any evidence that PTC was looking to run Labour party candidates at this time as PTC's refusal to countenance the establishment of an LRC in 1907 - an event discussed later - supports. Instead it seems that was of most concern was the 'working class credentials' of the representatives on

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[57] PTC, *Minute Book*, 25 April 1901, 9 August 1901, 9 November 1901; *Perthshire Courier*, 20 October 1901.

[58] PTC, *Minute Book*, 1 February 1900, 1 March 1900, 7 November 1900.

municipal bodies i.e., PTC can be viewed as possessing at that time a 'workerist' political outlook in its running of 'PTC' as opposed to Labour candidates.

PTC's first sally into independent working-class representation in 1900 was later than attempts in other Scottish towns/cities. Aberdeen had five ILP councillors in 1893 (two trades council representatives in 1884), Edinburgh Trades Council one in 1889, and Paisley three ILP councillors in 1898. DTC ran their president and secretary in 1890 as 'labour (with a small "l") candidates.' DTC too sought working-class representation on the Town Council and not the election of socialists or Labour men. An important difference between the running of working-class candidates in Dundee to Perth was that the trades council of the latter had sufficient finances to pay their representatives ('twice the pay of the average male jute worker') once elected to office so that attendance at 'day meetings' was possible. The lack of this financial support in Perth is likely to have been a factor in reducing the desire for candidature amongst Labour activists.[59]

When Simpson left Perth a year or so later PTC resolved to find a replacement. However, in February 1902 it was minuted that the timescale for finding a candidate was proving tight. By the time of the School Board elections of 1903 PTC was working with the CPCS and the Perth Clarion Fellowship in selecting a candidate. In 1906 candidate endorsement rather that direct representation defined that year's School Board elections.[60] Whilst there were some notable successes such as the election to the Auchterarder School Board

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[59] Harvie, 'Before the Breakthrough', p. 13; Kemp, 'Red Tayside'. pp. 224-26.
[60] PTC, *Minute Book*, 13 February 1902, 15, 29 January 1903, 21 March 1906.

in 1911 of R. Robertson of the SDP (in an electoral contest that included another SDP candidate as well as an LRC nominee), the Perth labour movement never evolved into a significant force on either the city or the county's School Boards.[61]

Perth Parish Council became a target of the labour movement around the start of the new century. It was a vein worth tapping - in the Parish Council election of 1898, only eight nominees came forward for 17 seats, all of whom were elected without contest. John Montgomery, Secretary of PTC, stood as a Labour candidate in the 1901 Parish Council election (Second Ward). Montgomery went on to be selected by PTC as 'a direct working man representative candidate' for the Fourth Ward in the 1902 municipal election. In another low turnout, Montgomery though defeated resolved to stand again, which he did the following year describing himself in his election pamphlets as 'a progressive candidate.'[62]

PTC eventually attempted to obtain representation on all Perth's public bodies including the Local Committee of the Old Age Pension Scheme, the Insurance Committee, the Public Baths & Wash House Committee, and the Library Committee to which one of its number was co-opted to in 1904. There was by no means 'total' resistance on these public bodies to working-class representation.[63]

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[61] *Forward*, 8 April 1911.

[62] *Perthshire Courier*, 3 October 1903, 29 October 1901, 3 November 1903; PTC, *Minute Book*, 25 September 1902, 23 October 1902.

[63] *Perthshire Courier*, 22 November 1904; PTC, *Minute Book*, 3 February 1909, 26 March 1913, 7 May 1913.

Montgomery attempted to use his foothold in Perth Parish Council in the pursuance of further representation by nominating PTC candidates to fill vacancies arising mid-term. In this endeavour, he was unsuccessful. However, in the formal elections of 1904, three (of the four nominated) PTC candidates were returned: Penny (First Ward), Montgomery (Second Ward), and John Williamson (Third Ward). Three years later Penny and Williamson were both still Parish Councillors and both succeeded in being re-elected as official PTC candidates for a fourth term (unopposed in the latter's case).[64]

At a meeting of PTC on 6 March 1907 the secretary read out a letter from Joseph Forbes Duncan,[65] a member of the ILP executive, 'intimating that he would be in Perth shortly, and asking if the council would be willing to form an LRC in Perth.' After consideration, the meeting resolved: 'the question of an LRC for Perth to be premature and not likely to appeal to the various local branches just yet.' Two weeks later Duncan spoke in Perth on the growth of trade unionism, the Labour Party's role in advancing parliamentary legislation on industrial and social matters, and on the essentialness of direct working-class representation on all elective bodies. In reply to Duncan's last point a member of PTC highlighted that on electoral matters: 'the special difficulties of Perth in this question.' A difficulty confirmed by the failure to field a single candidate in the 1906 and 1907 municipal elections (and has been noted earlier in the 1907 parliamentary by-election in which Robert Pullar was elected unopposed)

[64] PTC, *Minute Book*, 2 November 1904, 2, 16, 30 October 1907, 13 November 1907.
[65] Duncan was General Secretary of the Scottish Steam Fishing Vessels' Enginemen's and Firemen's Union and ILP organiser for Scotland.

despite cuts in trading services being made by the Moderates (the centre-right Conservative grouping) on the Town Council.[66]

Duncan was the main ILP organiser in the east of Scotland at this time. The NLS houses a great deal of correspondence between Duncan and his wife Mabel which includes details of his work with various ILP branches including Perth. These 'Perth letters', though few in comparison to Aberdeen, Alva, Dundee, Dunfermline, and the many other places Duncan visited, do suggest that PILP was not particularly proactive and dependent on outside support for growth: 'I am doing fairly well for them in Perth - getting them new members and getting them to work.'[67]

It was not until 1908 that PTC agreed, after much discussion, to confer with its affiliates as to the formation of a local LRC with the aim of securing 'working-class representation on public bodies.' After an extended period of consultation and some effort in elucidating responses, from those trade unions affiliated to PTC, four announced they were in favour of establishing an LRC, six were against, and five failed to reply, so that PTC left the proposal to be considered for another year.

Unperturbed by the continued intransigence (and in a few cases indifference) of the Perth trade unions to the establishment of an LRC/Workers' Election Committee (LRC/WEC), PILP pressed ahead. It is not clear exactly when an LRC/WEC was established in Perth, but one was in existence in the

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[66] PTC, *Minute Book*, 6, 20 March 1907.

[67] Joseph F. Duncan, *Letter to Mabel Duncan*, 5 September 1906, The Knowe, Craigie, Perth. Joseph F. Duncan Papers: *Letters October 1905 to December 1908* (NLS, Acc. 5491 - 1-2, 5 September 1906).

spring of 1909,[68] providing a candidate for the School Board election standing on a 'straight socialist ticket.'[69] Not only was this LRC/WEC nominee elected but he also 'obtained a higher number of votes than the chairman of the late Board, the Lord Provost, the ex-Dean of Guild and an ex-Bailie.' The successful candidate was David Thomson, chair of PILP, who the socialist newspaper *Forward* described as the 'first real labour and socialist candidate' seen in Perth. Thomson had some success on the Perth School Board and was lauded in the 1909 PTC *Annual Report* for having brought in a 'Fair Wage Clause'.[70]

Before continuing to explore the historical narrative of labour movement involvement in Perth's municipal bodies, it is worth pausing to consider the make-up of the Town Council in Perth during the period of scrutiny. This is not an easy task: reports in the local press and the *Minute Book* of the Town Council give very little information as to the party membership of councillors. In 1900, the Council was not only divided into two political groupings, Moderates (Conservatives) and Progressives (Liberals), it was also factional and split into several cliques. Hutchison has argued, 'the strength of Liberalism lay in part in the continuing pull of certain traditional party issues' such as temperance an issue which polarised Perth municipal politics, dividing the Council into a

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[68] Harding suggests the existence of a Labour Party in Perth in 1907: 'Socialism seemed to be making progress with the formation of a Perth Labour Party in 1907, four years before that in Glasgow . It was soon "well-established in Perth with meetings regularly well-attended." They soon had members on the School Board.' Harding, 'War and Social Change', pp. 37-38.

[69] PTC, *Minute Book*, 19 February 1908, 1, 29 April 1908, 13 May 1908, 19 August 1908.

[70] *Forward*, 19 March 1909, 10 April 1909, 8 May 1909; PTC, *Minute Book*, 2 February 1910.

'Temperance Party and what is known as the party that is not the Temperance Party, although not necessarily the drinking party.'[71]

In 1903 Perth's First Ward was fought directly on temperance between 'Councillor Macpherson' and 'ex-Treasurer Paton.' The *Perthshire Courier,* in the same article went on to plead:

> We want a broader interest in our municipal life then that shown by the liquor traffic on one side or the temperance cause on the other, and it should not be a question as to a candidates' real fitness whether he is a staunch Good Templar or the mildest of moderate drinkers.[72]

The 1906 municipal election is not only a case in point but worth examining for the involvement of the labour movement:

> The Moderates or Municipal Reformers are making a determined effort for victory, and they profess to find signs of weakening on the part of their Progressive opponents. Matters have been complicated somewhat by the actions of Labour candidates, who are dividing the Progressive strength: but in several cases a working arrangement has already been arrived at, and the division may not prove as serious as was at one time feared.[73]

Temperance continued to be an important factor in Perth for some time and had been so for some years. In fact, PILP chose the temperance issue ('Should the drink traffic be municipalized?') as the topic of its first series of monthly lectures and debates, which it started in October 1906: 'the affirmative is to be

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[71] Hutchison, 'Impact of the First World War', p. 36; *Perthshire Courier*, 20 October 1904.

[72] *Perthshire Courier*, 3 November 1903.

[73] *Perthshire Courier*, 23 October 1906.

put forward by Tom Kennedy, the *Clarion* Vanner and the negative by Mr George

Martin,[74] an advanced Radical [Liberal].'[75]

Temperance not only politically divided the Conservative and Liberal

parties in Perth but more importantly created division within the anti-

Conservative vote. This was manifest not just as elucidated in the previous

paragraph by Liberal-Labour disagreement but also within the 'socialist camp'

as a division between Labour and the 'anti-drink' parties such as the Scottish

Prohibition Party (SPP) which was founded in Dundee in 1901 to pursue

temperance by political means.[76] The SPP had by no means 'one string to its

bow', as Kemp has argued, it also 'sought Council office to solve the problems of

Dundee's workers.'[77] (The SPP's leader Edwin Scrymgeour after several attempts

succeeded in gaining a parliamentary seat in the double Dundee constituency

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[74] Martin, a Perth councillor, had come under attack the previous year in the local press, by a correspondent calling himself 'one of the ignored prohibitionists,' for 'supporting the local issue' and consequently not being 'a true prohibitionist.' *Perthshire Courier*, 24 October 1905.

[75] *Forward*, 20 October 1906.

[76] Several (non-party political) temperance organisations were active in Perth in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The International Order of Good Templars (IOGT), for example, which was a major temperance organisation that had originated in the USA, maintained 25 lodges in the County of Perth in 1894 for its 1,339 members - the seventh largest IOGT division in Scotland. (Lanarkshire being the highest with 65 lodges and 3,647 members.) The Perth Division included among its membership Alexander Wright a prominent local councillor. (There were at the time 1,067 IOGT lodges across Scotland; UK-wide IOGT membership rose to around 100,000 in 1903.) Another prominent temperance organisation, the Scottish Permissive Bill and Temperance Association included several Scottish industrialist families among its leadership including the 'Coats and Clark families, the Forrester Paton family and a group of drapers and dyers like Sir Robert Pullar of Perth.' Norma Davies Logan, 'Drink and Society 1870-1914' (University of Glasgow: unpublished PhD thesis, 1993), pp. 22, 37-8, 45.

[77] Kemp, 'Red Tayside', p. 228.

alongside E. D. Morel for the ILP ousting Winston Churchill, the sitting MP, in the process.) An SPP branch operated in Perth between 1904 and 1912.[78]

6.5 *the Perth Branch of the Scottish Prohibition Party*

Early in the life of the Perth branch of the SPP a split occurred in the party's central leadership over the decision by its chairman, the Reverend Walter Walsh, to share a platform with the leader of the Liberal Party, Henry Campbell-Bannerman, during the latter's visit to Dundee of 17 November 1904.[79] Despite the temperance movement's close political association with Liberalism, the presence of Walsh on the platform of a minister of a government which derived 'revenue from the sale of liquor' was too much for the SPP executive which subsequently 'voted in new rules that prevented party members appearing on the platform of other parties "except to denounce".'[80] Unable to accept these rules, Walsh broke from the SPP taking a large group of members with him castigating the SPP in the process as simply existing 'for the purpose of fighting

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[78] For the latter, see for example *Perthshire Courier*, 6 December 1904 and for the former the well-attended meeting at the Co-operative Hall of 22 October 1907 with Robert Stewart (Vice-President of the SPP and candidate for Dundee's Ninth Ward) and Edwin Scrymgeour (then a Dundee councillor).

[79] Walsh was a colourful character who professed 'universalist' principles of unity and kinship and involved himself in controversy as a reforming minister of the Baptist Church and as a political activist. Walsh entered the local political scene in Dundee as early as 1900. Two years later 'the Dundee District Lodge Electoral Action Committee of the Independent Order of Good Templars contributed £8 to the Reverend Walter Walsh's election expenses for a contest for a seat on Dundee Town Council as he, standing as a Prohibitionist, though not a member of the order himself, was the only candidate who met the Lodge's anti-drink demands.' Various correspondence. Edwin Scrymgeour Collection (Dundee Central Library (DCL), Box 15); John Douglas Kemp, 'Drink and the Labour movement in earlier twentieth-century Scotland with particular reference to Edwin Scrymgeour and the Scottish Prohibition Party' (University of Dundee: unpublished PhD thesis, 2001), pp. 231, 254;The Reverend Walter Walsh (ed.), *Hymns of Universal Religion sung by The Church of To-day*. (Dundee: David Winter & Son, 1911).

[80] *Scottish Prohibitionist*, 1908; Kemp, 'Drink and the Labour Movement', p. 268.

all other temperance bodies when ... [he] ... had helped to bring it into being to fight the liquor traffic.'[81]

The membership losses in Dundee were so severe that the three Dundee branches were forced to amalgamate into one. John M. Beadie writing in January 1905 reported:

> I have just heard that a meeting of those who are to leave is to be held to-night in the Gilfillan. The idea seems to be, that they are to "keep together", and off the Party entirely. I have also got the "news" that Perth has been asking for full particulars, from some of them, so be prepared for developments from the outside branches.[82]

The *Perthshire Courier* commenting on the Gilfillan Hall meeting noted that:

> The [SPP] Secretary intimated that in response to a communication from the Perth Branch, which indicated that the changes in the rules should not have been made without their consent, he had given a full statement of the position of the party and the reasons which had given rise to the recent dissensions.[83]

The entire Perth branch left the SPP creating a new (though short-lived) political grouping, the Perth Prohibition Party (PPP). The political disagreement between the SPP's Perth branch and the party leadership does not appear to have been very deep. Certainly, they felt strongly enough to break away, however, their request to return to the SPP fold only a few months later does suggest that the ideological schism was not great. This is confirmed by a letter written to Scrymgeour: '[I am] rather surprised at the whole business ... there is

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[81] Walker, *Juteopolis*, p. 271.

[82] *John M. Beaddie to Edwin Scrymgeour*. Edwin Scrymgeour Collection (DCL, Box 9).

[83] *Perthshire Courier,* 10 January 1905.

little difference between us [SPP and PPP], "only a difference of expression".'[84]

The crux of the matter may have possibly hinged on the autocratic nature of the decision and the feeling by the Perth branch to have been excluded from consultation and a democratic process of consent. Another important factor that may have been at play was the attitude adopted by the SPP to those outside its ranks. The SPP was not a broad church and there is plenty of evidence to demonstrate that the party and its guiding light, Scrymgeour, were extremely intolerant of dissent and unwilling to compromise politically. A good indicator of the SPP's reluctance to make concessions even with their closest allies is illustrated by their relations with the IOGT which in 1902 had made a financial contribution to the SPP election fund but by 1903 estranged from the SPP:

> In December 1903 the Good Templars temperance organisation expelled all SPP members who were also Templars, since Party activists had continually criticised any temperance campaigners who did not agree with prohibition.[85]

This 'purity' did not always advantage the SPP. Writing to Perth SPP in regard to joint activity, PILP 'stated that while they recognised the magnitude of the drink evil, they regretted that were unable to cooperate with the Prohibition Party, owing to the inflexible position it took up, chiefly in declining to accept measures of reform short of total prohibition and because of its non-recognition of democratic control.'[86]

As stated earlier, the PPP secession was brief: 'Within months they were

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[84] *John M. Beaddie to Edwin Scrymgeour*. Edwin Scrymgeour Collection (DCL, Box 9).

[85] [Anon], *Edwin Scrymgeour: 'The Great Prohibitionist 1866-1947'*. (Pamphlet) (Dundee: Dundee City Council, 2001). Edwin Scrymgeour Collection (DCL, Box 9).

[86] *Perthshire Courier*, 10 January 1905.

seeking to return to the SPP, subject to the SPP accepting responsibility for the losses they had incurred in the interim, including those of a meeting addressed by Walsh that had cost more to advertise than it had taken in.' The SPP refused to pay the money and the Perth branch re-joined regardless.[87] And whilst Walsh seemed to have carried the Perth branch with him initially, the body of that branch abandoned Walsh who went on to develop relations with Dundee LRC. The SPP branch in Perth continued to function until 1912.

It was the product of another split in the SPP, the National Prohibition and Reform Party (NPRP),[88] that provided a group of Perth prohibitionists who worked more easily with the Perth labour movement:

> The Perth Trades Council gave their support to one of their members who stood as an SPP candidate and later as a National Prohibition and Reform Party candidate (an offshoot of the SPP) in Perth in 1910, 1911 and in 1913, successfully on the final occasion - though they made it clear that they did not agree with him on prohibition.[89]

That candidate was David Bruce, secretary of PTC. Bruce possessed a flexibility that Edwin Scrymgeour and other SPP members lacked. The *Minute Book* of PTC include several entries where Bruce excused himself from PTC events because alcohol would be present whilst sending his wishes to those that were to attend. Bruce was well regarded:

> Mr. Bruce had only recently joined the Trades Council, but

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[87] 'Drink and the Labour Movement', p. 272.

[88] The Socialist Prohibition Fellowship was initially known as the NPRP. The NPRP split with the SPP over the issue of religion and brought over the Auchtermuchty branch and a significant section of the Coatbridge, Dundee and Perth branches. The NPRP was closely associate with Robert Stewart one of the founder members of the CPGB. 'Drink and the Labour Movement', p. 258.

[89] PTC, *Minute Book*, 25 October 1911.

since he came amongst them he had been one of their most hard-working members. Although they could not see eye to eye with him regarding Prohibition, they yet recognised that as a social reformer he was in the front rank, and as such, it was their duty, not only as trade unionists, but as citizens, to rally round him on this occasion. If ever the working men of Perth had a chance of sending a true working-man representative to the Council they had it in Mr. David Bruce.[90]

Bruce was, nonetheless, a determined prohibitionist which might explain why Scrymgeour and the SPP presented a somewhat inconsistent attitude to him:

Later the same year, in November 1911, the *Scottish Prohibitionist* advocated that its readers vote for a NPRP candidate in municipal elections in Perth. "Mr. Bruce's programme is no more socialistic than when he was run by the SPP. Such wobbly conditions are not very assuring to the public, but we think the Perth First Ward electors should give Mr. Bruce a trial". When Bruce eventually won a set on Perth Council in 1913 his victory was celebrated on the front page of the *Prohibitionist* as if he had still been a party member.[91]

In the 1911 municipal election Bruce received 141 votes in Perth's First Ward, several hundred votes shy of the three successful candidates who polled 444, 419, and 408. This was not Bruce's first municipal contest; he had attained 255 votes in 1909 and 98 in 1910. (The prohibitionists ran a second candidate, Thomas A. Smith, in 1910. He received 67 votes.)[92]

Bruce's views on prohibition differed strongly from those of the majority of his fellow PTC delegates. Nevertheless, PTC acknowledging Bruce's progressive stance on social and labour issues continually supported his candidacies.[93] Eventually, Bruce's perseverance paid off. In the 1913 municipal

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[90] PTC, *Minute Book,* 25 October 1911.

[91] 'Drink and the Labour Movement', p. 272.

[92] *Perthshire Courier*, 1 November 1910, 16 November 1909; PTC, *Minute Book*, 12 November 1910; *Forward*, 11 November 1911.

[93] PTC, *Minute Book*, 25 October 1911.

election with the support of PTC, Bruce secured office with 188 votes in the

Second Ward.[94] The result created a stir in the local press:

> It fell to the Second Ward to provide the sensation of the election. The chances of Mr David Bruce gaining the seat against such experienced councillors as ex-Lord Provost Cuthbert and Mr J. K. Taylor were never really considered, and the popular belief was that the well-known Prohibitionist speaker would figure in his usual place at the foot of the poll. The fact, however, that Mr Bruce has been returned must be regarded as in the nature of a Labour triumph, the new councillor having been run by the Perth Trade and Labour Council. The result in this ward will not be easily forgotten.[95]

(Bruce however found himself rebuffed and ridiculed within the Town Council

chamber from his very first meeting.[96])

Other prohibitionists who worked closely with the Perth labour

movement during this period include Frank Simpson who had been a key SPP

figure in Fife for many years and who as noted earlier became a Labour

representative on Perth School Board, and John Montgomery who when he

stood in the 1903 Perth municipal election was lauded by the *Perthshire Courier*:

> John Montgomery, who stands to win after a second trial is being backed up as a *bona fides* representative of men who work for weekly wages. In Mr. Montgomery trades' unionists have a candidate of their own choosing.[97]

When Montgomery died in early 1905 the *Perthshire Courier* wrote that

Montgomery had been 'one of the foremost labour representatives in the city'

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[94] Bruce remained a councillor until he chose to step down at the end of 1917 at which point he was replaced by William Whyte, President of PTC. PTC, *Minute Book*, 22 September 1917.

[95] *Perthshire Advertiser*, 5 November 1913, p. 2.

[96] *Perthshire Courier*, 11 November 1913.

[97] *Perthshire Courier,* 3 November 1903.

and 'one of the most progressive men in the city.'[98] Montgomery like Bruce worked happily in the temperance movement and the wider labour movement: he had been Electoral Superintendent of the Southern District of the IOGT; a member of the SPP and subsequently the PPP; an active member of the congregation of the Reverend R. S. Barclay; a Parish Councillor representing working-class interests; and, an important figure on PTC locally and nationally.

Unlike Dundee, the prohibition/anti-drink political groupings in Perth played a net positive role in developing a Labour politic as well as providing number of able cadres within the local labour and trade-union movement.

6.6 *Labour and Municipal Politics, Perth 1909-1922*

Further electoral success for the Perth labour movement came in 1909 with the election to municipal office of William R. Allan, on a socialist ticket (and candidate of WEC) in the First Ward. Another ILP (WEC) candidate, former PTC member Neil M. Black, failed to gain election in the Second Ward in 1909.[99] That year, the ILP in Scotland had more candidates in burgh, county, and parish elections than ever before.

During their selection both Allan and Black gave assurances as to their willingness to see trade union wages paid on all council contracts and fair wages to all corporation employees. Allan went on to top the poll in the First Ward in 1910. In 1911 Allan seemed to have fallen out of favour with parts of the local

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[98] *Perthshire Courier,* 17 January 1905.

[99] The results for the First Ward were Grieve (524), Miller (421), Cuthbert (416), Allan (396), McPherson (383). The results for the Second Ward were McNab (581), Hardie (542), Crystal (473), Young (426), Black (242). PTC, *Minute Book*, 13 November 1909; *Perthshire Courier*, 16 November 1909.

labour movement over his involvement in a Council contract with a non-union firm and his change of attitude to a proposed Gas Stoking Plant.[100] Allan was nonetheless re-elected three times and in 1913 was appointed Bailie. In September 1916 Allan announced his resignation. By that time he had become estranged from PTC and the labour movement going so far as to deny that he had ever been a WEC candidate.[101]

If the narrative of labour movement involvement in Perth's local electoral politics has suggested so far a steady advance in working-class representation, the 1912 municipal election results point firmly to the forward march of Labour halted.[102] Three Labour candidates contested the 1912 election and all three failed to win office. John Bremner (LRC and PTC) received 173 votes against his opponents' 655, 579, 394, and 209 in the Third Ward; Andrew Bell (PTC) Andrew Bell 265 against successful votes of 428 and 364 in the Fifth Ward. J. M. Rae (LRC) stood in the Fourth Ward.[103] (The following year saw an LRC candidate, a Mr Cunningham win a seat in the Fifth Ward.[104])

These failures cannot be put down to opposition in the local press. The editor of the *Perthshire Courier,* had welcomed the Labour field prior to the election:

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[100] PTC, *Minute Book*, 13 November 1909, 4 May 1911, 13 September 1911; *Perthshire Courier*, 1 November 1910, 11 November 1913.

[101] PTC, *Minute Book*, 6 September, 28 October 1916.

[102] This was by no means a wild conclusion. The Unionist *Perthshire Constitutional* writing in 1911 asked the question, 'As the workers abandon Liberalism and move left how long will it be before there is a labour MP in Perth?' *Perthshire Constitutional*, 24 October 1911.

[103] *Forward*, 2 November 1912.

[104] *Perthshire Courier*, 8 November 1913.

> Bailie Crombie and Councillor Stewart are called upon to fight a labour representative in the person of Mr Andrew Bell. It will be interesting to see how such a very advanced socialist fares in the fighting fifth ward. ... We welcome the appearance of three Labour candidates and venture to hope that one or more of them will be successful. The Town Council would be none the worse of the presence of several working men able to speak from personal experiences on behalf of the class that forms the majority of the community.[105]

A very informative post-election analysis published in the *Perthshire Courier,* gives some insight into the balance of political power in the town in 1912, and more importantly made the case of the continued strength of allegiance to the Liberal Party amongst the working class, though the pro-Liberal viewpoint of the newspaper tempers the objectivity of their commentary:

> Their joint and several defeats will be of great advantage if it teaches the ILP the greatness of its own weakness in Perth. Out of the three Wards, with a total electorate of 4,335 men and women the labour candidates after an exhaustive canvas, were only able to poll a united total of 650. The ILP has threatened to contest Perth City at the next election and some Liberals have been shaking their heads, whilst many Tories have been rubbing their hands, but we are inclined to question whether a Labour candidate can be brought forward. If Labour can only poll 650 votes out of 4,335 municipal electors, what number could they hope to poll out of 5,377 parliamentary electors, for it must be remembered that many Liberals would vote for a Labour candidate for the Town Council who would not dream of supporting a Labour candidate for Parliament. The municipal election shows that Liberalism in Perth is well able to meet and to repulse an united attack by the combined forces of Toryism and Socialism.[106]

The *Perthshire Courier's* assessment of the paucity of ILP strength in Perth proved to be prophetic. A few years later when over 100 members of the Scottish section of the ILP Scouts met for a two-day camp at Kinross that included addresses by

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[105] *Perthshire Courier*, 29 October 1912.
[106] *Perthshire Courier*, 12 November 1912.

James Maxton and Robert Stewart, a report in *Forward* made mention of contingents from Edinburgh, Dundee, Alva, Glasgow, Tillicoultry, and Cowdenbeath, but not from Perth. Towards the end of 1917 PILP consisted of a mere 11 members, despite the prominent role played by the branch in the strike at Pullars earlier that year. (A series of Sunday meetings with high-profile ILP speakers in the winter of 1917 boosted branch membership to 31 - a figure whilst significantly higher than that prior to the recruitment drive was nonetheless still a very small number.)[107] Lack of numbers and a lack of wider support within the labour movement hampered ILP efforts in Perth. Attempts by PILP to utilise the North Inch for rallies, for example, were frequently turned down by the Town Council which had publicly made its opposition to socialism clear, whereas after its establishment PDLP a far larger grouping and one with the direct support of PTC had fewer problems in that regard.[108]

If as Gordon Brown has argued 'it was the Independent Labour Party that was the fulcrum of Labour Party activity within Scotland,'[109] then the weakness and small size of PILP (at a time when the ILP nationally was expanding)[110] helps to explain the failure of Labour to make any great inroads in Perth. Kenefick has built on Brown's argument making a case for the electoral

[107] *Forward*, 19 June 1915, 8 December 1917.

[108] Harding, 'War and Social Change', p. 195: PTC, 25 March 1918, 1 May 1919, 1 June 1919, 22 April 1922; *Perthshire Courier*, 18 June 1918; *Perthshire Constitutional*, 5 April 1922, 3 May 1919.

[109] Gordon Brown, 'The Labour Party and Political Change in Scotland 1918-1929: The Politics of Five Elections' (University of Edinburgh: unpublished PhD thesis, 1981), p. 400.

[110] 'The ILP which had lost members from the beginning of the war, recovered through its exploitation of welfare issues, most notably rents. Its membership, down to 3,000 in early 1917, with only 112 branches, had expanded to over 9,000 in 1,912 branches by September 1918.' Harvie, 'Before the Breakthrough', p. 24.

breakthrough of 1922 as being due to ILP efforts and the financial backing that the ILP provided.'[111] Glasgow is a good illustration of the central role played by the ILP - which was immersed in the struggles on the Clyde, heavily involved in the issue of housing and engaged in rent strike activity and other social issues including unemployment, and in anti-conscription activity during the Great War (an issue looked at in the next section) - in winning the working class to Labour and thus forging the 'electoral triumphs of the 1920s.'[112] Another example, closer to Perth is Dundee where Kenefick and Baxter have found a labour movement which was 'clearly growing in confidence and gaining in strength before 1914 and [which] was able to expand trade-union membership, mount successful strike action, elect Labour officials and front prominent national political campaigns between the 1890s and 1914.'[113]

PDLP achieved little in its first few years. That is not to say the Perth labour movement did not have some success, for example, the unanimous election of Alexander Gowans, a nominee of PTC in the November 1918 municipal elections, but rather as in the past these successes were minor and not part of a substantial shift in political allegiance.[114] The question here is whether this paucity of progress into municipal politics was typical of Labour at that time or whether it was peculiar to the situation in Perth. The answer lies in

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[111] Kenefick, *Labour Politics*, p. 191.

[112] ILP membership doubled in Glasgow between 1917 and 1920 when it stood at 2,600 members and although membership dropped to 1,400 by 1922, the ILP in Glasgow remained a powerful and active political grouping. Smyth, *Labour in Glasgow*, pp. 98-101.

[113] Kenefick, *Labour Politics*, p. 212; Smyth, *Labour in Glasgow*, p. 206.

[114] *The Scotsman*, 9 November 1918, p. 6.

an examination of the position of the Labour Party branches of other Scottish towns/cities.

According to Kenefick Edinburgh returned a Labour councillor in 1909, 'two more in 1911, and a further three in 1913' as well as a parish councillor in 1908 and a second in 1911.[115] In Glasgow, whilst Labour had achieved much in the municipal field since its first councillor in 1909 - 12 councillors in 1912; and 19 in the final ward elections before the Great War - Smyth has argued that 'it remained very much a minor player with little prospect of becoming a majority party in either parliamentary or municipal affairs.'[116] In other words, despite its meagre progress by 1914, Labour politics in Perth was not quantitatively on the surface anywhere other than might be expected of it. It is when one looks deeper that the real malaise is exposed. Although specifically addressed to the issue of female workers in a specific US environment, Carole Turbin's argument 'that it is only sustained activism over a long period of time, rather than action tied to specific labor struggles which may be taken to indicate a consciousness of shared interests' is very revealing.[117] Even if the municipal electoral achievements of Labour in Perth by 1914 mirrored (proportionally) those of Glasgow and Dundee, the roots firmly planted in these two cities would soon produce a yield that far outstripped that of the Perth labour movement. More importantly, as Smyth has argued, the ILP in Glasgow (even by 1909):

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[115] Kenefick, *Red Scotland*, p. 77.

[116] Smyth, *Labour in Glasgow*, p. 4.

[117] Carole Turbin, 'Reconceptualising Family, Work and Labour Organizing: Working Women in Troy, 1860-1890', *Review of Radical Political Economics*, 16 (1984), p. 4.

> [lacked] a major issue on which to base its appeal. ... That much-needed "inspiration" was housing which, in the immediate pre-War years, under the impact of Wheatley's cottages scheme, became the key issue behind Labour's increasing success.[118]

As will be seen, housing never became a major political issue in Perth; nor for that matter did any other issue move to the fore sufficiently to allow PILP to become anymore than a tiny player in the Perth's political culture.

Once again it is in the postwar period where the labour movement nationally entered a new paradigm in political significance, that the Perth's divergence from this narrative becomes apparent. Tanner, for example, has claimed that 'research into municipal politics' has demonstrated that in Edwardian Britain 'there lurked a municipal [Labour] monster, whose tentacles reached out across the country' strangling and devouring the Liberal party 'at the roots.'[119] If such a monster existed, it did not do so in Perth.

As argued earlier, Labour's success in Scotland in the postwar period owed much to the activities of the ILP during the war. These activities, Kenefick has observed included the 'successful "exploitation of welfare issues" and "worker's grievances" ... [as well as] the active opposition to war played by the NCF [No-Conscription Fellowship]' the majority of whose members were linked to the ILP.[120]

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[118] James J. Smyth, 'The ILP in Glasgow, 1888-1906: the struggle for identity', in McKinlay, Alan and R. J. Morris, (eds.), *The Independent Labour Party on Clydeside 1893-1932: From Foundation to Disintegration* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991), p. 49.

[119] Tanner, 'Elections, Statistics, and the Rise of the Labour Party', p. 894.

[120] Kenefick, *Red Scotland*, p. 133.

6.7 *the No-Conscription Fellowship and Anti-war Activity*

After the introduction of conscription under the Military Services Acts of 1916, military service tribunals were formed as statutory bodies by local authorities to hear applications for exemption, which by the war's end ran into the millions. Some 98% of the tribunals work concerned cases of exemption based on 'work of national importance', 'domestic or business hardship' or 'medical unfitness'. The remainder concerned 'conscientious objection' on 'moral, religious and political grounds'. [121]

Central to oppositional work in Britain against conscription was the No-Conscription Fellowship (NCF - *est.* November 1914) within which the ILP, which opposed the war and militarism from the onset of hostilities, played a dominant role.[122] The ILP's campaigning paid great dividends, its 'Home Front Offensive' saw its membership more than triple to 10,000 and its branch structure double to over 200.[123]

Opposition to the War and especially the notion of an 'inequality of sacrifice' played a role in the transformation of working-class political identity. In Dundee, for example, Walker has argued that in the postwar years, the Labour Party capitalised 'upon the feelings of revulsion against the war.' For Gallacher the Great War did much to develop working-class solidarity and

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[121] Kenefick, *Red Scotland*, p. 155.

[122] In 1917 the NCF maintained 7 'Divisional' and 150 'Branch Secretaries'. Division 1 (Scotland) comprised 16 branches, including Dundee, Edinburgh, Falkirk, Glasgow, Kilmarnock, Motherwell, Paisley, and Stirling. Thomas C. Kennedy, *The Hound of Conscience. A History of the No-Conscription Fellowship 1914-1919* (Arkansas: The University of Arkansas Press, 1981), pp. 294-301.

[123] Kenefick, *Red Scotland*, p. 155.

resistance among the population of the Vale of Leven. In his argument, Gallacher drew upon the high levels of casualties experienced by the Vale: over 500 men recruited locally out of a population of 20,000 were killed. Perth Burgh which had a population of *c.* 36,000 in 1911 (*c.* 33,000 in 1921) lost about a thousand soldiers - a rate of casualty higher than that which Gallacher deemed a 'radicalising experience' for the Vale working class.[124]

Perth with its traditions of military recruitment, its importance as a 'war station', and its high levels of volunteerism experienced little of the anti-war/ anti-conscription activity of Dundee and elsewhere. The lack of a branch of the NCF and of any notable anti-war activity meant Perth lacked yet another missing piece of the Labour 'breakthrough' jigsaw.[125]

The first sitting of Sheriffdom of Perth's Appeals Tribunal took place on 27 March 1916 - 400 cases were heard in the first few weeks. The members of which comprised the Earl of Mansfield, Sir John Dewar, Rufus D. Pullar, and Councillor David Bruce.[126] As a member of PTC and a prohibitionist councillor, Bruce operated in his words as 'the representative of the organised workers.' (The insularity of PTC and their limited class basis is further evidenced by Bruce's declaration of representation only of a certain section of the Perth working class.) In his reports to PTC, Bruce made great mention of the number of cases heard by the committee and the disparity in the way its members dealt with cases of 'indispensability' caused by a bias. Those claimed

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[124] Gallacher, *Vale of Leven*, p. 189; *Census of Scotland* 1911-1921.

[125] Kenefick, *Red Scotland*, p. 202.

[126] *The Scotsman*, 28 March 1916, p. 6; Harding, 'War and Social Change', p. 106.

to be indispensable by a major Perth employer (at least two of whom sat on the Tribunal) or a local laird were treated more favourable than those for whom the CPCS made representation. Conscientious objectors, were according to Bruce treated even more unfairly.[127] The question of bias in military Appeals Tribunals has been considered by Thomas C. Kennedy who has concluded that whilst the NCF and many prominent individuals, George Bernard Shaw being one example, made claim to bias at the time, little evidence exists to show that the tribunals acted (in the main) outside the remit given to them by the government of the day.[128] If Kennedy's argument is correct, and Bruce's observations accurate, then the latter's comments are rather suggestive of Perth being a counter-example.

Bruce was not anti-war as his conduct at trades council meetings confirms. For example, he objected strongly to the reading of a letter against militarism sent to PTC from the British Socialist Party (BSP) containing a leaflet entitled 'Prussianism or Peace' in March 1916. And, in May 1916 when PTC considered a motion that the government look to negotiate an early peace to the war, Bruce put forward an amendment that the resolution lie on the table. (A vote was split equally for and against the amendment, which was passed with the Chair's casting vote.[129]) Bruce's concerns with the Appeals Tribunal were not a matter of the execution of the War but rather with what he saw as class and political bias by those who served upon it.

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[127] PTC, *Minute Book*, 2 April 1916.

[128] Thomas C. Kennedy, 'Public Opinion and the Conscientious Objector, 1915-1919', *Journal of British Studies*, 12, 2 (May 1973), pp. 108-09.

[129] PTC, *Minute Book*, 17 May 1916.

The divisions within PTC over the War are worth a brief consideration. The aforementioned BSP anti-militarist circular required a vote of delegates before even being read. Five of the 18 delegates present were not even in favour of allowing it to be heard by the meeting. Whilst the trades council was split on the pursuit of the War, a majority were firmly opposed to conscription going so far as to passing an ILP resolution against it.[130]

Both Harvie and Kenefick's argument that the NCF assisted in raising the ILP's profile, its growth and electoral success (especially in Aberdeen and Dundee) lead to the conclusion that the lack of NCF activity in Perth was yet another factor that explains the failure of Labour in Perth to match the electoral breakthrough and success achieved elsewhere in Scotland.[131]

6.8 *Summary Remarks*

The slow emergence of Labour and socialist activity in Perth had its roots in the absence of the 'new unionist' belligerence of 1889-1891. Even with the founding of PILP in 1904 Labour politics in Perth remained in the shadow of its Liberal Party rival struggling as it did against craft union pro-Liberalism and resistance to the establishment of a Labour Party, the poor reception of socialist ideas among the Perth working class, the failure of the labour movement in Perth to offer a significant challenge to the industrial order, and the absence of alternative cultural practices provided by inward migration of other populaces such as Irish workers, and the absence of a culture of socialism provided by a 'web of progressive' forces. The failure of PILP to provide a candidate to oppose

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[130] PTC, *Minute Book*, 30 June 1915.
[131] Harvie, 'Before the Breakthrough', p. 24; Kenefick, *Red Scotland*, p. 155.

Robert Pullar in the 1907 Perth Burgh by-election exemplifies the paucity of Labour politics in Perth at that time. Whilst a small majority of those who voted in a 'referendum' on the issue supported a Labour candidacy, the majority of PTC's membership were either opposed or chose not to vote. Pullar's position as a patrician employer at the centre of the Perth Liberal electoral machine, his long involvement in the lives of the city's working class, and the attachment of the craft unions to Liberalism assisted him in his unopposed election. The weakness of PILP and its lack of support among PTC, the trades council's affiliated trade unions, and the Perth working class, resulted in PILP remaining a small ineffectual political grouping.

Even in and around 1909 when PTC began to make an ideological departure from the Liberal Party with the founding of an LRC/WEC it nonetheless remained furtive about establishing a Labour Party branch. It was not until early 1918 that PDLP was established. This turning point occurred at just the same time that the wider Perth working class were embracing trade unionism. Without the long years of community involvement and politicking that defined the ILP in Glasgow, Dundee, Paisley, and elsewhere however the newly founded Labour Party branch was unlikely to, and indeed did, have little impact.

The establishment of permanent trade-union structures among Perth's textile workforce after 1912 did not improve matters. The branch leadership of ASDBFKT for example hindered rather than advanced the Labour cause by acting as a break on the acceptance of socialism in complete contrast to what

was occurring among Dundee's textile workers whose DDJFWU did much to advance pro-Labour sentiment among its membership.

Apart from the limited success of running working-class candidates in municipal elections between 1869 and 1871 by PWMA the Perth labour movement had little involvement in local politics until the founding of PTC in 1897. Like other Scottish trades councils, PTC's early forays into the municipal sphere took the form of the endorsement of pro-trade union Liberal candidates. In this PTC was joined by the CPCS who allied themselves to the Perth labour movement to protect their commercial interests.

By 1900 the labour movement in Perth was determined to secure the election of independent working-class representatives to the full range of municipal bodies. Success though it came eventually was limited and offered little threat to the established Liberal-Conservative municipal order. Furthermore, not only were these attempts by the labour movement in Perth manifestations of a working-class 'tribalism' rather than a Labour politic, but they also lagged behind what had taken place in other Scottish towns/cities.

Temperance and the 'Drink Question' as a political issue divided the local Liberal (pro-temperance) and Conservative (pro-liquor) parties and motivated a section of the labour movement. A branch of the Dundee-run SPP operated in Perth between 1904 and 1912 and although plagued by splits and disagreements with the authoritarian leadership style of Edwin Scrymgeour, the party's founder, the branch nonetheless furnished the labour movement in Perth with several progressive Labour activists. These included David Bruce,

Secretary of PTC, who as a NPRP member was elected to Perth Town Council in 1913 after several previous attempts.

The first Labour candidate for municipal office in Perth was William R. Allan who stood successfully with the support of the WEC and PTC in November 1909. Allan's actions as a councillor are quite indicative of the narrow pursuit of interests that defined PTC and the Perth labour movement. His main interests were with the establishment of Fair Wages and trade-union rates of pay in council contracts. Allan's electoral success though followed by others was not indicative of the arrival of Labour politics in Perth - the 1912 municipal elections were a total failure for the Perth labour movement (in particular PILP which was the force behind the WEC); its candidates received a combined vote of just 655 out of an electorate of 4,335. Liberalism in 1912 remained the dominant political force in Perth.

Kenefick's argument that widespread activity over many years by the ILP in Scotland on housing, rent levels, conscription, wages, and unemployment coupled with the financial support it provided was the root stock from which the general election triumphs of the early 1920s grew helps to explain the failure of Labour in Perth to emulate what happened in Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Paisley. In contrast to these cities where the ILP provided the fulcrum from which Labour emerged on the Scottish political stage, PILP made little real impression on the Perth working class who remained unresponsive to its appeals.

Few general studies of Scottish labour history include the co-operative movement in any great detail. Whilst the labour and trade union movements wrestled

with the social issues around production, the co-operative movement was engaged in a struggle for working-class control over the economic issue of consumption, so that the scrutiny of the latter (attended to in Chapter 7) provides further insight into the political development of the Perth working class.

Chapter 7 - *the Co-operative Movement in Perth*

Co-operative enterprise was the largest and most successful of any working-class institution in the nineteenth century and yet has received little in the way of significant scrutiny by historians. This chapter aims to shine something of a light on the relationship between the main co-operative retail society serving the people of Perth and its district in the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the City of Perth Co-operative Society (CPCS), and the city and district's working class a large number of whom it served as consumers and some of whom it employed.

The key question to be answered by this chapter is to what level business pragmatism as opposed to the professed ideological position of co-operation dominated the actions and endeavours of the CPCS including those in which the Society allied itself with Perth's labour movement and especially in its role as an employer of labour. In particular the question as to how contingent circumstances influenced the relationship between co-operation and labour will be explored. The extent to which 'self-interest' extended into the CPCS's collaborations with PTC in the pursuit of independent working-class representation for municipal and parliamentary office will provide a specific aspect of this study. In other words, this chapter aims to determine the hierarchy of the relationship between the CPCS and its customers (consumers), employees, and the labour movement.

7.1 *Co-operative Ideology*

Unlike trade unionism which involves itself with the level of capitalist appropriation of surplus value in the productive process, retail co-operation sought to increase the value of the worker's wage at the point of consumption. This duality, the Women's Co-operative Guild (WCG) viewed as forming 'Two Halves of One Circle'; an image which as will be seen belies the difficulties of reconciling interests framed by dialectical contradiction.[1] Co-operation's economic-corporate interests and its goals required it to occupy both a productive and consumerist space and to employ at commercially competitive rates of pay the very workers it sought to elevate materially. And while, the co-operative vision, at least in theory, was juxtaposed to that of the capitalist forms it sought to replace, its practice within a capitalist economy (often indistinguishable from that of capital) created enormous difficulties in the reconciliation of competing interests. Informed as it was by its roles in the production and consumption processes, the ideological vision of co-operative organisations was also a site of struggle contested by various groups in particular the labour movement.

7.2 *Beginnings*

The British retail co-operative movement originated in the late eighteenth century outside and as an alternative to private capital's dominance of the means of distribution and sale, as an open-to-all, profit-sharing, and democratically run provider of good quality working-class retail essential goods

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[1] Women's Co-operative Guild, *Co-operation's Great Opportunity* (London: Women's Co-operative Guild, 1919), p. 9.

at competitive market prices. Retail co-operatives, which together accounted for 6% of British retail trading in 1900 and 11% in 1939, were successful because their development ran concurrently with critical transformations in the retail sector that supported them and because of the specificities of retail co-operation. These included the payment of a 'dividend' to customers out of the annual trading surplus; a 'reputation for honest trading'; and a 'loyalty to the democratic ideals of consumers' to co-operation.[2]

The second half of the nineteenth century witnessed a large increase in the establishment of co-operative societies in Britain with distributive society membership standing at 350,000 in 1873; 696,000 in 1884; 1.7 million (within 1,439 societies) in 1900; 3 million (within 1,385 societies) in 1914; and 4 million in 1919.[3]

The CPCS - registered in terms of the Industrial & Provident Societies Act on 27 January 1871 with '90 members and capital of £85' selling 'a few staple articles of food' - was one of these societies.[4] The birth of co-operation in Perth was not easy and it faced substantial hurdles and attacks in the early years of its existence. Macdonald's argument that 'many co-operative societies across Scotland were greatly influenced by their origins and the outlook of their founders' resonates with the experience of the CPCS whose leadership's viewpoint seemed to be dominated by the struggles of the Society's early years.[5]

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[2] James Jeffreys, *Retail Trading in Britain 1850-1950* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1954), p. 158.

[3] Peter Gurney, 'The Middle-class embrace: Language, representation, and contest over co-operative forms in Britain, *c.*1860-1914', *Victorian Studies*, 37.2 (Winter 1994), p. 2; Sidney Pollard, *The Co-operatives at the Crossroads* (London: Fabian Society, 1965), p. 3.

[4] Philippou, *Perth*, p. 281; City of Perth Co-operative Society Ltd, *Jubilee Celebrations 1871-1921: Fifty Years of Progress* (Perth: City of Perth Co-operative Society Ltd, 1921), p. 1.

[5] Macdonald, 'A Different Commonwealth', p. 463.

In 1872 the CPCS opened its first bakehouse and by 1875 was operating a bread delivery service. The Society's first retail outlet, 'Branch Shop No. 1', was opened in Perth in 1876. Thereafter additional establishments were opened across the city as the CPCS moved into the sale of groceries, meat, fish, fruit, confectionary, milk, shoes, boots, and tailoring. To act as a record of its 'social and educational progress' the CPCS established in June 1877 a newspaper, the *City of Perth Co-operative Pioneer*.[6]

Growth was not restricted to Perth. In 1881, for example, the CPCS moved into premises at Scone, a village located a few miles from the city.[7] Expansion both within and around Perth continued apace during the 1890s. By 1897 the CPCS was a growing concern having 'bought land and buildings worth £24,859 … and spent on fixed and livestock £4,685.'[8] 'Branch No. 9' opened in Stanley in July 1898. The new century saw the CPCS developing infrastructure, warehousing, and production facilities including a stables, garage and motor engineering workshop for its transport division (1902), a ham and sausage factory (1904), drapery and furniture warehousing/workrooms (1906), as well as branches across the County of Perth including those at Almondbank (1907) and Dunkeld (1917); and van services as far north as the town of Abernethy. By

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[6] http://main-cat.nls.uk/vwebv/holdingsInfo?bibId=2750660 [Accessed 15 August 2015].

[7] Co-operative societies outside Perth pre-dated the founding of the CPCS: in 1867, the *First Co-operative Survey Report* detailed three societies in the County of Perth with a total membership of 390, capital of £706, sales of £16,317, and a profit of £1,620. James A. Flanagan, *Wholesale Co-operation in Scotland Glasgow, the Fruits of Fifty Years Efforts (1868-1918) an Account of the Scottish Co-operative Wholesale Society, Compiled to Commemorate the Society's Golden Jubilee* (Glasgow: 1919), p. 442.

[8] Co-operative Union Ltd, *Handbook to the Twenty-Ninth Annual Co-operative Congress to be held in Perth on 7th, 8th and 9th* [of] *June 1897* (Glasgow: Scottish Co-operative Wholesale Society Ltd, 1897), p. 318.

November 1920 the CPCS was operating 'a Central Grocery Department and Grocery Reserve Store and 12 Grocery branches' serving the needs of almost 9,000 members.[9] Table 7.1 (below), which details CPCS membership, (share and loan) capital, and sales, provides evidence of sustained growth in all three areas between 1871 and 1930.[10]

Table 7.1 *Membership and Business Growth of the CPCS, 1871-1930*

	Membership (at end of period)	Share and Loan capital (at end of period)	Sales
1871	90	£85	£704
1871-1880	1,682	£9,029	£210,974
1881-1890	2,920	£34,073	£855,398
1891-1900	4,829	£79,447	£1,495,536
1901-1910	6,553	£121,638	£2,425,925
1911-1920	8,037	£175,308	£3,640,557
1921-1930	8,808	£258,800	£4,774,858
60 Years' Sales	-	-	*£13,403,248*

(**Source**: City of Perth Co-operative Society, *Year Book 1917-1918* (Perth: City of Perth Co-operative Society, 1918); CPCS, *Diamond Jubilee Souvenir*, p. 23)

The CPCS story was not unlike that of co-operative societies elsewhere in Scotland. Ronald Jones's account of the development of consumer co-operation in Edinburgh, Potobello, and Leith, for example, shares a great deal in common with that of Perth.[11] The district of Perth eventually included several co-operative societies organised into two districts: Fife & Kinross-shire and

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[9] City of Perth Co-operative Society, *Diamond Jubilee Souvenir of the City of Perth Co-operative Society, 1871-1931* (Perth: City of Perth Co-operative Society Ltd, 1931), pp. 5-22.

[10] Co-operative Union Ltd, *The Thirty-Second Annual Co-operative Congress 1900. Held in Park Hall, Cardiff June 4th, 5th, and 6th* (Manchester: Scottish Co-operative Wholesale Society Ltd, 1900), p. 128.

[11] Ronald Jones, 'Consumers' Co-operation in Victorian Edinburgh: The Evolution of a Location Pattern', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, New Series, 4, 2, *The Victorian City* (1979), pp. 292-305.

Forfarshire & Perthshire. Table A7.1 (Appendix 7) provides details of those co-operative societies operating in Perth and District in 1891.[12]

In 1901 and 1911 the CPCS maintained a membership-population index close to the Scottish average. Despite the value of membership spending lying well below the average and below that of its immediate neighbourhood societies - a consequence of the Perth low-wage economy - the CPCS, nonetheless, was a key player in the Perth economy and a significant employer with a membership of 6,624 (*c.* 18.5% of the Burgh population) and annual retail sales of £265,690 in 1911 as illustrated in Table A7.2 and Table A7.3 (both Appendix 7) which provide details of the membership of co-operative retail distribution societies in Scotland in 1901 and 1911 and the average trade per member of said societies. By 1916 co-operative membership in the County of Perth stood at 11,809 (*c.* 9.5% of the 1911 county population) with an annual retail trade valued at £419,562.[13]

7.3 *Co-operation and Strike Solidarity*

The point has been made that co-operation endeavours to maximise the spending capacity of the worker. Inherent within this aim, as Hall and Watkins have argued, is the 'desire that organised labour shall wrest from capital an ever

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[12] Table A5.1 (Appendix 5) does not include societies founded before 1891 but not appearing in the Reports of the Chief Registrar of Friendly Societies, for the year ending 31 December 1891. These include Comrie Village, St Johnstone, and Scone Co-operative Societies. William Maxwell, *History of Co-operation in Scotland: its inception and its leaders* (Glasgow: Scottish Section of the Co-operative Union, 1910), pp. 380-83; North-Eastern District Co-operative Association Conference (NEDCAC), *Minute Book*, 8 December 1888 (UDA, MS 8/1/1-8/1/8, 1879-1951); Board of Trade - Labour Department, *Directory of Industrial Associations in the United Kingdom - including employers' associations, trade unions, boards of conciliation and arbitration, and workmen's co-operative societies* (HCPP, Cd. 120, 1900), p. 125.

[13] James Lucas, *Co-operation in Scotland* (Manchester: Co-operative Union Ltd, 1920), p. 83.

larger share of the products of industry.'[14] In other words, it is incumbent on the co-operative movement to support trade unionism including its pursuance of increased wages through strike activity. And indeed as A. M. Carr-Saunders *et al* have shown the co-operative movement has 'on numerous occasions, demonstrated in solidarity with the working-class movement as a whole.'[15] In general, however, as Robertson and Anthony Adams have independently argued, support for strikes across and within individual co-operative societies was extremely variable, episodic, and contingent; and far from a 'formal class-based alliance.'[16]

In this section the behaviour of the CPCS in relation to strikes external to its own workforce will be examined. The conduct of the CPCS in relation to strikes involving its own workforce is examined in the next section.

In early January 1891 34 members of the CPCS approached the Society's board of directors with a proposal for the convening of a meeting to express solidarity with the ASRS which was at the time immersed in the 'Great Scottish Railway Strike' of 1890-1891.[17] This was agreed and a meeting was arranged for 10 January 1891. Just before the start of the meeting, the CPCS's auditors delivered a letter to the Society's president:

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[14] Hall, *Co-operation*, p. 349.

[15] A. M. Carr-Saunders, Florence P. Sargant and Robert Peers, *Consumers' Co-operation in Great Britain. An examination of the British Co-operative Movement* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1938), p. 44.

[16] Robertson, *Co-operative Movement*, p. 207; Adams, 'Working Class Organisation', pp. 118-19.

[17] James Mavor, 'The Scottish Railway Strike', *The Economic Journal*, 1, 1 (March 1891), p. 206.

> With reference to the posters calling a special meeting of the members of the Co-operative Society – business: railway men's strike – and referring to a letter from Mr Todd, secretary, read at meeting in Opera House, on the 7th instance, and having heard rumours that it is likely a proposal may be made to give a grant in assistance of the strikers, we beg to state that we consider it advisable not to attend, as in the event of a grant being voted at the meeting this afternoon, we, in course of our official duties as auditors, shall require to consider whether any grant made to the strikers is one contemplated by the rules, and in accordance with law. We may, however, say that, so far as we have been able to give the matter consideration, we do not think the society has the power to make the contemplated grant.[18]

A reading of the letter at the meeting was followed by a majority approval of a resolution agreeing to contribute £100 to the ASRS strike fund. Two days later the Board convened to consider a letter opposing the donation and threatening to 'petition the Sheriff the day following to interdict the society from paying any sum to the men on strike.' Despite a solicitor advising as to the legality of the donation, the Sheriff acting for eight CPCS members granted the interdict, the wording of which did not prevent a meeting of the Society's members from passing the following resolution:

> [That] £100 be paid to the railway employees' strike fund, £90 of the sum to be taken from the provident fund, and £10 from the educational fund, and that the meeting appoint three members to receive this money and pay it over to the committee of the men on strike by ten o'clock the following morning. [And] the directors be authorized and instructed to defend the society against the action for interdict, and to upheld the preceding resolution of this meeting complained of in that action.[19]

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[18] CUL, *Twenty-Ninth Annual Co-operative Congress*, pp. 318-19.

[19] CUL, *Twenty-Ninth Congress*, pp. 319-21.

In order to ensure that the ASRS received funds immediately, 51 CPCS members each agreed to guarantee £1 from the loan capital held in their name. One of the directors opposed to the strike resigned.

Elsewhere support for the railway strike was less contentious and in fact received a great deal of support and public sympathy. The *Co-operative News*, for example, reported in early January 1891: 'money continues to flow into the funds of the men freely. A number of co-operative stores have subscribed handsomely.'[20]

The challenge by a minority grouping within the CPCS was not a matter of legality, as the Society's own solicitor confirmed. If it was an issue of unease as to the use of the Society's finance outside of its direct commercial activity then it stands in contrast to the unanimous support for a £50 donation for dependents of soldiers fighting in the second Boer War made by the CPCS towards the end of 1899.[21] Equally, if it represented an opposition to 'striking' *per se*, then it is opposed by the seemingly uncontested decision of the CPCS directors of August 1898 to 'give the sum of £10 from the Provident Fund … towards the relief of distress in South Wales, consequent of the miners' strike there.'[22]

How far politics and ideology played a part in the CPCS attitude to strike solidarity is a difficult question to answer. The 1890-1891 railway strike adversely affected a great deal of Scottish industry, the trade of the Scottish Co-operative

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[20] *Co-operative News*, 24 January 1891.

[21] A request in early November 1899 to donate money to the 'Lord Provost's War Fund' was considered, proposed, and passed by the society without difficulty or questioning debate. City of Perth Co-operative Society Ltd, *Minute Book*, 9 November 1899 (PKCA, MS311/2, MS311/3, 1897-1982).

[22] CPCS, *Minute Book*, 24 November 1898.

Wholesale Society (SCWS)[23] and consequently the CPCS itself; it disrupted those large Perth concerns such as Pullars whose business depended on the rail network and whose owners exerted significant influence locally. In other words, it is not possible to say without a high degree of speculation whether the dissent within the CPCS was ideological or simply a pragmatic response to the disruption of the business interests of the CPCS and the wider Perth business community. Nonetheless, the evidence is suggestive that some members of the CPCS and at least one of its directors showed some disinclination to support striking workers where the Society's commercial interests were affected.

The position of the leadership of the CPCS as regards the 1890-1891 railway strike is not fully known apart from what can be surmised from their agreement to hold the initial solidarity meeting. How much of the support for the various pro-strike motions was a result of the Society's own ideological position and how much was a response to the pressure placed upon it by the local labour movement is difficult to gauge. The difficulty in drawing too strong a conclusion from this episode is the lack of other data to test it against. For while the Scottish co-operative movement provided significant levels of solidarity and support to striking workers during the Irish transport strike of 1913 and the UK labour disputes of 1919, 1921, and 1926, lack of evidence leaves the position of the CPCS in regard to this solidarity and support unknown.[24] What compounds matters further is the fact that the Scottish (and indeed the British) co-operative movement, as will be discussed later, professed a very

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[23] The SCWS was founded in 1868 as a direct supplier of purchased and manufactured goods to the growing number of Scottish co-operative societies.

[24] Carr-Saunders, *Consumers' Co-operation*, p. 44.

different political position in the postwar period to that prior to 1914, so any comparison of the CPCS attitude to striking workers in 1898 to that of 1913, 1921, and 1926 would be a failure to compare like with like. Nevertheless, the 1917 strike at Pullars, the most militant moment in the industrial relations history of Perth, is worth brief consideration for during the course of that strike the CPCS was approached by the labour movement for assistance;[25] and certainly there is evidence of usage of the Co-operative Hall by PTC and the dye-workers' union during the strike for meetings and rallies.[26] There was even some speculation after the Pullar family's announcement of their intention to sell or close the firm that the CPCS might step in with a rescue bid.[27]

7.4 *Co-operation as an Employer of Labour*

From its inception, the co-operative movement aspired to be, and be seen to be, a model producer, retailer, and wholesaler of goods to and for the benefit of working-class communities. In pursuing this goal the co-operative movement became intentionally and unavoidably an employer of large numbers of workers for whom it professed to be and presented itself as a 'model employer'. Articulation of such pro-labour sentiment was very common within the co-operative movement. The Forfarshire & Perthshire Co-operative Conference Association (FPCCA) included Dundee and Arbroath trade councils from as early as 1891 and PTC from mid 1899. In April 1900 the conference association recommended 'that all Co-operative Societies in Rural Districts should place no

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[25] *The Scotsman*, 27 August 1917, p. 8.
[26] See for example, *Forward*, 15 September 1917.
[27] *Perthshire Courier*, 25 September 1917.

obstacle in the way of their employees becoming members of trade unions.'

Furthermore, towards the end of 1900, a majority at the regional conference

voted in favour of active trades council participation in the co-operative

movement.[28]

This image of a 'model employer' and friend of the labour movement

was challenged by co-operative society employees, from within its own ranks,[29]

and by the labour movement itself. Indeed, such concerns were articulated by

Harry Quelch a London-based SDF member who was involved in the London

Dockers' Strike of 1889:

> They [co-operative societies] employ non-union labour and
> pay far less than trade union wages. ... It is [its] very success as
> a commercial concern, which demonstrates the failure of co-
> operation as a means of emancipating the workers. ... It has
> been successful as a commercial undertaking – but it has
> absolutely failed to produce any appreciative improvement, in
> the condition of the working classes.[30]

The CPCS offered no opposition to this dichotomy between the

articulation of principle and the manifestation of practice. David Glass, for

example, speaking to the FPCCA in his capacity of CPCS General Manager

claimed: 'the possibilities of the co-operative movement to better the conditions

of the working classes were almost unlimited ... the prospect of the ultimate

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[28] NEDCAC, *Minute Book*, 17 September 1891, 17 October 1891, 8 April 1899, 14 April 1900, 13 October 1900.

[29] The 1893 SCWS congress speech of the President of the SCWS, William Maxwell, provides a good example of the challenge from within. Maxwell, speaking of working weeks up to 61 hours and paltry pay levels, informed the congress of the co-operative movement's failure to carry out its 'platform platitudes of greatly improving the condition of the labourer through co-operation.' James Kinloch and John Butt, *History of the Scottish Co-operative Wholesale Society Limited* (Glasgow: Co-operative Wholesale Society Ltd, 1981), p. 161.

[30] Harry Quelch, *Trade Unionism, Co-operation and Social Democracy* (London: The Twentieth Century Press, Ltd, 1892), pp. 3, 10-12.

triumph of bringing the producer and consumer together were never brighter than at present' a few years after he had been forced to defend CPCS wage levels in the very same forum and less than a year prior to the CPCS under Glass's leadership being embroiled in a dispute that saw the Perth co-operative society intransigent and bellicose in its response to demands made by its bakers' union.[31]

Hall and Watkins have argued that conditions of employment within most co-operative societies 'were not worse than those generally prevailing; in fact they were usually better.' In their view, as an employer the co-operative movement generally 'followed established custom.'[32] In many regards - working hours, conditions of service, holiday entitlement, and non-competitive working environments included - the British co-operative movement was often at the leading edge of employment practice. Robertson too has shown that the co-operative movement was frequently a good employer. W. H. Marwick, on the other hand, has made the point that in many cases co-operative society employees were 'too poor to avail themselves of the advantages of co-operation.' Despite its low wage levels this does not seem to have been the case in Perth.[33]

The difficulties for the co-operative movement as an employer were structural: by unavoidably operating in competition with capital, the co-operative movement was compelled to maintain similar (and thus competitive)

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[31] NEDCAC, *Minute Book,* 14 October 1894, 10 December 1897, 9 October 1898.

[32] Hall, *Co-operation*, p. 216.

[33] W. H. Marwick, *A Short History of Labour in Scotland* (Edinburgh: W. & R. Cambes Ltd, 1967), p. 79; *Perthshire Courier*, 26 February 1917, p. 6.

conditions of service and wage levels.[34] Hall and Watkins, describe the inevitable antagonism between those in co-operative service and management with the expression 'Two Mutually Hostile Parties' – an axiom at odds with the WCG's notion of 'Two Halves of One Circle'.[35] In other words, the contradictions manifest within the incompatible roles of a 'consumer champion' and a 'model employer', co-operation's competition with capital, and a primary and increasing focus on the consumer, generally resulted in co-operative societies emulating rather than challenging capital as an employer.[36]

The two sides of co-operative activity - production and distribution - developed trade-union organisations separately. Productive workers, in the main, joined industrial craft unions whilst distributive workers with salaries and conditions generally better than their equivalents in the private sector were slower and more reluctant to be unionised. Paternalistic industrial relation strategies played their part in this: 'the fact that a co-operative employee had relatively little reason to fear capricious dismissal and oppressive discipline, ensured that there was plenty of labour forthcoming even if the pay was not high.'[37] The potential of a job-for-life and the availability of welfare provision including housing played a part in reducing worker militancy and industrial strife. In Perth, the CPCS offered welfare amenities and services, through a social and educational programme, activities at the Co-operative Hall, and an annual excursion for its entire workforce. In addition, it made available some

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[34] CWS, *Consumers' Democracy*, p. 149.

[35] Hall, *Co-operation*, p. 215.

[36] William Richardson, *A Union of Many Trades: The History of USDAW* (Manchester: USDAW, 1979), pp. 8-9.

[37] Hall, *Co-operation*, p. 217.

housing units to its workforce and members though evidence suggests that these were provided less for reasons of paternalistic behaviour modification and more for reasons of financial acumen.[38]

Co-operative workers did eventually form their own trade union - the Amalgamated Union of Co-operative Employees (AUCE) - in 1895. For the first 15 years, the AUCE grew steadily. Recruitment in Scotland was however poor. In spring of 1907, when the AUCE claimed 15,000 members and 400 branches, in Scotland it had only 350 members and 7 branches. To improve matters, a recruitment campaign was launched that coincided with attacks on co-operative employees by societies experiencing trading difficulties during the economic downturn of 1907-1909. The AUCE fought the attacks on their members' salaries and at the same time set out minimum wage levels. Membership figures for 1909 of 2,549 members and 70 branches, testify to the success of the campaign.[39] By 1915 AUCE membership stood at 30,000 at which point, the union claimed the highest membership of unskilled co-operative employees of any trade union.[40]

A branch of the AUCE was operating in Perth as early as June 1907. By 1913 it was organising a third of all CPCS staff. In 1917 the Perth branch of the

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[38] The first move by the CPCS into housing took place in 1902 with the setting up of a Building Committee and the construction of eight cottages 'for sale to members or others.' By 1907 the society had built and sold several houses as well as a maintaining a property portfolio that included 170 tenants. CPCS, *Minute Book*, 9 May 1899; Departmental Committee on House-Letting in Scotland: *Report of the Departmental Committee on House-Letting in Scotland Volume I: Report of the Royal Commission on the Housing of the Industrial Population of Scotland* (HCPP, Cd. 3715, 1907) pp. 12-18.

[39] Arthur Ivor Marsh and Victoria Ryan, *Historical Directory of Trade Unions Volume I Non-manual Unions* (Farnborough: Gower Publishing Company Ltd, 1980), pp. 6-7; Kinloch, *SCWS*, pp. 164-66.

[40] *Scottish Co-operator*, 10 July 1914.; Kinloch, *SCWS*, p. 270.

AUCE (PAUCE) could boast at its annual meeting a large healthy membership, strong finances and 'a large and representative committee.'[41]

Table A7.4 (Appendix 7) details the average salary levels of distributive and productive employees in the service of several co-operative societies in 1909. The mean salary of CPCS distributive workers at £50 is very close to the sample mean and median of £48 and £49 respectively. However, the mean salary of CPCS productive workers at £46 is below the sample mean and median of £62 and £58 respectively. Table 7.2 (below) details the relative levels of wages in Scotland in 1912 compared with London (London (Middle Zone) = 100).

Table 7.2 *Relative Levels of Wages in Scotland, 1912 with London*

	Building (Skilled Men)	Building (Labourers)	Engineering (Skilled Men)	Engineering (Labourers)	Printing (Compositors)	Mean Deviation
Aberdeen	81	71	85	82	88	-3.2
Dundee	90	79	89	78	90	+0.6
Glasgow	92	81	96	79	92	+3.4
Paisley	89	86	96	79	92	+3.8
Perth	**82**	**79**	-	-	**83**	**-2.3**
Scotland	*86*	*79*	*92*	*80*	*86*	*0.0*

(**Source:** *Cost of Living of the Working Classes 1912*, pp. 37, 266-85)

Although the employment categories differ, manual workers in Perth in 1912 had a wage level below the Scottish average matching the pattern within the productive side of co-operative business activity. The wages of the CPCS's productive workforce were probably lower than many other Scottish co-operative societies partly because, as has been previously argued, wages in Perth were generally lower and partly, the AUCE believed, by design: 'in Perth they

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[41] PTC, *Minute Book*, 5 June 1907; *Perthshire Courier*, 26 February 1917, p. 6.

were fighting a notorious badly paid town' and 'a Committee which she had no hesitation saying was one of the most tyrannical Committees in Scotland.'[42]

As the AUCE became more powerful, it increasingly engaged directly with co-operative society members. James Lucas maintained (*c.* 1910) that, 'a closer rapprochement between these two wings [co-operation and labour] was being sought and desired by both sides.' This accord included the co-operative movement actively encouraging members to join trade unions and encouraging trade unions to bank with the wholesale societies.[43] Nonetheless, despite demands at the annual SCWS congress, efforts by the SWCS's Joint Committee of Trade Unionists and Co-operators, and AUCE militancy, pay levels in many co-operative societies remained below the trade union's stipulated minimum. In the 1910s the AUCE waged industrial war with the co-operative societies, recruiting large numbers of workers throughout. This period of industrial militancy by co-operative society employees was punctuated by a truce during 1916-18. Perth remained aloof from the truce, the years 1916-17 instead witnessed a long-running dispute between PAUCE and the CPCS. According to Hall and Watkins, the national upsurge in AUCE militancy ended 'in the depth of the postwar economic depression, with prices deflated and the AUCE fighting stubbornly to delay the inevitable reduction of wages.'[44]

The relationship between PAUCE and PTC at this time was rather fraught. The cause lay in the aggressive recruitment tactics of the AUCE

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[42] *Perthshire Courier*, 26 February 1917, p. 6.

[43] Lucas, *Co-operation in Scotland*, p. 71.

[44] Hall, *Co-operation*, pp. 217-9; Kinloch, *SCWS*, p. 166; *Perthshire Courier*, 26 February 1917, p. 6.

especially in regard to members of other unions which brought it into conflict with those unions, the Labour Party, and the Trades Union Congress (TUC) for which the AUCE was considered a 'poacher'.[45] It was not only the AUCE's recruitment of distributive workers that was the problem[46] but also its recruitment of skilled workers (such as the bakers, shoemakers and tailors) historically considered the domain of the craft unions. Matters became vitriolic in 1917 when Councillor Bruce made a statement to the local press in which he claimed Simpson, the District Organising Secretary of the AUCE had 'sold his brethren.' Despite Bruce's attack, when that same year PAUCE requested of PTC to be allowed to take part in a planned 'labour demonstration', a vote of 13 to 3 was passed in their favour.[47]

Over the six decades with which this thesis is concerned there were very few disputes between the CPCS and its employees. (Table A3.1 (Appendix 3) provides some detail of these.) The operative bakers' strike of 1898, which *The Scotsman* described as 'a dark spot in the history of the co-operative movement in this country,' and which arose at a time when the co-operative movement in Perth was challenging the domination of local traders was one of these and is examined next.[48]

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[45] The AUCE was forced out of the TUC in 1915 by a coalition of unions who opposed it. By 1921, with its amalgamation with the National Union of Warehouse & General Workers, the AUCE returned to the TUC as the National Union of Distributive & Allied Workers. Kinloch, *SCWS*, p. 273; Marsh, *Historical Directory of Trade Unions Volume I*, p. 7.

[46] This brought them into conflict with unions such as the National Union of Shopworkers & Clerks.

[47] PTC, *Minute Book*, 7 March 1917, 25 July 1917.

[48] *The Scotsman*, 11 August 1897, p. 8.

In 1897 PTC made a request 'for assistance in the formation of a [bakers' union] branch' to the directors of the CPCS whose bakery division employed the largest group of bakers in Perth and as such were the key to creating a viable union. The request was rejected.[49] With the assistance of DTC, PTC, nonetheless, succeeded in organising a Perth branch of the Operative Bakers of Scotland National Federal Union (POBSNFU), which in December 1897 elected James Duncan as Secretary and David Bruce (of PTC) as Chairman. By early 1898 the POBSNFU had 87 members.[50]

In early November 1898 the union appealed to PTC for support for the town's operative bakers who were threatening to strike to achieve alignment of conditions of service with neighbouring towns and villages such as Broughty Ferry where bakers were earning 28s for a 55-hour week, with time-and-a-half for overtime whilst Perth's operative bakers were, the union claimed, 'the lowest paid of any in Scotland' and working up to 70 hours a week in unhealthy conditions. With that support the POBSNFU launched a frontal attack on Perth's baking firms over wages and conditions:

> The Perth master bakers and operative bakers had been asleep for about 30 years compared to other towns. If they looked at the wage statistics they would find that the bakers of Scotland 20 or 30 years ago were getting much the same wages as the Perth bakers were earning at present. ... They found the joiners getting 8d an hour; the masons 9d; and the poor bakers work from four or five in the morning to four in the afternoon in an atmosphere fit for a dog for the miserable wage of 3½d an hour. ... The master bakers in other towns had to pay higher shop rents, higher wages, shorter hours, and not so high prices for the bread. Why then should the Perth men

[49] CPCS, *Minute Book*, 26 November 1897.
[50] PTC, *Minute Book*, 9 December 1897, 20 February 1898.

> work longer hours and for less money than the shops in
> Dundee, Broughty Ferry, Arbroath, and even Carnoustie.[51]

Table A7.5 (Appendix 7) details the demands made by POBSNFU to the Perth
Master Bakers' Federation (PMBF), the federations response, and the union's
decision. Agreement was reached in all areas bar overtime and the 'Early Men'
question, both of which were referred back to the employers:

> There was a disposition on the part of the majority of the
> masters to comply with the wishes of the employees, but
> others were strongly against yielding to what had been asked.
> In the circumstances no definite decision was come to, it being
> understood that each employer would be left to act as he
> thought best.[52]

Four of the masters conceded all the demands, and whilst some,
including the CPCS, yielded some of the demands, the vast majority of
employers gave the union 'the cold shoulder.' Strike notices followed: 'the
notices have been sent to 17 shops, and they affect 82 men.' By 23 November 1898
the local press were reporting that a fifth master had acquiesced and the
majority of those remaining accepted all the demands 'with the exception of
overtime payment for foremen.' All other bakers were to receive time-and-a-half
for overtime, but no pastry or bread foreman would receive such a rate of
overtime; this policy was agreed to by the town's master bakers and
subsequently by the POBSNFU. Five firms, the CPCS amongst them, continued

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[51] *Perthshire Advertiser*, 11 November 1898, p. 2, 16 November 1898, p. 5, 21 November 1898,
p. 2.

[52] *Perthshire Advertiser*, 11 November 1898, p. 2; *Perthshire Courier*, 15 November 1898.

to insist their 'Early Men' came in two hours earlier rather than the one hour agreed by the other bakehouses.[53]

On 24 November 1898 the CPCS board met with a POBSNFU delegation. The issue at stake was the agreement made by the union with the PMBF to allow 'Early Men' to start an hour earlier, which was being undermined by the intransigence of the co-operative society. In the end it was not the CPCS that compromised but the union and the PMBF.[54]

With the insistence in requiring a two-hour early start, the CPCS stood apart from the vast majority of bakehouses in Perth. Their position was understandable from a commercial point of view. As the biggest baking firm in Perth and one that covered a wide geographic area, the obduracy on the 'Early Men' issue could be seen simply a matter for which compromise from a business perspective was not possible. The fact that the bakehouses represents by the PMBF were prepared to allow their main rival a competitive advantage attests to this argument.

During the dispute there arose a disparity across firms in relation to overtime payments for foremen. The CPCS which had been paying overtime was determined its foremen would not reap a direct benefit from the strike and adopted the advice of the PMBF to rearrange foremen wages 'so that they shall

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[53] *Perthshire Advertiser*, 16 November 1898, p. 5, 18 November 1898, p. 3, 23 November 1898, p. 3, 25 November 1898, p. 6; *Perthshire Courier*, 22 November 1898.

[54] CPCS, *Minute Book*, 24 November 1898; *Perthshire Advertiser*, 28 November 1898, p. 3, 29 November 1898, p. 6.

suffer no loss.'[55] Significantly, the CPCS threatened to sack any foreman who joined a trade union.

Unionisation of foremen was at that time an issue that many private-sector employers fought against as a means of safeguarding the allegiance of their 'non-commissioned officers' who were central to the control of the workforce. As supervisors, foremen provided force (and the threat of force) as the personification of the power of the employer within the factory environment. As Alan McKinlay and others have argued, the 'Foremen' question sat at the very 'frontier of control' within the class struggle inside the factory. The loyalty of the foreman was fundamental to the maintenance of the fabric of the factory hegemony - a loyalty tested by the alienation and exploitation inherent in the labour process. To maintain the support of the foremen, the capitalist employer attempted to direct these feelings of alienation and exploitation into a space separate from that occupied by trade unionism so as to maintain the sense of 'otherness' of an elite in opposition to the proletarian 'togetherness'. This was done partly by ensuring the foremen cognised rewards as dependent on management largesse rather than on worker militancy.[56] The

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[55] *Perthshire Advertiser*, 29 November 1898, p. 6.

[56] Alan McKinlay, *Making Ships, Making Men Working for John Brown's – Between the Wars* (Clydebank: Alan McKinlay, 1991), pp. 18-20; William Kenefick, 'The Shipping Federation and the free labour movement: A comparative study of waterfront and maritime industrial relations, *c.* 1889-1891', in Richard Gorski (ed.), *Maritime Labour – Contributions to the history of work at sea, 1500-2000* (Amsterdam: aksant, 2007), pp. 136-39; McIvor, 'Clydeside employers' and William Kenefick, 'A struggle for control: The importance of the great unrest at Glasgow harbour, 1911 to 1912', in Kenefick, *Red Clydeside*; Alan McKinlay, 'Philosophers in Overalls?: Craft and Class on Clydeside, *c.* 1900-1914', in Kenefick, *Red Clydeside*, pp. 18, 96; Joseph Melling, 'Non-commissioned officers: British employers and their supervisory workers, 1880-1920', *Social History* 5, 2 (May 1980), pp. 190-91, 206; Melling, 'Scottish Industrialists', p. 62 *ff*.

actions of the CPCS in ensuring that their foremen did not receive the fruits of the bakers' dispute fit within this framework.

The trade-union movement in Perth was privileged in terms of its access to the CPCS's directors, nevertheless, this did not result in any advantageous settlement or easier negotiations. There is no evidence that demands made on the CPCS were in anyway different to those made to the private trading establishments. What differed was the response, the CPCS due to its size and position was able to achieve a more favourable settlement than other employers.

At the same time that the bakers' dispute raged in Perth, the CPCS was embroiled in industrial strife with its operative tailors whose membership base was smaller then that of the bakers.[57] The specificities of the dispute are not of direct concern, what is, is the fact the dispute exposed something of the relationship of the CPCS's membership to the co-operative and trade-union movements - a separation of interest - as this report of a PTC meeting claimed:

> Mr Eaton said there was not a Trade Unionist on the Board of Directors, and that had been proved. ... They were well enough aware that the Directors were not all Trade Unionists. He (Mr Milne) had done his best to improve the Board in this respect. As long as the members stayed at home and would not trouble themselves about who were elected they must take the consequences. The Secretary – Mr Glass is the ruling power. ... Mr Milne – You are a member of the Co-operative as well as I am. If Mr Glass has this power the sooner it is out of his hands the better. ... The Secretary remarked that the society understood that they had won this battle. ... Mr Rattray, another tailor, ... did not think any private firm would have treated them as the Co-operative Society had done.[58]

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[57] CPCS, *Minute Book*, 24 November 1898; *Perthshire Advertiser*, 21 November 1898, p. 2.

[58] *Perthshire Advertiser*, 25 November 1898, p. 3.

The power structure of co-operative societies needs here a little elaboration. As Jones has pointed out, whilst the membership of co-operative societies exercised control over policy through the mass meeting, effective control 'tended to pass to the management committee and through it to the group of appointed executives - the general manager and the departmental heads - who constituted a society's bureaucracy.'[59] This was the situation within the CPCS. Irrespective of this centralisation of functional power, the CPCS Board of Directors, its board of management, as in other co-operative societies was subject to election. In its first 50 years the CPCS had only had two General Managers, David Glass (1871-1901) and John Clark (1901-1921). Glass may have been the ruling power during his tenure (and Clark after him) but he did not rule without the support and approval of the vast majority of the CPCS membership.

The co-operative movement in 1916 was not the same organisation it was in 1898. As will be discussed, the movement struggled during the First World War against a governmental attitude prejudicial to co-operative enterprise. Hardened by this treatment co-operators looked increasingly towards independent parliamentary representation and/or alliance with the Labour Party. Yet, in May 1916 during another Perth-wide bakers' dispute, the CPCS was once again more intransigent than the city's other baking firms:

> Mr Laing (Bakers) reported that members of his union employed by the CPCS had handed in their notices owing to the Directors not having granted the 3/- increase to the men who were paid above the minimum rate of wages. The other Master bakers in the town having signed the agreements to do

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[59] Jones, 'Consumers' Co-operation', p. 294.

this. His union had had no other alternative but to withdraw their labour until their demand was complied with. Meantime the Co-operative Society had applied to the Board of Trade to intervene and the matter was now in the hands of the National Executive who were holding a meeting that night, to discuss the situation meantime their notices had been withdrawn and they expired 3rd June.[60]

In February 1918 the CPCS showed its determination once again to oppose the very workers whose votes it hoped to capture by joining forces with Perth Town Council to oppose the carters' claim (as articulated by the SHMA) for 20s on pre-war rates and time-and-a-half for overtime.[61]

It would seem that despite the political developments within the Scottish co-operative movement, business pragmatism, consumer centrality, and corporate 'self-interest' still dominated the practice of the CPCS in 1916-17 just as it did in 1898. This is not to say that the CPCS stood in opposition to the labour movement rather that its support of that movement was qualified and informed by its core concern - retail consumerism - and to a lesser extent by the Society's working-class customer base. In this manner the CPCS fits in well with Macdonald's description of Paisley co-operation:

> Pragmatic communitarian concerns, rather than an unqualified commitment to the Labour Party, facilitated the growth of a social consciousness which, whilst progressive, was not necessarily committed to either class politics or a socialistic interpretation of society's ills.[62]

This picture is slightly at odds with Jones's considerations of the Edinburgh co-operative movement in the Victorian era which made decisions which 'were not

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[60] PTC, *Minute Book,* 31 May 1916.

[61] The carters won the pay rise but not the overtime demand. PTC, *Minute Book*, 28 February 1918; *The Scotsman*, 21 May 1918, p. 4; Harding, 'War and Social Change', p. 169.

[62] Macdonald, 'Radical Thread', p. 154.

always motivated by strictly commercial considerations' and who drew upon 'the broader social ideals of the co-operative movement.'[63] There is scant evidence to show that the membership of the CPCS, apart from a minority active within the labour movement, operated in a similar fashion. In fact, as has already been stated, the membership of the CPCS generally supported the decisions of the Society's directors, as in the case of the major dispute of 1916-1917.[64]

As a retailer of goods and services for consumption by the Perth working class, the CPCS was a success story and a viable concern. It provided good quality goods at reasonable prices, acted democratically, and enriched the cultural lives of its members. That the lives of Perth's workers might have been more difficult financially without the existence of the CPCS and its amelioration of hardship is a proposition for which ample evidence exists. Such reliance was likely to undermine any potential criticism of the CPCS's industrial relations, so that the failure of the Society's members to criticise or engage with the board of directors over their labour relations can be interpreted as a response to the widespread poverty of the Perth working class. Individual members and small organisations associated with the local labour movement acted upon the CPCS in their attempts to change that body's practice. In this undertaking, they floundered upon the disinterest of the CPCS membership content in its dealings with an organisation intimately linked to improvements in working-class life in Perth.

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[63] Jones, 'Consumers' Co-operation', p. 292.
[64] *Perthshire Courier*, 26 February 1917, p. 6.

As an employer of labour, both productive and distributive, the CPCS followed the practice common to the SCWS and its network of societies by maintaining salaries and working conditions generally in line with private trading establishments and local labour markets. By replicating the attributes of capital in its dealings with labour, the CPCS as a cultural form within Perth society assisted in the reproduction and reinforcement of a social dissonance and disparity that it professed to oppose.

Co-operation in Perth, in common with the co-operative movement as a whole, upheld the primacy of the consumer in its dealings. Like that of Paisley, and of the wider Scottish co-operative movement as described by Macdonald and Robertson independently, the co-operative movement in Perth, in its interactions with the labour movement behaved in a contradictory manner. When its interests required it, as will be seen in the next section, the CPCS was more than willing to ally with the labour movement. When its interests were threatened, it opposed the labour movement sometimes displaying a capriciousness and resolve of 'self-interest' to rival that of private capital.[65]

7.5 Co-operation, Electoral Politics, and the Co-operative-Labour Relationship

7.5.1 Parliamentary Politics

The British co-operative movement's own literature is peppered with statements pleading political neutrality, as this statement from the CWS 1902 *Annual* illustrates: 'co-operation is defined simply as a method of trading, open to all whatever their social or political views, unwilling to concern itself with ulterior

[65] Macdonald, 'Radical Thread', pp. 99, 152.

aims and purposes.'[66] Despite such pronouncements the movement became engaged with parliamentary politics as early as 1881 when it established the Joint Parliamentary Committee to lobby Liberal-Labour MPs over matters of direct concern to co-operative enterprise. The anti-co-operative 'meat boycott' of the late 1890s (examined later) provided further impetus to those in the movement advocating parliamentary representation.

One of these advocates, William Maxwell, SCWS President, won support from the 1897 Perth Co-operative Congress for direct political representation. His efforts however, ended in failure due to opposition from a large number of societies and from the Liberal-dominated Central Board which subsequently set the 1897 Congress decision aside.[67] At the 1900 and 1905 congresses, delegates voted against direct representation.[68] Subsequent congresses witnessed not only growing support for direct representation, but also increasing backing for an alliance with the Parliamentary Labour Party.

During the First World War,[69] conscription, government procurement practice, a state commitment to competitive free trade, unfair trading rules including the application of 'Excess Profits Duty' to co-operative society trading

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[66] Co-operative Wholesale Society Ltd, *Annual 1902* (Co-operative WholesaleSociety Ltd, 1902), p. 337, cited in Carr-Saunders, *Consumers' Co-operation*, p. 40.

[67] T. F. Carberry, 'An Examination and Evaluation of the Co-operative Party of the Co-operative Union Ltd' (University of London: unpublished PhD thesis, 1966), cited in Macdonald, 'Radical Thread', p. 152.

[68] City of Perth Co-operative Society Ltd, *Diamond Jubilee Souvenir of the City of Perth Co-operative Society, 1871-1931* (Perth: City of Perth Co-operative Society Ltd, 1931), p. 52 *ff*.

[69] The co-operative movement despite initial misgivings gave full support to the war effort providing large numbers of employees to fill the British army's ranks both willingly through the process of volunteering and unwillingly in that exemption boards treated co-operative employees less favourably than their equivalents employed by private traders.

surpluses, food shortages and rationing, and, state control/restriction of foodstuffs and fuel, disadvantaged co-operative societies to the advantage of private firms. Significantly the attacks on the benefits of co-operative membership occurred at a time when 'real wages' were falling. Matters were compounded by the inability of co-operative societies to influence government distribution committees and draft tribunals through lack of representation and the movement's inability to influence government policy.[70] The experience of unfavourable government assisted by a Liberal Party in turmoil resulted in the 1917 Co-operative Congress decision to form the Co-operative Party - and to 'secure direct representation in Parliament and on all local administrative bodies.'[71] One of the earliest actions stemming from this decision was the proposal to target the Eastern Perthshire parliamentary constituency. This resolution did not come into fulfilment: the 'decision was ultimately abandoned, owing to another working-class candidate being put forward by the local Railwaymen.'[72]

Despite the establishment in 1918 of the Perth Parliamentary Representation Committee by the co-operative movement there was little the Co-operative Party could achieve in a city where the labour movement could not muster enough support to field a parliamentary candidate in any of the district's constituencies until 1922.[73] It was in municipal politics that the Perth co-

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[70] Adams, 'Working Class Organisation', pp. 119, 141-42; Carr-Saunders, *Consumers' Co-operation*, p. 41; Lucas, *Co-operation in Scotland*, pp. 71, 74.

[71] Co-operative Union Ltd, *Co-operative Congress Report* (Glasgow: Co-operative Union Ltd, 1917), pp. 552-53, cited in Adams, 'Working Class Organisation', p. 128.

[72] CPCS, *Diamond Jubilee Souvenir,* p. 53.

[73] City of Perth Co-operative Society, *Minute Book of the Perth Co-operative Parliamentary Representative Committee*, 8 January 1918 (PKCA, MS311/2/4, 1918-1928).

operative movement achieved some, albeit minor, victories. The detail of these successes are not important - what is are the reasons behind the decision of the CPCS to depart in 1897 from co-operation's articulated political neutrality.

7.5.2 *Municipal Politics*

As large multiple (private) retailers/wholesalers and the SCWS network expanded in the later nineteenth century to occupy space within the commercial domain of small private traders, the latter formed trading associations and by propaganda and boycott attacked co-operative commerce.[74] The trading associations did not, however, attack the private multiples whose expansion threatened the small trader and the co-operative societies. (The CPCS, for example, experienced a large decrease in sales during the society's 65th quarter (*c.* 1887) due to competition with the multiple stores.[75])

Geoffrey Crossick has described the traders' opposition to co-operative enterprise as one that 'tended to take the form of local conflicts in which shopkeepers sought to deter working men and women from using what was known as "the stores" by a variety of threats.'[76] Threats to employment - especially to co-operators employed by the Scottish railway companies - were a common feature of anti-co-operative actions.[77] Although few co-operators were

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[74] The traders' associations were local groupings organised, in the main, outside established political organisations and generally *ad hoc* in nature. Geoffrey Crossick, 'Shopkeepers and the state in Britain, 1870-1914', in Geoffrey Crossick and Heinz-Gerhard Haupt (eds.), *Shopkeepers and Master Artisans in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (London: Methuen, 1984), pp. 240-41.

[75] CPCS, *Diamond Jubilee Souvenir,* p. 14.

[76] Crossick, 'Shopkeepers and the state', p. 248.

[77] James Deans, *Memories - Reminiscences of a Co-operative Propaganda* (Manchester: 1922), p. 27, cited in Kinloch, *SCWS,* p. 248.

sacked, intimidation did have the effect of coercing individuals into giving up their co-operative society membership.

Whilst in general these 'Trade Wars', as they were known, are generally considered as occupying two temporal periods - the later 1880s when the Scottish Traders' Defence Association (STDA) was established and 1895-1897 - there are documented cases of anti-co-operative activity before 1888 and throughout 1888-1914, so that the aforementioned periods should be considered more correctly as upsurges in the anti-co-operative campaign.[78] Perth provides an example of an early episode of anti-co-operative activity:

> J. Grace the President of the Perth Society and also a director of the SCWS, was employed by the Caledonian Railway Company in a "responsible post". In June 1876 he told, in a letter to the board, how "certain Bakers and Shopkeepers" had brought their "influence to bear on the Company to such an extent that he had to resign the presidency for the consequences might have been serious."[79]

The first wave of the war against co-operative enterprise comprised rather piecemeal uncoordinated, nonetheless, often truculent attacks. Perth's small retailers formed part of this initiative and in 1885 a group of traders and private dealers formed a society whose aim was to curtail the activities and growth of the CPCS.

The 'Trade War' of the later 1880s appears to have had little real impact in Scotland and according to Macdonald, 'while the trade of the co-operative suffered in the short term, by 1888 matters appeared to have stabilised.'[80] As

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[78] Gurney, *Co-operative Culture*, p. 199; Kinloch, *SCWS*, p. 247.

[79] SCWS, *Minute Book*, 14 June 1876, cited in Kinloch, *SCWS*, p. 88.

[80] Macdonald, 'A Different Commonwealth', p. 466.

Table 7.1 (earlier) shows the first anti-co-operative foray by the private traders of Perth failed to prevent growth in CPCS sales, investment, and membership. Ultimately, as elsewhere in Scotland, the attacks on the co-operative movement in Perth served to unite opposition to private traders and expand further awareness of co-operative schemes.

When the STDA intensified their anti-co-operative boycotts in 1895-1897, they did so with greater hostility and success than before. During this campaign, the STDA openly encouraged employers to sack employees linked directly or indirectly to the co-operative movement. For this short period, private traders and co-operative societies were engaged in open conflict: a public meeting held in the City Hall by the STDA, for example, was reportedly a very rumbustious affair with several members of the CPCS heckling the platform speakers.[81] It was within the butchery trade that the boycott was for a while nationally extremely effective and vicious, especially in Glasgow.[82] In Perth, 20 master butchers (retailers and wholesalers) joined the traders' defence association in an agreement not to deal with co-operative societies.[83] The meat boycott eventually failed as the SCWS turned increasingly to North American suppliers.

Lucas's argument that the boycotts of the late 1890s were 'perhaps the immediate cause of the cessation of co-operative neutrality in local government' finds a resonance in the CPCS's response to the challenge of the private traders.[84] Kinloch and Butt have also made mention of 'political action' at 'local

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[81] *The Scotsman*, 9 June 1897, p. 7.
[82] Kinloch, *SCWS*, p. 246 *ff*.
[83] *The Scotsman*, 2 September 1897, p. 5, 30 November 1897, p. 7.
[84] Lucas, *Co-operation in Scotland*, pp. 65-68, 73.

level' being taken by Scottish co-operators in and after 1897 and again this chimes well with Perth where in October 1897 the CPCS agreed to donate money to a 'Co-operative Vigilance Committee ... to be used for the return of candidates favourable to co-operation to all public bodies.'[85] This decision was a response to STDA attempts to see the introduction of municipal legislation disallowing any member of a co-operative society from employment on a public body. (The CPCS operated at that time with a membership approaching 5,000 and annual sales near £200,000.) That this decision was a matter of utility goes almost without saying.

During the municipal election of November 1897 the CPCS interviewed candidates to gain their position on co-operation. The Society then issued a circular to all its members asking them to support their adopted candidates and oppose those of the Traders' Defence Association.[86] Whilst evidence suggests the CPCS's endeavours made little impact on the results, it led to the decision to form a committee with PTC to procure suitable working-class candidates for the 1898 municipal elections.[87]

At the end of October 1898 three candidates were in place including David Glass, General Manager of CPCS.[88] All three attained office. Glass's interaction with the labour movement requires consideration. An examination

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[85] Kinloch, *SCWS*, p. 255; CPCS, *Minute Book*, 5 October 1897.

[86] The CPCS also attempted that year to secure the candidacy of Francis Norie-Miller (Chairman of the School Board and Manager of General Accident) and a Mr Ramsay to the School Board. In the end neither stood. *Perthshire Advertiser*, 15 October 1897.

[87] *Perthshire Advertiser*, 11 October 1897, p. 2, 12 October 1897, p. 2, 3 November 1897; CPCS, *Minute Book*, 5 October 1898.

[88] PTC, *Minute Book*, 27 October 1898; CPCS, *Minute Book*, 21 October 1898.

of his contributions to the quarterly meetings of the SCWS suggests that his main concern was the running of the CPCS as a business and not political matters *per se*. For example, at the 119th quarterly meeting of the SCWS (*c.* 1898), his only recorded contribution was an argumentative exchange with the SCWS leadership over the poor quality of their tea. Glass had been a founder member of the Perth Cloth Society, the predecessor of the CPCS and had been instrumental in the development of co-operation in Perth. He had spent 30 years defending the CPCS against its enemies and detractors. His candidacy in the 1898 municipal election was a continuation of his defence of the Society.[89]

There was considerable debate within PTC as to Glass's attitude to trade unions; a debate heightened by the CPCS's disputes with its employees running at that time. The involvement of the co-operative movement in the 1898 municipal election must be placed against the backdrop of the labour disputes with which the CPCS was involved. Glass as a candidate in the municipal election presented himself as a representative of the working man arguing during the electoral hustings that he 'thought it would be a lesson that the working man had a vote. They had been told that the working man had no vote. They had the power if they would only use it,' while in his role as General Manager of the CPCS he frequently adopted positions in relation to the CPCS workforce more bellicose than those adopted by Perth's private traders in relation to their own employees.[90] Additionally, as was mentioned earlier, Glass

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[89] Scottish Co-operative Wholesale Society, *Quarterly Meeting Reports from 119th to 133rd Quarter* (Glasgow: Scottish Co-operative Wholesale Society, *n.d.*).

[90] *Perthshire Courier*, 8 November 1898.

had been forced at regional cooperative conferences to defend CPCS wage levels against accusatory attacks from DTC.

Whilst the SCWS claimed to have seen off the traders' boycott nationally by 1900, the Traders' Defence Association remained a potent force in Perth for several more years. They were however unable to maintain support for the butchers' boycott in Perth for long due to a lack of unity in their own ranks and strong support for the CPCS. Even as early as the end of 1897, the number of meat retailers/wholesalers involved in the boycott had dropped from twenty to three.[91]

The combination of CPCS growing economic strength and political action outside and within the Perth municipal chamber and legal actions taken by the SCWS in the Court of Session eventually resulted in the end of the traders' boycott in Perth. Kinloch and Butt have argued the traders' boycotts in Scotland 'created a climate of opinion favouring the idea of co-operative political action.'[92] For the Perth co-operators, this argument was true during the moments of crises created by the traders' boycotts. The absence of the boycott issue however reduced the desire for municipal politics and support for co-operative candidates.

Macdonald has argued that although 'after 1906, co-operation continued between co-operative societies and the Labour Party' their 'commitment was qualified and restricted mainly to local municipal politics.'[93] This seems to be

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[91] *The Scotsman*, 30 November 1897, p. 7.
[92] Kinloch, *SCWS*, p. 255
[93] Macdonald, 'Radical Thread', p. 186.

the case in Perth where it was only when its interests were threatened as in 1907-1908 by the re-launch of a Traders' Defence Association and the publication of a weekly journal attacking co-operation that the CPCS threw itself again wholeheartedly into electoral politics and secured the election in November 1908 of the Society's General Manager John Clark.[94] Even in the postwar period with the establishment of the Co-operative Party and the impetus within the movement for political engagement, the Perth branch of the new party had little success. (Its single candidate in each of the 1923, 1924, and 1925 municipal elections all failed to attain office. In both the 1926 and 1928 municipal election the Co-operative Party put forward two candidates, one was successful in each contest. The following two years were very lean for Perth's co-operators: the single candidate in the 1929 municipal election was defeated; and in 1930, no one could be found to stand.[95])

Whilst the CPCS played a central role in the economic and social life of Perth's working-class community - the local labour movement utilised CPCS facilities, co-operative movement representatives and (after 1918) its parliamentarians spoke at local rallies and parades such as the annual May Day event - the extent of the CPCS's involvement in wider labour politics was limited and qualified. When, for example, they were invited to contribute to the Co-operative Parliamentary Fund in April of 1898, the CPCS's directors resolved to

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[94] *Balhousie Advertiser*, 1 May 1907, [*n.p.n.*], Pullar & Sons Ltd Company Records, *Newspaper Cuttings Book* (PKCA, MS51/5/2/8); CPCS, *Diamond Jubilee Souvenir,* pp. 18-19.

[95] Co-operation maintained a small presence on Perth Parish Council during this period: 'prior to 1923, one of our members represented the Co-operative interest on this body, but in 1923, through co-option, this was increased to two, and until this body ceased to function the latter representation was maintained.' CPCS, *Diamond Jubilee Souvenir,* p. 54.

let the matter lie. Local educational matters were an exception - the Perth Co-operative Education Committee actively sought to work with the labour movement on this issue. At the end of 1899 PTC approached the CPCS in pursuance of candidates for the School Board elections forming a Joint Committee to that end and having immediate success with the election of their candidate Frank Simpson as a 'Labour candidate depending entirely on a Labour vote.' The joint committee was still working in January 1903 by which time it was also working with representatives of the *Clarion* Fellowship. When the School Board raised its own salaries to a level thought overly generous by PTC in 1908, a public meeting to discuss the issue was organised jointly by the trades council, trade union secretaries, the ILP, and the CPCS.[96]

The CPCS sought out - as it suited its needs - a labour movement which actively pursued links and joint work on the entire spectrum of labour politics. Several PTC delegates were active within the CPCS from an early stage. In October 1901 PTC claimed to be involved in as many CPCS events and activities as possible despite also claiming to be looked upon with suspicion by the Society's leadership. Attempts to see PTC members elected to the CPCS Board of Directors began as early as March 1900. By 1904 the trades council was celebrating the election of two of its members to the CPCS 'Directorate', other successful election bids followed in later years.

There is significant evidence of PTC attempts to involve the CPCS in Labour politics; its letter to them of September 1913 as regards working together

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[96] CPCS, *Diamond Jubilee Souvenir,* p. 55; PTC, *Minute Book*, 8 December 1899, 1 February 1900, 29 March 1900, 12 April 1900, 29 January 1903, 26 March 1903, 1 April 1908; CPCS, *Minute Book*, 15 April 1898.

over a conference on the nationalisation of the railways provides one example. These attempts bore little fruit and as late as 10 March 1915 the trades council was talking merely of 'still maintaining links' with the CPCS.[97] The labour movement's 'courting' of the CPCS was not only unrequited, the CPCS often failed to live up to expectations as a partner of Labour. A major area of discontent was the CPCS's use of non-unionised print-shops. This surfaced in 1901 in relation to the Co-operative Education Committee when 'it was agreed to take some action in the matter of non-union printing being executed for the Co-operative Society' and again in 1905 in relation to the printing of the *Co-operative Pioneer*.[98]

Not all Labour organisations in Perth considered the CPCS a potential ally in the struggle for working-class improvement. The Perth branch of the SPP, which like the co-operative movement represented a facet of the Labour struggle, maintained a difficult relationship with the CPCS over the sale of alcohol in its stores. At a well-attended hustings at Cherrybank School during the municipal elections of 1908, for example, John Clark the CPCS General Manager found himself heckled and the subject of a wrecking amendment of the vote of confidence in him by the SPP in alliance with Councillor McIntyre representing the Traders' Defence Association. After a kerfuffle and counter-heckling by John Bremner of PTC, McIntyre was removed from the meeting, which at times came close to violence.[99]

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[97] PTC, *Minute Book*, 15 March 1900, 31 October 1901, *Annual Report* 1903-1904, 10 September 1913, 10 March 1915.
[98] PTS, *Minute Book*, 12 January 1901, 27 March 1905.
[99] *Perthshire Courier*, 27 October 1908.

7.6 *Summary Remarks*

The historiography of the British co-operative movement in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries has not done justice to the importance of that movement to working-class domestic life. As an institution co-operation put the facilities and resources of the labour and trade-union movements in the shade and yet has had little of their scrutiny and examination. Co-operation stood in opposition to private capital and as such found itself within the realm of a war of position between the labour and trade-union movements on one side and private capital on the other. Unlike the labour and trade-union movements which were concerned with the labour process and production, the co-operative movement was primarily involved with consumption. The movement was however by necessity an employer of labour and producer which brought it into conflict with its own ideals and with the labour movement.

Co-operation in Perth was a huge enterprise and the CPCS played an overwhelming positive role in improving the lot of the city and district's working-class communities. The Society grew from humble beginnings in 1871 to an organisation with sales approaching £4 million and over 8,000 members in 1921. In common with the Macdonald's observations of the co-operative movement in Paisley, the CPCS occupied a 'frequently contradictory position in the town's labour history.'[100] This was a result of the overarching dominance of business pragmatism, consumer centrality, and corporate 'self-interest'. The CPCS like its counterparts in other Scottish towns/cities, with which it shared many common features, professed an ideological position in regard to the

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[100] Macdonald, 'Radical Thread', p. 152.

working class that presented as a dialectical contradiction when operating as an employer of labour.

The position of the CPCS in regard to the support of striking workers external to its own workforce was though generally favourable was nonetheless contingent on the effect to their own business needs. Strikes such as the 1890-1891 railway strike which impinged on Perth, for example, caused some dissent within the CPCS leadership and a legal challenge.

Co-operation's profession of the ideal of being a consumer champion, model producer, and model employer was challenged internally and externally. The CPCS offered no exception to this. Despite a declared aim of improving working-class spending power the CPCS placed the needs of its own business above such consideration. Pay rates in Perth, a low-wage economy, were in line with local pay especially those in the productive side of CPCS enterprise. The common perception of the CPCS from within the labour and trade-union movements was that of a tyrannical committee offering poor pay to its employees. It would be wrong for the leadership of the CPCS to be burdened with this description alone. The large Perth membership had ample opportunities to oppose or modify Society policy. This it chose not to do.

Slow to organise, workers on the consumption side of the CPCS's business (productive workers in the main were organised by the established Perth trade unions) eventually formed a branch of the AUCE (PAUCE) in 1907. PAUCE did not have an entirely fruitful relationship with PTC which viewed it as a poacher union and at times the two were at in conflict - a position replicated

across Scotland by the fraught terms with which the national trade-union movement engaged with AUCE.

Whilst the industrial relations history of the CPCS demonstrates few episodes of strike activity to 1922, the operative bakers' strikes of 1898 and 1916-17, which were both significant events in the trade-union history of Perth, exposed something of the Society's attitude to its workers. During the 1898 strike the CPCS management displayed an obduracy and aggressive determination not to given in to its employees' demands - far in advance of Perth's other bakehouses. Here again the ability of the CPCS to separate the business interests of retail co-operation from its professed ideology was evidenced. The refusal of the Society to give way on the foreman question exemplified this pragmatism and business priority.

Very early into the life of the Scottish co-operative movement and despite claims for political neutrality, a decision was made for the movement to become involved in parliamentary politics so as to better and safeguard its interests. The pursuit of 'self-interest' seemed to lie at the very heart of the co-operative movement in its political engagements. The first forays into parliamentary politics were defensive actions: responses to the attacks of private traders that peppered the later nineteenth and very early twentieth centuries. Direct political representation in Parliament had been raised within the co-operative movement before the close of the nineteenth century. It was not however until after the Great War (during which time the movement had been treated appallingly poorly by the British State) that the Co-operative Party was

established and ran its own candidates for office. A plan to stand a Co-operative Party candidate in Eastern Perthshire in 1918 however came to nothing.

On the municipal level the CPCS had been actively engaged with the labour movement and the selection of candidates for municipal office from 1897. Once again the motivation to do so was pragmatic. The organised attacks by a section of Perth's private traders that began in 1876 and continued into the 1900s did much to bolster the CPCS into political action, first in pursuit of partnership with the labour movement and subsequently in pursuit of direct representation on the Town Council. Central to understanding the motivation of the CPCS in its political activity and partnering with the labour movement is when it chose to act. For during those periods when the attacks upon the CPCS and its local enterprise dwindled so did the Society's appetite for municipal politics. As with its aim of being a model employer so too with its political activity: the co-operative movement in Perth's support of labour and labour politics was limited almost entirely to 'self-interest'.

A key reason that the ILP in Scotland experienced growth and electoral success in the first two decades of the twentieth century was its advocacy and campaigning on 'social politics'. Housing, an issue which was of direct and pressing interest to much of the Scottish working class, formed a major component (unemployment another) of this 'social politicking'. The provision of working-class housing consequently sat within the orbit of the Perth labour and trade-union movements and like retail co-operation examined in this chapter the housing of the working class in Perth requires consideration.

Chapter 8 *- the Housing of the Working Class in Perth*

This chapter will demonstrate that the quality of working-class housing and the quantity of 'suitable' working-class housing in Perth remained unresolved problems throughout the period of study of this thesis. Furthermore, it will establish that a significant proportion of Perth's populace was housed in slums managed and owned by rapacious landlords protected by the Town Council's inactions and indifference. It will then go on to explore the question as to why, despite severe housing problems, there existed a comparative absence of protest and significant political action by the Perth working class and the city's labour movement on housing. In particular, the reasons for the complete lack of activity akin to the rent strikes experienced in several places across Scotland in 1915 will be assayed.

In order to answer these questions a brief consideration of the development of working-class housing as a political issue (specifically in regard to the labour movement) is required - an issue attended to in the next section.

8.1 *Working-Class Housing - Historical Starting Points*

Throughout the nineteenth century industrialisation and urban migration acted as a motor for the rapid population growth of Britain's towns/cities. This change in urban demography outpaced societal responses to its social and public health effects, the result of which has been described by Michael Flinn as 'bitter and terrifyingly costly in terms of human life.'[1] Disease stood at the apex of the

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[1] Michael Flinn (ed.*)*, *Scottish Population History from the 17th Century to the 1930s* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), p. 371.

hierarchy of reasons behind high mortality rates in these expanding urban environments.

Three major diseases blighted the Britain of the nineteenth century: cholera, typhus, and tuberculosis.[2] Unlike cholera which was primarily a water-borne disease just as likely to originate on the finest country estate as in an area of working-class squalor, typhus and tuberculosis were directly linked to poverty, malnutrition, unemployment, overcrowding, and deprivation.[3] None of these diseases however could have taken the toll they did without the assistance of low wages which as Richard Rodger has argued were unequivocally responsible for 'reducing affordable nutritional and accommodation standards to such minimal levels as to expose large numbers of workers, and weaken their resistance.'[4]

The growth of deprivation and disease increasingly challenged national and local government to respond. One such response (in Scotland) was the establishment in 1845 of the Board of Supervision for Poor Relief to oversee the poor law, mediate between Westminster and local government, and supervise an

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[2] During the first five decades of the nineteenth century typhus established itself in Britain's expanding insanitary slums where it became epidemic and endemic. Numerically tuberculosis out-performed both the combined effects of typhus and cholera, to be the 'most lethal disease of the nineteenth century.' Michael W. Flinn, *Report on the Sanitary Condition of the Labouring Population of Great Britain by Edwin Chadwick 1842* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1965), p. 11.

[3] Rosalind Mitchison, *Life in Scotland* (London: B. T. Batsford, 1978), p. 153.

[4] Richard Rodger, 'Employment, Wages and Poverty in the Scottish Cities 1840-1914', in R. J. Morris and Richard Rodger (eds.), *The Victorian City A Reader in Urban History 1820-1914* (Harlow: Longman, 1997), pp. 79, 98.

expanding local government 'sanitary' bureaucracy (Burgh engineers, medical officers of health, and sanitary inspectors).[5]

The 1880s were a local *maxima* in the significance of housing as a social and political issue in Britain and marked by a Royal Commission in 1884-1885 to investigate the state of working-class housing.[6] The Commission's report not only brought into the public domain a great deal of information as to the poverty of living conditions of the British working class but also acted as a catalyst for governmental and societal action. That said, it was not until the turn of the century that any serious governmental consideration of 'social' housing provision was manifest.

After 1894 the Scottish Secretary operated as the president of the newly constituted Local Government Board for Scotland (LGBS), which had taken over the mantle of the Board of Supervision. The LGBS was the central housing authority in Scotland with full powers over local authority housing.[7] Despite numerous pieces of legislation and rhetoric, the track record of the LGBS was not good: 'only one improvement scheme to clear slum areas had been confirmed by the LGBS between 1909 and 1913.'[8]

The private sector provided no compensation for the paucity of municipal housing provision. Private housebuilding in Scotland was cyclical

[5] J. K. Young, 'Homes fit for Heroes', p. 425; Simon Gunn, *The Public Culture of the Victorian Middle Class. Ritual and Authority and the English Industrial City 1840-1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), p. 45.

[6] *First Report of Her Majesty's Commissioners for Inquiries into the Housing of the Working Classes* (HCPP, C. 4402, 1884-1885).

[7] John G. Kellas, *The Scottish Political System.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 29 *ff.*

[8] J. K. Young, 'Homes fit for Heroes', p. 126.

and subject to periods of decline.[9] Housing problems in Scotland (particularly Glasgow) were compounded by a depression in house construction between 1905 and 1908.[10] This stagnation, Roger has argued, 'brought a virtual cessation to housebuilding and was so serious to warrant a special report in the 1911 census.' By 1914 Scottish housebuilding had become moribund.[11]

Alongside a growth in housing legislation and state/municipal involvement in housing emerged an increasing labour movement awareness of and engagement with the housing conditions of the working class. This development has been observed by McIvor and Kenefick among Clydeside workers in the pre-war years as one accentuated by the 'mounting housing crisis' in Glasgow and manifest as 'a subterranean struggle over rents and the legal aspects of landlordism.'[12] Rodger sums up the importance of the 'housing question' to Labour politics succinctly:

> Housing was not the sole factor in the emergence of political polarisation from the 1880s, but it was an important strand and was instrumental in bringing organised labour into labour policies.

James J. Smyth has logicised that housing was 'the one issue above all others which lay behind Labour's' municipal successes in Glasgow prior to the

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[9] Employment within the 'house and building' sector of the Scottish economy fluctuated between 1881 and 1911 showing an overall 4% rise nationally. After a period of decline, there was a revival in housebuilding in the mid-1890s. *Census of Scotland 1881-1921, numerous pages.*

[10] Harvie, 'Before the Breakthrough', p. 16.

[11] Rodger, 'Employment, Wages and Poverty', p. 92; Petrie, *Rent Strikes*, p. 21.

[12] William Kenefick and Arthur McIvor, 'Introduction: Roots of Red Clydeside 1910-1914?', in Kenefick, *Roots of Red Clydeside*, pp. 13-14, 26.

Great War.[13] Melling has made a similar argument.[14] It was not fortuitous: the Labour parties in Glasgow, particularly the ILP, for example, organised around and promoted Glasgow ILP councillor (and socialist) John Wheatley's proposals for local authority housing (the £8 municipal worker's cottage scheme). It is generally accepted that that such campaigning on and engagement with the 'housing question' assisted Labour's rise in popularity in many parts of Scotland (not just Glasgow) in and after the Great War but also to a lesser extent in the pre-war years.[15] In addition, as Smyth has argued, activism around discontent with housing conditions 'encouraged Labour's organisational growth.'[16] It also had the consequence of bringing large numbers of women into Labour activism (both directly and indirectly through a myriad of 'autonomous' housing groups).[17] Melling has gone further and claimed 'the housing struggles of the decade after 1914 changed the course of Labour politics.'[18] The first of these struggles, the rent strikes of 1915, in which the ILP played a central organisational role and which moved housing onto the national stage, is considered next.

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[13] James J. Smyth, '"From Industrial Unrest to Industrial Debacle?": the Labour Left and Industrial Militancy, 1910-1914', in Kenefick, *Roots of Red Clydeside*, pp. 251-.

[14] *Rent Strikes. Peoples' Struggle for Housing in West Scotland 1890-1916* (Edinburgh: Polygon Books, 1983), pp. 35-45.

[15] Harvie has suggested that Labour's control of 14% of the seats on Glasgow Corporation by 1914 was directly linked to their campaigning on 'municipal housebuilding and controlled rents.' Harvie, 'Before the Breakthrough', p. 16.

[16] J. J. Smyth, *Labour in Glasgow*, p. 8.

[17] Joseph Melling, 'Work, culture and politics on "Red Clydeside": the ILP during the First World War, in McKinlay, Alan and R. J. Morris, (eds.), *The Independent Labour Party on Clydeside 1893-1932: From Foundation to Disintegration* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991), p. 108.

[18] Joseph Melling, 'Clydeside rent struggles and the making of Labour politics in Glasgow, 1900-39', in Rodger, *Scottish Housing*), p. 65.

In 1915 a national campaign against rising rents saw protests and rent strikes in towns/cities across Britain, including Aberdeen, Annan, Cambuslang, Clydebank, Dundee, Fife, Glasgow, Greenock, Gretna, Hamilton, Kirkcaldy, Leith, Mid-Lanark, and West Calder; but not Perth. J. K. Young has argued that these rent strikes signified the failure of government legislation, in particular the House Letting & Rating (Scotland) Act 1911, to mitigate long-term 'housing' grievances that governmental enquiry had exposed, as well as being driven by what she has called 'the economic price exacted from the Home Front.'[19] Responding to the rent strikes, a governmental inquiry under Lord Hunter took evidence from those industrial areas affected by the agitation with the remit to look into the causes of rent increases.[20] Hunter chose to freeze rents and mortgage interest, which were pegged at pre-war levels. Initially only key industrial areas were covered, but further agitation led to its extension to the whole of the UK.[21]

The Liberal government in 1914 had drawn up plans for the construction of 25,000 homes to be funded by state-aided public utility societies, a plan soon dwarfed by the postwar target of half a million houses paid for directly by the Exchequer. The Housing, Town Planning, &c. Act (Scotland) Act 1919 and the large-scale housebuilding initiative it required might not have happened if it was not for the 1915 rent agitation irrespective of the existence of an acute

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[19] J. K. Young, 'Homes fit for Heroes', pp. 352, 386.

[20] Hearings were held predominantly in Glasgow, though sittings also took place in Aberdeen, Dundee, and the other principal towns of Scotland. *Royal Commission on the Housing of the Industrial Population of Scotland 1917-18*, p. 2.

[21] Whilst this action was effective in ending the rent strikes, it also acted as a negative catalyst by reducing private landlordism profitability and causing a collapse in the private letting market.

deficiency in available housing. Such a radical housing policy was a continuation of the state's debate/negotiations with a labour movement growing in strength and numbers and one upon which it considered 'the future of the entire social order depended':

> [That] the government believed that unless drastic measures were taken Britain would follow Russia and Germany into Bolshevik revolution. ... Accordingly, the months after the Armistice saw the government promising a wide-ranging programme of social reform and at its head was the pledge of a great housebuilding campaign.[22]

This *ad hoc* measure designed to counter the attractiveness of socialism was also designed to facilitate the private housebuilding/letting industry to increase profitability by returning rents to market rates.

Within a few years of the end of the war the political and economic situation in Britain underwent major transformation. The economy moved into recession and slump towards the end of 1920. The working class no longer a threat to the *status quo* could not command the insurance premium of which the postwar housing programme had been part - the 'homes fit for heroes' pledge as legislated by the Housing, Town Planning, &c. Act 1919 resulted in the construction of just 213,000 houses (UK-wide) a level far below both requirement and the 500,00 in three years stipulated by the 1919 Act.[23]

Knowing how the housing situation in Perth fitted in with elsewhere in Scotland is an important step in the process of understanding why there was such a vacuity of action on this issue. In the next two sections it will be argued

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[22] Swenarton, *Homes fit for heroes*, pp. 47, 67, 190.

[23] http://www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/transformingsociety/towncountry/towns/overview/councilhousing/ [Accessed 25 August 2015].

that Perth shared some characteristics in common with those areas of 'poor' housing which experienced high degrees of political activity in regard to housing and rent amelioration. Those characteristics that differed from these areas will also be highlighted and will eventually form the basis of an argument for why the conjunctural crisis that was the 1915 rent strikes bypassed Perth.

8.2 *Working-Class Housing in Perth - a Quantitative Issue*

One major consequence of urban population growth and national and local government indifference, neglect, and failure to address its consequences was insufficient and inadequate working-class housing. Insufficiency, the first of these issues (a quantitative phenomenon) was directly influenced by population growth and it is this issue that is considered in this section. Working-class housing as qualitative issue is examined in the next section.

Between 1871 and 1911 the population of Scotland rose by 42% - an annual equivalent growth rate of 0.88%. In contrast, the population of the County of Perth was numerically stable between 1871 and 1921, its time series experiencing a maximum deviation on its 1871 figure of 0.8% (per decade) and a mean deviation of minus 3.2% (per decade).[24] The population of the Municipal Burgh of Perth rose by 61% between 1871 and 1911 - an annual equivalent growth rate of 1.2%. Between 1911 and 1921 the population of the Municipal Burgh of Perth fell by 6.3% (2,274 persons).[25]

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[24] In fact, the population of the County of Perth in 1921 was almost the same as in 1801.

[25] The UK population figures comprise Great Britain and Ireland for 1801-1911; Great Britain and Northern Ireland for 1921. B. R. Mitchell, *Abstract of British Historical Statistics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962), pp. 6-7, 21-23; *Census of Scotland 1881-1921, numerous pages.*

Carstairs has accounted for the disparity in Perth (Burgh and County) population trends as growth in the municipal population due to an increasing birth rate and a reduced mortality rate alongside inward migration from county to city.[26] Whilst the annual mortality rate for Perth did decrease overall in the period considered by Carstairs, the bulk of the decrease occurred between 1899 and 1901 with a drop of 6% (21.5% to 15.5%).[27] Thereafter it oscillated gently around a mean of 14.8% rising in 1921 to a level higher than that of 1901.[28] Out-movement from the County of Perth was in this period higher than the Scottish average partly due to migration into Perth as well as into the towns/cities of the Central Lowlands (and to a smaller degree overseas).[29]

The population data employed in the previous paragraph has demonstrated that the population of the city of Perth grew at a rate above the Scottish average (between 1871 and 1911) and accounted for some of the reasons for this growth. Given the changes in Scottish society during that period, urban growth was bound to outpace the growth of the country as a whole - Perth being no exception. This suggests two things. The first, that a comparison with national population growth is insufficient, and second, that a comparison of the

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[26] Carstairs, *Industrial Population in the Tayside Area*, p. 7.

[27] Improvements in public health, housing, and medical developments all played their part in reducing mortality rates. The improvement in mortality rate between 1899 and 1901 is likely to have been a result of the Public Health (Scotland) Act 1897.

[28] Perth Town Council Health & Sanitary Departments: *Annual Reports of the Medical Officer of Health for Perth* (1899-1964) 1901, 1921 (PKCA, PE4/1B, PE4/4, 1901-1923), *numerous pages.*

[29] Total out-movement as a proportion of the population of the County of Perth (Male/Female) was 15.84/13.12 (1861-1871), 12.89/11.39 (1871-1881), 15.24/11.44 (1881-1891), 12.02/9.85 (1891-1901), and 12.31/10.71 (1901-1911) per cent. Jeanette M. Brock, *The Mobile Scot. A Study of Emigration and Migration 1861-1911* (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers Ltd, 1999), p. 219.

population growth of Perth with that of other Scottish cities is *sine qua non* for understanding how significant the demand for housing in Perth stood relative to other Scottish towns/cities. To this end, the local housed population levels recorded by the *Census of Scotland* between 1881 and 1921 (inclusive) of Aberdeen, Dundee, Glasgow, and Paisley (ADGP) are placed alongside those of Perth in Table 8.1 (below).

Table 8.1 *Housed Population Levels of ADGP and Perth, 1881-1921*

	1881	1891	1901	1911	1921	Change 1881-1911 (%)
Aberdeen	103,472	120,137	151,101	158,247	153,078	+52.9
Dundee	139,294	152,193	159,753	160,489	164,336	+15.2
Glasgow	482,861	557,364	745,109	754,534	998,419	+56.2
Paisley	54,867	65,362	78,320	81,915	82,621	+49.3
Perth	**27,922**	**29,311**	**31,653**	**33,706**	**31,349**	**+20.7**
Scotland	*3,735,573*	*4,025,647*	*4,472,103*	*4,760,904*	*4,882,497*	*+27.4*

(**Source:** *Census of Scotland* 1881-1921, *numerous pages*)

Of the five towns considered in Table 8.1 Dundee and Perth were the only two which experienced growth below the Scottish mean between 1881 and 1911 so that population expansion in Perth was not as great a factor as it was in Aberdeen, Glasgow, and Paisley. It needs to be pointed out that the absence of Irish migration into Perth was once again a factor. The large numbers of immigrant Irish that relocated to Dundee, Glasgow, and elsewhere placed an enormous strain on housing - one consequence of which was increases in overcrowding - a matter to be considered later in this chapter.

Irrespective of its smaller relative size, Perth's rate of urban growth of around 6.5% per decade still placed increasing demands on housing availability

in the city throughout the nineteenth and into the twentieth century.[30] The manner in which these demands were met (or not met) poses a number of questions. For example, the fact that whilst the growth rate between 1901 and 1911 was 6.5%, the growth in the number of inhabited houses (7,233 in 1901 to 8,119 in 1911) was 12.2% requires the question as to whether this increase in inhabited houses was met by housebuilding (private and/or governmental (local and/or national)), by making more dwellings available, by shifts in occupancy levels and hence increased overcrowding, and/or through existing stock, to be answered.[31] The issue of housebuilding will be considered first.

As an economic sector 'House & Building' was the fourth largest employer of labour in the County and City of Perth in 1881 and 1901 employing 5,275 workers in 1901, but declined thereafter. There is evidence to suggest that employment in this sector was not involved in a great deal of house construction as Table 8.2 (overleaf), which details the level of private enterprise housebuilding in Perth between 1901 and 1911, confirms.[32] (The sector presumably involved itself in the main with either house repair/renovation and/or construction for the business sector.)

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[30] These raw figures do not take into account the 1910 boundary change, nor do they look at the nature of the population growth be it working class or middle class.

[31] *Annual Report of the Medical Officer of Health* 1911 (PKCA, PE4/3, 1901-1913), p. 7.

[32] The low level of 'social' housing construction in Perth will be established later in the chapter.

Table 8.2 *Number of Dwellings (of Different Types) Built by Private Enterprise in Perth, 1901-1911*[33]

	1901	1904	1905	1906	1907	1908	1909	1910	1911
Four-Roomed	20	12	14	6	3	4	1	2	2
Three-Roomed	43	71	35	42	23	6	0	0	0
Two-Roomed	25	5	40	112	13	24	16	36	35
One-Roomed	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Villas	0	17	31	41	39	41	18	16	16
Total	*95*	*105*	*120*	*201*	*78*	*75*	*35*	*54*	*53*

(**Source:** *Annual Reports of the Medical Officer of Health* 1901-1911 (PKCA, PE4/1A, PE4/1B, PE4/2, PE4/3, 1899-1913), *numerous pages*)

Even before the downturn that began in 1905, the absolute number of new dwelling builds in Perth was very low. Private enterprise housebuilding can in no way account for the manner in which Perth's growing population was housed. It is to 'social' housing that is examined next.

At the end of 1906 Charles Guthrie was charged by the Scottish Secretary with running a Departmental Committee to examine house letting and rating in Scotland - the aim of which was to 'inquire into and report upon alleged grievances connected with the letting of working men's dwellings.'[34] Guthrie concentrated on evidential inquiry from the west of Scotland, but his inquiry did include cross-examined statements from witnesses with detailed knowledge of local housing conditions in Perth. One witness, James Miller Barlas, a member of Perth Town Council and Lord Dean of Guild, made detailed statements as to the situation in Perth. Barlas was a credible witness, not only

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[33] The data refers to dwelling houses passed through the Dean of Guild Court.

[34] Published in the summer of 1907, the *Guthrie Report* failed, according to J. K. Young, in its attempt 'to forge a compromise between the interests of tenants, councils and the landlord.' Consequently, as Mark Swenarton has argued, housing 'remained an open political issue' in Scotland. J. K. Young, 'Homes fit for Heroes', p. 314; Swenarton, *Homes fit for heroes*, p. 33.

was he a councillor, he was also a house agent of four years standing who factored some 602 properties. In his evidence, Barlas spoke of housing outside the private rental sector. This 'non-private' housing included more than a 100 new houses constructed by the Corporation of Perth 'partly through opening up new streets, and to provide houses before the streets were formed.'[35]

The proportional level of this local authority housing requires consideration. Table 8.3 (below) details the proportion of families housed by several local authorities in Scotland in 1917 as calculated by the Royal Commission on Housing of the Industrial Population of Scotland Rural and Urban.

<u>Table 8.3</u> *Proportion of Families Housed by Local Authorities in Scotland in 1917*

	Proportion of Families Housed by Local Authorities in Scotland (%)
Aberdeen	0.4
Bo'ness	0.5
Clydebank	0.4
Edinburgh	0.8
Glasgow	1.3
Greenock	1.4
Hamilton	0.3
Kilmarnock	0.8
Leith	0.5
Oban	2.1
Perth	**1.4**

(**Source:** Royal Commission on Housing in Scotland, *Report of the Royal Commission on the Housing of the Industrial Population of Scotland Rural and Urban* (HCPP, Cd. 8731, 1917-1918), p. 387)

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[35] 'The rents for these 'new houses' varied 'from £4 10s for one-roomed houses up to £12 10s for three-roomed houses'. *Report of the Departmental Committee on House-Letting in Scotland Volume I*, p. 201.

Whilst the table shows that Perth outperformed many other Scottish towns in the provision of local authority housing in 1917, it nonetheless also shows that the proportional level of this housing was relatively insignificant in overall terms.[36]

Perth Town Council was not the only supplier of rental housing in Perth outside the private sector. Pullars 'carried out a progressive building programme during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries'[37] building a range of housing units 'that catered principally for those employed at [its works at] Tulloch'[38] and consisting 'predominantly of terraced blocks, but with some houses and cottages included.'[39] In addition, in the first decade of the twentieth century the CPCS began a small housebuilding initiative in Perth which by 1917 stood at 170 tenancies with rents 'varying from 5 guineas up to 19 guineas for

[36] Housebuilding until the First World War was generally left to the market. The modal practice in housebuilding involved builders constructing properties for property owners to rent. As J. K. Young has explained: 'essentially these houses were built for the private rented market in order that investors could earn a good return from their capital.' Like all business ventures, housebuilding and private landlordism operated in cycles whose amplitude and periods were altered by factors that affected profitability: risk, interest rate levels, capital availability, other investment opportunities, and rent levels. During the beginning of the twentieth century, these factors caused capital flight from the housebuilding/letting industry and coupled with an extended period of decline in the building industry led to a crisis in the housing market (especially at the lower end). J. K. Young, 'Homes fit for Heroes', pp. 128, 135; Swenarton, *Homes fit for heroes*, p. 31.

[37] John McG Davies, *Social and Labour Relations at Pullars of Perth, 1882-1924* (Dundee: CETAFS, 1993), p. 4.

[38] The Tulloch properties include a series of two-storey dwellings in Tulloch Terrace: three terraces completed in 1882, one in 1892, and a fifth in 1897. Gifford, *Perth and Kinross*, p. 665.

[39] Davies, 'Pullars of Perth', p. 89.

two-roomed houses' and four-roomed houses at £13.[40] Nonetheless, whilst as was seen in earlier chapters, housing as a form of paternalistic provision had an impact on industrial relations, the overall level of 'social' housing provision in Perth did not place it apart from its comparator towns.

It is clear that neither the private sector nor Perth Town Council were responding to the city's population growth by building large numbers of new dwellings. Before continuing to examine how Perth's growing population was housed, the actions of Perth Town Council in regard to housing as a quantitative issue will be considered in a little more detail alongside the response of the local labour movement to the growing need for new housing.

Despite the failure of governmental initiatives to have a direct effect on slum replacement and 'social' housing development, as Jean Young has argued many (if not most) Housing Acts created opportunities for those local authorities who wished to undertake working-class housing development to do so.[41] J. B. Sime a Perth councillor (Second Ward) made the case for such a development in Perth as early as 1875:

> In regard to the great hardship borne by the working classes
> for many years through the insufficiency and scarcity of good
> houses, he trusted that would now be rectified under the
> Artisan's Dwellings Bill [Artisans' and Labourers' Dwellings
> Improvement Act 1875].[42]

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[40] J. M. Rae of PTC giving evidence in 1917 to the Royal Commission on the Housing of the Industrial Population of Scotland claimed that the CPCS had some 10 years earlier built a number of houses to let the main object for which 'was undertaken is said to have been the provision of an outlet for spare capital.' Royal Commission, *Royal Commission on the Housing of the Industrial Population of Scotland 1917-18*, p. 268.

[41] These Acts operated permissively - no Scottish council was forced by legislation to construct housing for its citizens until the interwar period.

[42] *Perthshire Advertiser,* 26 October 1875.

Local authorities could with Parliamentary approval also enact their own housing legislation. An analysis by the Home Office into the effectiveness of those local housing Acts passed between 1875 and 1882 in burghs of 25,000 persons or more (Dundee, Glasgow, and Paisley included) revealed such Acts existed in all but one burgh - Perth.[43] In 1893 a Perth Improvement Act was finally passed - to the end of constructing two working-class city centre developments: St Katherine's Court (built in 1901 – 70 houses/128 rooms) and St Johnstoun's Buildings (built in 1903 on land vacated by the City of Perth Gas Corporation – 44 houses/80 rooms) - although as can be seen from their dates of construction the time-lag between the 1893 Act and completion of the two developments was rather long. During this period PTC kept the issue of 'social' housing alive as a political issue - some examples of which are considered next.

In 1898 PTC passed a resolution condemning the Town Council, the Lord Provost, and the Burgh magistrates for their continued opposition to 'social' housing.[44] A few years later PTC took part in a conference on 'The Housing of the Working Class' (23 February 1901) attended by some 96 delegates representing trades unions, friendly societies, and co-operative societies from Perthshire and Forfarshire at which the following resolution was passed:

> This conference urges the local authorities to use the powers they already possess under the Housing of the Working Classes Act 1890, to borrow money for the purpose of acquiring land and erecting comfortable cottages and tenements thereon.[45]

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[43] J. K. Young, 'Homes fit for Heroes', pp. 103, 107, 112-13, 117.

[44] PTC, *Minute Book*, 20 February 1898.

[45] Gauldie, *Cruel Habitations*, pp. 301-02.

PTC's efforts to improve the housing situation in Perth also included calling upon the Town Council to buy properties to rent to workers which after a set period of time would become their property.[46] The Town Council's subsequent response - the decision to build a number of working-class dwellings near the city's harbour in proximity to the city's slaughter house, gas tanks, and sewers - did not sit well with PTC from which an unanimous resolution of opposition was forthcoming. The dispute continued for some time with eventual success when the Town Council agreed to hold back on the development until the formation of a new administration.[47]

Three other factors impinged on the issue of housing as a quantitative phenomenon in Perth: 'Unfit for Habitation' closing orders, homelessness, and dwelling occupation (overcrowding). Each of these issues will be looked at in turn.

A Sanitary Inspector was appointed to Perth in 1911 and together with the Medical Officer for Health made visitations to properties under the Housing & Town Planning Act 1909. The numbers of inspected properties in 1912, 1913, and 1920 were 143, 177, and 129 respectively of which the number of properties deemed 'Unfit for Habitation' were 36, 7, and 64 respectively. It is the last figure that is most revealing. Despite the high level of dwellings found to be unfit, no closing orders were allowed due - according to official reports - to the 'housing

[46] PTC had by this time set up a Housing Reform Committee. PTC, *Minute Book*, 25 April 1901.
[47] PTC, *Minute Book*, 9 August 1901, 22 August 1901, 31 October 1901, 27 March 1902, 10 April 1902.

problem' in Perth.[48] Closing orders were not reducing dwelling availability in Perth. This stands in marked contrast to the situation in Paisley in 1918 about which, after listening to evidence from Paisley's Sanitary Inspector, the Royal Commission of 1918 came to the conclusion that overcrowding in the burgh was a direct result of the Town Council's closure of unfit dwellings.[49] It needs to be noted that the *Perthshire Advertiser* claimed at the time that part of the reason for the low level of closing orders in Perth was the fact that many of the city's slum properties were owned by 'locally influential businessmen.'[50] Perth was not unique in this regard: Rodger has observed:

> In Edinburgh, 80 percent of councillors in 1875 (72 per cent in 1905) were landlords, and on important committees which set the rates and approved building proposals ... landlords were even more strongly represented.[51]

Perth's homeless could find refuge in one of Perth's common lodging houses. These residential buildings were effectively dosshouses and gender segregated: 'residents rented a bed, not a room, and brought in their own food, cooking it in communal kitchens. Rooms were dormitories of single beds, licensed to hold a number of "inmates", and rates were cheap.'[52]

There were four common lodging houses in the Burgh of Perth in 1911: Oliphant's Vennel, Skinnergate, Guard Vennel, and 103 South Street. These were generally of poor construction and were frequented mostly by tramps and

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[48] *Annual Reports of the Medical Officer of Health* 1912, 1913, 1920 (PKCA, PE4/3, PE4/4, 1909-1923), *numerous pages.*

[49] Macdonald, 'Radical Thread', p. 144.

[50] *Perthshire Advertiser*, 23 October 1911, p. 5.

[51] Richard Rodger, 'Crisis and Confrontation in Scottish Housing 1880-1914', in Rodger, *Scottish Housing*, p. 37.

[52] J. K. Young, 'Homes fit for Heroes', p. 440.

migratory labourers, whom the *Perthshire Advertiser* described as 'the *bottom dog*.'[53] Local officials visited the common lodging houses as part of their sanitation and housing duties 'to detect filthy houses and ... overcrowding.'[54] Table 8.4 (below) details bed availability in Perth's common lodging houses between 1899 and 1920.

Table 8.4 *Number of Beds Available in Common Lodging Houses in Perth for 1899-1920*

1899	1901	1902	1903	1904	1905	1906	1907	1909	1910
232	203	206	197	133	231	225	206	209	209

1911	1912	1913	1914	1915	1916	1917	1918	1919	1920
190	199	225	190	273	254	228	228	199	204

(**Source:** Perth Town Council Health & Sanitary Departments: *Sanitary Department Registers: Register of Common Lodging Houses* (1899-1920) 1899, 1901-1910 (PKCA, PE4/5, 1898-1948), *numerous pages*)

The number of beds available in Perth's common lodging houses remained generally stable for the entire period. Only three years out of the two decades under scrutiny had bed availabilities shown more than a 10% deviation from the mean of 212. Whatever the level of housing shortages in Perth, the gap was not filled by an expansion in common lodging. At the same time, there is no evidence to suggest a high level of homelessness in Perth at any time during the period covered by this thesis.

In terms of population growth, homelessness, and provision of 'social' housing Perth was 'better off' than its comparators; as regards housebuilding it was not. What remains to be explored is the issue of overcrowding, which was pivotal in fermenting the alienation and anger that led to the rent actions

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[53] *Perthshire Advertiser*, 3 May 1913, p. 2.

[54] J. K. Young, 'Homes fit for Heroes', p. 457.

described in the opening paragraph of this chapter, and of which Ann Petrie has argued that (for this period) was 'probably one of the most insidious features of Scottish housing.'[55]

In 1901 the population of Perth was 32,957 distributed over 2,122 acres - a level, which according to C. Parker Stewart the then Perth Medical Officer for Health, made Perth 'the least densely populated of the large towns of Scotland'.[56] As Table 8.5 (below) evidences this was a characteristic of life in Perth that appeared to improve over time though in reality boundary changes probably made the greatest impact on population density levels with areas of low population being assimilated by the Municipal Burgh.

Table 8.5 *Population Density (persons per acre) for Perth, 1901-1922*

1901	1904	1905	1906	1907	1908	1910	1912	1913	1914	1915-19	1920	1921	1922
15.5	15.9	16.1	16.3	16.4	16.6	11.5	11.5	11.1	11.1	11.4	11.6	10.5	10.5

(**Source:** *Annual Reports of the Medical Officer of Health* 1901, 1904-1908, 1910, 1912-1922 (PKCA, PE4/1B, PE4/2, PE4/3, PE4/4, 1901-1923), *numerous pages*)

Even in 1908 when the population density in Perth was at a local *maxima* for the period 1901-1922, it stood at a level significantly below those of ADGP.[57]

Table A8.1 (Appendix 8) provides a range of measurements of dwelling occupation levels (overcrowding) for ADGP and Perth for the period 1881 to 1921. On average, dwellings in Perth contained more rooms and had lower room occupation levels than ADGP. Of the five Scottish towns analysed, the occupation levels in Perth were significantly lower than Dundee, Glasgow, and Paisley. Only Aberdeen can be said to have had occupation levels approaching

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[55] Petrie, *Rent Strikes*, p. 17.
[56] *Annual Report of the Medical Officer of Health* 1901 (PKCA, PE4/1B, 1901), p. 4.
[57] *Annual Report of the Medical Officer of Health* 1908 (PKCA, PE4/2, 1904-1908), p. 5.

those of Perth. When considered over time, by far the greatest improvement in occupation levels occurred in Perth.

The reduction in overcrowding levels experienced between 1911 and 1921 can be accounted for by the drop of 6.3% in the population of Perth over that decade. Given that this drop in population was a consequence of the First World War and its aftermath, reduced occupancy levels were likely to be the result of the removal of one or more persons from each family/household - an outcome would have had little impact on the availability of housing in general.

In conclusion, the evidence provided by Table A8.1 (Appendix 8) suggests strongly that overcrowding (a factor as identified by the 1917 Royal Commission as a key issue in the 1915 rent strikes) was not a matter of concern in Perth.

There remains a need to reconcile the problem of significant population growth, low-levels of house construction (private and 'social'), low homelessness, and the increase in the number of dwelling houses between 1901 and 1911. It has been impossible to answer this question with certainty - further research might if evidence can be found go some way to resolving the issue. What is irrefutable is that the growing population was housed. One way that this could have taken place without large scale housebuilding and/or increased homelessness and/or overcrowding, was if the additional dwellings already existed. In other words, there may have been a surplus of dwellings in Perth. This state of affairs, if it existed, would go someway to explain why overcrowding was never an issue in Perth, and as will be shown later, in

explaining (at least partially) why rents in Perth were far lower than in most Scottish towns/cities.

It is the qualitative nature of working-class housing in Perth that now requires examination. As will be shown in the next section, the majority of working-class housing in Perth was of a low standard and lacked basic sanitation, so that it was not a shortage of housing *per se* that was an issue in Perth but rather a lack of 'suitable' (i.e., good quality) housing.

8.3 *Working-Class Housing in Perth - a Qualitative Issue*

One aspect of house letting that caused substantial discontent (and which led eventually to political action and legislative response) in many Scottish working-class communities was the practice of letting out missives which not only required rents to be paid yearly, half-yearly, or quarterly, it committed tenants to a term of rental as long as 18 months by forcing them to agree future tenancy in advance. Before the House Letting & Rating (Scotland) Act 1911, 80% of Scottish working-class housing involved long leases. For this reason many tenants chose to live in accommodation inferior to that their income level allowed in order to militate against the possibility of eviction during times of economic hardship and unemployment.[58]

In his evidence to the Guthrie Committee of 1906/7 (discussed earlier) James Miller Barlas claimed that not only was the use of missives a recent phenomenon in Perth but that the issue of short lets had never been raised in

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[58] Rodger, 'Employment, Wages and Poverty', p. 103; Macdonald, 'Radical Thread', p. 214.

the city even by PTC.[59] Barlas was not entirely accurate in his statement. In response to a letter from the Tenants' Protection Association of Glasgow in very early January 1906, PTC resolved to make support for the abolition of missives a test question in future municipal elections. The next time that this issue was raised within PTC, however, was not until 1915 when the trades council chose to support the Perth Tenants' Defence Association in their campaigns against short lets. Nonetheless, it seems a reasonable conclusion on this evidence that the missive system a particular cause of grievance elsewhere was not as major an issue in Perth.[60]

In 1885 the Royal Commission for Inquiry into the Housing of the Working Classes in Scotland reported that housing within towns in Scotland was poor and worse than many other places in Britain - though far from the extreme of London.[61] Ingrid Hammarström and Thomas Hall claim that at this point in the nineteenth century 'the worst of English housing was merely the average in Scotland; the overcrowding, mortality, medical statistics in general offer ample confirmation of the environmental conditions in Scottish towns.'[62] How Perth compared in this regard to other parts of Scotland is the question to which this chapter now turns.

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[59] *Report of the Departmental Committee on House-Letting in Scotland Volume II*, pp. 200-01.

[60] PTC, *Minute Book*, 10 January 1906, 24 March 1915.

[61] *Second Report of Her Majesty's Commissioners for Inquiring into the Housing of the Working Classes. Scotland*, pp. 4-8.

[62] Ingrid Hammarström and Thomas Hall, *Growth and Transformation of the Modern City (The Stockholm Conference 1978 - University of Stockholm)* (Stockholm: Swedish Council for Building Research, 1979), p. 122.

Table A8.2 (Appendix 8) provides brief descriptions of the predominant types of working-class dwellings found in ADGP and Perth, 1905-1912. Whilst this information covers the period 1905-1912, it is reasonable to consider the housing descriptions as valid for several decades before and after 1905 due to the low level of housebuilding and 'closures' in that period.

Perth differed from ADGP, where tenements dominated, by having a broader range of working-class dwellings. It is worth noting that whereas in ADGP tenements were seen as part of the housing problem, in Perth the construction of new tenements improved the life of a small section of the city's working-class community. The shared space and collective dependability enshrined in tenement living operated to create a commonality of interests that assisted the process of resistance and solidarity which became manifest in the rent strike agitation of 1915. Terraces and the myriad of other types of dwellings that were a feature of Perth did not offer the 'political' communality of the tenement.

Another key difference between Perth and ADGP lay in the age of its properties. Perth a medieval town established prior to the twelfth century did not break out of its original boundaries until the 1760s.[63] In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries Perth contained a large number of poor quality dwellings of an 'extreme age'.

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[63] Gifford, *Perth and Kinross*, p. 567.

There is a plethora of evidence confirming the poor quality of working-class housing in Perth.[64] The city's Medical Officer for Health, for example, writing in 1898 made the case that 'Perth had more slums ... than they had in Edinburgh and Glasgow.'[65] *Labour Leader* provided in 1894 a description of Perth which not only included a description of the state of working-class housing in the city but offered a portrait of an acquiescence to a state of appalling wretchedness:

> I have been away among the hills and dales of Perthshire this past week. The people upon inquiry so far as I have been able to make as yet, have not heard of the Labour movement, and, of course no nothing about socialism. Many of the people work fifteen and sixteen hours per day for from 15 to 16s per week and are living in houses that would not pass sanitary inspection for pigs, far less human beings.[66]

An article in *Forward* from 1906 provides further anecdotal evidence as to the quality of housing in Perth at this time: 'the housing of the working class in Perth is wretched and the slums appalling for so small a place.'[67] A particularly damnatory description of the city was made around the same time by the Reverend Mr Knight of St Leonard's United Free Church, Perth who not only 'denounced "darkest Perth" with "its selfish landlords".' but also estimated that Perth was home to almost two million rats.[68] Even by 1922 there remained at

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[64] Harding has argued that Perth Town Council 'tried hard to keep up housing standards,' providing a few examples to support his assertion. These odd examples of improvements are insignificant against the case outlined in this chapter so far. Harding, 'War and Social Change', p. 90.

[65] *Annual Report of the Medical Officer of Health for Perth* (1897), cited in PTC, *Minute Book*, 28 February 1898.

[66] *Labour Leader*, 28 July 1894.

[67] *Forward*, 17 November 1906.

[68] *Perthshire Constitutional*, 6 December 1905; *Perthshire Advertiser*, 14 March 1906, p. 7.

least five substantial slum areas in Perth including Thimblerow (considered the worst) and Castle Gable.

Dundee it could be argued had, if comparison is made by size of population, a worse track record in working-class house provision than Edinburgh or Glasgow. At the very least, dwelling occupation levels in Dundee for 1881-1921, as detailed in Table A8.1 (Appendix 8), placed it on par with Glasgow and Paisley as a city with an appalling housing problems. It has already been established that overcrowding was not an issue in Perth so that a quantitative comparison of housing in Dundee and Perth would place Dundee well in advance *vis-a-vis* inadequate housing provision.

According to Rodger, Dundee's 'housing stock most closely resembled that of the "average" Scottish' burgh. Since Perth's housing stock did not, a qualitative comparison between the two city neighbours provides little comparative information as to which had the greater housing issue *per capita*. Ultimately without further research it is impossible to really say with certainty how the quality of working-class housing in Perth compared with other Scottish towns/cities. What really matters however is that despite Glasgow, Dundee, and Perth all suffering with inadequate housing provision (though to different degrees) for their working-class citizens, the political responses by the labour movements of the two larger cities diverged greatly with that of Perth.

Campaigning work by PTC on the issue of 'social' house construction and availability was discussed earlier. The trades council also lobbied the Town Council on issues of sanitation and improvement often using the Town

Council's own reports to that end. A good example of such action is provided by a set of interviews conducted by PTC with Dr C. Stuart (Medical Officer of Schools in Perth) and Mr McKenzie (Inspector for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children in Perth) in 1911, which were promulgated in the local press and exposed the dire nature of Perth's slum housing: 'the sanitary condition of the city is disgraceful. ... Regarding the slums in the city, it was high time the Town Council were taking action. Some properties required a great deal of improvement, while others ought to be removed entirely.'[69] PTC were convinced that their efforts had had the desired effect on the Town Council:

> Since the year 1896, up to the present there have been introduced (under the Burgh Police Act 1882) 446 water closets. Of that number, 58 have been installed during the present year and 28 last year. This means that during the 14 years prior to the agitation of the Trades' Council, they were introduced at something like 28 each year. Unless the present rate of introducing these conveniences is accelerated, another twenty years will pass before the work is anything like near completion. ... The introduction of a water supply into houses has gone about in even a more leisurely fashion – 105 in 16 years! Of these 53 were installed last year, and the remainder scattered over the period maintained.[70]

Despite these improvements, four years later, Reverend Millar Patrick of the United Free Church Presbytery, Perth appearing as a witness to the 1917 Royal Commission on Housing claimed:

> [There are] 'whole streets of houses in the city ... without the most elementary of sanitary conveniences ... In other cases ... the provision of water-closets is inadequate ... the consequence in single-roomed or two-roomed houses were several people reside must be deplorable from every point of view ... It is not houses only of the poorer order that are in this

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[69] *Perthshire Advertiser*, 23 October 1911, p. 5.
[70] *Perthshire Advertiser*, 3 May 1913, p. 2.

case; there are some rented at from £7 to £12 of which this is true.

Patrick's description of the state of housing in Perth was corroborated by J. M. Rae of PTC who also gave evidence to the Commission.[71]

It was poor quality of housing in Perth (rather than demand) that was the crux of the matter. Essentially, many of Perth's working-class residents lived in appalling slum conditions with poor sanitation - a predicament which the Town Council appeared to disregard apart from piecemeal efforts at improvement. Now that it has been established that there existed in Perth sufficient reasons for housing to be a major source of working-class discontent and alienation, what remains to be ascertained is the response to this state of affairs and in particular why that response differed so much from that experienced elsewhere in Scotland in 1915. This is the task of the next section.

8.4 *Resistance, Acquiescence, and Economic Contingencies*

Rosalind Mitchison has argued that the problem of urban housing in Scotland was more than an inevitable consequence of rapid growth caused by industrialisation. For Mitchison a key point of causation was a poor attitude to the masses and the acquiescence by the latter in their lot.[72] Whilst Mitchison was primarily concerned with an earlier period, her argument finds resonance in early twentieth-century Perth, for despite the depth of the housing problem, Perth's working class offered little resistance. The labour movement too failed to

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[71] Royal Commission on Housing in Scotland, *Report of the Royal Commission on the Housing of the Industrial Population of Scotland Rural and Urban* (HCPP, Cd. 8731, 1917-1918) pp. 72, 723.

[72] Mitchison, *Life in Scotland*, p. 154.

effectively challenge the state of affairs (apart from some success securing the construction of a few 'social' housing developments and minor improvements in sanitation conveniences as detailed earlier). The most striking moment of these failures occurred in 1915 when rising living costs, the increasingly unbearable nature of life in many Scottish cities (including Perth), coupled with the agitation of a growing and increasingly powerful Scottish labour movement led to rent strikes in many towns/cities across Britain but not in Perth.[73] Petrie's argument that 'the rent strike was one feature of the labour breakthrough' finds a resonance with the failure of the Perth labour movement to organise a rent strike in 1915 and their failure to offer a significant electoral challenge in 1922 - both issues that lie at the very heart of this thesis. The latter of these has already been considered earlier, it is the former that remains to be answered.[74]

It has been shown that PTC was composed of skilled artisan unions successful in maintaining relatively high rates of local pay for their members. Given the undeniable link between house affordability and wage levels, it seems reasonable to deduce that Perth's organised workers resided in superior quality housing to the majority of the city's working class and so the urgency of 'housing' as an issue to PTC despite some efforts by it in this direction did not exist. Rodger has made a similar point: 'where modest council housing had

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[73] It would be wrong to claim that PTC completely ignored the 1915 rent strikes and the agitation on the issue that followed. When approached by DTC in April 1916 to send two delegates to a conference of the National Housing Committee that had arisen out of the rent agitation in Glasgow and elsewhere, PTC agreed. In June 1916 the trades council were working with PILP to organise a joint meeting with the view to found a branch of the Committee in Perth. It is not clear however whether a branch was ever formed or whether it had any success as a body. PTC, *Minute Book*, 5 April, 3 May, 28 June 1916.

[74] Petrie, *Rent Strikes*, pp. 24, 31.

begun then it was artisans who were selected as tenants, not those in greatest need.'[75] Council housing was as demonstrated earlier a very minor part of working-class housing provision in Perth and thus would seem to diminish the validity of Roger's point. However, the issue here is not quantitative but rather qualitative. The provision of improved accommodation for Perth's highly-unionised artisans - a numerically minor but politically major sector of the Perth working class - would, as already argued, have had the effect of limiting the 'housing question' as an issue of concern to them and thus to the labour movement.

The machinations and discussions within PTC that took place in 1920 in regard to a proposed national 24-hour strike on the issue of increased house rents (linked to the relaxation of rent control under the House-Letting and Rating Suspensory (Scotland) Act 1920) offer some illustration of the trade council's position on housing in the postwar period and by interpolation to the earlier period. In various meetings in July and August 1920 the constituent unions of PTC hummed and hawed over the issue waiting for national guidelines and ballot results, waiting to see what other unions were planning, agreeing to support the majority decision and in some cases such as with the Painters' Union making no decision. Where votes were taken by Perth trade-union branches they generally resulted in opposition to the strike - in the case of the ASDBFKT by a large majority. Union branch meetings (the carpet weavers for example) where the strike was under discussion were poorly attended. Finally, three days before the planned strike date of 23 August 1920 PTC made

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[75] Rodger, 'Crisis and Confrontation', p. 37.

the recommendation to its members not to take part in the strike. (The strike received widespread backing in Glasgow which included a large protest rally on Glasgow Green.[76])

It has already been seen that overcrowding which was a major cause of discontent elsewhere and a primary factor in the 1915 rent strikes was not a feature of the housing situation in Perth and this absence helps in part to explain the absence of a rent strike in Perth in 1915 (and indeed in 1920). The rest of the explanation requires a consideration of the cost of living (and the relative cost of living) and in particular levels of rent in Perth in and immediately prior to 1915.

In Glasgow increasing demand for housing caused by the massive influx of munitions workers in the early phase of the First World War saw landlords respond by raising rents.[77] These rent increases and the increasing cost of living led to the formation of the Glasgow Women's Housing Association, several large-scale demonstrations, and the eventual involvement of the city's trade unions and labour movement. It remains to be seen to what degree these economic triggers existed in Perth.

The Board of Trade *Cost of Living of the Working Classes 1912* enquiry (discussed in Chapter 4) revealed that the cost of living in Scottish towns was the second highest in Britain and that rent, coal, and food prices were far higher than in the Midlands, and in the case of food higher than even those of

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[76] PTC, *Minute Book*, 8 July, 20 August 1920.

[77] The quality of working-class housing and poor sanitation was also an issue of contention in Glasgow as it was in Perth.

London.[78] This is a state of affairs that Rodger has argued existed for some time: 'compared to England, Scottish prices were higher, real wages lower and purchasing power reduced, including the capability to pay rent.' As will be seen, if it were not for the relatively cheaper price of coal in Scotland the cost of living in Scottish urban centres would have been even higher.[79]

As Table 8.6 (overleaf), which is an expanded version of Table 4.2 (Chapter 4) reveals, wage levels in Perth lagged behind those of its comparators with the exception of Aberdeen where wage levels also stood below the overall Scottish mean. Even the printers, a group considered by Harding to be the highest paid workers in Perth, were earning below the Scottish average.[80] Whilst the sample set is not representative of the Perth workforce as a whole it is not unreasonable to deduce that if the printers, a highly organised sector of the Perth workforce with a track record for militancy and industrial action, were receiving wages below the Scottish mean, then wage levels among the vast majority of the city's non-unionised workers must also have been below national rates.

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[78] The comparator indices for rent/coal/food for Scotland and the Midlands were 62.0/80.0/106.0 and 52.3/74.1/97.4 respectively (London (Middle Zone) = 100). *Cost of Living of the Working Classes 1912*, pp. 37, 266-85; J. K. Young, 'Homes fit for Heroes', p. 394.

[79] Richard G. Rodger, 'Market Forces, Housing and the Urban Form in Victorian Cities', in Anthony Sutcliffe and Derek Fraser, *The Pursuit of Urban History* (London: Edward Arnold, 1983), pp. 196-97; Rodger, 'Employment, Wages and Poverty', p. 99.

[80] Harding, 'War and Social Change', p. 133.

Table 8.6 *Relative Wage Levels in ADGP and Perth, 1912*[81]

	Building (Skilled Men)	Building (Labourers)	Engineering (Skilled Men)	Engineering (Labourers)	Printing (Compositors)	Mean Deviation from the Mean Relative Levels
Aberdeen	81	71	85	82	88	-3.2
Dundee	90	79	89	78	90	+0.6
Glasgow	92	81	96	79	92	+3.4
Paisley	89	86	96	79	92	+3.8
Perth	**82**	**79**	-	-	**83**	**-2.3**
Scotland	*86*	*79*	*92*	*80*	*86*	*0.0*

(**Source:** *Cost of Living of the Working Classes 1912*, pp. *xxvi, xxxvi*, 1, 266-85)

In order to get a fuller picture of life in Perth the buying power of wages must also be considered. Table 8.7 (below) quantifies the cost of living in ADGP and Perth in 1912.

Table 8.7 *Cost of Living in ADGP and Perth, 1912*[82]

	RPI	Rents (including Rates)	Total Food	Coal
Aberdeen	101	61	103	86
Dundee	104	67	105	97
Glasgow	99	67	108	71
Paisley	99	61	103	73
Perth	**108**	**55**	**111**	**88**

(**Source:** *Cost of Living of the Working Classes 1912*, pp. *xxvi, xxxvi*, 1, 266-85)

The RPI for Perth was not only the highest in Scotland of the towns looked at by the 1912 enquiry, it was the highest in the UK. Matters got a lot worse during the first three years of the First World War when as was noted in

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[81] (London (Middle Zone) = 100).

[82] (London (Middle Zone) = 100).

Chapter 4 the cost of living in Perth (partly as a result of profiteering) rose at a rate of 2%-5% per month.[83]

The combination of low wages and extremely high prices caused high levels of deprivation, malnutrition, and vulnerability to disease among Perth's working class. A report in the *Perthshire Advertiser* of interviews conducted by a delegation from PTC with the (Perth) Inspector for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children and the Medical Officer of Schools made much of this state of affairs:

> Poverty and disease are rampant in Perth. ... One great cause of under-feeding ... was the low wages of some working people. In fact, it was physically impossible on the income of certain householders, to feed the members of it adequately.[84]

In complete contrast, and herein lies the rub, the rent index for Perth was the second lowest in Scotland of the towns looked at by the 1912 enquiry despite Perth being the only one of the five towns detailed that had experienced a rent rise between 1905 and 1912 (3%) above the Scottish mean of 1.9% - a figure that indicates that prior to 1912 relative rental values were even lower in Perth.[85]

Low wages combined with a high cost of living, a dearth of available (though in many cases 'unsuitable') properties, meant that private landlords in Perth could not charge high rents. A negative feedback consequence of this state of affairs was that the rental property market in Perth was defined by low profitability which in turn discouraged housebuilding and property development. In addition, Perth never experienced the influx of workers

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[83] Harding, 'War and Social Change', p. 5; *Perthshire Courier*, 8, 10 February 1915.

[84] *Perthshire Advertiser*, 23 October 1911, p. 5

[85] *Cost of Living of the Working Classes 1912*, p. *xxx*.

associated with either Irish immigration, nor with the war-related industries and the consequent demand for housing that provided Glasgow's landlords with the opportunity to raise rents.[86]

8.5 *the Housing of the Working Class in Perth, post-1915*

'Suitable' housing availability by the end of the First World War was such a problem in Perth that the Presbytery of Perth became involved. At the end of February 1919 a 'Representative Meeting of Citizens' was held at the Synod Hall in Perth under the direction of the Citizens' Local Housing Committee, that had been established some months earlier under the direction of the Reverend David Graham, Convenor of the Social Work Committee of the Presbytery. Another clergyman, Reverend Joseph Shillinglaw of St Stephen's United Free Church, Perth, presided over the meeting as Chairman of the Committee. The ILP, PTC, CPCS, and the Perth Landlords & Property Agents' Association (PLPAA) all sent representatives. Attendees also included Lord Provost Scott, the Lord Dean of Guild, William Young MP (Perth), James Gardiner MP (Kinross & Western Perthshire), clergymen, council officials, local businessmen such as Frank Eastman (Eastmans) and Francis Norie-Miller (General Accident), as well as Ross Young, the Chief Commissioner for Housing for Scotland.

After an address by Reverend Shillinglaw in which he outlined the scarcity of housing in Perth and the inability of private enterprise to meet this need, a resolution was presented to the attendees:

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[86] This did not mean, however, that the war did not put some pressure on rent levels in Perth as evidenced by PTS's denouncement of house rents at the end of 1915. PTS, *Minute Book*, 29 November 1915.

> That this meeting, representative of the citizens of Perth, is of the opinion that the 200 houses projected by the Town Council are immediately necessary to meet the present emergency; but that the health and well-being of the people demanded a much larger scheme of housing. And, therefore resolves to approach the Town Council to urge that body as Local Authority to take all steps necessary to press upon the Government the need of Perth city in regard to housing.

Having endorsed an almost identical resolution at a previous meeting, a representative of the PLPAA nonetheless offered a counter-motion placing the onus for housebuilding back with the Town Council.[87] Their amendment, which was defeated (and the original passed unanimously) also demanded that only returning military personnel or the very poor be allowed to occupy properties with rents below the market rate.

The efforts of the PLPAA was very much aimed at maintaining the cartel of private landlordism within Perth. One of the attendees of the meeting, Major Munro (brother to the Secretary for Scotland) went so far as to attack the PLPAA claiming 'the counter-motion appeared to him to be moved with the object of putting a brake on progress.' The attempt to return housebuilding in Perth to the Town Council was undertaken due to the complicity of that body with maintaining the *status quo*. The claim by ex-Bailie Calderwood 'that the Town Council thought 100 houses were quite sufficient,' for example, stood in the face of clear evidence to the contrary. The *Perthshire Advertiser* but weeks earlier having described housing as 'a vexed question' went on to argue that some 315 houses were 'needed to meet the requirement of the working-classes in the

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[87] Part of the landlords' concerns (articulated at the meeting at the Synod House) resulted from their perception that the Local Housing Committee was 'in the clutches of the Labour Party.'

district.' The most powerful voice at the meeting, Young, the Chief Commissioner, advised the Council 'to take advantage of the Government money provided and build more.'[88]

A few weeks later a full-scale public meeting was held in Perth City Hall at which the Secretary for Scotland outlined the government's plans to construct 109,000 homes in Scotland. He also made the case for the return to economic rents arguing that these were indeed affordable. As for Perth, it was proposed, 'to proceed at once with the erection of 300 additional houses under the Local Government Board housing scheme ... it was also announced that no fewer than 278 houses had been condemned as unfit for habitation.'[89] (Many of these unfit properties had already been condemned by the Perth Sanitary Inspector but no closure orders had been issued.)[90]

It is rather suggestive of the weakness of the Perth labour movement (and its disinterest in housing matters) and the acquiescence of the Perth working class (placated by low rents) that even by 1919 the Town Council felt no pressure to deal with the problem of inadequate working-class housing in Perth. Without a serious and sustained challenge as occurred elsewhere in Scotland, the Liberal and Conservative councillors that ran Perth Town Council could and

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[88] *Perthshire Advertiser*, 15 January 1919, p. 2, 1 March 1919, p. 3.

[89] *Perthshire Advertiser*, 19 April 1919, p. 3.

[90] Given that it was not until the second half of the interwar period (1929-1938) that large-scale local authority housebuilding was undertaken in Perth - the Corporation dwellings around the Edinburgh Road, at Riggs Road, and elsewhere, and the two-/three-storey Neo-Georgian tenement development at Muirton and the smaller scheme at Tulloch - it can be argued that Perth Town Council was a bit slow in responding to the postwar government edict on house construction. (All these developments were pre-dated by the first model workers' houses constructed (1924-1932) in the Gannochy area of Perth (on the east bank of the River Tay) by the whisky firm of Arthur Bell & Sons.) Gifford, *Perth and Kinross*, p. 568 *ff*.

did ignore housing as a political issue and yet still maintained working-class electoral support. By remaining aloof from the housing issue, the Perth labour movement ensured the absence of yet another factor that elsewhere allowed emergent Labour parties to 'cut their teeth' and which fertilised the growth of a Labour politic in Scotland. If Rodger is correct to claim that 'the launch of Labour on Clydeside ... owed much to its stance on housing issues,' then it seems only right to proffer its corollary that in Perth the paucity of Labour's electoral challenge owed something to its failure to pursue the 'housing question'.[91]

8.6 *Summary Remarks*

Housing in Perth in the nineteenth century and in the first two decades of the twentieth century was of very poor quality. Insanitary living conditions were the norm and improvements piecemeal and inadequate. Housebuilding was both limited and wanting. Nonetheless, despite a plethora of evidence of poor quality housing in Perth, insufficient evidence has been found to conclude whether housing in Perth was qualitatively worse than Dundee or Glasgow or indeed to what index it compared.

The labour movement (and the established churches) were active to a certain degree proffering 'social' housing as an alternative to the private landlordism that dominated Perth. This hegemony of private landlords was shored up by the Town Council some of whose members were themselves landlords and/or factors. Housing however was never the major issue for the

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[91] Rodger, 'Crisis and Confrontation', p. 43.

city's trade unions and PTC whose ability to maintain relatively high wage levels (as compared to the majority of the Perth working class) and the availability of some social housing ensured that the environmental experience of their members was very different. Overcrowding and rent increases that operated as triggers in Glasgow for the creation of wide-scale dissent over housing that fed into the conjunctural crisis in capitalist hegemony that was experienced in many British towns/cities as rent strikes and which led to major concessions to the working class including rent control and state-funded housebuilding programmes, were not factors in Perth.

Ultimately, despite extremely poor quality working-class housing, an increasing demand for 'suitable' housing driven by a reasonably high growth of population and a low level of housebuilding by both the private and non-private sectors, and a local council privileging the interests of the city's landlords, it was low rents, the absence of overcrowding, and the relatively high wage levels of the organised working class and the availability to them of 'superior' housing, that seems to have curtailed the politicisation of the housing issue in Perth. It must be pointed out however the case for a casual relationship between housing and labour action (and working-class voting patterns) was not sufficiently made in this chapter. Nonetheless despite the shakiness of this causal link it is likely that it was the aforementioned factors that acted as the social cement that ensured that in 1915, a year which witnessed at least eight separate industrial disputes within Perth for higher wages and 25,000-30,000 Glasgow tenants withholding their rents, no rent strike took place in Perth.

Chapter 9 *- Conclusions*

This thesis has provided a historical description of the Perth labour and trade-union movements (*c.* 1867-*c.* 1922) and a comparison between the loci of their political development and those of other Scottish towns/cities/areas most notably Dundee, Glasgow, and Paisley (but also to a lesser extent Aberdeen, Edinburgh, and the Vale of Leven). The study has included general striking patterns and militancy as a function of time as well as an examination of critical points such as the 'new unionism' of 1889-1891. In doing so this thesis has filled a gap in Scottish labour historiography and added to a growing corpus of studies on the labour and trade union movements of Scottish towns/cities/areas other than those in the well-examined industrial regions of the West-Central Belt. In addition, this thesis has provided a wealth of data against which generalising narratives which purport to describe the development of Scottish labour history can be read. Central to the examination of the loci of political development of the Perth labour and trade union movements and to providing an understanding as to their deviation from those of elsewhere has been the nature of the Perth 'local identity'. Two concepts have been central to this thesis: the Marxist concept of hegemony and paternalistic industrial relations. In regard to the latter a key element of the Perth 'local identity' has been shown to be the longevity of paternalistic industrial relations in Perth. Whilst paternalism as a viable management tool was not suited to the industrial parts of Clydeside and Glasgow and whilst its effect dwindled in many Scottish industrial areas, it lingered in Perth well into the twentieth century. This has provided a way of explaining the deviation of Perth's labour history from those of elsewhere.

Perth during the period of scrutiny of this thesis was foremost a market town for a rich agricultural county. As a port, railway hub, and commercial centre Perth was at times economically self-directing and at other times susceptible to regional influence. Whilst agricultural production dominated its district, textile manufacture/processing (especially dyeing and drycleaning) was the industry of greatest importance in Perth. Of primary importance to economic change in Perth was its general railway station which linked Perth to the major commercial centres and markets of the UK and without which the dyeing, drycleaning, and whisky blending industries could not have thrived. The railway and transport industries in Perth were also a significant sector of employment (much of it unionised). In common with national economic changes, the city's service industries gradually grew in importance at the expense of manufacturing and textiles.

Until the 1910s the vast majority of the Perth working class were employed in industries that lacked any trade-union presence - industries associated with family or oligarchical management whose industrial relation styles were in the main paternalistic. The Perth economy was suited to the practice of authoritarian paternalistic industrial relations. The compactness and demographic stability of the growing Perth population, the nature and size of its businesses and factories which allowed for face-to-face management, the dominance by a few firms of much of the local employment market, the ability to offer a 'job for life', all promoted the use of an approach less suited to Scotland's larger industrial centres such as Clydeside. This culture of paternalism driven in part by religious and social ideas (though in the main an

economic construct) provided Perth's factory masters with a subservient and disciplined workforce committed to 'the firm'. Paternalism extended out of the factories and permeated through much of the political, social, and cultural life of Perth as welfarism in the provision of benefits outwith the cash nexus - company housing, leisure, recreation, and education - but also in the involvement of factory owners in civil society. (The power and influence of welfare offerings such as housing were enhanced by the paucity of existing provision within Perth.)

The local factory and political order was created by consent and concession so that the Perth working class played a major role in its own subordination. Where trade unionism did flourish it was until 1913 primarily within the artisan trades or in skilled industries such as printing. The organisations of these craft workers, including the city's trades council, operated for decades in the interests of a small elite group of workers. Trade unionism within the textile industry was slow to develop and as might be expected from an enterprise which was central to the economy of a city with only one large industry, when permanent trade-union structures were established within it, in and after 1913, they maintained a strong influence over the political allegiance of their members.

Economically contingent and tied to the health of capital, paternalistic management as a general practice became increasingly difficult in periods of economic downturn. Coupled with the undermining of the factory order by the counter-hegemonic challenges of the labour movement, technological and social changes that undermined the value of welfare benefits, wage demands

and industrial conflict fuelled in part by the growth of trade unionism and socialism, the growth of limited company status, and improvements in state provision, the viability of factory paternalism as an industrial relations tool diminished during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This process was far from homogeneous across industries and regions - paternalism endured in Perth long after its demise elsewhere.

Chapter 3 opened with a description of Perth in 1867 in which the city's artisans had already established trade unions to represent their interests. These craft unions - branches of increasingly formidable national bodies - were not the first trade unions to be seen in the district and evidence was furnished to show a tradition of agricultural trade unionism dating from the turn of the nineteenth century that predated the establishment of similar organisations anywhere else in Scotland. After the exclusion of agricultural and coal mining trade unionism, and the preclusion of domestic workers, Chapters 3 and 4 provided a roughly chronological description of trade unionism in Perth, *c.* 1867 to *c.* 1922. Key to this task was the production of a detailed database of strike activity in Perth for this period using a broad range of primary and secondary sources - Table A3.1 (Appendix 3).

The growing legalisation of trade-union activity that occurred from 1867 onwards and the economic boom of the early 1870s coupled with a period of low unemployment saw a growth in trade-union membership in Perth and a success in organising and winning disputes that emulated what was happening across Britain. With little fear of unemployment and with the ability to seek work outwith Perth, the city's artisan tradesmen and their trade-union branches

proved successful in raising the pay and improving the conditions of a small proportion of the Perth working class whose wages remained for more than a half-century well in advance of other workers. This contrasted greatly with the situation experienced by most workers in Perth who competed with each other for employment in a local economy in which a few major employers controlled the labour market.

In their activities, the labour movement in Perth during the 1870s beat time with national developments. A good example of this was provided in Chapter 3 by the struggle for Shorter Hours of the 1870s that began in Tyneside (as the Nine Hours' League) and spread across the UK. In Perth, those in the building, engineering, craft, and printing trades readily took the struggle forward. Perth's engineers, for example, represented as they were by the Amalgamated Society of Engineers (ASE) pursued a 51-hour week in concert with activists situated across Scotland and England. Success defined the campaign for most of the city's trades. The carpenters and joiners (represented by the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters & Joiners (ASCJ)), for example, achieved a 51-hour week in 1877 - an achievement that correlates well (temporally) with the national picture. The artisan unions ability to pursue a reduction of the working week in Perth was facilitated by their dominance of the local labour market. Militancy over the hours of labour extended in Perth (as it did nationally) to textile workers. Their struggle took on a different form in that the textile industry workforce pursued their claims with non-institutionalised protest and as would be the pattern for decades without any permanent body

representing their interests. In this, Perth was not unique and a similar observation has been made by Gallacher about workers in the Vale of Leven.

Towards the end of the 1870s and into the 1880s the weakening economic situation impacted negatively on trade-union militancy in Perth and nationally. By the end of that decade with improved economic circumstance the trade-union movement revived and expanded as workers returned to their old unions and thousands of previously unorganised workers joined new more militant trade unions. This 'new unionism' bypassed Perth. Lowish employment in those industries associated with 'new unionism' offered a partial explanation. It was concluded in Chapter 3 that the cause also lay in worker indifference and a resistance on behalf of the established artisan unions to see the formation of trade unions for the unskilled.

During this period the artisan trades as exemplified by Perth Typographical Society (PTS) won improvements to and defended established pay and conditions of service. Despite the small size of PTS and its limited depth of membership, it maintained a control over and entry to the workplace that allowed it to operate very effectively. At the same time and in line with the textile trade unionism generally, Perth's textile workers maintained their propensity for non-institutionalised industrial action and resisted calls for unionisation from trade unions such as the Dundee and District Mill & Factory Operatives' Union (DDMFOU).

Perth & District Labour and Trades Council (PTC) was formed in 1897 (in advance of many other Scottish trades councils) by small branches of the craft

societies such as the ASE. For much of its lifetime PTC operated as an exclusive club providing for a minor proportion of the Perth working class. Diminutive in relative size to other Scottish trades councils, PTC often acted to inhibit its own growth. Efforts by Dundee Trades Council (DTC) and the Dundee Tramway Union (DTU) to organise transport workers in Perth (in 1906 and 1910), for example, were resisted by PTC which instead privileged Municipal Employers Association (MEA) as its union of choice. By thwarting DTC, PTC was asserting its position as the arbiter of change and at the same time alienating DTC. Such actions slowed down the process of unionisation of the Perth working class.

When PTC did attempt to unionise workers it more often than not was confronted with resistance and apathy. New trade-union branches that did form were frequently still-born or dysfunctional. Whilst PTC proved itself to be adept at winning and maintaining pay advances and improvements in working conditions for and alongside its affiliate unions, it nonetheless remained effectively ghettoised for decades. The marginalisation of PTC, its failure to widen its sphere of influence and to expand trade unionism in Perth, meant that the seeds of a Labour politic were not planted in Perth at a time when Labour shoots were beginning to establish themselves in the soil of Scottish working-class consciousness.

1898 marked the start of a period of national industrial relations quietude that lasted until 1907. In 1908 and throughout the remaining pre-war years with an improving economy the trade-union movement once again expanded in membership and militancy. Unlike the earlier strike fusillade of 1889-1891, the pre-war upsurge was influenced to a certain degree by socialist

and syndicalist ideas. Quantitatively in terms of strike patterns and levels, Perth once again mirrored the national picture.

Chapter 4 took as its initial focus textile trade unionism in Perth to 1913. Like their counterparts in Dundee and elsewhere, Perth's textile firms employed large numbers of women at pay rates lower than their male colleagues. This pay differential was accentuated in Perth by the relatively low rates of male pay. Jute workers in Dundee, for example, who remained largely non-unionised until after 1906 were paid far better than their equivalents in Perth. Whereas in Dundee trade unionism among textile workers advanced logarithmically after 1906, in Perth the textile workforce (especially its female operatives) despite a willingness to self-organise and a propensity for spontaneous striking, did not offer their countenance to permanent trade-union structures until 1913 and not fully until 1918. Conjunctural crises such as the 1891 and 1911 strikes at Shields provided evidence of a *leitmotif* within the behaviour of the Perth textile workforce: years of discontent followed by extemporaneous explosions of anger and strike activity (and occasionally the establishment of generally short-lived trade-union branches) were followed after the granting of concessions by the employer with a return to the pre-crisis norm of docility.

In establishing the binding that maintained the textile factory order, Chapter 4 located it in paternalistic labour relations as practised by Perth's textile employers many of whom formed the city's Liberal ruling elite in local civil society. Strikes it was deemed within the textile industry served not to undermine or challenge the factory hegemony but rather to maintain it. The watershed to this social behaviour was eventualised around 1913. At Shields that

year, for example, after several years of dispute a works committee was established - a permanent structure that provided for bargaining between company management and representatives of the National Federation of Women Workers (NFWW) and the Amalgamated Society of Dyers, Bleachers, Finishers & Kindred Trades (ASDBFKT). A number of reasons for this sea-change in textile worker attitude were elucidated in Chapter 4. First, 1913 sat towards the end of a critical point in industrial unrest led nationally by dockers, railway workers, and seamen - part of the local *maxima* that occupied the years 1910 to 1913. Second, the cost of living in Perth and levels of poverty had become intolerable. A Board of Trade cost of living analysis for Scotland's towns/cities in 1912 showed the Retail Price Index (RPI) of Perth to be the highest in the UK. Waning real wages further accentuated the economic hardship of the Perth working class. Unlike the 'steam venting' that defined the earlier periods of economic despondency, many of the strikes that occurred in the Perth textile industry during the pre-war strike upsurge directly involved national trade-union leaders who came to Perth determined to successfully organise the substantial numbers of impoverished textile workers. In this they had their successes as the case of Shields already mention evidences. The keystone in 1913 remained Pullars.

The principal industrial relations episode at Pullars during the national strike upturn of 1910-1913 was the 1912 strike. In decades of operation little had shaken the Pullars' management control of their works. Between 1873 and 1906 complete industrial tranquility reigned at Pullars. The 1912 strike changed matters, albeit temporarily. Pullars were the paternalist employers *par excellence*

in Perth employing individual wage bargaining and a range of welfarist concessions to secure the loyalty and acquiescence of their workforce to low wages and harsh working conditions. In 1912 when as was demonstrated in Chapter 4 the cost of living in Perth stood in advance of all other towns/cities in the UK, a significant proportion of the Pullars workforce struck. Influenced and supported by the labour movement - locally (PTC and the Perth branch of the Independent Labour Party (PILP)) and externally (NFWW, ASDBFKT, and the National Prohibition & Reform Party (NPRP)) - these workers appeared to abandon the patterns of compliance and servitude that had defined industrial relations within the Perth textile industries. In reality, their actions were aimed at re-establishing the existing hegemony that was threatened by the failure of Pullars to respond to the worsening economic situation. Once the proximity of those advocating counter-hegemonic alternatives - the leadership of the national textile trade unions - was diminished, the striking workers returned to the factory with little concession from their employers.

The 1917 strike at Pullars had its cause in a set of circumstances similar to those of the 1912 dispute. Food prices and the cost of living in Perth already high in the pre-war years ran far in advance of wage increases. Textile worker spending power in 1917 was just two-thirds of what it had been in 1912. In other unionised textile firms - outwith Perth - arbitrated pay increases had done much to alleviate rising living costs. The response to this situation at John Pullar & Sons Ltd (Pullars), P & P Campbell (Campbells), and in some of the other Perth textile companies was industrial militancy and a major upturn in trade-union recruitment with hundreds of workers joining the ASDBFKT. The response

from the management at Pullars was draconian. (Campbells' management on the other hand showed themselves willing to enter into an arbitrated settlement (November 1917) and avoided a strike.[1]) Far from the Liberal employers of the past, the Pullar family, firmly ensconced in the Unionist camp, showed no willingness to move beyond their narrow corporate interests. With the dominant partner in the paternal relationship unwilling to keep its side of the bargain, the cycle of reproduction of the factory order at Pullars broke down and the conflict spilled over into violent confrontation at the factory gates.

The Great War had altered the political and social backdrop against which the 1917 strike at Pullars played out. The state had been forced by the contingency of 'total' war to engage and partner with national trade-union bodies. The hegemonic relationship between workers and their employees formerly established at the level of the firm was now constructed between the state and the trade unions directly. This change meant that paternalism and the ideological vision it offered were defunct. Incapable of and unwilling to adapt to this new paradigm, the Pullar family sold the firm to Eastman & Sons Ltd (Eastmans) who immediately set about the creation of an industrial relations strategy suited to the new factory order and one that acknowledged the local arrangements of the past.

As labour relations in Perth's textile industry moved into a new era, trade unionism in the city once again moved in phase with the national narrative. 'New unionism' in the form of militancy from gas workers, carters, and municipal employers emerged finally whilst at the same time the older trade

[1] See Table A3.3 (Appendix 3).

unions that still formed the core of PTC continued to successfully represent their members by use of the traditional tools of trade unionism but also by embracing the new state regulatory machinery as exemplified by the local and national arbitration bodies.

As a political force, in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the labour movement in Scotland lagged behind its companion movement south of the border. Liberalism too, as was shown in Chapter 5, even though it went on to dominate Perth politics for more than half a century, also took its time to develop. Reform activity associated with the First and Second Reform Acts were rarely witnessed in either the city of Perth or its county. Chartism though it existed in some form was also limited to minor events and small activist groupings. When Perth Radicalism moved to the centre stage with the creation of Perth Working Men's Association (PWMA) in 1869, its efforts were short-lived and fleeting. This absence of currents of radicalism in the nineteenth century ensured the absence of the Labour torrent that was 1922.

By 1868 Liberalism had secured its position in Perth and whilst Conservatism aided by boundary changes, Liberal disunity (nationally and locally), and its own improved organisational developments slowly edged its way into the county seats, the Liberal Party remained electorally dominant in the city of Perth until the early 1920s. Perth Conservatism was a canny beast that showed great flexibility and a willingness to ally to traditional Liberalism to defeat Radicalism whenever it seemed likely to outmanoeuvre the Whiggish elements in Perth's Liberal Party. It was also aided by local support for

Orangeism. Imperialist ventures such as the second Boer War however as argued in Chapter 5, played no role in increasing Conservative support.

For decades Liberal hegemony in Perth was secured not by electioneering but by the complete dominance of a politics and culture centred on the workplace. Perth's Liberal elite were also its captains of industry who through control of employment, the factories, and the application of an all-pervading paternalism ensured the loyalty of a significant proportion of the Perth working class. This hegemony was only slowly lost. Changes that elsewhere saw to the demise of industrial paternalism and Liberal hegemony were only gradually realised in Perth. Paternalistic management methods alongside the traditional family owned firm structure persisted in Perth when in many other parts of Scotland they had been superseded. Migration especially of Irish workers that was responsible for challenging the ideological *status quo* in the Vale of Leven, Dundee, and Paisley was never an issue in Perth. Its absence and the failure of the labour movement to offer counter-hegemonic alternatives to Liberalism meant that the electoral challenge to Liberalism by Labour when it came in 1922, although sufficient to undermine a divided Liberal Party, was too little and too late.

The labour movement in Perth for decades had comprised an active but small Independent Labour Party (ILP) branch, a co-operative movement willing to act politically but primarily focussed on sectional issues, a trades council reluctantly and slowly throwing off its support of Liberalism in favour of an unhurriedly developing taste for socialism and Labour politics, and a working class in the main unorganised and reluctant to adopt class politics. In Chapters 3

and 4 it was argued that PTC and its constituent trade unions though effective in looking after their members interests only ever represented a small minority of the Perth working class.[2] Perth lacked the leading industrial sectors responsible for high trade-union membership - such as coal and engineering - whose workers as John Benson has argued were 'the most active politically;' and it never experienced the 'new unionism' of 1889-1891, which not only gave the trade-union movement size and significance, it provided momentum for the development of a labour politic.[3]

Labour politics in Perth was far from what Laybourn has argued was the case in Bradford where the 'capture of trade-union support ... was largely responsible for the success of the Bradford ILP;'[4] and in Leicester where Bill Lancaster has argued the culture of socialism, 'local activism and organisation [trade unions, trades council, co-operative societies, *Clarion* cycling groups and choirs, socialist picnics, ILP branches, a socialist church, and socialist Sunday Schools] were vital in making Labour a movement capable of a national impact.'[5] Nearer to home, Dundee had much of the 'socialist infrastructure' that

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[2] The Perth & District Power Loom Tenters Society illustrates this point well. Formed in 1910, with just 26 members, the Society became active in PTC but remained insignificant. In the summer of 1920 it had dwindled to a membership of 20. (In the 1920s the Society ceased to exist - it likely became integrated into the Scottish Union of Power Loom Operators.) PTC, *Minute Book*, 20 July 1920.

[3] John Benson, *The Working Class in Britain, 1850-1939* (London: Longman, 1989), p. 190.

[4] Laybourn, 'Recent Writing on the History of the ILP', p. 321.

[5] In Leicester the ILP was particularly effective in spreading in a rhizomorphous manner its influence into the full spectrum of labour movement organisations whilst at the same time by constantly championing the issue of poverty in the city achieved greater and greater success within the municipal electoral environment. Lancaster, 'Breaking Moulds', pp. 75, 85-87.

was so important in Bradford and Leicester. This culture of socialism and 'web of progressive' organisations, which were so important in Dundee and elsewhere in the development of a Labour politic, never existed in Perth.

The absence of these 'ingredients' of local activism is not in itself the ultimate explanation for the paucity of Labour politics in Perth. It is the combination of their absence and the lack of other driving challenges to the local political hegemony. In Colne Valley, for example, trade unionism suffered from a similar weakness as did Perth, but the local ILP and labour movement, David Clark has argued, were driven forward by the power of the 'external and moral aspects of socialism.'[6]

With the arrival of permanent textile trade-union structures in and after 1913 the trade-union movement in Perth for the first time offered a real challenge to the hegemony of the city's industrial order. From a mere 67 members in 1917 the ASDBFKT grew into an organisation of 2,000 workers prepared to take on their employers to achieve their aims.[7] It might be surmised that at this point the Perth labour movement might have presented itself in a way similar to that being experienced across Scotland. This, as was shown in Chapter 6, was not the case. The problem was the innate conservatism of the ASDBFKT leadership, which whilst happy to organise strikes in support of improved pay and conditions remained firmly opposed to 'socialism and syndicalism' and the

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[6] David Clark, *Colne Valley: Radicalism to Socialism: The Portrait of a Northern Constituency in the Formative Years of the Labour Party* (London: Longman & Company, 1981), pp. 88-89.

[7] *Perthshire Courier*, 9 February 1920.

actions on the 'Red Clyde'.[8] In this the ASDBFKT's actions stand in marked contrast to those of the DDJFWU which Walker has argued assisted Labour as an electoral force in Dundee.[9]

By the early 1920s politics in Perth was nonetheless unrecognisable from that that had existed earlier. Perth's economic and political elite, once guardians of a local Liberal tradition, stood in 1922 in the Conservative camp. The Perth working class too, once staunchly Liberal had by 1922 shifted - a grouping to Perth District Labour Party (PDLP) that had only latterly entered parliamentary politics. Others responded to the appeals of a Toryism 'based primarily around changing political conceptions of the nation' and found solutions in decades of Conservative rule - whilst some die-hards refused to abandon a Liberalism whose death agony was heard in Perth as an echo of its national decline. This shift mirrored to a degree the political changes experienced across Scotland especially in the east of the country where, as J. P. D. Dunbabin has argued, strong support for the Liberal Party prior to the Great War declined in favour of growing allegiance to the Conservatives whilst maintaining a sizeable (20%) of parliamentary seats. It deviated, however, in that the advance of Labour - at the expense of the Liberals - as a rival to Conservatism was only experienced partly in Perth so that the growth in electoral support for Labour among the Perth working class after 1918, as has already been argued, served only to divide the vote and secure repeated Conservative electoral victories.

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[8] *Perthshire Advertiser*, 7 July 1912, 26 April 1919, p. 3; *Perthshire Constitutional*, 12 January 1910; *Perthshire Courier*, 28 April 1919.

[9] Walker, *Juteopolis*, p. 204.

During the nineteenth century the co-operative movement in Britain stood head and shoulders above all other working-class organisations in importance to that class. Primarily a supplier of goods and services to working-class communities, the co-operative movement was also an employer of large numbers of workers.

The City of Perth Co-operative Society (CPCS) from its establishment in 1871 grew steadily as a business and as an employer. Its development and growth proceeded in a manner similar to many other co-operative societies; its political outlook and behaviour dependent as they were on the strength and involvement of the local labour movement differed in significant ways from societies such as those operating in Edinburgh, Leith, and Portobello. The task of this chapter was to examine the relationship between the co-operative movement in Perth and the people it served and employed. Specifically this involved a study of the CPCS and its dealings with the labour movement in Perth.

After a brief summary of the commercial history of the CPCS, Chapter 7 offered a consideration of the contradiction between the ideals of co-operation and the needs of the CPCS as a profit-seeking business albeit one that sought to share those profits with its membership. The CPCS and its responses to strike activity external to its operations and among its own workforce were explored in some detail. In regard to the former, whilst a difficulty in forming a generalisation was highlighted it was concluded that the CPCS did willingly offer support to striking workers external to its own workforce. Where such strikes nonetheless impinged on CPCS commercial interests a degree of reticence was noted in the behaviour and response of the Society. The close

dependency between the CPCS and the Society's working-class customer base was a very powerful motivator and tied the CPCS closely into to the lives of that community. This meant that as in 1912 with the major strike at Pullars which affected the entire city, the CPCS had no real choice but to support the striking workers.

It was as an employer that the CPCS (and the co-operative movement in general) displayed less supportive tendencies towards striking workers. The co-operative ideal of being a model producer, retailer, and wholesaler was not compatible with the movement's other declared aim - that of being a model employer. Voices from within co-operation and the labour movement were well aware of this contradiction, which they articulated in public.

Through the public statements of its first General Manager, David Glass, the CPCS made much of the ideal of serving the Perth working class as consumers and employees of co-operation. Despite Glass's pronouncements the 1898 and 1916-17 operative bakers' strikes in Perth (two of very few disputes that directly involved the CPCS between 1871 and 1922) exposed the unresolvable dialectical contradiction between co-operation's role as a consumer champion, model employer, and as a commercial organisation in competition with private capital. Not only did the CPCS work to prevent the development of trade unionism among its workforce but when faced with demands for improved pay and conditions, it acted on occasions in a manner far more hostile and belligerent than its competitive rivals. In dealing with the tension between its commercial activities and its responsibilities as an employer the CPCS maintained positions which made it clear that in all matters it privileged a

business pragmatism, consumer centrality, and corporate self-interest above all. It did not do so in isolation and in general the vast majority of its members supported (or at the very least did not oppose) its management decisions informed by the effectiveness of the Society in improving their members' living standards.

Despite the professed political neutrality of co-operation, the British co-operative movement displayed an increasing willingness to engage with municipal and parliamentary politics throughout the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This was manifest in the pursuit of direct representation at the local and parliamentary level and ultimately by the formation in 1918 of the Co-operative Party. In these pursuits the co-operative movement worked in tandem with the labour movement. The catalyst for the politicisation of co-operation lay in the opposition to co-operative societies by private traders. One of the first of such oppositional manifestations to take place in Perth was the attack on the CPCS by private traders in 1876. Further Trade Wars in the 1880s, 1895-1897, and 1907-1908 did much to consolidate the desire within the CPCS leadership for direct representation on municipal bodies especially the Town Council, which it achieved in 1898. As with its behaviour as an employer, the CPCS's commitment to political representation and its association with the political activities of the labour movement was qualified and limited to self-interest.

The primacy of the consumer in the activities of co-operators, the close association of co-operative retail societies with working-class social and economic life, and the co-operative movement's role as an employer of labour,

together created conflict and tension between the co-operative and labour movements. At various times dependent on the particular manifestation of the conflict and the internal/external forces acting upon them - and indeed simultaneously - the movements could act in cohesion or antagonistically.

For the CPCS, business pragmatism (the need to make a profit) and its historical mission (to maximise the spending power of its members) were major if not almost overriding factors in the process of reconciling competing demands, especially the claims of its workforce for higher wages and improved working conditions. CPCS involvement in municipal and parliamentary politics as an ally of the labour movement was pragmatic, a matter of self-interest, and episodic.

Chapter 8 began by providing a brief review of the development of working-class housing as a political issue from the mid-nineteenth century until the immediate postwar period. Perth like Scotland's other towns/cities had in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries undergone industrialisation and consequent population growth. With this urban expansion came disease and sanitation issues that impacted greatly on public health and mortality rates caused by poverty-fuelled poor nutrition/health, insufficiency in housing supply, overcrowding, and inadequate dwellings. Governmental legislative response to this situation first appeared in the mid-nineteenth century and whilst much was done to improve issues of sanitation at the municipal level, the quality and quantity of working-class housing remained an unresolved issue. The conjunctural crisis caused by the Great War of 1914-19 in particular the rent strikes experienced in several places across Scotland in 1915 (but not in Perth)

provided the catalyst for significant national action on working-class housing - the 'Homes fit for Heroes' initiative; one however that was not fully realised.

The population of the city of Perth between 1871 and 1911 rose at a rate higher than the overall expansion in the population of Scotland. Comparison of the housed population of Perth (1881-1921) with Aberdeen, Dundee, Glasgow, and Paisley (ADGP) however revealed that population growth whilst significant in Perth at +20.7% between 1881 and 1911 was less than half that of most other Scottish towns/cities and below the Scottish average. Perth's growth rate of 6.5% per decade still placed pressure on housing supply and the manner in which this demand was met was examined in Chapter 8.

In order to understand to what extent working-class housing provision in Perth compared to those towns/cities such as Glasgow that experienced rent strikes and agitation on housing and sanitation, the quantity and quality of said housing was examined. To assess the former a number of factors were considered and comparison made with a number of comparator towns/cities. Those factors examined included the levels of private housebuilding construction and 'social' housing provision (included properties provided by Pullars and the CPCS for its workers/members) in Perth, as well as the numbers of 'Unfit for Habitation' closing orders, levels of homelessness and housed homelessness, population density, and overcrowding.

Perth fared better than most Scottish towns/cities in relation to most of these factors: in general homelessness was not a major issue in Perth in the prewar years; overcrowding was not only lower in Perth than in ADGP but

improved dramatically between 1881 and 1921; the proportion of families in Perth housed by the Town Council in 1917 was higher than that achieved by most Scottish local authorities (although at 1.4% it was nonetheless low); it was a similar story in regard to population density - Perth was then the least densely populated of Scotland's large towns. Private housebuilding was the exception with very few new properties constructed in Perth between 1901 and 1911.

This set of quantitative housing data were reconciled with the increasing housed population in Perth in Chapter 8 by deducing that there must have existed a surplus of dwellings. Unless this was the case it is difficult to see how an increasing population could have been housed such that room occupation levels decreased in a city where few new dwellings were constructed and homelessness remained at a low and stable level.

Qualitative aspects of working-class housing formed the secondary focus of Chapter 8. As a medieval city which had remained within its original boundaries for more than half a millennium, Perth was in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries composed of a wide variety of dwellings many of extreme age and poor quality. The typical architectural features of Perth's working-class dwelling contrasted greatly with those of ADGP where the tenement block was dominant.

For a large number of Perth's working class citizens home was a slum residence with insufficient sanitation. Many of these slums were still in existence in 1922 despite attempts by the local labour movement to pressurise the Town Council in the provision of 'social' housing and the clearing of several

slum areas. The wretchedness of working-class life in Perth's slums in 1915 was compounded by low wages and a high cost of living, which resulted in widespread poverty, deprivation, and even malnutrition. And yet, despite the quality of housing being a major source of discontent and alienation, the 1915 rent strike and associated militancy bypassed Perth.

Such a lack of resistance had its source partly in the acquiescence of the Perth working class in their lot and partly in the failure of the labour movement to organise in this area. (Though it must be added that the causal link between poor housing and labour activity was not established.) The weakness of PILP has already been argued. PTC had some record of lobbying the Town Council on housing and sanitary issues but for the vast majority of its membership whose pay levels stood in advance of the majority of other workers in Perth and who in all probability resided in the better available working-class dwellings, housing was never a pressing issue. Even in and after 1913 with the development of general unionism, little changed.

The main cause for the absence of a rent strike in Perth in 1915 as suggested at the end of Chapter 8 was low rents. Perth in 1912 had the second lowest Rent Index in Scotland. In addition, without the influx of workers for war-related industries such as experienced in Glasgow, Perth's low wage economy, high cost of living, and 'normal' levels of housing demand meant it was impossible for landlords to raise rents.

Ultimately, the deviation between the Perth labour movement and the experience of labour elsewhere in Scotland was a matter of different economic/social

structures and political cultures; and the presence or absence of factors of causality - all of which formed the Perth 'local identity'. The implication of this for Scottish labour history is that narratives based upon the historical experiences of certain 'big' industrial towns/cities falter when extrapolated to other industrial towns/cities, or regions whose socio-economic structures though analogous differed significantly as mediated by a 'local identity'. The historical development of the labour, trade-union, and co-operative movements in Perth suggest that any attempt at an all-encompassing historical generalisation of Scottish trade unionism and the rise of Labour in Scotland must acknowledge a degree of fragmentation and divergence. Further studies such as this thesis may well add strength to this argument.

<u>Appendices</u>

Appendix numbering relates to the chapter in which the appendix appears e.g., Appendix 5 is the appendix associated with Chapter 5 and not the fifth appendix.

Appendix (Chapter) 1

Table A1.1 *1922 General Election (Scotland)*[10]

	1922 Result for Labour - Proportion of the Vote if 'Unsuccessful' (%)	First 'Labour' Contested Election after 1922 if 'No Candidate' in 1922
Aberdeenshire & Kincardineshire Central	NC	1924
East Aberdeenshire & Kincardineshire	NC	1924
Kincardine & Western Aberdeenshire	NC	/
Aberdeen North	Labour Win	/
Aberdeen South	NC	1923
Argyll	NC	1924
Bute & Northern Ayrshire	39.4	/
Kilmarnock	45.3	/
South Ayrshire	Labour Win	/
Ayr District of Burghs	26.0	/
Banffshire	NC	1924
Berwick & Haddington	29.3	/
Caithness & Sutherland	NC	1929
Dumfriesshire	NC	1924
Dunbartonshire	49.6	/
Dumbarton District of Burghs	Labour Win	/
East Fife	NC	1929
West Fife	Labour Win	/
Dunfermline District of Burghs	Labour Win	/

[10] 'From the General Election of 1922, Co-operative Party candidates were endorsed by the Labour Party and ran as Labour and Co-operative' candidates; 'Until August 1932 the Independent Labour Party (ILP) was affiliated to the Labour Party and as their candidates normally received endorsement they are consequently treated as official Labour candidates'; The Combined Scottish Universities returned three MPs under a system of proportional representation (STV). Craig, *British Parliamentary Election Statistics 1918-1968*, p. *x*. (NC = No Candidate.)

Kirkcaldy District of Burghs	48.6	/
Forfarshire	NC	1924
Dundee I	Labour Win	/
Dundee II	SPP Win	/
Montrose District of Burghs	45.6	/
Inverness	NC	1923
Ross & Cromarty	NC	1929
Western Isles	NC	1923
Galloway	NC	1925
Bothwell	Labour Win	/
Coatbridge	Labour Win	/
Lanark	45.0	/
Motherwell	CPGB Win	/
Rutherglen	Labour Win	/
Glasgow Bridgeton	Labour Win	/
Glasgow Camlachie	Labour Win	/
Glasgow Cathcart	Labour Win	/
Glasgow Central	41.9	/
Glasgow Gorbals	Labour Win	/
Glasgow Govan	Labour Win	/
Glasgow Hillhead	/	1923
Glasgow Kelvingrove	/	1923 (CPGB)
Glasgow Maryhill	Labour Win	/
Glasgow Partick	/	1923
Glasgow Pollok	24.7	/
Glasgow St. Rollox	Labour Win	/
Glasgow Shettleston	Labour Win	/
Glasgow Springburn	Labour Win	/
Glasgow Tradeston	Labour and Co-operative Win	/
Linlithgowshire	Labour Win	/
Midlothian & Peebles Northern	38.3	/
Peebles & Southern Midlothian	Labour Win	/

Edinburgh Central	Labour Win	/
Edinburgh East	/	1924
Edinburgh North	/	1924
Edinburgh South	/	1929
Edinburgh West	/	1923
Leith	23.5	/
Moray & Nairn	/	1924
Orkney & Shetland	/	1945
Kinross & Western Perthshire	/	1924
Perth	18.9	/
Eastern Renfrewshire	Labour Win	/
Western Renfrewshire	Labour Win	/
Greenock	34.1 (CPGB)	/
Paisley	49.5	/
Roxburghshire & Selkirkshire	/	1923
Clackmannnanshire & Eastern Stirlingshire	Labour Win	/
Western Stirlingshire	Labour Win	/
Stirling & Falkirk District of Burghs	Labour Win	/
Combined Scottish Universities I	NC	1924
Combined Scottish Universities II	NC	1924
Combined Scottish Universities III	NC	1924

(**Source:** F. W. S. Craig (ed.), *British Parliamentary Results 1832-1885* (Hants: Parliamentary Research Services, 1989); F. W. S. Craig (ed.), *British Parliamentary Election Statistics 1918-1968* (Glasgow: Political Reference Publications, 1968); Bridges, 'Parliamentary Elections in Perth', all *numerous pages*)

Figure A1.1 *Parliamentary Boundaries for Scotland, 1922-1949*

(**Source:** Craig, *British Parliamentary Election Statistics 1918-1968*, p. 204)

Appendix (Chapter) 2

<u>Table A2.1</u> *General Accident Fire & Life Assurance Corporation Ltd - The General's Review*

'To attain *position* in the service of any Insurance Company a man must put *his heart into work*. He must be thoughtful and alert, sensible and courteous, obedient and disciplined, and perform his work in the way his superiors require. ... If he prove himself capable and reliable, he will undoubtedly secure in due time a position well worth happening.'

....

'Work for the *General*, regard it as your last aim in life to push its interests, and you will find in return that the *General* will work for you, and push you forward until you occupy a position in its service which will equal your ambition.'

....

The disciplined office force – disciplined to punctuality and efficiency – is as effective in business life as its army prototype is in warfare.'

....

Industrial peace is undoubtedly essential to the country, but whether we shall ever really get it is a difficult question to decide, as there is a tendency nowadays for labour to dominate capital. The best interests of the country will apparently be served by making strikes illegal.'

(**Source:** *The General's Review*, January 1908, April 1908, April 1909, January 1911)

Appendix (Chapter) 3

<u>Table A3.1</u> *Strikes and Lockouts in Perth and District 1867-1922*

Date and Length of Strike	Location	Industry	Claim/Issue	Details	Sources in addition to the Board of Trade *Labour Gazette*
1867-1879	/	/	/	/	/
Mar. 1870	Perth	Masons	Advance in wages: ½d per hour to 6d per hour	Masters refused to accept masons' demands – outcome unknown.	*Dundee Courier*, 31 March 1870
Apr. 1871	Perth	Boot and Shoe-makers	Advance in wages	Advance granted by Masters. Six Perthshire shoemakers on strike were imprisoned for staring at another shoemaker who was still working during the strike. The prosecution was undertaken using the civil offence of conspiracy.	*The Scotsman*, 8 April 1871, p. 5
Oct. 1871	Blair-gowrie	Textile Workers	Length of meal break and advance in wages	Mill workers in a number of factories across Perthshire became active over the demand for a decent length of lunch-break in a dispute that formed part of a Scotland-wide agitation. At Ericht Linen Works, they achieved a 1d per cut rise, an hour for lunch and a 50-minute breakfast period. At McIntyre & Company, the hour for lunch demand was accepted, and at Saunders & Sons (Blairgowrie), workers were successful with their demands.	*Blairgowrie Advertiser*, 28 October 1871, p. 2
Nov. 1871 1 week	Perth	Textile Workers	Advance in wages: 10%	Women workers at Shields' Wallace Works. Around 500 workers involved.	*The Times*, 20 November 1871

Mar./ Apr. 1872	Perth	Boot and Shoe-makers	Advance in wages: 10%-15%	An advance of 4d per pair was granted.	*The Scotsman*, 22 March 1872, p. 6, 2 April 1872, p. 6, 4 April 1872, p. 6
Mar. 1872	Crieff	Carpenters and Joiners	Advance in wages and reduction in hours	An advance of 1d per hour (to 5d) was granted but not a reduction in hours.	*The Scotsman*, 5 March 1872, p. 6
Mar. 1872	Perth	Engineers	Demand for a 51-hour week	The agitation at C. D. Young & Company's iron and engineering works formed part of the national 'Nine Hours' movement.	PASE, *Minute Book*, March 1872
Mar. 1872	Auch-terarder	Masons	Against the employment of non-union workers	Masons employed on the construction of the Aytoun Hall and Memorial, Auchterarder were paid off before they could begin a strike creating a lock-out.	*The Scotsman*, 18 March 1872, p. 3
Apr. 1872 2 days	Alyth, Meigle, and district	Carpenters and Joiners	Demand for a 51-hour week and an advance in wages: to 6d per hour	The strike by Alyth joiners resulted in 'nine-hours limit' with no reduction of pay, time-and-a-half for overtime, and an advance in wages.	*The Scotsman*, 1 April 1872, p. 5, 4 April 1872, p. 6, 14 May 1872, p. 3
Apr. 1872	Perth	Printers	Demand for a 51-hour week.	Masters, with one exception complied with the demand for a 51-hour week.	PTS, *Minute Book*, 26 April 1872; *The Scotsman*, 29 April 1872, p. 6
June 1872	Perth	Boot and Shoe-makers	Advance in wages	/	PASE, *Minute Book* 20 June 1872
July 1872	Perth	Seamen	Advance of wages: 5s per week to £3 15s	The strike involved seamen working on vessels at Perth Harbour.	*The Scotsman*, 29 July 1872, p. 5
Sep. 1872	Auch-terarder	Boot and Shoe-makers	Advance in wages	The Masters offered 4d rise per pair on women's boots and 6d rise on men's boots, which was accepted.	*The Scotsman*, 5 September 1872, p. 6

Oct. 1872	Perth	Boot and Shoe-makers	Advance in wages	An average advance of 15% was granted.	*Dundee Courier*, 12 October 1872
June 1873	Crieff	Boot and Shoe-makers	Advance in wages: 6d rise per pair of men's shoes and 4d per pair of women's shoes	Masters with one exception ignored demand and workers struck. The strike was settled after the Masters agreed to the advance on new work and half the rise on repairs.	*The Scotsman*, 26 June 1873, p. 5
July 1873	Blair-gowrie	Railway Porters	Advance in wages: 2s per week	The Caledonian Railway Company (CRC) offer of 1s per week was rejected by workers who (bar one man) struck.	*Dundee Courier*, 22 July 1873
Sep. 1873 10 days	Perth	Wagon Wrights	Advance in wages: 1s 6d per week	The strike at CRC's Perth works saw the workers resume work without any concession on their demand.	*The Scotsman*, 19 September 1873, p. 5
Dec. 1873	Alyth	Boot and Shoe-makers	Advance in wages: 10%	The Masters offered 5%, which was initially refused by the workers. The demand was the third in three seasons. Eventually the workers returned to work for the 5% advance.	*The Scotsman*, 17 December 1873, p. 5; *Dundee Courier*, 12 December 1873, 17 December 1873
June 1874	Perth	Carpenters and Joiners	Advance in wages: ½d per hour	Because of the strike a large number of the joiners left Perth.	*Perthshire Courier*, 23 June 1874
Sep. 1874	Perth	Textile Workers	Advance in wages	Campbells' Balhousie Works – workers recruited from Dundee struck over failure to receive promised equivalent wages to Dundee.	*The Scotsman*, 1 September 1874, p. 6, 3 September 1874, p. 5; *Dundee Courier*, 1 September 1874
Oct. 1874	Auch-terarder	Masons	Against the employment of six non-union workers	Masters agreed to all demands.	*The Scotsman*, 9 October 1874, p. 5

Date	Place	Trade	Cause	Outcome	Sources
Dec./ Jan. 1874/5 2 months	Coupar Angus	Slaters	Advance in wages: to 7d per hour	Masters agreed to demand.	*The Scotsman*, 15 January 1875, p. 6; *Perthshire Courier*, 19 January 1875
Feb./ Mar. 1875	Crieff and Muthill	Masons	Advance in wages: ½d per hour	Strike called after Masters refused to concede demand.	*The Scotsman*, 21 January 1875, p. 6, 1 March 1875, p. 5
Mar./ Apr. 1875 6 weeks	Perth	Carpenters and Joiners – Carriage and Wagon Wrights	Advance in wages: 3s per week to 3s 9d	Some 52 workers were either locked out or left the service of the CRC. Large-scale public support for the strikers. Men either resumed on old terms or left the city.	*Dundee Courier*, 30 March 1875, 31 March 1875, 2 April 1875; *The Scotsman*, 31 March 1875, p. 4, 7 April 1875, p. 8, 13 May 1875
Apr. 1875	Crieff	Carpenters and Joiners	Advance in wages: to 6d per hour; and demand for a nine-hour day	Demand made in February refused by the Masters followed by a strike in April.	*The Scotsman*, 2 April 1875, p. 5
May 1875	Perth	Textile Workers	Against a reduction in wages: 10% on current pay	About 400 workers at Coates, Pullar & Company's jute works. The strike ended without any concessions made.	*The Scotsman*, 22 May 1875, p. 6; *Dundee Courier*, 22 May 1875, 24 May 1875, 25 May 1875
May 1875	Perth	Rope and Twine Spinners	Advance in wages: 1s; and one hour less work on Saturday	Working week was 57 hours.	*The Scotsman*, 25 May 1875, p. 6; *Dundee Courier*, 25 May 1875
July 1875	Dunning	Textile Workers	Against a reduction in wages: 3s per pound made on their pay for carriage and agency	Gray's Factory – the shawl weavers worked elsewhere during the strike.	*Perthshire Courier*, 20 July 1875

Dec. 1875	Crieff	Textile Workers	Issue of bad yarn reducing capacity to earn wages	Helly & Company – agreement made and the power-loom weavers returned to work.	*The Scotsman*, 14 December 1875, p. 6
Mar. 1876	Perth	Carpenters and Joiners	Advance in wages: ½d per hour	Some Masters agreed to advance - bulk of workers struck.	*The Scotsman*, 2 March 1876, p. 6
Apr. 1876	Perth	Boot and Shoe-makers	Advance in wages: 6d per pair of shoes to match neighbouring towns	/	*The Scotsman*, 12 April 1876, p. 7
May 1876	Auch-terarder	Textile Workers - Shawl Weavers	Issue of shawl prices	Many of the shawl weavers took to working in the town's new shirtings and tweed industry.	*Dundee Courier*, 17 May 1876
Dec. 1876	Perth	Printers	Advance in wages	Agreement with *Perthshire Constitutional* and *Perthshire Courier* for 3s per week; no agreement with *Perthshire Advertiser*, which led to strike.	PTS, *Minute Book*, 9, 15, 30 December 1876
Apr. 1877 1 week	Crieff	Tailors	Advance in wages: 15%	Masters refusal to the demand led to a strike.	*The Scotsman*, 3 April 1877, p. 6
Apr. 1877	Perth	Carpenters and Joiners	Advance in wages: ½d per hour to 8d per hour	Masters refusal to demand led to a strike with all but nine or ten workers still working. Strike was settled when joiners agreed to proposal from Masters that 8d per hour be given to competent workers, leaving it to the discretion of the Masters to deal with other workers as they saw fit.	*Dundee Courier*, 3 April 1877; *The Scotsman*, 3 April 1877, p. 6, 9 April 1877, p. 6, 10 April 1877, p. 3; *Perthshire Courier*, 10 April 1877
Apr. 1877	Auch-terarder	Textile Workers - Power-loom Weavers	/	/	*The Scotsman*, 4 April 1877, p. 8

Oct. 1877	Perth	Plasterers	Advance in wages: ½d per hour to 8d	/	*The Scotsman*, 9 October 1877, p. 6
Feb. 1878	Perth	Masons	Against a reduction in wages	In opposition to a proposed wage reduction about 160 masons struck. After 6 firms rescinded the wage reduction some 60 masons returned to work. The strike continued at the four remaining firms. The strike was settled when on a 2-1 vote a 1d reduction was accepted.	*Dundee Courier*, 27 February 1878; *The Scotsman*, 1 April 1878, p. 6
May/ June 1878	Perth	Engineers	Against a reduction in wages and encroachment of hours of labour	Strike was settled when workers agreed to a 7½% reduction in their wages and full-time employment. 500 employees of the CRC involved in the strike. A day earlier 1,400 had struck at Glasgow.	PASE, *Minute Book*, 22 May 1878, 22 June 1878; *The Times*, 29 May 1878, p. 5
May 1879 2-3 days	Auchterarder	Textile Workers - Bobbin Winders	Advance in wages	Strike at Hally & Company's Ruthven Works ended after a couple of days when most workers returned on old conditions.	*Dundee Courier*, 7 May 1879
Oct. 1879	Crieff	Masons	Against a reduction in wages: 1d per hour	Wage reduction imposed in January of that year	*Dundee Courier*, 10 October 1879, p. 3
Jan. 1880	Auchterarder	Textile Workers - Powerloom Weavers	Advance in wages: 1-2d rise on the cut of Auchterarder shirting cloth	Strike at Peters, Young & Son's Auchterarder Works. Power-loom weavers obtained a rise of 1-3d on the weavings of shirtings.	*Blairgowrie Advertiser*, 10 January 1880, p. 6, 17 January 1880
Jan. 1880	Auchterarder	Textile Workers - Bobbin Winders	Advance in wages	Strike at Hally & Company's Ruthven Works ended when the company acceded to the demand for higher wages by granting a farthing on the winding of a spindle of yarn.	*Blairgowrie Advertiser*, 10 January 1880, p. 6, 17 January 1880

Jan. 1883	Perth	Railway Workers	Shorter hours	CRC strike spread to Stirling, Grangemouth, Dundee, Carstairs, Forfar, and Perth. The strike involved railwaymen at Perth and 60 between Perth and Forfar. The strike ended when the workers accepted terms. In the aftermath of the strike 13 workers were dismissed.	*The Scotsman*, 19 January 1883, p. 5, 22 January 1883, p. 4, 23 January 1883, p. 5; *The Times*, 19 January 1883, p. 6, 20 January 1883, p. 5
Aug. 1883	Alyth	Textile Workers	Advance in wages: 6d a week	Full demand attained.	*Dundee Courier*, 21 August 1883
Aug. 1883	Alyth	Textile Workers	/	Workers resumed without concession.	*Dundee Courier*, 28 August 1883
May 1885	Perth	Masons	Advance in wages: average ½d per hour	The 200 masons, the entire workforce of Kinnear Moodie & Company contractors (Edinburgh and Glasgow) at Perth Station eventually returned to work without any concessions made.	*The Scotsman*, 5 May 1885, p. 7, 7 May 1885, p. 7
Feb. 1887 4 days	Alyth	Textile Workers - Spinners and Weavers	Advance in wages	All but 20-30 women workers at Smiths struck. Strikers attained a settlement of 3d per week for spinners and 5% on rates for weavers.	*Dundee Courier*, 10 February 1887, 11 February 1887, 15 February 1887
Dec. 1888	Perth	Textile Workers	Delay in pay rise	The delay in the agreed 5% advance in wages at Smiths resulted in a strike. The strike collapsed before Henry Williamson of the DDMFOU arrived to mediate.	*Dundee Courier*, 22 December 1888, 24 December 1888

Feb. 1889	Blair-gowrie	Textile Workers	Advance in wages: 5%	Despite being advised by Reverend Williamson to return to work the millworkers held to their demands which were granted by at least two of the mills.	*Glasgow Weekly Herald*, 16 February 1889 cited in Gordon, *Women and the Labour Movement*, p. 125
May 1889	Perth	Textile Workers	Advance in wages	In claim of a pay advance around 30 workers at Campbells' Maston dye-works struck after employer refused to make any concessions.	*The Scotsman*, 9 May 1889, p. 5, 13 May 1889, p. 8; *Strikes and Lock-outs of 1889*, p. 41
Sep. 1889	Perth	Bakers	Demand for a 55-hour week and advance in overtime payments	Four firms agreed to demand - strikes at other establishments. The action formed part of a national movement for a uniform starting hour for morning work and extra pay for overtime that affected over 1,000 bakeries across the country.	*The Scotsman*, 24 September 1889, p. 5, 7 October 1889, p. 9; *Strikes and Lock-outs of 1889*, p. 62
Mar. 1890 1 hour	Perth	Carpenters and Joiners	Advance in wages: ½d per hour	One hour strike by 57 carpenters and joiners for an advance in wages, which was granted.	*Strikes and Lock-outs of 1890*, p. 58
Feb. 1890	Blair-gowrie	Textile Workers - Flax Spinners	Advance in wages	/	*Strikes and Lock-outs of 1890*, p. 99
1890/1	Perth	Railway Workers	See Chapter 4	See Chapter 4	*The Times*, 22 December 1890, p. 7, 23 December 1890, p. 5, 24 December 1890, p. 4, 26 December 1890, p. 4, 27 December 1890, p. 8, 31 December 1890, p. 5

June 1891	Perth	Textile Workers	Advance in Wages: 10% increase	The strike involved about 700 female linen weavers at Shields' Wallace Works. On the advice of Henry Williamson of the DDMFOU the women returned to work and negotiated a settlement worth £40 a week collectively.	*The Scotsman*, 2 June 1891, p. 5, 3 June 1891, p. 8; *Strikes and Lock-outs of 1891*, p. 503
July 1891	Perth	Printers	Advance in wages: 3s per week to 30s per week to bring into line with Edinburgh scale	All print firms except Cowan & Company agreed to terms. Initially the threat of strike persuaded Cowan to agree terms, but after his renegading on the deal a strike commenced.	PTS, *Minute Book*, 9 May 1892, 11, 18, 21 June 1892, 11 July 1892
Jan./ Feb. 1893 24 days	Perth	Painters	Advance in wages: ½d per hour, and against the employment of non-union labour	The strike involving 12 firms was eventually unsuccessful, and the workers returned to work without concession.	*Strikes and Lock-outs of 1893*, p. 110
June/ July 1893 25 days	Perth	Slaters	Against the employment of non-union labour	The strike was successful and the employers agreed to demands - the workers in question joined the union.	*Strikes and Lock-outs of 1893*, p. 69
Aug. 1893/ Apr. 1894 8 months	Perth	Tailors	Against the employment of non-union labour	Effectively a lock-out, the Master Tailors' Association closed their shops to members of the Scottish National Tailors' Operative Society who had demanded that those members of the 'English' Amalgamated Society of Tailors join their union and had refused to work with them otherwise. Ultimately, the Scottish Society agreed to work with Amalgamated Society.	PTC, *Minute Book*, 14 August 1893

Apr. 1894 2 days	Perth	Carpenters and Joiners	Advance in wages: ½d per hour	Two firms granted the advance and experienced no strike, the remaining 150 workers struck successfully and attained the advance demanded.	*The Scotsman*, 3 April 1894, p. 7; *Strikes and Lock-outs of 1894*, p. 66
Apr. 1894 13 days	Perth	Plasterers	Advance in wages: 1d per hour	The dispute involving 53 workers was settled when the employers agreed to grant an immediate ½d per hour pay rise followed by another in three months.	*Strikes and Lock-outs of 1894*, p. 72
Apr. 1894 13 days	Perth	Plumbers	Advance in wages: 1d per hour	Dispute involving 53 plumbers (28 unionised) was settled after arbitration - an immediate ½d per hour and a commitment to receive the second ½d per hour rise after three months.	*The Scotsman*, 23 April 1894, p. 8; *Strikes and Lock-outs of 1894*, pp. 72-73
Apr. 1894	Blair-gowrie	Textile Workers - Spinners and Hecklers	Retention of lost hours and return to full working time	The strike involved 30-40 jute spinners and hecklers at a single firm.	*Strikes and Lock-outs of 1894*, p. 156
May 1894 2 days	Perth	Carpenters and Joiners	Advance in wages: ½d per hour	Strike involved 102 joiners at 11 firms (48 members of a trade union). A Board of Arbitration found in favour of the workers.	*Strikes and Lock-outs of 1894*, p. 228
May 1894 13 days	Perth	Plumbers	Advance in wages: 1d per hour	Strike involved 50 workers who won ½d immediately with a promise of ½d in 3 months.	

Date/Duration	Place	Workers	Cause	Description	Sources
				The lock-out of millworkers employed by Smiths spread from the mill to the factory leaving only 20-30 weavers still working. The final settlement was for a 5% reduction.	
June 1894 3 days June 1894 8 days June 1894 13 days June 1894 8 days	All Alyth and Blair-gowrie	Textile Workers	Against a reduction in wages of 10%	Strike in a number of Blairgowrie Works of 1,000 flax and jute spinners. That at Westmill (Keithbank Works) lasted a single week. Those at Ashgrove, Westfields, and Bramblebank continued longer. Eventual settlement was for a 5% reduction with a further reduction of 5% if the trade required it. The agreement was accepted on the understanding that a similar reduction was to be implemented in Dundee. When this turned out not to be true, a second strike began with 937 workers. Informal arbitration by a deputation of eleven local gentlemen unconnected with the textile industry led to the end of the strike and an agreement to accept the 5% reduction, the proposal for a further reduction being withdrawn.	*Dundee Courier*, 6 June 1894, p. 4; *Dundee Courier*, 9 June 1894, p. 4; *Labour Leader* 23 June 1894; *Strikes and Lock-outs of 1894*, pp. 158-59
July/ Aug. 1894 1 month	Perth	Slaters	Advance in wages: ½d per hour	The 30 slate workers (four firms) involved in the strike won their claim in full.	*The Scotsman*, 4 August 1894, p. 9; *Strikes and Lock-outs of 1894*, pp. 76-77

Nov. 1894	Perth	Textile Workers - Winders, Weavers, and Finishers	Advance in wages	The strike involving 800 workers in the linen trade was settled with a 5% increase in pay.	
June 1895 7 hours	Crieff	Masons	Against the employment of non-union labour	Five masons at one firm struck over the employment of two non-union workers. The situation was resolved after the two workers in question agreed to join the union.	PTC, *Minute Book*, 4 June 1895; *Strikes and Lock-outs of 1895*, p. 83
June 1895	Perth	Plasterers	Advance in wages: ½d per hour	The strike by 30 workers at three firms achieved its aim when the advance was granted to take effect from 3 June 1895.	*Strikes and Lock-outs of 1895*, pp. 5-6
June 1895 2 days	Comrie	Carpenters and Joiners	Advance in wages: ½d per hour	The strike by 12 workers achieved its aim.	*Strikes and Lock-outs of 1895*, pp. 74-75
Jan. 1896	Alyth & Blairgowrie	Textile Workers	Sacking of foreman	Spinners at McIntyre & Company's Erichtside Works struck after their second foreman was given notice to leave.	*Dundee Courier*, 14 January 1896
May 1896 3 days	Blairgowrie	Textile Workers - Weavers	Demand to paid single-loom prices as against two-loom prices when working a single loom	The strike involved 91 jute and linen weavers at a firm in Blairgowrie (76 directly and 15 indirectly) was unsuccessful and the workers returned to work without concession.	*Strikes and Lock-outs of 1896*, p. 102
June 1896	Perth	Railway Workers - Signalmen	Advance in wages	The 14 signalmen involved in the strike attained a 1s per week advance.	
Dec./ Jan. 1896/7	Perth	Railway Workers	Demand for a reduced working day	Widespread industrial action by the ASRS against the NBRC spread from Edinburgh and Leith to other areas including Perth.	Kenefick, *Red Scotland*, p. 46
Feb. 1897 3 days	Alyth	Textile Workers - Jute Spinners	Issue of poor materials	After their employers agreed to improve the materials the 205 jute spinners returned to work.	

June 1897 6 days	Crieff and Muthill	Masons	For guarantee of present rate of wages for a year, an extra ½d per hour when working more than two miles from the town and proper shed accommodation in wet weather	The *c.* 50 stonemasons from five works eventually achieved all their demands.	*Dundee Courier*, 8 June 1897, p. 2; *Strikes and Lock-outs of 1897*, p. 17
Nov. 1897	Perth	Bakers	Advance in wages and right to join a trade union	Strike centred on CPCS employees.	*Perthshire Advertiser*, 5 November 1897
Mar./ Apr. 1898 24 days	Perth	Tailors	Over refusal of Scottish National Tailors' Operative Society to work with members of the 'English' Amalgamated Society of Tailors	The employers (three works affected) with the exception of one firm agreed only to employ members of the Scottish Society and not to seek any alterations in workers' conditions of employment before August 1899. This was a re-run of a quarrel that arose a few years previous.	*Strikes and Lock-outs of 1898*, p. *xli*; *The Scotsman*, 7 April 1899, p. 6
Nov./ Dec. 1898	Perth	Bakers	Demand for a 56-hour week and time-and-a-half for overtime	Dispute was won.	PTC, *Minute Book*, 24 November 1898
Nov. 1898	Perth	Tailors		Strike involved tailors working for the CPCS.	PTC, *Minute Book*, 24 November 1898
Mar. 1899	Perth	Painters	Advance in wages: ½d per hour advance to 8d per hour and a 1s rise per week on country work to 4s per week	By end of March 1898 two firms conceded demand, the painters maintained their demands at those firms that remained.	*The Scotsman*, 27 March 1899, p. 9

Mar. 1899 3 days	Perth	Brass-founders and Finishers	Advance in wages: workers having less than 25s a week to be paid at the rate of 6d per hour, and those having more than that at the figure of 6½d per hour. The moulders also stipulated for an advance of ½d per hour for those already on who present have 6½d	One firm agreed to the demand, but James MacLeish refused so that 17 workers struck (one non-union man remained at work). The strikers resolved to make the workplace a closed shop when the strike ended. The strike ended when MacLeish agreed to the demands.	*The Scotsman*, 30 March 1899, p. 9, 1 April 1899, p. 11: PTC, *Minute Book* 31 May 1899
Apr. 1899 6 days	Perth	Glaziers	Advance in wages: ½d per hour to 7d per hour.	The glaziers achieved their demands after a week on strike. They won the dispute with the assistance of PTC - a glaziers' union branch was set up.	*The Scotsman*, 11 April 1899, p. 7, 18 April 1899, p. 7; *Strikes and Lock-outs of 1899*, p. 16; PTC, *Minute Book* 10 April 1899
Mar. 1900	Blair-gowrie	Textile Workers	Over a foreman receiving his 'warning'	The strike involved workers at the Erichtside Works.	*Dundee Courier*, 27 March 1900

Jan. 1900 13 days	Perth	Painters	Demand to be paid the same rate as Glasgow painters employed on the same job.	Local painters (Perth and Dundee) employed by a Glasgow painting firm, A. & J. Scott, working on Perth General Station struck over the 1d per hour extra paid to Glasgow painters (the Perth painters received 9d per hour, the Glasgow painters 10d per hour). Work resumed pending the award of an arbitrator. Sheriff Fyffe, who found in favour of the employer. The strike involved about 38 painters who were replaced by the employer. Under an agreement between the Masters' Association and the Executive of the Painters' Federation Society local pay rates were allowed. During the strike the Glasgow Federation sent down two pickets to prevent the firm employing other Glasgow workers as 'rat labour' to fill the ranks of the strikers.	*Perthshire Advertiser*, 29 January 1900; *The Scotsman*, 6 March 1900, p. 7, 8 March 1900, p. 7, 4 April 1900, p. 10
May 1900	Perth	Masons	Against a reduction in wages of ½d per hour	The strike of 280 stonemasons ended in their favour.	*Perthshire Advertiser*, 2 May 1900

May 1900 4 months	Perth	Painters	Demand for the adoption of working rules and in regard to a boundary wage	The demand by 62 painters was refused by employers stating that at least three months would be required to consider the request. In consequence, the painters struck. The strikers were later joined by their apprentices. The painters agreed to return to work on the understanding that a conference of employers and workpeople would be held in December to arrange working rules for ensuing year. Sheriff Fyfe of Glasgow was appointed arbiter in the painters' dispute. Men agreed to resume work until arbitration complete but an issue as to who was to be a 'gaffer' meant that only three actually returned.	*The Scotsman*, 5 May 1900, p. 11, 8 June 1900, p. 7; PTC *Minute Book*, 29 August 1900
June 1900 8 days	Perth	Carpenters and Joiners	Against a wage reduction of ½d per hour	After a short strike the worker (members of the ASCJ) returned without concession.	PASCJ, *Minute Book*, 26 June 1900
Mar. 1901	Perth	Tailors	Advance in wages	/	*Perthshire Advertiser*, 13 March 1901
Apr. 1901 7 days	Perth	Carpenters and Joiners	Against a reduction in wages of ½d per hour to 8d per hour	After three employers agreed not to reduce wages as proposed the strike of 70 carpenters and joiners continued at all but 7 firms. The strike ended when the employers agreed to maintain the current wage rates for 3 months before an eventual reduction. The reduction went through around 1 July 1901.	*Perthshire Advertiser*, 1 April 1901; *The Scotsman*, 1 April 1901, p. 10, 2 April 1901, p. 9, 10 April 1901, p. 11
June 1901 28 days	Crieff	Masons	Against a reduction in wages of ½d per hour	The strike involved 36 stonemasons.	*Perthshire Advertiser*, 1 June 1901

July 1901	Perth	Railway Workers	Advance in wages and over demand for closed shop	/	*Perthshire Advertiser*, 27 July 1901
Dec./ Jan. 1901/2 14 days	Crieff and Perth	Plasterers	Against a proposed reduction in wages from 8½d to 8d per hour	The strike of 45 plasterers was resolved with the maintenance of the higher pay level until 10 March the following year.	*The Scotsman*, 4 January 1902, p. 8
Mar. 1902 5 days	Perth	Plasterers	Against a reduction in wages	The plasterers asked for an extension period before the wage reduction, when not granted they struck. The strike of up to 40 plasterers was settled when the employers agreed to continue at 8½d.	*The Scotsman*, 11 March 1902, p. 7, 18 March 1902, p. 7
June 1902 2 days	Perth	Masons	Advance in wages: 8d per hour and 3s bonus for country work.	Strike concluded with all demands achieved.	
July-Sep. 1903	Perth	Tailors	Demand for improved working conditions	Begun in Edinburgh 6 months' earlier, the tailors' dispute spread to Aberdeen, Glasgow, and Perth. The strike was ended by a conference in Glasgow.	*The Scotsman*, 31 August 1902, p. 7, 31 August 1903, p. 9, 14 September 1903, p. 9, 19 September 1903, p. 10, 23 September 1903, p. 8
Apr. 1905	Perth	Ship Workers	Advance in wages: 1d per hour	The main complaint of the workers in the employment of the Dundee, Perth & London Shipping Company was that they receive 6d per hour whilst those in Dundee received 8d per hour.	*The Scotsman*, 27 April 1905, p. 10

Sep. 1905	Perth	Textile Workers		Jute spinners at Coates Brothers & Company's Balhousie Works and at Gossie & Son's factory involved in the strike. One worker, a trade union activist was first victimised and then sacked for his union work.	
Jan. 1906 A few hours	Perth	Textile Workers	Issue related to wages	Female workers at Pullar's refused to start work before speaking to management over their wages. The employer ordered the workers to start work or leave - the workers took the former course.	Davies, 'Pullars of Perth', pp. 258-59
Apr. 1906	Perth	Painters		The strike was caused by the employment of a glazier as a painter.	Harding, 'War and Social Change', p. 44; Davidson, 'Sleepy Hollow', p. 63
Apr./ May 1909	Perth	Bakers	Advance and stability in wages, and an issue of time-off on Saturday	The strike involved members of the OBNFUS and various Perth bake-houses some unionised and some not. No concessions being granted, the branch voted 16-9 to return to work without improvement.	PTC, *Minute Book*, 2 February 1910; PBNFUS, *Minute Book*, 21 April 1909, 12 May 1909
July 1910	Perth	Railway Workers	Advance in wages and demand for improvement in conditions	/	*Perthshire Advertiser*, 27 July 1910
Aug. 1911 5 days	Perth	Railway Workers		A national dispute of 16,000 railway workers to which the Perth men joined reluctantly. The strike saw the military called out, government involvement, and a victory for the rail unions.	*The Scotsman*, 19 August 1911, p. 10, 18 August 1911, p. 6, 28 August 1911, p. 8; *Perthshire Courier*, 22 August 1911, p. 1

Dec. 1911 Long running	Perth	Painters	Advance in wages, a week's holiday, and an early finish on Saturday	In settlement the workers attained a ½d per hour increase and double-time for three days in mid-summer.	*Perthshire Advertiser*, 30 December 1911
Jan. 1912	Perth	Carpenters and Joiners	Advance in wages and recognition of new bye-laws.	70-80 members of the PASCCJ, who struck settled for a ½d per hour pay rise but without the other issues (bye-laws) that they had been pursuing. They were then forced to seek new employment as their employers had taken on other men in their place.	*Perthshire Advertiser*, 17 January 1912
Jan. 1912	Perth	Shop Assistants	Demand for improved conditions	Shop assistants in Perth involved in a dispute for improved conditions.	*Perthshire Advertiser*, 3 January 1912
June 1912 3 days	Perth	Textile Workers		Major dispute at Pullar's which brought in key union figures. The initial cause of the strike (of 340 workers) was a refusal to grant the yearly increases due on first Saturday of June. Beginning in the glazing and finishing departments, the strike soon spread across the works. External support for the strikers was substantial including the local ILP and Robert Stewart of the then recently-formed NPRP.	*Perthshire Advertiser*, 12 June 1912; *Forward*, 3 June 1912
Sep. 1912	Perth	Railway Workers	Against a reduction in wages	/	*Perthshire Advertiser*, 14 September 1912, p. 5
Nov. 1912	Perth	Message Boys	Issue of new workers being given 1d more than those currently employed	An unofficial strike involving 20-30 message boys employed by the CPCS.	*Perthshire Advertiser*, 11 November 1912

Jan.Feb. 1913 Several weeks	Perth	Painters	Advance in wages and finishing 12 noon on Saturday: double time on certain buildings, trade union men only, a shilling a day for county work	PTC assisted with the strike. Press bias became a feature of the strike. Several conferences between the workers and employers took place without success. Involvement of the painters' union General Secretary and deputations from Glasgow. The 70 strikers attained a 1d per hour increase for country work.	*The Scotsman*, 7 January 1913, p. 5, 9 January 1913, p. 9, 14 January 1913, p. 11, 23 January 1913, p. 11, 29 January 1913, 6 February 1913, p. 9
Jan.1913	Perth	Gas Workers	Issue of the suspension of a worker	Possibly a dispute rather than an actual strike.	*Perthshire Advertiser*, 22 January 1913, p. 5
Mar. 1913 5 days	Perth	Plumbers	Advance in wages: 1d per hour	The 40 strikers agreed to accept ½d per hour initially with a further ½d per hour to follow in June.	
Apr.1913 3 days	Stanley Mills	Textile Workers - Spinners and Weavers	Advance in wages	The 223 textile workers settled for a 5% increase in pay on an average of 12s a week.	*Strikes and Lock-outs 1913*, pp. 128-29; *Perthshire Courier*, 23 April 1913
Apr./ May 1913 18 days	Perth	Bakers	Advance in wages: 4s per week taking the minimum wage to 35s per week	Settlement was for 2s per week on the minimum wage, with 6d per day extra for jobless. Because of the bakers' actions three shops previously closed to the union opened up to them and the union stepped up attempts to get the final two non-union shops in to line.	PTC, *Minute Book*, 17 May 1913; *The Scotsman*, 15 May 1913, p. 8
May 1913	Perth - Inver-gowrie	Paper Mill Workers	Advance in wages: 2s a week	Possibly a dispute rather than an actual strike.	*Perthshire Advertiser*, 28 May 1913

Sep. 1913 8 days	Perth	Textile Workers	Advance in wages: 2%-10% according to grade	The 400 strikers, members of the NFWW employed at Shields, settled for an average advance of around 5%. In the ballot for strike action, 332 voted 'Yes' and 57 'No. The workers had been without a pay rise for 20 years. As part of the agreement a worker-management committee was established.	*Perthshire Advertiser*, 13 September 1913; *Perthshire Constitutional,* 17 September 1913
Oct. 1913	Perth	Coopers	Advance in wages: 2s per week to 35s per week	Around 30 coopers of Leith, Edinburgh & District Coopers Society (which included Perth) struck. About 200 had been affected but many of the larger firms had settled. Advance pursued due to rising cost of living.	*The Scotsman*, 23 October 1913, p. 9
Dec. 1913	Perth	Carpenters and Joiners	Advance in wages and Saturday work to end at noon: 1½d per hour	Initially involved in separate strikes, the three craft unions worked together utilising joint action. Strike saw bargaining skills and arbitration at work.	*Perthshire Advertiser*, 24 December 1913, p. 24
Dec. 1913	Perth	Painters	Advance in wages, against the employment of non-skilled labour and county boundary set at 1 mile from Perth Cross: 1d per hour	See above	*Perthshire Advertiser*, 24 December 1913, p. 24
Dec. 1913	Perth	Plumbers	Advance in wages and the amendment of certain bye-laws: ½d per hour	See above. The plumbers were members of two separate unions. At a conference between the two sides the bye-law changes were agreed but not the pay rise. The bye-laws related to work conducted by non-plumbers.	*Perthshire Advertiser*, 24 December 1913, p. 24

Jan./ Feb. 1914	Perth	Textile Workers	Advance in wages	Calls by the strikers for arbitration were ignored. After the strike failed, 27 trade union members (including four or five union committee members) involved in setting up the union at Pullars were victimised.	Kenefick, *Red Scotland*, p. 121; *The Scotsman*, 15 January 1914, p. 9, 13 February 1914, 16 February 1914, p. 12
Feb./ Mar. 1914 7 weeks	Perth	Gas Workers - Gas Fitters	Advance in wages: 5s per week	Strike involved gas fitters. Settlement was for 2s 1d per week increase.	
Mar. 1914 For some time	Perth	Tailors	Advance in wages: ½d per hour	Tailors in Perth involved in a dispute over a demand for a ½d per hour pay increase.	*Perthshire Advertiser*, 18 March 1914
Apr. 1914 3 weeks	Perth	Carpenters and Joiners	Advance in wages: 1d per hour and 2s on county money	About 120 carpenters and joiners struck at all but one firm which had granted the men's demands. The employers refused the county money saying it would not allow them to compete with county firms. Eventually all demands were conceded. The firms involved included Masterton & McGregor and R. Hill contractors of Perth.	*The Scotsman*, 7 April 1914, p. 9, 4 April 1914, 23 April 1914, p. 9; HC, *Hansard*, House of Commons, 23 April 1914
July 1914 1 day	Perth	Railway Workers	Advance in wages	After the employers refused to budge, the workers returned to work.	*Perthshire Advertiser*, 12 July 1914
Aug. 1914	Aber-uthven	Farm Workers	Protest over poor pay, food, and housing conditions	Strike by berry pickers at Aberuthven. Many of the pickers were schoolboys from Greenock, Glasgow, and Paisley; and those lured by the labour exchanges in Glasgow and Stirling. Meeting held of the workers supported by the Auchterarder branch of the SFSU.	*Forward*, 1 August 1914, p. 8
Mar./ Apr. 1915	Perth	Shop Assistants	War Bonus	War Bonus granted.	PTC, *Minute Book*, 24 March 1915

May 1916 19 days	Perth	Slaters and Plasterers	Advance in wages: 1d per hour	Strike of 30-40 workers was settled with 1d per hour to 10½d and 6s per week county money agreed.	*The Scotsman*, 22 May 1916, p. 6
May 1916 1 week	Perth	Bakers	Advance in wages: 5s a week	The bakers received 3s a week advance after arbitration.	Davidson, 'Sleepy Hollow', p. 70
Aug./ Sep. 1917 19 days	Perth	Textile Workers - Dyers, Cleaners, and Labourers	Advance in wages: 10s per week on pre-war wages	The strike which involved 1,309 workers was settled by the granting of bonuses of 3-5s.	*The Scotsman*, 20 August 1917, p. 3, 25 August 1917, p. 9, 27 August 1917, p. 8, 28 August 1917, p. 7, 30 August 1917, p. 6, 6 September 1917, p. 7, 7 September 1917, p. 6, 10 September 1917, p. 3, 17 September 1917, p. 7, 18 September 1917, p. 2, 19 September 1917, p. 7, 28 September 1917, p. 7, 9 October 1917, p. 6, 31 August 1917, p. 7
Sep. 1917	Perth	Lamp-lighters	Against a reduction in wages	Involved 5 men and 7 women. Possibly a dispute rather than an actual strike.	Davidson, 'Sleepy Hollow', p. 71

Jan. 1918 3 days	Perth	Municipal Workers especially Gas Workers and Carters	Advance in wages: 15s on pre-war wages	Strike involved gas workers and those in departments dealing with work and paving, fire and lighting, and street sweeping - about 120 workers. The gas workers resumed work on 4 January 1918 with a 7s interim payment and having submitted the case to arbitration. Other workers stayed out. The Strike "plunged the city into darkness and cut off the engines at Pullars and Campbells." The CPCS carters were not pleased and struck demanding 25s - over the pre-war rate "which is the case in most burghs."	*Perthshire Advertiser*, 5 January, 9 January 1918, 30 January 1918, 11 May 1918, 30 May 1918, 11 June 1918, 12 June 1918; *The Scotsman*, 5 January 1918, p. 9; *Perthshire Courier*, 7 January 1918, 19 March 1918; Harding, 'War and Social Change', p. 169; PTC, *Minute Book*, 4 July 1918
May 1918	Perth	Carters		Perth Town Council and the CPCS allied to fight a SHMA claim for the carters - 20s- on pre-war rates and time-and-a-half for overtime. They were given the former but not the latter.	*The Scotsman*, 21 May 1918, p. 4; Harding, 'War and Social Change', p. 169; PTC, *Minute Book*, 28 February 1918
June 1918	Perth	Bakers	Advance in wages and reduction in hours: 17s a week, a reduction of 3½ hours, and a flat rate bonus	After a conference with the employers the dispute was settled with an agreement to pay the bonus as part of the 17s a week rise. The hours remained at 53½ hours.	*Perthshire Constitutional*, 3 June 1918, p. 6
Aug./ Sep. 1918 6 days	Perth	Textile Workers	Advance in wages: 20s a week on pre-war wages and 12½%	Dispute at Shields' Wallace Works - lockout - dispute closed the works. Ballot on management proposals: 6 for and 262 against. Workers returned to work pending arbitration.	*The Scotsman*, 30 August 1918, p. 4, 2 September 1918, p. 3; *Perthshire Advertiser*, 19 October 1918

Feb. 1919	Perth	Moulders	Against a reduction in hours	The moulders after attaining a reduction from 51 hours to 47 hours sought a further reduction to 45 hours. Employers agreed to an inquiry. Moulders then downed tools 'in sympathy with the Dundee moulders to which branch the Perth moulders' were affiliated.'	*The Scotsman*, 11 February 1919, p. 6
Feb. 1919 2 days	Perth	Railway Clerks	Union recognition	Failure of the rail companies to recognise the Railway Clerks' Association - the Perth branch of which had existed since 1901. When no other branch joined the strike the Perth railway clerks returned to work.	Davidson, 'Sleepy Hollow', p. 73
Feb. 1919 > 1 week	Perth	Masons	Failure to pay bonus for working in frost	Most of the 50 workers involved lived outwith Perth and returned home for work during the strike which lasted at least one week.	Davidson, 'Sleepy Hollow', p. 73
Mar./ Apr.1919 5 days	Stanley	Textile Workers	Refusal of a woman to join the Flax & Textile Workers' Union	500 workers involved in the strike at Stanley Mills, which was settled 'amicably.'	Davidson, 'Sleepy Hollow', p. 74; *Perthshire Courier*, 31 March 1919; *Perthshire Advertiser*, 10 May 1919
Apr. 1919 27 days	Perth	Municipal Workers - Gas Fitters and Meter Repairers	Advance in wages: 30s per week on pre-war wages	Perth Town Council agreed to an advance of 5s a week to a minimum 20s to all workers on pre-war rates (workers over 18 years of age). At a mass meeting the municipal workers accepted the offer.	*The Scotsman*, 12 April 1919, p. 11; Davidson, 'Sleepy Hollow', p. 73

May 1919 2 days	Perth	Textile Workers	Advance in wages: 5s per week for men, 4s per week to women, 2s per week to workers under 18	2,000 workers involved in the strike. Originally comprising employees of Campbells and Pullars, a fire at the former factory meant that those workers were without jobs. The strike was not sanctioned by the ASDBFKT. After the master Dyers' Association and the trade union met an advance in wages was agreed - 5s per week for men over 18, a scale of wages fixed for women and girls, and a scale for boys to receive consideration.	*The Scotsman*, 23 May 1919, p. 6, 24 May 1919, p. 10; *Perthshire Advertiser*, 24 May 1919; Davidson, 'Sleepy Hollow', p. 83
May 1919	Perth	Textile Workers	Advance in wages	Thomson's Fair City Dyeworks.	*Perthshire Constitutional,* 26 May 1919
Sep./ Oct. 1919 9 days	Perth	Railway Workers	Against a reduction in wages	Workers returned to work after an agreement to continue negotiations and that no one would see their wages fall below 51s per week. Over 1,000 NUR members lived in Perth at the time - most of whom did not strike.	*Perthshire Advertiser*, 27 September 1919, 7 October 1919; *Perthshire Courier*, 29 September, 1919; Davidson, 'Sleepy Hollow', p. 74
Mar. 1920 3 days	Perth	Painters	Advance in wages and a reduction in hours: 1s 8½d per hour and an 8-hour day	Workers returned to work after attaining 1s 8d per hour rise and a 9-hour day.	Davidson, 'Sleepy Hollow', p. 75
Mar. 1920	Perth	Saw-millers	Advance in wages	The saw-millers were members of the General Workers' Union. The strike involved two firms and was settled with a 2½d per hour rise. During the strike it was claimed that the local Labour Exchange provided 'blackleg' workers to the firms.	Davidson, 'Sleepy Hollow', p. 75; PTC 17 March 1920

May/ July 1920 52 days	Perth	Joiners	Advance in wages: 2s 6d per hour	A national dispute involving 10,000 joiners (ASCJ) including 148 in Perth. The strike was settled with an agreement for a modified advance to various sectors of the trade and a conference to level rates organised.	Davidson, 'Sleepy Hollow', p. 75
May 1920 1 day	Perth	Carters and Scavengers	Failure of Town Council to grant 5s per week advance recommended by their trade union	Workers attained their demand.	Davidson, 'Sleepy Hollow', p. 76
May/ June 1920 63 days	Perth	Wood-workers	Advance in wages and other concessions	National strike of 2,000 workers. The woodworkers attained 2½d per hour (apprentices 1½d per hour), the minimum rate was fixed at 1s 11d per hour, with a rise to 2s per hour from October 1920.	Davidson, 'Sleepy Hollow', p. 75
Aug. 1920	Almond-bank, Hunting-tower, Pitcairn-green, Stormont-field, and Luncarty	Textile Workers - Bleachers	Establishment of a Closed Shop	Bleachers at Lumsden & Mackenzie (Huntingtower, Pitcairngreen and Stormontfirld) and those at James Burt-Marshall (Luncarty) struck over implementation of a union 'closed shop'. Issue of aggressive tactics by County police force. PTC threw its support behind the strike and arranged a public meeting with the Cherrybank Pipe band. There was an attempt to link in with building trades and other union branches in associated parishes to support the strikers.	Harding, 'War and Social Change', p. 190; *Perthshire Courier*, 2 August 1920; PTC, *Minute Book*, 4 August 1920

Nov. 1920 9 months	Perth	Insurance Workers	Refusal to recognise the trade union	A dispute at General Accident involving 133 insurance workers (members of the Insurance Guild), although the management denied its existence and received loyalty pledges from staff. The strike failed despite rallies at Westminster and national publicity.	*The Scotsman*, 13 November 1920, p. 11; Payne, 'Risky Business', p. 97; PTC, *Minute Book*, 8 December 1920
Dec. 1920 4 days	Perth	Building Workers - Masons, Joiners, Plasterers, Plumbers, Slaters, and Labourers	Advance in wages: 2s 4d per hour	The strike involved 200 workers directly and 100 indirectly. The advance was granted.	Davidson, 'Sleepy Hollow', p. 76; *Perthshire Courier*, 20 December, 1920
Dec./ Jan. 1920/1 12 days	Perth	Bakers	Advance in wages	This Scotland-wide strike involved 500 bakers. In some cases the Masters agreed to a 7s 6d pay rise in others ('private employment') the workers returned on Master's terms.	Davidson, 'Sleepy Hollow', p. 77
Mar. 1921 75 days	Perth	Electrical Workers	Against a reduction in wages of 3d per hour	Strike involved 640 workers Scotland-wide. Workers returned with agreed 2s per hour reduction.	Davidson, 'Sleepy Hollow', p. 77; *The Scotsman*, 8 March 1921, p. 9, 14 March 1921, p. 9
June 1922 Several months	Perth	Plasters and Labourers	Against a reduction in wages for the building trade	The strike was a Scotland-wide dispute involving 850 workers directly and 400 indirectly. The strike was settled 7 October 1922 with the acceptance of a reduction and stabilisation of wages until 1 January 1924.	Davidson, 'Sleepy Hollow', p. 77

Table A3.2 *Comparison of Annual Strike Levels in Perth and the UK, 1888-1922*

	Number of Strikes UK	Number of Strikes Perth		Number of Strikes UK	Number of Strikes Perth
1888	517	2	1906	486	1
1889	1,211	3	1907	601	0
1890	1,040	3	1908	399	0
1891	906	2	1909	436	2
1892	700	1	1910	531	1
1893	782	4	1911	903	2
1894	929	9	1912	857	5
1895	745	4	1913	1,497	11
1896	926	5	1914	972	6
1897	864	3	1915	672	1
1898	711	3	1916	532	2
1899	719	3	1917	730	2
1900	648	5	1918	1,165	4
1901	642	5	1919	1,352	8
1902	442	2	1920	1,607	9
1903	387	1	1921	763	1
1904	354	0	1922	576	1
1905	358	2	-	-	-

(**Source:** B. R. Mitchell, *Abstract of British Historical Statistics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962), pp. 71-72; James E. Cronin*, Industrial Conflict in Modern Britain* (London: Croom Helm, 1979), pp. 48-49; David Butler and Anne Sloman, *British Political Facts 1900-1979* (London: The Macmillan Press Ltd, 1980), p. 219)

Table A3.3 *Arbitrations and Settlements affecting Perth, 1917-1922*

	Industry or Trade	Details of Demand and its Settlement
September 1917	Boot and Shoe Operatives	Members of the National Union of Boot & Shoe Operatives at the CPCS sent a claim to arbitration under Sheriff A. J. Loutitt Laing, which formed part of a claim for benefit under the National War Bonus Agreement: 5s 6d to women over 18 and youths 18-21; 10s to men earning 35s per week and under; 9s to men earning over 35s per week and under 45s; 8s to men earning over 45s.
September 1917	Glass Workers	Arbitration settlement for workers at John Moncrieff & Company Ltd for advance for women and girls. Settlement by Officer of the Chief Industrial Commissioners Department: 18s per week from 1 August 1917 to women over 18; same girls from 6 October 1917.
October 1917	Carters	Arbitration settlement before Sheriff A. J. Loutitt Laing between the CPCS and SHMA. The claim for 6s per week was established effective of 1 August 1917.
October 1917	Gas Workers	Arbitration settlement between Corporation of the City of Perth and the National Union of General Workers (NUGW). The claim was for an increase in the war bonus of 8s per week. The arbiter Sir J. Urquhart granted 3s per week.
November 1917	Textile Workers	Arbitration between Campbells and the ASDBFKT for an advance of 10s per week. Sir J. Urquhart granted 4s to male journeymen dyers; 3s to other males above 18; 2s to lads under 18; 3s to females earning 14s and over; 2s to females earning under 14s; 10% advance to pieceworkers; and the half-yearly bonus of 1s to be added to wages paid weekly.
January 1918	Slaters	Arbitration settlement between Federated Master Slaters Association in Scotland and the Amalgamated Slaters Society of Scotland. Sir William Robinson awarded 1½d per hour.

February 1918	Municipal Workers	Arbitration between Perth Corporation and the NUGW. The claim was for 8s per week from 12 December 1917 to employees in Corporation gasworks, street sweepers, fire and lighting, and works and paving departments. A war wage advance of 7s per week to men and 4s 6d to women was granted.
March 1918	Carters	Arbitration between the CPCS and SHMA for increase of 20s per week on pre-war wages with time-and-a-half for overtime. Sir J. Urquhart awarded 20s with unchanged overtime.
May/June 1918	Bakers	Advance in wages rise requested to employers and the CPCS of 17s a week - the employers offered 10s a week. The bakers represented by the OBNFUS also requested a 3-hour reduction in the working week to 50½ hours. Settlement reached for 17s and unchanged hours.
May 1918	Carters	Arbitration between the CPCS and SHMA for 20s per week on pre-war rates. Sir J. Urquhart awarded 20s to all males over 18 and those under doing adult work. Otherwise, 10s per week. Overtime rates advanced proportionally and the claim was made effective from 1 January 1918.
June 1918	Textile Workers	Arbitration between Pullars and ASDBFKT for 20s per week over pre-war rates. J. Burgh. Baillie awarded 3-5s per week to skilled workers over 31 years; part of advance on their scales to skilled or unskilled men 25-30; 3s per week to women on time rates aged 18 or more; other working conditions were fixed. The settlement was effective from 15 April 1918.
July 1918	Painters	Demand for an advance of 3d to 1s 3d per hour. The employers offered 2d, the men refused, and threatened to strike, whereupon the employers agreed terms.
November 1918	Sawmill Workers	Arbitration between Calder, Dixon & Company Ltd (Perth Saw Mills) and NUGW. 5s per week to men 21 and over; 3s 6d per week to men 18-21; 2s per week to boys under 18.

November 1918	Carters	Arbitration between Perth Corporation and SHMA. Men awarded 5s per week.
November 1918	Textile Workers	Arbitration between Shields and Scottish Council of Textile Trade Unions. The claim was for whether the firm's wage offer was sufficient. Professor J. Irvine ruled the workers should be paid in accordance with the Committee of Production.
November 1918	Carters	Arbitration between the CPCS and SHMA for 25s per week over pre-war wages from 14 September 1918. Sir J. Urquhart established the claim.
December 1918	Textile Workers	Arbitration between Garvie & Deas Ltd (Perth) and ASDBFKT representing the firm's shirt makers and hosiery knitters for increased wages. Professor J. Irvine awarded a 10% increase to time workers and pieceworkers over 18 years of age and 5% to those under the age of 18.
August 1919	Engineers	Arbitration between D. Gorie & Son, J. Croall & Son, St John's Foundry & Engineering Company Ltd, and J. Stewart & Company and ASE for 3s per week advance. The claim was established.
January 1920	Masons and Labourers	Arbitration between The Building Trades of Scotland Operatives' Wages & Conditions Service Board (BTSOWCSB) and The Perth District Master Masons' Association (PDMMA). The arbiter awarded an advance of 1½d per hour on a 44-hour week.
February 1920	Municipal Workers	Arbitration between Town Council of Perth and the NUGW. The arbiter awarded men 5s per week to a maximum of 30s per week over pre-war rates. The claims regarding women were referred back to the employers.

April 1920	Masons and Labourers	Arbitration between BTSOWCSB and the PDMMA. The claim for an advance of 6d per hour was not established.
June 1922	Bakers	Arbitration between Scottish Association of Master Bakers, Scottish Co-operative Societies, and the Scottish Union of Operative Bakers and Confectioners. Arbiter awarded overtime at time-and-a-half and to pay wages relative to cost of living figures published in *Labour Gazette*.

(**Source:** Davidson, 'Sleepy Hollow', pp. 80-85, *The Scotsman*, 20 May 1918, p. 6, 3 June 1918, p. 3, 2 July 1918, p. 3)

Appendix (Chapter) 5

<u>Table A5.1</u> *Parliamentary Election Results, 1832-1945*

Key

(B): By-election

(D): December

(E): Elected

(EU): Elected Unopposed

(J): January

Perth Burgh, 1832-1910

1832: Laurence Oliphant of Condie **Liberal** 458 (E) Lord James Stuart **Liberal** 205 (Electorate 780)

1835: Laurence Oliphant of Condie **Liberal** (EU) (Electorate 874)

1837: Arthur Fitzgerald Kinnaird **Liberal** 345 (E) Sir Patrick Murray Threipland of Fingask **Conservative** 188 (Electorate 900)

1839 (B):[1] David Greig **Liberal** 9 (E) Laurence Oliphant of Condie **Liberal** 0 (Electorate 895)[2]

1841: Fox Maule **Liberal** 356 (E) W. Faichney Black **Conservative** 227 (Electorate *est.* 1,082)

1846 (B):[3] Fox Maule **Liberal** (EU) (Electorate *est.* 1,082)

1847: Fox Maule **Liberal** (EU) (Electorate 1,030)

1852 (B):[4] Fox Maule **Liberal** (EU) (Electorate *est.* 1,030)

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[1] The by-election was caused by the resignation of Kinnaird.

[2] 'Greig [who at the time of the election was Lord Provost of Perth] was nominated during his absence and, he claimed, without his consent. Oliphant retired before the poll but the Returning Officer decided that in the circumstances the poll should be opened and then closed after a few electors had voted for Greig.' Craig, *British Parliamentary Results 1832-1885,* p. 559.

[3] The by-election was caused by the appointment of Fox Maule as Secretary at War.

[4] The by-election was caused by the appointment of Fox Maule as President of the Board of Control for the Affairs of India.

1852 (B):[5] Arthur Fitzgerald Kinnaird **Liberal** 325 (E) Charles Gilpin **Unofficial Liberal/Radical** 225 (Electorate 1,034)[6]

1852: Arthur Fitzgerald Kinnaird **Liberal** (EU) (Electorate 1,034)

1857: Arthur Fitzgerald Kinnaird **Liberal** (EU) (Electorate 947)

1859: Arthur Fitzgerald Kinnaird **Liberal** (EU) (Electorate 966)

1865: Arthur Fitzgerald Kinnaird **Liberal** (EU) (Electorate 982)

1868: Arthur Fitzgerald Kinnaird **Liberal** (EU) (Electorate 2,801)

1874: Arthur Fitzgerald Kinnaird **Liberal** 1,648 (E) Charles Scott **Conservative** 940 (Electorate 3,863)

1878 (B):[7] Charles Stuart Parker **Liberal** 2,206 (E) Alexander Mackie **Conservative** 855 (Electorate 4,224)

1880: Charles Stuart Parker **Liberal** 2,315 (E) Colonel D. R. Williamson **Conservative** 774 (Electorate 4,000)[8]

1885: Charles Stuart Parker **Independent Liberal** 1,652 (E) John Chisholm **Conservative** 1,099 Alexander McDougall **Liberal** 967 (Electorate 4,369)

1886: Charles Stuart Parker **Liberal** 1,573 (E) William Fowler **Liberal Unionist** 1,120 (Electorate 4,369)

1892: William Whitelaw **Conservative** 1,398 (E) Charles Stuart Parker **Liberal** 1,171 John Woollen **Independent Liberal** 907 (Electorate 4,274)

1895: Robert Wallace **Liberal** 2,137 (E) William Whitelaw **Conservative** 1,763 (Electorate 4,456)

1900: Robert Wallace **Liberal** 2,171 (E) William Whitelaw **Conservative** 1,827 (Electorate 4,873)

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[5] The by-election was caused by the elevation to the Peerage of Fox Maule (as second Baron Panmure). 'The succession of Fox maule to the peerage removed one of the Free Church's strongest supporters in Parliament. His replacement was to be the brother of Lord Kinnaird, a strong supporter of the state church, and a voluntary was run against him without success.' Hutchison, *Political History of Scotland*, p. 66.

[6] Kinnaird is best considered an aristocratic Whig.

[7] The by-election was caused by Kinnaird's elevation to the Peerage as tenth Lord Kinnaird on the death of his brother.

[8] Williamson is best described as a county magnate. Despite the loss in the Conservative vote, Williamson was considered by the local Conservative association to have 'given a good show' and 'presented the gallant colonel with a handsome testimonial.' Bridges, 'Parliamentary Elections in Perth', p. 92.

1906: Sir Robert Wallace **Liberal** 2,875 (E) Samuel Chapman **Conservative** 1,867 (Electorate 5,398)[9]

1907 (B):[10] Sir Robert Pullar **Liberal** (EU) (Electorate *est.* 5,398)

1910 (J): Alexander Frederick Whyte **Liberal** 2,841 (E) Samuel Chapman **Conservative** 2,103 (Electorate 5,433)

1910 (D): Alexander Frederick Whyte **Liberal** 2,852 (E) Lieutenant-Colonel Charles Edward Drummond Telfer-Smollett **Conservative** 1,878 (Electorate 5,514)

Perthshire Counties, 1832-1880

1832: John Campbell, The Earl of Ormelie **Liberal** 1,666 (E) Sir George Murray **Conservative** 1,093 (Electorate 3,180)[11]

1834 (B):[12] Sir George Murray **Conservative** 1,464 (E) R. Graham **Liberal** 1,268 (Electorate 3,425)

1835: Fox Maule **Liberal** 1,453 (E) Sir George Murray **Conservative** 1,371 (Electorate 3,689)[13]

1837: William David Murray, Viscount Stormont **Conservative** 1,495 (E) Fox Maule **Liberal** 1,379 (Electorate 4,452)[14]

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[9] Samuel Chapman was a prominent Unionist within PWCA.

[10] The by-election was caused by the resignation of R. Wallace upon his appointment as Chairman of the County of London Sessions.

[11] Murray had been MP for Perth County 1824-1830.

[12] The by-election was caused by the succession of the Earl of Ormelie to the Peerage as the Marquess of Breadalbane.

[13] New organisational tactics played a role in the capture of the seat by the Liberals. Instead of relying on 'the agency of county writers' to handle constituency matters, the local Liberals set up their own committee of activists. Hutchison, *Political History of Scotland*, p. 50.

[14] Murray (Lord Stormont) had attempted during his election campaign to garner support from the newly franchised electorate, but had run into some difficulty: 'Lord stormont, seeking to win Perthshire, set out to ingratiate himself with the "middling and lower classes in this quarter [Perth town] by patronising football and so forth". Fifteen thousand gathered on the burgh's North Inch grounds to watch a 50-a-side match between teams chosen by Stormont and the Provost. Uproar ensured when Stormont protested at the crowd's behaviour, and violence broke out when he bit a man who was arguing with him.' *G. Gardiner to R. Graham*, 4 January 1836 (National Library of Scotland, Lynedoch MSS., MS 16143, 143-44 *ff.*, 4 January 1836), cited in Hutchison, *Political History of Scotland*, p. 13.

1840 (B):[15] Henry Home-Drummond **Conservative** 1,586 (E) G. D. Stewart **Liberal** 1,128 (Electorate 4,224)[16]

1841: Henry Home-Drummond **Conservative** (EU) (Electorate *est.* 4,224)

1847: Henry Home-Drummond **Conservative** (EU) (Electorate 4,187)

1852: William Stirling **Conservative** (EU) (Electorate 4,938)

1857: William Stirling **Conservative** (EU) (Electorate 3,415)

1859: William Stirling **Conservative** (EU) (Electorate 3,368)

1865: William Stirling-Maxwell **Conservative** (EU) (Electorate 3,448)

1868: Charles Stuart Parker **Liberal** 2,046 (E) William Stirling-Maxwell **Conservative** 1,767 (Electorate 4,876)

1874: William Stirling-Maxwell **Conservative** 2,554 (E) Charles Stuart Parker **Liberal** 2,060 (Electorate 5,505)

1878 (B):[17] Colonel Henry Edward Home-Drummond-Moray **Conservative** 2,439 (E) Hon. Captain A. W. Fulke Greville **Liberal** 2,255 (Electorate 5,613)

1880: Donald Currie **Liberal** 2,764 (E) Colonel Henry Edward Home-Drummond-Moray **Conservative** 2,472 (Electorate 5,918)

East (or Eastern) Perthshire, 1885-1910

1885: Robert Stewart Menzies **Liberal** 4,222 (E) Andrew Graham Murray **Conservative** 2,421 (Electorate 7,851)

1886: Robert Stewart Menzies **Liberal** 3,504 (E) John Robert Hollond **Liberal Unionist** 2,195 (Electorate 7,851)

1889 (B):[18] John George Smyth Kinloch **Liberal** 4,005 (E) William Lindsay Boase **Conservative** 2,289 (Electorate 7,790)

1892: Sir John George Smyth Kinloch Bt **Liberal** 3,533 (E) William Lindsay Boase **Conservative** 2,484 (Electorate 7,585)

1895: Sir John George Smyth Kinloch Bt **Liberal** 3,410 (E) William Lindsay Boase **Conservative** 2,535 (Electorate 7,641)

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[15] The by-election was caused by the succession of Viscount Stormont to the Peerage as the Earl of Mansfield.

[16] Home-Drummond was a 'Peelite' and an opponent of 'Protection'.

[17] The by-election was caused by the death of William Stirling-Maxwell (at Venice).

[18] The by-election was caused by the death of R. S. Menzies.

1900: Sir John George Smyth Kinloch Bt **Liberal** 3,185 (E) John Graham Stewart **Conservative** 2,143 (Electorate 7,463)

1903 (B):[19] Thomas Ryburn Buchanan **Liberal** (EU) (Electorate *est.* 7,463)

1906: Thomas Ryburn Buchanan **Liberal** 3,738 (E) Marquess of Tullibardine **Conservative** 2,648 (Electorate 7,825)

1910 (J): William Young **Liberal** 3,884 (E) Hon. Alexander David Murray **Conservative** 2,703 (Electorate 7,902)

1910 (D): William Young **Liberal** 3,658 (E) Archibald Noel Skelton **Conservative** 2,826 (Electorate 8,089)

West (or Western) Perthshire, 1885-1917

1885: Sir Donald Currie **Liberal (Liberal Unionist)** 3,786 (E) Colonel Henry Edward Home-Drummond-Moray **Conservative** 3,290 (Electorate 8,284)

1886: Sir Donald Currie **Liberal Unionist** 3,269 (E) George William Thompson Omond **Liberal** 2,329 (Electorate 8,284)

1892: Sir Donald Currie **Liberal Unionist** 3,422 (E) Alexander Ure **Liberal** 3,053 (Electorate 7,966)

1895: Sir Donald Currie **Liberal Unionist** 3,379 (E) John Deans Hope **Liberal** 3,087 (Electorate 7,984)

1900: John Stroyan **Liberal Unionist** 3,598 (E) Charles Stuart Parker **Liberal** 2,913 (Electorate 8,078)

1906: David Charles Erskine **Liberal** 3,890 (E) John Stroyan **Liberal Unionist** 3,087 (Electorate 8,401)

1910 (J): John George Stewart-Murray, Marquess of Tullibardine **Conservative** 3,864 (E) Thomas Brash Morison **Liberal** 3,566 (Electorate 8,547)

1910 (D): John George Stewart-Murray, Marquess of Tullibardine **Conservative** 4,027 (E) George Freeland Barbour **Liberal** 3,637 (Electorate 8,715)

1917 (B):[20] Brigadier-General Archibald Stirling **Conservative** (EU) (Electorate *est.* 8,715)

Perth, 1918-1945

1918: William Young **Coalition Liberal** (EU) (Electorate *unknown*)

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[19] The by-election was caused by the resignation of John George Smyth Kinloch.

[20] The by-election was caused by the Marquess of Tullibardine's succession to the Peerage as the Duke of Atholl.

1922: Archibald Noel Skelton **Conservative (Unionist)** 11,387 (E) William Henderson **Independent Liberal** 5,874 William Westwood **Labour** 4,657 William Robert Gourlay **National Liberal** 2,689 (Electorate 34,590)

1923: Robert Macgregor Mitchell **Liberal** 12,655 (E) Archibald Noel Skelton **Conservative** 11,134 (Electorate 34,635)

1924: Archibald Noel Skelton **Conservative** 13,022 (E) Robert Macgregor Mitchell **Liberal** 7,998 Cameron Roberts **Labour** 5,316 (Electorate 34,992)

1929: Archibald Noel Skelton **Conservative** 14,229 (E) Francis Norie-Miller **Liberal** 12,699 Helen E. Gault **Labour** 8,291 (Electorate 45,923)

1931: Mungo David Malcolm Murray, Lord Scone **Conservative** 19,254 (E) Francis Norie-Miller **Liberal** 15,396 Helen E. Gault **Independent Labour Party** 3,705 (Electorate 47,145)

1935 (B):[21] Francis Norie-Miller **National Liberal** 17,516 (E) Adam S. McKinley **Labour** 7,984 (Electorate 48,160)

1935: Thomas Hunter **Conservative** 23,011 (E) Robert Gunn **Labour** 8,209 (Electorate 48,815)

1945: Colonel Alan Gomme-Duncan **Conservative** 22,484 (E) Captain William Hughes **Labour** 11,617 Gunner J. Blair Brown **SNP** 1,547 (Electorate)

Kinross & Western Perthshire, 1918-1945

1918: James Gardiner **Liberal** 7,579 (E) Brigadier-General Archibald Stirling **Coalition Conservative** 6,975 (Electorate 23,888)

1922: James Gardiner **National Liberal** (EU) (Electorate *est.* 23,888)

1923: Duchess of Atholl **Conservative** 9,235 (E) Percy Alport Molteno **Liberal** 9,085 (Electorate 25,221)

1924: Duchess of Atholl **Conservative** 13,565 (E) John M. MacDiarmid **Labour** 5,286 (Electorate 25,978)

1929: Duchess of Atholl **Conservative** 12,245 (E) Dr. George Freeland Barbour **Liberal** 9,128 Reverend W. D. Stewart **Labour** 3,834 (Electorate 33,048)

1931: Duchess of Atholl **Conservative (Independent Conservative)** 16,228 (E) Thomas Atholl Robertson **Liberal** 10,533 (Electorate 33,862)

1935: Duchess of Atholl **Conservative (Independent Conservative)** 15,238 (E) Elizabeth MacDonald **Liberal** 10,069 (Electorate 34,232)

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[21] The by-election was caused by Lord Scone's succession to the Peerage as the Earl of Mansfield.

1938 (B):[22] William McNair Snadden **Conservative** 11,808 (E) Duchess of Atholl **Independent** 10,495 (Electorate 33,482)

1945: William McNair Snadden **Conservative** 16,536 (E) Reverend C. McKinnon **Labour** 7,782 (Electorate 36,096)

(**Source:** Craig, *British Parliamentary Results 1832-1885*; Craig, *British Parliamentary Election Statistics 1918-1968;* Craig, *Minor Parties at British Parliamentary Elections 1885-1974* (London: The Macmillan Press Ltd, 1975); Bridges, 'Parliamentary Elections in Perth', all *numerous pages*)

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[22] The by-election was caused by the resignation of the Duchess of Atholl.

Appendix (Chapter) 7

<u>Table A7.1</u> *Date of Establishment and Membership of Co-operative Societies in Perth and District, end of 1891*

	Date of Establishment	Membership end of 1891
Abernethy Co-operative (Bread Baking) Society	1853	120
Aberuthven Co-operative Society	1870	63
Auchterarder Co-operative Baking Society	1874	286
Auchterarder Co-operative Provident Society	1866	184
Auchterarder Feus Co-operative Society	1862	133
Blackford Co-operative Society	1876	72
Blairgowrie Co-operative Society	1884	133
City of Perth Co-operative Society Ltd	1871	*c.* 3,000
Crieff Co-operative Society Ltd	1875	245
Deanston Co-operative Society	1862	79
Dunblane Co-operative Society	1885	188
Dunning Co-operative Society	1871	86
Muthill Co-operative Society Ltd	*c.* 1879	152
Perth Co-operative Coal Society Ltd	*c.* 1873	1,043
Perth Working Men's Building Society	1883	22

(**Source:** *Friendly Societies, Industrial and Provident Societies, and Trade Unions. Reports of the Chief Registrar of Friendly Societies, for the year ending 31ˢᵗ December 1891. Part A* (HCPP, 137/137-I/137-II, 1892), pp. 150-52)

Table A7.2 *Membership of Co-operative Retail Distribution Societies in Scotland, 1901 and 1911*

	Membership 1901	Membership as a Proportion of Population 1901 (%)	Membership 1911	Membership as a Proportion of Population 1911 (%)
Aberdeen	19,164	6.29	19,961	6.39
Argyll	383	0.52	422	0.60
Ayr	19,915	7.83	26,111	9.73
Banff	428	0.70	522	0.85
Berwick	227	0.74	260	0.88
Bute	100	0.53	100	0.55
Caithness	1,566	4.62	1,468	4.59
Clackmannan	6,871	21.45	8,236	26.46
Dumbarton	11,629	10.21	18,051	12.91
Dumfries	1,909	2.63	3,187	4.38
Edinburgh	45,927	9.40	65,451	12.89
Elgin	42	0.09	108	0.25
Fife	21,743	9.94	31,492	11.76
Forfar	27,666	9.74	32,225	11.45
Haddington	3,029	7.83	4,836	11.18
Inverness	...	...	271	0.31
Kincardine	374	0.91	324	0.79
Kinross	192	2.75	289	3.84
Kirkcudbright	60	0.15	187	0.49
Lanark	78,884	5.89	110,082	7.61
Linlithgow	5,809	8.84	8,192	10.22
Nairn	...	...	...	...
Orkney	...	...	...	...
Peebles	1,293	8.58	1,643	10.77
Perth	**8,009**	**6.50**	**19,901**	**8.77**
Renfrew	21,285	7.91	30,940	9.84
Ross & Croma	...	...	...	...
Roxburgh	4,794	9.82	4,978	10.55
Selkirk	3,773	16.15	3,404	13.84
Shetland	...	...	190	0.68
Stirling	16,554	11.37	22,457	13.06
Sutherland	...	...	...	...
Wigtown	...	...	123	0.38
Scotland	*301,626*	*6.74*	*406,411*	*8.54*

(**Source:** Lucas, *Co-operation in Scotland*, p. 80)

Table A7.3 *Average Trade per Member of Co-operative Retail Distribution Societies in Scotland, 1901 and 1911*

County	Average Sales per Member 1901	Average Sales per Member 1911
Aberdeen	£29 17s	£37 7s
Argyll	£27 1s	£26 14s
Ayr	£34 19s	£35 5s
Banff	£21 0s	£18 11s
Berwick	£26 1s	£22 2s
Bute	£24 2s	£20 3s
Caithness	£13 17s	£14 12s
Clackmannan	£35 10s	£40 10s
Dumbarton	£43 14s	£40 2s
Dumfries	£26 19s	£28 18s
Edinburgh	£41 3s	£40 6s
Elgin	£17 5s	£19 1s
Fife	£39 6s	£41 14s
Forfar	£20 18s	£20 17s
Haddington	£41 14s	£41 18s
Inverness	/	£17 7s
Kincardine	£14 2s	£10 16s
Kinross	£17 5s	£26 19s
Kirkcudbright	£26 0s	£25 4s
Lanark	£41 13s	£39 5s
Linlithgow	£46 15s	£42 14s
Nairn	/	/
Orkney	/	/
Peebles	£54 18s	£54 6s
Perth	**£30 4s**	**£29 16s**
Renfrew	£35 9s	£34 6s
Ross & Cromarty	/	/
Roxburgh	£30 18s	£33 13s
Selkirk	£34 19s	£43 0s
Shetland	/	£9 14s
Stirling	£45 11s	£47 6s
Sutherland	/	/
Wigtown	/	£35 17s
Scotland	**£37 5s**	**£37 10s**

(**Source:** Lucas, *Co-operation in Scotland*, p. 82)

Table A7.4 *Average Salaries Paid by Co-operative Societies to Distributive and Productive Employees, 1909*

Society	Number of Distributive Workers	Number of Productive Workers	Total Distributive Worker Salary	Total Productive Worker Salary	Mean Distributive Worker Salary	Mean Productive Worker Salary
Aberdeen North	778	361	£37,566	£21,442	£48	£59
Alloa	140	118	£6,947	£5,839	£50	£49
Barrhead	119	55	£4,808	£3,656	£40	£66
Central Greenock	199	53	£8,548	£3,079	£43	£58
Coatbridge	346	148	£15,398	£8,416	£45	£57
Dunfermline	232	172	£11,509	£10,252	£50	£60
Eastern Dundee	238	44	£11,546	£4,116	£49	£94
Edinburgh - St Cuthbert's	1,513	815	£83,979	£44,014	£56	£54
Leith	222	117	£10,501	£7,097	£47	£61
Paisley Provident	336	78	£13,540	£5,961	£40	£76
Perth	**273**	**224**	**£13,620**	**£10,383**	**£50**	**£46**
Stirling	113	61	£5,618	£4,053	£50	£66
West Calder	202	118	£11,632	£6,409	£58	£54

(**Source:** Maxwell, *Co-operation in Scotland*, pp. 388-97)

Table A7.5 *1898 Operative Bakers' Dispute*

Demand	Master Bakers' Federation Response	Response
55-hour week.	56-hour week.	*Accepted*
Overtime rate at time-and-a-half.	Overtime rate at time-and-a-quarter.	*Rejected*
Holiday pay at double time.	Holiday pay at double time. Jobbers' pay 4s 6d per day, 5s Saturday, and no half-day Saturday.	*Accepted*
Apprentices prohibited from starting work before 5 a.m. during the entire length of the apprenticeship and no indenturing before the age of 16.	Apprentices to begin work with the men in the morning in-line with government policy in this area and indenturing from the age of 15.	*Accepted*
In any bakehouse employing 'Early Men', the maximum working week curtailed to 50 hours	In any bakehouse employing 'Early Men', the maximum working week of the 'Early Men' (only) curtailed to 50 hours.	*Rejected*

(**Source:** Table A3.1 (Appendix 3))

Appendix (Chapter) 8

Table A8.1 *Dwelling Occupation Levels in ADGP and Perth, 1881-1921*[1]

	1881	1891	1901	1911	1921
Aberdeen	46.3	42.1	40.4	38.7	36.0
Aberdeen	58.6	55.8	54.1	51.5	48.7
Aberdeen	1.51	1.44	1.41	1.40	1.36
Aberdeen	44.2	41.3	38.7	37.3	34.4
Aberdeen	80.8	78.1	76.6	74.6	74.4
Aberdeen	73.3	70.8	70.3	70.6	71.0
Dundee	59.7	57.7	52.5	50.0	43.5
Dundee	71.9	71.2	66.7	64.1	57.8
Dundee	1.87	1.84	1.75	1.69	1.52
Dundee	56.1	55.4	50.0	47.2	40.6
Dundee	89.2	89.1	88.4	87.5	85.4
Dundee	85.2	85.0	83.9	84.7	82.7
Glasgow	64.6	64.2	59.5	58.9	55.2
Glasgow	75.1	75.7	70.6	69.4	67.7
Glasgow	2.05	2.05	-	1.85	1.79
Glasgow	60.2	60.4	56.1	54.7	53.1
Glasgow	89.7	90.6	86.2	85.3	86.0
Glasgow	85.9	87.0	82.5	83.7	85.5
Paisley	64.8	62.6	61.1	59.9	56.8
Paisley	75.4	73.7	73.8	72.0	70.1
Paisley	1.98	1.97	1.95	-	1.86
Paisley	61.6	60.1	59.7	57.3	55.3
Paisley	86.4	86.7	87.6	87.3	87.7
Paisley	82.9	82.8	84.2	85.8	87.9
Perth	40.6	33.4	30.9	26.8	24.1
Perth	56.6	45.3	42.9	38.2	34.9
Perth	1.31	1.23	1.17	1.20	1.11
Perth	37.8	32.6	30.1	26.4	22.1
Perth	73.8	66.9	65.4	64.3	65.3
Perth	66.0	59.2	58.5	59.6	61.3

(**Source:** *Census of Scotland*, 1871-1921, *numerous pages*)

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[1] *Upper row: percentage of families households in dwellings two or more persons per room - upper middle row: percentage of persons in dwellings two or more persons per room) persons per room - first middle row: average number of persons per room - second middle row: percentage of persons in dwellings more than two persons per room - lower middle row: percentage of families in one-, two-, or three-roomed dwellings - lower row: percentage of persons in one-, two-, or three-roomed dwellings).* The particular area of Perth analysed by each census is detailed in Table A8.2 (overleaf).

Table A8.2 *Predominant Type of Working-Class Dwelling Found in ADGP and Perth, 1905-1912*

Aberdeen	'The prevailing types of working-class dwellings are "houses" of two or three rooms in tenement-buildings of rough-hewn granite. The buildings are generally two or three stories in height, and there are two "houses" to every story, those on the ground floor containing two rooms while on each of the floors above, one of the "houses" has two rooms and the other three. The two-roomed "house" consists of a kitchen, in which a bed-recess is provided, and a "room" or parlour, while in the three-roomed "house" there is an additional bedroom of similar dimensions. Attached to practically every tenement block are one or more wash-houses, a drying loft, coal houses and a bleaching green of considerable size.'
Dundee	'The typical "house" occupied by the working classes contains two rooms and is situated in a tenement block of three or four stories. Each "house" has a kitchen containing a bed-recess and a "room" sometimes containing another bed-recess. A wash-house and a drying green are attached to each tenement block. Three-roomed "houses" have an extra bedroom, usually of smaller dimensions than the other rooms. Four-roomed "houses" which are much less common, contain, in addition to parlour and kitchen, two bedrooms of fair size'.
Glasgow	'The typical working-class dwelling is a "room and kitchen house" in a four-storied stone tenement building, having two, three or four tenants to a floor. Sleeping accommodation in both "room" and kitchen is provided by a bed-recess, while the apartments are also distinctly larger than those usually found in English working-class houses. In three-roomed "houses" the additional room, which is less spacious than the others, serves as a bedroom. In the newer buildings a water-closet, pantry, and small scullery are provided to each "house" but with older types there is only one water-closet per floor. Behind each building is an asphalted courtyard, frequently rather small and confined, in which is a wash-house for the common use of all the tenants'.
Paisley	'Paisley presents the usual characteristics of Scottish towns as regards housing, the typical working-class dwelling consisting of a "room and kitchen" in a stone tenement block of three or four stories. The "houses" are reached through a "close or stone-built passage into the building, and commonly three "houses" are situated on each stair-head. A water-closet is placed on each stair-head for the use of the tenants on each floor. As regards sleeping accommodation, bed-recesses are provided, there being usually one in the kitchen and one in the "room," though in some cases there is none in the "room," while there may be two in the kitchen. A washing house and large drying green are provided for the use of the tenants of each block'.

....

| Perth | 'Although the housing presents very variety, ranging from dwellings of extreme age and irregular character to recently erected tenement blocks of the most modern kind, the typical residence of the working classes is, as in other Scottish towns, a dwelling of two or three rooms. The kitchen is usually provided with a bed-recess; this may or may not be found in the second room, but is rare in the third room, which is usually small. The sanitary accommodation generally consists of one convenience for from two to four tenants. A wash-house and drying green are attached to each tenement block, while a public wash-house supplies the needs of tenants in the older dwellings, in which this provision is seldom found'. |

(**Source:** Board of Trade: *Cost of Living of the Working Classes. Report of an Enquiry by the Board of Trade into Working-Class Rents and Retail Prices, Together with the Rates of Wages in Certain Occupations in Industrial Towns of the United Kingdom in 1912* (HCPP, Cd. 6955, 1913) (1913), pp. 266-68, 276, 282)

Table A8.3 *Area Analysed by Census of Scotland, 1881-1921*

	1881	1891	1901	1911	1921
Aberdeen	Parliamentary Burgh	Parliamentary Burgh	Municipal Burgh	City	City
Dundee	Parliamentary Burgh	Parliamentary Burgh	Municipal Burgh	City	City
Glasgow	Parliamentary Burgh	Parliamentary Burgh	Municipal Burgh	City	City
Paisley	Parliamentary Burgh	Parliamentary Burgh	Municipal Burgh	Burgh	Burgh
Perth	**Parliamentary Burgh**	**Parliamentary Burgh**	**Municipal Burgh**	**City**	**Burgh**

(**Source:** *Census of Scotland*, 1881-1921, *numerous pages)*

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A.6 *National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh*

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Kenneth Young Papers: *Printed Papers and Correspondence Relating to General Elections in the Auchterarder Area* (1885-1892) (MS308/1/2/4)

Leith, Edinburgh & District Coopers Society: *Branch Records* (1913-1950) - *Minute Book* (1913-1932) (MS276/1)

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Scottish National Operative Plasterers' Federal Union, Perth: *Branch Records* (1916-1926, 1920-1935) - *Notices* and *Working Rules - Subscription Book* (1916-1926) - *Papers* (1920-1935) (PERGM 898, PERGM 899, PERGM 905)

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North-Eastern District Co-operative Association Conference: *Minute Book (8 Volumes)* (1879-1951) (000205417) (MS 8/1/1-8/1/8)

A.10 *West Yorkshire Archive, Bradford*

National Union of Dyers, Bleachers & Textile Workers: *Records* (1894-1980) (WYB, 5D82, 6D82 - 23/2/3/1/19)

B. Parliamentary Papers[1]

B.1 *Co-operative Enterprise*

Report from the Select Committee on Co-operative stores; together with the proceedings of the committee, Minutes of evidence, and appendix (HCPP, 344, 1878-1879)

Report from the Select Committee on Co-operative stores with the Proceedings of the Committee (HCPP, 111, 1880)

Board of Trade: *Cost of Living of the Working Classes. Report of an Enquiry by the Board of Trade into Working-Class Rents and Retail Prices, Together with the Rates of Wages in Certain Occupations in Industrial Towns of the United Kingdom in 1912* (HCPP, Cd. 6955, 1913)

B.2 *Working-Class Housing Conditions*

First Report of Her Majesty's Commissioners for Inquiries into the Housing of the Working Classes (HCPP, C. 4402, 1884-1885)

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[1] Source materials in this section are grouped thematically within each category.

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Departmental Committee on House-Letting in Scotland: *Report of the Departmental Committee on House-Letting in Scotland Volume I: Report of the Royal Commission on the Housing of the Industrial Population of Scotland* (HCPP, Cd. 3715, 1907)

Departmental Committee on House-Letting in Scotland: *Report of the Departmental Committee on House-Letting in Scotland Volume II. Minutes of Evidence and Appendices* (HCPP, Cd. 3792, 1908)

Housing Conditions (Scotland): *Return Showing the Housing Conditions of the Population of Scotland* (HCPP, Cd. 4016, 1908)

Royal Commission on Housing in Scotland: *Report of the Royal Commission on the Housing of the Industrial Population of Scotland Rural and Urban* (HCPP, Cd. 8731, 1917-1918)

B.3 *Parliamentary Constituencies*

Parliamentary Constituencies: *Return Showing with Regard to Each Parliamentary Constituency in the United Kingdom, the Number of Electors on the Register now in Force* (HCPP, 47, 1886)

Parliamentary Constituencies (Electors): *Return Showing, with Regard to each Parliamentary Constituency in the United Kingdom, the Total Number, and so far as Possible, the Number in each Class on the Register now in Force* (HCPP, 288, 1895)

B.4 *Population and Demography*

Census of Scotland Taken 1871: Eighth Decennial Census of the Population of Scotland Taken 3ʳᵈ April 1871, With Report. Volume I (HCPP, C. 592, 1872)

Census of Scotland Taken 1871: Eighth Decennial Census of the Population of Scotland Taken 3ʳᵈ April 1871, With Report. Volume II (HCPP, C. 841, 1873)

Census of Scotland Taken 1881: Ninth Decennial Census of the Population of Scotland Taken 4th April 1881, With Report. Volume I (HCPP, C. 3320, 1882)

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Census of Scotland 1911: Preliminary Report on the Twelfth Census of Scotland (HCPP, Cd. 5700, 1911)

Census of Scotland 1911. Report on the Twelfth Census of Scotland. Volume II (HCPP, Cd. 6896, 1913)

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Census of Scotland 1921. Preliminary Report on the Thirteenth Census of Scotland (HCPP, Cd. 1473, 1921)

Census of Scotland 1921: Report on the Thirteenth Census of Scotland, Volume I Part 28, County of Perth (London: HMSO, 1923)

B.5 *Poverty, Wages, and the Cost of Living*

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Twenty-second Annual Report of the Board of Supervision for the Relief of the Poor in Scotland (HCPP, 3957, 1867-1868)

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Twenty-fourth Annual Report of the Board of Supervision for the Relief of the Poor in Scotland (HCPP, C. 5, 1870)

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Twenty-sixth Annual Report of the Board of Supervision for the Relief of the Poor in Scotland (HCPP, C. 462, 1872)

Twenty-seventh Annual Report of the Board of Supervision for the Relief of the Poor in Scotland (HCPP, C. 681, 1873)

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Report on the Methods of Administering Poor Relief in Certain Large Town Parishes of Scotland (HCPP, C. 2524, 1905)

Board of Trade: *Cost of Living of the Working Classes. Report of an Enquiry by the Board of Trade into Working-Class Rents and Retail Prices, together with the Rates of Wages in Certain Occupations in Industrial Towns of the United Kingdom 1912* (HCPP, Cd. 6955, 1913)

Board of Trade Department of Labour Statistics: *Report on Changes in Rates of Wages and Hours of Labour in the United Kingdom in 1913, with Comparative Statistics* (HCPP, Cd. 7635, 1914)

B.6 *Trade Unions and Strikes*

Eleventh and Final Report of the Royal Commissioners Appointed to Inquire into the Organization and Rules of Trades Unions and Other Associations: Together with an Appendix Containing a Digest of the Evidence, Correspondence with Her Majesty's Missions Abroad Regarding Industrial Questions and Trades Unions, and Other Papers. Volume I - Report (HCPP, 4123, 1868-1869)

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Forward

Glasgow Weekly Herald

Labour Leader

People's Journal

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