

**LABOUR AND SOCIALISM IN GLASGOW 1880-1914:
THE ELECTORAL CHALLENGE PRIOR TO DEMOCRACY**

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ABSTRACT

From the emergence of the 'modern' Socialist movement in the 1880s through to the First World War, the majority of socialists in Britain regarded the achievement of particular reforms and the ultimate goal of Socialism itself, as being realisable only through the ballot box. The subject of this thesis is how that movement, i.e. for independent labour representation, was conducted and with what success in Glasgow prior to the First World War. The whole basis of this electoral strategy, however, is called into question by the sex and class biases inherent in the franchise system, as defined by the Reform Acts of the nineteenth century.

The focus of the study falls upon local, municipal politics and particular attention is paid to the Independent Labour Party (ILP), as the largest socialist organisation and the body most associated with the movement of independent labour representation. Glasgow was chosen because of its working class complexion, the militant reputation it received during and immediately after the First World War, and its emergence as an electoral stronghold of the Labour Party in the post-war period.

To achieve its aim of securing elected representation, the ILP sought to promote alliances with other 'democratic' forces which were regarded as part of the working class movement: the trade unions, the co-operators, and the Irish. An alliance of this group was achieved in the 1890s and secured a level of Labour representation on Glasgow Town Council. The elements of this alliance, however, were fissiparous and the coalition eventually collapsed and with it Labour representation, until a more structured Labour Party was established in Glasgow in 1910-12.

Even at its most successful, this electoral challenge was limited. This limitation is examined in relation to the franchise system. The class bias of the system operated most forcefully against the poorer working class, and the failure of British Socialism, and particularly the ILP, to campaign for complete democracy is seen as emanating from 'respectable' fears of the residuum or 'slum dwellers'. The limited impact made by Labour prior to 1914 is thrown into sharper relief by the massively expanded support it enjoyed post-1918 amongst the new mass electorate, which meant that Britain, for the first time, at least approximated to being a full democracy. That the forces of Labour had signally failed to make adult suffrage an important plank of its platform is seen as indicative of a Labour movement and politics unable to transcend the divisions within the working class, and posing only a limited and self-limiting challenge to the established order.

DECLARATION

I HEREBY DECLARE THAT THIS WORK HAS BEEN COMPOSED BY ME.

JAMES J. SMYTH

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Introduction

This thesis is a study of Labour and Socialist politics in Glasgow between 1880 and 1914: from the origins of the first Socialist societies to the position of the Labour Party at the outbreak of the First World War. In general terms, this is a terrain the broad contours of which are well-known at both the national and local level.¹ However, so far as Glasgow is concerned, there has been little attention paid to the electoral challenge of Labour prior to 1914, certainly insofar as local, municipal elections are concerned.² This is surprising since the majority of Socialists in Glasgow, as elsewhere in Britain, believed that Socialism would only be achieved through the ballot box. Furthermore, the bulk of this effort was conducted at the level of the municipality, where elections were held annually, unlike the periodic and uncertain instances of Parliamentary elections, and where Labour might be expected to gain some practical influence, if not power.

Labour and Socialist politics cannot be reduced to elections only, and studies which seek to examine and highlight the influence of specific organisations and 'alternative strategies' are valuable in contributing to as full a picture as possible of the complexities of the Labour and Socialist movement on Clydeside.³ However, such attention should not distort our perspective on what was the dominant strategy of Labour and Socialist activists – the effort to secure working class representation on local and national organs of government. For this reason, our focus falls primarily upon the Independent Labour Party (ILP), as the largest Socialist organisation and the body most associated with the movement for independent labour representation.

The whole basis of this electoral strategy is called into question by the limitations – both of gender and class – of the franchise system, as defined

by the reform Acts of the nineteenth century. While there is now a significant literature and debate on the extent of disenfranchisement prior to 1918, and of the significance on the Fourth Reform Act, there has been, as yet, little attempt made to incorporate these findings within general overviews of labour and political history. This 'gap' is evident even in as resolutely critical an approach to Labour politics as Eric Hobsbawm's, *The Forward March of Labour Halted?* While Hobsbawm's concern is with the decline of the Labour vote post 1945 (or 1951 to be more precise), the rise in support for Labour in the first half of the twentieth century is presented as, more or less, unproblematic.⁴

The number and percentage of Labour voters (including Communist ones) grew without interruption (except for 1931) between 1900 and 1951 when it reached a peak of 14 millions or just under 49 per cent of all votes.

It is impossible to deny that this increase of votes actually occurred yet, it is surely as important to recognise that this was not a gradual accretion of support, but a development in which there were breaks and sudden leaps. The transformation of the electorate under the terms of the Representation of the People Act (1917) represents a major discontinuity in British politics; under the terms of this Act an (almost) democratic electorate was created in Britain for the first time. It was only then that the Labour Party emerged as a major political force in its own right, and yet Labour previously had not made suffrage reform a significant part of its programme. Unless the complexities and indeed, uncertainties, of Labour's progress are integrated into the long-term view of its emergence, there can be a danger of viewing Labour history, and the history of the Labour Party, in terms of a pre-determined trajectory.⁵

It is intended that this study will break new ground by a detailed examination

of Labour's electoral progress prior to the First World War, and by referring this directly to the existing franchise system. Thus the franchise and the electorate are not assumed to be unproblematic, but are regarded as limited and as obstacles to working-class political representation. In addition, the attitude of Labour to the franchise is critically examined.

Much of the approach adopted here echoes that of Matthew, McKibbin and Kay, who first attempted to relate the franchise to the emergence of the Labour Party.⁶ Their arguments have been criticised on the grounds that the pre-1918 franchise was not biased against the working class,⁷ and that Labour's support post-1918 did tend to come from the 'old' pre-war working-class Liberal voters.⁸ The argument that it was the newly-enfranchised electorate of 1918 which was responsible for Labour's relative success in the post-war years has been further questioned by a recent attempt to quantify how these 'new' voters actually voted.⁹

However, this study is distinct in a number of ways: Existing studies of the franchise have tended to operate at a 'macro' level using Parliamentary boundaries and elections, aggregated mainly at a national or purely English level, while we have been able to identify the Glasgow electorate at a much smaller quantitative level, i.e. Municipal Wards, and relate enfranchisement rates to social indicators for these precise geographical areas (it should also be noted that the literature dealing with the emergence of Labour in Glasgow makes little or no mention of the franchise): Unlike 'static' national approaches which compare the results of the General Elections of 1910 and 1918, our arguments are based upon a detailed examination of the political history of a specific locality, which permits us to take into account factors such as the specific role of the Irish community and of women. Whereas Matthew et al discount the impact of the First World War, we emphasise the radicalising social and political consequences of the War upon Clydeside, which are

considered in an epilogue. Furthermore, we assess Labour's attitude to the pre-1918 electorate and seek to explain its acceptance of the gender and class biases inherent in the franchise system. Ultimately our findings support the view, on the basis of the Glasgow experience at least, that there was an enormous gap between Labour's position before and after the First World War, and that this was crucially connected to changes in the franchise. However, in order fully to understand how this development occurred it is necessary to examine the actual course of historical events, and for this reason our study also attempts to follow a narrative structure.

Chapter One deals in detail with the formation and activity of the Socialist societies of the 1880s, namely the Socialist League (SL) and Social Democratic Federation (SDF). These organisations are significant in that they represented a break with dominant liberal ideology as well as having had close links to the movement for land restoration, or land nationalisation, and the input they later made to the movement for independent labour representation. Examination of their political practice also indicates, most clearly in the case of the SL, how involvement in actual working-class struggles cut across a strategy which was opposed to 'political', or 'electoral' activity. In attempting to resolve this tension, members of the SL joined the fledgling Scottish Labour Party (SLP). The SDF in Glasgow also contributed to the SLP, though its members retained a dual membership.

Chapter Two focusses upon the role of the Independent Labour Party and its relationship with other forces in the effort to promote working-class representation. The independent existence of the SLP between 1888-1894 is discussed with an emphasis upon the ad-hoc nature of early attempts to construct a Labour party. The electoral campaigns of Labour, both Parliamentary and Municipal, are discussed and the role of the Glasgow Trades Council, the Co-operative movement and the Irish Nationalists

considered. Throughout the various fluctuations in Labour support, the ILP continued to promote candidates, either alone or in a workers', or 'democratic' coalition. The attempt is made to locate the ILP - in terms of membership and branches - within Glasgow, and some light is shed on its membership by examining the occupations of its Branch Secretaries.

Chapter Three continues the discussion of Labour's municipal campaign. The policies upon which Labour stood and its success in returning candidates to the Town Council are examined. The local opposition to Labour is also considered, as are the ideas and policies with which Labour made successful appeal to the working-class electorate. The role of John Ferguson and the 'single tax' in the 1890s is dealt with, and special emphasis given to housing - an increasingly important concern for Labour and the Glasgow working-class. The location and extent of Labour support in the City are identified geographically and implications drawn as regards the social basis of that support. Labour's electoral fortune is seen not to have been one of uninterrupted progress, but to have suffered considerable setbacks. Even after considerable success in the years preceding the First World War, Labour's position on Glasgow Town Council remained that of a minority pressure-group.

Chapters Four and Five break off the narrative to consider the position and role of the Irish and of women in Glasgow. The 'Irish vote' has been regarded as peculiarly significant to Labour's electoral ambitions in Scotland, with some commentators regarding it as an obstacle in Labour's path. By concentrating on the local political scene and the debates over Labour candidates for Municipal honours (though with reference to Parliamentary elections), it is argued that significant elements of the Irish community were enthusiastic, if conditional advocates of labour representation. The occupational structure of the Irish population in Glasgow is examined, and the Irish nationalist

organisations seen as providing a voice for a section of the poorer, unskilled working-class. At the same time the electoral power of the Irish is seen as having been qualified by the fact of the social position of most Irish.

The role of women is discussed, despite their limited electoral role. Attention is paid both to the part played by women in the Labour and Socialist movement, and to what that movement expected of them. Despite male hostility to their involvement, women did gradually take a more active role in Labour politics throughout this period, a development in which the ILP was supportive, although attention is drawn to the tension between the rhetoric of sex-equality and more deeply imbued attitudes toward women. The women's suffrage movement is considered, in particular its relationship with the ILP in Glasgow. The low proportion of married women employed in Glasgow is pointed out, and it is argued that, as far as working-class women were concerned, the most important organisation was the Co-operative Women's Guild, a body, primarily, run by and for housewives. The relation of women's domestic concerns to class politics are then discussed.

Chapters Six and Seven look more closely at the franchise itself. Chapter Six details the actual levels of adult male enfranchisement for the Parliamentary Divisions and Municipal Wards of the City. The wide variations in levels of enfranchisement, i.e. the proportional adult male electorate, are related to a descriptive categorisation of the different areas of Glasgow and then a correlation is made between the proportion of adult males with the vote in the Municipal Wards with social statistics on housing and health for the same areas. In addition, enfranchisement levels of the delegates to Glasgow Trades Council are examined. It is argued, on the basis of this evidence, that the franchise was biased, not only against women but also against the working class and, in particular, the poorer working class.

Chapter Seven then broaches the political question: What was the effect of this restricted franchise upon Labour and what was the Labour and Socialist view of the franchise? Labour's reticence to campaign for adult suffrage or make a priority of further franchise reform is discussed at a number of inter-related levels: A predominant anti-feminism, acceptance of the 'Liberal' view of the franchise as a 'trust' and mark of citizenship, and the fears of the 'respectable' working class of the 'residuum' or 'slum-dweller' - a recurring phantom in Labour's demonology. As regards the electoral fortunes of the Labour Party in the pre-1914 period, it is reiterated that Labour's challenge was not only limited but also self-limiting, through its acceptance of the existing franchise system.

The limited electoral advance made by Labour in these years is thrown into sharper relief by a brief look at the post-war situation in which, within a very short time, Glasgow had become a stronghold of the Labour Party. In terms of its electorate, Glasgow was almost completely altered - the proportion of adult men alone who had the vote had almost doubled in the decade between 1911 and 1921. The Labour vote could now be counted in the hundreds of thousands as opposed to the four-figure totals of the pre-war period. Along with this massively expanded Labour constituency, the war-time experience was also a crucial factor in the development of Labour as a major political force. Direct involvement in political activity had become a reality for large sections of the population, especially women. Membership of working-class bodies like the Trade Unions and Co-operative Societies expanded rapidly as, to a lesser degree did the membership of the ILP. At the same time there were definite continuities across the War and, in Glasgow, none more so than in Housing. The years after 1918 did not see Labour emerge as the undisputed or unanimous choice of a united working class, and it was able to build upon pre-existing bases of support. Nevertheless, Labour's actual level

of support had reached a new height from which broader horizons could be glimpsed, and which had simply not been possible before.

NOTES

1. e.g. G.D.H. Cole, *British Working Class Politics 1832-1914* (London 1941); Henry Pelling, *A Short History of the Labour Party* (London 1978). An example of a locality-based study is, David Clark, *Colne Valley: From Radicalism to Socialism* (London 1981).
2. Information on the Parliamentary level for Glasgow and Scotland is provided by D. Howell, *British Workers and the Independent Labour Party 1888-1906* (Manchester 1984); I.G.C. Hutchison, *A Political History of Scotland 1832-1924: Parties, Elections and Issues* (Edinburgh 1986); H. Fraser, "The Labour Party in Scotland", in K.D. Brown, *The First Labour Party 1906-1914*, pp 38-63. (London 1985).
3. e.g. J. Hinton, *the First Shop Stewards' Movement* (London 1973); R. Challinor, *The Origins of British Bolshevism* (London 1977).
4. Eric Hobsbawn, *The Forward March of Labour Halted?* (London 1981), p 16.
5. On this issue see Richard Price, *Labour in British Society: an Interpretative History* (London 1986). Price attempts to overcome such conceptualisations of labour history, or, "The stultifying hold of a teleology that, whatever its sophistication, ultimately reduces that history to a series of universal, absolutist categories of analysis." p 12.
6. H.C.G. Matthew, R.I. McKibbin, J.A. Kay, "The franchise factor in the rise of the Labour Party", *English Historical Review* (1976), pp 723-52.
7. Duncan Tanner, "The Parliamentary Electoral System, the 'Fourth' Reform Act and the Rise of Labour in England and Wales", *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*, LVI (1983), pp 205-19. Martin Pugh, *Electoral Reform in War and Peace 1906-1918* (London 1978).
8. Michael Hart, "The Liberals, the war and the franchise", *English Historical Review* (1982), pp 820-32.
9. John Turner, "The Labour Vote and the Franchise After 1918: An Investigation of the English Evidence", in P. Denley & D. Hopkin, *History and Computing*, (Manchester 1987), pp 136-43.

Chapter One

The Modern Socialist Movement 1880–1888

Histories of the modern Labour and Socialist movement generally begin in 1893 with the formation of the Independent Labour Party (ILP) or, perhaps as early as 1888, with Keir Hardie's independent candidature at Mid-Lanark.¹ In Scottish terms, 1888 is the more logical starting point since, apart from Mid-Lanark, it was also the year of the formation of the Scottish Labour Party (SLP), which developed out of Hardie's campaign.

The whole decade of the 1880s is significant, however, since it was during this period that socialism – as an intellectual and organisational force – emerged. Born out of the radical, land-restorationist campaign of the late 1870s and early 1880s, socialism offered a distinctive analysis of society based upon the ideas of Marx and the theory of surplus value, i.e. Social-Democracy. Though without electoral significance and operating mainly at a propagandist level, the Socialist movement of the 1880s did represent a break with established political practice and ideas, as well as offering an alternative vision of how society might be organised.² In direct political terms Social-Democracy became an influential force within the labour movement, but its significance also lies in the crucial involvement of socialists within the movement for independent labour representation which, ultimately, produced the Labour Party.

The modern Socialist movement of the 1880s was based upon the perceived common interests of the working class – not simply that the working class had certain rights which society ought to recognise, but that the working

class represented the basis of society since it was Labour which was the creator of wealth. However, a class analysis of society and a politics based upon class representation faced stony ground in a system which emphasised individual values and responses and assumed middle and working class co-operation in terms of the 'masses' against the 'classes' (i.e. the landed aristocracy).³ From the Reform Act of 1832 until the First World War, Scottish politics were dominated by the Liberal Party. Only once, at the General Election of 1900, did the Liberals fail to win a majority of Scottish seats.

In Glasgow, the Liberals won every single seat at every election between 1832 and 1868, the first Conservative victory occurring at the General Election of 1874. This dominance was not expressed solely by a numerical superiority in the number of MPs – it could be said that Liberalism set the parameters of political debate within Scotland. The challenge to the Liberal ascendancy between 1886 and 1900 was more Unionist than Conservative, on their own the Conservatives never held as many as a third of Scottish seats. Moreover, it has been argued that, in Scotland, Conservatives promoted their cause in terms of Liberalism and that the breakaway Liberal Unionists of 1886, who claimed to remain Liberals, "absorbed the Conservative Party in Scotland."⁴ At the other end of the spectrum, "many of the Labour politicians were accustomed to claim that they were also Liberals."⁵ As far as the Glasgow working class or, rather, the organised Labour movement, was concerned, their world view was inherently Liberal. What Joan Smith refers to as the 'commonsense' of the Glasgow Labour movement, which was expressed in terms of conscious political beliefs and in the organisations that people joined, was part of a Liberal tradition.⁶ Under a restrictive, property-based franchise system, in which less than half the working class had the vote, the political incorporation of the working class appeared almost total.⁷ The socialist movement which emerged in the 1880s had, therefore, little space in

which to manoeuvre. One of the early Glasgow 'pioneers' described the situation confronting him and his comrades at that time:⁸

Socialist ideas had not assumed any political form in this country. The working class in the bulk were completely under the sway of the capitalist political parties - whose most advanced projects were embodied in Mr. Gladstone's Midlothian speeches of 1879-1880, in which no reference whatever to Socialism, or even to Labour in a political sense, occurs. There were no Socialist meetings, no Socialist literature.

The 'Land' Movement as a Precursor to Socialism

In Glasgow, as elsewhere in Scotland and Britain, at the end of the 1870s there were few indicators of independent working-class political activity. There were still some old Chartists and Owenites around who had been active in the agitation of the 1830s. There was also a number of Secularists, whose roots also went back to the 1830s, who organised the Sunday Lectures Society in the face of strong disapproval by the Kirk.⁹ Opportunities for discussion and debate were provided by Radical Associations, the Glasgow Parliamentary Debating Society (est. 1876), local Young Men's Debating Societies and Irish Land League Branches.¹⁰ On a directly political level (as distinct from mere political discussion) it was the Irish Land League that was the most important organisation. The 'land for the people' agitation was given a tremendous boost by the propaganda tours of Michael Davitt and Henry George, and it was in the land restoration movement that many were to become politically active for the first time and, especially for those who supported land nationalisation, to make their initial break with laissez-faire liberalism.¹¹ This movement was particularly strong in Glasgow due to the large number of immigrant Irish and displaced Highlanders. Immediate interest was aroused by the 'land war' in Ireland of 1879-1882 and the Government's response of Land Acts and coercion, and the beginnings of an organised

Crofters' movement in Scotland and the Highland 'land war'.¹²

The nascent socialist movement had an almost symbiotic relationship with the land movement. The first socialist body in Britain, the Social Democratic Federation (SDF), was originally founded in 1881 as an advanced radical society called simply the Democratic Federation. Its founding programme more or less embodied the People's Charter (though calling for adult suffrage, not just votes for men) and included legislative independence for Ireland and nationalisation of the land; in its early years Ireland dominated its activities.¹³ The leader of the Federation, H.M. Hyndman, had a close political friendship with Henry George, though by 1885 both had to recognise that the demands of Socialism were not compatible with the solutions offered by George's demands for a Single Tax. However, for a period in the early 1880s, there was much common ground over immediate policy, particularly over Ireland.¹⁴ Many of those who were to join the socialist movement and to play prominent parts in it, had first served their political 'apprenticeship' in the Irish and Land campaigns.¹⁵

The move from a radical-liberalism to socialism is exemplified in the careers of two Glasgow men, John Bruce Glasier and James Shaw Maxwell, both of whom became prominent in the Independent Labour Party (ILP): Glasier became Chairman of the ILP in the 1900s, while Maxwell, a slightly older man was the first Secretary of the ILP's National Administrative Council (NAC) and became a Labour Councillor in Glasgow.¹⁶ In the early 1880s both were members of the Scottish Land Restoration League (SLRL).¹⁷ In 1883 they became involved in producing a small weekly paper, *Voice of the People*, Maxwell as editor and Glasier as a regular contributor. In his memoirs of this period Glasier described the *Voice* as, "a little Radical and 'land for the People' weekly".¹⁸ The *Voice* only managed to survive for a couple of months and left little impact on the political life of Glasgow. However, its significance does

not lie in its circulation figures but as an indicator of dissatisfaction with Liberalism and the search, however cautious, for an alternative. Within the columns of the *Voice* were embodied elements of radical liberalism, land leagueism and labourism, and viewed from the perspective of Maxwell and Glasier's later trajectories, it can be regarded as representing a half-way house between Liberalism and Socialism.

The intention behind the *Voice of the People* was to challenge the Liberal Party supremacy and to act as a tribune for the working class whose interests, it argued, could never be represented by even, "the most Liberal daily newspaper".¹⁹ Alongside of the "magnificent increase" in national wealth, which had doubled since 1852, "chronic pauperism" had scarcely diminished.²⁰ Such problems as Labour faced (the terms "Labour", "the people", "the main body of the people", "the working class", were all used interchangeably) demanded "radical treatment", and the key was for Labour to increase its representation in the corridors of power.²¹ According to the *Voice* the, "so-called representation of the people in Parliament is one of the greatest shams which delude the people of this country." Labour had only two representatives in the House of Commons, as against the representatives of, "the Fighting Interests", "the Law and Liquor interests", and:²²

the Aristocratic and Moneyed interests ... represented in overwhelming numbers with a House of Peers wholly composed of landlords to back them."

Yet, it was Labour which, "produces wealth and profit for all and bears the whole social fabric on its broad patient back."²³ This acceptance of the labour theory of value and a desire to see the international solidarity of labour did not, however, lead to an acceptance of the class struggle. The *Voice* equated, "antagonisms between class and class" with that between "nation and nation"

and saw both as, "substituting the narrow motive of self-interest for the broader and cumulative inspiration of general well being."²⁴ The *Voice* sought to carry weekly trade union reports and in the event of strikes it intended that, "the case for the men will be as fully and explicitly stated in our pages as that for the masters is sure to be in other newspapers". However, the influence of the paper would be used to bring about, "a friendly settlement. We will denounce all attempts to stir up a needless strife between employers and employed."²⁵

The *Voice* called for an increased political role to be played by the trade union movement; the Glasgow Trades Council it regarded as the most obvious organising force to achieve Labour representation on the Town Council. At a practical level the *Voice* suggested that polling booths be kept open from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., rather than close at four in the afternoon, to make it easier for the working class electorate to vote. Similarly, it called for evening meetings of the Town Council, since day-time meetings effectively disbarred working class representatives. It did not, however, make any mention of further extension of the franchise.²⁶ The *Voice of the People* did recognise and approve of the self-organisation of the working class or, at least, the minority of unionised workers, and attempted to champion the "interests" of Labour. As the term "interests" implies, however, it did so within a liberal-individualist framework and distinguished itself from socialism. Commenting on the International Trade Union Congress at Paris, the *Voice* was pleased that the sober judgement of Henry Broadhurst had prevailed over the "hotter spirits".²⁷

The English leader embodies the best spirit of reform - that which gives full value to sturdy individualism, and refuses to ask the State to do that which diminishes, in any degree, the workman's consciousness of independence ... Hitherto the foreign workmen who met for council have dwelt chiefly on visionary schemes, which lead to vapouring talk and no forward movement. They do not as a body share the healthy distrust of

large social theories which characterises Englishmen, and which will keep at arms length such comprehensive impossibilities as are aimed at in the programme of the Democratic Federation..."

Yet, despite this opposition to the Federation, the *Voice* regarded it as a force to be taken seriously and debated with. It published the Federation's Manifesto, *Socialism Made Plain* (which marked the Federation adopting socialism) and spoke of its "respect" for the leaders of the Federation, in particular the "remarkable" William Morris whose, "practical sympathy with the proletariat, now being expressed in activity for the SDF", was likened to Mazzini.²⁸

The land restoration or, nationalisation, movement remained popular for a long time in Glasgow and exerted a strong influence on Labour politics. John Ferguson, the leading Irish Nationalist in Scotland, remained a life-long proponent of the single-tax policy and through him it became the central plank of early Labour municipal campaigns.²⁹ It was only in 1906 - after Ferguson's death - that the ILP in Glasgow could attempt to "expose" the "popular fallacy" of Henry Georgism.³⁰ Despite the undoubted influence and popularity of Henry George³¹, even in the early 1880s some of his erstwhile supporters were beginning to look for a more systematic doctrine than the "panacea" of land nationalisation.³² For many the attraction of the land movement was not that it provided the final word on economic matters but that it provided a forum for discussion of economic and social issues, which was singularly absent in both of the major political parties.³³ According to one contemporary, Henry George's visit to Scotland in 1882 was largely a disappointment, especially to his working class audience:³⁴

There were not many working men in the Land Restoration movement; but to those who were in it, George appeared to be dominated by middle-class points of view, notwithstanding the fact that he had himself been a working man. Those who

looked upon land nationalisation as a mere stepping-stone to something else, whatever that might be, were disappointed at the finality of George's views.

In this perspective, the importance of George, and the land movement generally, lay in stimulating economic thought, not in producing any original economic theory. In particular, it broke new ground by pointing to a positive role that could be played by the State, notwithstanding appeals to "sturdy individualism".³⁵

The Land Restoration movement had no importance in itself ... but it indicated clearly that there was gradually arising among the people, especially in Scotland, a feeling of hostility to both political parties and a contempt for the negative character of their domestic policies. Limited as was its range, the Land Restoration movement implied a breaking down of the antagonism to economic action by the State which characterised the period of *laissez faire*, and in that sense it prepared the way for the Socialist movement which began about 1884 among groups of people of a character similar to that of the groups which were affected by the Land Nationalisation propaganda, and indeed very many passed from one movement to the other."

The First Socialist Societies - and the 'Split'

H.M. Hyndman, the founder and major figure of the SDF, spoke alongside Henry George on the latter's visit to Glasgow in 1882 and immediately after the meeting a branch of the Democratic Federation was formed.³⁶ It appears to have been totally inactive, however, until the summer of 1884 when it re-activated itself and began to hold regular meetings on Sundays in a small hall in the City.³⁷ In December 1884 Hyndman returned to Glasgow to publicly inaugurate the branch - now part of the avowedly socialist SDF - and lectured to some 1200 people at the Albion Halls: "The first official statement in Glasgow of modern 'scientific' Socialism."³⁸ Later in the same month William Morris, the Treasurer of the SDF, also lectured in Glasgow, on "Art

and Labour".³⁹ Just at this moment, however, when the budding Socialist movement was beginning to establish itself, the SDF split.

The reasons and circumstances behind this split have been well detailed.⁴⁰ Essentially, the dispute was over two issues: the autocratic pretensions of Hyndman, and the value of struggling for immediate reforms which could (or could not) alleviate the present condition of the working class, the 'dreaded palliatives'. The 'opposition' group, which congregated around William Morris and which was to breakaway to form the Socialist League (SL), argued that the Federation should not have a permanently established leader, which they suspected Hyndman of attempting to become, and they did not want any policy of 'stepping stones' to Socialism to become all, or even part, of Federation policy. Though it is difficult to identify any insuperable differences between the two sides, the position of Morris and what was to become the SL can be regarded as the more 'left wing' or 'purist', in terms of the positions they took on reforms, parliamentarianism and foreign policy. At the time, however, there was great suspicion of Hyndman and what were perceived as his opportunist political tactics, and this 'personal' side to the dispute became decisive and affected the Scottish socialists quite crucially.

As the two factions grouped around Morris and Hyndman began to emerge within the London SDF during 1884, and Austrian exile named Andreas Scheu, who urged Morris to take a leading role, became prominent within the opposition to Hyndman. Scheu had experience in European Social-Democracy and was a highly talented and capable man.⁴¹ Whether this provoked Hyndman's latent Germanophobia and for whatever precise reason, it is clear that some time late in 1884 Hyndman made an attempt to discredit Scheu, now resident in Edinburgh, in the eyes of the Glasgow members of the SDF. The Edinburgh branch had approached their Glasgow comrades with a proposal that they work together and that Glasgow also adopt the title that

Edinburgh had adopted, i.e. the Scottish Land and Labour League (SL&LL). This name, however, was a moot point within the SDF and the Glasgow branch contacted Hyndman for advice or, as Morris saw matters, "some of the members seem to have approached Hyndman for *orders* as to what to do."⁴² Hyndman in his reply appears to have attacked Scheu as an anarchist who, "had tried to destroy the organisation of the German comrades and would do the same in Scotland if the comrades were not cautious of such foreigners."⁴³

At just this moment Morris appeared in Scotland. He had been in Edinburgh twice before but this was his first visit to Glasgow where he hoped he would be able to smooth things over. Ironically, his meeting with the Glasgow branch served to highlight the schism and to hasten its conclusion. After witnessing Hyndman's interference Morris determined to see matters through to an end.⁴⁴ Bruce Glasier has left a vivid, though untrustworthy account of this meeting.⁴⁵ Whatever the true nature of the debate between Morris and the Glasgow stone-mason William Nairne, the meeting was divided between the two. Although, according to Glasier, "the meeting felt drawn toward" Morris, yet, "the greater number present were ... ranged with Nairne on the Hyndman side."⁴⁶ By the beginning of January 1885 the split was complete, with Glasier and others leaving to form a branch of the SL, while in Edinburgh the SL&LL changed its affiliation to the new organisation.

Strange as it may seem - and it puzzled socialists at the time - Edinburgh was ahead of Glasgow in establishing a socialist presence. In late 1883 a Republican Society was formed in Edinburgh by John Lincoln Mahon and Robert Banner which, by early 1884, had become affiliated to the Democratic Federation.⁴⁷ Though this Society was identifiably socialist, by way of being a branch of the Democratic Federation, the actual change of name to Social Democratic Federation seems to have caused the Edinburgh members some concern and they decided on a different title for themselves; something "more

homely, concrete, alluring, less abstract and foreign looking", than the SDF.⁴⁸ This choice of name was deliberately intended to exploit the growing agitation in Scotland over the land issue, particularly with the direct action of the Highland Crofters being to the fore and the apparent success of the Scottish Land Restoration League. Furthermore, J. L. Mahon was of the opinion that the SDF, "as an organisation did not stand a chance in Scotland",⁴⁹ and so the Edinburgh socialists designated themselves as, The Scottish Land and Labour League, the Scottish section of the SDF. This was regarded with suspicion in London and Morris wrote to Edinburgh that, "it will be looked on here as a secession I am afraid."⁵⁰ Edinburgh could claim an established precedent through the previous Republican Society but this decision, especially as Andreas Scheu had only recently moved to Edinburgh, added to the tension within the London SDF. Come the split the title of the Edinburgh branch was accepted by the SL but it did provide a point of some contention and not just between London and Scotland but also amongst socialists within Scotland.⁵¹ Despite its name, however, the SL&LL did not immerse itself in agrarian issues (nor did it have anything particular to say about the Scottish situation), in fact quite the reverse. As E.P. Thompson has commented:⁵²

Despite the prominence given to the land in the League's objects, the Manifesto of the League (drawn up in October) was addressed almost exclusively to the industrial workers and might indeed had been open to criticism more for neglecting to include a specific paragraph relating to the crofters' struggle, than for breaking with the general line of propoganda of the SDF.

However, there were benefits gained.

Nevertheless the slight acknowledgement to national feeling brought immediate returns: Scheu made propoganda visits to Glasgow and the West of Scotland "with good success":and in Edinburgh the League began to gather

strength."

Part of the reason behind Edinburgh's greater initial progress was due to the activity of Andreas Scheu. Scheu's experience in the continental socialist movement marked him off from the rest of his comrades, apart from the exiled Frenchman Leo Melliet, veteran of the Paris Commune. Although both men were resident in Edinburgh, and Melliet had been and remained for a good deal longer than Scheu, it was Scheu who was the more important. Melliet was regarded as, "one of the most persuasive of speakers",⁵³ but it was Scheu who was, "*the* leading spirit in the movement at that time."⁵⁴ Scheu arrived in Britain about 1874 and he had lived in Edinburgh during 1879-82. He did, apparently, maintain some form of socialist propoganda at that time and succeeded in converting Robert Banner, then a young bookbinder, to socialism. Banner eventually followed Scheu to London and became an executive member of the SDF and then the SL.⁵⁵ It is interesting to note that the other co-founder of the Edinburgh Republican Society, John L Mahon, also moved to London and played a significant role in the split, and became the first national secretary of the SL.⁵⁶ Scheu returned to Edinburgh in the summer of 1884 and immediately set about galvanising the Federation branch; he organised regular meetings and even got the members to pay regular dues. Although Scheu returned to London once again the following May he had, in a short space of time, made a lasting impression. Looking back to this period one of his Edinburgh comrades described him as:⁵⁷

... that tall and commanding form, that striking personality ... he was filled to overflowing with energy and enthusiasm, - of the nervous temperament, excitable and exciting, he put vim into a meeting and everything he put his hand to."

Scheu, in later life, considered that he had been a member of four socialist

movements, the Austrian, German, English *and* Scottish.⁵⁸ A furniture designer to trade, which may have encouraged his friendship with Morris, Scheu managed to get money from a variety of sympathisers and hired a hall – which he furnished himself – as a meeting place for the branch. The stylish result made the young Bruce Glasier envious of Edinburgh and he sadly contrasted this, “handsome meeting place” to the “dingy little hall in the slummiest quarter of the city”, which the Glasgow branch used.⁵⁹ The major contributor was (as so often) Edward Carpenter.⁶⁰ In a letter written to Carpenter in September 1884, Scheu outlined the position of socialism in Edinburgh and the potential for its future development. Carpenter wanted details presumably to decide if it was worth giving any money and though perhaps tempted to exaggerate, Scheu, in fact, gave a very straightforward account of the situation.⁶¹

As to the number of persons here interested in Socialism I may not be positive; but I think they are by no means very few, actual members of the SDF there are at present no more than 25. Of “Justice” between 100 & 150 were sold by Mahon every week. There is a Socialistic Debating-Society at the University, which counts about 70 members and some of these students have joined our League. They have invited Morris and & [...] to lecture them in the ensuing winter and seem to be very earnest in the matter. Of course, our chief support we shall have to get from among the wage-workers and from amongst the audiences I used to have on former occasions – I feel entitled to expect a good number to join our society as soon as we have quarters of our own. Up to my arrival here nothing in the way of actual organisation had been done, but since i have started it, I see that they are quite willing to contribute their mites regularly. Like wise I am convinced that they will join us as soon as they see actual work performed.

In his efforts to establish a meeting place Scheu made overtures to the Edinburgh Land Restoration League to share a hall. Though he admitted to Carpenter that he had done so without “much hope”,⁶² it is interesting to look at how he approached the subject. This is contained in a letter to a Miss Reeves:⁶³

Madam, encouraged by what I learn of you from J. Mahon, I take the liberty of addressing you on a subject which, I have reason to think, interests you much and had already enlisted your sympathy: I mean the subject of Socialistic Propoganda in Gt. Britain and more especially in Scotland. ...

Not that I believe you to be a Socialist, but I am aware that you are supporting a movement which goes very far in the direction of Socialism. ...

Now, I need not say that as a Socialist I agree with Mr. G's [i.e. Henry George] efforts re. the solution of the Land Question; but I am one of those who go farther and claim also the socialisation of the means of Transit and production.

You may not agree with us there, but it is evident that Socialists and Land Restorers go a good length in the same direction. And if so, why should they go separated and not together; united in one purpose without quarrelling about the other and without doing one another damage.

This was the, more or less, standard view on the relations between land reform and socialism, i.e. that the former (nationalisation of the land) was correct in its own right but simply did not go far enough. As Scheu also commented:⁶⁴

Two years ago I heard Mr. H George admit that himself (in the Memorial Hall, London) by saying that he knew full well the nationalisation of the land would not solve the social question; but that he was convinced that it was a *sure step towards bringing that solution about.*

Scheu could hardly have been surprised, nontheless, that the Edinburgh Land Leaguers refused his offer and, as he admitted to Carpenter, he actually had high hopes that, "the best of them" would soon join the SL&LL anyway.⁶⁵ Like the Socialists the Land Restoration League was not strong, at least in Edinburgh, but wrote Scheu, "in Glasgow they are *very* strong."⁶⁶

This comparison brings us closer to a more fundamental political distinction between Glasgow and Edinburgh. In both cities Liberalism was dominant but

in Glasgow this was a relatively radical Liberalism, while Edinburgh was the power base of Scottish Whiggism. The Glasgow Liberals were more concerned with party organisation, along the lines of Chamberlain's Birmingham, and it was they who were behind the setting up of a Scottish Liberal Association. Their concern with political activity allowed them to be more sympathetic, though only to a limited extent, to working class involvement in political affairs.⁶⁷ It has been argued that it was Whig antipathy to the working class which encouraged Edinburgh Trades Council to be more politically active in the early 1880s than Glasgow Trades Council.⁶⁸ So, in Edinburgh there was a 'space' within the politics of the city which socialism could exploit, while in Glasgow, with a radical Liberal Party and a sizeable Land Restoration League, there were more alternatives for the politically conscious and the 'space' for socialist or labour activity was that much more limited.

When the 'split' took place the group around Morris, which actually comprised a majority of the SDF Executive, decided simply to resign rather than argue their case throughout the organisation. E.P. Thompson has commented upon Morris, whose role was crucial, that his actions were, "dictated far less by policy than by passion", and that, "it almost seems as if Morris, in his fury, had forgotten that the SDF had a membership." The important consequence of this was that the membership did not get a chance to understand fully the nature of the division and were "alienated" by the 'majority's' "precipitateness".⁶⁹ In Scotland, however, the SL came out of the split stronger than the SDF, and this may have been due, again, to Scheu's more realistic grasp of affairs. he recognised the limited resources available to the emerging movement and was unwilling to surrender valuable human capital to Hyndman, at least without a fight. In early January he wrote to Mahon (now Secretary of the SL):⁷⁰

I doubt whether your plan of letting the present branches of the SDF alone is a good one. I could do so only after a bona fide attempt has been made *to win them over*. It is certainly worth while and - although a somewhat disagreeable job - would be the more profitable one of the lot.

Why should H. have the Branches or even their names to puff himself up with? And where to find the new forces and organise *new branches*.

Scheu took a leading part in the debate in Glasgow where an attempt was made by the Morris sympathisers to win over the branch. In Scheu's opinion, "the better men ... are decidedly in our favour", while the leaders, "are not to be convinced of course, and are not worth having."⁷¹ Whereas in Edinburgh the SL&LL went over to the SL, more or less as a body, in Glasgow the SDF branch split in two, with Scheu being active in founding the new branch and preparing its initial agitation.⁷² By January 1885 the socialist movement had become established in the manner in which it was to operate over the next few years: there were the two rival parties of the SDF and the SL which, though they had their differences, do, nevertheless, have to be treated as part of the same movement.

Establishing the Socialist Propoganda

Initially the Glasgow branch of the SL adopted the designation of Scottish Land and Labour League (Scottish Section of the Socialist League) and had membership cards supplied from Edinburgh. This led to some confusion over where authority lay, with the secretary of the Glasgow branch arguing with Mahon in London that he saw no reason for Glasgow, "seeking any authorization from your Executive".⁷³ This does not, however, prove that the SL&LL offered any uniquely Scottish perspective on Socialism, nor was there any, "bitter row ... between the English and Scottish socialists over the questions of policy and party autonomy."⁷⁴ The Scottish socialist branches

gave little or no importance to the land question or to the position of Scotland vis-a-vis England in their propoganda.⁷⁵ The title of SL&LL was really an Edinburgh phenomenon, largely the choice of Mahon, which could be seen as an opportunist device for not specifically referring to Socialism. The Glasgow branch soon dropped the designation and was happier with just identifying itself straightforwardly as a branch of the SL. Moreover, when Mahon attempted to resurrect the name SL&LL a few years later he met a good deal of hostility from Glasgow.⁷⁶

Where there was a difference between the London leadership and the Scottish members was over religion. The Manifesto setting out the aims and principles of the SL was sent round the branches for discussion and the statement, "Socialism the only religion the Socialist League professes". gave offence to members of both the Glasgow and Edinburgh branches. Glasgow was "unanimously of [the] opinion" that such a remark was "unnecessary and injudicious", and wanted it changed to, "Single-hearted devotion to the cause of Socialism".⁷⁷ The Edinburgh branch was not unanimous but still wanted the phrase altered:⁷⁸

In religious Scotland you may rest assured that ... [it] will create unnecessary bitterness against us. It appears to several members of the League possible to be a Socialist without being a materialist or an atheist ...

The difference of opinion may not have been a difference between Scotland and England so much, as a difference between London and the Provinces. The Liverpool branch of the SL also wanted the offending statement dropped and so,⁷⁹

Avoids what causes many people to distrust and misunderstand us.

Within the cosmopolitan milieu of London and for people like Morris, Bax, Engels, the Marx-Avelings, acceptance of materialism and hostility to religion was relatively unproblematic. For those in "religious Scotland" and provincial England, such ideas were much newer and the weight of established religion on public opinion that much stronger. One of the young academics who joined the SL wrote to a fellow comrade of his desire to leave Glasgow University for something "decent", which he explained:⁸⁰

by 'decent' I mean largely that will not oblige me to knuckle down too much to conventionality in religion or politics.

Another source of offence to the Scottish membership was the SL view on "property marriage", which they also wanted to see dropped from the Manifesto.⁸¹ It is interesting to note that Scheu did not share the criticisms and misgivings of his Scottish comrades, but wanted the manifesto to be more explicit on the differences with the SDF and to take Hyndman more to task for his jingoism.⁸² However, the Socialist movement in Scotland could not avoid coming into conflict with established religion at some point since they were implicitly, if not explicitly, rivals for popular support. Bruce Glasier made the point in a letter to the Executive Council:⁸³

Sunday meetings in Scotland of a political character can only be attended by those who are prepared to suffer a degree of family and social ostracism

[but he went on to say]

we feel it our duty however to insist on Sunday propoganda as we will never reach the masses until we have made Sunday propoganda popular.

Socialism shared with other 'collectivist' movements, like land restoration, an emphasis on social issues rather than constitutional matters. What was

distinctive about the socialist propoganda, however, was its emphasis upon labour as as the source of all wealth, and as the basis of a future equality. As William Morris expressed it:⁸⁴

The first step to be taken then is to abolish a class of men privileged to shirk their duties as men, thus forcing others to do the work which they refuse to do. All must work according to their ability, and so produce what they consume - that is, each man should work as well as he can for his own livelihood, and his livelihood should be assured to him; that is to say, all the advantages which society would provide for each and all of its members

Thus, at last, would true Society be founded. It would rest on equality of condition.

Such a vision of a classless society came straight from Marx and the early socialist movement was, basically, in terms of its analysis of society and its emphasis upon the political role of the proletariat, Marxist. While Marx's works had not been widely distributed those who were familiar with his writings, "included a majority of the effective leaders of the [socialist] movement".⁸⁵ Figures like Hyndman, Morris, Bax, Scheu, the Marx-Avelings were the political and intellectual leaders of the first generation of British socialists and from them the influence of Marxism or Social Democracy, extended into a national movement. As regards the SDF:⁸⁶

there was scarcely a pioneer of modern British Socialism who did not pass through it or owe some debt to it, and ... the fact remains that it was Marxism popularised at various levels by Hyndman and his handful of disciples which created the mass Socialist movement in this country.

The fact that people did not refer to themselves as Marxists is not the point since, as E P Thompson has commented of the 1880s:⁸⁷

all Socialists accepted a certain body of principles which to-day would be known as "Marxist" but which at that time

went under no other name than "Socialism".

Branches of the SDF and the SL organised classes for the study of *Capital*⁸⁸ though using Marx as a tool of analysis did not, necessarily, mean becoming a Socialist. Liberal academics like Russell Smart of Glasgow could use Marx to appeal to the "upper classes" to follow Carlyle's advice to "become real Captain's of Industry".⁸⁹ Just as most academics were hostile to the new movement so were most of the clergy but there were a few who were attracted by the call for basic human equality. A great deal of early socialist propoganda was based on allusion to Christian principles of love and charity and it is not surprising that some clergymen found socialist ideas more in the spirit of the Gospels than the individualist ethos of Capitalism. In early 1884 the Minister of the Tron Kirk in Edinburgh gave a series of lectures on "Christian Socialism" during which he "candidly acknowledge[d] his indebtedness to Karl Marx for the economic ideas which he held": one of his lectures was entitled, "Labour is the source of wealth and the source of capital is surplus labour".⁹⁰ While this Minister only went as far as Marx's "economic ideas", the Minister of Greyfriars, John Glasse, went further and joined the SL&LL, remaining with it after the split.⁹¹

Initially the socialist effort had to be an intellectual one of arguing their case in public and attempting to make people think critically of the existing order. Thus Scheu advised his comrades:⁹²

Socialists might do worse than become members of debating societies, and endeavour to infuse some earnestness into them. Make them give up debating who wrote Eikon Basilike? or was Elizabeth justified in killing Mary Queen of Scots? and in place of such questions as these let them study and discuss the social question.

Scheu's own experience of debates in Edinburgh was mixed. At one Society he was able to convert their best speaker but, generally, he was not sure if it was worth the trouble since, he complained to Mahon, "I never had to deal with such ignorant snobs in all my life."⁹³ Nevertheless, the attempt had to be made, the movement had to start somewhere and Scheu, a vastly experienced debater, expected to find some, "young and intelligent workers" among the audience."⁹⁴

The main task which the movement set itself at this point was to, 'make Socialists'. This was expressed most clearly by the more consciously anti-political SL which was opposed to any partial reforms, and concentrated almost exclusively on the educational side of propoganda. The SL's founding document stated the issue unequivocally:⁹⁵

our view is that such a body [i.e. a socialist party] has no function but to educate the people in the principles of Socialism.

The methods adopted by the Socialists to publicise their message were simply the established methods that went back to the Chartists and before: the journal and pamphlet, the public meeting in public halls and on street corners. The extent of the socialist input, however, gave their activity a particular resonance and the hostility they encountered led to a series of 'free speech' campaigns up and down the country.⁹⁶ Until well into the twentieth century and the development of a more extensive and privatised mass media these methods remained the basis of socialist propoganda. The most consistent activity was public outdoor speaking. Regular 'pitches' had to be established and maintained by the branches. In Glasgow the most famous pitch was Jail Square at the entrance to Glasgow Green - an extremely popular venue where would be a host of other speakers and keen competition

for an audience.⁹⁷ Propoganda 'tours' were made by leading figures from London which were of great benefit in promoting interest and enthusiasm but the branches in Glasgow, Edinburgh and Aberdeen also provided speakers for their surrounding areas. Members in Glasgow would visit mining and industrial towns like Hamilton, Baillieston and Coatbridge on Saturdays to speak, sell literature and establish new branches.⁹⁸ The propoganda 'season' was roughly divided in two: winter and summer. The latter was taken up with open air activity and travelling while, in winter, propoganda would be moved indoors for lectures and classes in branch rooms or small halls, and large public meetings organised for the visits of well-known speakers, where the audiences could be reckoned in the hundreds, if not thousands. Such activity, as well as selling the Party newspapers (*Justice* for the SDF, and *Commonweal* for the SL) provided the mainstay of branch activity, but gradually dissatisfaction and a desire to make more concrete links with the working class affected the membership.

Membership

The actual membership of the socialist societies was extremely small. By 1887 the national membership of the SL stood at around 700.⁹⁹ In early 1885 the membership of the Glasgow branch was 55¹⁰⁰ and there is no evidence that it ever grew much beyond this.¹⁰¹ There was also the SDF and by 1887 it had three branches in Glasgow.¹⁰² After the SL&LL changed its affiliation the SDF took some time to re-establish itself in Edinburgh but by the end of 1886 a new branch had been formed with a second established in Leith the following year.¹⁰³ Both organisations managed to form branches in other areas, e.g. Paisley, Hamilton, Blantyre, Motherwell, Coatbridge, Kilmarnock, Rutherglen, Greenock, Dundee, Creiff, Carnoustie, Arbroath, Galashiels, Dysart, etc.¹⁰⁴

There has been a tendency amongst some commentators on the socialist movement in this period to regard it as being basically middle class, and with few working class members.¹⁰⁵ However, examination of memoirs and contemporary sources reveals the Socialist movement in Scotland to have been primarily working class. James Leatham, one of the founders of socialism in Aberdeen, and himself a printer to trade, recalled that the Glasgow branches of both the SDF and the SL, "were primarily for the workmen ... [the] petty-bourgeois ... had their single tax movement."¹⁰⁶ A founder member of the Glasgow SDF remembered that, "The original membership of the branch consisted of a few working men, one or two designers in cast iron and a few clerks."¹⁰⁷ In January the SL&LL in Edinburgh had increased its membership to 52, "of whom 26 are artisans, 9 students, and the rest clerks, warehousemen, artists and one woman."¹⁰⁸ William Nairne, "the founder and pioneer of the SDF in Scotland", was a stonemason from the North. His brother-in-law, Bob Hutchinson, was a shoemaker. There were also a number of Irishmen, mostly unskilled, who joined the movement. These included John Toole, Pete Curran, Jim Connell, author of the "Red Flag" and John Leslie. The most famous of Scotland's Irishmen was James Connolly who, with his brother John, also a socialist, was a carter with Edinburgh Town Council.¹⁰⁹

It is one thing, however, to identify the members of the socialist societies as mainly working class, but it does not follow that they were presagers of a mass 'conversion' to socialism. William Morris regarded those early working class members as,¹¹⁰

there by their special intelligence, or of their eccentricity;
not as working men simply. ... As a friend ... once said to me,
We are too much a collection of oddities...

The 'conversion' to socialism was primarily an individual response, not a collective one, despite belief in collectivism. At the same time, though, the early socialists should not be regarded as an incoherent group of individuals whose common intellectual response to the 'social question' was purely coincidental. As E.P. Thompson has commented:¹¹¹

And yet their conversion to the Socialist cause was a symptom of those deep upheavals in the economic and political life of Britain which were, in the next few years, to prepare many thousands for their message.

Making Contact With the masses - The need to "Do Something"

The main problem confronting the Socialist movement was the working class itself. At one level there were the organised, skilled workers, representing only a minority of the working-class and, in the main, committed to the Liberal Party but who were the existing Labour movement. At the opposite end of the scale were the most poverty-stricken, the unskilled, casually employed 'slum dwellers', possibly given to riot but often regarded as likely to be moved by appeals to jingoism as by radical sentiment.¹¹² Much of the early socialist propaganda appears enthusiastic and naive in its clarion call to "the proletariat" to revolt. The unity of the working class was assumed to operate at an immediate level, not only in terms of historic perspective. What was lacking, in a strategic sense, was an understanding, certainly an analysis of, the consequences of divisions within the working class. The Socialists were not unaware of these divisions but were unable to provide a political strategy to overcome sectionalism and promote immediate joint or common interest between the broad groups of skilled and unskilled. The Socialist League approached the Trade Unions with the message that the role of their organisations was, more or less, defunct. Unions were the preserve of the "aristocracy of labour", and had made what gains they had due to British

industry's initial monopoly of world markets, but this period and its concomitant benefits to the labour aristocracy was now over.¹¹³

The general result, we repeat, is that trades' unions do not grow in strength and numbers, but appear to have reached their zenith and to have achieved all they are capable of under present conditions.

It was apparent that union organisation could not be extended to the unskilled and, moreover, "the vast increase in the numbers of labourers [presented] an insuperable barrier to any solid advantage being gained by trades' unions."

The question then now arises. What useful function can unionists still fulfil? We would, in reply, urge upon all unionists to direct all their energies towards consolidating and federating with the distinct end of constituting themselves the nucleus of a Socialist commonwealth...

Such an appeal was really no more than a hopeful exhortation and was extremely unlikely to meet any positive response from the Trade Unions, though individual trade unionists may have responded positively. It is significant, however, that the effort was made at appealing to a particular section of the working class, the organised, in fact "the aristocracy of labour" itself. More than this, the SL was talking in terms of trades unions' operating as some sort of vanguard, they were to make themselves the "*nucleus* of a Socialist commonwealth". Here then, was an implicit assumption that the important element was the *organised* working class. As for the poorer workers, lacking their own organisations, it was impossible to make such a direct appeal, apart from through demonstrations and meetings, and even then there was no guarantee that they would be reached. In one of his visits to Glasgow William Morris spoke at a meeting in the East End. his speech was well received by an audience of some 200 but he remained concerned

about who exactly he was, or was not speaking to.¹¹⁴

The last lecture was on Monday 28th, at Bridgeton, the east end of Glasgow, and to speak plainly a most woeful abode of man, crying out from each miserable court and squalid, crowded house for the abolition of the tyranny of exploitation. But here we did not score a success, There were election meetings going on all about us; and I fear that our audience was just *not* that what we wanted - to wit, the poor folk of the district, who, if they only knew it, do so sorely need showing what it is that has doomed them to their special form of hell-upon-earth - one of the worst forms in existence I should think.

The upsurge in New Unionism in the late 1880s showed that ideas of the Trade Unions being incapable of further growth were completely at variance with the actual experience of both the 'old', established unions and groups of workers previously considered beyond organisation. However, many of the leading activists of the New Unionism were Socialists, members of the SDF in the main. As an organisation, the SDF had a more considered attitude to the existing labour movement and political activity in general.

Apart from the 'personal' question of leadership the main reason for the socialist split had been the vexed issue of involvement in elections and electioneering in pursuit of partial reforms. Commenting upon a statement by Morris in March 1888 that "political action" (as electoral politics were constantly described) had been the main difference which had led to the formation of the SL, Hyndman indicated that rivalry between the two bodies was being replaced by co-operation (while admitting that the old unpleasantness was not due solely to theoretical differences), but also took the opportunity to re-state the SDF position:¹¹⁵

First and foremost we utterly distrust politics, and we distrust politicians as they are to-day. But we cannot separate ourselves from our epoch in this respect, any more than we can in the matter of dealing with capital and capitalists, much as we detest the existing economical system. If we do not act

politically we must act militarilly or anarchically. Men and women must be doing something beyond mere theoretical education and propoganda for a remote future. That, at any rate, is our opinion. You cannot keep an organisation healthy and vigorous without having some immediate work, as well as some immediate aim. Therefore, for propogandist purposes, and for purposes of criticism, and even to help on reconstruction pacifically as far as possible, we adopt political and municipal action, running Social-Democratic candidates wherever we can.

The whole issue of Socialists standing for election, however, had been muddied by the "Tory Gold" scandal of the 1885 General Election, when the SDF stood three candidates on the basis of money 'laundered' through the Conservative Party. The "miserable totals" polled by the three candidates only made matters worse, once the true source of the money was revealed and the SDF suffered a fresh haemorrhage of members.¹¹⁶ The affair also led to a reaction against 'political action', even within the ranks of the SDF.¹¹⁷ On other issues like the campaign for the eight hours day, trade union organisation and unemployment the SDF was more involved. However, though more active than the SL and more sympathetic to campaigns for specific aims short of socialism itself, it did not then follow that the SDF had a consistent strategy in regard to the existing Labour movement. Despite the prominent role taken by SDF leaders like Will Thorne and Harry Quelch in trade union activity, others, such as Hyndman, "regarded the growth of unionism as unimportant compared with the opportunities provided for the advancement of Socialism."¹¹⁸ Moreover, just as the SDF did not have a single view on such matters, the SL was, if anything, even more divided.

On the occasion of the split from the SDF the 'opposition' stated their views on what a socialist organisation should be. In their polemic against Hyndman's ambition to become an "indispensible leader", they argued that what was required was, "only a band of instructed men, each of whom can

learn to fulfil, as occasion requires it, the simple function of the leader of a party of principle."¹¹⁹ Such an approach did not solve the problem of leadership but only avoided the question. The same approach, however, was adopted in regard to party activity. Arguing against the false, "hopes of amelioration of the conditions of the workers," they expressed the view that a socialist party could or should, at the moment, "only educate the people in the principles of Socialism, and to organise such as it can get hold of to take their due places, when the crisis shall come which will force action upon us."¹²⁰ Such an 'insurrectionary' view became, for many, simply untenable as no evidence of any crisis of capitalism emerged. A 'Parliamentary faction' was formed which sought to grasp the nettle of 'political action'. This group, involving the Marx-Avelings, Bax, and Thomas Binning and (from the sidelines) Engels eventually brought matters to a head at the Fourth Annual Conference of the SL in 1888. The result, however, was that the 'Bloomsbury Group' was expelled and, from then on, the out-and-out anarchist faction grew in influence until it eventually dominated what remained of the League.¹²¹ However, how these ructions and divisions affected Scotland is a somewhat different matter.

Although both the SL and SDF were national organisations, at a very practical level - due to distance, lack of finance and communications - branches had a tendency to follow their own lines of development. The history of Aberdeen is instructive here: formed as a branch of the SL in October 1887 by Mahon and James Leatham, the Aberdeen group actually followed a political practice more akin to that of the SDF, getting involved in the eight hours question, trade union organisation, and unemployed agitation; it became closely involved with H.H. Champion and his Parliamentary candidatures, and in 1893 eventually joined the SDF.¹²² The differences of the national leaderships were never that clearly drawn in Scotland and by the end of 1888 there existed a

rough consensus among the Scottish socialists for a more thorough and better organised propoganda. This was partly fuelled by a dissatisfaction with London and resulted in the formation of the Scottish Socialist Federation (SSF). T.E. Barlas, the organising secretary of the Dundee SDF, circulated the Scottish Branches with a plea for increased donations which would enable paid lecturers to be employed and directed by a Scottish Committee, arguing the case in terms of the success of the German Social Democratic Party.¹²³ The following month the "Glasgow Committee" called a meeting of SDF members to discuss, "proposals for organisation of propoganda."¹²⁴ This interest culminated in a Conference called by Edinburgh SDF of all Scottish Socialist Societies, "to arrange and perfect a system of propoganda in Scotland."¹²⁵ The outshot of this Conference was the "formation of a Delegate Committee to thoroughly organise the propoganda in Scotland", which Committee was to sit in Edinburgh for the first year with John Leslie appointed Secretary pro tem.¹²⁶

The Conference was, more or less, representative of the available socialist forces in Scotland. Attending from the SDF were Crieff, Edinburgh, Dundee (No. 1 and Central), and Glasgow (Central and South); from the SL were Edinburgh, Glasgow, Kilmarnock and West Calder, plus the Glasgow Christian Socialist Society. Branches unrepresented were SDF Parkhead and SL Carnoustie and Arbroath but they, "indicated they would be bound by decisions taken."¹²⁷ Since London, "has shown itself unable to organise Scotland", it was resolved, "That a Scottish organisation be formed for propoganda purposes."¹²⁸ According to David Lowe, "the Conference resulted in a severance from London and the establishment of a separate organisation, the Scottish Socialist Federation."¹²⁹ Whatever the actual ambitions behind the SSF it did not emerge as a separate Party, and there was no sense of a separate Scottish identity or strategy involved. In practical terms it remained

largely an Edinburgh phenomenon with the SDF and SL branches there linking up, but operating, ultimately, simply as the Edinburgh branch of the SDF.

Increasingly Socialists began to consider the question of party organisation and the existing Labour movement, and began to think in terms of a "Social Democratic Labour Party."¹³⁰ Ultimately, this idea would lead to the formation of the Independent Labour Party (ILP) and the Labour Party itself. However, the idea emerged not out of theoretical disputes but from the practical activity that socialists found themselves engaged in.

In Glasgow the socialists made their first contacts with the masses in the Lanarkshire coalfields. The link was made by William Small, a miners' agent who established a branch of the SL&LL in Hamilton in late 1884.¹³¹ Thanks to Small the SL found an audience amongst the miners and speakers regularly visited from Glasgow. The first major demonstration of popular sympathy with socialism occurred in the Autumn of 1885 at Hamilton. There, at the Low Quarries, Bruce Glasier addressed a meeting of between 2 to 3,000 miners (most of whom were Irish). It is unlikely that, beyond meetings given by national figures such as Morris or Hyndman, there had been a larger assembly to listen to socialist propoganda. Moreover, this was no public lecture given to an audience of individuals but a truly mass meeting of workers. The backdrop to this and similar meetings was the severe slump of 1883-6 which particularly affected the Western Scottish coalfields.¹³² The title of Glasier's speech was 'The Robbery of Labour'. Described by a local paper as an "open advocacy of revolution", it was warmly greeted by his audience.¹³³ The SL maintained a high level of activity within Lanarkshire: organising propoganda outings, speaking at strike meetings and attempting to build branches. In the next few years, with the renewed attempts at building trade unions throughout the Scottish coalfields and a particularly bitter and violent strike in Lanarkshire during 1887, these links were intensified.

Moves being made by the miners to establish and strengthen their unions in Lanarkshire, Ayrshire, Stirling and Fife brought about a Scottish Miners' National Federation, founded in Glasgow in August 1886. Keir Hardie, from Ayrshire, was elected Secretary (defeating William Small) and in pursuit of a moderate policy which would restrict output he proposed that all areas take a week's 'holiday' and so push up the price of coal. The more militant Lanarkshire workforce, led by Robert Smillie, stayed out on strike after the 'holiday', much to Hardie's annoyance. They were unable, however, to extend the strike to other areas and were left on their own. The situation rapidly deteriorated with families forced to go begging and police were drafted in from Glasgow to defend blacklegs. After a riot in Blantyre in which food shops were looted and prisoners freed from the gaol, further police reinforcements and troops were also sent in by order of the Glasgow magistrates and conducted a midnight raid on the miners' rows.¹³⁴ The Liberal establishment proved unmoved by the miners' plight and even the radical *North British Daily Mail* castigated the Blantyre incident as, "lawless proceedings of the lowest section and population of the central mining districts of Lanarkshire."¹³⁵ In this situation it was the Glasgow socialists who emerged as the champions of the miners' cause and the SL opened their rooms as a temporary strike headquarters. The support of the SL culminated in a mass meeting of 20,000 held on Glasgow Green in February 1887.¹³⁶ For the socialists this was an event beyond their previous experience, an indication of working class strength in alliance with socialism that heralded a potential breakthrough. The sheer sense of excitement is captured in a letter from Bruce Glasier, the Secretary of the Glasgow SL, to the League headquarters in London:¹³⁷

I write you in great haste to warn you that the League here has made a bold effort to enlist the sympathy of the Unions in our movement and ally them with our propaganda. We are credited on all hands with having imparted to them

notions of Plunder and entire disregard of the sacred rights of property.

We intend to justify their assertions by holding a meeting in sympathy with their claims.

We expect the meeting will be very large and that the police will supply us with a guard of honour. We will of course take care not to commit ourselves. This action of ours will we expect establish the League in Scotland.

In great haste and wishing heaven's protection upon us.

Yours fraternally, J. Bruce Glasier.

P.S. Vive le Revolution!

This letter clearly expresses the 'barricades mentality' common among socialists at the time.¹³⁸ Given the violence at Blantyre, the deaths in Trafalgar Square during the "Bloody Sunday" riot and the persecution throughout the country of socialists involved in the unemployed agitation, there were good reasons for Glasier's fears and excitement.¹³⁹ At the same time, given their belief in an iron law of wages, and rejection of any and all ameliorative measures then, logically, the actual outcome of the Strike was of no great consequence. Nevertheless, and despite their theory, the socialists did maintain their contact with the working classes.

The single biggest issue, prior to the New Unionism, in which the Socialists made an impact was the campaign amongst the unemployed. In Glasgow the SL appears to have led the unemployed agitation. In May 1886 it organised a mass meeting of the unemployed on Glasgow Green to demand work from the City Council and to protest at the stopping of outdoor relief.¹⁴⁰ As a result the magistrates decided to keep the soup kitchens open for another week but refused to provide work. This partial success cut across the 'official' position held by the SL. At the meeting on the Green a letter from Morris was read out, which "denounce[d] the system that permitted men to

starve, and point[ed] out that little good could be done until workmen became their own masters."¹⁴¹ These sentiments were well received but the paramount, practical concern must surely have been to do something, no matter how 'little'. The harsh realities of the class struggle began to pose uncomfortable problems for the young movement and, for many, new approaches began to be considered.

Little encouragement came from London, however. In November 1886 the Executive Council of the League passed (at the time of the Lord Mayor's show ¹⁴²in London) the following resolution:

... while believing that no organised help can be promised to the unemployed before a complete economic revolution is effected, expresses its indignation at the cowardly and sneakish action of the authorities in suppressing a meeting of the unemployed for the purpose of contrasting their miserable condition with the clownish performance of the City robbers.

The sentiments expressed were ambivalent and no lead was provided to members and branches involved in the agitation. The following year, with unemployment still to the fore, the Executive sought to clarify its position further.¹⁴³

That the Socialist League do maintain officially the continuance of that policy of non-intervention pursued by it up to the present; and though it can prohibit no individual member or members of that body from participating in unemployed agitation, it cannot take to support either morally or pecuniarily, any member whose participation in any such agitation leads him into difficulties.

This explains why Glasier in his breathless report of the miners' demonstration should have included the proviso, "we will of course take care not to commit ourselves." The Glasgow Branch remained active in the unemployed campaign and, not satisfied by the League's official statement,

sought further clarification. The opinions of, and divisions among, the Branch members are detailed in two letters written by Glasier on the same day 24 October 1887: the first being an official communication by Glasier in his role of branch secretary expressing the collective view of the branch, the second a personal note giving more detail on the opposing attitudes and the reasons behind them.¹⁴⁴

The Glasgow branch decided to ask the Council to append an explanatory statement to their resolution, their complaint being, "not so much the meaning as the manner of the resolution." It was, "of a far too *brief* and *formal* nature to appear in the Journal of [the] League which circulates amongst not only many outsiders who know little or nothing of the policy of the League, but also among socialists who may only recently have become acquainted with our organisation." The resolution, "as it stands conveys the impression the the Council have no regard for the unemployed and have no sympathy with those who display any interest in the cause of these victims of our capitalist system", and in Glasgow's opinion, "the resolution should have been worded or amplified as to show that the Council were actuated not by a conviction that it is not in [the] power of the League to do anything of real advantage to the unemployed." The last sentence is confusing but it would appear that the crux of the 'official' communication was, that while the branch accepted the League's official position in principle they were worried about the bad impression their apparently uncaring attitude might convey. This position, however, disguised an actual division among the members which Glasier's second letter went on to explain.

The "unemployed question" was of "serious concern" to the branch which was "divided as to [which] policy we should pursue." At the same meeting which expressed dissatisfaction with the Council's resolution on the matter it was also decided that the branch, "meanwhile ... should not actively interfere in

the agitation." Glasier himself was among those who, "stick to the position that whatever temptations there may be to join in the unemployed struggle - yet the real welfare of the unemployed and all other portions of the suffering will be best maintained by pressing onward the complete revolution." Nevertheless, those who shared this view were sympathetic to "those who wished to do something." Glasier admitted there was a logic to the opposing view and he commented:

I find it by no means an easy task to maintain the principle that we cannot secure any adequate amelioration of the condition of the unemployed under the existing system and that any insufficient ameliorative would merely drive as it were the sore underneath the surface.

The argument of, "those who wished to do something" was threefold. Firstly,

that it is quite impossible for us to be absolutely sure of what may happen in the future - and that cases of *absolute starvation* must have to the living generation a claim above all abstract principles and concern as to future contingencies.

Secondly, at a very practical level, there was the "common good fund" of the City Corporation which was intended for the relief of the unemployed and the Corporation also possessed large areas of unreclaimed land which could be utilised to provide permanent employment.

It is asked is it not in accordance with socialist principles to ask the [Town] Council to employ workers - without the interference of middlemen or contractors for the common weal of the workers and whole body of citizens?

Glasier admitted that this, "makes our position difficult here." Lastly they argued for the benefits of spreading socialism. Thus,

seeing no other political or religious body have as yet championed the cause of the unemployed, it would be of immense advantage as a means of creating a sympathy and interest in our propoganda here if we took the lead in [the] matter as we did with conspicuous success in the case of the Lanarkshire miners' strike.

Towards a 'Socialistic' Labour Party

Here then was an incipient division within the Socialist movement (and not just affecting the SL) between those who were out for socialism without any 'distractions', and those who were thinking in terms of incorporating the struggle for partial reforms and amelioratives within the ultimate struggle for socialism. The two sides could be labelled 'revolutionaries' versus 'reformists', but his would be a shorthand that would obscure more than it would explain. The 1880s were too much a period of flux, with new ideas only being developed and people uncertain on how to make them practical, for such a dichotomy to have any valid meaning. What is clear is that there were tensions within the Socialist movement with thoughts increasingly turning to the possibilities of 'political action' and the notion of a 'Labour Party'.

At the 1887 Conference of the SL the 'parliamentary' resolution which eventually forced the issue and led to the expulsion of the Bloomsbury group was actually submitted from the Hamilton branch. It read in full:¹⁴⁵

Whereas the primary duty of the Socialist party is to educate the people in the principles of Socialism and to organise them to overthrow the capitalist system, this Conference lays down the following line of policy for the guidance of the executive and branches of the Socialist League;- That every effort be made to permeate the existing political organisations with Socialism, that all possible help be given to such movements as trade unionism, co-operation, national and international labour federation, etc. by which the working classes are trying to better their condition; that Parliament, municipal, and other local government bodies and the contests for the election of members to them should be

taken advantage of for spreading the principles of Socialism and organising the people into a Socialistic labour party; that while we share the common aspirations of the wage earners to win better terms from the capitalist, we steadily insist that their complete economical emancipation can only be effected by transforming the society of to-day into a co-operative commonwealth.

The reference to permeation of the "existing political organisations" indicates a Fabian influence but the key phrase was the call for a "Socialistic labour party". This, and the intention of working with existing labour bodies like the trade unions and the co-operatives, and standing candidates for election pointed socialism in a wholly new direction - and one which it would eventually take. The crucial figures behind this resolution were J.L. Mahon and William Small.

During 1887 Mahon was extremely active, operating almost as a one man propoganda unit, amongst the Northumberland miners and in Scotland. He re-galvanised the Edinburgh Branch and brought back into play the title of Scottish Land and Labour League (SL&LL). Mahon's association with 'parliamentarianism' as well as his perceived opportunism - he refused to use the term socialist in his propoganda and substituted 'democrat' instead - guaranteed him hostility among the Glasgow membership.¹⁴⁶ Nonetheless, Mahon was, particularly in his intention to take socialism right into the trade unions and lay down a policy against the current leadership, pointing the way ahead. In his correspondence with Engels during the early summer, Mahon, "sketched out a policy which some elements in the movement were in fact to follow in the next five years, and which was to lead to the formation of the ILP in 1893."¹⁴⁷ Mahon was also active in Lanarkshire where his policy re. the Unions is likely to have had more appeal to the likes of William Small. That Mahon had a close relationship with the Hamilton Branch is indicated by the fact that he acted as their delegate at the 1887 Conference and would,

therefore have moved the above resolution on a Socialistic Labour Party.¹⁴⁸ With the failure of this resolution a number of members (beyond those who were immediately expelled) gradually began to move into other areas. Mahon kept up his propoganda effort but was completely out of sympathy with the majority view of the SL and left at the end of 1887, eventually rejoining the SDF.¹⁴⁹

Of more significance, however, was the trajectory of William Small who, in his search for a more practical policy for socialism to put before the working class , supported Keir Hardie's 'independent labour' candidature at the Mid-Lanark by-election of April 1888. Following this failed attempt Small became one of the founder members of the coalition of radicals, land restorationists, socialists, and trade unionists which came together as the Scottish (Parliamentary) Labour Party.¹⁵⁰ As the SL slowly disintegrated - Morris eventually left and the organisation ultimately dissolved in a sordid police conspiracy¹⁵¹ - this was a route that other members increasingly took. In May 1893, in a letter to Scheu, Bruce Glasier commented that, "The League of course if defunct - and I am without a socialist habitation or a name."¹⁵² Glasier was replying to an overture by Scheu about the possibility of a delegate from Glasgow attending the International Congress at Zurich. Glasier informed Scheu that socialists in Glasgow would be keen to go, but were unlikely to have the money since they were all in deficit after the winter's propoganda; he personally was in dire straits, having lost his job on account of his political activity.¹⁵³ There were now only two socialist bodies in Glasgow, the Fabians and the SDF, but there was another organisation which Glasier thought likely to be sympathetic:¹⁵⁴

I am *sure* your name would be favourably received by several of the *Labour Party* bodies - many of the members of which were at one time members of the League.

At the beginning of that year (1893) the Scottish Labour Party (SLP) had identified itself as socialist and at the founding conference of the ILP at Bradford called for the new party to adopt the title of, 'Socialist Labour Party'.¹⁵⁵ Glasier's old comrade from their land league days, Shaw Maxwell, was elected to the post of National Secretary, and though Glasier remained aloof for the time being he soon joined and, in 1897, he was elected to the National Administrative Council (NAC) of the ILP and from then on was one of the so-called 'big four' of the Party, alongside Keir Hardie, Philip Snowden and Ramsay MacDonald.¹⁵⁶ The threads that were to bind socialism to Labour had, by then, nearly all been sewn together. It is the ILP and the policy of 'independent labour representation' which our attention will be focussed upon now, though with particular attention to developments in Scotland between 1888 and 1893.

NOTES

1. A recent example of such periodisation is to be found in David Howell, *British Workers and the Independent Labour Party 1888-1906* (Manchester, 1984).
2. Earlier labour historians recognised the 1880s as a natural 'break-point', e.g. Thomas Johnston ended his *History of the Working Classes in Scotland* (Glasgow 1946) in the mid 1880s when, "the modern Socialist propoganda begins", and "with the birth of the Modern Labour Movement." pp 393-4. Johnston's work was first published in 1920.
3. J.G. Kellas, "The Liberal Party in Scotland 1885-1895", (Ph.D., London, 1961) p 311, the movement for independent labour representation had only, "the aim of class representation to distinguish it clearly", which was alien to, "the traditions of Scottish society."
4. *Ibid*, pp 2-3, 214-5.
5. *Ibid*, p 279.
6. Joan Smith, "Labour Tradition in Glasgow and Liverpool", in *History Workshop*, XVIII (Spring 1984) pp 32-56.
7. Neal Blewett, "The Franchise in the United Kingdom 1885-1918", in *Past and Present*, No. 32 (Dec 1965) pp 27-56.
8. J. Bruce Glasier, *William Morris and the Early Days of the Socialist Movement*, (London, 1921) pp 11-12.
9. *Ibid*, pp 20, 25-5; James Mavor, *My Windows on the Street of the World*, (London 1923) pp 76, 173.
10. Glasier, *op cit*, p 20; Edward A. Mossman, *Fifty Years of the Glasgow Parliament 1876-1926* (Glasgow 1926); Mavor, *op cit*, p 169.
11. Lawrence Thompson, *the Enthusiasts: a biography of John and Katherine Bruce Glasier*, (London, 1971) pp 31-4; Mavor, *op cit*, pp 174-6; see also T.C. Smout, *A Century of the Scottish People 1830-1950* (Glasgow and London 1986) p74, re. the Crofters' Holdings Act of 1886 representing a break with *laissez-faire* reliance on market forces to a new perspective based on actual historical experience.
12. F.S.L. Lyons, *Ireland Since the Famine* (Glasgow 1973), pp 160-177, on the Irish 'land war'; James Hunter, *The Making of the Crofting Community* (Edinburgh 1976) pp 132-3 on the Irish example to the Scottish Crofters, and also his comment (p 137), "while crofters were willing to draw on the Irish example, they were not, at this stage at least, prepared to encourage direct Irish involvement in their

affairs."

13. Chushichi Tsuzuki, *H.M. Hyndman and British Socialism* (Oxford 1961) pp41, 44-6.
14. L. Thompson, op cit, p 34; Tsuzuki, op cit, p48.
15. This is stated at a general level by Mavor, op cit, see discussion below; L. Thompson, op cit, p 32 for Bruce Glasier and Shaw Maxwell joining the Land League in Glasgow; at a higher level of intrigue there is Jim Connell's claim to have been, "a sworn fenian before I was 16 years old." *Justice* 4 April, 1917.
16. For Glasier see, Glasier, op cit, and L. Thompson, op cit; for Maxwell see L. Thompson, op cit, p 25, Glasier, op cit, David Lowe, *Souvenirs of Scottish Labour*, (Glasgow, 1919), W.M. Haddow, *Socialism in Scotland: Its Rise and Progress* (Glasgow 1920).
17. Glasier, op cit, p5; L Thompson, op cit, p 32; Fred Reid, *Keir Hardie: the Making of a Socialist* (London, 1978) p 80.
18. Glasier, op cit, p 19.
19. *Voice of the People*, 13 Oct 1883.
20. Ibid.
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid.
23. Ibid.
24. Ibid. 20 Oct 1883
25. Ibid. 13 Oct 1883
26. Ibid. 13 Oct, 10 Nov 1883.
27. Ibid. 17 Nov 1883, note the use of the term "Englishmen".
28. Ibid. 27 Oct, 4, 17 Nov, 1883. The comments on Morris were penned by Glasier, already showing signs of the "hero worship" he was to fall into a year later on actually meeting this "half mythical being", Glasier, op cit, pp 19, 24.
29. Joan Smith, op cit, p34.
30. *Forward*, 13 Oct 1906; see Chapter 3 below.
31. Joan Smith, op cit, p34.
32. Mavor, op cit, p 174.

33. Ibid.
34. Ibid. p 175.
35. Ibid. pp 175-6.
36. L. Thompson, op cit, p 34; Tsuzuki, op cit, p48.
37. Glasier, op cit, pp 20-1; Mavor, op cit, p 177.
38. Glasier, op cit, p 28; Tsuzuki, op cit, p64 gives the correct date.
39. Glasier, op cit, pp 25-8 for an account of the lecture given to an audience of 3,000 at the City Halls.
40. E.P. Thompson, *William Morris: Romantic to Revolutionary* (London 1977) pp 331-365, who gives a good deal of prominence to developments in Scotland.
41. There has been no direct work on Scheu himself, yet in biographies and memoirs of the period he is constantly referred to in significant terms. Morris listed Scheu alongside Hyndman and Belfort Bax as one of the people he learned marxism from; see W. Morris, "How I Became A Socialist", in *Political Writings of William Morris*, ed. A.L. Morton (London, 1984) p242. Scheu published his own memoirs in Germany in 1920 under the title, *Umsturzkeime* ("Seeds of Revolution").
42. Morris to R. Thompson, 1 Jan 1885, reproduced in *The Letters of William Morris to his Family and Friends*, ed. Philip Henderson, (London, 1950).
43. Ibid.
44. E.P. Thompson, op cit, p357.
45. Glasier, op it, pp 31-3. Glasier's account is coloured by his determination to prove that Morris was hostile to marxism. See E.P. Thompson, op cit, Appendix II, "William Morris, Bruce Glasier and Marxism", for a complete refutation of this case.
46. Glasier, op cit, p 32.
47. John Gilray, "Early Days of the Socialist Movement in Edinburgh", xerox copy of ts reminiscences first delivered as a talk to the ILP Annual Conference of 1909 held in Edinburgh, held in the National Library of Scotland.
48. Ibid, p 3.
49. E.P. Thompson, p351
50. Ibid, p 352.



51. See below for Glasgow's hostility to Mahon's re-use of the title in 1887.
52. E.P. Thompson, p352.
53. Mavor, op cit, p 69.
54. Gilray, op cit, pp 2-3.
55. Tsuzuki, op cit, p 66.
56. E.P. Thompson, p 357; Andreas Scheu to Edward Carpenter, 24 Sept 1884, Scheu Collection, International Institute fo Social History, Amsterdam.
57. Gilray, op cit, pp 2-3; See also Glasier to Scheu, 19 Feb 1887, Scheu Collection.
58. Scheu to Jack Williams, 24 Jan 1914, Scheu Collection.
59. Glasier, op cit, pp 21-2.
60. Gilray, op cit, p 10.
61. Scheu to Carpenter, 24 Sept 1884, Scheu Collection
62. Scheu to Carpenter, 8 Oct, 1884, Scheu Colection.
63. Scheu to Miss Reeves, 21 Sept 1884, Scheu Collection.
64. Ibid.
65. Scheu to Carpenter, 24 Sept 1884, Scheu Collection.
66. Ibid.
67. Kellas, op cit, pp 48-9.
68. W.H. Fraser, "Trades Councils in England and Scotland 1858-1897", Ph.D., University of Sussex, 1967. pp 418-9.
69. E.P. Thompson, pp 364-5.
70. Scheu to J.L. Mahon, 12 Jan 1885, Scheu Collection.
71. Ibid.
72. *Commonweal*, Feb 1885.
73. James Mavor to Mahon, 25 Jan 1885, Socialist League Collection, International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam.
74. James D. Young, *The Rousing of the Scottish Working Class* (London,1979) p 145.
75. See E.P. Thompson above. Also study of branch activity in

the pages of *Justice* and *Commonweal* yields no evidence of interest on either issue.

76. Mahon to Scheu, 1 Sept 1887, Scheu Collection; George Mclean et al (Glasgow Propogandist Committee) to SL (London), 2 Dec 1887, Socialist League Collection.
77. Mavor to Mahon, 25 Jan 1885.
78. Alex K. Donald, 21 Jan 1885, Socialist League Collection.
79. R.F.E Willis (Liverpool) to SL (London) Jan 1885, Socialist League Collection.
80. Archibald McLaren to R.F. Muirhead, 30 April 1888, McLaren Correspondence, Muirhead Collection, Mitchell Library, Glasgow.
81. A.K. Donald to Mahon, 1 Feb 1885.
82. Scheu to Mahon, 4 Jan 1885, Scheu Collection.
83. Bruce Glasier to SL (London), 26 Jan 1886, Socialist League Collection.
84. W. Morris, "Useful Work versus Useless Toil", in Morton (ed), op cit, pp 94-5.
85. E.P. Thompson, op cit, p332.
86. L. Thompson, op cit, p34.
87. E.P. Thompson, op cit, p332.
88. Gilray, op cit, p 9.
89. Maclaren to Muirhead, 16 Nov 1887, Muirhead Collection.
90. *Justice* 16 Feb 1884, also 19 Jan and 8 March.
91. R. Page-Arnot, *William Morris: the Man and the Myth* (London, 1964) p 77
92. *Commonweal* Feb 1885.
93. Scheu to Mahon, 12 Jan 1885, Scheu Collection.
94. Scheu to Topping, 16 Sept 1884, Scheu Collection.
95. "To Socialists", founding statement of the SL, Socialist League Collection.
96. E.P. Thompson, pp 393-403 - "The Fight For Free Speech"; Bob Duncan, *James Leatham* (Aberdeen 1978) pp 23-4 for the 'free speech' campaign in Aberdeen.
97. Harry McShane and Joan Smith, *No Mean Fighter* (London,

- 1978 p 12-14)
98. Bruce Glasier to SL (London), 19 Sept 1885, Socialist League Collection, where he writes of hopes of forming branches in Dundee, Paisley and Hamilton.
 99. E.P. Thompson, op cit, p460.
 100. Mavor to Mahon, 14 Feb 1885, Socialist League Collection.
 101. "Report of the Glasgow Branch 1888", gives membership as 53 - the "number the branch could afford to pay for" in terms of fees to London - while the actual regular fee-paying membership was 78, Socialist League Collection.
 102. *Justice*, 1 Oct 1887.
 103. *Justice*, 26 Nov 1886, and 1 Oct 1887.
 104. W.M. Haddow, op cit, p 14; D. Lowe, op cit, p 128; plus branch reports in *Justice* and *Commonweal*
 105. L. Thompson, op cit, p 69, refers to Pete Curran as, "that creature rare as a unicorn in early Socialist Societies, a genuine working man."
 106. James Leatham, *Glasgow in the Limelight* (Turriff, 1924) p31.
 107. Mavor, op cit, p 177.
 108. *Commonweal* Feb 1885.
 109. Leatham (1924), op cit, Chapter on "Some Pioneers" gives backgrounds of some Glasgow members. Desmond Greaves, *The Life and Times of James Connolly* (London, 1976) pp 17-8, 38-9, for the Connolly brothers and Leslie.
 110. E.P. Thompson, p 298.
 111. Ibid.
 112. A more balanced view of the reactionary tendencies of the working class is given by Gareth Stedman-Jones, "Working Class Culture and Working Class Politics in London, 1870-1900: Notes on the Remaking of a Working Class", in *Languages of Class: Studies in English Working Class History 1832-1982* (Cambridge 1983), p 180, where he points out that the "loutish jingo mobs" of 1900 were composed mainly of "students and clerks", while the working class can best be described as having "passively acquiesced" rather than having "actively promote[d] the jingoism."
 113. *Address to Trades' Unions*, The Socialist Platform No. 1 (1885), pp9-10.

114. *Commonweal*, 10 July, 1886, emphasis in original.
115. *Justice* 31 March 1888.
116. Tsuzuki, op cit, pp 70-2.
117. Ibid. p 72.
118. Ibid. p 89.
119. "To Socialists".
120. Ibid.
121. E.P. Thompson, op cit, pp 503-11.
122. Bob Duncan, op cit, Chapter 2. James Leatham, *William Morris, Master of Many Crafts: a study*, (Turiff 1934), p VI, where he says that he and Morris argued this out and that Morris eventually came to admit Hyndman as being right, i.e "Socialism must have a political policy for immediate application."
123. *Justice*, 20 Oct 1888.
124. *Justice*, 10 Nov 1888.
125. *Justice*, 24 Nov, 1888.
126. *Justice*, 8 Dec 1888.
127. D. Lowe, op cit, p 128.
128. Ibid.
129. Ibid.
130. see article by Hyndman on this issue in *Justice*, 10 Aug 1889.
131. F. Reid, op cit, pp 80-2; L. Thompson, op cit, pp 52-3; J.D. Young, op cit, pp 151-3; also papers of Bella Small relating to her father William Small, in the National Library of Scotland.
132. T.J. Byres, "The Scottish Economy During the Great Depression 1873-1896, with special reference to the heavy industries of the south-west", B. Litt, Glasgow University, 1963, p 492, f.n. 109.
133. *Commonweal*, Oct 1885.
134. F. Reid, op cit, pp 88-90; L. Thompson, op cit, p 53.
135. Reid, op cit, p 91,
136. L. Thompson, op cit, p 53; E.P. Thompson, op cit, p 437.

137. Bruce Glasier to SL (London), 11 Feb 1887, Socialist League Collection.
138. see Leatham (1934), op cit, p IV on Morris and Glasier as being "barricade men" during this period.
139. E.P. Thompson, op cit, p 506, re "the petty injuries and brutalities familiar" to the British socialists. This comment is made in relation to the case of the Chicago Anarchists.
140. *Commonweal*, 22 May 1886.
141. Ibid.
142. Socialist League, *Report 1887*.
143. Socialist League, *Report 1888*.
144. Bruce Glasier to SL (London), 24 Oct, 1887.
145. The full resolution was printed in, *Our Corner*, June 1887.
146. see above, f.n. 76.
147. E.P. Thompson, p 465. Mahon wrote: "I really think that here amongst the miners & iron works Socialism will take its first firm hold on the masses of the people. Our real immediate foes are the Trades Union leaders. We must fight these fellows in their own stronghold. We must lay down a policy & line of action for the Socialists to pursue *inside* the Unions, foster a Socialist ring there & get the leaders driven out." (emphasis in original.)
148. The use of people in London as delegates by branches that would, otherwise, not have been represented, was common practice - Scheu did the same for Glasgow and made sure they were of the same opinion on the major debates. Scheu to Bruce Glasier, 7 June 1888, Scheu Collection.
149. Tsuzuki, op cit, p 82; E.P. Thompson, op cit, p 478.
150. David Lowe, op cit, pp 1-3.
151. E.P. Thompson, op cit, pp 559-572.
152. Bruce Glasier to Scheu, 25 May 1893, Scheu Collection.
153. Ibid.
154. Ibid.
155. *Labour Leader*, Feb 1893; *Report of the First General Conference of the Independent Labour Party*, (Bradford, 1893), p 3.
156. L. Thompson, op cit, p 101.

Chapter Two

The ILP and Labour Organisation in Glasgow, 1888-1914

The story of the emergence of a 'Labour' electoral presence in Glasgow is also the story of the Independent Labour Party (ILP). It is not that Labour – in a political sense – was simply reducible to the ILP but that the ILP was the main organisation, or galvanising force, behind the alliance of forces that constituted the 'Labour Party'. Other bodies and individuals represented the trade unions, the co-operators, the Irish and, while all are significant, their direct involvement was never as consistent or committed to the policy that was the ILP's self-appointed aim, i.e. of securing the independent representation of labour in national and local government. It is for this reason that, despite its relatively small membership,¹ the ILP merits attention in its own right. Our focus will be upon the organisation of the ILP – the question of what sort of Party, branches and electoral presence, membership – and its relationship with other working class forces in constructing a 'Labour alliance'. First, however, we need to consider the Scottish Labour Party (SLP), formed in 1888 and which was, in the words of Keir Hardie, "The Pioneer of the ILP".²

The Scottish Labour Party

The independent challenge posed by Keir Hardie at the Parliamentary by-election at Mid-Lanark in 1888 has been substantially chronicled.³ For our purposes what is of interest is not the details of that electoral campaign but the organisation which developed out of it – the SLP. In turn this leads to

consideration of the whole question of the creation of a 'labour party', an issue which pre-dated Mid-Lanark. David Howell, in his mammoth history of the early years of the ILP comments upon Scotland that:⁴

Scottish Labour could claim to be organisationally in advance of its English counterpart ... [yet] individual prominence and organisational precocity neither indicated nor produced mass support.

In fact, the formation of the SLP (and Hardie's candidature at Mid-Lanark) can be explained in terms of the very weakness of the Labour movement in Scotland. Because of the lack of a strong trade union base, political questions assumed a much larger importance in Scotland. The main thrust behind the formation of the SLP came from within the coalfields of Lanarkshire and Central Scotland. Unlike in Durham or Northumberland the miners' unions in Scotland were not strong enough to force their choice of representatives upon local Liberal associations. The absence of Lib-Lab M.Ps., and Lib-Labism generally, from Scotland, meant there was no avenue for working class leaders into Parliament. Because of this the question of organisation became paramount.

This is not to say that Hardie and the other miners' leaders involved with him were merely ambitious but frustrated Liberal politicians, though they all were or, at least, had been Liberals. The argument for independent representation of miners and for a labour party, as articulated by Hardie, was based upon the weakness of the mining unions in Scotland. This position was clarified in the pages of Hardie's paper, *The Miner*, which argued for the State to play an interventionist role in improving the position of miners, an argument which was conducted against the 'independent' view of the Lib-Lab M.Ps. In the very first issue of *The Miner* the Northumberland miners' M.P., Thomas Burt, wrote, "it seems to me to appeal to Parliament to fix the hours of adults [i.e.

adult men] is to weaken the motives for union and self-reliance."⁵ In opposition to this view, Hardie and the other Scottish mining leaders did not make a contrast between the Union and Parliament – they put an immense effort into forming the Scottish Miners' National Federation – but, through a recognition of their weakness, sought a potential ally in Parliament. Replying to Burt, Hardie drew a comparison between the plight of the miner and the Irish and Highland peasant:⁶

Parliament, when called upon, interfered to save the Irish and Highland tenant farmers from landlord oppression; and it is surely none too much to ask it to interfere in behalf of the miner. The classes named had the opportunity, as the miner has, of putting things right of themselves; but that which looks well in theory is often found to be very difficult in practice. So it is in this case. The miner finds it next to, if not quite, impossible to continue an eight-hour day without some outside help, and he therefore looks with confidence to Parliament to respond to his cry by voting for the Bill.

The eight hours issue was complicated by the fact that some areas in England and Wales already enjoyed an eight or even seven hour day and, for them, eight hours appeared a retrograde step. Hardie gave this argument short shrift and regarded the Lib-Lab M.P.s. who used it to explain their opposition to an Eight Hours Bill as voting for sectional against national interests; the eight hours was to be seen as a maximum not a minimum. In Scotland only Fife enjoyed an eight hours day but the coal industry there was just on the threshold of expansion and did not alter the basic position regarding Scotland. The pressure exerted from Scotland won it a measure of independent recognition and the Northumberland M.P.s., Burt and Fenwick, who abstained on the Eight Hours Bill in 1887, were forced to concede that they would vote for a separate Scottish Bill.⁷ Such differing perceptions served to highlight the distinctiveness, not only of Scottish miners, but of Scottish political life in general. *The Miner* of February 1888 listed the mining

proposals likely to come before Parliament in the new session – another Eight Hours Bill, a Mining Royalties Bill, a Mining Accidents Insurance (Scotland) Bill, a Truck Bill, and an Arbitration Court Bill – and pointed out that:⁸

each and all of these measures ... proceed from Scotland, and from the Scottish Miners' National Federation. This gives proof of what could be done if we had a Scottish Parliament sitting in Edinburgh.

This was a much more practical (and relevant) approach to the question of Scottish political identity than the vague sentiments of the Scottish Land and Labour League and the SLP, formed later in the same year, did include 'Home Rule all round' in its founding Programme.⁹ Like socialists such as Mahon, however, the Scottish miners' leaders were focussing upon a strategy of achieving social reform and were looking towards Parliament and the formation of a working class political party; a strategy that did not include Home Rule as a *major* demand. The existing 'labour party', as the Lib-Lab M.Ps. were sometimes referred to, was regarded as inadequate to the demands, not only of the miners, but the working class as a whole.¹⁰

The Miner found the 'New Liberal Programme' of 1886 and the 'Address' issued by the TUC Electoral Committee as totally deficient as regards the needs of the miners. Even the contributions made by the labour M.Ps. to the former document were seen as lacking any social content and subsuming miners' interests purely to the dictates of the Liberal Party. *The Miner* refused to regard the Liberals as beyond reproach and went so far as to question the value of all Parties to working men: "Party be hanged we are miners first and partisans last."¹¹ The identification of working class interests with the fortunes of the Liberal Party – the policy of the labour M.Ps. – was no longer tenable: "It is the half-heartedness of the present leaders which keeps our cause from progressing."¹² Objection was made to the "apologetic tone" of the TUC

Address, which actually referred to a "Labour Party", though there was very little sign of its actual existence. If the only purpose of this "Labour Party" was to return working men M.Ps. then it was worse than useless. What was needed was a policy and this was presented by Hardie and Chisholm Robertson, Secretary of the Stirlingshire Miners and President of the Scottish Miners' National Federation, in the Programme of the "Sons of Labour".

Here, 'political' demands such as adult suffrage and payment of M.Ps. were presented together with 'social' reforms like the eight hours day and the ubiquitous local veto over the licensing laws. Both Hardie and Robertson argued an 'evolutionary' line that the era of the Liberal Party and hence any positive role it might have once played in politics, was now at an end. Having done good work in the past in securing civil and religious freedoms, the Liberal Party now had to give way to a new force.¹³ This view of the Liberal Party as historically obsolete complemented the argument that the capitalist was no longer necessary: "His day is now nearly past."¹⁴ At a political level their emphasis varied at times between the (theoretical) end of Liberalism and its *ultimate* replacement, with the practicality of simply establishing some sort of independent labour presence.

The Trade Unions already provided a presence of sorts, but the aim was for something more. In an editorial on the Unions, Hardie argued that a Trade Union was firstly, "An insurance society", organised by the workers themselves but, "to justify its existence [it] must be something more than an insurance society."¹⁵

It possesses the means of spreading education and of interesting the members in all questions affecting their well being, social and political. Working men should be taught to be members of a Labour party first, and Whigs and Tories after. The classes do not fail to make the most of the great party names to keep the masses divided, and while working men are quarrelling as to whether a Whig or Tory shall rule them both are fleecing him and sharing the plunder equally between

themselves. We want a new party - a Labour party pure and simple, and Trade Unions have the power to create this..."

Hardie was the Secretary of the Scottish Miners' National Federation and in his report to the annual meeting in 1887 he returned to the theme of a Labour Party, only now he appeared to be retreating from his statement above on the role of the Unions:¹⁶

The formation of a Labour Party in the country has hitherto been looked upon as a dream of the enthusiast. It would appear as if the miners of Scotland were to have the credit for transforming it into a reality. Resolutions have been passed at various large centres in favour of this being done, while in some constituencies candidates have been selected. The Labour Party will be a distinct organisation from the Trade Unions. It will be Conservative enough to preserve everything that is good: liberal enough to reform what is capable of being reformed; and radical enough to uproot and destroy whatever is altogether wrong.

The following month he added:¹⁷

Trade unions must of necessity become more and more political organisations, but their politics must be those of labour. ... in Scotland ... the labour question is only beginning to come to the front. Whatever is done in this matter should be done apart and distinct from the Trade Unions, so that men may not have to pay for the support of a man in Parliament with whose general political opinions they have no sympathy.

It is obvious that Hardie wanted the unions to play a role in the 'Labour Party', in fact that he saw their involvement as crucial, but he was unclear and uncertain as to what that role should be and how far the members would permit political activity. A clearer statement of intended organisation was given by Chisholm Robertson in an article on the 'Programme of the Sons of Labour':¹⁸

It is necessary that working men's political associations should at once be formed in every town and district in the country, at which proposals for raising the standard of living of the people should be debated and agreed upon. An International Conference of representatives of these associations should be held, and the proposals arranged into a practical workable programme. Seats in which the power is in the hands of the labourers should be selected, for which well-known and tried representatives should be put forward for places in which their influence is greatest. Political organisers should be appointed to spread the programme and establish branch associations, and in order to meet this expense, and to meet contingencies likely to occur soon, an "election and payment of members" fund should at once be revised. The mere knowledge that such associations were in action, watchful, and ready to call members to account for omissions would have an effect greater than can now even be dreamt of.

This statement of intent was both wildly ambitious - an international dimension was envisaged - and ultra-cautious - the actual term "Party" was not used. The Sons of Labour was an attempted off-shoot of the American organisation, the Knights of Labour; branches were formed, mostly in the English Midlands, though by 1892 it was almost totally defunct.¹⁹ There was some activity in Glasgow among the dock labourers and in early 1890 the 'District Master Workman' of the Knights in the City was J. Shaw Maxwell, editor of the old *Voice of the People*. In Scotland, however, the idea of the 'Sons' was mostly associated with the Lothian Miners' leader, William Bulloch, another contributor to *The Miner*, who attempted to push the organisation in the coalfields.²⁰ The history of the Knights and Sons need not concern us here beyond noting that, for Hardie and Robertson it was the political aspect which appealed, rather than the trade union side, which was rendered redundant, more or less, by the existence of the Scottish Miners' National Federation. Bulloch addressed the Federation's Executive on the subject in May 1888, and at the following meeting John Weir, Secretary of the Fife Miners' Union, argued against the 'Sons' organising in any area other than those which remained unorganised by the Federation.²¹ In 1890 a conference

was held by the Knights in London where it was decided, "to form a programme of action in national and local politics".²² What this meant, however, was simply support for the TUC established Labour Electoral Association (LEA) and, through it, for the Liberal Party. In Scotland by this time developments had taken a completely different turn.

In Scotland, without any strong tradition of Lib-Labism, working through the LEA was not a viable strategy; Scottish local Liberal Associations were quite determined not to select working men candidates. The ultimate decision of actually forming a Labour Party was only taken after exhausting attempted routes via the Liberal Party. Towards the end of 1887, when Hardie was still a prospective candidate for North Ayrshire, he made a speech commenting upon how the Liberals and Tories had selected their candidates, which had been done:²³

without the mass of the people being consulted. Your leaders have chosen the men, and now they send them down to you to have them returned.

Hardie's solution was to, "endeavour to have a Labour Electoral Association formed in every town and village in the constituency."²⁴ He would then insist on a plebiscite between himself and the Liberal Association's candidate with whoever getting most support having a clear run against the Tory. Whether this was a principled commitment to a more democratic procedure or just a tactical manoeuvre to gain more credibility for his candidature, the real purpose behind such a suggestion was to try and weaken the middle class grip on the selection of candidates. Hardie repeated his plebiscite demand a few months later at Mid-Lanark. It was refused and he went to the poll in a three-cornered contest.²⁵ Immediately after the poll - and arising out of Hardie's campaign - branches of a new organisation, the Scottish

Parliamentary Labour Party, were formed and the history of labour representation entered a new, 'independent' phase.²⁶

The 'independent' stance adopted by Hardie and the SLP was not, necessarily, how they would have chosen matters to proceed. The formation of some sort of labour party was not predicated on a break with the Liberal Party. Prior to Mid-Lanark Hardie was still talking in terms of the LEA. In the article by Chisholm Robertson, referred to above, it would appear that what was intended by these, "working men's political associations" amounted to no less than an 'independent Labour Party': a network of local branches, some form of (inter) national cohesion, an electoral challenge for parliamentary seats, paid organisers and a fund for 'party' finances. And yet the term 'Party' is not used. Much of the talk and rhetoric about a 'labour party' must be seen as a means of 'sueing' for a limited amount of representation from the Liberals. The refusal of the Scottish Liberal Party to countenance working class candidates effectively forced the issue. The term Labour Party, whether in upper or lower case, cannot be accepted as an unproblematic definition. However, as we are dealing here with the Labour Party in the process of becoming a reality we should not expect a pre-defined strategy that could simply be followed, but should expect trial and error, new initiatives meeting varied responses and with varied success. The ad-hoc nature of labour politics at this time must be kept in mind. A good description of this experience is given in William Stewart's 1921 biography of Hardie:²⁷

New organisations were born and lived a little while and then died, but always left behind them some foundations and corner stones for future builders. Labour Electoral Associations, National Labour Parties, Sons of Labour - modelled on the American Knights of Labour - Hardie was willing to try them all and also ready to associate with the pioneers and propogandists whom these organisations called into activity.

The first 'official' meeting of the SLP took place in Glasgow on 19 May 1888. Hardie explained the purpose as being, "the formation of a bona-fide Labour Party in Scotland."²⁸ It was decided to form a committee which would arrange for an inaugural conference and public demonstration to be held in August, also in Glasgow. At that Conference an Executive was elected and a Constitution and Programme decided upon. The purpose of the new party was claimed to be:²⁹

to educate the people politically, and to secure the return to Parliament and all local bodies of members pledged to its programme.

The Programme contained a series of 'political' and 'social' demands. Among the former were adult suffrage and the abolition of plural voting, triennial parliaments, the payment of election expenses and salaries for M.Ps. The latter included the eight hour day, nationalisation of the land and minerals, state acquisition of railways, waterways and tramways, and the issue of State money only.³⁰ The SLP did not declare itself socialist but, clearly there was much in such a programme that would have appealed to socialists. The dominant tone of the conference was, perhaps, best expressed by Cunningham-Graham, himself a declared socialist and also a sitting Liberal M.P., when he said that the working classes:³¹

were not getting a fair share of the benefits of civilisation; and the means he proposed to help them were - shorter hours of labour, relief works for the unemployed, nationalisation of the means of the land, and the means of production. Now much as they revered the party led by the G.O.M., they did not expect them to take up a programme like that.

At the same time as socialists like Cunningham-Graham and William Small were helping to form the SLP, there was also a significant input of radical

opinion into the new organisation, as indicated by the election of John Ferguson, the Irish Nationalist leader in Scotland, and Dr. G.B. Clark, the Crofters' M.P., as the two Honorary Vice-Presidents. While the question of a 'Labour party' was increasingly exercising the minds of socialists, it was also the case that the question of labour representation was a common theme amongst radical opinion.

The radical 'wing' of the Liberal Party tended to view the cause of labour representation as their own or, at least, to view labour as sharing with them a common interest against the Whigs. One example of this type of thinking is provided by John Stuart Mill in 1870 when he supported the candidature of George Odger, Secretary of London Trades Council, at a by-election at Southwark, where he stood against the Liberal. The result was to let in the Tory, although it was Odger who came second. Mill wrote to Odger:³²

It is plain that the Whigs intend to monopolise political power as long as they can without coalescing with the Radicals. The working men are quite right in allowing Tories to get into the House to defeat this exclusive feeling of the Whigs, and may do it without sacrificing any principles. The working men's policy is to insist on their own representatives and, in default of success, to permit the Tories to be sent into the House until the Whig majority is seriously reduced when, of course, the Whigs will be happy to compromise and allow a few working men representatives in the House.

Hardie's strategy in the run-up to Mid-Lanark can be seen as an echo of the views of Mill. In March 1888 he wrote:³³

Better to split the party now, if there is to be a split, than at a general election, and if the labour party only make their power felt now, then terms will not be wanting when the general election comes.

Hardie's stance over Mid-Lanark did receive significant support from radicals.

The London based Henry Georgite, land-restorationist journal, *The Democrat*, viewed Hardie as, "the Radical candidate", who was being dished by an unrepresentative clique, i.e. the Mid-Lanark Liberal Association.³⁴ The identification of labour representation with the radicals' own interest also meant, ultimately, labour's identification with the Liberals.³⁵

If the labour classes are to form a reliable wing of the Liberal Party their just and equitable claims must no longer be either tampered with or evaded.

However, taking an 'independent' line at a by-election was one thing, the pressure for 'unity' against the Tories at a general election was a completely different matter. In 1892 the editor of *The Democrat* had moved firmly back into the Liberal camp. The SLP was running candidates against Liberals and was forced to expel John Ferguson and Dr. Clark for speaking in support of Liberal candidates in seats the SLP was contesting.³⁶ The basic problem confronting the radicals was what to do when the Liberal Party refused to countenance Labour representation. For some, like Shaw Maxwell the solution was to move completely towards an 'independent' line and socialism.³⁷ For most, however, the only course of action was to remain within the Liberal Party where, in Hardie's words he (i.e. the Radical) "has to grin and bear the situation as best he may."³⁸ There was also a fundamental difference between the ambitions of the radicals who saw Labour as being a "reliable wing of the Liberal Party" and the socialist inclined views of men like Hardie who could, at least theoretically, consider a future beyond the Liberal Party. During the Mid-Lanark campaign Hardie wrote:³⁹

But don't let us be mistaken: sending a "working man" representative to Parliament is only a beginning, but it is a beginning: ... We must get rid of this talk of working men having a right to a 'share' in the representation. Why working men and women (using that term to embrace all workers) must have *all* the representation.

The socialist input to the SLP involved both the SL and the SDF. As we saw from Bruce Glasier's letter to Andreas Scheu (see Chapter One) "many" ex-members of the League had joined the SLP. This process was encouraged as the SL began to fracture over the question of anarchism, with the result that, "One section of its members drifted more and more towards political action, and identified themselves with the Labour Party programme".⁴⁰ One such was John W. Warrington, President of Glasgow Trades Council.⁴¹ At the same time members of the SDF also joined the SLP, though without abandoning their own organisation. Its work and involvement was recognised by George Carson, who wrote of the SDF:⁴²

[its] splendid work in and out of doors cannot be too highly spoken of, and many of whose best members are also active and zealous members of the Labour Party.

This involvement operated harmoniously - in Edinburgh it was the membership of the Scottish Socialist Federation which actually established the SLP branch⁴³ - an arrangement made all the easier by the actual structure of the SLP. The SLP operated a branch structure like any other political party but, at the same time, its "Annual Conference" was a much broader affair at which were represented trade union branches, trades council, co-operative societies, land nationalisation societies, Fabians, SDF, and branches of the SLP itself. The intention was to make the SLP the instrument for achieving labour representation but to associate with that policy a much wider and more representative body of opinion. After the Annual Conference there was the Annual Business Meeting of the SLP proper. Even here, however, there was little attempt at centralised control. As Hardie made clear, the emphasis was on local autonomy:⁴⁴

Each branch was a separate practical organisation, and the work of the executive appointed yearly from the conference

ended with the carrying out of the resolutions, and taking such action as might be necessary for extending the sphere of operations. ... If they began to make hard and fast rules binding on every branch then the party would in his opinion go to pieces ... So long as members and branches and affiliated organisations set to work on the principle of an independent labour party, they would be left free to apply these principles in the way best suited to the local requirements.

From SLP to ILP

The formation of the ILP in 1893 did not mark any break with the established practices of the SLP – the pursuit of independent representation remained the purpose of both organisations. However, the eventual assimilation of the Scottish body into the 'National' ILP did mark a subtle change in the nature of the SLP as an organisation. The separate identity of the SLP was lost, to a great extent, since it became simply a Division of the ILP where before it had been a Scottish Party in its own right. The eventual decision to join up with the ILP was only taken almost two years after Bradford, at the final annual conference of the SLP on 26 December 1894. The motion was moved by Hardie and the 53 delegates from 32 Branches voted unanimously in favour. At the same time a motion to form a Scottish "Council" of the ILP was defeated by 28 votes to 22.⁴⁵

The SLP also had to forfeit its 'twin-track' approach of annual business meeting and annual conference. The identification of the broader labour movement and other, sympathetic organisations with the 'Labour Party' was lost as the single annual conference of the National ILP became the focal point of organisation and debate. Linked to this the autonomy of the individual branches of the SLP was lost. The ILP, as originally established, took a very similar line to the SLP on branch autonomy but the centre of the Party – the National Administrative Council (NAC) – soon began to exert an increasing authority over both organisation and policy.⁴⁶ This is not to say

that the ILP became a dictatorial organisation but to point out that it did become more of an organised Party. This represented a break with the practice of the SLP and gradually led to a new relationship between it and other socialists. We have seen that members of the SDF were also active members of the SLP, but with the formation of the ILP and its identification of itself (despite the choice of name) as a socialist Party, in Scotland this meant that the SDF would eventually have to regard the 'Labour Party' as a rival. This should not be regarded as an absolute division since in certain areas both parties could work harmoniously together and, as Joan Smith has pointed out, someone's choice of Party could depend simply on who had a nearby branch.⁴⁷ Nevertheless, the nature of the previous relationship between the SDF and SLP was altered.

The SDF accepted the need for electoral politics though they were never so successful in constructing labour 'alliances' as the ILP. In any joint proceedings to construct electoral coalitions the SDF would attempt to inject the demand for 'socialisation of the means of production, distribution and exchange', while the ILP was happier to go along with much vaguer commitments to reform and collectivism, in order to encourage non-socialists to get involved. These two contrary strategies were expressed at the SLP annual conference of January 1894. John Warrington of Glasgow Trades Council, and ex-member of the SL, moved a resolution, the salient point of which was:⁴⁸

... we hereby recommend the workers of Scotland to support energetically the Scottish Labour party, and every similar organisation which has for its object the return to Parliament and to every representative body representatives who will act irrespective of the convenience of any political party in securing justice to labour and the establishment of a just social order.

This was seconded by a delegate from Govan Trades Council who emphasised that, "the real fundamental principle of the resolution" was labour representation in Parliament.⁴⁹ From the SDF, however, an amendment was moved that would delete everything after "securing" and replace it with:⁵⁰

The socialisation of the means of production, distribution, and exchange, to be owned and controlled by a Democratic State in the interests of the entire community, and the complete emancipation of labour from the domination of landlordism and capitalism.

The mover of the amendment argued that while nationalisation of the land would secure the workers a "fairer" share of the wealth produced only full socialisation could provide them with "the full reward of their labour". Hardie, acting as Chairman, said on behalf of the executive that they were "aware that there were different parties among the Socialists" and that the resolution had been framed so as to, "express the idea of socialism without committing the idea of socialism to any one school."⁵¹ The SDF amendment was lost by 57 votes for to 104 against. Hardie's statement however, still suggested that the SLP was committed to socialism and this led to an objection from David McLardy, delegate from the Scottish Land Restoration Union, who stated that "he was not in favour of what was known as Socialism", (which provoked a cry of "Oh, Dear") and that, "Unless it was understood that he was not committed to that movement, he must move an amendment."⁵² The radical influence on the SLP, however, was on the wane, no further amendment was moved and the original resolution was then carried unanimously.

This debate was repeated throughout the pre-war period. In January 1900 the Scottish Trade Union Congress (STUC) promoted a "Workers Conference on Parliamentary and Local Representation", which was to give birth to the Scottish Workers' Representation Committee (SWRC), effectively the Labour

Party in Scotland until its dissolution in 1909.⁵³ Represented at the Conference were Trades Councils, Trade Unions, the Co-operative movement, the ILP and the SDF. The main discussion was around the first resolution, which was on 'working class representation'.⁵⁴

Recognising that no real progress had been made with those important measures of social and industrial reform which are absolutely necessary for the comfort and wellbeing of the working classes, and further recognising that neither of the two political parties can or will give effect to those reforms, this Conference is of opinion that the only means by which such reforms can be obtained is by having direct independent working class representation in the House of Commons and on local administrative bodies, and hereby pledges itself to secure that end as a logical sequence to the possession of political power by the working classes.

Two amendments were offered to the resolution. One was to drop "independent", and this was defeated by 141 votes to 13. The SDF then moved to include, "to secure the socialisation of the means of production, distribution and exchange", which received 23 votes. This vote did not mean, according to the ILP view of politics, that any commitment to socialism had been negated. The Chairman of the Conference was Bob Smillie of the Lanarkshire Miners, and prominent member of the ILP, who described himself as "a trade unionist, co-operator and socialist", and argued that the conference which was made up of the "different sections of the democratic movement" had "established the new Trinity of Labour."⁵⁵ As with the SLP in 1894 the temper of the Conference appeared to be socialist. Smillie managed to re-introduce a commitment to socialism by arguing - after the defeat of the SDF resolution - that the majority were actually in favour of its inclusion, only "there was no special reason for adding it to the resolution."⁵⁶

There has been a tendency to regard the SDF as a dogmatic and humourless type of organisation. Smillie criticised them for losing much of the value in

their arguments by, "a too persistently aggressive spirit."⁵⁷ Joseph Duncan, full-time organiser for the ILP in Scotland complained, after a run-in with John Maclean that, "They are a queer breed of impossible people the SDF."⁵⁸ Like all 'myths' this view of the SDF does have a basis in reality, though it is important to note that the most assiduous propogators of the 'myth' tended to be prominent members of the ILP. As David Howell has commented:⁵⁹

The image of the Social Democratic Federation as a narrow dogmatic sect unsuited to the pragmatic rigours of British politics is a tendentious, partial and misleading one, in which the polemical judgements of some ILP contemporaries have been canonised into firm historical verdicts.

For many in the ILP the more attractive strategy was 'socialist unity' with the SDF, rather than the softly-softly approach of the 'Labour alliance'. Harry McShane has recalled how he left the ILP in 1911 to join the newly formed British Socialist Party, which was basically the old SDF with Victor Grayson, Robert Blatchford and "the best elements of the ILP."⁶⁰ However, it was only a minority of the ILP which defected and, according to McShane, in Glasgow some joined the BSP while retaining their ILP membership.⁶¹ The SDF was capable of giving a public lead over campaigning - like opposition to the Boer War and unemployment - but it is clear that it was the ILP which made the running in promoting labour representation. Their approach did attract other forces, which would not accept a purely socialist platform, into electoral alliances. Though at times the ILP did have to stand on its own, the commitment to forming a party of labour was always there and, certainly insofar as Glasgow is concerned, the link between socialism and labour as an electoral force was made solely through the ILP.

Elections - 1) Parliamentary

As far as parliamentary representation is concerned, Scotland was one of the

weak spots for Labour. In a direct comparison with England, I.G.C. Hutchinson clearly shows how much less successful was the Labour challenge, both in terms of the number of seats contested and those actually won.⁶² And yet, an 'independent' challenge to Liberalism emerged in Scotland first. Prior to Mid-Lanark, the Scottish Land Restoration League (SLRL) stood five candidates at the general election of 1885 in and around Glasgow. Their polls averaged 472 votes and a 6 per cent share. These results, however, divide into two groups: In Tradeston, Partick and Greenock the averages were 75 votes and a 1.1 per cent share, while in Hutchesontown and Bridgeton the SLRL candidates received 1,156 and 14.4 per cent, and 978 and 12.1% respectively.⁶³ Only the latter two were bona-fide candidates, the other three being "reprisal" candidates against the Liberals for their having refused the first two straight fights against the Conservatives.⁶⁴ The SLRL had little, if any, direct Labour support, though it could well have expected some. Glasgow Trades Council refused its endorsement even though the franchise reforms of 1884/5 had encouraged it to re-consider the question of independent labour representation. It commented that the Reform Act, "has added ... to the roll of voters two million of the working classes who had previously no voice in matters political." Claiming that it had always been in "the most complete unanimity" as regards the desirability of having labour men in Parliament it concluded that, "the time for action ... had arrived."⁶⁵

The SLRL may have been more concerned with the Highland agitation and land reform, but these issues were not seen as irrelevant to the needs of the industrial working class. During 1885 the Glasgow Trades Council circulated trades councils throughout Britain for their opinion of the causes of the poor state of trade, and found:⁶⁶

in nearly all cases the opinion held was that the present unsatisfactory state of the Land Laws was the great cause of the current depression."

Despite such an analysis Glasgow Trades Council was not yet prepared to support electoral challenges against the Liberal Party. This would only occur when the personnel of the Council changed and also its political stance – from Liberal to Labour. A footnote to the SLRL campaign is that the candidate at Hutchesontown was none other than Shaw Maxwell, who was to re-contest the same seat ten years later for the ILP.⁶⁷

Glasgow Trades Council did support Hardie's candidature at Mid-Lanark and, although it did not join the SLP at its foundation it did affiliate eventually and it was one of the constituent members of the short-lived Scottish United Trades Council Labour Party (SUTCLP). The history of the SUTCLP need not detain us for very long; formed in 1891 it had disappeared by 1893. Partly influenced by H.H. Champion the SUTCLP did not at first appear as a rival to the SLP but personal conflicts involving Champion and Chisholm Robertson versus Hardie certainly imparted that edge to relations between the two organisations. However, the SUTCLP was a short-lived phenomenon, though its longer-term significance can be seen as being part of the ad-hoc development of 'independent labour'. As David Howell has commented:⁶⁸

Yet the success of the SUTCLP in cultivating links with trades councils indicated some shift in Scottish trade union opinion which could produce subsequent benefits for the SLP.

At the beginning of 1893 an SLP delegate at the annual conference could claim of Glasgow Trades Council that, "The Council was theirs and they would keep it."⁶⁹ In the General Election of 1892 three Glasgow seats were contested; two by the SLP and one by the SUTCLP. The SLP candidates stood in Camlachie and Tradeston where they secured 906 votes and 12 per cent and 783 votes and 11 per cent respectively, while the single SUTCLP candidate, for the College constituency, managed only 225 votes and 2 per

cent. Disappointing as these results were, some consolation could still be taken from them. Speaking at the SLP conference the following January Hardie pointed out that, "At the recent General Election the Labour Party was for the first time in evidence as an organised movement."⁷⁰ The seven labour candidates in Scotland (4 SLP and 3 SUTCLP) had accounted for 14 per cent of the poll. Hardie went on to claim that, "the same proportion would hold good all over the country, a fact which proves the strength of the labour vote and its power for good if properly directed."⁷¹ The basis of Hardie's optimism (apart from his own triumph in West Ham) could only have been realistically based upon forcing concessions from the Liberals, since in both Tradeston and Camlachie the SLP intervention was sufficient to deprive the Liberals of victory.

No deals were made with the Liberals in Scotland, however, which was crucial in restricting Labour representation north of the border prior to 1918. At the General Election of 1895 the ILP stood eight candidates in Scotland, five of whom contested Glasgow constituencies. The Glasgow average poll was 502 votes and 7.5 per cent. Only Bob Smillie, standing for Camlachie, managed to get more than 10 per cent of the votes, and in Hutchesontown, Shaw Maxwell managed to secure only half the number and proportion of votes he received ten years previously. Even the *Labour Leader* had to admit that the Glasgow polls were "disgracefully small"⁷² and after this debacle Labour's parliamentary ambitions became much more circumspect: only one Labour candidate stood in Glasgow at the General Election of 1900 and only two in the Elections of 1906 and 1910.

In 1900 the Glasgow Labour candidate was the only one to stand in the whole of Scotland - this was A.E. Fletcher who stood in Camlachie under the auspices of the SWRC.⁷³ It was the ILP which was principally behind Fletcher's candidature - he had stood down in Aberdeen at a by-election in 1896 once

Tom Mann entered the field⁷⁴ – and they were able to get a significant coalition of forces to support him, the SWRC, the SDF, the Clarion Scouts, the United Irish League, the Trades Council and, most significantly, the local Liberal Association.⁷⁵ The key to this coalition was the Boer War which possibly explains the Liberals' failure to promote a candidate of their own, and Fletcher's anti-war stand made him acceptable to the socialists. The 1900 or "Khaki" election was unique in Glasgow' political history as the first and only time that the City returned a wholly Unionist (four Conservatives and three Liberal Unionists) representation to Parliament. Fletcher's performance was certainly creditable, getting over 3,000 votes and 42 per cent of the poll, but the unique circumstance of this election reduces its significance.

Labour eventually made its breakthrough in 1906 when George Barnes, of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers (ASE), won Hutchesontown, defeating both Conservative and Liberal in a three-cornered contest. Both Barnes and Joseph Burgess, the candidate in Camlachie, were members of the ILP, and even if Barnes, "had no time for Glasgow socialists"⁷⁶ the preference for moderate trade unionists as parliamentary candidates was part and parcel of the ILP's strategy. Barnes success and the relatively high poll in Camlachie were partly due to Irish support for Labour in preference to the Liberals.⁷⁷ Alongside Barnes, Labour also returned Alex Wilkie in the two-member Dundee seat, again in the face of Liberal opposition. Labour's success overall in Britain in returning 30 M.Ps. in 1906, enthused the ILP which, even in Scotland, despite only securing two victories, could share in the general euphoria and even claim a distinctive contribution. Joseph Duncan wrote to his fiancée, "And so the Revolution is started at last."⁷⁸

We have done much better in Scotland than I expected. ... This is not a big proportion but then it must be remembered that in Scotland we have not a clear fight anywhere. In every constituency we have to fight both Liberal & Tory. Although this makes harder fighting it is much more satisfactory. When we

get our men in it means that they go in on our own votes. It declares the open war. ... It is the clear trumpet call of the revolution.

However, the cause of labour representation in Scotland stubbornly refused to move. In the general election of December 1910 William Adamson won a further seat in West Fife, giving a grand total of three Scottish Labour M.Ps. Even this may exaggerate the strength of Labour's "own votes". While Barnes and Wilkie originally won their seats against Liberals they did not subsequently have to face Liberal opposition. Adamson's victory was also achieved against a Liberal but he appears to have benefitted from the decision of the Conservatives not to contest after their third-place in the January 1910 election. The crucial factor, as regards Labour's performance in Scotland compared with England, was that indicated by Duncan above, the failure of the Lib-Lab pact to operate north of the border. The Liberal acceptance of both Barnes and Wilkie after 1906 was simply the acceptance of a *fait accompli*, made easier by the 'loyalty' of the Labour Party in Parliament to the Liberal Government. Elsewhere Labour was not strong enough to force the issue and the Liberals in Camlachie were prepared to lose the seat to the Unionists (as happened in all three elections in 1906 and 1910) rather than cede their claim to it to Labour. Even if the non-existence of the Lib-Lab pact in Scotland was partly due to timing - the Scottish Liberals only considered it after Chamberlain's tariff reform campaign had been launched, allowing the Liberal Party to place itself firmly at the head of the Progressive forces⁷⁹ - Labour's failure to force concessions reflects both its own weakness and the continuing strength of the Liberal Party in Scotland.⁸⁰

Elections - 2) Municipal: From The 'Forces of the Democracy' to the Labour Party.

Local elections offer more scope for the psephologist, in that they were conducted annually rather than the irregular occurrences of general elections, and that municipal wards covered much smaller areas than parliamentary constituencies, thus allowing a more detailed picture of local social indicators. We shall cover the actual detail of Labour's municipal programme in the following chapter, and the question of the electorate in Chapter Six. At the moment our concern lies with the *organisation* of Labour's electoral presence at the municipal level.

The ILP's first electoral success in Glasgow occurred at the Municipal election of 1895 when it ran three candidates and managed to return two of them.⁸¹ This breakthrough, however, was facilitated by the general lack of interest shown in the polls that year due to a complete re-organisation of ward boundaries (necessary after the extension of the City boundaries in 1891) to take place the following year, which meant that victorious candidates would only have one year on the Corporation before having to stand for re-election rather than the normal three-year term.⁸² While most other organisations and individuals were concentrating their energies for the full local 'general' municipal election in 1896 when all seats on the Council would have to be contested, the ILP took the opportunity of securing at least some sitting Councillors. The Trades Council, which had previously 'endorsed' candidates for the municipal elections, took no part in the 1895 contests, but this was because it was planning a much more substantial intervention for 1896. It was clear that this 'general' election would provide a unique opportunity for the proponents of Labour representation and the Trades Council put itself at the front of this movement.⁸³

It had been agreed [in 1895] to appoint a Standing Committee of the Council to keep in touch with the Ward Committees and other bodies of workers, so as to be able to increase the numbers and thus strengthen the position of the Labour members of the Town Council. It was felt that no such

opportunity was likely to again occur as, owing to the re-arrangement of the Wards, the whole of the 75 members fell to be elected...

This view marked a complete departure from the timorous attitude towards local labour representation held by the Trades Council a decade previously.⁸⁴ The change in attitude had been brought about by the gradually increasing socialist element in the Trades Council which, particularly after 1892, was effectively dominant. The Council did not, however, intend to act alone but to create an effective 'labour party' which would comprise delegates from the Trades Council, individual union branches, the ILP, the Glasgow Federation of Co-operative Societies and the Irish National League (INL). An inaugural meeting was held with three delegates from each 'central' body at which a Programme was drafted. Following on from this a "large and well-represented" meeting of delegates from branches was held on 12 June at which it was decided to form and run candidates under a Workers Municipal Committee. This Committee (which soon became known as the Workers Election Committee (WEC)) numbered approximately 160.⁸⁵

and when it is borne in mind that only two delegates were allowed for each body or Trade Society, it will at once be seen that it was what it claimed to be - representative in a very high degree of the workers of the city.

Glasgow's 'general' election of 1896 provided a great stimulus to political organisation, propoganda and debate, much needed after the depressing performance of the ILP campaign at the Parliamentary polls the previous year. This new enthusiasm was reflected in the publication of a new socialist journal, *The Glasgow Commonweal*. A monthly publication, the *The Glasgow Commonweal* was not presented as a party organ but was an open affair giving space to the activities of the ILP, SDF and Clarion Scouts. Although it

only survived for eight issues, it did cover the preparations for the forthcoming municipal elections and it was the doings of the WEC which came to dominate its pages. The full implications of the alliance being constructed by the ILP and Trades Council were not welcomed by all socialists or all members of the ILP and the debate over the WEC was carried on within *The Glasgow Commonwealth*. The very choice of title refers back directly to the old Socialist League/William Morris *Commonweal*, and the debate over electoral strategy in 1896 echoes the debate which the Socialist League underwent in 1887. The difference being that the SL was divided over the question of electoral politics *per se*, while the Socialists in Glasgow in 1896 were divided over whether or not electoral politics should be pursued with non-socialists.

The 'purist' line against any electoral compromises was expressed in a long article by George Neil entitled, "Socialism or Dishonour".⁸⁶ It was, he wrote, "the desire of some socialists to run conjointly with the Trade Unionists, Irish Nationalists, and Co-operators under the name of the 'Workers Party'" (as the WEC was often called). This name, 'Workers' Party', was in Neil's view acceptable to all only because it "does not suggest anything at all of Socialism". However, the dilemma was that since they believed that only socialism could solve the "Labour problem" it was the duty of socialists to push it forward at every opportunity.⁸⁷

But are we at all likely to accomplish our object by burying our identity, and following the lead of a few idiosyncratic individuals who have made up their minds to be returned "by hook or by crook" for one constituency or another, to the 'Marble Halls of Glasgow'. ... To run under any other name than that which we are best known by merely because a few of the supporters of the other parties are willing to go a short part of the way with us and then cry halt is not the way to further Socialism.

Moreover, among the Trade Unionists, Co-operators and Irish Nationalists there were "some [who] hate both Socialism and Socialists as strongly as the devil is supposed to hate holy water." Their alliance with socialism was simply a marriage of convenience prompted by their understanding that "Socialism is now a power in Glasgow" and that they needed the "assistance of the Socialists in the various wards" to get their candidates returned.

In Neil's estimation both the Trade Unions and the Co-ops were moving in the direction of socialism and there was an implicit, logical connection between them and socialists but, as regards the Irish, he was particularly hostile, as his reference to "holy water" might suggest. Neil admitted that many Irishmen had supported socialists in the past, "but it must be remembered that those Irishmen were, and some of them still are, Socialists." He questioned the very basis of the Irish claim to representation in the City - as residents and ratepayers yes, but not as "Nationalists whose sole object is Home Rule for Ireland." Locally, the Nationalists had, at the last Parish Council Election, run in a leet with Liberals and Tories against Socialist candidates, and generally Neil's opinion of them was unequivocal:⁸⁸

they are so shifty that no party can depend for any length of time upon their support. ... the nationalist party, as a party, in and out of the House of Commons, are among the bitterest opponents of Socialism.

In contrast, the co-operators, wrote Neil, "have a claim to our support", because, "Many of our comrades are Co-operators, and there is unquestionably a manifest desire among Co-operators to know more about Socialism." This being so he felt able to claim that the Co-ops would support Socialist candidates. As for the Unions:⁸⁹

They are undoubtedly gradually coming round to Socialism, and many of our best men among them are not

afraid to openly espouse our cause."

While workers' organisation was necessary under capitalism, trade unionism did not provide the solution to "the industrial anarchy which dominates the world today" and would prove less able to withstand capitalism in the future. It was necessary, therefore, that all socialist candidates should stand on a socialist platform. Neil was not advocating abstention but it was clear that the return of "two or three Socialists to the Council" was not seen as being of any particular value, and his emphasis on the educative role of speaking and acting Socialism could have come straight out of the *Commonweal* of 1886. Neil's was not a lone voice, however, and he can be regarded as representative of one strand of thinking, basically that of the SDF which still retained an active presence within the ILP.⁹⁰ He received support from another contributor who saw more cons than pros in the 'workers' coalitions, especially, "the risk of being obliged to not only vote for, but to run non-Socialist candidates."⁹¹ Someone else argued for getting as many Socialists as possible onto the Ward Committees through which, "Socialist representation will be made easier, and a good opportunity afforded for pushing non-Socialist representatives in our direction."⁹² However, the very real opportunity which existed for returning a significant number of 'Labour' Councillors proved the stronger influence. All ILP branches save one were affiliated to the WEC and a letter on, "The Policy of Socialists a Municipal Elections", stated what would appear to have been the majority view:⁹³

As a Socialist and a Trade Unionist I think the policy now being carried out is the best under the circumstances. Candidates are scarce, money is ditto, and we depend for our votes largely on the non-socialist but fairly sympathetic, yet easily alienated trade union voters. We wish to challenge the personnel of the Council, to do which we must win new seats and keep those we have, and when limited action for a given end is possible, we are justified in seizing the opportunity.

This was a very straightforward exposition of the 'labour alliance' strategy. However, the WEC, or 'workers' party' included more than just the socialists and trade unionists. It also had within its ranks the Irish Nationalists and the Co-operators, and these four distinct groups in total accounted for what we might term the "forces of the democracy". The term "the democracy" was used to denote the working class or, rather, the enfranchised working class in its organised expression. Through its own self-organisation the working class was seen as gradually establishing its own agenda in political affairs. Commenting on the Glasgow municipal election of 1894 the *Glasgow Herald* pointed out how "incongruous" the old, familiar mottoes of "retrenchment and reform" and "economy and efficiency" had become:⁹⁴

especially at this time, when the new democracy is asking that the Corporation shall become a sort of universal employer of labour, which is to be remunerated at trade union rates and is to go on only for eight hours a day. However this may be, it is the fact that in several of the wards in which there were contests many votes were given on the understanding that the candidates for whom they were recorded were "sound" on the labour and eight hours question.

It was within this organised sense of "the democracy" and with the knowledge that there were certain demands that this "democracy" would support, that the ILP sought to locate its electoral strategy. The Chairman of the WEC, John Cronin, argued that this represented a "very agreeable change" in the ILP in Glasgow.⁹⁵

Quite a number of honest Trade Unionists socialistically inclined have complained of the narrow, bitter spirit in which the party in times past approached public questions. It was a common saying that the ILP would not could not work harmoniously unless they had everything their own way. This may or may not be true of the past, it is not true today. The Glasgow ILPers seem to have profited by experience, and I think it simple justice to say that in all recent movements they have struck a keen desire to work heartily with the Trade Unionists.

There was a certain amount of dissimulation going on here since it was the ILPers within the Trades Council who had pushed for the creation of the WEC, though it was the case that the two organisations were by no means synonymous. Cronin was a significant figure since, as well as being Chairman of the WEC, he was also President of the Trades Council, Secretary of the Iron and Steel Workers Union, and the municipal candidate for Dalmarnock Ward. He was also a Roman Catholic and a Socialist. Not surprisingly his view of the forthcoming election was quite different to that of George Neil:⁹⁶

It is sincerely to be hoped that the different sections will not seek to overload the programme with their own particular theories I don't believe in a big document full of empty platitudes. What we want is something that will appeal to the common sense of the workers, and likely to be realised in a few years.

Of the four 'democratic forces' that constituted the WMC, the ILP and the Trades Council involvement need little explanation. The ILP's basic strategy - despite manifestations of "narrow, bitter spirit" - was based upon forming a labour electoral alliance. The Trades Council had always taken a political role in attempting to secure reforms in the trade union interest and had, since the mid-1880s, accepted the logic of actual labour representation; the increasing dominance of socialists within the Council had developed that acceptance into a commitment to 'independent labour'. The Co-operative movement in Scotland generally played a more prominent role in Labour politics than its counterpart in England. Partly this was due to the relative weakness of Scottish trade unionism which gave the Co-ops a much greater weight within the Labour movement in Scotland. Certainly, Socialists put a great deal of effort into propoganda and educative work with the co-operative societies (and we shall discuss this in a later chapter), but 1896 saw the Co-ops in Glasgow throw their hats into the WEC ring largely due to a direct assault

upon their own organisation.

This was an attempted Boycott by private butchers to prevent Co-op Societies buying directly in the meat and cattle market. Essentially the Boycott represented an attack by small traders on what they perceived as the unfair competition from the Co-ops which were attracting increasing custom. In 1888 a Scottish Traders' Defence Association had been established in Glasgow which not only attempted boycotts against societies but also sought to victimise individual co-operators at their place of work.⁹⁷ When the butchers re-activated this campaign in 1896 they did so in a situation which was very likely to lead the Co-ops into direct political involvement. Not only were the labour forces offering to defend the Societies' right to buy in the meat markets, but the whole question of access to the markets could only be decided by the City Corporation since they were publicly owned. According to the historian of the Scottish Co-operative Wholesale Society (SCWS), the 1896 Boycott led to, "the start of a sustained effort on the part of the Scottish Co-operators to obtain Parliamentary representation."⁹⁸

This did not lead, however, to a consistent commitment to work with the 'workers party'. The Co-operative movement was represented at the founding of the Scottish Workers' Representation Committee (SWRC) in 1899/1900. but the Glasgow Societies had by that time already withdrawn from the WEC. The *Labour Leader* explained the non-involvement of the Co-ops in 1899 as due to the WEC changing its Secretary who had been a Co-op nominee.⁹⁹ However, the most likely explanation would appear to be that, having secured their position against the private traders, the Co-ops lost interest and reverted back to their 'no-politics' stand. Even as early as 1897 the WEC was comprised only of delegates from the Trades Council, the ILP, and the INL.¹⁰⁰

The involvement of the Irish in the WEC caused a certain difficulty with the

Co-ops who refused to endorse one of the nominated WEC candidates (P. O'Hare of the INL who was standing in Springburn) because, "he was engaged in the wine and spirit business."¹⁰¹ At the same time 'municipalisation of the liquor traffic' was one of the items in the WEC programme which all candidates were pledged to. This was a difficult item for the INL since many Irish were employed in the 'trade'. Nevertheless they did accept it and even when an INL proposal to drop this item was defeated in 1898, they did not, on that account, leave the Committee.¹⁰² The politics of the Irish community and its relationship to Labour and Socialism will be examined in detail in a subsequent chapter. However, its identification as part of 'the forces of the democracy' is worthy of comment on two counts. One is that the very active role taken by the INL in the pursuit of labour representation through the WEC qualifies the standard view of the Irish as being an electoral barrier to Labour. Obviously the link at a municipal level was easier to make since the question of Home Rule was not a dominant concern, but this local involvement with Labour does indicate a (strong) tendency within the Irish community to identify with the interests of the working class. This leads to the second point. The Irish or Catholic-Irish were predominantly working class, in fact mainly of the poorer working class. They were cultivated by proponents of labour representation because of their perceived voting strength and that they were primarily working class. But despite their 'national' identification the branches of the INL provided a voice for members of the largely unskilled, poorer workers who were not, by any means, adequately represented by the 'purely' Labour organisations. This provided an answer to George Neil's questioning of the right of the Irish to local representation. As Bruce Glasier admitted of the United Irish League (UIL) - as the INL became - despite all its shortcomings it was, nonetheless, "a democratic party acting for the poor."¹⁰³

The success of the WEC in getting a significant number of Councillors elected

- the 'labour group' on the Town Council became known as the "Stalwarts" - put Glasgow in the forefront of Labour organisation and appeared to set an example which could be followed nationally. In 1901 the *Labour Leader* opened up a debate on electoral strategy under the heading:¹⁰⁴

Wanted. A Stalwart Party in Parliament. Can the Forces of Democracy be United.

The subject for discussion is not the need for a Labour Party or even for its being independent, but whether it is possible for Labour to unite with other advanced sections of politicians so as to secure joint action in and out of Parliament, and if so, upon what terms and conditions is such joint action to be secured, and what are its likely effects upon the Labour movement.

By using the term "Stalwart Party" the leadership of the ILP were setting the parameters of the debate, indicating the outcome they preferred. Ironically, at just this time the 'democratic alliance' which had created the WEC in Glasgow was in the process of decay. At the municipal polls of 1902 the *Glasgow Herald* commented upon:¹⁰⁵

the almost entire disappearance of the word "Stalwart" from the vocabulary of the candidates and their supporters. It has for some time been a term of reproach, and has been regarded by various extreme partisans as synonymous with broken pledges and empty professions.

The exact structure of this 'labour party' in Glasgow had been unclear even in 1896 and, although the Stalwarts became an identifiable grouping on the Town Council over the next few years, the unity of the alliance gradually dissipated, making it increasingly difficult to identify just who exactly represented labour in the City Chambers. The WEC was not a political party and did not have a Party discipline. The candidates it adopted had to accept the programme formulated by the WEC but, apart from having to declare the

sources of funds beyond WEC contributions, there were no restraints on those standing for office. In 1896–99 this very looseness appeared a positive virtue, especially as the Stalwarts, while retaining, “fads and influences of old associations ... never disagree on essentials.”¹⁰⁶

Indeed the constitution of the Committee is more in the nature of an honourable understanding than a set of hard and fast rules which people are punished for breaking. Hitherto the work has been carried on without much friction is hoped and believed there will be less and less as succeeding years bring the wisdom that is born of experience.

The loss of the Co-operators seriously depleted the funds of the WEC.¹⁰⁷ The next group to depart was the INL, mainly due to differences with the ILP over the division of seats. The final straw for the Irish came with the death of John Ferguson in 1905 and the ILP claiming his Calton seat as ‘Labour’, rather than recognising it as ‘Irish’.¹⁰⁸ Far from being an example to Labour nationally, Glasgow now appeared to be seriously out of step. After the Municipal polls in 1905 and the loss of two ‘labour’ seats the *Labour Leader* commented acidly, “Perhaps there are reasons for this which the party in Glasgow will have to take into serious consideration.”¹⁰⁹ With even the Trades Council losing interest in the WEC it had become, more or less, a shell containing only the ILP. Unity of the democratic forces had proven more difficult to maintain than has been thought back in 1896, and the ILP’s own ambitions had become a source of antagonism. One later explanation for the break-up stated:¹¹⁰

As the Socialist element grew in strength on the WEC its programme and policy became more exclusively “Socialist”. This was not to the liking of the UIL, nor the Co-operators, and as a consequence they seceded.

As Labour representation on Glasgow Town Council continued to decline

throughout the early 1900s, the explanation by activists became more focussed upon the need for a more structured organisation. Labour's failure in these years was thrown into sharper relief by the success enjoyed by an individual named Andrew Scott Gibson who, originally identifying himself as a Socialist, fought a number of highly personalised, populist campaigns against the Corporation 'establishment' and municipal 'extravagance'. His role shall be discussed in the following chapter but it was significant that he appeared able to win in almost any Ward he chose to stand and that he always attracted a massive turnout of electors. The Glasgow correspondent of the *Labour Leader* regarded the success of Scott Gibson as indicative of the, "emergence of a type of free-lance candidate which, by claiming affinity with Labour, does nothing but harm to the Labour cause." What permitted this phenomenon was, "The absence of a well-organised municipal Labour party outside the Town Council, with a well-defined municipal policy."¹¹¹ The very loose structure of the WEC, previously regarded as a virtue, was now seen as a hindrance in that it discouraged the development of an organisation with a definite policy and a sense of party discipline.

An opportunity to construct a Labour Party on the ground had been offered by the SWRC, the Scottish equivalent of the Labour Representation Committee (LRC). The SWRC has recently been described as a weak and ineffectual organisation, basically "a failure".¹¹² While undoubtedly lacking in energy and dynamism, the SWRC had to labour under the burden of critical under-funding. This was because, although established under the aegis of the STUC, trade unions in Scotland tended on the whole to send their total affiliation fees to the London-based LRC. The SWRC constantly tried to have it established that, like the STUC, they should have a right to the proportion of monies produced from the Scottish members.¹¹³ Behind this dispute and the eventual disbandment of the SWRC, was the determination of the LRC, and its

Secretary Ramsay MacDonald, to maintain all union contributions and displace the SWRC. As one executive member of the SWRC stated:¹¹⁴

the aim of the Labour Party was to extinguish the Scottish Committee, and proposal to that effect had been made to the Committee during his term of office.

With the collapse of the SWRC the Labour Party gave little attention to Scottish affairs with the result that, up to the outbreak of War in 1914, "organisation lagged substantially behind the levels attained at this time in England."¹¹⁵ Glasgow, however, was partly responsible for failing to create a local 'Labour Party'. The opportunity had been presented by the SWRC which, at its first annual conference, passed a resolution in favour of the establishment of local committees which would undertake all electoral work – both parliamentary and municipal. This was opposed by the ILP in Glasgow which moved an amendment, "that local committees only deal with Parliamentary work and leave municipal elections to others."¹¹⁶ Whether the ILP opposed this resolution in order to maintain their own local dominance or to retain their alliance with the Irish (who were not part of the SWRC) is unclear. But what is clear is that Labour organisation in Glasgow was in serious decline. In the run-up to the polls in 1908 a correspondent in *Forward* complained of the WEC and the "same old wrangle over trifles, the same old higgle-de-piggledy, unorganised way of doing things."¹¹⁷

If we had selected six seats and fought them in November with six good men and had them early enough in the field, we could win something. But here we are, nothing done, nor will anything be done until the last moment, and then we shall waste our energies over some dozen divisions and win nothing. The Trades Council has withdrawn their delegates [from the WEC] Isn't it about time the ILP was doing the same, and uniting with the Trades Council to form an LRC?

In fact some progress was being made along these lines. In Springburn - "a great Trade Union stronghold" - there was a local LRC which had chosen the Labour candidate.¹¹⁸ The following year the Trades Council began to take a more active role again and appointed a new Election Committee, at which time Labour started to win seats on the Corporation again.¹¹⁹ The eventual formation of the Glasgow Labour Party still took a few years. Despite protracted discussions between the ILP, Trades Council and the Fabian Society the general trend towards a more cohesive organisation was apparent. Labour's re-emergence was not based upon an attempt to re-activate the alliance of the 'democracy' but was, rather, a development of Labour's own organisational strength and discipline, within which the forces of the democracy could be incorporated. The contrast with the WEC is clear:¹²⁰

The Glasgow Labour Party was instituted in 1912, and is composed of delegates from the Trades Council, Glasgow ILP Federation, seven divisional LRCs, the Fabian Society and the Women's Labour League. It takes the place of the Workers' Municipal Elections Committee (now defunct) and is the controlling body in all matters appertaining to Parliamentary, Municipal, Parish Council and School Board candidatures, and has a deciding voice on questions of policy and discipline, such questions being submitted to a conference of members and public representatives. The Party devotes attention to Registration and Political Organisation generally.

Just as the WEC, in its heyday, had not been simply a centralist shell, but had gathered within it a multiplicity of local organisations, so too did the Glasgow Labour Party. The significant difference is that it did so not as "a composite body", which the WEC had been, but as a "controlling body."¹²¹ The seven LRCs corresponded to the seven Glasgow Parliamentary Divisions and had responsibility for selecting candidates for local and national elections. The LRCs were themselves delegate bodies, having no individual membership structure, but it was the affiliated organisations that were the evidence of Labour's strength. The "basis of representation" of Blackfriars and

Hutchesontown LRC included delegates from Trade Union branches, ILP branches, British Socialist Party, Women's Labour League, Housing Association, Co-operative Women's Guild, Food Protest Association, Kinning park Co-operative Society, United Baking Co-operative Society.¹²²

Although undated this document refers to the First World War, as the affiliation of the BSP and Food Protest Association indicate. The inclusion of single issue campaigning bodies like the Food Protest and Housing Associations are indicative of Labour's strength beyond formal 'party' structures, a development that was greatly accelerated during wartime. Two other changes from the WEC are noticeable. One is the organised presence of women, whose increasing public role had been in evidence prior to 1914, but which also developed rapidly during the War. The great absence from the Labour Party was the Irish who were not permitted affiliation. This created a resentment amongst Irish political opinion in the City, yet the lack of an organised presence did not mean a total absence of on the part of the Irish, many of whom were taking active roles in Labour politics. The ILP delegates to the Blackfriars and Hutchesontown LRC numbered eight, meaning that there were four branches affiliated, which indicated its continuing significance. Whether acting 'independently' or in an electoral 'alliance' it remained the case that, "the ILP was the 'Labour Party' on the ground and in constituency wards around Clydeside."¹²³

Membership of The ILP

Although the role of the ILP in Glasgow is now well-attested to, there has been little attempt to provide detail on its actual organisational and social structure.¹²⁴ Despite the paucity of records, particularly those relating to individual branches, what there is in the ILP Archive is still of substantial value.¹²⁵ The SLP had seven branches covering the seven Parliamentary

Divisions of Glasgow, plus a branch in Govan and a Women's Labour Party (later the Women's branch of the ILP). Apart from the Women's branch, which collapsed in 1898, these branches were the mainstay of the ILP in Glasgow. In times of expansion they grew and formed 'extra' branches in their respective Divisions, while in periods of retrenchment they, at least, retained some sort of existence; in 1896 there were 17 branches, in 1910 18 branches, while between 1899 and 1902 there were only the eight 'core' branches plus Partick.¹²⁶

There are no figures for membership of the SLP available, which is hardly surprising given the 'autonomy' enjoyed by its branches would hardly have encouraged much collection of information at the 'centre'. The first membership figures we have for Glasgow are for the ILP in 1896 when eight of the 17 branches provided numbers. Central Branch had 60 members, Tradeston 50, Townhead 54, Springburn 25, Dennistoun 32 (these last three giving the St Rollox Division a total of 111), Blackfriars 26, Hutchesontown 60 (giving a combined figure of 86), and the Women's Branch had 50 members.¹²⁷

For 1897 there are figures for nine of the thirteen branches still active. Tradeston had 50 members, Camlachie 60, Central 30, College 97, Govan 20, Townhead 40, Bridgeton 80, Hutchesontown 72 and the Women's Branch 28.¹²⁸ For 1898 there is more consistency, in that there are figures for all nine remaining branches. Govan had 24 members, Tradeston 50, Bridgeton 108, College 104, St Rollox 40, Central 25, Camlachie 60, Hutchesontown 80, and the Women's Branch 30.¹²⁹ There are no membership figures available for 1899 but for 1900 there are numbers for all the branches except Govan. Tradeston had 30 members, College 39, St Rollox 49, Central 25, Camlachie 61, Bridgeton 92, and Hutchesontown 80.¹³⁰ For 1901 there are figures for five branches. College had 30 members, St Rollox 48, Central 25, Camlachie 55,

and Hutchesontown 59.¹³¹ For 1902 there are figures for three branches only. St Rollox had 50 members, Central 38 and Hutchesontown 60.¹³²

After 1902 membership figures are no longer provided at all, though from 1908 to 1910 it is possible to make extrapolations from branch affiliation fees paid to the NAC. Those figures we do have are not reliable as being definite records of the actual branch membership, though we can use them, even if only as indicators. As regards the ILP we are on somewhat safer ground than with other organisations since membership figures were based on actual dues paid. Therefore we are not dealing with exaggerated figures provided by enthusiastic secretaries but a record, more or less, of the paying membership.

David Howell has indicated, none the less, that there could be a danger of branches over-subscribing members, but the Glasgow information would tend to suggest a problem of under-subscribing. An example of this is provided by the Glasgow "City" (i.e. Central Division) branch which, in 1902 according to its fees paid to the NAC, had a membership of 38, an increase from the previous year's 25. These figures were produced from London for the Annual Reports, brought out after the Annual Conference which was held at Easter each year. However, according to a surviving document of the branch, its own *Annual Report* for the year ending 31 March 1903, the branch membership was stated as 98, the previous year's having been 83. Thus in 1902 the City branch membership, on the basis of fees paid to the NAC, was put at 38 while, in fact, it had been 83.

This discrepancy could be explained by a simple misprint, the number 83 having been entered into the annual report as 38, but the figure of 25 members in 1901 would suggest not. The *Report* of the City branch indicates a well-organised body which kept a close record of its changing membership,

how many had left and for what reasons and how many had joined over the previous twelve months. The *Report* also shows that the largest single source of revenue for the branch came directly from "members' contributions". This would suggest that City were withholding money from the NAC. This could be because they deliberately did not want to diminish their own resources or that, after working out their own financial needs, they simply had no money left to forward to party headquarters. Whatever the actual reason, the actual membership of the City branch would seem to have been significantly higher than the 'official' figures show.¹³³

How general a phenomenon it was for branches to under-subscribe it is impossible to say, but the above instance does qualify examples of particularly low membership figures. It has been pointed out that ILP membership in Glasgow, while accounting for half the total Scottish figure, hardly bears comparison with that of the two major parties.¹³⁴ For instance, in Bridgeton - an ILP stronghold after the War - is claimed to have only a membership of 20 in 1909.¹³⁵ However, as the figures above indicate Bridgeton had been one of, if not the, largest ILP branch in Glasgow up to 1902. Moreover, according to 'official' figures, Bridgeton had 200 members in 1910 and won a place on the "roll of honour" of branches affiliating on 200 or more members.¹³⁶

It is difficult enough to trace simply numbers of ILP members, turning these numbers into people is almost, if not quite, impossible. The increasing attention that the ILP on Clydeside has received has given us some idea of the social basis of its membership. The role of the likes of Harry Hopkins of the ASE on Govan Trades Council and the Clyde Workers' Committee, suggests a leading position taken by skilled workers.¹³⁷ However, apart from the most prominent of the activists and elected representatives there is no systematic data on ILP membership.

Howell has pointed out some of the pitfalls in trying to establish the class complexion of the ILP through its choice of candidates – the pressure to look for someone who could “afford” to get elected operated at both the national and local level. Howell sees the ILP, and this is mainly through descriptive material and revealing comments upon such matters as fear of victimisation by ordinary members, as being largely a party of the respectable working class, but not of the poorer and unorganised sections of the working class. His understanding of the work of Clark on the Colne Valley ILP (which had the benefit of extant local records) sees a significant middle class leadership group but a rank and file which reflected the industrial structure of the area.¹³⁸

As far as Glasgow is concerned we can glean a certain amount of systematic data through record linkage, though only for branch secretaries. Between 1895 and 1911 in the published *Directories of Branches* the names and addresses of the branch secretaries were provided. By checking these names and addresses with the Glasgow Electoral Register we can locate at least some of these individuals. Where the address was of branch rooms or where an address was outwith the City boundary, then that person cannot be traced. Likewise, this process assumes that people qualified for the vote in the first place. Where they did not their names would not appear. In total, we were able to trace the occupations of 69 ILP Secretaries, which are listed in the Table below.

TABLE 1: OCCUPATIONS OF GLASGOW ILP BRANCH SECRETARIES 1895-1911

METALS/ENGINEERING		OTHER TRADES		CLERICAL/WHITE COLLAR	
-----		-----		-----	
Engineer	3	Compositor	4	Clerk	7
Ironturner	2	Painter	2	Clerk/ Shorthand Writer	1
Turner	1	Tailor	2	Journalist	2
Blacksmith	1	Joiner	1	Secretary	1
Moulder	1	Shoemaker	1	Teacher	1
Plater	1	Mason	1	Draughtsman	1
Ornamental Fitter	1	Bricklayer	1		
Engraver	1	Saddler	1		
Pattern Filer	1	Car Builder	1		
Plate Polisher	1				
Electrical Engineer	1				
Engine Keeper	1				
Benchman	1				
TOTAL	16		14		13
NON-SPECIFIC		SHOP/PETIT BOURGEOIS		FEMALE TRADES	
-----		-----		-----	
Storeman	3	Traveller	2	Embroiderer/ Machinist	1
Warehouseman	1	Salesman	1		
Postman	4	Grocer	1		
Labourer	2	Butcher	1		
Guard	1	Glass Merchant & Glazier	1		
Gas Inspector	1	Cycle Agent	1		
Meter Inspector	1	Stationer	1		
Tester	1				
Cargo Measurer	1				
Packing Box Maker	1				
Stair Railer	1				
TOTAL	17		8		1

Sources: ILP, *Directories of Branches*, City of Glasgow, *Electoral Registers*, Glasgow
Post Office Annual Directories.

The most obvious comment about the above Table is the fact that there is only one woman. This is not simply a reflection of the extremely limited enfranchisement of women but that, apart from, the Women's Branch, this was the only female branch secretary of the Glasgow ILP. The number of men employed in metals and engineering supports the qualitative evidence on the significance of the skilled engineer. Harry McShane, unusual in that he was a Catholic who gained an engineering apprenticeship, recalled that his branch of the ILP, which he joined in 1909, "was composed mostly of workers, mainly engineers."¹³⁹ Ironfounders were the third largest occupational group in Glasgow in 1911, and blacksmiths, turners, platers were also numerous. The single largest male occupation, however, was commercial clerks, of whom there were 12,684 in 1911. Their prominence in the table above is, therefore, a true reflection of the occupational structure of the City of Glasgow. Amongst the other trades, printers, joiners, tailors were all prominent occupations. The shop-keeping or petit-bourgeois element is not especially large but is, at least, in evidence. On the other hand, the unskilled workers are poorly represented. In the non-specific category it is clear that many could be entered under 'white-collar' or even 'supervisory', e.g. the gas and meter inspectors. Similarly, tester, cargo measurer, packing box maker, stair railer all suggest suggest a level of skill or control. Even a storeman could be seen as demanding clerical duties, as would a postman. The unskilled, strictly defined, are represented only by the two labourers.¹⁴⁰

Our data on the occupations of the Glasgow branch secretaries support the picture of the Colne Valley ILP, i.e. "its rank and file reflected the district's dominant industry".¹⁴¹ At the same time branch secretaries still represent a leadership group to a certain extent, even if it is one that is as close to a representative sample of the rank-and-file as we are likely to get, certainly for this period. Yet there was a broader involvement in the life of the ILP

than Table 1, on its own, would suggest. Edwin Muir, at the time a young clerk in a Glasgow beer-bottling plant, joined the ILP in 1908. Already a member of the Clarion Scout Rambling Club, he "attended Socialist demonstrations and street-corner meetings, and went to Socialist dances." He had become friends with another young man who had been brought up in a "free-thinking, Socialist family." As his friend was a member of the ILP, Muir joined as well. His picture of the membership offers a qualification on a too narrow identification of the ILP with our list of branch secretaries:¹⁴²

Every Sunday evening we attended a speakers' class run by an old and experienced Socialist. Working-class mothers, dock labourers, suffragettes, and all sorts of other people attended the class."

NOTES

1. I.G.C. Hutchison, *A Political History of Scotland 1832-1924* (Edinburgh 1986) pp 78-9, on ILP membership figures prior to 1914. However, see below for more detail on membership.
2. *Socialist Review*, April 1914, "Pioneer of the ILP" is the title of an article by Hardie on the SLP.
3. J.G. Kellas, "The Mid Lanark By-Election (1888) and the Scottish Labour Party (1888-1894)", *Parliamentary Affairs*, XVIII (1965), pp 318-27; F. Reid, *Keir Hardie: The Making of a Socialist* (London 1978), pp110-5; K.O. Morgan, *Keir Hardie: radical and socialist* (London 1975), pp 25-33.
4. David Howell, *British Workers and the Independent Labour Party 1888-1906*, (Manchester 1984), pp 133-4.
5. *The Miner*, January 1887.
6. *The Miner*, March 1887.
7. *The Miner*, September 1887.
8. *The Miner*, February 1888.
9. David Lowe, *Souvenirs of Scottish Labour* (Glasgow 1919), p 3.
10. *The Miner*, July 1887.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid.
13. See Hardie in Ibid. and Robertson on the same theme in *The Miner*, August 1887.
14. *The Miner*, May 1887
15. *The Miner*, April 1887.
16. *The Miner*, August 1887.
17. *The Miner*, September 1887.
18. *The Miner*, August 1887.
19. H. Pelling, "Knights of Labour in Britain, 1880-1901", *Economic History Review* IX (1956) pp 313-331, p 325 & 328.
20. F. Reid, op cit, Appendix 2 "The Sons of Labour", pp 193-5.
21. *The Miner*, June 1888.

22. Pelling, op cit, p 327.
23. *The Miner*, November 1888.
24. Ibid.
25. Hardie came last with 617 votes, Reid, op cit, p 115.
26. *The Miner*, May 1888. The SLP originally had the designation "Parliamentary" as part of its title.
27. W.J. Stewart, *J. Keir Hardie. A Biography* (London 1921) p 55.
28. *The Miner*, June 1888.
29. Lowe, op cit, p 3.
30. Ibid. pp 3-4.
31. *The Miner*, September 1888, the G[rand] O[ld] M[an] being Gladstone.
32. Quoted in A.W. Humphrey, *A History of Labour Representation* (London 1912), p 39.
33. *The Miner*, March 188.
34. *The Democrat*, May 1888.
35. *The Democrat*, August 1887.
36. Kellas, op cit, p 327; Lowe, op cit, pp 112-3.
37. Maxwell had become the first Chairman of the SLP Executive in August 1888, see Lowe, op cit, p 4.
38. *Labour Leader*, 5 Jan 1894.
39. *The Miner*, April 1888, emphasis in original.
40. *Labour Leader*, June 1893.
41. Ibid.
42. *Labour Leader*, March 1893.
43. P. Vestri, "The Rise of Reformism", *Radical Scotland*, April-May 1984, pp 21-3.
44. *Labour Leader*, February 1893.
45. Lowe, op cit, p 170.
46. This process is fully detailed by Howell, op cit, Chapter 13, which is titled, significantly, "The National Administrative Council - from servant to oligarch."

47. J. Smith, "Labour Tradition in Glasgow and Liverpool", *History Workshop*, XVIII (Spring 1984) pp 32-56, p 38.
48. *Labour Leader*, 5 January 1894.
49. Ibid.
50. Ibid.
51. Ibid.
52. Ibid.
53. The printed reports and manuscript papers of the SWRC are held in the National Library of Scotland. Originally called the Scottish Workers' Parliamentary Elections Committee, the name was changed to SWRC in 1902 and to Labour Party (Scottish Section) in 1907.
54. *Scottish Co-operator*, 12 January 1900.
55. Ibid.
56. Ibid.
57. Ibid.
58. Joseph Duncan, Letter c. July 1906. The "Letters" of Joseph Duncan (1905-08) to his fiancée are held in the National Library of Scotland. Duncan was Secretary of Scottish Steam Fishing Vessels' Enginemen's and Firemen's Union until May 1906, when he took up the post of ILP Organiser for East Scotland.
59. Howell, op cit, p 389.
60. H. McShane and J. Smith, *No Mean Fighter* (London 1978), p 38.
61. Ibid.
62. Hutchison, op cit, pp 183, 256-7.
63. F.W.S. Craig, *British Parliamentary Election Results 1885-1918* (London 1974).
64. *Labour Leader*, 1 December 1905, article by Bruce Glasier, "Socialism Twenty Years Ago."
65. Glasgow Trades Council, *Annual Report 1884-85*.
66. Ibid.
67. Hutchison, op cit, p 185, describes the SLRL as "semi-socialist".
68. Howell, p 151. For the role played by Champion generally

in this period, see H. Pelling, "H.H. Champion: Pioneer of Labour Representation", *Cambridge Journal*, 1953, pp 222-38.

69. *Labour Leader*, February 1983.
70. Ibid.
71. Ibid.
72. Howell, op cit, p 161.
73. SWRC, mss notes of Meeting of Committee, 28 April 1900.
74. Hutchison, op cit, p 182.
75. Howell, op cit, p 163.
76. Hutchison, op cit, p 255.
77. Discussed in detail in Chapter Four.
78. Joseph Duncan, Letter 17 Jan 1906. Duncan "Letters", op cit. Duncan's use of the term "revolution" should not be misunderstood. He was a moderate within the ILP and pleased with the defeat of the "sectional" candidates of the SDF.
79. Hutchison, op cit, pp 259-60.
80. Howell, op cit, pp 171-2.
81. *Labour Leader*, 2, 11 November 1895; *Glasgow Herald*, 6 November 1895.
82. *Glasgow Herald*, 6 November 1895. Only five Wards out of 25 were contested.
83. Glasgow Trades Council, *Annual Report 1895-96*.
84. Glasgow Trades Council, *Annual Report 1882-83*. Under pressure from voices such as *The Voice of the People*, the Trades Council recognised labour representation was, "a question that one day must be faced", but put off that day indefinitely.
85. Glasgow Trades Council, *Annual Report 1895-96*.
86. *Glasgow Commonwealth*, August 1896.
87. Ibid.
88. Ibid.
89. Ibid.
90. From the pages of the *Glasgow Commonwealth*, Neil would

appear to have been a prominent member of the SDF as well as being in the ILP.

91. *Glasgow Commonweal*, October 1896.
92. *Ibid.*
93. *Ibid.*
94. *Glasgow Herald*, 7 November 1894.
95. *Glasgow Commonweal*, June 1896.
96. *Ibid.*
97. J.A. Kinloch, *The Scottish Co-operative Wholesale Society 1868-1918* Ph.D. University of Strathclyde, 1976, pp 337-49; W. Maxwell, *The History of Co-operation in Scotland - Its Inception and Leaders* (Glasgow 1910), pp 329-45; J.A. Flanagan, *Wholesale Co-operation in Scotland: The Fruits of Fifty Years Efforts* (Glasgow 1920), pp 133-4, 150-5.
98. Kinloch, *op cit*, p 355.
99. *Labour Leader*, 7 October 1899.
100. *Labour Leader*, 23 October 1897.
101. *Scottish Co-operator*, November 1896.
102. *Labour Leader*, 27 August 1898.
103. Quoted in Howell, p 370.
104. *Labour Leader*, 19 October 1901.
105. *Glasgow Herald*, 5 November 1902.
106. J. Connell, *Glasgow Municipal Enterprise* (Glasgow & London 1899), pp 83-4.
107. Glasgow Trades Council, *Annual Report 1898-99*. The withdrawal of the Co-op saw the WEC's finances drop by £50, about a third of its total funds.
108. Glasgow Trades Council, *Annual Report 1904-05; Forward*, 11 November 1911.
109. *Labour Leader*, 10 November 1905.
110. Labour Party 13th. Annual Conference, Glasgow 1914, *Souvenir*, (Published by the Glasgow Labour Party), p 35.
111. *Labour Leader*, 10 November 1904.
112. Hutchison, *op cit*, p 250.

113. SWRC, *Second Annual Report, 1906* p 9.
114. SWRC, *Eighth Annual Report, 1908* p 16. The speaker was Robert Allan, previous Secretary of the SWRC. See also Hutchison, *op cit*, pp 252-3 on the machinations of MacDonald.
115. Hutchison, *op cit*, p 254.
116. SWRC, *First Annual Report, 1901*, p 14.
117. *Forward*, 12 September 1908, the letter was signed, "Disgusted".
118. *Forward*, 7 November 1908.
119. Glasgow Trades Council, *Annual Report 1909-10*.
120. Labour Party ... *Souvenir*, *op cit*, p 38.
121. *Ibid*.
122. *Rules of the Blackfriars and Hutchesontown Labour Representation Committee* n.d.
123. J. Melling, *Rent Strikes: People's Struggles for Housing in West Scotland 1890-1916* (Edinburgh 1983), p 39.
124. On this point see, A. Reid, "Glasgow Socialism", *Social History*, Vol 11, No. 1, January 1986, pp 89-97, who comments upon the ILP as a, "remarkably understudied party."
125. The ILP Archive, which was deposited in the British Library of Political and Economic Science, has been copied and published by Harvester Press and is available in a series of microfilm and microfiche volumes.
126. Details of branches and membership are taken from the published *Branch Directories* and *Annual Reports*
127. *Directory of Branches... 30 November 1896*.
128. *Directory of Branches... 28 February & ... 31 May 1897*.
129. *Directory of Branches ... 28 February & ... 31 May 1898*.
130. ILP, *Report of Eighth Annual Conference* (1900).
131. ILP, *Report of Ninth Annual Conference* (1901).
132. ILP, *Report of Tenth Annual Conference* (1902). Figures for 1901 and 1902 are only for branches represented at Conference.
133. *Annual Report of the Glasgow "City" Branch of the ILP* (31 March 1903).

134. Hutchison, *op cit*, p 248.
135. *Ibid.* In contrast to 868 Unionists in 1911.
136. ILP, *Directory of Branches 31 May 1910*. This number is arrived from the branch fees of £2, 10s. for one quarter, at a rate of one penny per member per month. Glasgow appeared top of a list of large towns, which was made up by grouping branches together. Glasgow's fees of £8, 9/2, gives a fee-paying membership of just over 500.
137. Melling, *op cit*, p 36.
138. Howell, *op cit*, pp 332-4; D.G. Clark, "The Origins and Development of the Labour Party in Colne Valley 1891-1907", (Ph.D., University of Sheffield, 1978), and *Colne Valley: Radicalism to Socialism* (London 1981).
139. McShane and Smith, *op cit*, p 25. "... who were very prominent in the socialist movement before the first world war (and in the communist movement afterwards). It might have been due to the work they did - there was a logic in engineering; yet they were also more slaves to their machines than the other trades, particularly if they worked as machine-turners, hole-borers and shapers. The engineers' trade union was also very democratic."
140. References to Occupations are taken from the *Census 1911, City of Glasgow*, p 46, Table E, "Principal Occupations of Males in Glasgow."
141. Howell, *op cit*, p 332.
142. E. Muir, *An Autobiography*, (London 1954) p 121.

Chapter Three

Labour and Municipal Politics, 1896–1914.

Our previous chapter on political organisation emphasised the importance of the local or municipal level. The electoral system of Wards with three members, and one Councillor retiring consecutively, ensured that Labour had the opportunity to stand candidates each year, if it could find the means to do so. As well as the Town Council elections, there were also annual elections to the School Board and the Parish Councils. Labour and Socialist candidates also stood for these bodies throughout this period, but this does not detract from the fact that most effort was deployed at the November Town Council Polls. Labour's lack of effort, and generally of success, at School Board and Parish Council elections was partly due to the sectarian involvement of the Churches.¹ However, at a more positive level, Labour's concentration on the Town Council was because this was the real source of local power. Municipal elections can tell us more about Labour than parliamentary campaigns. Their regularity encouraged a more consistent presence and also a more distinctive voice, since Labour's local policies were likely to differ, in degree if not substance, from national priorities. In 1896 the Workers' Election Committee (WEC) stood at the Glasgow municipal 'general' election under the following 9-point Programme.

- 1) Land values to be the basis of taxation; all to be appropriated.
- 2) Judicial maximum rents to be fixed for buildings and improvements, based upon cost and condition.
- 3) Right of Issue and Legal Tender for Corporation Notes, to abolish interest.
- 4) Acquisition of land by the Corporation for the erection of

dwellings, shops, &c. 5) Municipilisation of the liquor traffic. 6) Free libraries. 7) Free ferries. 8) Absorbption of unemployed labour, or adequate support for the unemployed by the state or community, as is the case with judges, ministers, police, assessors, army, navy, &c. 9) Minimum wage of public servants to be not less than 30/- per week of 44 hours.²

The Role of John Ferguson and the 'Single Tax.'

In a 'purist' sense this was not a socialist programme since it did not involve the demand for 'socialisation of the means of production, distribution and exchange'. Nevertheless, its precise demands on rents, the unemployed and a minimum wage were local expressions of the type of reform that most socialists supported. The most significant item, however, was the first point, the taxation of land values. It and the general tenor of the Programme as a whole were largely due to the influence of John Ferguson, Irish Nationalist leader and Glasgow City Councillor. Ferguson had been involved, albeit pessimistically, on Hardie's side at Mid-Lanark, and had held an honorary office in the Scottish Labour Party until forced out over his support for Liberal candidates at the General Election of 1892. Ferguson, who was in fact a Protestant from Ulster, owned a successful printing business in Glasgow.³ As his departure from the SLP shows there was the constraint of Home Rule on his relationship with Labour and Socialist forces. At the local level, however, there was more opportunity for joint co-operation with the Trades Council and the ILP without antagonising the national priorities of the Irish Party, especially in the supposedly non-political character of Scottish municipal politics. Ferguson stood for a political alliance between the working and middle classes, as he explained to Keir Hardie just after the Mid-Lanark contest:⁴

"I'm delighted to know the Labour Party is for action. My opinion is still it shd enter the Liberal Association and work

through it. There is certainly an element of danger in two political organisations holding the same principles coming into collision. In one organisation the labour and trading classes wd. learn to have a common interest but divided all the bitterness that Louis Blanc points out as existing between the "bourgeois" and the "proletarians" in France will arise here. If you cannot induce the Labourers to join the Liberal Association and push their claims through it by all means organise Labour by itself. Better that than nothing. I'll try all I can in the Liberal Association to support Labour claims and if need be I'll stand by the demands of Labour as put ford by you and other Labour leaders, against all parties. You only ask what must be granted if the foundation of our social edifice is not to be destroyed."

Ferguson's estrangement from the proponents of independent labour representation remained a qualified and temporary breach only, at least at the local level. He was elected to the Glasgow Town Council in 1893 and became the focus of leadership for the small group of "Labour" members who, after 1896, became known as the "Stalwarts". Even before 1896 however, Ferguson had emerged as the de facto leader of the "social reform" or "working class" candidates in Glasgow; his seal of approval seems to have been necessary to give any hope of success. In 1895 the ILP ran three candidates and got two returned. The Labour Leader commented that:⁵

"Our men fought on a pure Socialist programme, and won on the merits of that programme."

According to the *Glasgow Herald*, however, P G Stewart, the successful ILP candidate for the Fifth Ward:⁶

"came forward as a disciple of Councillor John Ferguson, whose lead on labour questions, and indeed generally, he is prepared to follow."

The return of the WEC candidates in 1896 was seen as a means of strengthening Ferguson's position and policy within the Council, not least by

Ferguson himself. Speaking on the night of the poll:⁷

"He had now at his back, he said, Mr Brown, Mr Shaw Maxwell, Councillor Mitchell, and Mr Cronin, gentlemen who would support him in his programme which he had fought so vigorously during his past tenure of office."

Speaking at the same meeting Boyd Brown "said he would follow in the footsteps of Councillor Ferguson".⁸ Since this meeting was being held in the INL hall and Brown had come third in the same ward as Ferguson had topped the poll in, he may just have been politically tactful, yet there is no indication that the candidates mentioned above, all members of the ILP, had any disagreements with any of Ferguson's policies, or with being identified as his supporters. Ferguson's views on society and reform were similar to many socialists who found the justification for socialism in the new testament and regarded Jesus as the "first socialist".⁹ His view of preserving the social fabric through reform, rather than seeking to destroy it was also shared by many socialists, and on certain issues he could even appear in advance of some of his ILP colleagues (see below).

Ferguson seems to have had an involvement in nearly every organisation and been acceptable to all the disparate forces behind the WEC. He had the strength of the INL behind him, of course, and even his tendency to go against the advice of the centre on occasion only reflects upon his own standing in Glasgow. To the Trades Council he was an accepted friend of labour who could be relied upon to support demands for trade union rates and conditions in Council contracts, etc. He was a member of the Liberal Party and could present himself as the choice of the Liberal Association.¹⁰ Though an Irishman, Ferguson's own business had no links with the liquor trade and his temperance views made him acceptable even to the co-operators. Ferguson was also a Protestant and this protected him from

anti-Catholic prejudices.

Due to Ferguson, the taxation of land values became a sort of test question at local elections and it was only after his death, in 1905, that the ILP in Glasgow could even begin to question its validity and seek to remove it from the municipal programme.¹¹ Ferguson spent the rest of his life pursuing the land tax shibboleth and even managed to get a majority of the Town Council to support a Parliamentary Bill, which was still going through the House of Commons in 1906, after his death. It would not appear, therefore, that the programme as a whole conformed to John Cronin's desire for, "something that will appeal to the commonsense of the workers", and likely to be realised in a few years."¹² And yet, it is clear that the taxation of land values did appeal directly to the 'commonsense' of the Glasgow working class.¹³ Ferguson argued that £2million per annum was paid to the ground landlords for the use of the land on which Glasgow was built. Despite Ferguson not really being qualified to make such a judgement it was, as a later commentator wrote, through it:¹⁴

"that he managed to draw so much support to his side. The figure of £2,000,000 became as popular as John Ferguson himself."

The programme in fact divided into two parts, an Administrative side which could be introduced by the Corporation more or less immediately, and a Legislative part which first required the granting of parliamentary powers; a division which became explicit in later programmes. Like the proposal to tax land values, the issue of corporation notes offered a route to self-sufficiency for the municipality and the means of financing social reforms. The basic premise behind issuing notes and providing banking services was to cut out the private money lenders and thus reduce (or even seek to completely wipe

out) the interest charges paid by the local authority. It became a mainstay of "municipal socialism" and Thomas Johnston, future Secretary of State for Scotland became one of the most prominent advocates of municipal banking and was a central figure in establishing Scotland's first municipal bank in Kirkintilloch where he stood as a Councillor from 1913.¹⁵

Item 5, the municipilisation of the drink traffic was a hardy perennial. To a very great extent municipal politics had revolved around the temperance question. The Socialist and Labour forces, while seeking to implant a new, reforming agenda could not afford to antagonise a powerful lobby which they mostly sympathised with anyhow. Municipal control became the distinctive Labour solution to the drink problem. On occasion a Labour or Socialist candidate would receive the support of the temperance "party" but, by and large, and despite nearly every Labour and Socialist candidate declaring themselves to be total abstainers, the temperance vote went to the "middle class, "apolitical" candidate.

Housing was covered by items 2 and 4 with the emphasis on controlling rents. While rent levels were crucially important to all working class households, it was only later, with the virtual collapse of working class house building from c. 1904 leading to increasing pressure on the existing housing stock, combined with the heavy unemployment of 1907/8, that housing came to dominate local politics in Glasgow. The other items in the programme were consistent, practical labour issues. Along with the demands for free libraries and free ferries, the issues of wages and unemployment were of immediate concern to the labour interest and could be fought for immediate implementation.

There was little that was controversial about the administrative side to the WEC programme, so far as campaigning in working class wards was

concerned, so much so that other candidates found no difficulty in presenting similar reform "manifestoes". What was distinctive about 1896 and the intervention of the WEC was its organised nature, the electors being asked to support a definite programme rather than only the promises of individual candidates. The Stalwarts did not form a Party and as we shall see below the parts eventually re-asserted themselves over the sum total, but it did, nevertheless, represent an advance on what had gone before. The existing "labour" element or "party" in the Town Council consisted of John Battersby and A J Hunter,¹⁶ both of whom were closely connected with the Trades Council; Battersby had been a previous President in and a member of the Parliamentary Committee, while Hunter was the Council's Secretary, a position he held until 1902.¹⁷ Although they stood as working men and based their appeal on the labour vote they did not seek to disturb the no-party-politics consensus, and were increasingly out of step with the younger socialists on the Council. Even the election of Ferguson and Finlay in 1893 did not mark a crucial turning point, though it and the increased interest of the Trades Council in 1884, and the ILP successes in 1895 gave clear indications of the growing tendency towards organisation of the labour forces.

As detailed in the previous chapter, 1896 provided a particularly fortuitous set of circumstances for Labour's electoral challenge. Of particular significance, and especially given the de facto leadership of John Ferguson, was the Irish involvement - five INL branches were affiliated to the WEC.¹⁸ At the November poll of 1896 there were twelve wards "where the Irish electors had a special interest".¹⁹ This "special interest" might simply mean supporting a candidate who expressed sympathy with Irish interests as seems to have been the case in Maryhill, or it could refer to the situation in Anderston where the name of the Irish candidate was announced from the pulpit of the local Chapel.²⁰ By and large, however, the "way to Catholic success" (in the phrase

of the *Observer*) lay via the WEC, even though local Catholic opinion, such as the *Observer*, did not draw attention to this fact.²¹ What is clear from the 1896 poll is that Irish-Catholic candidates were not strong enough to stand on their own; to have any chance of success they had to be allied to some other group, to seek a wider legitimation by identifying with other interests. For the major organ of Irish-Catholic opinion the state of municipal alliances represented, "A mixed state of matters ..."²²

In some cases the candidates who are of our creed and race receive in one ward the support and co-operation of a political party, while in another ward the same political party objects to run with Irishmen or with Catholics on a host of varying, and in some cases conflicting grounds."

Thus the Trades Council was willing to support Sheehan in Mile End (though he retired before the contest) but not M.J. Connell in Townhead, and while Connell was on the Liberal or "popular" ticket the Liberal Associations in Springburn and Hutchesontown preferred to support Tory rather than Irish candidates.²³ The situation in Hutchesontown was even more complicated since Stewart of the ILP was selected by the Ward Committee, but neither he nor it supported the Irish nominee Quin. At the same time Stewart was not a recognised WEC candidate, Hutchesontown being the only ILP branch not to affiliate²⁴, and even though he became one of the leading Stalwarts and was regarded as a Labour candidate, certain Irish-labour support, for instance P Reilly of the Labourers Union, went to Quin.²⁵

The situation was a very fluid one with WEC recognition being granted to certain Irish candidates very late in the day. Out of this confusion it can be safely said, that no matter how large or organised the Irish vote may have been, Irish candidates were only returned where they were in alliance with Labour or where they were actual Labour candidates. Perhaps only John

Ferguson was strong enough to stand on his own and his situation was somewhat unique (apart from anything else he was not a Catholic). Of the twelve wards listed, the only Irish successes were in the East End wards of Dalmarnock, Calton and Mille-End where those candidates were actually WEC nominees, and only one of whom, John Cronin, was an Irish-Catholic, and even he was a member of the ILP. The fourth East End ward, Whitevale, saw Hugh Murphy nominee of the WEC and the INL fail by only 131 votes, while Joseph McGroary, a similar labour-Nationalist candidate failed by over 1,000 votes in Cowcaddens.²⁶ Elsewhere the Irish candidates were easily beaten. The East End wards were historically the most fiercely contested, where labour representation was strongest, and where we would expect most Irish, i.e the poorer working class, to live. Hutchesontown which bordered Calton and Dalmarnock on the south bank of the Clyde was very similar and is seen as having had a very large Irish vote, yet even here the ILP candidate was able to triumph over the Irish nominee.

The Labour Presence in Glasgow Town Council.

1896 was seen as a great victory by the Labour forces: Of the eleven WEC candidates standing in eight wards, five were returned.²⁷ This number represents only definite WEC candidates and does not include those given belated recognition on the eve of the poll. It does not even include P.G. Stewart, whose return increased the number of Stalwarts to six. Moreover there were already the two existing "labour" members, Baillies Battersby and Hunter, whose position re the WEC was an ambivalent one; they were not on the WEC list in 1896 though they were regarded as part of the "Labour party on the Town Council", and in the following years they became regarded as Stalwarts and stood as WEC candidates. This gave a total Labour representation of eight, five of whom were members of the ILP, Stewart, Shaw Maxwell, Cronin, Boyd Brown, and Mitchell, the last three of

whom were office bearers on the Trades Council. In the following year the WEC ran eight candidates in seven wards and won four, a net gain of three seats. At the same time Battersby and Hunter were returned unopposed, so the Stalwarts had increased their representation to eleven, including six ILPers.

As has been indicated above, the policy which the Stalwarts stood on and would pursue in the Council Chambers had already been given shape by John Ferguson. In 1894 he had introduced two (crucial) motions: One;

"That the land values of the city, not being the creation of any individual, but the whole community, should be appropriated to the service of the city."

And secondly;

"That 21s. be the lowest wage for an able-bodied man in the municipal employment for a week of six days."

Out of a total possible vote of 77 Ferguson received eight votes for the first and twelve for the second. After the 1896 election, both these motions were passed, as well as a proposal to permit a limited Corporation fire insurance, and a vote in favour of Corporation banking.²⁸

In their first two years of activity these were the major successes of the Stalwarts. To take the taxation of land values any further an Act of Parliament was necessary, and while Ferguson won Corporation assent to pursue such a Bill, he died before it was finally dealt with by the House of Commons. While this was Ferguson's major pre-occupation and the means by which to finance other reforms, he did not stand still. Having "secured" the 21s. with, as he put it, "the help of my sterling friend and colleague, P G Stewart ... The real living wage will be my next consideration". "By this I mean a wage which will afford a proper, moral, intellectual, and physical

life."²⁹ There was, however, some disagreement among the Stalwarts over this. George Mitchell opposed any further increase "at present", even though the 21s. represented a retreat from the 30s in the WEC programme, which made no mention of gender, and instead he favoured an eight hour day, "which, as every intelligent man knows, must ultimately result in an increase of wages." This attitude had more than a little the 'superior' labour aristocrat about it. Mitchell was put out that the tramwaymen still wanted to work Sundays even after having their hours reduced and spread over six days, and having had their wages increased by 1/6. In his opinion, of the 12,000 municipal employees, "there are not more than 3,000 worth fighting for. An even smaller number than that belong to trade unions."³⁰ This ignored the difficulties unskilled and semi-skilled workers faced in trying to organise, as well as the financial pressures on what were still relatively low wages. Nevertheless, having achieved the 21s., the issue of a municipal minimum wage was one Labour would return to.

Other concerns given prominence were free libraries, proposals to establish council workshops, and municipal control of the drink traffic.³¹ Housing was covered through attempts, most closely associated with P G Stewart, to utilise and extend the terms of the Glasgow City Improvement Acts of 1866 and 1897 to clear the worst slums and provide an amount of Council-built housing.³² However, the advocates of "social reform" in Glasgow faced a major problem, what was left to municipalise? As P G Stewart put it in 1898:³³

"And with regard to the future. Glasgow is in the happy position of having already municipalised everything that even the most advanced among other towns contemplates municipalising. We must therefore look for fresh fields to conquer."

We shall examine the search for "fresh fields" below (and the difficulties in

finding them) but it is worth considering at the moment just how far the Stalwarts were the direct cause of reform.

As we have seen above, the strength of the Stalwarts on the Council was eleven in 1897, and though one contemporary account puts the number at ten in 1898, a later account refers to a maximum of fourteen, presumably by 1899-1900.³⁴ While this undoubtedly represented a distinct bloc of votes (assuming some sort of "party" discipline) it still accounted for only a very small minority of a total representation of 75 Councillors. Furthermore, Labour's electoral strength was directly related to the extent of its challenge; at no time did labour ever stand sufficient candidates to win a majority on the Council.

At the 1896 municipal 'general' election there were 14 labour candidates (eleven WEC nominees plus Stewart, Battersby and Hunter) out of a total field of 114. Over the next three years the WEC ran 22 candidates in all out of 28 contested seats, with a net gain of four. Of these 22, however, seven were sitting Councillors which meant that, at best, Labour could have hoped to gain an extra 15 members between 1897-99. As things stood, the Stalwarts had, at most, twelve members by 1899, representing 16% of the full Council. Moreover, while in the elections of 1897,98, and 99 the WEC had run in nearly all the seats contested, even had it won every seat it challenged for the most it could have hoped for by 1899 was 23 Councillors, or 31% of the total elected membership. These figures point to both the limited extent of Labour's electoral challenge and the limited extent of electoral contests in municipal politics. However, within those seats which were contested the issues largely revolved around pro and anti-Labour causes. This becomes clearer when we realise that it was the same wards that tended to be contested regularly.

The East end of the City was divided into four wards, Dalmarnock, Calton, Mile End, and Whitevale; the first two comprised Bridgeton Parliamentary Division and the latter two Camlachie. Bordering Calton to the South of the Clyde was ward 18, Hutchesontown, half of the Blackfriars and Hutchesontown Division, and it was in these five wards that Labour's main challenge was posed in these years. Between 1896-99 there were only three uncontested seats, Mile End and Hutchesontown in 1897 (when Battersby was returned unopposed) and Whitevale in 1898; on all other occasions the seats were contested and always by Labour. Success varied: Whitevale, contested on three occasions was never won; Dalmarnock yielded a seat in 1896 but was followed by three successive defeats; two seats were secured in Calton in 1896 which were held in '97 and '99 with an unsuccessful effort in '98; Mile End and Hutchesontown likewise produced two seats apiece in 1896 which were successfully held over the next three years. Labour's other area of strength was in the artisan north of the city, the St Rollox division which comprised the municipal wards of Dennistoun, Springburn, Cowlairs, and Townhead. Dennistoun was a largely middle class residential area which was only contested for the first time in 1907 by the "socialist millionaire" and member of the ILP, James Allan.³⁵ The other three wards were extensively working class in character, with a great deal of employment in engineering and railways, and reputed to have a high level of trade union and co-op society membership. Cowlairs returned Hunter of the 'old' labour party who was unopposed in 1897 and re-elected in 1900; apart from him, however, there were no other Labour candidates in this ward. Springburn and Townhead were contested much more fiercely. Despite defeat in 1896, both seats were won by Labour the following year; in Springburn's case, two seats which were held in 1898 (uncontested) and 1899; William Forsyth of the ILP won Townhead in 1897 and successfully held the seat three years later, but Labour's efforts in the intervening years were fruitless.

Other candidatures in these years were single challenges in Anderston (successful), and Cowcaddens, Maryhill, and Gorbals, (all unsuccessful). The WEC/Co-op candidate, Peter Glasse, challenged twice in Woodside but was beaten on both occasions. If we discount 1896, which was an unique year, there were nine wards which were never contested at all in 1897,8,9 and only six contests in which there was no Labour candidate. Labour's electoral challenge was, therefore, more or less limited to the north and east of the city with the centre, west and south, i.e. the business and middle class residential wards being almost beyond consideration.

The 'Ratepayers' Reaction

Even in the wards where Labour did return candidates, however, it was never able to dominate totally; at no time did Labour ever hold all three seats in a single ward. Furthermore, the successful years of the Stalwarts were quite short-lived. Labour representation did not embark on a constantly increasing trajectory but, in fact, soon went in to a serious decline. The 'democratic' alliance behind the WEC was, more or less, defunct by the mid-1900s. Between 1905 and 1909 Labour only won two elections for the Town Council, and in 1908 its representation had fallen to a single seat in Mile End.³⁶ The break-up of the Stalwarts meant that the WEC took on a more socialist identity - all candidates were members of the ILP and were reliant upon ILP branches for their campaigns. The Labour Programme had, in fact, changed little since the original WEC document in 1896 but the loss of the Co-operators, the Irish and the decreasing interest shown by the Trades Council, left 'Labour' more exposed to the middle-class reaction against the increasing demands being placed upon the rates. The ILP might claim that the Labour vote represented the solid "bedrock" of out and out socialist support, but this was little comfort for the actual loss of seats it was suffering.³⁷

In effect, while Labour's policies had not changed the political climate had. The extension of municipal services and control had been a relatively unproblematic issue in the early 1890s. Municipalisation may have been claimed as an effective local contribution to socialism by the ILP, but it had already been adopted by a majority of the Liberal-dominated Town Council. Glasgow had achieved a world-wide reputation as the most municipalised City and attracted visitors on that score.³⁸ From a Liberal viewpoint, which regarded municipal control as a manifestation of "civic spirit" the Labour councillors could be regarded as simply the most enthusiastic proponents of what was an accepted policy.³⁹ The last great municipal venture had been the take-over of the tramway network from its American operators. The campaign behind this move had involved socialists and the Trades Council and its success had allowed Labour to 'swim with the tide' of extending municipal control and win the partial reforms introduced by Ferguson and the Stalwarts.

There had always been an opposition to the growth of public services which, in Glasgow, found its most faithful expression in the leader columns of the *Glasgow Herald*. At the election of John Ferguson in 1893, the *Herald* warned against, "his overwhelming schemes of municipalisation and confiscation", thereby drawing the connection between public ownership and the threat to private property.⁴⁰ Further proposals to take over the City's telephone system and establish municipal workshops were being discussed at this point, to which the *Herald* objected as being outwith the remit of the Council's duties.⁴¹

Such schemes must be regarded with disfavour. They do not commend themselves to the ratepayers at large, and they are not consistent with the financial position and responsibility of the Corporation."

Increasingly groups of 'concerned ratepayers' began to organise objections to the policies of the Corporation. One such was the Citizens' Union which was established in 1898 and which did not run candidates so much as offer its recommendation in support of candidates who opposed further municipal undertakings. One of its principal figures was a butcher called Roderick Scott who, in 1900, defeated Boyd S. Brown - one of the original Stalwarts of 1896 - in Calton.⁴² Scott had also been a prominent force in the Co-operative boycott, though he had been defeated at the 1896 poll. Even though Boyd had estranged himself from the WEC by 1900 and was not a recognised candidate, it was still significant that Scott could win a seat (and by a thousand plus majority) in the same Ward as John Ferguson.

At the same time as the 'ratepayers' pressure groups began to take the initiative, so Labour began to run out of steam. Part of the problem was that Glasgow did not have much left to municipalise. Further schemes were suggested, such as coal supplies, milk, banking, housing, but none managed to arouse much enthusiasm. Suggestions for services such as coal and milk also managed to estrange allies in the co-operative societies which already provided such services. From around 1900, moreover, the rates issue became much more pronounced and significant. This was due to particularly large increases in Glasgow's rates due to municipal reforms and amenities, and to national reforms and improvements, e.g. in education, which placed more demands upon local authorities. Between 1900 and 1906 the Glasgow Poor Rate more than doubled, from 10.25d. in the £ to over 20d.⁴³

Labour's poor performances were thrown into sharper relief by the success of Scott Gibson, a 'maverick' candidate who, from his first appearance in 1901 and over the next few years fought a series of elections in various wards, winning every one. Everywhere he stood there was a huge poll and an extremely virulent campaign. At no time connected with the WEC or ILP

Gibson was, at first, identified as a socialist by the *Labour Leader*, though he was soon regarded as a "reactionary" adventurer.⁴⁴ The secret of Scott Gibson's success was the 'populist' type of campaign he was able to run, exploiting public resentment of municipal 'extravagance' and rising rates. Harry McShane recalls of him:⁴⁵

He attacked the Town Council fearlessly and criticised all kinds of corrupt practices; he protested and exploded against the people at the top and got himself thrown out of the Corporation on a number of occasions. He was nowhere near the Labour point of view, but he was one of the best speakers I ever heard.

In 1902 (despite already being a sitting Councillor for Springburn), Scott Gibson challenged and defeated the incumbent Lord Provost, Samuel Chisholm, in Woodside on a "massive" turnout of 82.9%.⁴⁶ Chisholm was undoubtedly a prime representative of "the people at the top" but he was also a firm defender of municipal provision of services and of housing reform in particular. He had been supported by the WEC in 1896 due to his defence of the City Improvement Bill⁴⁷ and it was he who was most identified with the Municipal Housing Commission which sat during 1902-03. His defeat by Scott Gibson was seen by the *Glasgow Herald* as a check to the Council's housing proposals and "a declaration in favour of some immediate action toward the restriction of municipal expenditure."⁴⁸ We shall discuss Scott Gibson's politics further, particularly in relation to the Irish Nationalists in the following chapter, and we shall return to the housing question below. At this point, however, he was a thorn in Labour's side - indirectly in that he encouraged hostility to municipal provision, and directly when he, once again, changed wards and moved to the East End and won Dalmarnock in 1906, a seat the ILP had been trying hard to regain.⁴⁹

As we have already discussed (Chapter Two), Scott Gibson's success did,

eventually, encourage Labour to seriously consider the questions of organisation and party discipline. The formation of the Glasgow Labour Party, however, took some time and other explanations were offered for Labour's poor showing. Foremost among these were the perceived hostility of the Temperance and Women voters. The role of the female electorate is perhaps analogous to the Irish vote in this instance. Women could qualify for the local vote, but only under very restricted circumstances and only accounted for a fraction of the total electorate. We shall return to the question of women and the vote in a further chapter, but for the moment it is sufficient to comment that explanations of defeat that claimed, "In reality, we did win on the men's vote.", are not very convincing.⁵⁰ The hostility of the Temperance lobbies to Labour candidates was a, more or less, constant opposition. Labour challenged the Temperance view with their own solution of 'municipal control of the drink trade', and also by refuting the claim that drink was the cause of poverty.⁵¹ At the same time, however, Labour was itself imbued with temperance sympathies and there were very few candidates who did not declare themselves as abstainers, e.g. in 1906 of the nine "Forward" candidates eight were claimed to be life-long abstainers.⁵² At the same time, while temperance remained a significant issue and the 'lobby' a significant force, it was not the dominant issue it had previously been. Moreover, the hostility to Labour candidates was not a new phenomenon and had not prevented the Labour successes of the later 1890s.

The nadir of Labour's municipal fortunes appeared to be the election of 1908, when eight candidates were run and all were defeated. There had been no victories in either 1905 or 1906 but 1907 had produced one retained seat and a significant increase in votes: in 1906 eight Labour candidates had gained 8,000 votes or 24% of the total poll in the seats contested by them, in 1907 these figures were 12,566 and 40%.⁵³ After the apparent recovery of 1907, the

results in 1908 were particularly hard to bear, yet there were certain indicators that suggested a potential shift in Labour's favour. The decline in votes was not as low as Labour had registered in 1906 – 9,548 votes were polled, giving a share of 36%. Furthermore, 1908 saw the return of mass unemployment to Glasgow and the ILP and SDF worked together in organising meetings and demonstrations to demand relief.⁵⁴ The Glasgow Workers' Unemployed Committee was formed which included the Trades Council, according to which "Unemployment is really the question of the day".⁵⁵ The plight of the unemployed allowed Labour to focus demands upon both the national and local state and make public provision a more popular issue once again. It is hardly surprising that the municipal elections in 1909 saw the Trades Council take a more active role again in establishing an Election Committee.⁵⁶ At the same time a decision taken by the Town Council to exploit the tramway surplus as a subsidy for the rates also galvanised the Trades Council to take political action to defend the principal that, as the working class were the main users of the trams, they should get the major benefit by way of low fares. The Trades Council campaign was successful and the proposal was shelved.⁵⁷

It was only in retrospect, however, that 1909 appeared as a turning point. Partly the improved performance was due to a concentration of resources, only four seats being contested. While the local polls were an improvement on previous years, there was no rejoicing at having won a single seat; the disappointments of the previous years had cut too deep to allow that. As one commentator in *Forward* put it:⁵⁸

For the present, Municipal Socialism is in the lean and dry stage. It stands in need of new ideas and a new inspiration.

Labour's Re-Emergence 1910–1914; Importance of the Housing Question.

If the tramways had been the big issue in municipal politics in the early 1890s, the single most important concern from 1910 on (and indeed right up to the present day) was housing. It had always been an issue; the original WEC programme of 1896 had included the demand for legally fixed maximum rents, and direct building of houses by the Corporation, and two years later it made this last point a much more specific call for the "erection of artisan dwellings", via the development of the City Improvement Trust, "to be let at rents sufficient to cover the cost of construction and maintenance."⁵⁹ This demand had already been made by an ILP candidate in 1894, alongside a proposal for direct labour.⁶⁰ In the working class areas, even non-socialist candidates could make housing and anti-landlordism a plank of their programme, as, for instance, a "temperance and working-man's candidate" in the Gorbals in 1891 who appealed to the electors, "to vote down the landlord and house factor clique."⁶¹ The proposal to tax land values was explicitly directed against the 'unproductive' class of landowners ("compelling landowners to tax land values", as one candidate put it⁶²) which, in Glasgow terms was easily transposed onto landlords.

Labour's priorities were set out by John Ferguson in his brief two point programme of 1893. First was the appropriation of the "Ground values" for the benefit of the community, and secondly to create a labour opinion in the Council which would use the existing powers of the Corporation, while seeking yet greater powers, in order to improve the condition of the working class.⁶³

"by means of a living wage, natural hours of labour,
comfortable healthy homes, and proper places of recreation."

Out of this fourfold concern with the quality of life the Stalwarts were most successful with the first two, which were really part and parcel of the one

issue. Although not without a certain amount of ambivalence from within its own ranks, Labour was able to make this a test question for candidates in working class wards. Housing, however, did not become such a test question and this was partly because the Corporation did not have direct responsibility and control of the provision of houses, as it did have over the wages and conditions of its own employees. Although demands could be formulated for the Council to actually do something about housing, it had, first of all, to acquire the necessary powers from Parliament, a protracted process that did not encourage hopes of immediate progress, as was possible over wages and conditions.

Nevertheless, some developments did occur after 1896. A second Glasgow City Improvement Act was passed by Parliament in 1897 which permitted the Corporation to purchase slum or insanitary property at the value of the ground on which it was situated, not, as under the 1866 Act at full market value plus ten per cent. Furthermore, P G Stewart introduced a clause which gave the Corporation powers to purchase land, in and out of the City boundary, upon which to build houses. This was included despite expert legal opinion against, and that it passed both the Lords and Commons was "a great surprise" to Stewart himself.⁶⁴ However, there were very definite limitations placed on the possible development of Council housing; the area of land purchased was to be, in total, no more than 25 acres, and the Corporation was not permitted to spend, on the purchase of land and the erection of buildings, more than £100,000.⁶⁵ By 1901 one block of land in Carntyne had been built on and let, but the cost of 69 one-apartment and 84 two-apartment tenement flats was over £17,000; in 1902 the Corporation was authorised by provisional order to spend an extra £150,000.⁶⁶

The potential of the housing question as a popular campaigning issue for Labour was always significant. The election of 1902 was fought, basically, on

this issue. John Ferguson, who was actually only narrowly returned, stated the basic viewpoint.⁶⁷

"Upon this question no compromise is possible. Decency, morality, and virtue are bound to deteriorate amidst a horrible den of dirt - moral and physical - in which hundreds and thousands of our wage-earners have to live."

The Citizens' Union based its intervention at the polls solely on the housing question, but saw only one of its chosen candidates returned. Labour, on the other hand, was conspicuously successful. Apart from Ferguson, three other candidates retained their positions and a new seat was won. Even the *Glasgow Herald* had to admit that the results represented, "a victory of no mean character for the extreme party."⁶⁸ This success was, however, overshadowed by Chisholm's defeat at the hands of Scott Gibson, and the growing reaction against rates increases, along with the break-up of the WEC, meant that Labour was unable to capitalise on the issue.

Apart from this, there was the nature in which the housing issue was presented. The housing built by the Corporation was always referred to, as was the housing 'problem' generally, as affecting mainly the "poorest classes". Joseph Melling has commented on how in the pre-1914 debate on housing, "objective conditions were described in highly moralistic terms." The Glasgow Municipal Commission, for instance:⁶⁹

"combined statistical analysis with sweeping generalisation on the minority of vicious loafers and criminals amongst those inhabiting ticketed dwellings."

Such constant pejorative references to the "poorest classes" very likely had an adverse effect on the more respectable elements of the working class. By 1914 Glasgow Corporation had only built 2,199 houses, the vast majority of

which were one or two apartments.⁷⁰ Council housing, therefore, only affected a very small number of people directly and did not represent any improvement on the more substantial existing tenement properties. Gradually, however, from around 1902, the terms of the debate over housing began to change. Emphasis began to be put on the building of 'cottage' type housing. This had been argued by the ILP Councillor Joseph Burgess at the Municipal Commission and the attraction of garden cities of low-rise housing, against tenements, provided a positive example which Glasgow Town Council eventually decided it should attempt to follow in 1912.⁷¹ Alongside of this development, there was a changed perception about who such houses should be provided for, and Labour was in the forefront of arguing that they should be for the 'respectable' working class. In his evidence to the Municipal Commission in 1903 George Carson, Secretary of the Trades Council and member of the ILP, stated that, "The Council is in favour of the housing proposals of the Corporation ... being satisfied that if carried out they would be of the utmost advantage to the people." He then went on to say:⁷²

The Council is opposed to the suggestion that the Corporation should be restricted to the providing of housing accommodation for the criminal and vicious classes only. If the Corporation are to build houses at all, it must be for the thrifty, industrious and sober working classes for whom such housing accommodation should be provided, as the larger portion of these, by reason of their small wages, are compelled to live in houses which are inimical to health, and generally amongst a most undesirable class of people.

As we have seen, Labour's municipal fortunes began to improve in 1909 and this was maintained with by-election victories and into the election of 1910.⁷³ The duties of organisation would seem to have been taken more seriously, but at the same time it was felt that Labour lacked a big issue which it could champion, a new "inspiration". These two factors became combined with the further extension of Glasgow's boundaries which, as in 1896, provided a

stimulus to Labour representation. The extension of 1891 was never regarded as a final measure, in 1906 Kinning park was at last included within Glasgow, though the big development was the inclusion of Partick, Govan, Tollcross, etc. in 1912. The case for extension was really unanswerable; as the *Glasgow Herald* pointed out the whole area was effectively one City and had been so for some time.⁷⁴ The existing boundaries had been rendered obsolete and confusing by rapid urban development, and, in the case of fire, actually dangerous. Glasgow also provided services to the outlying areas and, reasonably enough, expected payment in return. The price demanded by the outlying burghs, however, was exemption from Glasgow rates for a considerable period.⁷⁵ As in 1891, and in the case of Kinning Park, the most vociferous advocates of inclusion were the local labour forces. Labour candidates in the soon-to-be-incorporated areas were well to the fore in the election of 1911, fought on the boundary question, and enjoyed some success.⁷⁶ At the same time the Glasgow Labour Party was in the process of being formed.

Among the new generation of political leaders on Clydeside was John Wheatley. Possibly the single most influential figure in Labour circles Wheatley's role encompassed the ILP, the Labour Party, the Irish, housing, and the extension of Glasgow. In many ways he can be regarded as inheriting the mantle of John Ferguson, only with the distinction that Wheatley's primary loyalty - despite the fact that he was a Catholic - lay within the ILP and Labour.

Prior to the First World War Wheatley was best known for his success at debating on whether or not Catholics could be socialists. A member of the ILP, and former member of the UIL, Wheatley established the Catholic Socialist Society (CSS) to achieve that end, i.e. to draw the Irish - Catholic working class population into the labour and socialist movement.⁷⁷ *Forward* played a

supportive role by giving the CSS a regular column, "Catholic Notes", to report and debate its activities. Wheatley has been credited with almost single-handedly swinging the Irish vote behind Labour in the West of Scotland.⁷⁸ More recently it has been suggested that the impact of Wheatley and the CSS was minimal and obscures the real reasons behind the Irish shift to Labour post-1918.⁷⁹

Although Wheatley had to face much hostility from within Catholic circles as, for instance, having his effigy burnt by a crowd from the local Catholic Church,⁸⁰ it would appear that in his debate with the Belgian Jesuit, Father Puissant, Wheatley enjoyed the tacit support of the hierarchy. The Archbishop of Glasgow refused to condemn Wheatley or the CSS, in contrast to the situation in Leeds where the opposition of the Bishop there led to the rapid collapse of the CSS. The debate with Puissant was conducted in the pages of the *Glasgow Observer* between 1906 and 1909, which took a fairly tolerant view of the activities and purpose of the CSS. (Wheatley had previously been employed by the *Observer*) Both the *Observer* and Archbishop Maguire took an open attitude towards the Labour Party, could talk of it eventually replacing the Liberal Party, and of how Irish voters, freed from Irish and Catholic concerns, should vote Labour, at least at the local level. From August 1909 Father Puissant no longer contributed to the debate and it seems likely that he had become something of an embarrassment to the hierarchy.⁸¹

This did not mean the end of hostilities between Labour and the Irish. The year 1911 saw a particularly acrimonious furore over relations between both in terms of seats and candidates however, despite the demise of the Stalwarts and the UIL being barred from affiliation to the Glasgow Labour Party, it still remained the case that Irish candidates had been supported by and run under the auspices of Labour. The relationship between the Irish and Labour was a complex and fluctuating one (as we shall discuss in the

following chapter), but it needs to be approached with the understanding that – whatever ‘official’ Irish opinion might be at any one time – significant numbers of the Irish working class were, and had been for some time, voting Labour.

In the municipal election of 1912 John Wheatley, already a sitting councillor for Shettleston in Lanark County Council, came top of the poll for the new Glasgow ward of Shettleston and Tollcross, in so doing becoming the only Catholic on Glasgow Corporation. That this “triumph” was achieved over the opposition of the “official Irish party” and the *Observer* indicates Irish support for Labour and further questions the myth of a homogeneous Irish vote. Tom Johnston, writing in *Forward* saw Wheatley’s success as particularly gratifying and of no little significance. The “official” Irish opposition, he claimed, was partly because they.⁸²

“knew that if [Wheatley] was elected they could no longer tell the Irish working man that the Labour Party was anti-Irish.”

Wheatley’s success, and his status as the only Catholic Councillor, must have produced a powerful argument in support of his case that the Irish working class should join up with the Labour and Socialist movement.

The other issue Wheatley’s name is most closely associated with is housing, in particular his role at the Ministry of Health in the first Labour Government in formulating the 1924 Housing Act. Wheatley’s concern over housing pre-dates the First World War and is linked to the development of a popular housing campaign by Labour on Clydeside. Though it took the War to shove the housing question in Glasgow to the forefront of national politics, the origins of the crisis were firmly rooted in the pre-war years. For the decade preceding 1914 Glasgow experienced almost zero additions to its stock of working class housing; the state of the housing market was so disorganised

that there were large numbers of houses standing empty, thus exacerbating the shortage of appropriate housing at affordable rents. Basically the problem was one of poverty; people could not afford the houses that were available, while the returns on low rent properties were so low as to make building unprofitable. In 1913 the Labour Party Housing Committee (LPHC) was formed, in a situation described by its chief organiser, Andrew McBride:⁸³

"They recognised that as private speculators had practically ceased building, and that as many houses were admitted to be unfit for human habitation, we felt we were in easy reach of a famine in housing."

The LPHC enjoyed the support of every part of the labour movement, and also involved elements of the working class who had been apolitical, or even hostile to socialism.⁸⁴ In mid 1914 a further development took place with the formation of the Glasgow Women's Housing Association (GWHA), mainly through the efforts of the LPHC and the Women's Labour League (WLL). The intention was to broaden the housing campaign and to involve women more directly, in which it was remarkably successful – the GWHA became the organising focus of the Rent Strike of 1915. Increasingly Labour presented itself as the "only housing party", and at the same time began to develop a more positive approach to the female electorate.⁸⁵ The housing situation had certainly become more serious in Glasgow in the years since 1902, but its new-found significance in municipal affairs was not due solely to the objective circumstances of the housing market, but to that, combined with Labour's ability, unlike in the Stalwart period, to provide organisational support for the issue and thus maintain and develop an effective campaign. Even without the advent of war it is unlikely that the housing question would have faded away.

The LPHC was originally founded to support a policy of local authority

housing outlined by John Wheatley as the "artisan, or, eight pound cottages scheme". The intention was for the Corporation to build cottage-style houses for working class families which could be let at a rent of only £8 per annum; the funds to allow this were to be taken from the surplus of the Corporation owned tramway system. In its simplicity, and its popularity, this scheme of Wheatley's was similar, in its political effect, to John Ferguson's proposal to tax land values, with its magical figure of £2m. Labour had found its "new inspiration." According to one recent writer, Wheatley's proposal:⁸⁶

"was perhaps the single most crucial element to the growth in support for Glasgow Labour and its housing proposals."

Had it been adopted, however, Wheatley's policy would have, at best, had only a limited impact on Glasgow's housing shortage, at most only 1,000 houses a year could have been built, and any broader impact would have been due to the "filtering up" process of poorer tenants moving into the accommodation released by the families lucky enough to secure a cottage.⁸⁷ Looking to the future Wheatley's scheme may well have contained within it the drawbacks that good-quality council housing was to demonstrate in the inter-war period; the actual tenants of the early council houses were the very people who could most afford renting from the private sector; poorer tenants were to be unable to afford the new houses, and the "slum-clearance" housing provided for them carried the stigma of obvious cheapness and lower quality; and optimistic notions of "filtering up" were to founder on the economic reality of poverty.⁸⁸ Wheatley himself was less than forthcoming on what to do about the "slum dweller". In his *Reply to the Critics of £8 cottages*, Wheatley penned the following in regard to the selecting of tenants:⁸⁹

- "Would preference be given to the slum-dweller?"
- It is not the intention of the Labour Party to do so. This is a scheme to prevent people from falling into slum life.

- Why not deal with the slum-dweller first?
- The Labour Party believe that the most immediate and greatest assistance that can be rendered to the weakest as well as the strongest section of the working class is to shake the profit and interest mongers off their backs.
- But after houses have been provided at cost price there would be probably a small section who could not afford the rent?
- The Labour Party will always be found foremost in helping these."

It was the propoganda impact of the \mathcal{B} scheme that was most important. This is not to say that it was 'merely' propoganda, but that Wheatley's proposal, due to its simplicity, practicalness, and attractiveness, was able to influence and galvanise public opinion. He himself was aware that the programme was not sufficient for the City's needs but argued that should this experiment prove itself then the City would find other ways of extending the scale of this type of house-building.⁹⁰ By anyone's standards Wheatley was talking about a definite improvement in the quality of life. Compared to the one and two apartments most of Glasgow's working class was housed in, the proposed cottages were obviously superior. Wheatley's plan was for 4-apartment houses comprising:⁹¹

- Living room - 13ft. by 11ft. 6in.
- Parlour or bedroom - 13ft. 6in. by 11ft. 6in.
- Bedroom - 10ft. 3in. by 9ft.
- Bedroom - 10ft. 3in. by 8ft.
- Kitchen scullery - 10ft. by 6ft. 6in.
- Bathroom - 6ft 6in. by 5ft. 6in.
- With an average garden area for each house of 130 square yards.

It was a proposal which sought to raise people's expectations (though not without a certain ambivalence for women as we shall see), and it was a theme Wheatley remained constant to. Ten years later, speaking in the House of Commons against the Tory Government's housing proposals, Wheatley expressed graphically the sense of moral outrage and class consciousness which made housing such an important political issue. Having been brought up himself, in a family of eleven who shared a single apartment, Wheatley spoke from direct experience.⁹²

"... I would like to say in conclusion that the houses are too small - they are miserably small. ... These houses will never be homes. They will very soon be slums. They proceed on the assumption that the working classes have no friends, and do not require any place in which to entertain their friends. ... Why should you object to the preaching of class war in this side? What are doing in all your legislation? Why do you propose these boxes for our people? Are they inferior to you? Are you laying it down that this Britain of ours is not, within 50 or 60 years from now, to rise in its housing superior to the boxes which you are providing in this Bill to-day?..."

While the political significance of the housing question has been well-attested, it is possible to make a more precise correlation between housing conditions and electoral support for Labour. Table 1 below shows those Wards with the highest proportion of one and two-roomed houses in 1911 for the then Municipal Burgh of Glasgow. (It does not include those areas absorbed into Glasgow in 1912 unfortunately.) The two columns to the right indicate whether or not a Ward had at least one Labour councillor in either 1896/97 or in 1914.

TABLE 1: LABOUR MUNICIPAL REPRESENTATION AND SIZE OF HOUSES IN GLASGOW WARDS

WARD	% of 1 & 2 roomed houses	Labour 1986/7	Labour 1914
Hutchesontown	92.0	*	*
Dalmarnock	91.6	*	*
Mile End	91.4	*	*
_____ 90% +			
Springburn	86.2	*	
Kinning Park	85.2		*
Cowlairs	80.1	*	*
_____ 80% +			
Whitevale	76.3		
Calton	75.9	*	
Townhead	74.3	*	*
Blackfriars	73.3		
Anderston	73.1		*
Cowcaddens	72.2		
Woodside	71.4		*
Govanhill	70.4		
_____ 70% +			

Source: *Third Statistical Account of Glasgow*, p 455, for housing figures. Electoral results from the *Glasgow Herald* - and refer to the municipal polls of 1896 and 1897, and Labour's position after the municipal election of 1914.

In 1911 fourteen of the City's 26 Wards has a proportion of 1 and 2-roomed houses in excess of 70%, the average for the City being 66.4%. Of these, eight had at least one Labour Councillor in 1914. Apart from the newly incorporated areas these were the *only* Labour Councillors in the City. If we go back to 1896/7, which years witnessed the emergence of the Stalwarts, we find that Labour representation was, again, concentrated solely within these same Wards. If we disregard Kinning Park for a moment, since it did not become part of Glasgow until 1906, we see that of the nine Wards which were responsible for all the Labour Councillors at these two dates, five had

Labour representatives on both occasions. This 'link' gets closer the higher up the 'scale' we go, i.e. the greater the proportion of 1 and 2-roomed houses in a Ward (or the more pressure on housing there would be in an area) the more likely that Ward was to have had a Labour Councillor. Thus, of the five Wards with more than 80% of 1 and 2-roomed houses, all were at least partially represented by Labour in either of the two dates, and four were so on both occasions. The three Wards 'scoring' over 90% - Hutchesontown, Dalrnarnock and Mile End - all returned Labour representatives in both years.

We shall discuss the social indicators of Glasgow's Wards in more detail in Chapter Six, and attempt to distinguish between middle class, 'respectable' working class and 'poorer' working class. There was, however, no fixed criteria for determining the status of working class areas solely by the size of houses. the quality of 1 and 2-roomed houses varied considerably. Thus the 'artisan' areas of Springburn and Kinning Park appear to have had suffered worse conditions than the 'slum' areas of Anderston and Cowcaddens, when we might have expected their positions on the Table to have been reversed. Nevertheless, there does appear a clear link between housing conditions and Labour electoral success, which also indicates that Labour enjoyed support both in 'artisan' and 'poorer' areas. This raises fundamental questions about the basis of Labour's constituency and Labour's own perception of that support, questions that can only be fully answered from the vantage point of post-1918 and a fully democratic franchise.

Conclusion; Labour's "Permanent" Minority Position.

Having reached the end of the period under consideration it is necessary to briefly examine just how strong an electoral force Labour had become in Glasgow. Although housing provided the big municipal issue Labour had been seeking, the improvement in its electoral performance had begun before the

housing campaign took off. As we have seen above, the number of candidates was reduced to four in 1909 and Labour's average poll increased dramatically. The single gain at the November poll was followed by two by-election victories, and Labour representation now steadily increased. Prior to the city extension in 1912 the number of Labour councillors had reached 12,⁹³ and with the elections of the newly extended area there was an infusion of new blood from the outlying burghs with victories in (Govan) Fairfield, and Shettleston & Tollcross. By mid 1914 there were 17 Labour councillors in 11 wards; 12 in 8 'inner city' wards and 5 in 3 'outer' wards.⁹⁴ The importance of the housing question can be gauged from the results of the 1913 poll at which Labour won six seats and lost two, the two losses being due to the failure of those Councillors to vote for the £8 cottages scheme in the Council (which was only defeated by one vote), which had led to "apathy" among their supporters as regards canvassing.⁹⁵

Labour's successes in the years after 1909 still have to be seen in relation to the full representation of Glasgow Corporation. If this is not done there is a danger of drawing a false and misleading picture of the extent of Labour's popularity or, to quote Melling, "the growth in support for Glasgow Labour".⁹⁶

If we look at the results of the 1913 election, the last municipal election before the outbreak of War, we see that Labour contested 13 of the 17 wards in which there were elections, and won in six of them, gaining just under 50% of the votes cast in those 13 wards; Labour thus seems to have been getting the representation its vote deserved. This representation, however, remained extremely limited. Labour's 17 Councillors only accounted for 15.3% of the total 111 elected members, a figure which did not match the proportionate representation enjoyed by the Stalwarts at their height.⁹⁷ While there was undoubted scope for further improvement in Labour's position, 11 wards represented just under 30% of all the wards, it is clear that, even had Labour

been able to win outright control of all these wards where it had at least one member, it would still have been nowhere near to winning a majority on the Corporation. There remained huge areas of the City where Labour did not contest; in the last three years of full municipal elections (1911,12,13) there were 14 of the 26 'inner city' wards where Labour did not stand at all. Just as in national politics, so at the municipal level, Labour could only aspire to be a minority party. It took the upheavals of the First World War, and the creation of a, more or less, universal electorate, before that situation could begin to be changed.

NOTES

1. One of the ILP's first electoral successes was the return of Boyd Brown to Barony Parish Council, where he conducted a single-handed campaign against the "classification" of the Poorhouse "inmates". *Glasgow Commonweal* April 1896. William Martin Haddow of the ILP was elected to the School Board in 1903 and recalled that, "Education was then very largely in the power of the various churches..." W.M. Haddow, *My Seventy Years* (Glasgow 1943), p 60.
2. *Glasgow Commonweal*, November 1896.
3. *Labour Annual 1895* (Manchester 1895), pp 169-70; *Labour Leader*, 22 October 1898.
4. John Ferguson to Keir Hardie, 17 May 1888, Francis Johnston Correspondence, ILP Archive, 1888/87.
5. *Labour Leader*, 9 November 1895.
6. *Glasgow Herald*, 6 November 1895.
7. *Glasgow Observer*, 7 November 1896.
8. Ibid.
9. *Labour Leader*, 22 October 1898.
10. *Glasgow Herald*, 8 November 1893.
11. See articles, "Popular Fallacies - Henry Georgism Exposed", in the very first issues of *Forward*, 13 October 1906, etc.
12. *Glasgow Commonweal*, June 1896.
13. See Joan Smith, "Labour Tradition in Glasgow and Liverpool", *History Workshop*, XVIII (Spring 1984), pp 32-56, for a discussion of the Gramscian conception of 'commonsense' applied to Glasgow. "Glasgow working men's 'commonsense' was dominated by strands of a Radical Liberal and Reform tradition which working men had participated in for three-quarters of a century." p 44.
14. *Forward*, 13 October 1906.
15. T. Johnston, *Memories* (London 1952), p 24; W. Knox (ed), *Scottish Labour Leaders 1918-1939: a Biographical Dictionary* (Edinburgh 1984), p 150.
16. *Labour Leader*, 17 September 1898.
17. W.H. Fraser, "Trades Councils in the Labour Movement in Nineteenth Century Scotland", I. MacDougall (ed), *Essays in Scottish Labour History* (Edinburgh 1978), p 5.

18. *Glasgow Commonweal* October 1896.
19. *Glasgow Observer*, 7 November 1896.
20. Ibid.
21. Ibid. The *Observer* identified Murphy in Whitevale as the "Labour- Nationalist candidate", but only referred to Cronin of the WEC as Irish or Catholic.
22. *Glasgow Observer*, 10 October 1896.
23. Ibid.
24. *Glasgow Commonweal*, October 1896.
25. *Glasgow Observer*, 7 November 1896.
26. *Glasgow Herald*, 4 November 1896.
27. Glasgow Trades Council, *Annual Report 1895-96*
28. *Labour Leader*, 22 October 1898, interview with John Ferguson; also 17 September & 1 October 1898.
29. *Labour Leader*, 22 October 1898.
30. *Labour Leader*, 17 September 1898, interview with George Mitchell.
31. *Labour Leader*, 24 September & 1 October 1898.
32. *Labour Leader*, 1 October 1898.
33. Ibid.
34. J. Connell, *Glasgow Municipal Enterprise* (Glasgow & London, 1899), pp 80-1. Labour Party 13th. Annual Conference, Glasgow 1914, *Souvenir*, (Published by the Glasgow Labour Party), p 35.
35. *Forward*, 9 November 1907; Allan also contested Dennistoun in 1909, 10, & 11.
36. *Forward*, 7 November 1908.
37. *Labour Leader*, 7 November 1908.
38. M. Sanger, *An Autobiography* (New York 1971), p 96, Sanger was not overly impressed by this example of "local socialism".
39. *Municipal Glasgow: Its Evolution and Enterprises* (Glasgow 1914), Preface by the Lord Provost, D.M. Stevenson, p 2. Stevenson had been a sympathiser of the Socialist League in the 1880s.

40. *Glasgow Herald*, 8 November 1893.
41. Ibid.
42. *Glasgow Herald*, 7 November 1900.
43. *Annual Reports of the Local Government Board for Scotland*, PP 1901 XXVII, PP 1907 XXXVII.
44. *Labour Leader*, 9 November 1901. 31 October 1903.
45. Harry McShane & Joan Smith, *No Mean Fighter* (London 1978), p 14.
46. *Glasgow Herald*, 5 November 1902.
47. *Glasgow Commonweal*, November 1896.
48. *Glasgow Herald*, 5 November 1902.
49. *Glasgow Herald*, 7 November 1906.
50. *Labour Leader*, 11 November 1904, this claim was made by William Stewart after his defeat in Dalmarnock.
51. e.g. J. O'Connor Kessack, *Is Drink the Cause of Poverty? a Reply to the Temperance Party*, (Glasgow 1907).
52. *Forward*, 17 November 1906.
53. election figures extracted from *Glasgow Herald*
54. McShane & Smith, op cit, p 24.
55. Glasgow Trades Council, *Annual Report 1908-09*
56. Glasgow Trades Council, *Annual Report 1909-10*
57. Ibid.
58. *Forward*, 13 November 1909.
59. *Labour Leader*, 27 August 1898.
60. *Glasgow Herald*, 7 November 1894.
61. *Glasgow Herald*, 4 November 1891.
62. *Glasgow Herald*, 7 November 1894.
63. Reprinted in *Labour Leader*, 22 October 1898.
64. *Labour Leader*, 1 October 1898.
65. *Municipal Glasgow..*, op cit, pp 63-4.
66. Ibid., pp 64, 67.

67. J. Ferguson, *Address to the Citizens of the 25 Wards* (Glasgow 1902), p 4.
68. *Glasgow Herald*, 5 November 1902.
69. J. Melling, *Rent Strikes: People's Struggles for Housing in West Scotland 1890-1916*. (Edinburgh 1983), p 17.
70. *Municipal Glasgow ...*, op cit, pp 68-9.
71. *Glasgow Municipal Commission on the Housing of the Poor* (Glasgow 1904), evidence of Joseph Burgess, p 254; J. McKee, *Glasgow Working Class Housing Between the Wars, 1918-1939* (M. Litt., University of Strathclyde, 1977), p 3.
72. Glasgow Municipal Commission, op cit, p 550.
73. Glasgow Trades Council, *Annual Report 1909-10*
74. *Glasgow Herald*, 2 November 1911.
75. Melling, op cit, p 19.
76. *Glasgow Herald*, 8 November 1911; *Forward*, 11 November 1911, Labour made two gains in Govan.
77. The best source on Wheatley's life and politics remains Samuel Cooper, *John Wheatley: A Study in Labour History*, (Ph.D., University of Glasgow, 1973). David Howell, *A Lost Left: Three Studies in Socialism and Nationalism*, (Manchester 1986) provides a valuable analysis of Wheatley's political ideas and their development.
78. R.K. Middlemas, *The Clydesiders: A Left Wing Struggle for Parliamentary Power*, (London 1965), pp 37-40.
79. I.S. Maclean, *The Legend of Red Clydeside* (Edinburgh 1983), p 185.
80. McShane & Smith, op cit, p 18.
81. Bob Purdie, *Outside the Chapel Door: The Glasgow Catholic Socialist Society 1906-22* (Thesis, Ruskin College, 1976), pp 23-6.
82. *Forward*, 9 November 1912.
83. Quoted in Melling, op cit, p 40.
84. *Ibid*, pp 33, 48.
85. *Forward*, 16 January 1915.
86. Melling, op cit, p 40.
87. McKee, op cit, p 14.

88. Ibid., pp 32-4.
89. J. Wheatley, *A Reply to the Critics of £8 Cottages* (Glasgow 1913), p3.
90. Ibid., p 8.
91. Ibid., p 1.
92. J. Wheatley, *Homes or Hutches?*(Glasgow 1923), pp 15-16.
93. Glasgow Trades Council, *Annual Report 1911-12*
94. Glasgow Trades Council, *Annual Report 1912-13-14*
95. *Forward*, 8 November 1913.
96. Melling, op cit, p 40.
97. Labour Party, *Souvenir*, op cit, gives a possibly exaggerated figure of 14 Stalwarts which would have accounted for 18.7% of the total Council membership.

Chapter Four

The Irish

If, in the political system operating after the First World War the support of the Irish-Catholic population in Scotland for the Labour Party has been seen as crucial to Labour's success, it is also the case that prior to the First World War the Irish in Scotland have been identified as a major stumbling-block to the advance of the Labour movement. Studies of the Irish, or Catholic, vote in the modern period have identified it as being more pro-Labour than the Scottish working class vote as a whole.¹ Generally speaking, it has been seen that only with the settling of Irish independence in 1922, i.e. with the removal of Home Rule from the political agenda, that the Irish in Scotland (and the UK for that matter) broke their long alliance with the Liberal Party and moved to Labour.² We shall return to the immediate post-war period, and the role of the Irish vote, in the conclusion to this study, but for the moment it is important to emphasise the change in Irish voting patterns post-WW1 insisted upon by much of the historiography, and the view taken of the negative role played by the Irish as regards the Labour movement pre-1914, since it will be seen, through a detailed examination of Irish relations with Labour in Glasgow, that the 'break' in Irish political behaviour has been exaggerated. The 'traditional' view of the Irish and Labour is expressed by J G Kellas:³

One important factor which weakened the Labour movement in Scotland was the hostility of the Roman Catholics. As long Home Rule depended on the Liberals, the Catholics voted for them and the Labour Party was deprived of much of its potential working class vote. ... The Protestant-Catholic split also entered the industrial wing of the movement, for the trade unions could not be effective when cheap labour in the form of Irish Catholic immigrants was readily available.

Elsewhere Kellas has stated this view even more forcibly:⁴

It was the attitude of the Irish working class which prevented the emergence of a strong Labour movement in Scotland, until Irish Home Rule was solved.

The work of William Walker adds to the weight of the above view by emphasising the Church-oriented basis of Irish nationalist politics hostile to both secular ideologies, especially if they smacked of socialism, and any weakening of the Home Rule vote.⁵ Other historians, notably I S Wood and John McAffrey, have sought to qualify this view of the Irish in Scotland, and they comment upon the positive, active role played by individual Irishmen and Irish organisations alongside of, and within the Labour movement. Wood in particular seeks to question the views of Walker on:⁶

Whether Irish nationalism in Scotland was always inimical to any immigrant rapport on class issues with Scottish trade unionists and radical movements

The work of McAffrey, involving as it does some attempt at quantifying the Irish electorate, is the more directly relevant to our concerns here. McAffrey sees the Irish vote in Scotland as:⁷

a conditional vote, organised and given to whatever power in the State would accede to Catholic wishes as expressed in this conjunction of religion and nationality.

Furthermore, by attempting to focus attention on the number of Irish voters, McAffrey calls into question the supposed significance of the 'Irish vote', as well as indicating cracks in its supposed monolithism. Thus, on occasion, in specific localities the Irish vote, or parts of it, went to Labour, while a general level of enfranchisement of 50% of Irish male householders must have

seriously limited the impact of that vote, even if it was united.⁸

Overview of Irish Nationalist Politics in Glasgow

Organised Irish-Catholic nationalist politics in Glasgow can be traced back to 1823 and the establishment of a Catholic Association to support Daniel O'Connell's agitation for Catholic emancipation.⁹ The "Liberator" was extremely popular in Scotland and his regular visits and tours encouraged a Catholic political presence and helped make links with indigenous radical forces. Contact between revolutionary radicals had been established earlier in the 1790s through Thomas Muir and the Society of United Scotsmen. This 'underground' activity was to continue throughout much of the nineteenth century, co-existing with the Reform Act agitation and Chartism.¹⁰ In the 1850s and 1860s the Irish Republican Brotherhood – the Fenians – enjoyed considerable support in Glasgow, mainly through the aegis of the "violently national" Free Press.¹¹ This paper, established in 1851, and its editor Keane, had politically to oppose the Catholic hierarchy which, both in Ireland and Scotland condemned the IRB. It was not until the collapse of the Fenian movement by the end of the 1860s that the directly 'constitutional' movement for Home Rule came to dominate the activities of the Irish in Britain, until it was, in turn, surpassed by the armed struggle of Sinn Fein.

In 1870 Isaac Butt, an ex-Tory who had acted as defence lawyer for Fenian prisoners, established the Home Government Association in Dublin. Almost immediately it spread to Britain with the first 'mainland' branch of the Association, or League as it was soon to be called, being founded in Glasgow in 1871. The moving force here was John Ferguson, like Butt also a Protestant, born in Belfast in 1836 and who had moved to Glasgow in 1860. Ferguson arranged for Butt to speak in Glasgow, and from that meeting began the Home Rule agitation in Britain. The branch established in Glasgow was

named the Home Government Branch (HGB) which, throughout all the developments of the Home Rule party - Irish Land League, Irish National League, United Irish League - remained "the most influential sector in Great Britain of the movement".¹²

Ferguson had been involved in the activities of the Reform League prior to the passing of the 1867 Act which helped to stimulate Catholic efforts at the local political level. With the emergence of Parnell and a new, more aggressive policy from the Irish MPs, the Irish National League (1882) sought to make the Irish electorate in Britain a more disciplined and cohesive force. Though Parliamentary elections were all important a great deal of effort was spent at the local level in getting representation on to Ward Committees and securing Catholic representatives on the School Board.¹³ The School Board elections, by way of the cumulative voting system, allowed for direct sectarian representation and indicates the level of co-operation between the Church and the INL. Archbishop Eyre, soon after his arrival in Glasgow, had formed a Catholic Union with the aim of mobilising the Irish vote by making sure that Catholic electors appeared on the register.¹⁴

It is normal to find at the elections in this period that the parochial organisation of the local Catholic Union and the local branch of the Irish National League co-operated in compiling registers of voters, in urging registration, deciding on candidates and canvassing. The parish and the local political organisation were often indistinguishable in their activity.

The extent of Protestant leadership of the Irish Party, eg Butt, Parnell, and in Glasgow John Ferguson, meant that sectarianism was never likely to flourish within Irish nationalism. A move directed from within the HGB that "Irishmen should not place their confidence in Protestant leaders", was repudiated by a city-wide meeting.¹⁵ However, as Ian Wood indicates, things might be quite different in certain localities. Wood gives instances from Lanarkshire and Ayrshire which suggest that branches there were exclusively Catholic in a

deliberate sense.¹⁶ The role of the clergy should not be underestimated. While tensions continued to exist, most notable over hierarchy condemnation of the 1886 "plan of campaign" as illegal, and on the Pope's authority against God's law,¹⁷ and more recurrently over the Church's major pre-occupation with religious education, there is little doubt that constitutional nationalism enjoyed the Church's support, as fenianism had encountered its wrath. Whether or not this led to clerical control is another matter.

Undoubtedly the pattern of Irish migration encouraged the identification of Irish and Catholic. While census figures do not distinguish between religions there is no doubt that Ulster Protestants were regarded as distinct from Catholics, as less of a threat (though Orangemen came in for criticism), and, indeed, as more or less Scottish. A phenomenon of the nineteenth century migration into mining areas (the industry with the largest number of Irish-born males employed in Scotland) was the formation of small communities that were totally Irish and Catholic, as was the case of the small village where John Wheatley's family lived, and which remains even today in a village like Croy to the N E of Glasgow. The historian of the Irish in Scotland regards their unity in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as exemplary and due to several overlapping causes. Firstly, "assimilation with the native stock had not then begun", and this was partly due to their being able to maintain their own religion. The community was largely single class; "in those days the vast majority belonged to the working class and the opportunities for success on business or profession were few". Their "isolation" meant they were "thrown back on one another for social intercourse in their moments of leisure". And in their social life the role of the local church was central:¹⁸

The church had been built with their hard-earned money, their pastors were usually Irish like themselves, the school alongside depended on their contributions for its upkeep, and

even the humble parish hall was hallowed in their sight by the fact that it had been their temporary chapel until they were able to undertake the erection of a stone edifice. The hall provided recreation for them in the evenings of the week and was the meeting place on Sundays after Mass for the formulation of plans for financing the school and clearing of debts, and determining policy in the schoolboard and municipal elections. In addition it housed such confraternities as the Young Men's Society or the local branch of the benevolent institution known as the Irish National Order of Foresters. ... The men of the parish had their branch of the INL, which met usually on Sunday afternoons, but the concert run on Saturday evenings under the management of the branch was open to all the parish. Once a year, too, in the west of Scotland at least, there was a reunion of those who claimed the same county in Ireland as their birthplace.

Given this "centripetal force" it is hardly surprising that Irish and Catholic were, more or less, synonymous terms. Thus the parish priest at Baillieston, speaking at the inauguration of a new INL branch in 1886:¹⁹

he could not separate the Irish cause from Catholicity, and he always considered, speaking in a general sense, that when he met an Irishman he met a Catholic.

The Catholic-Irish newspaper, the *Glasgow Observer and Catholic Herald* (better known simply as the *Observer*), which divided its space between Church matters and Nationalist politics, made similar, if less forthright identification. At the 1896 municipal elections for instance it referred to "candidates of our race and creed", and commented upon, "The way to Catholic success".²⁰ Such comments do not prove sectarian attitudes or clerical control but they do indicate just how difficult it is separate Irish from Catholic at this time. The same identification was made by the host community, which could result in an anti-Catholic reaction; John Cronin of the WEC and ILP lost his seat at Dalmarnock in 1898 in the face of a campaign of, "keep out Cronin the Papist."²¹ Unfortunately there has been no work done on the 'Orange' vote (or 'community') similar to that on the Irish-Catholics, but the extent of comment about it in the press of the period

leaves no doubt as to its existence. However, anti-Irish prejudice extended beyond the membership of the lodges. Helen Crawford, a future leader of the 1915 rent strike, suffragette, prominent member of the ILP, and later the Communist Party, was brought up in the Gorbals in a strongly religious household – her father was a Presbyterian (and Tory) and her mother a Methodist – and recalled the attitudes prevalent towards the Irish in the Glasgow of the 1880s.²²

Irish was, in the eyes of the public, synonymous with Catholic and both stood for the overthrow of the Church and for violence. ... I looked upon the Fenian and Catholic Irish as sub-human.

The year 1885 saw the Catholic political forces in Glasgow develop a greater cohesiveness. This was the first General Election since Parnell had assumed the leadership of the Irish party and it was to be fought under his new, aggressive tactics which, in this instance, meant the unusual step of voting Tory. It was also the year in which the *Glasgow Observer* was established, giving the Irish community in the city their first regular journal since the demise of the Free Press in 1868.²³

Moreover, unlike its predecessor, the *Observer* did not clash with the hierarchy but was in broad agreement over politics with the Church; the closeness of the relationship indicated by sales of the *Observer* at the back of the Chapel.²⁴ The one point of friction was the differing emphasis put on Home Rule and Catholic education with the *Observer*, and its (eventual) proprietor Charles Diamond insisting on the primacy of the former over all other considerations. The results of the school board elections of that year were analysed by the *Observer*, "to demonstrate the self-confidence which Catholics could feel through effective electoral organisation."²⁵ Though the cumulative vote of the school board elections allowed Catholic representation, this success could not be repeated at either the Parliamentary or even

municipal level. Nevertheless it could encourage an awareness of electoral strength and further efforts at organisation, as well as raising (unrealistic) hopes of securing Catholic/Irish MPs and Town Councillors. The rapid development of the INL meant that "[it] could claim from 1885 to be the fastest growing political organisation in Scotland."²⁶ At its strongest it had over a hundred branches, mostly situated in the West, and though Glasgow accounted for only a few more than a dozen of these, "judged from the press coverage [Glasgow branches] tended to have larger membership and to provide a base for the movement's best-known activists in Scotland like John Ferguson".²⁷

The Tory success in 1885 could be explained as due to the INL's switch of allegiance, just as Gladstone's victory the following year can be seen in terms of the 'return' of the Irish vote. This was undoubtedly how Nationalists chose to depict events, thus reflecting favourably on their political muscle, but there is a case for regarding the election results and the Irish vote as being no more than coincidental. Thus the Conservatives could have expected a swing in their favour over issues that had nothing to do with the Irish. The seats lost by Liberals were relatively few in Scotland with, according to McAffrey, Kilmarnock Burghs, "the only important industrial one they lost directly to Irish abstention."²⁸ The General Election of 1886, again in broad terms, seems to indicate the significance of the Irish vote to the Liberals, but in Scotland, "the Liberals suffered serious reverses ... and nowhere more so than where the Irish vote was strong". This leads McAffrey to the conclusion that:²⁹

Catholic political participation in Scotland then in the 1880s and 1890s could be seen as important in maintaining support for the Liberals and ensuring their return when there was a general tide of support for Liberalism as in, for instance 1892. But when a mood of Unionism swept in, as it did in the period up to the early 1900s, it was nowhere strong enough to guarantee the retention of Liberal seats under threat.

Generally speaking the Irish vote was solidly pro-Liberal up to the elections of 1910, as instructed by the executive of the Irish parliamentary party. However, on specific occasions, in specific areas, the Irish vote did go to Labour, or was split over whether or not to support a Labour candidate. This could occur from either the decision of the Executive, or could emerge from the initiative of local activists struggling against the authority of the centre. Though the Irish vote was "conditional" on who would best respond to Irish issues it was not an "opportunist" vote, 1885 notwithstanding, an exercise never to be repeated except in individual cases. Given the working class nature of the Irish community in Britain, the continuing peasant struggle against landlordism in Ireland, and the fact that Home Rule became an integral part of the radical programme, there can be little question that the Irish vote was intrinsically anti-Tory. It could be argued that had the Conservatives been able to 'solve the Irish problem' then the Irish would have voted for them, but the important point is that the Tories, as the Unionist Party, were incapable of offering the Irish Home Rule or anything approximating to it. The pressure on Irish support for the Liberal Party was, therefore, always going to come from the left, which meant, by and large, that Labour would be the only serious alternative choice for Irish voters.

TABLE 1: PRINCIPAL OCCUPATIONS OF IRISH-BORN MALES IN GLASGOW 1911.

Total Irish-born male workforce aged over 10 = 26,062.

Total male workforce aged over 10 = 253,210.

Irish-born males as percentage of total male workforce = 10.29%.

OCCUPATIONS -----	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)
General Labourers	1959	7.52	2.88	26.86
Dock/Quay Labourers	1561	5.99	1.57	39.29
Ironfounders	1497	5.74	3.62	16.35
Iron, Steel, Tube Manufacture	1040	3.99	2.07	19.82
Builders', Masons' Bricklayers' Labourers	995	3.82	0.83	47.11
Vanmen, Lorrymen, Carriers, Carters	866	3.32	4.35	7.86
Gas Works Service	832	3.19	1.01	32.54
Undefined Workers in Engine & Machine Making	646	2.48	3.37	7.58
Omnibus & Tram Service	583	2.24	1.14	20.22
Boot, &c. - Makers, Dealers	550	2.11	1.18	18.34
Labourers in Engineering Works	525	2.01	1.10	18.92
TOTAL	11054	42.41	32.12	18.88

TABLE 2: OTHER (SELECTED) OCCUPATIONS OF IRISH-BORN MALES IN GLASGOW 1911

OCCUPATIONS -----	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)
Barmen	215	0.82	0.46	18.34
Inn, Hotel Keepers; Publicans, Beersellers; Wine & Spirit Merchants, Agents	296	1.14	0.77	15.12
Builders, Bricklayers, & Masons	231	0.89	1.12	8.17
Advocates, Solicitors	3	0.01	0.19	0.63
Physicians, Surgeons, Registered Practitioners	9	0.03	0.20	1.73
Schoolmasters, Teachers, Professors, Lecturers	35	0.13	0.41	3.38

SOURCE: *Census of Scotland 1911*, Vol 1 Part 2, City of Glasgow, Table XXII; Vol 3, A.

Table III. **Notes:**

COLUMN A = Number of Irish-born in each occupation.

COLUMN B = Number of Irish-born as a percentage of total Irish-born male workforce.

COLUMN C = Total number of all workers employed in each occupation as a percentage of total male workforce.

COLUMN D = Number of Irish-born in each occupation as a percentage of total Irish-born workforce.

The working class complexion of the Irish community has been attested to by writers from Handley on, yet, surprisingly little attempt has been made to quantify this perception. The essentially unskilled or semi-skilled, manual labourer nature of the Irish-born male workforce can be gauged clearly from the table above. 'Principal Occupations' are identified as those in which there were more than 500 Irish-born males employed, according to the Census of 1911.

Of the eleven principal occupations no fewer than four are explicitly described as labouring jobs, and these four groups alone account for just under 20% of the total Irish-born male workforce.

In all of the eleven principal occupations, bar two, the Irish have a higher employment location quotient, ie Irish workers were more likely to be employed in these areas than the rest of the workforce.

Table 2 - Other (Selected) Occupations - throws added light on the social structure of the Irish community. As we might expect the Irish are very much under-represented in the Professions - Law, Medicine, Education. The

numbers employed as Builders, Masons and Bricklayers contrasts sharply with the figure in Table 1 for the labourers in these trades; in the former the Irish are under-represented while in the latter they are massively over-represented. Barmen and Publicans, etc. are included due to the significance of the 'drink trade' within the politics of the Irish. Conforming to the myth about the Irish and publicans the Irish are over-represented in these two groups which, if taken as one, would qualify as a principal occupation. The importance of the drink trade amongst the Irish, however, is likely due to it being one of the few commercial opportunities open to them.

Irish Nationalism and Socialism

Prior to the formation of the Labour Party (or, rather, those forces pushing for independent labour representation) there existed organisations on the left which could act as a pole of attraction to Irish workers. As we saw in chapter 1 the early Socialist movement was intimately involved, and to a great extent grew out of, the land agitation in Scotland and Ireland; before joining the fledgling SDF Bruce Glasier had been secretary of a branch of the Land League and Shaw Maxwell had been similarly active.³⁰ For certain Irishmen the pull towards socialism would be strong due to it addressing their position as industrial workers in Britain and, in its radicalism and revolutionary fervour, socialism could be regarded, in contrast to Home Rule constitutionalism, as closer to the revolutionary nationalism of the Fenian movement, of which some Scots-Irish socialists claimed involvement.

Even association with pronounced atheists and free-lovers, etc. could arouse the condemnation of the clergy, as occurred in Parkhead in 1887 when numbers of Irish unemployed began to visit a newly-established SDF hall.³¹ The influence of such company, so it was argued, would lead to Irishmen losing their heritage, i.e. their religion and their Irishness. The life histories of

John Wheatley and James Connolly both show, in their different ways, that Catholics could be socialists without losing their religion or, at least in the case of Connolly, their Irish identity. Nevertheless, the move towards socialism, in the early part of the period, seems only to have attracted individual Irishmen and to have involved a break, to some degree, with the Irish-Catholic community. Amongst the early members of the Glasgow SDF was Pete Curran who later joined the ILP and became a Labour MP for Jarrow. He received the attention of the *Glasgow Observer* over the subject of his schooling and subsequent (sic) loss of Irishness. Under the heading, "Pete (Pat's) Schooling", it commented:³²

Mr Pete (who used to be Pat) Curran was the subject of an appreciative sketch in the Tory 'Daily Graphic', from which it may be learned that Mr Curran, who belongs to Glasgow, was educated there at a Board School. If this is so, Mr Curran is true to his training. Catholic parents who want to make ILP Pete's out of Catholic Pats should adopt that has turned out Mr Pete (Pat) Curran.

Those Irish who joined the socialist movement, at least in its early stages, could not be expected to retain much influence within the immigrant community. They were not harbingers of mass conversion, the decision to become a socialist being largely an individual choice. Yet they were no more "oddities" than the rest of their new comrades whose collective conversion was symptomatic of the "upheavals of the economic and political life of Great Britain" at this time.³³ Significant as the Irish element of the early socialist societies may have been, within the Irish community they were only of marginal importance. In terms of mainstream politics it is the role of the branches of the INL and of prominent individuals within the nationalist movement that has to be examined. Once, however, a significant Labour presence emerges the political role of the Irish has to be related to it.

The General Elections, 1885 – 1895

Parnell's instruction to vote Tory in 1885 cut across established Irish voting behaviour and the interests of the Irish working class in Britain. The discipline of the response in Irish ranks emphasises the dominance of the national question in the Irish community. Nevertheless there were some problems in realising total support to the leadership's call.

The Third Reform Act made an enormous impact on the Scottish Highlands where a land reform movement, inspired by the example of the Irish Land League, had been active since 1881-2. (see Chapter One re land war.) Under the new franchise a Crofters' Party was formed, outside of official Liberalism, with Irish and Radical support and which won four out six seats contested in 1885.³⁴ The total absence of Irish electors in the Highland constituencies meant there was no confusion over the 'vote Tory' policy, but in the industrial south-west there were a number of candidates run by the more left-wing, pro-land nationalisation, Scottish Land Restoration League [SLRL], which did have sympathisers amongst the Irish community.

The most prominent figure in this respect was John Ferguson who had openly questioned Parnell's policy. Ferguson supported the candidature, in Blackfriars and Hutchesontown, of James Shaw Maxwell, who also received the endorsement of Michael Davitt.³⁵ As we have already noted, of the five SLRL candidates, only two – Shaw Maxwell in Blackfriar and Hutchesontown and Forsyth in Bridgeton – were 'serious' challenges. (see Chapter Three.) This being so the relatively high polls of Shaw Maxwell and Forsyth may well have been due to Irish support. Shaw Maxwell's support for the Irish Land League had made him "particularly popular with many of the Glasgow Irish".³⁶ While Ferguson was censured by the Executive for his role at the election, a majority of his own branch, the Home Government, gave him a vote of

confidence, and his stature within the movement seems to have encouraged the Executive to leave matters alone.³⁷ There is no suggestion of a split away from the executive but it does seem likely that a number of Irish were prepared to follow Ferguson's example, and in Blackfriars the local INL was divided on the matter with many supporting Shaw Maxwell.³⁸

There were no radical or 'labour' candidates (the term 'labour' was sometimes applied to the SLRL candidates) at the 1886 election but Ferguson again stepped out of line over his support for Keir Hardie at the Mid Lanark bye-election in April 1888. While so much has been written about Mid Lanark as a milestone in the eventual formation of the Labour Party, we have seen above (Chapter Two) that it only appears so in retrospect; at the time it was simply one of a series of 'one-off' initiatives, which cumulatively led to the beginnings of independent labour representation. A great deal has also been made of the role of the Irish vote which, it has been argued, by being withheld from Hardie was the prime cause of his defeat.³⁹ Yet, given estimates of the total Irish vote in the constituency of only 900 (10% of the electorate) even had Hardie secured all of these votes he would still have come last.⁴⁰ As it was, it would seem likely that Hardie did receive an amount of Irish support. Handley, who tends to downplay the Labour and Socialist influence on the Irish community, says that Hardie's stand, "caused a split in the Irish vote", and that, "A third of the delegates at a conference of Hardie's supporters were Irishmen."⁴¹ Hardie had spoken at the St Patrick's day meeting that year in the Glasgow City Halls along with Cunninghame Graham, then the sitting Liberal MP in Lanarkshire NW and one of Hardie's closest political associates. It seems reasonable to assume that, as with Shaw Maxwell three years earlier, a number of Irishmen were prepared to break ranks and vote for Hardie.

In fact Hardie's performance was not as good as Shaw Maxwell's had been;

8% of the poll compared to 14%. Hardie's low poll, after much optimism, may have been due to an increasing awareness that he was not going to poll sufficient to win and that a vote for him would be 'wasted'. Even John Ferguson was secretly urging withdrawal while still helping to organise Hardie's campaign. In a letter to Cunninghame Graham only days before the poll Ferguson reckoned that Hardie would not get even 300 votes, and argued for a deal by which, "I think we have a chance to get out with some credit". The intended deal involved 'labour' declaring support for the Liberal in return for Liberal support for Hardie next time round.⁴² As we have already seen from Ferguson's communication with Hardie after the poll his own preference was for Labour to work through the Liberal associations, though he approved of continued agitation and became one of the Honorary Presidents of the newly-formed Scottish Labour Party later that year.

The very ad-hoc and ill-defined nature of what the Labour party (with a small 'p') was, and its relationship with the Liberal Party, indicates one of the difficulties Irish electors would have had in supporting it. While they might be in agreement with the manifestoes and programmes issued by Hardie, the SLP, Knights of Labour or whoever, the question had to be faced, what were they being asked to vote for? In concrete terms the Labour party could hardly be said to exist, whereas the Liberal Party was one of the two parties of government. And, moreover, this Labour party, though increasingly spoken of and referred to as a power in the country, was divided into a plethora of organisations, and was unclear, to say the least, as to whether it was independent or a 'wing', of Liberalism. Even as the cohesiveness and identity of the Labour Party developed it can hardly be said to have ever, prior to 1914, been independent of the Liberals, insofar as parliamentary politics were concerned. Labour figures may have railed at the Irish worker for failing to vote in his own class interest (a disposition shared with the indigenous labour

force), but given the limited extent of Labour's challenge, and the over-riding importance of the national question of the Irish community, it was expecting a great deal from the Irish community to jettison their alliance with the Liberals who held the constitutional power to make Home Rule a reality. This simple fact meant that even Irish radicals like Michael Davitt and John Ferguson would never break completely with the Liberals.

The 1892 General Election saw, for the first time, a definite 'Labour' challenge at the polls. In Scotland seven 'Labour' candidates stood: three from the SLP (two in Glasgow seats); and four from the SUTCLP (one in Glasgow). All stood against Liberals and all lost heavily, though in Camlachie and Tradeston, the Labour intervention may have been responsible for losing the seats to Liberal Unionists. (see Chapter Two.)

For the Irish this was an election where maximum unity had to be thrown behind the Gladstonian Liberals who had, apparently, committed themselves to Home Rule. The *Glasgow Observer* was in no mood to encourage any sympathies for Labour candidates. It could claim that, "We are not going to find fault with the Labour Party for asserting their independence and battling for their rights", but it questioned the credentials of Cunninghame Graham, "a Scottish landlord", Bennet Burleigh, "Unionist journalist", and even Keir Hardie, whom it accused of "carpet bagging", as "bona fide Labour representative[s]". This "so-called Labour Party", it went on, warming to the subject, was being led by⁴³

A wretched set of wire-pullers [who] put one another forward as Labour candidates, blow each other's trumpets, and apparently believe that those watching them are such fools as to be taken in by the palpable deception.

Irish workers will note that the game of these men is obviously to put Home Rule to one side, and also to put the land question out of sight."

The immediate 'provocation' for this splenetic attack was Cunninghame Graham's assertion that he was quite pleased about Michael Davitt's defeat at the Waterford bye-election by John Redmond, leader of the Parnellites, which group the *Observer* was violently opposed to. However, the fundamental point of contention was attitudes to the Liberal Party, upon which all hopes of Home Rule seemed to lie.

Labour can only be regarded as having a specious independence from the Liberals at this stage. When the rhetoric is cut through the strategy, at least of the SLP, can be seen as trying to force a number of seats from the Liberals, i.e. by the threat of standing labour candidates to get agreement from the Liberals to allow Labour a free run in a number of constituencies against the Tories. The SLP Conference in January 1892 was talking in terms of 12 candidates in Scotland (plus one in Carlisle).⁴⁴ The 'independent' status of these candidates was not at all clear since it was claimed, by Hardie, that Cunninghame Graham was the officially adopted Liberal candidate in Camlachie, and Bennet Burleigh was "likely" to be adopted by the Liberal Association in Tradeston.⁴⁵ As we have discussed elsewhere (in Chapter Two) Labour's organisation and strategy were fluid and ad-hoc; as in 1888 at Mid-Lanark the ultimate step of standing against Liberal candidates was one that Labour saw itself as forced to take due to Liberal intransigence in failing to give Labour its fair share of parliamentary representation. The suggested tactics of the SLP can be compared to the history of the Irish Party. This is implicit in Hardie:⁴⁶

In addition the Labour party hold the balance of power in many other constituencies and the Executive would see that power was relentlessly used."

This comparison, very common at the time, was made explicit by John Ferguson who referred to Labour's raising its "own standard" in 1892, in the

same way the Irish Party did in 1871.⁴⁷

The attitude of Ferguson to the General Election was not dominated totally by Home Rule or, rather, he saw Home Rule and the cause of labour as inextricably intertwined. As relations between the Labour and Irish parties began to worsen Ferguson attempted to act as peace-broker, to appeal for harmony by taking a long view of affairs. In early January 1892 he sent a long letter to the press entitled, "The Revolt of Labour and the Triumph of Home Rule", in which he stated his own position and tried to accommodate the Labour and Irish interests.⁴⁸

Ferguson argued that the Home Rule movement, as led by Isaac Butt in the 1870s, had looked to the Irish aristocracy to gain Home Rule, to win through "generous sentiment". As a result the movement was dead or dying by 1878. The leadership of a 'new' party under the leadership of Parnell was also the formation of a new "democratic" movement with the policy of "the Land for the people". "Home Rule at once took a new life when it called up economic and democratic forces like those to aid its noble sentiments". Not only did "the new doctrine [sweep] the masses" in Ireland but, "The British workingmen were attracted to the Home Rule doctrine". The labour candidates of 1885 stood on Home Rule and "appropriation of ground rents", and this "revolt of labour" was what induced Gladstone and Morley to start looking seriously at "Irish history and Irish social problems." The Highland land war and crofter agitation was organised on the lines of Davitt and the Land League. Gladstone's proposal to buy out the Irish landlords was responsible for defeat in 1886, but "the Labour Party" would not support any government which proposed that policy, and, further, "is for Home Rule as a first measure, to clear the way for the labour and land reform it demands. I know of no labour leader who is not upon the Irish side."

According to Ferguson "the Labour Party will control the coming election". What had to be done was to convince Gladstone and Morley that the "official party must not act as hitherto against the two or three dozen of Labour candidates who will be put up to win." Here we again come up against the point that this 'Labour party' is not, or is not yet, a truly independent political force, but is still part of Liberalism. Ferguson was delighted at the success of the Radicals (with whom he identified) at the Liberal Convention in Scotland the previous November where they successfully carried a Home Rule amendment calling for the "appropriation of ground rents and mining royalties by taxation", and also proposals for "one man one vote", and the Eight hours day. Ferguson may well have believed that, "the Labour Party knows the near future belongs to it", but for the moment his position was of continued adherence to the Liberals.

The Radical party to which I belong is doing its best to prevent any parting of the ways between the Liberal and Labour parties till we turn the next election and carry Home Rule."

But this could only be avoided if Labour was permitted its "two or three dozen candidates". Ferguson wanted to avoid "another Irish blunder" like Mid-Lanark in 1888 when Parnell opposed Hardie to please Gladstone. In his desire to link Labour and the Irish Ferguson seems to have grossly overstated the strength of Labour; far from controlling the election its performance was negligible. The insurmountable dilemma facing Ferguson and other Irish politicians who thought like him was that the Liberals were not going to accept Labour candidatures, and this being so, unless Labour abandoned its ambitions, there would have to be a direct clash.

The SLP conference on 2 January was largely dominated by the question of relations with the Liberal party, and decided on a policy of voting, where there was no Labour candidate, for any party depending on the attitude of individual

candidates to the labour programme. There was a strong suspicion that Liberal headquarters in London were planning to stand working men Lib-Lab candidates, "in order to outmanoeuvre the Labour Party", and Hardie stated that these would be fought even more vigorously than ordinary Liberal candidates.⁴⁹ In such a strained atmosphere Hardie added to the pressure by stating that the Liberal Conference decisions on land nationalisation and the eight hours were nothing but, "a device to catch the Labour vote".⁵⁰ Ferguson, himself partly responsible for achieving these breakthroughs, was compelled to publicly contradict Hardie. It was something he was actually loath to do since he had no desire to muddy the waters any further, but, since he had been unable to attend the SLP Conference, he felt he had no other option. Pointing out that Hardie had been in the strangers gallery at the Liberal meeting and did not indicate then that, "he thought the whole thing a fraud", Ferguson described Hardie's new view as "unjust [and] impolitic".⁵¹ Despite Ferguson's efforts to be as diplomatic as possible, this public disagreement helped further sharpen the differences in policy between Labour and the Irish. In the same letter Ferguson went on to say⁵²

I look to the Liberal party as the real instrument to obtain reform, and to Mr Gladstone as the noblest British statesman in our annals.

Given this view there could be little doubt where Ferguson would stand when the crunch came over Labour candidates standing against Liberals. After the elections he was expelled for his position of Honorary Vice-President of the SLP for having appeared on Liberal platforms in seats contested by Labour.

As we have seen all seven Labour candidates in Scotland were defeated, the best result being in Aberdeen South where H H Champion (SUTCLP) managed 15.8% of the poll. Even here, however, the Liberals still won, though Champion's 'military' style of socialism may have been more attractive to

disaffected Tories than Liberals. In Glasgow the SUTCLP candidate fared abysmally with only 2.1% of the poll, but the SLP in Camlachie and Tradeston did reasonably well in polling 11.9% and 10.7% respectively, and made the greatest impact by drawing off enough Liberal votes to let the Unionists in. (see Ch 3) How much of the Irish vote the SLP candidates got is an open question and Cunninghame Graham certainly didn't seem to expect much in early 1892 when he wrote to Hardie:⁵³

About the Irish I am not sorry. Let them do their meanest. They'll want me some day. In the meantime I look to Scotch democrats as yourself, Haddow, Brodie, etc. to protect me from the attacks of reactionary priestcraft. That is what it means.

The dispute with Ferguson, however, cannot be reduced to "the attacks of reactionary priestcraft", and shows the political complexity and variety amongst the Glasgow Irish community. McAffrey points out that in the 1890s, "there is evidence of a growing interest within the Catholic community in social questions", with translations of *Rerum Novarum* appearing in the press and regular discussion meetings being held on it. This is related by him to the regularly expressed fears about Irishmen voting for "no-hope" Labour candidates. After the election of 1892 the *Observer* fulminated against the "traitors" who had supported Labour in Camlachie and Tradeston; the virulence in itself being an indicator that sufficient numbers had done just that.⁵⁴

Despite the failure of the Liberal Government to secure the Home Rule Bill against the hostility of the Lords the General Election of 1895 again saw the INL throw its weight behind the Liberals. A complicating factor for Irish electors, however, was the Church-School question and the view taken by many of the hierarchy, including Cardinal Vaughan (successor to Cardinal Manning), that Catholics should support Tories since they, at least, wanted to have religion taught in schools.⁵⁵ The *Observer* strenuously opposed this

attitude which actually threatened to push Home Rule into the background. Charles Diamond, proprietor of the *Observer*, had been Nationalist MP for North Monaghan from 1892, but was 'de-selected' by his constituency in 1895, partly due to this issue and partly due to his opposition to the drink trade.⁵⁶ The *Observer* argued that the Liberal Nonconformists and the Radical Secularists had good reason to oppose the Tories over the imposition of Church of England schools, and that while the Radicals were not as hostile as commonly supposed the Tories had been in power for six years (1886-1892) and done nothing to relieve Catholic complaints about rate-support for schools.⁵⁷

This dispute between the clergy and politicians indicates that Irish was not simply reducible to Catholic, that religion had to respond to political demands and priorities, as well as vice-versa. For the *Observer* the issue was clear-cut; the "first duty" of the Irish Party was "to get Home Rule for Ireland".⁵⁸

If Catholic Ireland were offered denominational schools, and Catholic colleges and other advantages to religion in exchange for Home Rule, she would not accept them. THE IRISH PARTY WOULD BE BOUND IF THEIR SUPPORTERS IN THIS COUNTRY WERE CALLED ON TO VOTE TORY AT THE GENERAL ELECTION, TO OPPOSE THAT ADVICE, AND IN SO DOING THE BISHOPS, PRIESTS AND PEOPLE OF CATHOLIC IRELAND WOULD SUPPORT THE IRISH PARTY.

Moreover, there were other considerations as well as Home Rule per se. It was argued that any call to vote Tory on this one issue was unlikely to have any effect, since the Irish vote was a radical and social reform vote.⁵⁹

I believe that if at the General Election his Eminence and the Heirarchy called upon us to vote with the Tories on the school question and ignore other considerations that such an appeal would not be widely responded to. This is an indisputable fact. The Irish Home Rulers will not vote Tory while Home Rule is advocated by Radicals and opposed by Tories.

That is certain. Labour men, temperance men and others interested in social reform, will not be easily got into the Tory camp on this education question ...

On the other hand the *Observer* was just as hostile to the ILP candidates as it was to the Tories, indeed it insisted on regarding them as opposite sides of the same coin; "in this contest Labourite means Coercionist".⁶⁰ Any vote for Labour was not only a wasted vote but a direct vote for the Tories since Labour's policy was not based on actually winning seats but on keeping the Liberal out. The example of Camlachie in 1892 was kept in mind, when "Cunninghame Graham, posing as a Labour candidate, succeeded in doing the work of the wrecker and handing over the seat to the Tories".⁶¹ On this occasion there was, apparently, no dispute between the *Observer* and the INL in Glasgow. The Father Maginn Branch, one of the two Bridgeton branches, refused the ILP candidate, Professor Watson, permission even to address the membership. John Ferguson was fully behind the Liberals, and much more definitely so than in 1892. Gone was the view of Labour replacing the Liberals and he explicitly contradicted his own argument of three years before, viz, "that the Independent Labour Party are only doing as the Irish Party did". In general terms Ferguson's position had not changed, indeed it could not change, logically, until Home Rule was won, or the Liberals began to oppose the movement, but there was an identifiable hardening in his attitude as regards the intervention of the ILP.⁶²

They could easily have been adopted by the Liberal Party upon the same principle of general support of Liberal measures with complete independence on Labour questions. They now have to be opposed because they will not agree to form the combination for the advance and support of the Liberal Party upon its great programme."

The ILP stood five candidates in Glasgow in 1895, a challenge not to repeated on the same scale prior to the First World War, but its performance was very

disappointing, averaging only 7.5% of the poll with Robert Smillie doing best with just under 11% (see Chapter Three). The result of the election was bad for the Liberals who were left with just two of the City's seven seats, though it is not clear that the ILP intervention was responsible. Most of the Unionist majorities were very small, but only in one seat, St Rollox, would the combined Liberal - ILP vote have defeated the Conservative, and this was the seat where the ILP vote was proportionately the lowest. The *Observer* did not immediately seek to blame 'traitors' for the disastrous results. There was a common agreement that it had been the absence of working-class voters due to the 'Fair' holidays, a cause cited by the *Observer*, Ferguson and the parish priest in St Rollox.⁶³ However, Labour's relatively high poll in Camlachie may have been due, as in 1892, to a level of Irish support from within the HGB. It was a few months after the General Election, in the run-up to the municipal polls, that the *Observer* laid the blame for the Liberal defeat in Camlachie at the door of the HGB:⁶⁴

It is notorious that the Home Government Branch did all it could safely do against Baillie Chisholm in Camlachie, and only by a sort of death-bed repentance came into line at the eleventh hour, when to persevere in its schematic disposition would have resulted in the branch being cut off from the organisation.

The re-opening of this old wound was the prelude to a new and much more significant division within Irish opinion, over the role of the Irish vote at municipal elections and in particular, its relation to Labour candidates.

The Municipal Alliance and Irish Disagreements

Although at first sight the General Election of 1895 would have appeared likely to have worsened relations between Labour and the Irish, this was only true as regards the attitude of the *Observer*, while the INL drew much closer to the ILP and Trades Council. After 1895 there was a change in Irish and

Labour approaches to the vexed question of what stance to be taken towards General Elections. By 1900 there was considerable Irish disenchantment with the Liberals, leading to the INL in Blackfriars & Hutchesontown actually voting Tory, a policy supported by the *Observer*.⁶⁵ The Gladstone-MacDonald pact of 1903 allowed the INL to recommend support for Labour candidates where they were solid on Home Rule, thus allowing more leeway to the local branches.⁶⁶ Even though this agreement did not run in Scotland it, nevertheless, had an impact on thinking within the INL with the Executive giving support to Labour in a number of three-cornered contests. Alongside of this Labour's parliamentary ambitions became more limited after 1895, in subsequent General Elections it only contested two, at most, of the Glasgow seats, and always the same two. At the same time Labour's share of the vote began to increase markedly.

We shall return to the parliamentary scene below but the first major breakthrough in terms of electoral arrangements occurred in local elections. As we saw in the previous chapter the ILP in Glasgow followed the lead of John Ferguson in municipal politics, and the INL played a significant role in the formation and early years of the Workers Election Committee [WEC], a development which further split Irish opinion in the City.

The crucial divide lay, on the one hand, between the Home Government Branch of the INL and, on the other, the *Glasgow Observer*.⁶⁷ In 1894 the *Observer* came under the sole ownership and control of Charles Diamond who was a keen advocate of temperance and the local veto, and though he could agree with men such as John Ferguson that the Irish vote was largely a working class, social reform vote, he was determined that nothing should stand in the way of Home Rule, neither the ILP nor the Cardinal of Westminster. The Home Government Branch was the oldest and largest nationalist organisation in Scotland and was also the wealthiest, and hence,

most independent, of all the INL branches. It also had a number of publicans amongst its membership and office-bearers. We have already seen that the branch or, at least, large elements within it, had given succour to Labour candidates in 1885, 1892, and even 1895, much to the chagrin of the *Observer*. However, it was the much more open support given by the HGB to ILP candidates for the Town Council that really brought the simmering dispute out into the open.

During the General Election campaign of July 1895 Hugh Murphy, President of the HGB, had sailed very close to the wind in following the instructions of the Executive. He had spoken of the duty of unity in the Irish camp which could only be translated in practical terms as meaning support the Liberals. But Murphy did not, unlike Ferguson, make any direct reference to, or criticism of, the Labour candidates. The *Observer* made no bones about the matter, regarding Labour as open accomplices of the Tories; "They are our enemies. Have at them."⁶⁸ And later it was to fulminate at the HGB's "coquetting" with Smillie in Camlachie. Only a few months after the General Election Murphy was working assiduously for the ILP candidates at the municipal polls. The closeness of the relationship can be gauged from the fact that it was Murphy who proposed George Mitchell of the ILP at the Committee meeting of the Second Ward (Mitchell, incidentally, topped the poll at the Ward Committee). Speaking in support of putting Mitchell forward as a distinctively Labour candidate, Murphy argued that⁶⁹

during the past ten years they had seen candidates calling themselves temperance candidates, and candidates calling themselves publicans' candidates, but they found that all in the Town Council, Liberal, Tory, Publican and Temperance united to put down the workingman (cheers) These men only used the workman as a ladder to get into power and then kicked them away.

For the *Observer* this was "dabbling in political heresy" and it urged its

readers, "Do Not Support the ILP".⁷⁰ It was particularly critical of Hugh Murphy who, as well as being the most assiduous proponent of Irish co-operation with the ILP was, as President of the HGB, one of the most influential figures in Irish circles in Glasgow. His heresy lay, in the eyes of the *Observer*, in that the ILP was effectively anti-Home Rule due to its tactic of opposing Liberals. Mitchell had been particularly active in the Camlachie parliamentary contests of 1892 and 1895 which, on both occasions, saw the Liberals lose to the Tories. The ILP's intention in standing Mitchell - "the brains-carrier of the [ILP] in the city" - was the same as the Irish would have in standing candidates, not simply to add to their number, but to increase their status and prestige in the district and city. Thus, to permit the return of any ILP candidate, for any position, weakened the cause of Home Rule in Glasgow, and the *Observer* attacked the reasoning which led Irishmen to support Mitchell.⁷¹

Their theory is that Municipal and Parliamentary elections stand quite apart, that we can support a man and a party at a Municipal election and assail them when a Parliamentary election comes round. But in local politics this water-tight compartment fighting is really impossible.

The *Observer* devoted a specific editorial to Murphy entitled, "Mr Murphy, ILP", in which it argued that it was time he joined the ILP outright since that was where his heart was anyway.⁷²

and there is nothing to distinguish him from Pete (Pat) Curran and the other Home Government men who have gone before him into the camp whither most of them tend.

It has been argued that Catholic hostility to the ILP in the 1890s was due to the nature of 'Ethical Socialism' with its biblical imagery, New Testament code of ethics, revivalist fervour, etc, and which seemed almost like a rival and sacriligious religion.⁷³ Whatever the significance of this it is notable that the *Observer* did not bring religion into the debate. It was obviously concerned at

the secularising tendency of involvement with the ILP, witness its obsession with Pete (Pat) Curran, though this was concerned with his loss of Irishness as much as his religion, but in terms of the debate with the HGB the *Observer* was concerned only with political issues as such.

The strongest point that Irish figures like Murphy had in their favour was that ILP councillors would be supporters of John Ferguson's municipal programme. This the *Observer* accepted, as it did that the programme was a "good thing" and, yes, it did want supporters of it returned to the Town Council, but not if they were opponents of Home Rule; "then we stick by the greater and let the lesser go". Ferguson's programme would just have to wait until Home Rulers could be found to support it.⁷⁴

Though its attitude was determined by Home Rule the *Observer* also partly based its opposition to any dealings with the ILP on the temperance issue by claiming that, "The ILP are just as welcome to the whisky people as the Tories are".⁷⁵ The evidence for this was that "one of" the ILP candidates had, at a previous Parish Council election, been supported by a circular emanating from the Publican's Association. The level of innuendo was continued with the comment, "This throws a white light on the anxiety of the Home Government Branch to promote ILP candidates".⁷⁶ This lurid scenario of a 'publican conspiracy' involving the HGB and ILP does have some circumstantial, though tenuous, evidence to support it: Murphy and other HGB members were involved in the drink trade; the ILP had already suffered from the publicity surrounding a wine dealer who had provided the party with funds; a few years later Boyd S Brown, likely to have been the candidate referred to above, was dropped by the WEC due to his liquor connections. Yet to claim the ILP was acting as a front for publicans was mere political abuse. While there was plenty of scope for corruption on the licencing court, the ILP and WEC always stood, no matter the private actions of individuals, with municipal control as

part of their programme. When the INL attempted to get this item dropped from the WEC programme it failed, but did not then resign from the Committee. (See chapter Three.)

While the furore over relations with the ILP was continuing there was an attempt being made to better organise the Irish vote at municipal elections. As with any other organisation the INL had its eye cast on the re-division of wards due to take place in 1896 and the subsequent 'general' municipal election. It was attempted to establish a Central Municipal Election Council in order to increase Irish representation or, as it was put, "to safeguard Irish interests in municipal contests and afterwards to establish committees in each ward in Glasgow."⁷⁷ At a delegate conference this resolution was passed by the votes of five branches against one, with one abstaining. The delegates of the opposing branch, the Sir Charles Russell, were castigated as "Whigs", and the argument for "a sternly independent attitude towards both political parties" was directed at them.⁷⁸ Against the centralised focus of the projected Committee the Russell branch wanted "Home Rule" for each branch (and the dissolution of the Committee). One of its delegates stated that he had:⁷⁹

canvassed the 6th Ward [i.e. Blackfriars] over and over again and he did not think that the Irish held overwhelming power in that district at least.

The whole point about the Central Committee, however, was to bargain the Irish vote in wards where it was numerous but not "overwhelming" for support in wards where Irish candidates could hope to get returned. Such a strategy demanded central control over local autonomy. In turn, however, it begged the question of exactly where the Irish were strong enough to return their own candidates. The interesting point about the quote above is that Blackfriars was commonly regarded as an area with an important Irish vote - at every election special appeals were made by candidates to the Irish

electors – yet here was a Nationalist with, presumably, close knowledge of the ward, denying the significance of that vote. It is not too much to speculate that a similar recognition was shared by the by the other INL branches who still wanted concerted Irish action but realised it could never be fully independent. This, and an existing sympathy with Labour anyway, explains why come the General municipal election of 1896 there was no evidence of the Irish Central Municipal Election Council, but that the INL had joined with the Trades Council sponsored Workers Election Committee.

As we saw in the previous chapter the success of the WEC was also the key to the return of Irish councillors, though not as the *Observer* had hoped for, as straight Nationalist or Catholic candidates. Although somewhat muted, temporarily, by the results in 1896, the *Observer's* opposition to links with the ILP continued throughout the 1890s, as did its opposition to the HGB. The main target remained Hugh Murphy whom it denied, "speaks for the Glasgow Irishmen", but only for:⁸⁰

a very narrow circle of Glasgow publicans and Glasgow ILP men who happen to be Irish in nationality and anxious to use the Irish movement to further their own purposes.

As the alliance with the ILP was maintained via the WEC the *Observer* even turned on John Ferguson, accusing him of being a Parnellite and a supporter of the Tories, i.e. by supporting Labour candidates against Liberals.⁸¹ Even when the INL withdrew from the WEC the quarrel did not end. In 1903 the HGB bought over the *Glasgow Star and Examiner* and published it as their own organ in opposition to the *Observer*. However, they could only maintain the venture for five years when they were forced to sell out to, of all people, Charles Diamond, who then published the *Star* as a mid-week supplement to the *Observer*.⁸²

A New Century – New Perspectives on Labour

Throughout the 1890s, after the 3rd Home Rule Bill, it became increasingly clear that the Liberals were dragging their feet over Home Rule with the development of an 'Imperialist' wing under Lord Roseberry. The year 1900 brought this into clearer focus in terms both of Liberal commitment to Home Rule at the General Election, and attitudes to the Boer War. For Hugh Murphy it was clear that the Liberal Party could be divided into two separate wings and that the Liberal Imperialists who supported the war in southern Africa were also staunch defenders of the Union of Ireland with Britain. Whereas in 1895 the struggle had been between Liberal and Tory there was now a struggle within Liberalism itself. This, and the sympathy felt by the Irish for the Boer Republics led Murphy to propose a policy of standing independent candidates against Liberal Imperialists and:⁸³

failing this, they should sweep away the Liberal Jingo and have the genuine Jingo elected. ... By doing so they would have the forces of liberty and reaction fighting over again.

Murphy's position was perhaps made easier by the fact that he believed a Tory victory to be inevitable, and this would therefore make it easier for Irish voters to support 'independent', i.e. Labour candidates. For the *Observer*, still clinging to its faith in the Liberal Party, such a strategy was far too drastic a step to take and it counselled voting for anti-Boer Liberals so long as they supported Home Rule, though not for "any seceder or backslider who chooses to use the Liberal name."⁸⁴ The Catholic education question was still an issue, though not so prominent as in 1895, and the *Observer's* attitude was still the same; the Tories were not sympathetic to Catholic claims, the Liberals, at any rate in Glasgow, were, and that Home Rule remained the decisive issue anyway.⁸⁵

The differing perspectives of Murphy and the HGB, and the *Observer* did not,

as things worked out, precipitate any clash between them. The Liberal candidates in four of the city's constituencies re-affirmed their support for Home Rule, and in Blackfriars & Hutchesontown where the sitting Liberal would not agree to give the undertaking to, "keep Irish Home Rule in the forefront of my programme both in and out of Parliament", Irish opinion was united against him. There was no contest in Central with the sitting Tory being returned unopposed. There was only one Labour candidate, in Camlachie, which offered the rare spectacle of the HGB and the *Observer* both supporting Labour; the reason being that there was no Liberal in the field. The HGB passed an unanimous vote in his favour and the *Observer* approved of him as "just the kind of man the constituency ought to have."⁸⁶ Diamond's paper had not changed its mind over Labour candidates handing seats to Tories in three-cornered contests but that problem did not arise in Camlachie on this occasion since, "the Liberals and Labour people have come to a wise, mutual understanding on the matter."⁸⁷

The 1900 election is famous in Glasgow's history as the only occasion in which the Conservatives won all the seats. In this Tory clean-sweep what was the role of the Irish? As McAffrey has argued the Irish vote was unable on its own to combat the general swing to the Conservatives.(See above.) In 1900, however, it is difficult to get a clear picture since the two seats where Irish influence was reckoned greatest were fought under very particular circumstances. In Blackfriars and Hutchesontown the Irish electors were advised to vote Tory in order to punish the recalcitrant Liberal. A Liberal majority of almost 400 was turned into a deficit of just under 1,000, but given the other results in Glasgow, however, it is difficult to see the Irish action as the determining factor.

In Camlachie the Unionist had an even greater majority, defeating the Labour candidate by 1,238 votes, though in this case the seat had already been lost

by the Liberals . While Labour had established a relatively strong position in Camlachie and enjoyed a good relationship with the INL it was still not popular enough, even with united Irish backing and no Liberal opponent, to win a Parliamentary seat. According to the *Observer* Fletcher's defeat was due, not to any hesitance in the Irish vote, but to a Liberal "boycott" of the Labour candidate.⁸⁸ A point of related interest is that the *Observer* also stated that William Maxwell, the Liberal candidate for Tradeston who was President of the Scottish Co-operative Wholesale Society, would be opposed by Liberal shopkeepers in the district because of his co-op connections.⁸⁹ Given the antipathy of Liberal Associations in Scotland to labour candidates, and the recent history of the small traders failed "boycott", both these assertions appear very likely.

1900 and Irish backing for Fletcher in Camlachie marks a watershed in the practical arrangements between the Irish and Labour as regards parliamentary elections in Glasgow. In 1906 not only the HGB, but also the INL Executive and the *Observer*, would support the Labour candidates in Glasgow, both in three-way contests. However, this did not indicate a straightforward shift from Liberal to Labour allegiance, and in the municipal arena the attitudes of the HGB and the *Observer* seemed almost to swap over. Just as the *Observer* began to regard Labour as a potential ally, though it remained insistent upon judging each candidature separately, so the HGB began to retreat from the Stalwart alliance.

At the municipal elections of 1901 the *Observer* was jubilant about the defeat of Shaw Maxwell in Mile End for which it claimed the responsibility. The *Observer* had always been hostile to Shaw Maxwell but the specific reason on this occasion was that Maxwell had sacrificed the candidature of Hugh Murphy in attempt to appease the local Tories and prevent them opposing his own re-election. The *Observer* was still opposed to Murphy but chose to

regard this as a slight to the whole Irish-Catholic community and advised its readers to vote for the Tory who, despite Maxwell's efforts, did stand, and won by 29 votes.⁹⁰ At the annual 'Workers' Concert on the night of the poll Shaw Maxwell made, "bitter ... references to the cause of his fall". He stated that he had had to fight, "an extraordinary combination of Tories, Liberals, Unionists, Orangemen and Catholics", and argued that his advocacy of Home Rule for the past twenty-one years deserved, "a little more gratitude".⁹¹ There were also veiled threats from his supporters of retaliatory action against John Ferguson the following year in Calton. While 1901 was a bad year for the Stalwarts, in which they were defeated in the five wards where they stood and lost two seats - the only bright spot being P G Stewart's unopposed return in Hutchesontown - the effort was made by defeated ILP candidates, like Carson and Hunter, not to indulge in recriminations. Stewart explicitly countered Shaw Maxwell by saying that:⁹²

He would consider himself a traitor to his party if he uttered a single word there which would prevent the advanced forces coming together..

Out of this tangled web certain threads can be grasped. One being that the Irish identified themselves as 'Progressive' or 'Labour' voters (the labels being interchangeable) but, they expected a quid pro quo in that they had a separate identity within the larger framework and should receive reciprocal rights.⁹³

The Irish voters in the city are progressive voters; perfectly willing to vote on the progressive side, since their interests lie that way, if only the progressive party would have the courage and loyalty to agree to give comrades' rights to their Irish allies.

Another point to emerge is that, and despite the clash with Shaw Maxwell, the

Observer was more clearly identifying with Labour, to the extent of now offering advice on how to improve its performance. The *Observer* agreed with George Carson that what was needed was better organisation and argued that the Stalwarts should conduct:⁹⁴

a constant campaign the whole year through in all the Wards which they represent or desire to represent ... It is clear that the method of attempting to raise a splash in three or four weeks before the election is one which cannot end in success.

As an example of what could be done it referred to Scott Gibson, not as someone to be supported, but whose methods of organisation were, "worthy of exact imitation in every detail".⁹⁵

The poor level of organisation by Labour was examined in the previous chapter and the Shaw Maxwell incident simply puts it into sharper focus. Both Shaw Maxwell and Hugh Murphy were recognised WEC candidates yet they appear to have been at loggerheads with one another, and the dispute seems to have continued the following year when John Ferguson only managed to win in Calton by 60 votes.⁹⁶ Shaw Maxwell regained Mile End at a bye-election in 1903 when he stood against the WEC candidate, none other than Hugh Murphy, and retained it in November, this time as the official candidate of the WEC;⁹⁷ behaviour which would seem guaranteed to raise Irish tempers to boiling point. This absence of any central authority not only encouraged the rise of the maverick Scott Gibson but also permitted personality clashes to threaten and seriously weaken Labour's position. As the very 'particular' concerns of municipal politics re-asserted themselves, with candidates operating as freelancers, it was becoming rapidly apparent that the WEC was no more than a mere shell.

The conflict between the HGB and the ILP largely revolved around the

phenomenon of Scott Gibson whom the HGB firmly supported, while the *Observer* was as equally scathing in condemnation of him as was the ILP. This new element in Glasgow's municipal scene was, by and large, a cult of personality, but did, on occasion, threaten to erupt into an actual political movement. After the polls in 1902 the Glasgow Herald bemoaned the "indignity put upon the Council by the election of two Scott Gibsonites", and went on to draw a distinction between this "type", and the "earnest Socialist".⁹⁸

Of course, the existence of a class capable of believing in the Scott Gibson type of candidate is a formidable obstacle in the way of reform; but, if the earnest Socialist has come to stay, surely it is impossible that the electors will be very long in finding out Town Councillors who shirk committee work and devote themselves to the cause of making rows at open meetings of the Corporation.

While Scott Gibson's genius for creating controversy was one reason for the dislike felt for him across all shades of the 'established' political spectrum, the reference to a certain "class" indicates a more fundamental cause for concern. The outstanding feature of the Scott Gibson election campaigns, apart from his personal success, was the massive turnout at the polls. In his first election, for Springburn in 1901, the turnout was 69% with Scott Gibson securing 73% of the poll against a sitting member. The following year when Scott Gibson fully came to public prominence with his sensational unseating of the incumbent Lord Provost in Woodside, the turnout was an unprecedented 83%. In 1905 when he successfully defended his seat, and in 1906 when he won in Dalmarnock, the polls were again in excess of 80%; the average polls for contested wards in these years were 57%, 70%, and 64% respectively.

While Scott Gibson was able to galvanise interest and support much more effectively than Labour candidates, it was also the case that he was perceived

as bringing a new body of electors to the polls, very much of the lower working class. The self-styled scourge of municipal extravagance and advocate of the "claims of the poorer classes" was originally identified by the *Labour Leader* as a socialist and regarded by the *Herald* as a Stalwart or, at least, representing what had originally been understood as a Stalwart. However, despite claims of his having been a member of the ILP at one time, Scott Gibson was never part of the Stalwarts nor a candidate of the WEC. In 1902 Labour supported Lord Provost Chisholm in Woodside because of his support for municipilisation and housing reform, and Labour's relations with Scott Gibson can be regarded as in an open state of hostility from then on. From Scott Gibson's populist perspective, however, the Labour members were simply part of the municipal establishment. In particular he clashed with Joseph Burgess (ex-editor of the *Workman's Times*, now a labour Councillor, whom S G dubbed "the Cockney Columbus who discovered Glasgow). Scott Gibson claimed that Burgess had misused Corporation funds regarding expenses for a journey to London⁹⁹ and it was claimed that Burgess later "intrigued" with the Liberal-Temperance caucus in Woodside against Gibson in 1905.¹⁰⁰

The question of temperance brought out all the usual accusations and counter accusations of publican influence and machinations on the magistrates bench. *Forward* claimed that Scott Gibson won in Woodside in 1902, "with the support of the Publicans and the Landlords", while posing as a temperance advocate.¹⁰¹ In 1904 the defeated sitting member for Woodside (ousted by a "Scott Gibsonite"), replying to accusations by Scott Gibson that he, Martin, was, "one of the drinking set", claimed in return that it was his opponents who represented, "an unscrupulous section of the drinking set".¹⁰² Martin was particularly incensed by the role played by the *Star*, and set out to prove that it was, "Mr Scott Gibson's party organ". The evidence for this was that of

forty "Scottish shareholders" in the paper over thirty were, "publicans or brewers travellers, and one was a retired publican". The lawyer, M J Connell was also a shareholder and he was Scott Gibson's closest associate on the Town Council, as well as being an office-bearer in the HGB.¹⁰³

The Irish, and particularly, the HGB's connections with the drink trade, had long been a cause for comment in Glasgow politics and it may well have been the case that their support for Scott Gibson was merely a marriage of convenience useful to the business careers of certain nationalist politicians. However, there is also the fact of Scott Gibson's popular appeal to consider. The *Star* commented on the superior attitude displayed by supporters of Martin in Woodside in 1904 to the "type" of people who voted for Scott Gibson. It reported one such, a sausage manufacturer, as saying:¹⁰⁴

He believed the better class were in favour of Baillie Martin. There was a great many of the unthinking, may be the unwashed, whose support they could not hope to get. They had not the power or sense of reasoning.

It is not difficult to see in this attitude (and that of the *Glasgow Herald*) a fear of the residuum, of the slum-dweller and slum-voter, a fear also expressed from within the ranks of Labour. For the Irish, however, the effort to extend the franchise was a constant pre-occupation, not, it is true, by any protest movement, but by organising to submit claims to the registration courts, and by attempting to manipulate the terms of the lodger franchise.¹⁰⁵ For a community largely made up of the poorer working classes this is hardly surprising and also helps explain Irish sympathy for Scott Gibson. It is an interesting point that M J Connell, who won in Cowlares in 1902 had previously been unsuccessful when he had been a Liberal and Ward Committee nominee in 1896, and as a WEC candidate in 1899. At the same time, while municipal affairs had their own momentum and particular

concerns, for the HGB, as part of the United Irish League, Home Rule could not be forgotten, and the alliance with Scott Gibson did not survive the General Election of 1906. Irish National support for Labour in Glasgow, as had occurred in 1900, was repeated at the General Election of 1906. Though on this occasion there were two Labour candidates this was still a moderate challenge as compared with 1895. What was different from 1900, however, was that the Labour candidates were standing against Liberals in three-cornered contests, yet still received 'official' Irish support; the Executive of the UIL, the *Observer*, the *Star*, and the HGB were all united in calling for Irish votes for Labour in Blackfriars & Hutchesontown, and Camlachie, and also N W Lanarkshire which included part of municipal Glasgow.

A crucial factor in Labour getting Irish support lay in having their candidates in the field first, in the case of Hutchesontown George Barnes began his campaign seriously as early as 1902. Obviously, Irish hostility to the Liberal in 1900 made the adoption of a Labour candidate solid on Home Rule that much easier. In Camlachie the absence of a Liberal candidate in 1900 allowed Labour to justifiably claim priority in challenging the sitting Unionist. There was some local opposition to Barnes amongst the Irish with a move from within the William O'Brien branch of the UIL for a repeat vote for Bonar Law, the Conservative. Though Wood describes this as a "major split" within the local branch it seems clear that the majority were for the Executive's directive and Barnes.¹⁰⁶

While Barnes secured a historic first for Labour in Glasgow and pushed the Liberal into third place over one thousand votes adrift, Labour came last in Camlachie where a Liberal Unionist topped the poll. Irish support may have been difficult to organise given that Labour's candidate was Joseph Burgess, yet the *Star* made it clear that no matter their (low) opinion of Burgess in municipal politics they were solidly behind him in the General Election; he

was the choice of the UIL Executive, he was first in the field, and he was judged sincere over Home Rule.¹⁰⁷ For his part, Burgess, speaking at an ILP meeting declared himself "delighted" with UIL support with which he was certain of victory.¹⁰⁸ In the event Burgess did not succeed, though he did poll 2,568 votes and received 30% of the turnout. This represented a drop of 539 in the Labour vote from 1900 which, considering there was a Liberal in the field, was not a bad performance, but one which, nevertheless, indicated how far Labour had still to go to achieve any significant change in the party system, even when it had Irish support.

At the same time as it was supporting Burgess in Camlachie the HGB was distancing itself quite markedly from Scott Gibson who was standing as a Unionist in Mid-Lanark. There was plenty of sympathy for Scott Gibson because of his municipal work and even suggestions that he could have chosen another constituency such as Bridgeton, but the HGB was clear that, on this occasion, "The Irish electors had to give him 'A SOUND THRASHING'", even though, "In municipal politics we have accorded our fullest support to Mr Scott Gibson."¹⁰⁹ The fact that the Liberal in Mid-Lanark, Caldwell, had previously stood as a Unionist in St Rollox did not give too much cause for concern - the UIL Executive had given him their mandate, and the *Star* declared him to be, "a tried and trusted friend of Ireland".¹¹⁰ Scott Gibson was, if anything, even more inconsistent since it had first appeared that he was going to stand as a Liberal in Tradeston.¹¹¹

The HGB may have looked forward to a resumption of normal relations after the General Election¹¹², but Scott Gibson's decision to transport himself to yet another Ward precipitated the final parting of the ways. Scott Gibson resigned his Woodside seat two years early in order to challenge Hugh Alexander in Dalmarnock whom he charged had, as Chairman of the Licensing Bench, obstructed his elevation to magistrate.¹¹³ Once again Scott Gibson

was successful. In another massive poll he defeated Alexander by almost a thousand votes, and his first action on returning to the Council was to claim his magistrate's chain. For the *Star* this was egotism gone too far.¹¹⁴

Mr Gibson has come out of the contest successful, but covered with mud. He stands now for nobody but himself; he is "the great I AM of Glasgow. ... He has ... left his record behind him in the mud of Dalmarnock. Instead of making himself the rallying centre of the advanced forces in the Council, he is completely isolated from the small body of men who have hitherto been associated with him.

Despite supporting Burgess in Camlachie and the disengagement from Scott Gibson, Irish relations with Labour at the municipal level did not improve and may well have been at their worst ever. Pointing out that the Labour candidate in Dalmarnock polled less than Scott Gibson's majority over Alexander, the *Star* commented that, "such freaks" as Scott Gibson were only permitted by, "the present contemptible condition of the Labour organisation throughout the city".¹¹⁵ John Ferguson - "practically the founder and the original guiding spirit of the Municipal Workers' Committee" - had died earlier in the year and with his death relations with the ILP had further deteriorated.¹¹⁶

In recent years the Workers Committee fell more and more into the hands of narrow-minded cranks, and, since Mr Ferguson's death, it has practically been dominated by the ILP. Indeed, we are somewhat at a loss to know how they can continue to honestly maintain the name of the "Workers' Municipal Committee.

The final straw was the ILP's decision to run a candidate at the bye-election to replace Ferguson without consulting with the Irish in Calton. As a result the Irish electors were advised to vote against Labour and the seat was lost. Further insult was made in November when Baillie O'Hare, one of only two

Catholics on the Town Council, retired in Springburn and the ILP put up Hugh Lyon against the man intended as the replacement Catholic, Daniel Harvey. As a Parish Councillor, it was claimed that Harvey had been, "a consistent upholder of the Labour cause ... [who] invariably supported the policy of the Glasgow Trades Council." As such there could be no objection to him, "from a democratic standpoint".¹¹⁷ But, the unity which had underpinned the 'Stalwart' alliance was a thing of the past. The WEC was now, more or less, the ILP, and its emphasis was upon, not the broad "forces of the democracy", but a more precise consideration of "Socialist and Labour votes".¹¹⁸

The November election of 1906 was Labour's worst year at the municipal polls in terms both of share of the vote and average poll. Eight candidates were run, six under the aegis of the WEC, one ILP, and one 'Labour'; no fewer than five came bottom of the poll. They were, as the *Star* righteously commented, "completely wiped out".¹¹⁹

As the various twists and turns in Glasgow politics during 1906 indicate the Irish political constituency was a "sophisticated" one, capable of distinguishing between local and national priorities, and between individual candidates. To reiterate McAffrey's point regarding, "the main characteristic of the Catholic vote in Scotland", prior to 1914, it was:¹²⁰

a conditional vote, organised and given to whichever power in the State would accede to Catholic wishes as expressed in this conjunction of religion and nationality.

However, and as McAffrey himself warns against regarding the Catholic vote as "homogeneous and monolithic" due to the existence of different national groupings, it needs to be added that the Irish Catholic vote was by no means always united, as the dispute between the *Observer* and the HGB makes clear.

An Uneasy Alliance, 1910–1914.

After the lack of friction over Irish support for Labour at the General Elections of 1900 and 1906, controversy resumed in 1910. There was no difficulty over George Barnes in Blackfriars & Hutesontown. He had proven himself a popular MP to Irish-Catholic opinion, solid on Home Rule, and detached from the secular position on education. The Liberals had accepted their defeat in 1906 and did not contest the seat in 1910; Barnes was triumphantly returned with 62% of the poll. However, in Camlachie, there was another three-cornered contest. Labour still had ambitions for the constituency and put forward J O'Connor Kessack whom the HGB was eager to support. The decision of the UIL Executive to support the Liberal, Cross, provoked perhaps the deepest split in Irish ranks in Glasgow, as the officers of the HGB resigned en masse. That this was principally due, not to a desire to support a fellow Irishman, but to a general pro-Labour position, can be seen from the fact that the Chairman of the HGB Murphy (brother of the late Hugh) resigned his seat on the UIL Executive after it had decided to support the Liberals in N W Lanark in preference to Labour.¹²¹ Though the *Observer* claimed that there was no split in the ranks in Camlachie and that the Executive mandate for Cross was "enthusiastically adopted" by a 500 strong meeting of "Nationalist electors of Camlachie", its own reporting of the passionate debate aroused in the HGB proved otherwise. At a tumultuous meeting one member of the HGB declared:¹²²

he had been at an Irish meeting in Camlachie where 95% of those present were agreed that they were no longer to be kept in the slums by Mr Cross or Mr Mackinder.

The significance of the above remark is that it emphasises, not Home Rule, but class issues confronting Irish workers in Britain. At another Nationalist

meeting in Glasgow, at College where there was no Labour candidate, it was declared that the Irish in that Division:¹²³

would have to consider their position as British working men as well as their position as Irishmen.

Certainly it would appear that, at the January election, the Irish vote stayed with Labour in Camlachie. Kessack's poll of 2,443 was only 125 adrift of Burgess's 1906 total, representing a fall of only 1.1% in share of the vote. The Tory vote slightly increased and the Liberal vote slightly fell. In the December election, however, there was a significant change in voting, even though the overall result remained the same. Labour lost 904 votes while the Liberals gained 660 to come within 26 votes of the Conservative. What is important, in terms of the Irish influence, is that on this occasion there was, more or less, unanimous backing of the Liberal¹²⁴ and Labour's drop of 904 votes matches almost exactly the 912 extra votes divided between Liberal and Tory (the Tory vote rose by 252). This could be explained simply by anti-Tory voters giving up on Labour after three unsuccessful efforts, but the arithmetic of the changed vote does offer significant circumstantial evidence as to the existence and size of a recognisable Irish vote; the *Scotsman* in 1910 estimated a figure of 700 Catholic voters in Camlachie.¹²⁵

At the local level Irish relations with Labour had improved from the low-point of 1906, but there was still a great deal of uncertainty and flux. Irish-Catholic opinion still demanded recognition of its interests and some level of representation in return for its support. At the municipal election of 1910 the *Observer* laid down the, by now familiar, line on whom to support and why:¹²⁶

The great bulk of the Catholics in Glasgow are working-people, wage-earning people, and where conscience and dignity allow them to support Progressive candidates, they are more than disposed to do so. But it would be unreasonable,

as it is unfair, to expect that where any political scarecrow is put up to bear the Progressive banner, the Irish vote can be reckoned on as a certainty in his favour, irrespective of his record, position or programme.

The big issue that year was the tramway surplus and what use it should be put to. The "Progressive" or Labour view, as expressed by the Trades Council, was that it should be used to reduce fares, in this way benefitting the people who created the surplus. The alternative, Tory, policy was to use the surplus to reduce the rates. This, which became Corporation policy, was depicted by the Trades Council as, "vicious [and] unspeakably mean".¹²⁷ The *Observer* took its position on which candidate to support on his line on the trams, ie the same view as the Trades Council. In three Wards, however, there was a different priority.

In Townhead and Cowcaddens the issue for the *Observer* was that of amour-propre. Hugh Lyon was opposed in the former because of his having defeated the Irish-Catholic candidate in a bye-election and his opposition to O'Hare in Springburn four years ago.(see above.) Irish support was advised to go to his opponent who also had the right line on the tramway surplus. In Cowcaddens the issue was the very personal one of Shaw Maxwell now no longer having any connection with Labour, but whom the *Observer* had not forgotten or forgiven. Here the tram question was not even referred to. The third contest involved George Carson in Maryhill. Carson, Secretary of the Trades Council, was one of the most prominent Labour men in Glasgow and one who had worked closely with the Irish; "In general circumstances", declared the *Observer*, "[he] would be a Labour candidate whom Irishmen would readily support".¹²⁸ However, the Trades Council had adopted the "Secular Solution" to the education question, which opposed any public money being used to maintain sectarian education. Though Carson attempted

to avoid answering the question directly the *Observer* was clear that, "He should be asked to drop the "Secular Solution" or drop the Catholic vote".¹²⁹

The election results were an overwhelming rejection of the Council policy of using the tramway surplus to reduce the rates. Even the *Glasgow Herald* admitted as much;¹³⁰

The defeat of Mr Wilkie in Whitevale on the tramway surplus issue may be taken in conjunction with the significant success of the Labour candidates as an indication that the Corporation allocation does not find favour among the working classes.

And as a result of the November polls the Town Council dropped its rates 'subsidy' policy.¹³¹

In fact 1910 was Labour's most successful year in municipal elections in Glasgow in terms of share of the vote and average poll. Out of five candidates three were returned and the other two only lost by 196 and 13 votes. In addition two sitting Labour members were returned unopposed. Of the three elected, however, only one had the blessing of the *Observer*, Dr Erskine in Anderston, while both Lyon and Carson won their seats by very comfortable majorities, 1278 and 772 respectively (Shaw Maxwell was no longer connected with Labour and his defeat is therefore of little consequence). Judging by these two results alone - in Wards the Irish claimed influence - it would seem that Labour could either do without the Irish vote altogether, or get that vote without an 'official' mandate. (That the *Star* was no longer the mouthpiece of the HGB helps to cover up any differences within Irish opinion.)

The following year, 1911, saw the *Observer* much more enthusiastic in its backing of Labour. The 'secular solution' had been settled satisfactorily but

the main reason was that two Nationalists were standing to whom, "The leaders of the Labour Party unhesitatingly accord their support".¹³² Yet, this arrangement became the prelude to another fierce debate between the ILP and the Irish-Catholics which came to a head in 1912. Amongst the rank-and-file of the ILP, and amongst younger leaders such as Tom Johnston and Pat Dollan, there was undoubted resentment over this deal, especially as the two candidates were publicans, and it was regarded as an electoral fix by Labour Councillors with overtones of association with the drink trade. In the event neither candidate won, though Labour was particularly successful in gaining four new seats. How far Labour voters were prepared to vote for Irish - Catholic candidates is, therefore, a moot point. One of the Irish nominees was in Calton, John Ferguson's old Ward, and he was easily defeated by a thousand votes. The other candidate, Thomas White, was the more interesting, since he actually stood as an official LRC nominee and, in a four-cornered contest in Anderston, was opposed by W G Leechman standing as an "Independent Socialist". Leechman, who was "repudiated by the leaders of the Labour Party",¹³³ came last with only 300-odd votes, and although White only managed third place, their combined vote would have been (just) enough to win the seat. The only Labour candidate not given the Irish mandate was George Hardie in Gorbals who came over a thousand votes adrift. The *Observer's* refusal to support him was not through any fault in, "an excellent candidate", but because of a long standing commitment to the sitting member.¹³⁴ The only other Labour defeat was James Allan, again, in 'bourgeois' Dennistoun, where there was not a particularly numerous Irish presence.

As we examined in the previous chapter the labour forces in the City eventually faced up to the problem of organisation and a tortuous negotiation was started by the ILP in 1910, eventually culminating in the inaugural conference of the Glasgow Central Labour Party in March 1912.¹³⁵ Although

Irish opinion, both the *Observer* and the *Star* under HGB control, had argued for a more organised Labour presence, the actual shape it took came as a shock to them.

Along with any degree of organisation comes a certain degree of centralisation and exclusiveness. As indicated previously the Glasgow Central Labour Party was a "controlling body" as opposed to the old Workers' Election Committee which had been a "composite body". (see previous chapter.) In an organisational sense, as well as political, there was a change in emphasis from the 'forces of the democracy' to the constituent parts of Labour, and in this re-organisation there was no room for the UIL.

The *Observer* reacted furiously. It was particularly galling that, at this time, there were no Catholic Councillors. The connection between race and religion was now made perfectly clear. Whereas, "Jews and atheists", could be freely returned:¹³⁶

The Catholics of Glasgow, the Irish Nationalists of Glasgow (the terms are entirely synonymous) have no representative professing their creed or policies in the Corporation of Glasgow.

The rules of the new Party dictated that it would not support any candidate who was not a member of the ILP or the Trades Council or any of its affiliates. Thus any Catholic candidate, who did not qualify on the above lines, could not be supported, far less adopted by the Labour Party. The *Observer* connected this to the furore caused the previous year by the support of Labour councillors for the Nationalists in Calton and Anderston; the Councillors were carpeted by the membership and a compromise only reached by the resolution restricting the labour mandate to members of official labour bodies. However, the *Observer* drew a distinction between the

rank-and-file, whose rule this was, and the leadership, i.e. the sitting Labour Councillors who remained true friends and deserved continued support. Thus the Irish vote was not to be uniformly hostile but to be given only to existing Councillors and ex-Councillors, and only withheld from new candidates.

At the November poll the two sitting labour members given the *Observer's* mandate were returned. The three other candidates in 'old' Glasgow, this being the first election to include the newly incorporated areas, all lost. In the 'new' wards Labour won two seats, one being John Wheatley in Shettleston & Tollcross, both without Irish support. The result of the poll was declared satisfactory by the *Observer* since it had contradicted Labour's evident belief that it, "could secure Irish support in defiance of Irish organisations or the Irish Press".¹³⁷ The *Observer* however, had "fought as much as we want to fight", and appealed for peace by requesting Labour to revise the offending rule.¹³⁸

The following year the antagonism was much more muted. The *Observer* did not expect the rule excluding nationalist candidates to last another year and even though it remained, literally, party policy, the Labour leadership were wholeheartedly supporting the Irish-Catholic candidate, O'Hare, in Cowcaddens, and the Labour Party had even, "furnished a contingent of willing workers", to aid his campaign.¹³⁹ Labour's results it declared 'excellent', adding only that they would have been better had all friction been avoided with the Irish. More to the point, however, was the fact that Labour's six successes were all new men, the two sitting members being defeated. This somewhat challenged the *Observer's* pre-election claim that, "any Labour candidature in any Glasgow Ward [running without Irish support] would be a mere bootless piece of propoganda".¹⁴⁰ The paper did make the effort, rather half-heartedly, to claim responsibility for the defeats in Townhead and Maryhill, but Lyon and Carson had both won easily three years before in the

face of much more definite 'official' Irish-Catholic opposition. Their defeats were, as we have previously seen, much more to do with alienating their own supporters by having failed to vote for the Wheatley-Stewart cottages scheme. (See previous chapter.)

Conclusion

Evidence for the existence of an influential Irish vote in Glasgow is, on the basis of the above, contradictory, though there can be no doubt as to the widespread belief in a powerful Irish electoral force. On occasion the Irish vote appears to have been decisive, e.g. the municipal poll of 1912, and at other times to have been totally inconsequential, e.g. Lyon and Carson in 1910. Confusion is partly due to the fact that this vote cannot be regarded as a constant, undivided unit; the recurring conflict between the *Observer* and the HGB indicating clearly enough that the Irish community did not speak with one voice. As it is hoped the above has also made clear, the pole of attraction for Irish-Catholic workers was always going to be Labour, and Catholic opinion recognised this. Individuals such as John Ferguson, and branches of the Nationalist movement such as the HGB reached this understanding first - an understanding based upon the class nature of the Irish in Britain - and their lead was eventually followed by the originally hostile *Observer*. The Irish remained careful never to totally subsume their identity within Labour and continued to press for recognition of themselves as a separate community. However, unlike in Liverpool, the Irish community in Glasgow was not located specifically enough to permit it to return its own candidates unaided. And, as the early successes of the Stalwarts showed, as, in a different way did the success of John Wheatley, it was through co-operation with Labour that Irish-Catholic candidates would be returned to the Town Council. Getting such candidates adopted, however, was another matter. There is no doubt that Labour wanted the Irish vote and, certainly in the early years, was willing to support Irish Nationalist candidates. That there was, nevertheless, a reticence in so doing, could have been due to a multiplicity of factors: awareness of a working class 'Orange' vote; awareness of a more general anti-Irish antipathy; prejudice within the ranks of Labour

itself; temperance 'respectability' wanting nothing to do with publicans; desire for a more democratic and better organised Party structure. As regards the latter point the *Observer* saw a clear division between Labour's rank and file and the Labour Councillors.¹⁴¹

In Parliamentary elections Home Rule still predominated. Yet, as we have seen, support for Labour even here was strong and divisions within Irish opinion ran very deep. Of importance here is the limited aspect of Labour's challenge in Glasgow after 1895 which permitted a more or less, united Irish support for the Labour candidates in 1900 and 1906. The bitter controversy surrounding the UIL Executive's command to vote Liberal in 1910 in Camlachie, the HGB's home constituency which included Mile End Ward where, with the exception of Hutchesontown, Labour enjoyed most success in the municipal elections between 1896 and 1913, can only be explained if we accept that voting Labour had become an established practice for many Irish workers.

NOTES

1. I. Budge, & D.W. Urwin, *Scottish Political Behaviour*, (London 1966), pp 61-3; M.G. Clarke, & H.M. Drucker, *Our Changing Scotland: A Yearbook of Scottish Government 1976-77* (Edinburgh 1976), p 12 - this refers to a poll taken in the Glasgow area just after the February 1974 General Election, which found that of those Catholics who had voted, 79.3% voted Labour.
2. J.G. Kellas, *Modern Scotland: The Nation Since 1870* (London 1968), p 74.
3. *Ibid.*, p 194.
4. J.G. Kellas, "The Mid-Lanark By-Election (1888) and the Scottish Labour Party (1888-1894)", *Parliamentary Affairs* (1965), pp 318-329, p 323.
5. W.M. Walker, "Irish Immigrants in Scotland: Their Priests, Politics and Parochial Life", *The Historical Journal*, XV (1972), pp 649-667. Walker deals only with the Irish in Dundee, not in Scotland as a whole, and he says almost nothing about the Irish National League.
6. I.S. Wood, "Irish Immigrants and Scottish Radicalism", in I. MacDougall (ed), *Essays in Scottish Labour History* (Edinburgh 1978), p 68; also I.S. Wood, "John Wheatley, The Irish and the Labour Movement in Scotland", *The Innes Review*, Vol 31 (1980), pp71-85, see p 73 where he is more definite on this point.
7. J. McAffrey, "Politics and the Irish Community Since 1878", in D. MacRoberts, (ed), *Modern Scottish Catholicism* (Glasgow 1979), p 146.
8. J. McAffrey, "The Irish Vote in Glasgow in the Later Nineteenth Century: A Preliminary Survey", *The Innes Review*, Vol 21 (1970), pp 30-36, p 36.
9. J.H. Handley, *The Irish in Scotland* (Cork 1943), p 276.
10. *Ibid.*
11. J.H. Handley, *The Irish in Modern Scotland* (Cork 1947), p 261.
12. *Ibid.*, p 270.
13. Wood (1978), *op cit*, pp 70-1.
14. McAffrey (1979), *op cit*, p 146.
15. Handley (1947), *op cit*, p 275.
16. Wood (1978), *op cit*, pp 173-4.

17. Handley (1947), op cit, pp 278-9.
18. Ibid., pp 281-3.
19. Quoted in Wood (1978), op cit, p 73.
20. *Glasgow Observer*, 10 October, and 7 November 1896.
21. *Labour Leader*, 5 November 1898.
22. Helen Crawford, Typescript biography, (n.d.) p 13. Held in Marx Memorial Library.
23. Handley (1947), op cit, p 274. There had been a couple of attempts in between but they had not been successful.
24. A practice that continues to the present-day. Also see O.D. Edwards, "The Catholic Press in Scotland Since the Restoration of the Hierarchy", in D. MacRoberts, *Modern Scottish Catholicism 1978-1978* (Glasgow, 1979).
25. McAffrey (1979), op cit, p 145.
26. Wood (1978), op cit, p 71.
27. Ibid.
28. McAffrey (1979), op cit, p 147.
29. Ibid.
30. Presbytery of Glasgow, *Report of Commission on the Housing of the Poor in Relation to Their Social Condition* (Glasgow 1891), evidence of John Bruce Glasier, p 178.
31. *Forward*, 24 April 1909. Bob Purdie, *Outside the Chapel Door: The Glasgow Catholic Socialist Society 1906-1922* (Thesis, Ruskin College, 1976), p 18.
32. *Glasgow Observer*, 6 November 1897.
33. E.P. Thompson, *William Morris: Romantic to Revolutionary* (London 1977), p 298.
34. J.G. Kellas, "The Liberal Party in Scotland 1885-1895", (Ph.D., University College London, 1961), p 225. Irish support in this context does not refer to voting.
35. Wood (1978), op cit, p 72.
36. Ibid. Presumably Forsyth held similar views.
37. Handley (1947), op cit, p 276.
38. McAffrey (1979), op cit, p 148.
39. J.G. Kellas, (1965) op cit, pp 322-3.

40. H. Pelling, *The Social Geography of British Elections 1885-1910* (London 1967), p 408; McAffrey (1979), op cit, p 150.
41. Handley (1947), op cit, p 277.
42. John Ferguson to R.B. Cunninghame-Graham, 11 April 1888, ILP Archive, Francis Johnston Correspondence, 1888/43.
43. *Glasgow Observer*, 9 January 1892.
44. *Scottish Leader*, 4 January 1892.
45. Ibid.
46. Ibid.
47. *Scottish Leader*, 6 January 1892.
48. Printed in full in *Glasgow Observer*, 9 January 1892.
49. *Scottish Leader*, 4 January 1892.
50. Ibid.
51. *Scottish Leader*, 6 January 1892.
52. Ibid.
53. R.B. Cunninghame-Graham to Keir Hardie, 9 January 1892, ILP Archive, Francis Johnston Correspondence 1892/2.
54. McAffrey (1979), op cit, pp 148-9.
55. *Glasgow Observer*, 13 July 1895.
56. *Glasgow Observer*, 20 July 1895.
57. *Glasgow Observer*, 13 July 1895.
58. Ibid.
59. Ibid.
60. Ibid.
61. Ibid.
62. Ibid.
63. *Glasgow Observer*, 20 July 1895.
64. *Glasgow Observer*, 26 October 1895.
65. Wood (1978), op cit, pp 79-80.

66. Ibid., p 83.
67. Handley (1947), op cit, pp 284-6.
68. *Glasgow Observer*, 13 July 1895.
69. *Glasgow Observer*, 26 October 1895.
70. Ibid.
71. *Glasgow Observer*, 9 November 1895.
72. *Glasgow Observer*, 26 October 1895.
73. Purdie, op cit, pp 10-12; S. Pierson, *Marxism and the Origins of British Socialism* (London 1976), see chapter Six; Also, E.P. Thompson, op cit, pp 773-9, for critique of Pierson.
74. *Glasgow Observer*, 26 October 1895.
75. *Glasgow Observer*, 2 November 1895.
76. Ibid.
77. *Glasgow Observer*, 26 October 1895.
78. Ibid.
79. Ibid.
80. Quoted in Handley (1947), op cit, p 285, from the *Observer* in January 1898.
81. Ibid., from the *Observer* in February 1899.
82. Samuel Cooper, "John Wheatley: a Study in Labour Biography", (Ph.D., University of Glasgow 1973), p 23.
83. *Glasgow Observer*, 8 September 1900.
84. *Glasgow Observer*, 15 September, 29 September 1900.
85. *Glasgow Observer*, 19 September 1900.
86. *Glasgow Observer*, 15 September, also 29 September 1900.
87. *Glasgow Observer*, 29 September 1900.
88. *Glasgow Observer*, 6 October 1900.
89. Ibid.
90. *Glasgow Observer*, 9 November 1901.
91. Ibid.

92. Ibid.
93. Ibid.
94. Ibid.
95. Ibid.
96. *Glasgow Herald*, 5 November 1902.
97. Glasgow Trades council, *Annual Report 1902-03 Labour Leader*, 31 October, 7 November 1903.
98. *Glasgow Herald*, 2 November 1904.
99. *Star*, 28 October 1905.
100. *Star*, 27 January 1906.
101. *Forward*, 3 November 1906.
102. *Glasgow Observer*, 5 November 1904.
103. Ibid.
104. *Star*, 19 October 1904. For the *Star*, this was a, "gratuitously insulting reference to the working class electors of the ward."
105. *Glasgow Observer*, 15 October 1904.
106. Wood (1978), op cit, p 83; see also Handley (1947), op cit, p 290.
107. *Star*, 6 January 1906.
108. Ibid.
109. Ibid.
110. Ibid.
111. Ibid.
112. *Star*, 27 January 1906.
113. *Glasgow Herald*, 7 November 1906; *Star*, 10 November 1906.
114. *Star*, 10 November 1906.
115. Ibid.
116. Ibid. The WEC was also referred to as the Workers' Municipal Committee.
117. Ibid. According to the *Star*, the Trades Council declined to

support Lyon, but see *Forward*, 3 November 1906, and Glasgow Trades Council, *Annual Report 1905-06-07*, where Lyon is clearly referred to as a WEC candidate, though there had been some confusion over the affiliation of his Union to the Trades Council.

118. See previous chapter; *Forward*, 10 November 1906.
119. *Star*, 10 November 1906.
120. McAffrey (1979), op cit, p 146.
121. *Glasgow Observer*, 22 January 1910.
122. Ibid. Mackinder was the Liberal Unionist, and Cross the Liberal candidate.
123. Ibid.
124. *Glasgow Observer*, 10 December 1910.
125. McAffrey (1979), op cit, pp 53-4, ref to *Scotsman* of 18 November 1909; Cooper, op cit, pp 49- 50, ref to *Scotsman*, of 18 January 1910.
126. *Glasgow Observer*, 29 October 1910.
127. Glasgow Trades Council, *Annual Report 1909-10*
128. *Glasgow Observer*, 29 October 1910.
129. Ibid.
130. *Glasgow Herald*, 2 November 1910.
131. Glasgow Trades Council, *Annual Report 1910-11*.
132. *Glasgow Observer*, 4 November 1911.
133. Ibid.
134. Ibid. This loyalty was, "for his services to Nationalists and Catholics."
135. Cooper, op cit, pp 61-2; Glasgow Labour Party, *Minutes*, 21 March 1912.
136. *Glasgow Observer*, 2 November 1912.
137. *Glasgow Observer*, 9 November 1912.
138. Ibid.
139. *Glasgow Observer*, 10 November 1913.
140. *Glasgow Observer*, 1 November 1913.

141. *Ibid.* The *Observer* described the Labour Councillors as, "our good friends, indeed our best friends."

Chapter Five

Women, Socialism and the Suffrage

Of all the 'communities' which Labour made appeal to the most potentially significant, and the most neglected, was that half of the population which was female.¹ Women's 'issues' made scant impact upon the Labour and Socialist movement yet, in claiming to represent the working class this movement also claimed to speak on behalf of women. In a period when all women were explicitly denied the Parliamentary vote on the grounds of their sex and only a small minority allowed the vote in municipal affairs, it is particularly apposite to refer to women as being 'represented' or 'spoken for'. Women's interests, where they were not explicitly middle class, were not assumed to be any different to the general interest of the (male) working class. The achievement of socialism would negate inequality between the sexes, though for many socialists as well as trade unionists domestic bliss would be achieved through making it unnecessary for women to seek paid employment outwith the home.² However, this period also witnessed the emergence of a movement - led by and for women - for the purpose of gaining equal electoral rights, which demanded a response from Labour and Socialist men. Our concern here is not so much with the Suffrage movement itself, but with the relationship between women and the Labour and Socialist movement, and the role played by and allowed to women in that movement.

The organisations which constituted Labour as a political force were overwhelmingly male in membership. The Glasgow Trades Council - the 'parliament' of the City's working class - had extremely few female members. In 1891, out of a total of 160 delegates, four were female, all members of the

Women's Protective and Provident League (WPPL). Ten years later there were only two women – again from the WPPL – out of 228 delegates. In 1911, by which time there were 288 delegates to the Trades Council, there was a grand total of seven female members, five from the National Federation of Women Workers, and two from the Weavers' (Women) Society.³ As we have already seen, the ILP, apart from its Women's Party in the 1890s, only had one women branch secretary in Glasgow. (See Chapter Two.) While there was likely a much more significant level of female membership within societies and branches, the chance that a woman might rise to any position of prominence was extremely unlikely.

The other forces of the 'democracy' were little different. Within the Irish-Catholic community the INL branch was, as Handley has informed us, for "the men of the parish".⁴ The Co-operative movement, perhaps surprisingly given its concentration upon consumption rather than production, was hostile to women's participation in the work of the societies. The example of the Kinning Park Society shows this clearly enough. In 1891 there was a large demonstration of Co-operators to mark the laying of the memorial stone of new Society buildings, at which not a single woman was permitted to attend.⁵ The following year the Scottish Women's Guild was formed, ten years after the creation of the English body, and through its efforts the position of women in the movement was improved.⁶ In 1892 women were able to attend "a public occasion in the life of the [Kinning Park] Society for the first time", the opening of the new buildings, due to the pressure of the newly formed Guild.⁷ The Women's Guild had to struggle hard for whatever recognition they received, and it remained even more difficult for women to take an equal part in the running of the Societies themselves. Kinning Park, which was amongst the most progressive of Societies, only elected its first woman Director in 1916.⁸ Nonetheless, the Co-operative Women's Guild is of crucial significance

in relation to working class women and political activity, and we shall have more to say on its role at the end of this chapter.

Women, Employment and Marriage.

Underpinning such different roles and attitudes were the very different experiences each sex had of paid employment. As Table 1 shows, during this period, while almost all men aged 15 or over (i.e. 96%+) were regarded as occupied, only around 40% of all women of the same age were so entered by the Census.

Table 1: Proportionate male and female occupied populations aged 15+ in Glasgow 1891, 1901, 1911.

i.e. those employed aged 15+ as a percentage of total male and female populations aged 15+.

Year	Males	Females
1891	97.6	41.7
1901	96.9	39.9
1911	96.3	38.7

SOURCE: *Census of Scotland* City of Glasgow, 1891 and 1911

These general figures, however, tell only part of the story of what were two almost totally different labour markets. As has been recently commented:⁹

Glasgow's female labour market differed in three crucial respects from its male counterpart. It offered relatively few openings for school leavers to acquire a skilled training; its occupational range was much more restricted; and a minority of women was listed as gainfully employed in successive Censuses.

A fourth element, or the combined effect of the other three, could be added, that of wages. Women's actual, and *expected* earnings were significantly lower than male earnings. Relegated, primarily, to unskilled jobs where the supply of labour tended to exceed the demand, it is hardly surprising that, "women workers were massively over-represented among the ranks of the low paid throughout this quarter of a century."¹⁰ Even in 1911, domestic service was still, by far, the largest single employer of women in Glasgow, and this was not including servants working in hotels or institutions, etc.¹¹ In her evidence to the Glasgow Municipal Commission on the Housing of the Poor, Margaret Irwin pointed out that there was little or no consistency in female wage rates, and that trying to estimate an average wage was particularly fraught.¹² Amongst shop assistants while "charge hands" could expect to earn between 12s. and £1, with a few able to earn over £1, most "girls" - i.e. young women over 16 years of age, got between 4s. and 12s. per week. According to Irwin the highest paid occupations for women were tailoresses and textile workers, but only among those who were the most highly-skilled and regularly employed. For the former, wages of between 15s. and 18s. could be expected with possible high-points of 19s. or 20s. This, however, was only during the busy period, while in slack times earnings could fall to half that. Amongst the least skilled and worst paid workers in the "finishing" department of the clothing trade, women could earn around 6s. or 7s. in the busy period, and could fall to 4s., 2s. 6d. or even nothing at all in slack times.¹³

We shall return to the question of (male) wage rates in Chapter Seven when we come to consider the gap between the 'poorer' and 'better-off' working class but, for the moment our point is simply that of the low wages paid to women compared with men. As we shall see, unskilled men could expect earnings of between 16s. and 24s. per week, which was at least as high as

the highest wages paid to skilled women workers. Behind the poor wages paid to women was not just the fact of the jobs they happened to be in but predominant attitudes of why women worked and what they should, therefore, be paid, i.e. the whole notion of 'pin-money', that a woman's wage was merely a 'supplement' to the wage of her husband. It was this that led to a "competition" between single and married women, which kept female earnings down. As Professor Smart, of the Glasgow Municipal Commission, expressed the matter:¹⁴

the single woman has to suffer from the fact that she is single; that is to say, while the wages of wives and daughters are supplementary to the wages of the head of the house, and therefore increase his ability to pay rent, the wages of single women are determined by the competition of these supplementary women, and therefore remain low.

While it is impossible to distinguish figures for single women who were dependent solely on their own earnings and single women who lived with their parents and were contributing to a larger, household income, we do at least know the number of wives who were returned as employed. In 1911 there were, in Glasgow, 7047 married women listed as occupied, which accounted for only 5.5% of the total number of married women, and only 6.5% of the total number of occupied females aged 15+. As Treble has commented, "This distinctive pattern [of female employment] owed everything to the impact of matrimony upon the female labour market."¹⁵ The "impact of matrimony" had been an increasing influence over the previous half century; in 1851 the proportion of married women working had been three times as great, at 16.9%.¹⁶

It is from this perspective that we have to approach the subject of working class women and political involvement, i.e. of the overwhelming significance of marriage and the expectation that, upon getting married, a woman should

stop working for a wage. Particularly among skilled workers, it became a crucial element to their notion of 'respectability', an indication of their earning capacity and status, that their wives should not 'work'. This domestic ideology went further than simply the male egotism of artisans, however, as even Margaret Irwin objected to young married women going out to work, "if her husband is earning good wages."¹⁷

Socialism and the 'Woman Question'.

The 'modern' women's movement, in the sense of a growing body of opinion which was able to consistently promote the demand for woman's suffrage, can be traced back to 1867 and John Stuart Mill's attempted amendment to the Second Reform Act to include women in the extended franchise. The defeat of Mill's proposal (by 174 to 93 votes) led to suffrage societies being formed in Manchester, London and Edinburgh. In 1868 the National Society for Women's Suffrage was formed which became in 1897 the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS).¹⁸ The NUWSS was to be the main organising force behind the 'constitutional' campaign for the vote, as opposed to the 'militant' campaign of the Pankhurst led 'suffragettes', the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU).¹⁹

The main motivating force behind such women as Lydia Becker, Secretary of the NUWSS, and Elizabeth Garrett, the pioneer doctor, was the sense of vacuity and frustration bred by a life of enforced triviality and dependence.²⁰ By the end of the century a number of significant gains had been made in woman's social and legal status: there was a recognition of married women's rights as regards ownership of property, access to children, maintenance; women householders had the municipal franchise (in England from 1867 but not introduced to Scotland until 1882), and could stand for election to local authority bodies.²¹ From Mill's first effort until the outbreak of the First World

War there was no issue, other than Ireland, debated so much in Parliament as women's suffrage, and eight Bills actually passed their second reading.²² Repeated failures in Parliament, despite strong support, gradually forced the NUWSS away from being simply a pressure group to building a national, campaigning movement. The 'suffrage' demand was for the vote to be granted to women on the same terms as it was, or may be, given to men. As such, and given that the suffrage societies were for long almost wholly middle class, it could be argued in conservative terms. As one sympathetic M.P. put it, "It is property which votes in this country and not man."²³

It was hardly surprising that the Socialist bodies of the 1880s should have little sympathy with such a bourgeois perspective, as rights through property were exactly what socialists opposed. The founding manifesto of the Socialist League looked forward to a future equality under socialism when:²⁴

Our modern bourgeois property-marriage, maintained as it is by its necessary complement, universal venal prostitution, would give place to kindly and human relations between the sexes.

Though there was a wide acceptance among socialists that there was a 'woman question', the issue was, conveniently, left over until the attainment of actual socialism when all inequality would be transcended. As such there was little debate on the specific content of what might constitute female emancipation. In his great utopian romance, *News From Nowhere*, William Morris depicted the sphere of women as remaining domestic, or "semi-domestic", concerned mainly with housework and motherhood.²⁵ However, Morris did see this role as being freely chosen by women in a society where domestic and productive labour would be performed in mutual harmony. The issue of 'socialist' relations between the sexes did cause some comrades difficulties. This may have been particularly so in "religious

Scotland" where the membership of the SL&LL wanted the reference to "property marriage" dropped from the Party Manifesto.²⁶ Andreas Scheu recalled of his young Edinburgh comrade John Gilray how, "on his first visit to me, I frightened him off with my advanced remarks on the question of sexual relations."²⁷ This was not simply a "bourgeois" reaction, but was equally informed by working class respectability. This was at a time when:²⁸

it was not considered good form for women to appear on the platform at Co-operative or other working class meetings.

Socialists in the 1880s gave little support to women's demand for the vote. Partly this was due to a general hostility or ambivalence towards electoral politics, and a concentration upon 'social' issues which were regarded by many as being distinct from constitutional or 'political' matters. (We shall discuss socialist attitudes to the franchise more fully in Chapter 7.) Partly it was due to the women's demand for votes on the same terms - i.e. property-based - as men. And partly it was due to an antipathy or sheer indifference to political matters affecting women. An attitude well expressed by H.M. Hyndman, leader of the SDF:²⁹

I have never been able, while fully admitting the justice of giving suffrage to all women, if they claim it, to get up much enthusiasm for female suffrage by itself ... I cannot believe in Suffrage, limited practically to well-to-do women as being worth serious effort...

There were a number of prominent women members in the early Socialist movement, such as Annie Besant and Eleanor Marx-Aveling. Outwith London it was likely more difficult for women to make their mark, certainly there is little indication of women taking a leading role in either the SL or SDF in Scotland. We have already indicated in Chapter One that, out of 55 members of the

SL&LL in Edinburgh in 1885, only one was a woman. Glasgow would not appear to have been any different in this respect, though there is some indication that women did have a different perspective on certain issues. Bruce Glasier recalled the intervention of Mrs. Neilson, a member of the Ruskin Society and the "first woman recruit" to the Glasgow branch of the SL, on the occasion of a visit by William Morris. She criticised the men for their militarism, their lack of attention to women's suffrage, and the danger of Morris becoming conceited due to the hero-worship bestowed on him. Glasier commented that:³⁰

This was, I believe, almost the first definitely anti-militarist note, and the first sound of the new woman's agitation that any of us had yet heard.

The emergence of independent labour and the formation of the Scottish Labour Party and then Independent Labour Party, did mark a change in female involvement in politics. The SLP/ILP concentration upon electoral affairs had more of a bearing on women's concerns, particularly as regards the demand for the vote, thereby creating a space where women could be active and push for demands of their own. Much of the ILP's responsiveness was due to the influence of Keir Hardie who, of all the socialist leaders, had the most advanced perception of women as constituting a distinct 'constituency'. Although much of Hardie's championing of the WSPU may have been due to his long-standing friendship with the Pankhurst family, his concern with female emancipation had much deeper origins than this. However, despite his assertion that, "The sex problem is at bottom the labour problem.", Hardie had no particular socialist perspective to offer on the subject; his arguments were based on on 'democratic' grounds alone.³¹ Hardie saw women, and this went against the perceived wisdom of women as innately conservative, as potential electoral assets to Labour. He suggested to the SLP in Glasgow that it should

choose a woman as a candidate in the School Board elections.³² It was in School Boards and Parish Councils that women made their first breakthroughs as elected representatives pre-1914, though they were not selected to contest the more important Town Council elections. This suggests that Hardie saw women as being suitable for a particular sphere in politics only, but nonetheless, he was encouraging their direct involvement. In this Hardie remained constant and he became one of the most outspoken men supporters of women's suffrage.

Part of the SLP's contribution to encouraging women's political involvement lay in having a separate Women's Branch or, "Scottish Women's Labour Party" as it was styled prior to the SLP joining the National ILP. Based in Glasgow it has, unfortunately, left no records and we know next to nothing of its formation, membership and activity. As we saw in Chapter Two the Women's Branch survived until 1898 and had a possible high-point of 50 paying members in 1896. Like many other branches it experienced difficulties over raising money. In April 1897 the Secretary of the Branch informed London that they would be unable to forward their dues that month since, "Our members are dropping off (we have now only 29) and we are meanwhile straining very nerve to pay our rent."³³

Financial problems were likely more acute for the Women's Branch given the fact of women's lack of earning power. In 1894 the Branch decided to look for more central premises in the City, necessary as they were not based in a single locality like other branches, and eventually they took up the offer of rooms in the SLP's headquarters in Brunswick Street. Rent, however, still had to be paid and raising the wherewithall represented a difficulty. Kate Taylor, the Secretary, estimated that they needed a commitment from 100 women to pay 5 shillings a year into a club and suggested that this could be given by "monied people in the country", in order to help the Glasgow women. She

argued such a club was necessary for a City like Glasgow:³⁴

not only for local need, but also to serve as one of the centre's of the forward "women's" movement now so rapidly developing.

The Scottish Women's Labour Party was both an expression of and a contributor to this women's movement. One of its contributions was to raise the matter of votes for women within the Labour movement. At the Fifth Annual Conference of the SLP the Women's Labour Party moved a motion:³⁵

That this Conference urges the Government to take steps at once to extend the Parliamentary Franchise to women.

As it stood this resolution was, basically, the standard women's suffrage demand for the vote on the same terms as men. However, the movers accepted an amendment - moved by a delegate of the SDF - which turned the issue into an adult suffrage motion, i.e. that all men and women aged 21 years and over should have the vote.³⁶ Ten years on and the suffrage debate within the Labour and Socialist movement would revolve around this exact point - women's suffrage *versus* adult suffrage. Though partially successful, in at least making votes for women part of the political agenda, the Women's Branch did not succeed in making the issue one of immediate importance, since the suffrage generally was regarded as a finished matter. During the debate, which was a short one, two points were raised by men which are worth mentioning. The first was an amendment that the resolution be extended to cover all women, married and single. This, it was argued, was because the municipal franchise, "had only been given to single women, with the result that their votes had simply been handed over to their spiritual advisers."³⁷ This reflected the widespread belief that the existing women's

vote was determined by the Churches. The amendment was, however, accepted. An attempt was then made, by a delegate of the Glasgow Shoemakers, that the resolution be dropped altogether, on the argument that:³⁸

the proper sphere of women was the home; but if they went further in the direction in which they had been going, the time would soon come when men would remain at home to discharge the maternal duties, and the women would go out to do all the work.

Although this managed to raise a laugh, the amendment was unable to find a seconder and fell.

The following year the Women's Labour Party took the fight into the National ILP. At the Annual Conference held in Newcastle the Glasgow women successfully amended a NAC resolution, "in favour of every proposal for extending electoral rights and democratising the system of government", so that it included specific reference to "men and women" after "electoral rights".³⁹ The actual formulation was suggested by Hardie, as he put it, "in order to avoid opening up a wide question". Presumably this was a coded reference to women's suffrage. However, Mrs Pearce, the Women's Labour Party delegate, declared that, "this would satisfy her."⁴⁰ Adult suffrage remained the universal socialist and labour position until in 1903 the ILP decided to promote a female suffrage bill.⁴¹

The ILP did not have a separate women's section, as the Liberal and Tory Parties had, and this equal membership of the sexes is seen as having encouraged a greater female participation.⁴² Amongst the Socialist organisations, however, the ILP also had a 'better' record. This may have been partly to do with the fact that the ILP was the largest socialist society. The pro-feminist attitudes of Hardie and George Lansbury were also a help.

More fundamentally, however, was the actual practice and outlook of the ILP which distinguished it from the Marxist SDF and Socialist Labour Party. The latter body, so significant in the development of the shop stewards movement on Clydeside, placed its emphasis on industrial and workplace struggles, which could, only too easily, ignore the predicament facing women in the home. Although the SDF was more politically orientated it, nevertheless, shared a similar myopia in regard to women. This was largely due to the approach adopted by British Marxism which based its propoganda on the analysis of the extraction of surplus value from the worker at the point of production, and had no understanding of the re-production of the labour force and the particular oppression of women under capitalism, far less any critique of patriarchy.⁴³

The ILP, on the other hand, was neither industrially based nor was it dominated by an economic-reductionist approach to theory - in fact the ILP had little or no theory. This and its concentration on electoral politics, allowed the ILP to base its propoganda on more than exploitation at the workplace. According to Sheila Rowbotham, the attraction of the ILP to women lay in:⁴⁴

The fact that the ILP's origins had been very much to do with local politics and they campaigned on local councils for things like education, parks, recreation - those sort of things that did affect women's everyday lives.

All this did not make the ILP immune from anti-feminism, or guarantee equality in practice. The ILP still remained a man's party in which a lot of women, who joined through their husbands, found their role was that of making the tea.⁴⁵ At the same time there were significant numbers of female activists within the ILP, at both the local and national level. Annie and Ada Maxton, sisters of James Maxton, and members of the ILP in their own right,

recalled that there tended to be a bigger proportion of women speakers at ILP meetings than at any other organisations' meetings.⁴⁶

In the same year the ILP voted in support of women's suffrage Mrs. Pankhurst was elected to the NAC of the ILP. Both this and the vote in favour of a female suffrage bill were indicative of the growing strength of the women's suffrage movement, particularly among working class women. The emergence of a "radical suffragist" campaign was based among the women textile workers of Lancashire and Cheshire and represented a significant broadening of the established, middle class base of the suffrage movement.⁴⁷

1903 also saw the formation of the Pankhurst-led Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) in Manchester. The WSPU, in a sense, grew out of the ILP, and shared much the same background as the working-class radical suffragists. Under the guidance of Christabel Pankhurst, however, it chose to concentrate solely upon the vote and base its appeal to middle and upper class women, a growing social exclusiveness marked by its move from Lancashire to London in 1906.⁴⁸

Women's Suffrage in Glasgow.

From the mid-1900s the women's suffrage campaign moved to a new height of activity. Much of this was due to the increasingly militant tactics of the WSPU, though historians have more recently tended to question the effectiveness of the 'suffragettes' and emphasise the continued significance of the 'constitutional' NUWSS, its links with the Labour Party, and the role of working class women.⁴⁹ As far as Glasgow is concerned two points need to be identified. One is that the links between the suffrage campaign and the Labour and Socialist movement were conducted largely through the WSPU, and secondly that the suffrage campaign itself did not involve working class women. The 'failure' of Glasgow to produce a working class suffrage

movement like that of Lancashire can be explained largely by the different experience of female employment in the two areas. In that part of the North of England women had a long tradition – through the textile industry – of working outside the home even after marriage, of earning relatively high wages, and of being organised in trade unions. In Glasgow, where the previously strong cotton industry had been overtaken by Lancashire earlier in the nineteenth century, there had been a continuous decline in the employment of married women, and female workers had only a precarious sense of organisation.

As the WSPU distanced itself from the ILP and Labour generally (it even turned on Keir Hardie), in Glasgow a close relationship was maintained largely through the pages of the *Forward* newspaper under the sympathetic editorship of Tom Johnston. The first issue of *Forward* in October 1906 carried a large advertisement for a meeting to be addressed by the Pankhursts in the Glasgow City Halls.⁵⁰ In the second issue Johnston himself described the women's suffrage movement as, "another Chartist revival", and argued the connection between women's rights and socialism:⁵¹

We can never have socialism without complete democracy, and every privilege broken, every barrier burst, every sex and social hallucination swept aside makes clearer the road and clearer the eyesight for the struggles which are before the people of this and all other countries.

As well as such general support *Forward* carried a regular feature, "Our Suffrage Columns", which was under the control of the WSPU. Here, the arguments against women having the vote were dissected and exposed, and the arguments for women's rights, not only the vote, were promoted. The Glasgow women were aware of the limitations of the vote *per se* but argued that it was the requisite first step in the (continuous) battle for equality.⁵²

But the vote, after all, is only a weapon, not a stronghold, a symbol not a magic key. The possession of the weapon is necessary for the greater conflicts; and the symbol of political equality and responsibility is necessary to the self-respect of women.

It was this 'symbolic' value attached to the vote that was, perhaps, the single most telling factor behind a woman's decision to join the ranks of the 'suffragettes'. Helen Crawford of the Glasgow WSPU recalled that:⁵³

The members who became most prominent in the WSPU were middle class women, to whom the best-paid professions were closed because of their sex.

And that the majority of activists were:⁵⁴

serious, thoughtful women who were far from satisfied, not only with the position, but with the unjust social laws, over which they had no control. It was gall and wormwood to these intelligent women to see the most ignorant and undeveloped men allowed to participate in elections as voters while they were debarred.

There were women who agreed with the denial of the enfranchisement of their sex, but of more significance were those women who supported the adult suffrage argument. Although adult suffrage was used to block women's suffrage in the Labour movement, rather than as a consistent demand in its own right - Keir Hardie said of the Adult Suffrage Society, "it is never heard of save when it emerges to oppose the Women's Enfranchisement Bill"⁵⁵ - the argument that a limited suffrage bill would only strengthen the forces of property and reaction to the detriment of Labour was a powerful one. Many Labour and Socialist women supported adult suffrage because of this basic class solidarity.⁵⁶ Agnes Pettigrew, Secretary of the Shop Assistants' Union in Glasgow argued that the demand of "votes for women" was, as things stood,

essentially a middle class measure which would only work to the advantage of the Conservative Party and would subsequently weaken the Labour Party.⁵⁷

In 1906 the Labour Party formed a women's section, the Women's Labour League (WLL) which, by the end of 1914, had three branches in Glasgow.⁵⁸ Its function was an essentially supportive one of working for the Party's candidates at elections - its President was Margaret, wife of Ramsay MacDonald - and, not surprisingly, it echoed Party policy as regards the vote and supported the adult suffrage position.⁵⁹ At the 1914 Labour Party Conference, the WLL, which held its own conference at the same time, attacked the militant tactics of the WSPU as divisive and the result of a "sex war" attitude. The Executive, while expressing itself, "as keen as anybody for women's suffrage", accepted that there were other, more immediate issues that should have prior claim on the Labour Party's attention, such as the Dublin Lockout and the South African General Strike.⁶⁰ The general view of such 'labour women' was that the struggle for women's emancipation was part and parcel of the wider struggle for socialism and for the emancipation of the working class, which was to be effected through the Labour Party and the trade unions. Thus, their political strategy was to work 'from within' the Labour movement to fight for improvements in the wages and living conditions of the working class. However, put in simplistic terms the WLL 'line' could in fact read:⁶¹

The role of women in revolutionising society is to join the Women's Labour League.

To the members of the WSPU this position not only failed to counter anti-feminism within working class organisations, but was also a betrayal of women's interests. Janie Allan, Glasgow of the WSPU and editor of "Our Suffrage Columns" in *Forward*, attacked this willingness to relegate the vote

and women's issues generally from primary consideration.⁶²

So long as women are willing to accept the last place, so long will they find there is no other place for them.

In spite of its middle class complexion the Glasgow WSPU appears to have had a strong socialist influence amongst its membership. Janie Allen was the sister of James Allan the shipping magnate and member of the ILP.⁶³ Helen Crawford had strong socialist sympathies and joined the ILP on the outbreak of war. One of the organisers of the Rent Strike, Crawford became a prominent figure in the ILP before joining the Communist Party.⁶⁴ Jessie Stephen came from a very different background, but her politics were similar to Crawford's, and she also left the WSPU when war was declared in 1914. Her family were working class and socialist, her father a tailor (who was frequently out of work), and a member of the ILP. Jessie worked as a domestic servant and became active in the Domestic Workers Federation. She became an office-bearer in the Maryhill Branch of the ILP when only 16 and at the same time joined the WSPU. Because of her own background Stephen was aware that the growing tendency towards violent outrages on the part of the WSPU had an alienating effect on working class women. Nevertheless, she still felt that the cause itself had a strong support among working class women and men. Critical of the existing written history of the suffrage movement, Stephen recalled, "the aspirations of the ordinary member of the WSPU."⁶⁵

These were about jobs, about wages, about the present matrimonial laws. All that sort of thing used to be discussed by us ... And those of us who were socialists were far more interested in economics than they gave us credit for. Some of these women who were really active in the WSPU had deep convictions about the economic structure of society, and there was the question of housing, and the question of making life easier for women in the home, and maternity benefits. The vote was only a means to an end, to a new state of society

where women could be treated as human beings, not as second class citizens.

Women and Politics

Throughout the debate over women's suffrage little mention was made of the actually existing female electorate, nor has much been said about it since. Though introduced later in Scotland than in England (see above), women householders did qualify for the municipal vote. However, only single women were allowed the vote, married women were not permitted to register.⁶⁶ This crucial qualification effectively curtailed the development of a significant local female electorate. In Glasgow in 1901 the number of women on the electoral register for the 25 municipal wards numbered some 23,223, which accounted for 17.13% of the total electorate of 112,322.⁶⁷ The proportional size of the female electorate varied considerably between wards, from less than 10% to just over 30%. There was no fixed gradation by social class. The 'slum' area of Cowcaddens had more women voters, both numerically and proportionately than middle class Dennistoun - 1258 female electors (20.20%) to 887 (15.09%). Those wards with the lowest proportion of women voters were the 'artisan' wards of Springburn (8.72%) and Cowlairs (9.14%), and the 'business' wards in the city centre, Blythswood (10.41%) and Exchange (7.16%). At the other end of the scale, however, those wards with the greatest proportions of female electors were the most clearly bourgeois residential areas, such as Kelvinside (28.13%) and Park (30.31%).

It was pointed out by pro-suffragists like Tom Johnston, that allowing women the vote in municipal affairs made the denial of it in national and imperial matters an even greater anomaly.⁶⁸ Johnston argued that, "no evil effects have followed", from women voting in local elections.⁶⁹ Yet, for many socialists it was accepted wisdom that the existing female electorate was a

reactionary force, dominated by the Churches. This view was expressed implicitly at the SLP Conference of 1894, as mentioned above, but at other times, it could be stated quite explicitly. Thus, William Stewart explained his defeat as a Labour candidate at the Glasgow municipal election of 1904:⁷⁰

In reality we did win on the men's vote. There are twelve hundred women voters, mostly controlled by the churches, and the most of them voted against labour, the result being that Mr Harvie joins his friend Mr Willock as the representative of the old women – of both sexes.

Stewart actually listed other reasons why Labour did not win: previous labour nominees had lost the confidence of the constituency; Tories and Liberals combined; religion was used to denigrate Labour, as was temperance; the unpopular sitting candidate was replaced by a new man; a third candidate was introduced, "to confuse the issue".⁷¹ And yet, despite all this, Stewart's defeat was, ultimately, laid at the door of the "old women", or the "bible women". The following year, after a second defeat, Stewart's explanation remained the same, "So we were beaten comrades by the old women of both sexes."⁷²

Those women who managed to get on the electoral register would likely have been 'old', in that they had to be householders and would tend, when not unmarried, to have been widows. The influence of the Churches upon women was testified by many, as was religion's general hostility to socialism. Helen Crawford, who was brought up in the Gorbals during the 1880s in as strongly religious and Tory household, recalled that, as a child, "If I heard the word, (socialism) I fled as from the devil."⁷³ Married in 1898 to a Presbyterian Minister, her growing awareness of inequality and questioning of the place allotted to women, received the stern admonition from her husband, "Woman, that is blasphemy."⁷⁴ At a more general level Crawford could see that, while working class men were organising and educating themselves, this was a very

one-sided development.⁷⁵

The women in Scotland, however, were still bound hand and foot to the Church in its various forms, to evangelical religion and even Spiritualism. The men failed to see the importance of educating their women folk and bringing them as intelligent fellow comrades into the struggle for human betterment.

Socialists had to defend themselves constantly against the charge that they were advocates of an enforced 'free-love', and it is likely that such an identification would have harmed them in the eyes of many people who were deeply religious. Numerically, the women voters of Dalmarnock could have swayed the result. There were around 1200 female electors and Labour lost by 358 votes in 1904 and 750 votes in 1905.⁷⁶ However, women only accounted for about 15% of the total municipal electorate in Dalmarnock, and when Stewart lost for a third time in 1906, this time coming last of three and over 2,000 votes adrift of Scott Gibson, he did not mention the "old women."⁷⁷

The 'true' picture of Labour's local fortunes at this time was that the electoral alliance behind the WEC had collapsed and the ILP was, as yet, unable to re-organise a successful campaign. (see Chapter Three) While there is almost a mark of desperation in Labour's explanations for its poor performances at this time, the type of language used reveals something about personal attitudes towards women amongst male socialists. Even Thomas Johnston was not immune from this sort of castigation of women. After the municipal election of 1906, at which Labour did particularly badly, Johnston attacked the "Temperance Party" for its hypocritical opposition to Labour and characterised them as, "old women wearing trousers to pose as men."⁷⁸ The derogatory meaning behind the repetition of this phrase "old women" is clear, as is the assumption that women were somehow inferior to men. Few socialists

would, publicly, defend such an argument, and most would have argued the basic equality between men and women but, to varying extents, these attitudes did exist and can be glimpsed in such 'throwaway' remarks about wearing trousers and the like.⁷⁹

Johnston, nevertheless, was a committed supporter of women's suffrage and women's rights generally. His choice of words do not prove him to have been a secret misogynist, but the pejorative tones do indicate a tension, to say the least, between 'official' political views, no matter how sincerely held, and more 'personal', possibly unconscious antipathies towards women. We cannot say much more on this issue without entering the dangerous waters of 'psycho-history', but the tensions which operated at an individual level also operated, albeit more clearly, at the level of organisations.

As we have seen above, women had to struggle to gain even the most basic public involvement and recognition. Advances, however, were made and women became, increasingly, part of the Labour and Socialist movement. The point has been made that, in regard to women inhabiting leading positions, the Scottish Trade Union Congress (STUC) has a much better record than the all-British TUC.⁸⁰ The first Secretary of the STUC was a woman, the very capable and experienced Margaret Irwin. However, the contradictions involved in a women taking such a prominent role are exhibited in this instance. The original choice of Secretary had been a man named Andrew Ballantyne who was forced to give up the position because, as a Factory Inspector, the Government objected to his appointment. Irwin, who had topped the poll to the Parliamentary Committee at the first Congress (with 60 votes, Robert Smillie came second with 56) was then appointed Secretary. However, she would only accept it as an interim appointment and refused nomination as a permanent secretary. She had already refused nomination as Chairman and in both instances her reason was the same, she:⁸¹

feared that at this early stage of the Congress work, it might be somewhat prejudicial to its interests were the post to be filled by a woman.

Too great an emphasis on leadership, however, misses the crucial point about women and political activity, which is that their general involvement was so limited. Membership of executive councils and such-like was a number of steps removed from being a simple member. As indicated by the delegates to the Glasgow Trades Council, there were few female delegates mainly because there were few female trade unions and few female trade unionists. To explain why this was so would involve not only discussion of labour market experience, but domestic divisions of labour, predominant social attitudes and the socialisation of children. All this is beyond our resources here, but we have attempted to deal with women's different experience of the world of paid employment and we must, again, emphasise the impact of marriage upon women's experience and expectations.

With this in mind, the organisation which takes on a greater significance is the Co-operative Women's Guild. Although formed later in Scotland than in England it grew from 22 branches with a combined membership of 1500 in 1892 to 157 branches with a membership of 12420 by 1913.⁸² The founding document of the Guild stated its object:⁸³

The Women's Guild is an Association of the Women of the Co-operative Movement. Its object is to assist in the propoganda of Co-operation, and to draw a closer bond of union between the wives, mothers and daughters of Co-operators, by mutual aid and social intercourse.

Most of the work of the Guilds was in fund-raising for Co-operative causes such as the convalescent homes established at Seamill and Abbotsinch, and most of their "social intercourse" revolved around cookery and dressmaking

lessons and discussions. As such the Guild re-inforced women's domestic role, and came to be seen in this light by men co-operators, an attitude of:⁸⁴

The Guild should be to the movement what the wife and mother is to the home.

Despite the 'limitations' of the Guild's activities and role, it did play a significant role nonetheless. It was through the influence of the Guild that women began to take up positions within the Co-operative Societies and, gradually, the Guilds took their place in the Labour movement with the right to delegate representation on local Labour Parties. Although any movement with an official women's section runs the risk of thereby relating women and women's issues to secondary consideration, there can be little doubt that the Guild played a crucial role in developing the self-activity of many working class women, particularly housewives, whose isolation within the home should not be under-estimated. As the Guild's own historian argued, the Guild was important in teaching women how to organise, and:⁸⁵

the real attraction, no doubt, lay in being brought out of their own little narrow groove, and so becoming acquainted with what other women had to contend with in life, and through combination trying to make life sweeter to many women workers.

The space provided by the weekly Guild meeting - free of any male domination - was crucial in allowing the members to, "be their natural selves, and freely express their ideas and opinions."⁸⁶ Within such an atmosphere women could more easily learn the mechanics of organisation and gain the confidence to chair meetings and speak in front of an audience. What was learned within the Guild could then be applied elsewhere.⁸⁷

As regards women's suffrage the Guild claimed, "an active interest", but not

to have been, "in evidence with the militant party."⁸⁸ In 1893 it petitioned the Government for votes for women but, apart from this and various resolutions in favour and branch discussions, the Guild appears not to have been involved in the suffrage campaign. The likelihood that Guild members would have husbands who qualified for the vote may well have lessened any sense of disenfranchisement. The suffrage movement itself, being predominantly middle class, may have discouraged involvement. Likewise, the very tactics employed by the suffragettes were likely to discourage working class women, as Jessie Stephen believed. Yet the working class housewives of Glasgow showed themselves more than prepared to directly challenge the power of the law and Government during the Rent Strike of 1915, an intensely 'militant' campaign in which individual members of the Co-operative Women's Guild took on leading roles.

We shall discuss the Rent Strike and the First World War in relation to women's political role in our concluding chapter but, for the moment, we need only emphasise the 'domestic' nature of that struggle. The Rent Strike was a campaign conducted, pre-eminently, by housewives in defence of their homes. And the strength of their response lay in this and in the fact that the campaign was organised physically around their homes, i.e. at their point of production, - a fusion of class consciousness and family consciousness around a single demand.⁸⁹ For most working class women the vote remained an abstract right, whereas the question of rents and housing generally had a direct and immediate bearing on their own lives and those of their families. It was only after the War, however, that women were able to use one to affect the other.

From 1912 the question of the vexed relationship between Labour and women's suffrage would appear to have been resolved, as the Labour Party Conference in that year decided upon a formulation that, while still for adult

suffrage, decided that the Party in Parliament would refuse to support any Suffrage Bill that did not include women.⁹⁰ This decision made little impact upon the WSPU but for the NUWSS it was an important breakthrough since it lessened the chances of any further extension of the franchise to men only, and it decided to support Labour Party candidates at by-elections.⁹¹

Important as Labour's new position was, its effect was still limited. The Labour Party was too weak a force in Parliament to effect any measure of suffrage reform. Furthermore, Labour had no intention of making the franchise a major priority in or out of Parliament. The Labour Party's attitude was, essentially, a negative one – it would refuse to support a Bill that did *not* include women. The fact that more than half the adult population had no say in the political life of the country was not seen by Labour as outrage or affront to British pretensions about Democracy. The total disenfranchisement of women was a fact of political life that Labour had accepted and could continue to live with, as it could with the fact that significant numbers of working class men were also without the vote. To explain this we must now turn our focus much more closely upon the franchise.

NOTES

1. Despite being treated as if they were a 'minority' interest women, in fact, constitute a majority of the population. In 1911 women accounted for 52.9% of Glasgow's population, there being 21,888 more women than men. *Census of Scotland 1911*, Vol. 1, Part 2, City of Glasgow, p 41.
2. A graphic illustration of this attitude was provided by *Forward*, which illustrated John Wheatley's cottage housing proposals with a drawing depicting a workman returning home to be greeted by his (two) children - one girl, one boy - with his wife waiting in the garden wearing her apron. What *Forward* expressed in a picture John Ferguson had put into words back in 1892 when he included in his 'labour programme' the demand that every man be paid a "wage ... sufficient to enable him to support a wife with no duties to discharge but that of her household, so that her husband may find comfort and companionship after his day's work." *Glasgow Observer*, 9 January 1892.
3. Glasgow Trades Council, *Annual Reports 1890-91, 1900-01, 1910-11*.
4. J.H. Handley, *The Irish in Modern Scotland*, (Cork 1948), p 282. A personal qualification can be made here, in that my maternal grandmother was an activist in the United Irish League until 1918.
5. P.J. Dollan, *History of the Kinning Park Co-operative Society Ltd.*, (Glasgow 1923), p 44.
6. Annie Buchan, *History of the Scottish Co-operative Women's Guild*, (Glasgow 1913), p 112.
7. Dollan, op cit, p 47.
8. Ibid., p 94.
9. J.H. Treble, "The Characteristics of the Female Unskilled Labour Market and the Formation of the Female Casual Labour Market in Glasgow, 1891-1914." *Scottish Economic and Social History*, Vol 6 (1986), p 33.
10. Ibid., p 34.
11. The number of female domestic servants in 1911 was 15,427. The next largest occupation was that of Commercial Clerks, of whom there were 8,364. *Census of Scotland 1911*, Vol 1, Part 2, City of Glasgow, p 47.
12. Glasgow Municipal Commission on the Housing of the Poor, *Minutes*, (Glasgow 1904), evidence of Margaret Irwin, pp 523-37.
13. Ibid., p 523.

14. Ibid., p 532.
15. Treble, op cit, p 35.
16. Eleanor Gordon, "Women's Employment in Scotland", (University of Glasgow, 1979, draft paper.)
17. Glasgow Municipal Commission..., op cit, p 534. See also Jane Humphries, "Class Struggle and the Persistence of the Working Class Family", *Cambridge Journal of Economics*, 1977, Vol 1, pp 241-258, for a view that seeks to explain working class attachment to the family - in the face of Marx's predictions of its imminent demise: "the resilience of the family derives in part from workers' defence of an institution which affects their standard of living, class cohesion and ability to wage the class struggle." p 241.
18. J. Liddington & J. Norris, *One Hand Tied Behind Us: The Rise of the Women's Suffrage Movement* (London 1978), pp 68, 75.
19. Ibid., p 13.
20. Ibid., pp 65-6.
21. M. Ramelson, *The Petticoat Rebellion: a Century of Struggle for Women's Rights* (London, 1972), p 82.
22. Ibid., p 162.
23. Walter L. Arnstein, "Votes for Women: Myths and Reality", *History Today*, XVIII (1968), p 532.
24. Socialist League, *To Socialists* (1885).
25. See Perry Anderson, *Arguments Within English Marxism* (London, 1980), p 166.
26. A.K. Donald (Edinburgh) to J.L. Mahon, 1 February 1885. Socialist League Collection.
27. A. Scheu to J.L. Mahon, 4 September 1887. Scheu Correspondence.
28. Dollan, op cit, p 47.
29. H.M. Hyndman, *Further Reminiscences* (London 1912), p 287, quoted in Ramelson, op cit, p 81.
30. J. Bruce Glasier, *William Morris and the Early Days of the Socialist Movement* (London 1921), p 41. Glasier also admitted that his failure to recall Morris's reply was, "a tell-tale forgetfulness on my part."
31. Kenneth O. Morgan, *Keir Hardie: Radical and Socialist* (London 1975), pp 162-3.

32. *Labour Leader*, 31 March & 7 April 1894.
33. Maude Bruce (Glasgow) to John Penny (London), 1 April 1887. Francis Johnston Correspondence 1897/13. The letter ended with the appeal, "Pray for us."
34. *labour Leader*, 14 April 1894. However the money was finally raised, the Women's Party moved into Brunswick Street shortly after.
35. *Labour Leader*, 5 January 1894.
36. Ibid. Interestingly, the original motion was seconded by Mrs. Neilson, formerly of the SL, and attending the SLP Conference as a delegate from the Ruskin Society.
37. Ibid.
38. Ibid.
39. ILP, *Report of Third Annual Conference* (1895), p 10.
40. Ibid.
41. Liddington & Norris, op cit, pp 179-80. The ILP's formal policy was, "The ILP is in favour of adult suffrage with full political rights and privileges for women, and the immediate extension of the franchise to women on the same terms as men." *Forward*, 16 February 1907.
42. Liddington & Norris, op cit, p 45.
43. Interview with Harry McShane, 21 September 1979.
44. "Talking About Herstory", interview with Sheila Rowbotham, *Radical Scotland*, No. 22, August/September 1986.
45. Interview with Annie & Ada Maxton, 3 September 1979.
46. Ibid. Harry McShane could not recall any women propogandists for any Party on Clydeside other than the ILP., McShane interview, op cit.
47. The phrase "radical suffragist" is used by Liddington & Norris, op cit, to distinguish the textile workers from both the NUWSS (which they, nevertheless, had close ties with) on the one hand, and the 'suffragette' WSPU on the other.
48. Ramelson, op cit, pp 131-4.
49. Ramelson, op cit, and Liddington & Norris, op cit, are the most thorough treatments. Martin Pugh, *Women's Suffrage in Britain 1867-1928* (London 1980), and *Electoral Reform in War and Peace 1906-1918* (London 1978), questions the whole validity of the WSPU campaign and the view that militancy mad any contribution to winning the vote.

50. *Forward*, 13 October 1906.
51. *Forward*, 20 October 1906.
52. *Forward*, 1 August 1914.
53. Helen Crawford, Typescript biography, (n.d.) p 87. Held in Marx Memorial Library.
54. *Ibid.*, p 113.
55. Quoted in Liddington & Norris, *op cit*, p 232.
56. *Ibid.*, pp 181-4.
57. *Forward*, 16 February 1907.
58. *Forward*, 16 January 1915.
59. Liddington & Norris, *op cit*, pp 235-6.
60. *Forward*, 31 January 1914.
61. *Ibid.*
62. *Forward*, 7 February 1914.
63. Crawford, *op cit*, p 63, Janie Allan was expelled from the WSPU by the Pankhursts for having made a deal with the Lord Provost of Glasgow, on her own initiative, to suspend activities during a Royal Visit, if suffragette prisoners in Perth Prison were not forcibly fed.
64. *Ibid.* See also biography of Helen Crawford in W. Knox (ed), *Scottish Labour Leaders 1918-1939: A Biographical Dictionary* (Edinburgh 1984).
65. Interview with Jessie Stephen, in *Spare Rib*, No. 32.
66. Bryan Keith Lucas, *The English Local Government Franchise: A Short History*, (London 1952), p 74.
67. *Glasgow Post Office Directory 1901-1902* is used since this was the last year that the GPOD divided the electorate strictly by sex. The problem of distinguishing between male and female electors for later years is addressed in chapter Six.
68. Thomas Johnston, *The Case for Women's Suffrage and Objections Answered* (Glasgow 1907), p 10.
69. *Ibid.*
70. *Labour Leader*, 11 November 1904.
71. *Ibid.*

72. *Labour Leader*, 17 November 1905.
73. Crawford, op cit, p 13.
74. Ibid., p 45.
75. Ibid., pp 48-9. Crawford felt that in her own propoganda activity she was better able to appeal to women because she herself had been "extremely religious."
76. *Glasgow Herald*, 2 November & 8 November for election results. Female electorate extracted from GPOD.
77. *Labour Leader*, 16 November 1906.
78. *Forward*, 17 November 1906.
79. That this sort of attitude was fairly universal, and not just a Scottish phenomenon, is suggested by Trotsky, writing about his period in Vienna in 1907 of how the leading Austro-marxists "revealed" their true selves, "in informal talks ... much more frankly than in their articles and speeches", including "their vileness towards women." L. Trotsky, *My Life* (London 1979), pp 214-5.
80. S. Lewenhak, "Women in the Leadership of the STUC 1897-1970", *Scottish Labour History Journal*, No. 7, July 1973.
81. Angela Tuckett, *The Scottish Trades Union Congress: The First Eighty Years, 1897-1977* (Edinburgh 1986), pp 35, 39.
82. Buchan, op cit, p 112.
83. Reproduced in Ibid., p 50.
84. Ibid., Preface by James Deans.
85. Ibid., p 61, "workers" here refers to women in and out of the home.
86. Ibid., p 10.
87. This point about the Guild providing women with experience was made forcibly by Annie and Ada Maxton who regarded the Guild as, "quite a power to be reckoned with." Interview with Annie and Ada Maxton, op cit.
88. Buchan, op cit, p 68.
89. Annie Buchan refers to the class awareness of the members of the Co-op Guild when she writes of how its finances were generated from within the movement itself: "the work and its accomplishment have been accomplished without the aid of any person of ease ... it has proved itself a helpful agency in forwarding and bettering the position of the class we are proud to represent." Ibid., p

97. Helen Crawford emphasises the importance of the family to working class women: "They lived lives of constant toil and were always under the menace of unemployment and ill-health of the bread-winner. Theirs was a position that only the bravest and most heroic could come through with success, and their greatest assets were pride in their family and strong, natural affection for them." Crawford, *op cit*, p 141. On the theme of class consciousness and the family, Jane Humphries has commented: "The working-class standard of living depends not only on the level of wages, the traditional trade union concern, but also the cost of living, which is the primary concern of the administrator of the wage - the housewife. Attacks on the working class situation through price increases have historically produced concerted action." Humphries, *op cit*, p 256. Though Humphries does not mention rent strikes, the Glasgow Rent Strike obviously fits such a scenario.

90. Liddington & Norris, *op cit*, p 247.

91. *Ibid.*

Chapter Six

The Franchise and The Electorate in Glasgow

The whole basis of the movement for independent labour representation was based upon "electoralism". The ILP and the other organisations contributing to 'Labour' in a political sense never lost sight totally of their campaigning and educative roles but the overriding emphasis was on securing representation upon local and national bodies. Ironically, it was this which most compromised Labour's supposed independence since deals and arrangements could be justified in order that Labour secured at least a presence within the State. Whatever Labour's ambitions might have been, rhetoric apart, they could never have realistically considered actually taking power (in the sense of forming a majority administration) at either the local or national level. Keir Hardie had spoken of the end of the Liberal era as early as 1887 and of the gradual replacement of the Liberal Party by Labour, but by 1914 there was little evidence of the likelihood of this ever occurring. So long as the Liberal Party retained its national strength and viability, the prospects for Labour were limited indeed.

Labour's ambition seemed to have included a long and a short-term view. The long-term was outlined by Hardie when he spoke of Labour provoking a split among the Liberals which would force the Whigs into an alliance with the Tories and lead the remainder into an alliance with the rest of the "democracy", paving the way for a clear clash of interest between Capital and Labour. The short-term view regarded the successful formation of a pressure group in Parliament as the major achievement. The model to follow was that of the Irish Party (and to a lesser extent the Crofter's Party) and it was argued

that such a group or Party though small in numbers would 'revolutionise' the workings of Parliament by holding the balance of power and, more or less, extorting its demands from the Government (assumed to be Liberal) of the day. These views were not competing strategies but were held by the same people and regarded as complementary.¹

The analogy with the Irish, however, was a false one. Labour had no solid constituency which could guarantee it majorities in any significant number of seats. Even where the working class constituted a clear majority, as in the mining divisions, Labour had to compete amongst an electorate which was already largely committed to either Liberal or Tory.² Despite the fact that this electorate was not based upon even a close approximation to universal adult suffrage, Labour saw no difficulty - or opportunity - on that account. The strategy, as outlined by Hardie in the mid 1890s was based upon the already existing "democratic" constituency which had to be won from the Liberal Party to support for Labour. Surveying the task confronting Labour at this time Hardie made no mention of any further extension of the franchise, the system appeared more or less perfect.

There is no need now to fight the battle of the franchise. Our fathers did that, and today only the details remain to be adjusted.³

The emergence of the women's suffrage movement a decade later forced Hardie to reconsider his position on at least one count and he became, and remained, one of the firmest supporters of the women's cause.⁴ Yet, as regards the large proportion of men who remained outwith the franchise, Hardie had nothing to say. In fact, the inclusion of women could be seen as one of the "details ... to be adjusted", especially when the demand was for the vote on the same terms as men. However, Hardie's silence on this issue has

been largely shared by British historiography which, for a long time and in some cases continues, to regard the issue of the franchise and democracy as unproblematic, particularly post 1885. It is only in the last two decades that historians have begun to recognise the levels of disfranchisement amongst the adult male population and to consider what possible effects this had upon politics in general and upon the Labour Party in particular.

While British constitutional history has witnessed five Reform Acts on the way to universal adult suffrage, British historiography recognises only three; the Representation of the People Act of 1917 and the Act of 1928 which eventually gave women equal status with men have not qualified for membership of the exclusive club of three. The "myth" of British democracy limits the process to the Acts of the nineteenth century only. In 1832 the middle class got the vote, in 1867 it was the turn of the urban working class, and in 1884 the Third Reform Act gave the vote to the rural workforce; the redistribution of seats in the Act of 1885 recognised the new social reality of the country.

This was, more or less, the accepted wisdom until about twenty years ago when Neal Blewett published his seminal article, "The Franchise in the United Kingdom 1885-1918".⁵ Fundamentally questioning the standard view that the electoral system in those years was in no way different to present day practice, Blewett pointed out the major discrepancies in:⁶

an electoral system in which less than 30% of the adult population was on the the electoral register, in which some constituencies were eight times larger than others, and in which polling struggled over nearly four weeks ...

Blewett's work and, in particular, his estimate that only 60% of all adult *males* had the vote, marks a watershed in our understanding of the limitations of the

pre-1917 Franchise, though the implications of this are only beginning to be applied to the political history of the period. In his recent, *A Century of the Scottish People 1830 - 1950* T.C. Smout considers the failure of the Liberal Party and working-class Liberal leaders to maintain the reform movement beyond 1885.⁷ David Howell, in his history of the ILP, also pays attention to the limited electorate and the question of how it affected the fortunes of Labour.⁸ Yet, there remains a very strong sense that even though the limitation is noted (in many constituencies the adult male electorate was under 50%) the broad analysis concerning late Victorian and Edwardian politics has not been altered in any fundamental sense. This is despite the fact that the whole question of the rise of the Labour Party has been directly related to the franchise in an article in 1976 by H.C.G. Matthew, R.I. McKibbin and J.A. Kay.⁹

Matthew et al consider not just the size of the electorate but also the implications about Britain's status as a Parliamentary Democracy and they directly relate the level of enfranchisement to the fortunes of the Labour Party. Entitled, "The Franchise Factor in the Rise of the Labour Party", the article argues that the rise of Labour and the decline of the Liberal Party has at least as much to do with the Representation of the People Act of 1917 as it had to do with social and political consequences following from the Great War.¹⁰ Their argument is that the mass electorate created by the 'Fourth' Reform Act favoured *both* Labour and the Conservatives at the expense of the Liberal Party.¹¹

... the Liberals were wedded to the forms of the 1867 to 1914 political community as their opponents were not, that the ideologies of both the Labour and Conservative parties made them better able to exploit a fully democratic franchise...

The authors construct a comparison between the pre and post 1918

electorates, on the basis of which they argue that: One, there was pre-1914 no significant element of the existing electorate that was not committed to either of the two big parties: Second, that post-1918 there is no evidence of a single "progressive" vote that transferred from the Liberal Party to Labour.¹² This allows them to conclude that:¹³

It follows that the substantial post-war growth in Labour's relative strength must in large measure be attributable to the franchise extension and registration reform of 1918. ... We cannot say how many votes the introduction of universal franchise was worth to Labour, but we can say that it was a critical element in the emergence of the party as a major political force.

Glasgow's Electorate

I shall consider later the post-1917 development of labour in Glasgow but for the moment my concern is: How democratic was the franchise system or, how deliberate were its exclusions?

Let us begin by considering just how many men in Glasgow were on the electoral register. In 1911 the adult male population of Glasgow Parliamentary Burgh was 161,543. [i.e an estimate of those aged 21+] In the same year there were 87,049 Parliamentary electors which gives an estimated level of adult male enfranchisement of 53.89%. This figure is slightly higher than that given by Matthew et al (p 732) of 52.40%, but I don't consider this to be statistically significant. 1911 is taken as the standard year of comparison by Matthew et al since the Census for that year gives the necessary electoral and population figures. The information would appear to be more precise for England and Wales than for Scotland. To get levels of enfranchisement for particular constituencies we have to 'reconstruct' the Divisions from the municipal Wards they were comprised of since we have much more exact age and gender information for the Ward level. This

permits a more precise estimate of enfranchisement levels than simply applying the proportion of adult males for the City as a whole to each Division, as it would appear Matthew et al have done. Within the City there were wide variations. The Redistribution of Seats Act of 1885 had turned Glasgow Parliamentary Burgh from a single three-member constituency into seven separate Divisions each returning one M.P. Some idea of the different levels of enfranchisement can be got from looking at the Divisions and not the City as a whole.

TABLE 1 LEVELS OF ENFRANCHISEMENT, PROPORTIONAL MALE ELECTORATE,
GLASGOW PARLIAMENTARY DIVISIONS 1911

i.e. The number of male electors as a percentage of the number of males aged over 21 in each Division.

Divisions. -----	Electorate as Proportion of Adult Males. -----
No 1. Bridgeton	43.71%
No 2. Camlachie	48.74%
No 3. St Rollox	57.53%
No 4. Central	75.60%
No 5. College	52.04%
No 6. Tradeston	50.00%
No 7. Blackfriars and Hutchesontown	48.31%

Total for the City as A Whole	53.89%

At one level there is Bridgeton in the East End with just less than 44% enfranchisement and at the other, the largely business dominated Central Division with over 75%. Central stands on its own with by far the highest proportion of electors, due mainly to the high level of plural (business) votes. Of the others, only St Rollox comes close to Blewett's national figure of 60%

though it matches almost exactly the average figure for Scottish Burghs of 57.30%, while the remaining five are all below this and three are actually below 50% enfranchisement. (Matthew et al give a somewhat lower figure for Bridgeton - 40.60% - but this is due, as I have said, to their applying the age structure for the whole City to each Constituency.)

By 1921 the level of male enfranchisement for all Britain was over 94% and in Glasgow, now enlarged to 15 Divisions, it was 101.3%.¹⁴ Thus, in ten years the national male electorate had increased by more than 50% and in Glasgow it had almost doubled. A development of such magnitude could only be expected to have major political consequences (and this is without considering the newly created female electorate). A recent work on Scottish political history has accepted the thesis of Matthew et al as regards Labour's growth and has connected the massive increase in trade union membership to the expanded electorate, seeing both as coming from amongst the "less skilled portion of the workforce."¹⁵ On the basis of statistics alone, the case against British Democracy pre-1918 would seem secure yet there remains an argument that the electoral and franchise system was more or less democratic and not legally or systematically exclusive of any significant section of the population, i.e. that it was not class biased.

This view is put forward by Martin Pugh contra Matthew et al in his *Electoral Reform In War and Peace 1906 - 1918*¹⁶ Pugh accepts the findings of Blewett and that the assumption prevalent until the early 1960s that "manhood suffrage had virtually been achieved by 1900 [was] a gross exaggeration".¹⁷ Nevertheless, he does not agree with Matthew et al whom he regards as "going to the other extreme and underplaying the democratic quality of the system." Like Matthew et al he identifies the "complexities of the registration system" as the main reason for disenfranchising most men, but he does not agree with the conclusion that this was the very reason for those

complexities. He points out, correctly enough, that men could move on an off the register and concludes from this that "the dividing line between the enfranchised and the unenfranchised was therefore much less significant than the gross numbers would suggest."¹⁸ In Pugh's estimation the system was, despite any flaws, "broadly representative"; the electorate was comprised in the majority of working class voters who were only slightly less represented than the middle class.

However, if the figures in Table 1 above do represent reality, even if not 100% accurate, what is the explanation behind them? If they have nothing to do with the inherent biases of the franchise system what then explains the differential? Our interest in these figures lies not just in the numbers involved, but in the differences between areas. That there were major differences between areas is quite clear from the figures for the Parliamentary Divisions but this is still a large and cumbersome level to deal with. If, however, we consider the smaller Municipal Wards the variation between areas becomes much more apparent and we are much better placed to relate the electorate to social factors such as housing and health and therefore take forward the discussion of the franchise system in regard to class.

The popular perception of Glasgow was (and remains) of it as an overwhelmingly working class city.

Glasgow is not only a great city, but it is also the industrial capital of a populous and thriving district crowded with busy towns which depend upon iron and steel and coal. ... The working class districts in Glasgow are in all parts of the city, north, south, east and west, and they are mostly in closest proximity to areas of factories, mills and workshops.¹⁹

The basic truth of this picture was supported by official statistics. The Census of 1911 recorded a male working population of 253,210 of which over 49,000

or almost 20% were employed in Iron Manufacture alone.²⁰ Glasgow's main industry was, broadly speaking, engineering though Clydeside (most of which had been swallowed by Glasgow by 1912) was equally, if not more, famous for shipbuilding; almost half of Govan's adult male population were employed in shipbuilding and engineering.²¹ Referring only to those employed in Glasgow itself, The Board of Trade in 1908 pointed out, "the diversity of industrial activity" and "that Glasgow is a great railway centre, a great port, a great engineering shop, and that it occupies a prominent place in the textile trades."²² Moreover, Glasgow also provided a home for thousands of people who worked outside the City boundary, as with the giant Singer sewing machine works at Clydebank, many of whose workers travelled daily from Bridgeton.²³ Yet the industrial and occupational structure of this working class city found only an uneasy reflection in support for Labour in the political field. The truth is that once we examine the electoral map of the City - as Henry Pelling has done for the Parliamentary Constituencies of Britain - the predominance of the working class becomes a much more attenuated phenomenon.

Matthew et al take issue with one view of the Edwardian electorate which estimates that 75-80% of voters were working class.²⁴ This appears to be based upon an estimate that the working class comprised 80% of the *population*. This itself is likely an overestimate since it includes agricultural labourers and is almost certainly so in terms of enfranchisement.²⁵ Blewett estimates a figure of 38% of the electorate being middle class, which Matthew et al revise upwards to 40% or even higher.²⁶ Pelling's work in mapping constituencies, however, shows that, prior to 1914 only 89 constituencies - which were responsible for electing 95 MPs - were, "predominantly working class in character."²⁷ Thus, although Pugh can argue that, "a substantial majority of the eight million Edwardian voters were, none

the less, working class",²⁸ this was a majority which was not as overwhelming as appearances might have suggested and which was effectively nullified by the careful drawing of constituency boundaries.²⁹

TABLE 2. LEVELS OF ENFRANCHISEMENT PROPORTIONAL MALE ELECTORATE, GLASGOW MUNICIPAL WARDS 1911

i.e. The number of male electors as a percentage of the number of males aged over 21 in each Ward.

1. Dalmarnock	46.94
2. Calton	38.88
3. Mile End	46.67
4. Whitevale	50.94
5. Dennistoun	67.45
6. Springburn*	48.05 (50.21)
7. Cowlairs*	57.54 (57.45)
8. Townhead	54.18
9. Blackfriars	51.61
10. Exchange	282.90
11. Blythswood+	272.01
12. Broomielaw+	67.27
13. Anderston	53.43
14. Sandyford	57.31
15. Park	64.96
16. Cowcaddens	36.83
17. Woodside	58.56
18. Hutchesontown	47.13
19. Gorbals	46.55
20. Kingston	55.28
21. Govanhill*	66.38 (49.21)
22. Langside**	86.68
23. Pollokshields**	85.16
24. Kelvinside**	83.88
25. Maryhill**	56.59
26. Kinning Park**	53.97

* = Those wards partly outwith Glasgow Parliamentary Burgh. Figures in parentheses are those for the area within the Parliamentary Burgh.

** = Those wards totally outwith Glasgow Parliamentary Burgh.

+ = Those wards with a particularly high plural voting element. It is most likely that the number of men with the municipal franchise was significantly greater in these wards.

What is most strikingly evident from this table is the phenomenally wide differential between wards, from under 40% at the bottom to close to 300% at the top; a much greater level of magnitude than that operating at the Divisional level. Before we proceed to attempt to account for these differences we need to explain how the figures in Table 2 were arrived at.

The table is constructed from two sources: The Glasgow Post Office Directory (GPOD) for 1910-11 which provides the numbers of electors in each ward: and the *Census 1911* published by the Corporation of Glasgow under the aegis of the Medical Officer of Health which provides much more detailed information than the official Census Report, in particular age and sex breakdowns in five year bands for each Municipal Ward. We know, therefore, how many men there were in each ward aged 20+ and we can simply deduct an estimated number for those aged 20 based upon the proportion of males at that age for the City as a whole. This gives us a, more or less, exact number of males of voting age, i.e. 21+.

The main difficulty arises from the City boundaries and the categories of voters used by the GPOD. In some years there is no problem since the GPOD gives a breakdown of Male, Female and Total Municipal Electors. However, in other years, and 1911 is such a year, the categories are Parliamentary, Supplementary and Total Municipal. This latter arrangement is confusing on two counts: One is that women could only qualify for the municipal franchise whereas men could qualify for both separately. Normally men on the Electoral register qualified for both but certain 'outside', i.e. plural voters could - due to the different rules about distance of residence - have a municipal vote while not qualifying for a parliamentary vote: Secondly, the boundaries of the Municipal Burgh were not contiguous with the Parliamentary Burgh; the former was much larger and contained wards partly and totally outwith the latter. Thus, for 1911 the GPOD only gives figures for those men who had a

parliamentary vote in one of the Glasgow Divisions; for the area outside all electors are grouped together as "Supplementary". The way around this problem is to apply the proportional Male/Female divide in 1901 (as given in the GPOD 1901-02) to the Parliamentary/Supplementary divide in 1911. That this produces, more or less, a true representation is indicated by the fact that for those wards totally within Glasgow Parliamentary Burgh the proportions between Parliamentary/Supplementary in 1911 are largely the same as those between Male/Female in 1901, apart, that is, from those wards with a high plural voting element.

Unfortunately, any examination of enfranchisement rates and class is limited by the paucity of figures relating to occupational and industrial structure. The Census only deals with Glasgow as a whole and gives no breakdown on occupations at a smaller area level. The statistics produced by the City Corporation - detailed as they are for the Ward level - are concerned mainly with sex, age, health and housing and make no reference whatever to occupation. It becomes necessary, indeed unavoidable, to use the figures produced by the Corporation - collected either by the Medical Officer of Health, or extracted from the Census schedules - as indicators of social structure within the City of Glasgow. However, we can at least make brief descriptive references to the industrial nature of some of the Wards and their levels of enfranchisement.

Glasgow's Municipal Wards

The two wards which stand out as having by far the highest rates - Exchange and Blythswood - constituted the commercial heart of Glasgow. They were also the two smallest Wards and were the preserve of the City's business community. Though Blythswood still housed a bourgeois element (as Glasgow's early West End), the electorate in it and Exchange bore little

relation to the actual resident population. It is impossible to estimate the size of the plural vote from any printed sources but, at least here, there can be no question as to its existence. The high levels of enfranchisement in these two wards can only be explained by a phenomenally high number of plural votes. Simply put, there were more electors in these two wards than there were men of all ages; in Blythswood in 1911 the ratio was almost 2 : 1. Because of the rules concerning Burghs and plural voting those whose business interests gave them a second vote in Glasgow would have had to *reside* outside the City. Those who lived within the boundaries of the City could choose to vote at their place of residence *or* their business address, but *not* at both. On one of the few occasions when there was actually a contested election in these Wards the *Glasgow Herald* provided a revealing description of the polling procedure of the "commercial electorate":

Blythswood Ward ... shares ... with Exchange Ward the honour of embracing the bulk of the commercial intelligence of Glasgow. As became such a constituency, the proceedings were characterised by business-like precision and activity, and gentlemen came and went to exercise their right brooking interference or promptings from no-one. ... As in the case of the neighbouring ward (Exchange) a large number of electors had residential qualifications elsewhere. The majority of these who desired to vote in Blythswood Ward had done so before six o'clock.³⁰

Nowhere else was the plural vote so evident, though the other wards which together with Exchange and Blythswood made up the Central Constituency - Anderston, Sandyford, and Broomielaw - would have had a significant plural element since they all at least bordered the City Centre. This was particularly so with Broomielaw which was very much in the heart of the City and which, although it had a relatively high enfranchisement level of over 67% was very definitely one of the "poorer class districts" of Glasgow.³¹ Because of the obvious disparity between population and electorate in Exchange, Blythswood

and Broomielaw we shall have to consider them separately from the other wards.

Langside, Pollokshields and Kelvinside all enjoyed enfranchisement levels of 80%+ and in these cases this did reflect their social composition. These wards were *the* residential areas of Glasgow (especially the last two) and were situated outwith the boundaries of the Parliamentary Burgh. The first two lay to the south of the City while Kelvinside (which was where the University was removed to from the High Street) was the "new" West End of Glasgow. Kelvinside was seen as being the home of the more anglicised, almost trendy wealth while Pollokshields represented the more douce and respectable Scottish bourgeoisie. These were the districts where the businessmen of the City tended to live and, given that many of them chose to exercise their franchise in Exchange, Blythswood or Broomielaw, the true or actual enfranchisement rate for adult males most likely was significantly greater than even these high rates indicate; i.e. more or less 100%.

The other wards which can be categorised as having "high" levels of enfranchisement were Dennistoun, Park and Govanhill. Park was famed as a rich district, dominated as it was by the great houses overlooking Kelvingrove Park. At the same time it was more "mixed" than the suburbs since although on one side it was bounded by Kelvinside it was also bordered by the working class areas of Anderston, Sandyford, Woodside and Cowcaddens and we can expect there to have been a good deal of overlap or "contamination." Similarly Dennistoun (or this "bourgeois ward" as it was referred to by the *Forward*²² had a strong middle class presence in the centre but also had a working class population overlapping with Townhead and Whitevale.

Govanhill is an especially interesting case. Commonly identified as an "artisan" ward³³ it lay partly within and partly outwith the Parliamentary Burgh

and the enfranchisement rates between the two parts are significantly different. To the North Govanhill was bounded by Gorbals and Hutchesontown and was part of the Blackfriars and Hutchesontown Division. This section of the ward had less than 50% enfranchisement. To the South it was bounded by Langside and presumably Govanhill itself became more "residential" the further South it went. Given that the overall rate of enfranchisement was over 66% and we know the "Glasgow" end had less than 50%, that part of the ward outside the Burgh must have enjoyed an even greater level, something more akin to that of Langside and the other residential wards. What is of added interest is that Govanhill was the only Ward with a "high" level of enfranchisement that ever returned a Labour candidate, in the local municipal election of 1911. In none of the others, with the exception of Dennistoun, did Labour ever bother to stand a candidate.

The remaining wards (two-thirds of the total) were largely working class and situated in all parts of the City - North , South, East and West.³⁴ The enfranchisement rates for all seventeen were below 60% while seven of these were actually below 50% and two fell under the 40% mark. Though there was no immutable demarcation between these wards we can make a general distinction between "artisan" and "poorer" working class areas (which were the descriptive categories used by the Medical Officer of Health). Broadly speaking those wards with rates higher than 50% were artisan or skilled areas while those below were poor or unskilled. Thus Sandyford, Woodside, Maryhill, Kingston and Kinning Park were regarded as artisan as were Townhead, Cowlairs and Springburn which were largely dominated by railway engineering. Cowlairs and Springburn were very often regarded as one and the same though, as we can see, there is a noticeable gap between their levels of enfranchisement. (Like Govanhill, Cowlairs and Springburn were only partly within Glasgow Parliamentary Burgh but there was not the same

discrepancy between enfranchisement rates between the two parts.)

Wards which can be categorised as poor or unskilled were Cowcaddens, Calton, Hutchesontown, Dalmarnock, Anderston and Gorbals, and the first two in particular represent this in their enfranchisement rates. Blackfriars would also fit into this category containing, as it did, some of the worst of Glasgow's housing stock around the High Street, but it was also an area of small businesses and likely had a greater plural voting element than the rest. Whitevale and Mile End together comprised the East End Division of Camlachie and though recognisably "poor" in many ways they were more "mixed"; Whitevale bordering Dennistoun and Mile End stretching out further East to the engineering districts of Parkhead and Shettleston.

This rough, descriptive guide to the social structure of the wards is ragged at the edges with a degree of overlap, particularly between working class areas. However, it does confirm a "commonsense" view of Glasgow and correctly identifies the broad trend and the extremes. Thus, the phenomenally high levels of enfranchisement in the business wards of Exchange and Blythswood are obviously due to the plural vote and neither they nor the rates in the middle class, residential wards are unexpected. At the other end of the scale Cowcaddens was renowned as a "slum area" and its low rate is just as clearly understood. Nevertheless, an attempt can be made to verify the connection between the franchise and class using the social indicators available to us. First among these is housing.

Housing

Though the Reform Act of 1867 enfranchised (part of) the working class it did so in terms of property, not as an inalienable human right. Thus the pre and post-1867 franchise systems remained "conceptually" the same.

This was because the nineteenth century Reform Acts had widened the membership of the electorate but had not fundamentally altered the nature of the franchise system: the right to vote was a privilege purchased through property, whether by its occupation, its ownership, or in the case of the servant franchise, by an economic relationship to an owner of property.³⁵

The relationship was either to business property or to residential property and could be through ownership or simply renting. The majority of electors were registered on the basis of the Occupation or Household franchises.³⁶ Given that Blewett estimates the plural vote at 7% of the total³⁷ it is clear that most people were registered by residence. In Glasgow nearly everyone rented their property (business and residential); in 1911 less than 2% of Glasgow's electorate were owners or life-renters, in contrast to Edinburgh where the figure was over 15%, though it is likely that the middle class suburbs outwith the Parliamentary Burgh had a higher proportion.³⁸

As we are already well aware, housing was a crucial factor in determining Labour support within Glasgow at the municipal level.³⁹ Our interest here, however, is in examining the direct relationship between housing and enfranchisement. It is safe to assume that the type of housing people lived in, i.e. could afford to pay for, reflected their wealth and social status. In terms of electoral registration housing type was crucial. Poorer quality housing tended to be let for shorter periods which reflected the necessity of many unskilled workers to move around after work and thus run a likely risk of not getting on the register or being removed from it due to the twelve month residency rule. There was a further difficulty in Scotland because householders had to pay their rates personally but for houses with an annual valuation of less than £4 it was the landlord who paid. Though the number of such houses in Glasgow were not particularly numerous, their inhabitants (presumably of the poorer working class) were effectively disenfranchised.⁴⁰

TABLE 3: HOUSING IN GLASGOW WARDS 1911.

Column 1 gives proportion of houses of 1 and 2 rooms. Column 2 gives proportion of population living in houses of 1 and 2 rooms.

WARDS	1	2
1. Dalmarnock	91.58	88.89
2. Calton	76.71	69.67
3. Mile End	91.41	88.25
4. Whitevale	76.38	70.75
5. Dennistoun	52.89	47.25
6. Springburn	86.29	82.84
7. Cowlairs	80.13	76.04
8. Townhead	74.35	68.53
9. Blackfriars	73.30	63.37
10. Exchange	42.77	30.20
11. Blythswood	18.45	10.52
12. Broomielaw	63.16	52.87
13. Anderston	73.19	66.47
14. Sandyford	53.15	48.36
15. Park	15.64	12.40
16. Cowcaddens	72.26	66.50
17. Woodside	71.48	66.47
18. Hutchesontown	92.06	88.82
19. Gorbals	56.13	47.89
20. Kingston	58.35	52.30
21. Govanhill	70.49	65.53
22. Langside	22.41	19.53
23. Pollokshields	8.52	7.27
24. Kelvinside	4.28	4.09
25. Maryhill	69.18	67.00
26. Kinning Park	85.23	82.13
Totals	66.41	62.14

Source: Corporation of Glasgow, *Census 1911*

TABLE 4: HOUSING IN GLASGOW WARDS, 1911

Column 1 gives number of persons per windowed room.
Column 2 gives number of windowed rooms per inhabited house.

WARDS	1	2
1. Dalmarnock	2.73	1.74
2. Calton	2.20	2.09
3. Mile End	2.68	1.76
4. Whitevale	2.31	2.05
5. Dennistoun	1.63	2.69
6. Springburn	2.46	1.94
7. Cowlairs	2.35	2.03
8. Townhead	2.16	2.21
9. Blackfriars	2.18	2.23
10. Exchange	1.20	4.39
11. Blythswood	0.92	5.89
12. Broomielaw	1.99	2.63
13. Anderston	2.12	2.20
14. Sandyford	1.63	2.93
15. Park	0.99	4.79
16. Cowcaddens	2.13	2.21
17. Woodside	1.92	2.35
18. Hutchesontown	2.63	1.76
19. Gorbals	1.93	2.52
20. Kingston	1.99	2.40
21. Govanhill	2.02	2.27
22. Langside	1.13	3.67
23. Pollokshields	0.78	6.08
24. Kelvinside	0.75	5.98
25. Maryhill	1.81	2.56
26. Kinning Park	2.57	1.89
Totals	1.83	2.55

Source: Corporation of Glasgow, *Census 1911*

Tables 3 and 4 provide statistical detail on the size of houses and density of occupation in all the Glasgow wards for 1911. These figures do not tell us what the value or letting conditions of houses were but they do provide indicators as to the quality of the housing stock in the different areas of the City and thus to the status of the population in each area. Generally speaking we would expect those wards where the houses were larger, i.e. with a low proportion of 1 & 2 roomed houses) to be representative of middle class areas, and the converse to be true for working class areas. Similarly those with a lower number of persons per room would likely be better off while wards with a greater number of persons per room we would expect to be poorer. The gradation runs from the opposite end though for number of rooms per house; those with a high number would be better-off and those with low the poorer.

Hardly surprisingly the ordering of the four categories is replicated in the four categories. Thus Hutchesontown, Dalrnarnock, Mile End, Springburn, Kinning Park, Cowlairs, Whitevale, Calton and Townhead inhabit the bottom places in all four leagues. At the top of the tables are Dennistoun, Exchange, Blythswood, Park, Langside, Pollokshields and Kelvingrove. If we apply the total figure for Glasgow as the average we find that these seven wards always fall on the right side of the divide so to speak. It can hardly be coincidence that these seven wards were also among our group of nine "high" enfranchisement wards and that Broomielaw, another of the nine, falls on the plus side on three out of four occasions.

At the other end of the enfranchisement scale, however, the "fit" is not quite so neat. The two lowest wards in terms of enfranchisement, Cowcaddens and Calton, are by no means the worst areas for housing. The three wards with clearly the poorest housing conditions on all four counts (e.g. 90%+ of 1 & 2 roomed houses) were Hutchesontown, Dalrnarnock, and Mile End, have very

similar levels of enfranchisement, i.e. under 50% and all within 0.5% of one another. Yet Gorbals with a similar enfranchisement rate of 46.55% had, relatively speaking, good housing conditions; less than half of its population lived in houses of one or two rooms.

Cowlairs, Woodside and Sandyford were three of the better-off "artisan" wards at the top end of the enfranchisement scale for working class areas, i.e. c. 58%. Their housing conditions, however, varied considerably with Sandyford being above the average in all four categories. This contrasted sharply with Govanhill which was a high category ward as far as its electorate was concerned but which was below average on all four housing counts. Springburn and Cowlairs not only "scored" worse than Sandyford but were even worse than Cowcaddens.

The statistics contained in Tables 3 and 4 provide indicators about social status, and are particularly clear in identifying "high status" or middle class areas. However, they are not so reliable in identifying differences between working class areas. In housing, insofar as the working class population was concerned, size was not a consistent guide to quality of accommodation or status of tenants. As Joe Melling has commented;

Even the more affluent skilled workers often preferred to begin married life in a one room tenement flat, before progressing to larger dwellings with families and "doubling up" with other households in periods of unemployment.⁴¹

There was also the pressure of trying to get a house near one's place of work. The above average levels for 1 and 2 roomed houses in Springburn and Cowlairs were due, presumably, to the expansion of the railway engineering industry; between 1901 and 1911 the population of these two wards increased by 25.6% and 10.7% respectively.⁴²

With this qualification in mind we can, nonetheless, claim a statistically

verifiable relation between housing and enfranchisement based upon the figures we have available. As the scattergrams below graphically indicate there is a significant correlation between the proportional adult male electorate in each ward and house size and density of occupation. The correlations are:

1. Proportional male electorate with proportion of 1 & 2 roomed houses = $-.82087$
2. Proportional male electorate with proportion of population living in 1 and 2 roomed houses = $-.82274$
3. Proportional male electorate with number of persons per windowed room = $-.84815$
4. Proportional male electorate with number of windowed rooms per house = $.79904$

NOTE: The number of cases plotted is only 23. This is because Exchange, Blythswold and Broomielaw wards were not included because their high level of plural voters meant that their electorates had only a limited relationship to their residential populations.

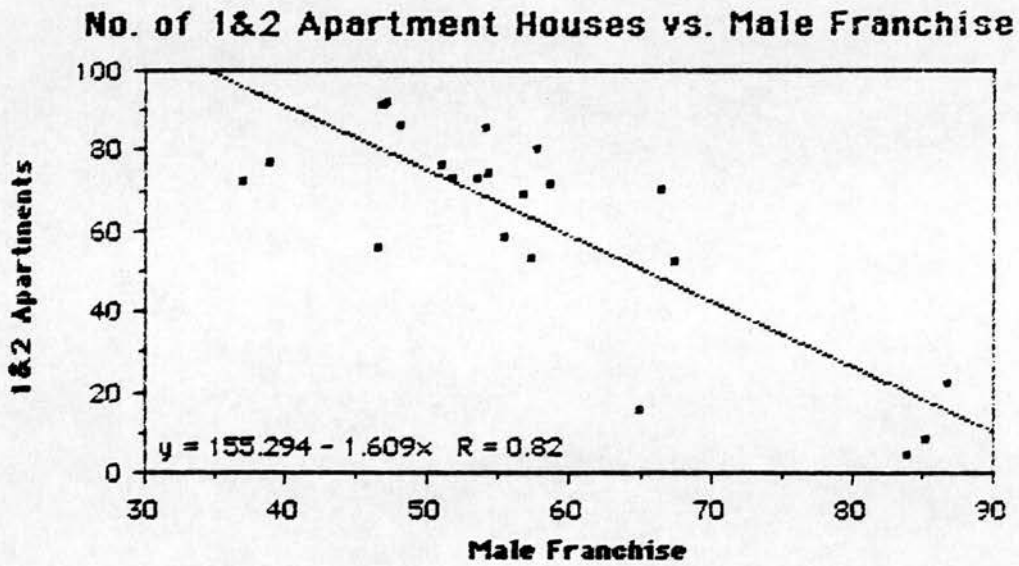
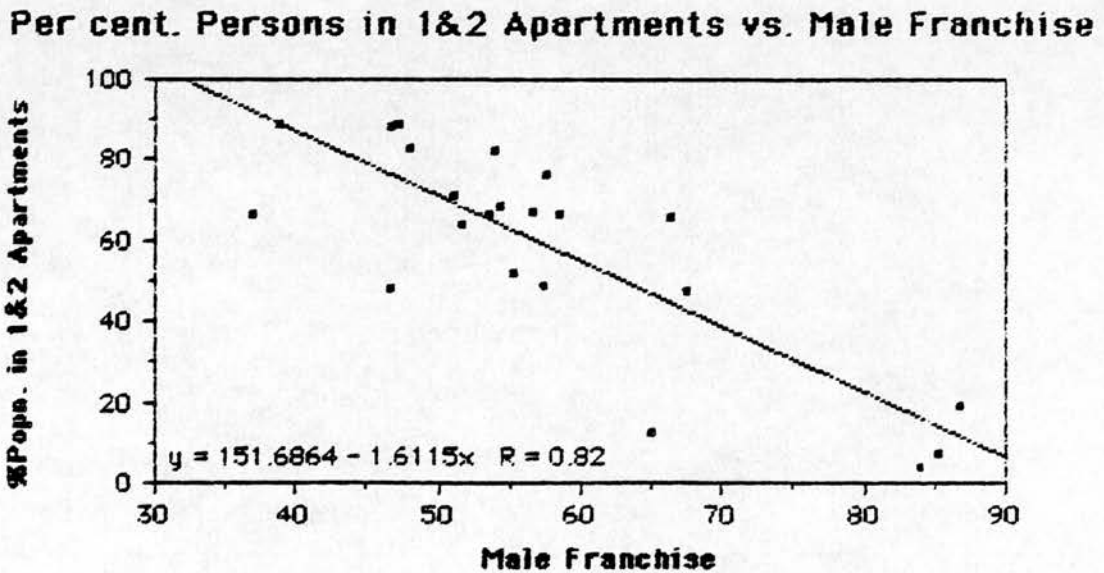
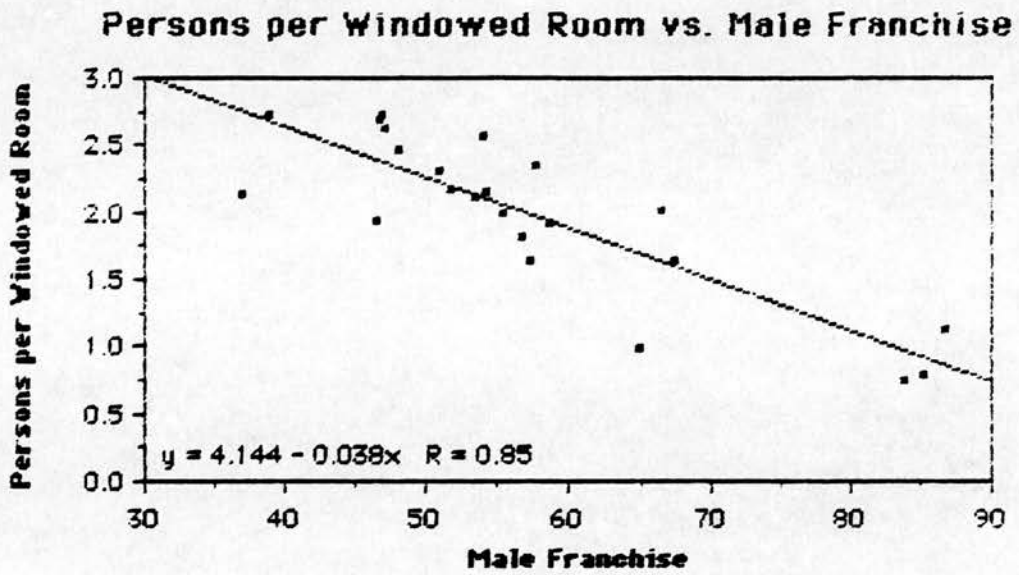
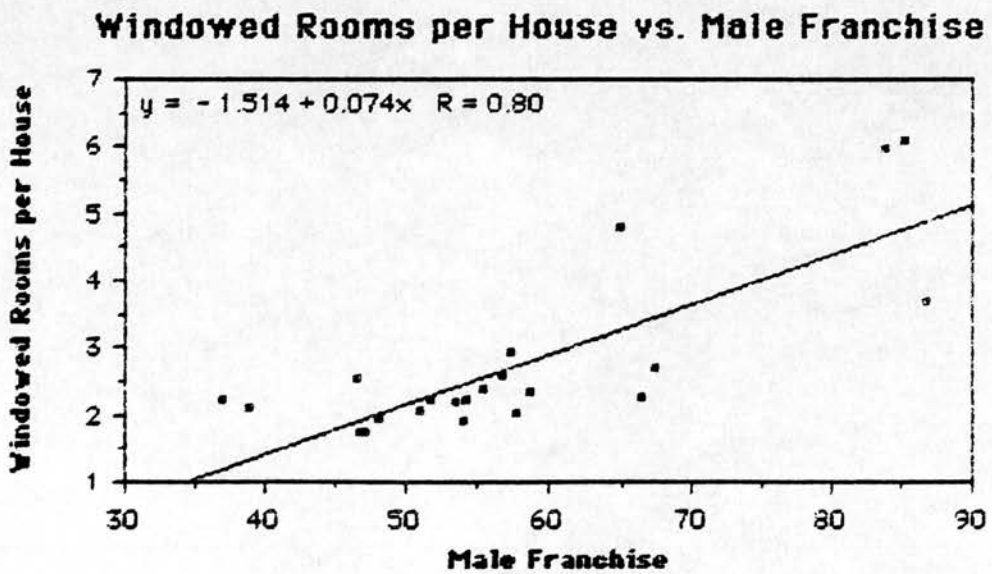
Figure 1**Figure 2**

Figure 3**Figure 4**

Health

Closely linked to housing was the issue of health, and Glasgow managed to provide some of the worst statistics for both in the whole of Europe.⁴³ A pivotal figure in the debate on health and housing was James B. Russell, Medical Officer of Health for Glasgow in the latter decades of the nineteenth century. Russell was convinced that mortality and susceptibility to disease were related to the "physical differences" between areas, "especially as to air-space". Such were the contrasts that he produced in the mid-1880s, a four-fold division of Glasgow or, as he put it, "We can classify the inhabitants of one city so as to produce four cities. ...

...to amply illustrate the law that the comparative healthiness of sections of population, whether they be traditionally separated and known by name as distinct communities, or are merely artificial divisions of the same community, is determined by the air-space within and without their dwellings."⁴⁴

While we need not share Russell's over-riding concern with air-space, he does provide us with a lead to follow, though we will not attempt any similar division of the City. This would be impossible, in the sense of producing a comparison with Russell's statistics for two reasons: One is that Russell was dealing with a smaller area, i.e. the Parliamentary Burgh only and not the extended area incorporated in 1891 which included districts such as Kelvinside, Pollokshields, Maryhill: Furthermore the geographical entities for the collation of health statistics were changed in 1902 from the old Statistical or Sanitary Districts which Russell worked on to the Municipal Wards; as Russell himself said, "Change in the constitution of such Districts is fatal to the comparability of their statistics."⁴⁵ For the Medical Officer of Health this changeover may have produced problems⁴⁶ but for us it provides an

opportunity to relate health to politics, namely the level of enfranchisement.

Socialist propogandists were not slow to exploit the figures produced by the Corporation's health officers. John Wheatley, for example, illustrated his arguments for municipal housing with references to the massive gulf in mortality rates between working class and middle class areas.⁴⁷ Death was built into the class structure. Tables 5 and 6 give the Death Rate and the Infant Mortality Rate for Glasgow's Municipal Wards in 1911.

TABLE 5: DEATH RATES PER THOUSAND IN GLASGOW WARDS, 1911

WARDS	RATE
1. Dalmarnock	18.59
2. Calton	19.35
3. Mile End	19.04
4. Whitevale	17.38
5. Dennistoun	11.27
6. Springburn	15.82
7. Cowlairs	14.94
8. Townhead	16.51
9. Blackfriars	18.39
10. Exchange	16.75
11. Blythswood	12.88
12. Broomielaw	22.66
13. Anderston	17.78
14. Sandyford	15.43
15. Park	11.39
16. Cowcaddens	19.59
17. Woodside	14.49
18. Hutchesontown	18.06
19. Gorbals	15.64
20. Kingston	18.33
21. Govanhill	13.34
22. Langside	9.31
23. Pollokshields	10.45
24. Kelvinside	8.89
25. Maryhill	12.75
26. Kinning Park	16.82
Total	16.44

Source: Glasgow Corporation, *Report of the Medical Officer of Health, 1913*

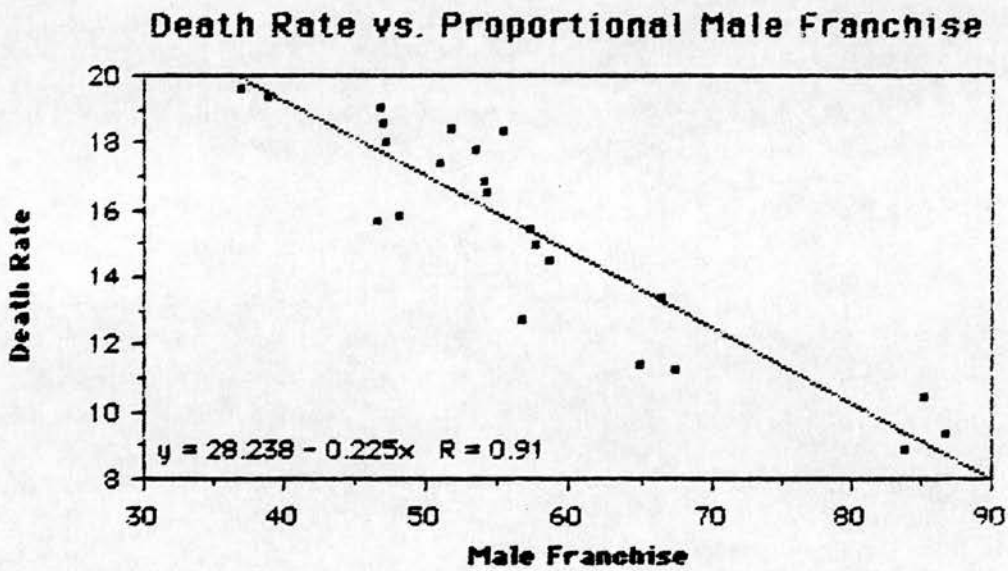
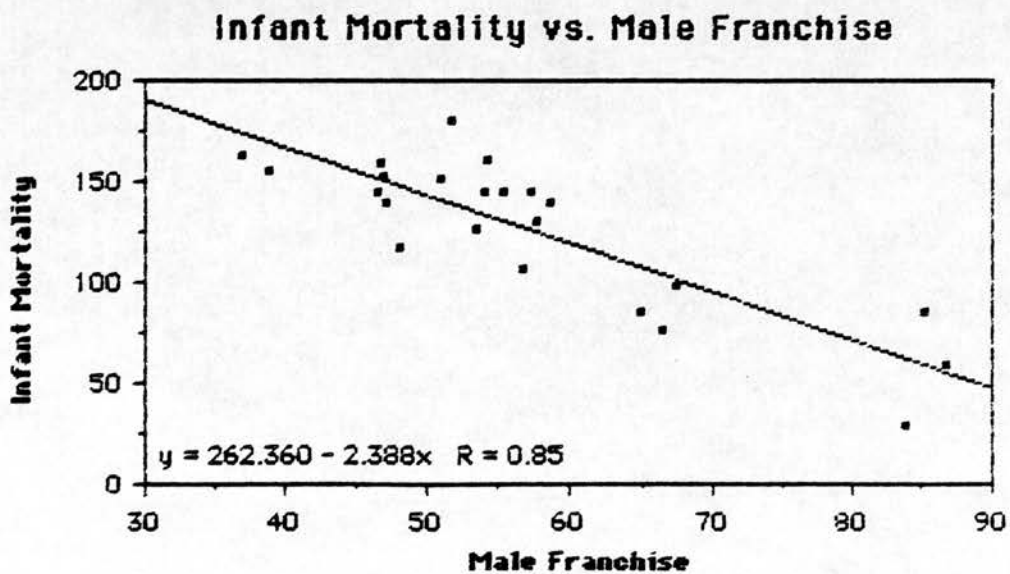
TABLE 6: DEATH RATE PER 1,000 BIRTHS IN GLASGOW WARDS, 1911

WARDS	RATE
1. Dalmarnock	152
2. Calton	155
3. Mile End	159
4. Whitevale	151
5. Dennistoun	99
6. Springburn	117
7. Cowlairs	130
8. Townhead	161
9. Blackfriars	180
10. Exchange	200
11. Blythswood	160
12. Broomielaw	234
13. Anderston	126
14. Sandyford	145
15. Park	85
16. Cowcaddens	163
17. Woodside	144
18. Hutchesontown	140
19. Gorbals	145
20. Kingston	145
21. Govanhill	76
22. Langside	59
23. Pollokshields	86
24. Kelvinside	29
25. Maryhill	106
26. Kinning Park	145
Total	136

Source: Glasgow Corporation, *Report of the Medical Officer of Health, 1913*

The picture that emerges from these Tables is very similar to the situation regarding housing as depicted in Tables 3 and 4. The identifiably residential middle class areas - Dennistoun, Park, Langside, Pollokshields, Kelvinside - have the lowest death rates and, along with Govanhill, the lowest rates for infant mortality as well. The three city centre or business wards - Exchange, Blythswood, Broomielaw - score badly on both counts, particularly Exchange and Broomielaw, the latter having the worst rates for both death and infant mortality for the whole city. Their geographical location in the heart of the City had, presumably, a lot to do with their poor health record, but this does give added weight to the decision not to include the wards in the correlations of electorate and social conditions.

The gradation of working class wards follows a pattern we would expect from the descriptive categorisation of 'artisan' and 'poorer', e.g. Cowcaddens is the worst of the working class districts in both tables. This gradation is particularly clear for Death Rate. At the top (with the highest or worst rates) there are Broomielaw, then Cowcaddens, then three of the four East End wards, Blackfriars, Kingston (the only 'artisan' ward), Hutchesontown, Anderston and Whitevale (the last of the East End Wards). Below this with healthier rates come the recognisably 'artisan' wards of Kinning Park, Townhead, Springburn, Sandyford, Cowlairst, Woodside and Govanhill. Apart from Exchange (business) and Gorbals (poor) the pattern is fairly consistent. The strength of the relationship with the electorate is shown, once again, by the scattergrams reproduced below. The correlation for proportional male electorate with infant mortality is similar to those of the various housing variables, -0.84993 , while the correlation with death rate is even closer at -0.91040 .

Figure 5**Figure 6**

Activists

On the basis of the above statistical correlations it appears clear that the electorate was largely determined by class and status. However the franchise system was meant to operate, whether or not deliberately to exclude the poorer through the mysteries of registration or whatever, the end result clearly discriminated against the working class.⁴⁸ Furthermore, there were significant variations between working class areas which clearly relate (even if not 100% consistently) to differences in social conditions.

These figures, however, deal at a general level and it is important for our purposes to try and focus our attention, to some extent at least, upon the working class electorate itself. Some detail on its complexion can be got from an examination of the delegate membership of Glasgow Trades Council. The Trades Council was by no means representative of the whole working class, but it does provide a 'sample' of the organised (male) working class, precisely that element we would expect to find on the electoral register.

In 1911 the delegates to the Glasgow Trades Council numbered 287, of whom only five were women. Of this number 205 could be traced to addresses within Glasgow Municipal Burgh, and of this figure only 113 and 114 appeared on the Electoral Register for each of the two years 1910-11 and 1911-12; an enfranchisement rate of c. 55%. The proportion of delegates appearing on the Register for both years was 45% while the figure for those appearing on either year was 66%. Even this higher figure leaves out a significant element of what must have been not only the most organised but also most politically aware section of the working class. The figure of 55% in any single year was only slightly greater than the figure for Glasgow as a whole.

Even within this group of activists, however, there were variations. If we take the Amalgamated Society of Engineers (ASE) and the Municipal Employees

Association (MEA) as broadly representative of skilled and unskilled workers respectively, we can see a marked difference in their enfranchisement levels. The ASE had 14 delegates representing 7 branches on the Trades Council and the MEA 36 delegates representing 22 branches. Of the ASE members, 11 lived within Glasgow Municipal Burgh and of these, 10 were on the Electoral Register for either of the two years. Of the MEA members 25 could be traced of whom 16 appeared on the Register for either of the two years. The difference in enfranchisement rates between the two Unions in the two years were 30% and 18%. Though these numbers are quite small (still the MEA accounted for one eighth of all Trades Council delegates) they do indicate a tendency for skilled workers as more likely to have the vote than unskilled. In fact the actual gap between skilled and unskilled or tradesmen and labourers was likely to have been much greater since the MEA was not a labourers union but a general union with a large number of semi-skilled and skilled members. Of those delegates of the MEA on the voter' roll only four could be regarded as simply unskilled, with a greater number having at least some sort of skill, including an electrician, engineer, plumber, joiner, and a brassdresser.

TABLE 7: ENFRANCHISEMENT LEVELS OF DELEGATES TO
GLASGOW TRADES COUNCIL, 1911

DELEGATES	NO. TRACED	NO. ON ELECTORAL REGISTER			
		1910-11	1911-12	BOTH YEARS	EITHER YEAR
GTC	205	113 (55%)	114 (56%)	93 (45%)	135 (66%)
MEA	25	13 (52%)	16 (64%)	13 (52%)	16 (64%)
ASE	11	9 (82%)	9 (82%)	8 (73%)	10 (91%)

GTC = Glasgow Trades Council; MEA = Municipal Employees Association; ASE = Amalgamated Society of Engineers.

Table 7 shows the enfranchisement levels for all delegates to Glasgow Trades Council in 1911 and for the delegates of the ASE and MEA in particular. By examining the Electoral Register over two consecutive years we can clearly see the tendency for individuals to move off and on the voters' roll. We know from our examination of ILP branch secretaries that changing address could mean losing the vote for a year or two before managing to get back on the Register.⁴⁹ Given this it could be argued that the number appearing on the Register in *either* of the two years - the highest figure - was the more representative, since it indicates the true number of those likely to qualify as electors. However, the fact remains that the number with the vote in any *single* year was significantly less and this, of course, was a difficulty (i.e. registration) faced by everyone who otherwise *qualified* for the vote. As Matthew et al have commented:

It is hard to disagree with the Liberal agents ... that mass disqualification was inherent in the occupation franchise. It is hard, also to avoid the conclusion that is precisely why it was there.⁵⁰

It was well-known that it was the poorer, unskilled sections of the working class who suffered most from registration difficulties.⁵¹ Anyone, be they a middle class businessman, shopkeeper, boilermaker, labourer, could lose their vote temporarily through moving house, but as Table 7 shows in the contrast between the members of the ASE and MEA, in fact between the ASE and the rest of the Trades Council delegates, there were simply more skilled workers getting onto the Electoral Register than unskilled in the first place.

As with our figures for the Municipal Ward populations so the above information on the Glasgow Trades Council shows that different sections of the population - who can be identified on a class and status basis - experienced significantly different enfranchisement levels. The division that existed between the middle and working class was replicated within the working class itself. What we now have to consider is how this limited electorate affected the fortunes of the Labour Party *and* why Labour accepted an inherently and obviously biased franchise system.

NOTES

1. See chapter three. That the Liberal and Capitalist era was almost over; *The Miner*, May, July, August 1887, also Keir Hardie, "The Independent Labour Party", in Andrew Reid (ed), *The New Party* (London, 1895) pp 258-264. On returning a number of Labour MPs, *The Labour Leader*, February 1893. On the Irish as an example for a Labour Group to follow see Robert Smillie, "If they had 80 men in the House of Commons they would be able, side by side with the Independent Irish members, to work a revolution in this country in a very short time." , Scottish Workers Representation Committee, *Second Annual Report 1902*
2. H.C.G. Matthew, R.I. McKibbin, J.A. Kay, "The franchise factor in the rise of the Labour Party", *English Historical Review* (1976) p 740, "Thus there was in the pre-war electorate no large pool of voters uncommitted to the existing major parties ...". On the size and distribution of the mining vote, Roy Gregory, *The Miners and British Politics 1906-1914* (London, 1968).
3. Andrew Reid, op cit, p258; quoted in Matthew et al, op cit, p724.
4. Jill Liddington & Jill Norris, *One Hand Tied Behind Us: The Rise of the Women's Suffrage Movement* (London, 1978) p125.
5. *Past and Present* No 32 1965, pp 27-56.
6. Ibid, p27.
7. T.C. Smout, *A Century of the Scottish People 1830-1950* (London, 1986) pp 246-8.
8. David Howell, *British Workers and the Independent Labour Party 1888-1906* (Manchester, 1984) pp 130-1.
9. Matthew et al, op cit.
10. Ibid, p 723.
11. ibid.
12. Ibid, pp 739-40.
13. Ibid, p 740.
14. Ibid, p 732.
15. I.G.C. Hutchinson, *A Political History of Scotland 1832-1924: Parties, Elections and Issues* (Edinburgh, 1986) p285.

16. Martin Pugh, *Electoral Reform in War and Peace 1906-1918* (London, 1978).
17. Ibid, p 3.
18. Ibid, p 4.
19. *Cost of Living of the Working Classes* Report of an Enquiry by the Board of Trade (1908), PP 1908 Cmd. 3864 CVII 319.
20. Census of Scotland 1911, Vol 1 Pt 2, City of Glasgow, p48, p76 Table XXIV.
21. Calum Campbell, *The Making of a Clydeside Working Class: Shipbuilding and Working Class Organisation in Govan* (Our History Pamphlet No 78, July 1986) p 1.
22. *PP 1908* op cit p 532.
23. Ibid, p 531.
24. Matthew et al, op cit, p 733; A.K. Russell, *Liberal Landslide* (London, 1973), pp 19-21.
25. Matthew et al, op cit; G Routh, *Occupation and Pay in Great Britain, 1900-1960* (Cambridge, 1965) pp 4-5.
26. Neal Blewett, *The Peers, The Parties and The People* (London, 1972) p 363-4; Matthew et al, op cit.
27. Matthew et al, op cit; H.M. Pelling, *Social Geography of British Elections* (London, 1967) pp 419-20.
28. Pugh, op cit p 3.
29. Pelling, op cit, p 3, "... in accordance with the provisions of the 1885 Redistribution Act, their boundaries were deliberately drawn with a view to separating, 'the pursuits of the population' ...".
30. *Glasgow Herald* 4 November, 1896.
31. Glasgow Corporation, *Report of the Medical Officer of Health 1913* p 231
32. *Forward* 9 November, 1907.
33. Glasgow Corporation, op cit, p 231.
34. *PP 1908* op cit.
35. Matthew et al, op cit, p 726.
36. Neal Blewett, "The Franchise in the United Kingdom 1885-1918", *Past and Present* (1965), No. 32, pp 27-56; 84.3% of the total electorate were qualified under these franchises, which cannot be separated, p 32.

37. Ibid, p 46.
38. *PP 1911* "Parliamentary Constituencies (Electors, &c) (United Kingdom)".
39. See Chapters Two and Three, also paper, "Organisational and Social Structure of the Independent Labour Party in Glasgow".
40. J. McAffrey, "The Irish Vote in Glasgow In The Later Nineteenth Century: A Preliminary Survey", *Innes Review* (1970) pp 32-3.
41. Joseph Melling, *Rent Strikes* (Edinburgh 1983) p 17.
42. *Census 1911*, Vol 1, Pt 2, p 42, Table A.
43. Sydney and Olive Checkland, *Industry and Ethos: Scotland 1832-1914* (London, 1984) p 185, "Glasgow ... with some 700,000 people in 1914 living in its three central square miles, the heaviest concentration of people in Europe."
44. James B. Russell, *Vital Statistics of the City of Glasgow*, in 3 parts, (Glasgow, 1885/1886), Part 2, pp 73-4.
45. Ibid, p 12.
46. Glasgow Corporation, *Report of the Medical Officer of Health 1902* for comments on this change.
47. John Wheatley, *Eight Pound Cottages for Glasgow Citizens* (Glasgow, n.d.); *A Reply to the Critics of the £8 Cottages* (Glasgow, n.d.)
48. See above pp 4, 7-8 for differences between Matthew et al and Pugh on this.
49. See Chapter Eight, p 33.
50. Matthew et al, op cit, p 734.
51. McAffrey, op cit.

Chapter Seven

Labour and its Constituency: Respectability *versus* Residuum

Largely missing from recent writings on the pre-1917 franchise system is any discussion of divisions within the working class. The restrictions and inequalities facing the working class electorate vis-a-vis the middle class have been effectively detailed but, as we have seen, major discrepancies in enfranchisement levels occurred within the working class itself. Even in Matthew et al the subject is not broached and the impression given, therefore, that the working class and the working class electorate were homogeneous. Even sociologists, approaching the issue from a different perspective, make the same, implicit assumption. H.F. Moorhouse, in his discussion of the political incorporation of the working class, argues against notions of "deference" and stresses the influence of " 'external' control and restraints". The nature of the franchise system up to 1918 is identified by him as a major factor in restricting working class involvement in the political system. Yet, Moorhouse does not consider the possible consequences of certain workers being more likely to have the vote than others; in electoral terms the working class is treated as homogeneous. The only possible conflict Moorhouse refers to – in electoral terms – is that between the mass of the working class and the labour leadership.¹

Unfortunately, Moorhouse does not relate this point to the franchise system, and this leads on to the second major gap in the literature on the franchise, which is the attitude of the Labour Party on the issue. At one level there is no problem – the Labour Party supported full adult suffrage which was part of its official policy, passed overwhelmingly at successive Conferences.

However, as indicated by Hardie's disparaging remarks about the Adult Suffrage Society, Labour's commitment to adult suffrage was more of a blocking manoeuvre against any commitment to votes for women; the debate at Labour Party Conference was not for or against adult suffrage per se but was a choice between adult v. women's suffrage. (see Chapter Five.) Labour and Socialist organisations had always been for adult suffrage and it was accorded a place in most manifestoes. With the honourable and partial exception of the SDF, however, this paper commitment was never translated into action. Why? Why did not Labour and the ILP whom, superficially at least, could have been expected to gain most from an expanded electorate, make adult or even male suffrage a campaigning issue with which to break out of its permanent minority position?

Interestingly enough, it is Martin Pugh (whom, as we know, dismisses ideas of mass bias against the working class in the franchise system) who provides at least the basis of a considered answer to this question. Pugh points out that, contrary to possible expectations, Labour never pressurised the Liberal Governments of 1906 to 1916 over suffrage reform, and that this mirrored Labour's preoccupation with consolidating its existing areas of support.²

... the party's immediate interest lay in the organised, politically aware sections of the working class already on the parliamentary register; nothing was as yet to be expected from domestic servants living with their employers or labourers residing with farmers who bulked large among the unenfranchised, or indeed from *many industrial workers in areas in which, in Ramsay MacDonald's words, 'poverty and degradation are of the worst type'.*

More generally, Pugh offers some reasons why (male) suffrage reform did not bulk large in the public domain. One was that the women's suffrage campaign overshadowed the exclusion of men and also, given the extremism of the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU), prejudiced the whole issue

for many. Secondly, and this seems to us the most significant³

... the unenfranchised men tended to include the least organised, least politically conscious and least articulate sections of the population. The Trade Union leadership was largely absorbed with exploiting to the full the benefits which were available through the political influence their members already possessed. Those outside the pale did not constitute a coherent class within the community ...

Thirdly, there was the possibility that sufficient numbers of workers were so disenchanted with the Labour Party that they totally rejected electoral politics and concentrated solely on the industrial struggle. Pugh himself is dismissive of this view since, for him, syndicalism was "too sophisticated to appeal to most unenfranchised men", and any search for a theoretical alternative to the Labour Party was, "characteristically the dilemma of middle class intellectuals like the Webbs rather than of the working man."⁴

There is something to all of these points though, it is interesting that Pugh clearly does accept that there was a class bias operating in the franchise system and that it operated most forcefully against the poorer and least organised sections of the working class. This appears to contradict his own argument that the system was "broadly representative".⁵

Despite what conservative opinion might argue about electoral reform leading inexorably (the first steps on the slippery slope) to democracy, it is clear that the likely outcomes of each and every Reform Bill were carefully weighed and balanced; the British Ruling Class did not take any sudden leaps in the dark. The Whig Cabinet of 1830 set up a four-man Committee to handle the Reform Bill and instructed it to prepare:⁶

...the outline of a measure ... large enough to satisfy public opinion and to afford sure ground of resistance to further innovation, yet so based on property, and on existing franchises and territorial divisions, as to run no risk of overthrowing [the]

existing form of government.

Though the Government of the day may not have had available to it particularly sophisticated statistical techniques it did make the effort to discover the numbers likely to be enfranchised - particularly in the burghs. Their calculations decided them upon the £10 franchise rather than the (too democratic) £5 qualification or the (too exclusive) £20. There is no doubt, however, that, despite the different effects the new franchise would have in different parts of the country, (i.e enfranchising more men in some areas than in others) their eventual choice gave the Government exactly what they wanted, especially as regards splitting the middle class off from its alliance with the working class:⁷

It was not merely a matter of letting the middle class into the outer defences while still barring them from the citadel itself. Once given the privileges of voting they were to become part of the garrison. The Bill was founded on the belief that when the middle class had been allowed a subordinate share of power they would side with the aristocracy and help keep the working class in order.

In this light Reform seems not so much a process of gradual but inevitable inclusion but one of continually re-defined *exclusion*. In 1867 the net was opened yet wider and this led some of the more excited reactionaries to fears that the aristocracy had committed political suicide and that Parliament was about to be handed over to the mob. Their terrors and prejudices are well expressed in a poem by Coventry Padmore:⁸

In the year of the great crime,
When the false English Nobles and their Jew,
By God demented, slew
The trust they stood twice pledged to keep from
wrong,
...
But, when the sordid Trader caught
The loose-held sceptre from your hands distraught,
And soon, to the Mechanic vain,

Sold the proud toy for nought,
 Your charm was broke, your task was sped,
 Your beauty, with your honour, dead,

However, despite such gothic horrors, the cooler heads who were the architects of the Act were certain of one thing, democracy was not on the agenda. As Disraeli himself put it:⁹

There are four and a half million inhabited houses in England. ... Not more than a moiety of these, even if the Bill passes, will be inhabited by persons qualified to exercise the franchise. Then if household suffrage be democracy what is this all about?

The Tories took no little trouble to get statistical forecasts of the likely impact of the reform proposals and it was known to them that the complexities of registration alone would disenfranchise many who could expect otherwise to have the vote.¹⁰

The 1867 Act did, nevertheless, increase the industrial electorate markedly. In Glasgow, the increase was nearly three-fold; at the General Election of 1865 there were 16,819 on the register while, following the Act, the Election of 1868 saw 47,854 voters.¹¹ Despite the fact that Glasgow's representation had been increased from two to three M.Ps. it remained the case that, as with the rest of industrial Britain, the City was still under-represented in Parliament. The redistribution of seats in 1885 gave Glasgow seven separate seats five of which were predominantly working class, but the general bias against the working class remained.¹² If, after 1867 there were about sixty seats in which the working class electorate predominated, after 1885 the number of such constituencies had only risen to eighty-nine.¹³ This restriction on seats where the working class predominated did limit any independent challenge by Labour forces, as did the constraints of money with which to finance and maintain

candidates. Moorhouse is right to highlight these points, as he is also correct to add that working class leaders, nevertheless, did make definite political choices – the constraints were not all external.¹⁴ The fact that working class leaders were happy to work with the Liberal Party for so long and to have been able to do so without any significant, sustained pressure from below, surely indicates more than the careerism of a few trade union leaders. Seen in this light, the Second Reform Act – as with the middle class in 1832 – can be regarded as having given the “privileges of entry” to the “citadel” to a *section* of the working class who, in their turn, became “part of the garrison”.

T. C. Smout has drawn out the distinction between the Painite and Gladstonian views of the suffrage. In the former a man’s right to vote “was innate, resting on his nature as a human being.” For the Whiggish Gladstone, however, “the right to vote was a moral privilege to be extended to a respectable class as and when it showed itself capable of acting responsibly.”¹⁵ In Britain it was the latter, of course, which triumphed from 1832 on. As the franchise was extended so barriers were deliberately created, “in the way of those least likely to be respectable and independent in the working class.”¹⁶ While this was understandable from a Whig or middle class Liberal point of view it represented a retreat by working class radicals who, in following the Liberal Party lead on this matter, abandoned the notion of “humanity” (a man’s a man for a’ that) in favour of “respectability”. While the Reform Acts of 1867 and 1884 can be regarded as stepping stones on the road to democracy there was a conspicuous absence of pressure being exerted by working class Liberal leaders to hurry or continue the process.¹⁷ Smout’s point about working class Liberals could, however, be as easily applied to independent labour leaders in the decades after 1885; franchise reform simply did not register on their list of priorities.

As we saw in the case of Keir Hardie in the mid-1890s, he had something of

a blindspot as regards the franchise, apparently believing the Charter had more or less been achieved. Matthew et al see in this evidence of Hardie's "complete naivety about electoral statistics".¹⁸ Yet, it also appears "naive" to think that Hardie and other Labour leaders were simply ignorant of the franchise system and of its inbuilt biases against the poor. The major reason why the leadership of the movement for independent labour representation could have accepted such an undemocratic system is because they shared sufficiently in the notions of "citizenship" and "respectability" around which the reformed system had been created.

As Smout shows, respectability was not simply a piece of false consciousness foisted upon the working class but was part of the lived experience of the working population.¹⁹ Respectability had many connotations which affected the whole household and not just the individual male worker. It can be seen as having been particularly onerous on wives and mothers as they were forced to 'keep up appearances' through the unremitting toil of housework and ensuring the physical cleanliness and 'respectability' of the home, children and husband.²⁰ It was always possible for a labourer and his family to be respectable but it was undoubtedly easier for a skilled tradesman with his better pay and more regular earnings to aspire to and achieve the desired status. While 'respectability' was not necessarily exclusive it was, nevertheless, defined in relation to something else, to an altogether more parlous state - that of the poor, the lumpen proletariat, the thriftless, the slum-dweller. In the 1900s the generic title of the "residuum" became common currency but if the label was new the phenomenon to which it referred was not. Similarly, as middle class efforts to draw distinguishing lines between sections of the working class (deserving and undeserving poor) were not new, neither was it new for the working class itself to draw distinctions, and both resounded in pejorative, moralistic terms. As Smout

points out, the reason why "Respectability was a divisive element within the working class" was because, "it gave a moral dimension to the craftsman's feeling that he was a cut above the labourer in more than just his level of skill." In terms of suffrage reform:²¹

There is no doubt that most working class radicals and trade union leaders revelled in their reputation for respectability in the third quarter of the nineteenth century, and they were not at all averse to the Gladstonian idea that by their manifestly excellent qualities they had 'won' the vote.

Even with the advent of independent labour candidates, reliance upon the Liberal Party and upon Liberalism did not end. As we saw in Chapter Three, Labour's electoral challenge was limited, both in terms of success and actual elections contested. Furthermore, within the socialist and independent labour movement itself, the belief in Liberalism was maintained. Bob Smillie the Lanarkshire Miners' Leader and one of the most prominent figures in the ILP, regarded Gladstone as "the greatest of all modern political leaders".²² Liberal, or perhaps, radical-liberal values were not simply opinions held by significant individuals but were part and parcel of the "commonsense" of the industrial working class. As Joan Smith has argued, this commonsense view of the world encompassed beliefs in Free Trade, democracy, the freedom of small nations, hostility to landlordism and the House of Lords.²³ Intrinsically connected to such beliefs were the societies people joined - "the friendly society branches, the co-operatives, and trade union branches".²⁴ In Glasgow, socialism and particularly the ILP, had a Liberal inheritance - there was much that was progressive in the radical-liberal tradition. However, the inheritance was not made available to everyone and its implications were ambivalent, to say the least, when applied to the whole of the working class:²⁵

In Glasgow skilled working [men] ... were Liberals by conviction, but they could also afford to be Liberals.

It is with this in mind, i.e. the reality of material divisions within the working class which had ideological and political consequences, that we must approach the question of Labour and Socialist attitudes to the franchise. To do so we will firstly look at the position of the poorer working class in Glasgow, with special reference to the Irish, and then discuss the nature of the 'respectable' working class, with particular emphasis upon the role of the Co-operators.

The Poor

Glasgow may well have been dominated by the skilled, male worker - certainly in comparison to a city such as Liverpool - but this did not include everyone. There is also the opposite side of the coin to consider, i.e. those who could not afford to be Liberals, who could not afford to join the Friendly Society, the Trade Union and the Co-op. James Treble has examined the unskilled and casual labour market in Glasgow for this period.²⁶ A number of occupations listed in the Census are "identified as being the preserve, or containing an element of unskilled male labour in the Municipal Burgh of Glasgow". In 1911 these occupations accounted for 27.16% of the total occupied male population.²⁷ As Treble points out this is something of an overestimate because it includes occupations which involved different gradations of skill but which cannot be disaggregated, and it also includes youths who would subsequently have gone on to an apprenticeship in a trade. Nevertheless, this does give some indication of the extent of poverty within the working class of Glasgow. This is not to say that everyone in such occupations were poor but, nevertheless, given likely, though irregular, wage rates of between 16s. to 24s. per week:²⁸

... it is impossible to dispute that the majority of the families of unskilled workers must have lived at or below the poverty line if they solely depended upon the income of the head of household.

The poverty line was usually regarded as 'around a pound a week'. This was the figure which the Glasgow Presbytery Commission on Housing focussed on in 1890.²⁹ Two decades later there were still many men earning this amount; wages of women and young people were even less. Concepts like poverty and standard of living are not just absolutes but are also relative issues. The labourer worked beside, and for, the skilled man and the most immediate reference point for both were the wages of each other. In his polemic against the labour aristocracy thesis, Moorhouse argues against any notion of the 'aristocrats' taking more than their 'share' of wages, at the expense of the unskilled.³⁰ While it is true that the wage costs of the workers were borne by the employers, this ignores the relevant point that skilled men were always determined to maintain their differential over other grades. This was not simply a phenomenon of the nineteenth century, but has remained a crucial factor in Clydeside industrial relations down to the 1970s.³¹

In Glasgow in 1905, weekly wage rates for male workers varied considerably. This was the case even amongst skilled workers in the same trade, e.g. weekly rates, which were recognised by the unions, for cabinetmakers ran between 29s. 9d. to 42s. 6d. The major gap, however, was that between the tradesmen and their labourers. In the building trades the rates for skilled men were between 38s. 3d. and 40s. 4.5d., while the rates for labourers were 23s. 4.5d. to 25s. 6d. In engineering skilled men's rates were between 36s. 1.5d. and 41s. 9d., while the labourers' rate was a mere 18s. Seven years later most wage rates had increased, though not all. Amongst the skilled trades in building, plasterers had actually experienced a fall in the hourly rate from 9.5d to 9d., while masons remained at 9d. Painters, however, had seen their wages rise from 9d. per hour to 9.5d., bricklayers, carpenters and joiners had risen from 9.5d. to 10d., while plumbers had increased their rates most of all from 9d. to 10d. Labourers, though, remained at exactly the same level; 6d. per

hour for plasterers' labourers and 5.5d. for bricklayers' and mason's labourers. Translated into weekly rates this meant that the skilled men varied from 38s. 3d. to 42s. 6d., and the labourers stayed at their previous rates of 23s. 4.5d. and 25s. 6d. It should be remembered that all these rates are based upon a normal, summer, working week of 51 hours and that earnings in winter would be considerably less.³² In engineering all the skilled trades experienced rises, and their weekly rates in 1912 were from 38s. 3d. to 42s. 9d. There was a general increase for labourers in engineering and their weekly rates ran from a low of 18s. to a high of 20s. 3d. In overall percentage terms the skilled workers in engineering benefitted most between 1905 and 1912 with an increase in wage rates of 8%. Next came labourers in engineering with a rise of 6%. Tradesmen in building had gone up by 4%, while building labourers had experienced no increase at all.³³

The Board of Trade Enquiry of 1912 gave each wage rate a weighted index number in comparison with London which was given the base figure 100. The index numbers for skilled men in building and engineering were 92 and 96 respectively, while for labourers the figures were 81 and 79 respectively.³⁴ This divergence had been getting steadily greater over the previous decades. In 1886 the difference in hourly rates between a carpenter and a labourer in Glasgow was 2.75d., while twenty years later the difference was 4.75d.; or, while in 1886 a labourer's hourly rate was equivalent to 63.33% of a carpenter's, in 1906 it was equivalent to only 60.53%.³⁵ Whatever the actual trend of real wages, as distinct from wage rates, and whether or not Glasgow by 1912 was part of a high wage economy, what is apparent is that the wage differential between skilled and unskilled was getting wider.³⁶ While no man was denied access to any civil right simply by dint of the type of work he did, the financial factor was, nonetheless, crucial. And it would have been those workers whose wages approximated closer to one pound a week than two

pounds a week, who would have found it most difficult to organise at work, to create, or even join mutual aid societies, and to get, and to keep their names on the electoral register.

The whole question of 'the poor' in Glasgow was complicated by the existence of a large Irish community. At one level it gave an extra twist to discussion of the residuum who could be identified not only by individual failings but also through cultural and racial stereotyping. Though the Irish in Glasgow were not concentrated in particular 'ghettoes' as in Liverpool, they were by no means evenly distributed throughout the City. When James Russell made his four-fold classification of Glasgow for the 1880s the percentage of Irish-born for the City as a whole was 13% but, for Russell's four areas, the percentages were, in ascending order: Group 1 - 7%; Group 2 - 12%; Group 3 - 17%; Group 4 - 20%. The number of Irish corresponded to worsening social conditions. In Russell's own words, the areas that comprised group four:³⁷

will be at once recognised as the worst districts of Glasgow, both morally and physically.

The connection of Irish and Catholic with poverty and the slums was well-established in Glasgow, as shown in the social investigations of 'Shadow' in 1858: "In almost all the other places visited ... the majority ... are Roman Catholics."³⁸ By the turn of the century, the Irish-Catholic population remained concentrated in the older and industrial parts of Glasgow. In 1901 the proportion of Irish-born of Glasgow's total population was 8.68%; in the 'inner' city it was 9.11%, while in the post-1891 incorporated areas it was smaller at 6.71%. The contrast within these areas, however, was much greater. In the 'older' City the proportions for Woodside and Blythswood districts was under 6%, while in Anderston and Cowcaddens the proportions were around

15%. In the 'newer' city there was an even sharper division between the suburban districts to the south and west (Langside, Pollokshields, Kelvinside, Hillhead, &c) where the proportion of Irish-born was only 2.95%, and the industrial districts to the north (Maryhill, Possilpark and Barnhill) where the proportion was 11.96%.³⁹ The racial divide did not just operate between the middle and working classes but also within the working class itself, between artisan and labourer.

That the Irish tended to be concentrated in certain occupations we have already seen.⁴⁰ Whereas eleven occupations accounted for over 42% of all Irish-born male workers, these same occupations only employed c. 23% of the total male workforce. Seven of these occupations also appear in Treble's list of unskilled jobs and while this unskilled 'sector' accounted for 27.14% of Glasgow's workforce in 1911, it was where 43.77% of Irish-born males were employed.⁴¹ It would hardly be overstating the case to argue that certain occupations - all in the unskilled sector - were, more or less, the preserve of Irishmen. Irish-born males accounted for, in 1911, almost 20% of all engineering labourers, almost 27% of all general labourers, over 32% of those employed in the gas works service, almost 40% of dock labourers and over 47% of builders', masons', and bricklayers's labourers. These figures, of course, only refer to those actually born in Ireland and do not include first or subsequent generation Scots-Irish, so the true representation of the Irish community would have been considerably greater. A particularly clear contrast with the skilled trades is offered by the figure for Builders, Masons and Bricklayers, where the Irish-born amounted to just over 8%. Twenty years previously John Bruce Glasier had pointed out to the Glasgow Presbytery Commission on the Housing of the Poor that Irish children took much the same jobs as their parents and that:⁴²

it is very well understood that the large proportion of

labourers are Irishmen.

Glasier was called as a witness before the Commission as the Secretary of the Socialist League and also partly due to his familiarity, "with the condition of the Irish poor", having been Secretary of a branch of the Irish National League.⁴³ Interestingly, no representative of the Irish and Catholic community itself gave evidence, though whether this was due to a decision by the Commission or Catholic hostility to a Protestant affair, is not known. The questioning of Glasier (as a surrogate Irishman) showed the prejudice held against the Irish as being responsible for their own poverty. One member of the Commission in particular, the Rev. Dr. Donald McLoed, made a clear connection between the Irish and, "drunkenness and self-producing of poverty". He accepted that, "when the Irish come over here they do not rise so much as the other races to be craftsmen", but argued that Irish children enjoyed the same educational advantages as Scots children and that Highlanders who came to the City as labourers, nevertheless, were able to rise, "into good positions."⁴⁴ In countering such bias Glasier had recourse to some stereotypes of his own:⁴⁵

I do not believe that it is vice that is against the Irishman, but rather virtue. The improvidence of the Irish springs rather from virtues; while the success of Scotsmen is on account of their canny disposition and desire to make money.

As we have seen in previous chapters anti-Irish feeling existed within the Labour and Socialist movement. Even Glasier was affected by it, though his was mainly hostility to Catholicism. When a Protestant evangelist was killed in 1902, Glasier confided in his diary that he regarded the man as a "martyr" and that, "I feel honest sympathy with his anti-Romanist crusade".⁴⁶ However, the strength of support for Home Rule among socialists and Irish involvement

in Labour politics in Glasgow meant that relations never deteriorated to the sectarian level of Liverpool.⁴⁷

The political role of the Irish and the existence of a sizeable Irish electorate further complicates any analysis of poverty and the franchise. Although we have already indicated that the Irish community and its electorate was simply not large enough to bear the explanatory weight placed upon it by some historians of early Labour politics it, nevertheless, remains the case that there were Irishmen who had the vote and that they would have been, in the main, poorer working class. If we are correct in our argument that, prior to 1914, the Irish provided a significant portion of Labour electoral support in Glasgow, this begs the question about the source of Labour's support in general. Did Labour gather most of its votes from the unskilled and poorer sections of the working class or did it rely upon its 'preferred' constituency of the respectable artisanate?

The Respectable Working Class

If there was an identifiable group which represented most closely the image of the respectable working man, it was the Co-operators. Because of the weakness of Scottish trade unionism the co-operative movement took on a greater political significance for independent labour politics in Scotland than in England. The involvement of Co-operative Societies in labour alliances was more of a recurring phenomenon than a consistently maintained policy but the Co-operators were, nevertheless, courted assiduously by the ILP. One of the most prominent of the 'stalwart' councillors, Shaw Maxwell, regarded the Co-operators as, "the most powerful organised section of the workers of Glasgow", and calculated them in 1898 as representing 25,000 to 30,000 of the City's electorate.⁴⁸ A decade later, and with the Co-operators facing renewed threats of boycott and considering re-engagement in Labour politics, Maxwell

estimated their voting strength at 50,000.⁴⁹ The Co-operators, as Shaw Maxwell had to admit, were in the main, "moderate Liberals",⁵⁰ and there is no substantive evidence that they provided any firm basis of support for Labour candidates. Nevertheless, the sheer size of their organisations made them a force to be reckoned with and a force to be admired and appealed to by socialists. Like his comrade in the SDF, William Nairne, John Maclean was a conscientious member of his own Co-op society and took every opportunity this "great popular movement" permitted to push marxist educational classes and to appeal to co-operators to take their political place alongside the trade unionists and socialists.⁵¹

Although Co-operative Societies had existed in Scotland from the eighteenth century, the movement as it is known really began in about 1860.⁵² In earlier societies weavers had often taken a prominent role and there had been close links with Chartism in many areas. Weavers continued to play a significant role into the 1860s but in the 'modern' period the initiative in establishing societies was mainly taken by skilled men in trades like building and printing as well as the emerging engineering and shipbuilding industries. Quite often a society would be set up by men employed in a single firm. The St George Society in Glasgow was formed in 1870 by employees of the Grovepark Weaving Factory, while the Cowlairs Society, established in 1881, was formed by employees of the North British Railway Company's Hydepark Locomotive Works.⁵³ Both the Dumbarton and Port Glasgow Societies were established by artisans from the local shipyards.⁵⁴ St Rollox in Glasgow, was formed largely by employees of the St Rollox Chemical Works.⁵⁵ In the east end Barrowfield Society most of the original members worked at the Barrowfield Printworks.⁵⁶

Co-operation was not exclusive to any particular industry and it can be seen that Societies reflected the structure of local employment. The largest Society in Scotland, Edinburgh's St. Cuthberts, was built up by men from printing,

building and cabinetmaking.⁵⁷ Such concentration, as well as being a source of strength initially, could create difficulties. The Cowllairs Society faced problems when the Hyde Park Works went on short-time in 1894,⁵⁸ as did Kinning Park in 1897 when "hundreds" of its members fell victim to the engineers lock-out.⁵⁹ Despite the overlapping membership, the Co-operative movement had an ambiguous attitude toward union activity, particularly strikes; Kinning Park was split over a donation to the Amalgamated Society of Engineers during the lock-out, with some members believing the employers to be in the right. Speaking in 1873, the then Chairman of the Scottish Co-operative Wholesale Society, Alexander Meldrum, expressed the class-consciousness of the Co-operative outlook when he said, "I hold that the working people should never depend on any rich man to help them." He then went on to offer some advice to trade unionists, with particular reference to the miners:⁶⁰

Instead of hoarding up their money ... and struggling with the owners of coal pits ... working men who believe themselves slaves can, by means of co-operation, make themselves free by becoming their own employers.

This was a co-operative version of the ILP argument that by voting Labour the workers could avoid strikes, i.e. the progress of the working class need not entail direct involvement in the class struggle. Co-operative independence and respectability received its ultimate accolade from the Liberal leader, Rosebery, when he attended the Co-operative Congress held in Glasgow in 1890 and described the movement as "a State within a State".⁶¹ However, as with the trade unions, citizenship of this "State" was not open to everyone. The basis of the survival of retail co-operation was the no-credit rule and this effectively excluded many of the poor who would have to remain, through necessity, with the private trader.

The growth of the 'modern' co-operative movement coincided with the beginnings of an increase in living standards amongst the working class. In the late 1880s, as more working people began to share in higher real wages and even some leisure time, so the previous steady growth of the movement accelerated. Continued expansion, however, was dependent upon the continual increase in working class living standards and the depression of 1905-08 effectively curtailed the movement's growth.⁶² Nevertheless, to be a member of a Co-operative Society indicated thrift and sobriety - there was no 'tick' and the Co-op would not trade in liquor. There was, therefore, a heavy implication that non-members did not join because of personal failings. The way Co-operators saw it the problem was that of the slum-dwellers. In his history of the Kinning Park Society published in 1924, Patrick Dollan wrote:⁶³

Schemes for bringing the benefit of mutual aid within the reach of the poorest were discussed but did not come to fruition. The promoters maintained that the poor would only be won over to Co-operation by selling them the best goods at the cheapest price. The artisan and technical sections of the community have always been willing Co-operators, but not so the poorer folk who are forced to live in congested areas. The problem of making them practitioners of mutual aid is still awaiting solution.

By the early 1900s, Kinning Park had become, "the premier retail concern in the West of Scotland", with its branches covering Kinning Park, Govan and a large area of Glasgow and new developments southwards towards Pollokshaws and Cathcart.⁶⁴ The move south was also a move to a new customer and member in the lower middle class suburbs of Shawlands and Govanhill. Dollan refers to these new suburban members as, " 'non-industrials' who sometimes escape the minor effects of trade disputes", e.g. the engineers lock-out of 1897.⁶⁵ Their influence grew during the 1900s. As trade depression, "diminished the turnover in artisan areas", and many

workers emigrated, so it was the influx of new suburban members and their purchasing power which balanced the Society.⁶⁶ In this development of the Co-operative movement the poorer workers, with their lower earnings, appeared to have little, or no, role to play.

A basic level of working class self-organisation was reflected in figures for trade union membership. In 1888 the degree of union organisation for Britain as a whole was around 10% of adult male manual workers, rising to 25% in 1901 and around 30% by 1910.⁶⁷ Progress, though, was uneven: there was a decline after the initial upsurge of "new unionism" during 1889-91, and there were wide discrepancies in union densities between trades and industries, e.g. while mining in 1910 had 60% union membership and shipbuilding 46%, woodworking and clothing had only 12% and 5% respectively. Nevertheless, the underlying trend was towards greater unionisation (though at an uneven pace for different workers), and from 1910 a second surge in organisation occurred alongside major outbreaks of industrial unrest. By 1914 there were over 4 million trade unionists in Britain - nearly half the adult male workforce - which made the British labour movement, numerically at least, "the strongest in the world".⁶⁸ Though Scotland's level of union membership was slightly lower than that for the rest of the UK, it shared in the same rate of growth,⁶⁹ with Glasgow being the traditional centre of strength; in 1892 two-thirds of Scottish trade unionists were in the Glasgow area.⁷⁰

Labour, Socialism and the Franchise

This industrial strength, however, did not translate well onto the political field. The Labour Party, even by 1914, had only a weak presence in Parliament which was due largely to Liberal sufferance and with few seats it could regard as "safe" outwith the mining constituencies. In Scotland, without any understanding with the Liberals, the position was even worse. However, could it be that this weakness was related to the limitations of the franchise? Internationally, Britain's democratic credentials did not compare very favourably with other capitalist societies. As Moorhouse puts it:⁷¹

... though Britain was the first country to industrialise, it was among the last of the industrial nations to grant unencumbered universal male suffrage.

In fact, of all "representative" governments in 1914, "the United Kingdom and the Kingdom of Hungary alone did not have manhood suffrage".⁷² Yet, despite this, the Labour movement simply did not take the issue of adult or adult male suffrage as important. Historians cannot look for the traces of a debate on the issue because - once we accept that motions on adult suffrage were basically blocking manoeuvres against votes for women - there was simply no debate to speak of. What was seriously discussed, and largely supported, was the call for proportional representation.⁷³

Labour's inactivity on the issue must also be seen in the light of counter examples from abroad. Both Australia and New Zealand, with their particularly close links with Britain, enjoyed adult suffrage (at least for the whites) and had a strong labour influence and representation in Government. Even Bismarkian Germany had introduced an adult male franchise, and the German SPD was *the* model of a mass working class party. Swedish social democracy campaigned vigorously for adult male suffrage, and in Belgium there were

general strikes called in 1886, 1888, 1891, 1893, 1902 and 1913 in an attempt to win the suffrage.⁷⁴ In Britain there was neither adult male suffrage nor was there a sizeable Labour, never mind Socialist, presence in Parliament.

Socialists in Britain proved incapable of shifting the mass of the Labour movement behind a demand for full democracy. This "failure" is partly explained by the fact that a considerable section of British social-democracy was simply uninterested in electoral politics. As we saw in chapter one the moral reaction against "politics", which were understood to mean electoral politics, was integral to the early socialist movement and particularly the Socialist League. It was not only anarchists who opposed "parliamentarianism" but also respected socialists like William Morris. His view was that if there was a time for socialists to play the electoral game it would only be some time in the future when the necessary work of educating for socialism had taken root. The "Tory Gold" fiasco of 1885, when the SDF accepted laundered money to allow it to stand candidates at the General Election - with derisory results - only seemed to confirm such an analysis. (See Chapter One.)

It did not take long, however, for members of the SL to argue for an electoral strategy and the formation of a socialist labour party. This debate split the League and led directly to its early demise, as the "parliamentarians" were expelled and control gradually came to rest with the anarchist wing. Ordinary members in Scotland voted with their feet and became involved in the fledgling Scottish Labour Party. Despite the fact that Morris in turn left the SL in reaction to the direction of the anarchists, he did not change his opinion about socialists standing for election. His attitude towards parliament remained that of regarding any "hopes" for change to be accomplished through the House of Commons as akin to "superstitions".⁷⁵ This so-called purist line continued to have a resonance for many socialists, even after the

formation of the Labour Party. It was a view which remained influential even among members of the ILP, who could react against poor election results or particularly offensive electoral alliances with calls for a return to the twin basic tasks of education and agitation.⁷⁶

In Britain most attention to the franchise came from within the Social Democratic Federation, the other side of social democracy in the 1880s. Despite the embarrassment of 1885, the SDF never rejected the "political" road to socialism. In fact it saw the success of electoral politics as a hope for the peaceful transition to socialism. To this end in 1894 the SDF called for full adult suffrage:⁷⁷

And why? Not because we look upon adult suffrage as a fetish, to fall down and worship; not because we regard even the fullest measure of political power as an end in itself, but because we believe that here in England it is possible to effect the peaceable transformation of society, and that here political power may be a means to an end."

Despite hints of national chauvinism – the SDF resented the superiority of many continental social democrats, particularly the Germans – the Federation did put its finger on the lack of full democratic rights and pointed to foreign examples of more equitable franchise and electoral systems. It argued that the franchise system deprived socialists of their proper share of representation. If the triple demand of, "Universal Adult Suffrage, Payment of Members and Election Expenses out of Public Funds and Second Ballot", were met, *Justice* estimated that:⁷⁸

... there would be sixty or seventy Socialist members on the floor of the House of Commons after the next general election."

Whatever the basis of this calculation might have been – at more or less the

same time *Justice* claimed that the SDF would have thirty or forty MPs if the French electoral system operated in Britain⁷⁹ – it is not the exact numbers that are significant, and they were very likely wildly optimistic. What is significant is that the SDF made the connection between full democracy and socialist representation. What the SDF did not do, however, was to provide a lead to a general movement demanding further franchise reform. On its own, the SDF was too small to sustain such a campaign and its approach was very much an insular one of using the issue to promote its own organisation. The demonstration called by the SDF for Trafalgar Square in 1894 was not thrown open to other forces but was a purely Federation affair, timed to coincide with its Annual Conference and with the object of showing the national strength of the SDF.⁸⁰ Not surprisingly, the “meeting” was not a success, even with a good turnout of members.⁸¹

Nevertheless, the SDF did represent the potential of an alternative approach, one which regarded the whole of the working class as its constituency. David Howell has questioned the traditional view of the SDF as a, “narrow dogmatic sect”, and points out the local co-operation that often existed between the Federation and the ILP.⁸² The main item of debate between the parties was the proposal to fuse into a United Socialist Party. This was a major issue in the 1890s but was to re-occur, particularly from 1908 with Victor Grayson’s election success. In that year John F. Armour, the organiser of the SDP in Glasgow, stood in Whitevale Ward on the WEC or “Forward” list of candidates. This was the only occasion that the SDP/SDF was so involved, but they did have successes elsewhere in Scotland with their own campaigns.⁸³ In 1910 John Maclean debated the issue of the Labour Party in the pages of *Forward* with Thomas Johnston and called for the ILP to leave the Labour Party and join with the Social Democratic Party (as it was now called). Maclean argued that the SDP did work with the trade unions and

encouraged membership and federation, and had run local candidates with the help of the unions and co-operative societies. He then made a claim about the basis of that electoral support:⁸⁴

It is a significant fact, also, that the larger portion of our votes comes from those as yet unorganised, showing, no doubt, a strange phenomenon that men unprepared to unite economically or politically are still prepared to vote socialists into power.

Maclean does not appear to have made any direct reference to the extent of disenfranchisement but the issue remained a live one within his Party. At its 1913 Conference the leadership of (renamed) British Socialist Party (BSP) was taken to task for having failed to promote a vigorous campaign for universal suffrage as instructed by the previous conference.⁸⁵ Significantly, the mover of the resolution at the BSP conference was not British but a Russian Social Democrat and veteran of the 1905 Revolution, called Peter Petroff, whose closest associate within the BSP was none other than John Maclean. At this point, however, all debate on the franchise was dominated by the suffragette campaign for votes for women on the same terms as men. Like the Party leadership, Petroff also opposed this demand but did so out of a genuine commitment to *universal* suffrage. Against the legalistic arguments of Hyndman that the brutal punishments meted out to the suffragettes was fit and proper punishment for "criminals", Petroff demanded the women be accorded the status of political prisoners and argued:⁸⁶

... they [the BSP] should not shut their eyes to what was going on and they should not be indifferent to the franchise system in this country, which was one of the most backward in Europe.

As we have seen the BSP/SDF was well aware of the inequalities of the

franchise system, but it was also not immune to anti-feminism and in the suffragette 'period' dragged its feet on the issue rather than attempt to exploit the opportunity to highlight the true extent of total adult disenfranchisement. Opposition to women's suffrage within the Labour Party was not confined to right-wing trade union leaders; it was Harry Quelch, along with Hyndman the most significant figure in the BSP, who was the mover of the adult suffrage amendment at both the TUC and Labour Party Conference.⁸⁷

In the opposite corner from the BSP, was the ILP which did support, as official party policy, the suffragette demand for, 'votes for women on the same terms as they are or may be granted to men'. As we saw in Chapter Five the ILP gave consistent support to the women's suffrage movement, both nationally and in Glasgow. The ILP took pains to argue that it was simply not true that only middle class women would be enfranchised and, in a survey of Nelson in 1905, claimed that if the existing parliamentary qualifications for men were applied to women, nearly all of the women who would be enfranchised would be working class.⁸⁸ In 1906 Thomas Johnston, like Hardie a committed supporter of the suffragette campaign, published a pamphlet, *The Case for Women's Suffrage*. His major argument in support was not based upon any notion of natural or human rights but upon the 'American' model of no taxation without representation. He listed the Three Reform Acts and the classes enfranchised by each.⁸⁹

But the women class – the women are still regarded by the State as in the category of paupers, lunatics, infants and criminals, they are still taxed and have no right to discuss the spending of the money so raised. They are not citizens: they are from the standpoint of the citizenship still slaves.

For Johnston it appeared axiomatic that paupers should have no rights of representation, presumably because they represented a net drain on the

exchequer. Johnston was a Fabian as well as an ILPer and the Fabians did have a very 'disciplined' approach to the problem of poverty.⁹⁰ Periodic unemployment amongst the skilled trades could put even respectable working men on the Parish. As we have seen (Chapter 3) this occurred in Glasgow during the slump of 1905-1908 and the automatic result of men being removed from the Register for either claiming parish relief or non-payment of rates was regarded as having had an adverse effect on the Labour vote. Yet, this recognition did not encourage any demand by the ILP for franchise reform and removal of the stigma of 'pauperism'. At this time Labour in Glasgow (and elsewhere) was fighting defensively on the grounds of financial probity and was keen to assure the local electorate that its programme could reduce the rates.⁹¹ Although this was a period of sharp increases in the rates due to the increased statutory duties being placed on local authorities, Labour's position cannot be regarded as simply a temporary adjustment to an increasingly hostile public climate.⁹² While being committed to improving public services, Labour was also committed to a 'ratepayers' franchise. Even as late as 1948 the Labour Government decided to retain the property qualification for local government elections.⁹³ Such an approach was very different from the views expressed by Peter Petroff.⁹⁴

People who had no voice in making the laws they were
expected to obey were living in a state of slavery.

Johnston's 'monetarist' approach to the franchise appears very 'unsocialist' in contrast, yet it was a view widely accepted within the ILP. In terms of attitude it went further than just the exact number of paupers but referred to a much wider phenomenon, to "those who did not constitute a class within the community", to use Martin Pugh's phrase.⁹⁵ For most labour leaders the very poorest section of the population were not regarded as part of the

working class at all, certainly not part of the working class movement. They constituted a sub-class, or a criminal class inhabiting the fringes of society, not so much unemployed as unemployable. Writing in 1895 during his first stint in Westminster as "member for the unemployed", Keir Hardie referred specifically on the need to discipline the "loafers" or "work-shy" who were seen as contaminating the ranks of the genuinely unemployed:⁹⁶

Treat them as you will and, above all, see that it is made impossible for them to propropagate their species."

Such a virulent contempt for a "species" apart owed little to the New Testament or the Brotherhood of Man. Hardie's strategy was based upon appealing to the existing (for the most part Liberal) voters. The sub-class were certainly not part of that constituency the ILP was aiming at. Furthermore, since a simplified electoral and franchise system, giving *every* adult the vote as of right and without any penalising conditions, would have enfranchised those very people who were an affront to working class respectability and independence, it becomes more apparent why reform did not loom high on the ILP's political horizons. Hardie expressed the matter succinctly enough:⁹⁷

It is the slum vote which the socialist candidate fears most.

The 'slum voter' was used as a regular excuse for explaining away poor performances by Socialist and Labour candidates. A municipal defeat in Bradford brought forth this diatribe on the local population from the defeated ILP candidate:⁹⁸

... bitter, intolerant, unsympathetic and insolent, prone to live on charity rather on the rights of manhood and womanhood

... not until the death rate, the insanitation and the horrible mode of life are changed, shall we ever see the South Ward of Bradford taking an intelligent interest in the things mostly concerning it.

If the existing working class electorate could not be relied upon to support labour candidates, it was by no means self-evident that those who were disenfranchised would be any more likely to. Furthermore, if reform only served to increase the slum vote there appeared a greater chance that Labour and progressive candidates generally would be net losers. The Boer War and the patriotic miasma which engulfed the electorate gave ample evidence of the triumph of ignorance and the 'slum' element coming into its own. At the same time it was not only the slum dweller who was susceptible to jingo appeals and, as for the ILP, as Howell has commented:⁹⁹

Fear of the masses was not restricted to manifestations of jingoism. ILP spokesmen also evinced an almost neurotic anxiety about disorder on the left.

For Labour leaders like Hardie and Johnston, votes for women on the same terms as men was a more satisfactory outcome. The exclusion of the poorer working class had always been accepted by labour spokesmen; the Second Reform Act was based upon it. Appreciation of the subtleties of the registration system was not confined solely to the political elite. In 1866 George Newton, Secretary of Glasgow Trade Council, wrote:¹⁰⁰

I am not aware that any body has proposed enfranchisement without a residential qualification, with this proviso no *scum* would be entitled at any time, they do not live in any one house long enough to qualify there, so there need be no anxiety about them.

Newton was writing to Lord Elcho, a renowned reactionary, but whom Newton

was attempting to involve in pushing trade union reform through parliament after the failure of Richard Cobbett to get re-elected to the Commons. Newton consistently followed a policy of moderation and assuaging the fears of middle class sympathisers and this did leave him isolated at times from the expressed views of the Trades Council. However, this does not mean that his views on the "scum" were not genuine nor that he was unrepresentative of Trade Union opinion. While the Trades Council supported manhood suffrage, it nevertheless welcomed the 1867 Reform Act. This could be seen as a further step in the right direction (even if the last "step" had been 35 years previous) but, in its immediate effect, the Act marked a differentiation within the working class, including some in the political constituency of the country while reinforcing the exclusion of others.

Apart from disabilities through non payment of rates and claiming poor relief, it is clear that the main, indeed the all-important exclusion of men from voting was the residential qualification. As we saw in the previous chapter, it was effective in that the poorer working class areas of Glasgow had very much lower levels of enfranchisement than the middle class suburban areas and distinctly lower than the more recognisably 'artisan' areas. It was not that labourers did not appear on the electoral register (any cursory glance at the voters' roll gives evidence of their existence) but that they were less likely to get, and stay, on the register. This was because the poorer members of the working population tended to take shorter lets and to move house more often. Nevertheless, anyone who moved house ran the risk of having their name removed from the register and this could include around 30% of electors in working class constituencies.¹⁰¹ As we saw in the case of delegates to Glasgow Trades Council, there was a wide discrepancy between the number of delegates appearing on the voters' roll in any one year and the number appearing in subsequent years.¹⁰² Through record linkage we can see

this process occur at an individual level, in the case of an ILP branch secretary. In 1900 George Seagars was the secretary of the Bridgeton Branch of the ILP and was on the electoral register for that year (i.e. 1899/1900). The following year he had changed his address and his name no longer appeared on the register (i.e. 1900/1901) at either his old or new address, despite the fact that he remained within the same ward and division, which should have made it easier for him to retain his vote. However, the next year again (1901/1902) Seagars' name re-appeared on the register for his 'new' address.¹⁰³

What the experience of Glasgow Trades Council shows is the general tendency of the residential qualification to depress the number of working class electors. What the individual example of George Seagars shows (as well as confirming that tendency) was that such disqualification could be corrected by individual effort, especially on the part of the skilled working man - Seagars was an ironmoulder. So long as this was the case it was likely to deflect any general demand for reform of the system. Through the sex and property conditions attached to the suffrage we can say that the nature of the franchise system was geared towards the model of being an adult man. The most common qualification for the vote was that of householder and most householders were, typically, married men with families of their own. The limited involvement of women in the system only highlighted its masculine bias, since women were only permitted the vote if they were single or widowed, i.e. in the absence of a controlling male. The vote allowed a man to 'speak' not only for himself but also his wife and children. Being on the electoral register was, therefore, a sign of maturity and respectability. Because the vote was not available to everyone it was a public symbol that here was a man who had his own home, paid his rates, was independent of poor relief and was thus, by virtue of his own effort and worth, part of the

political constituency of the country.

In contrast there were those who did not qualify for the vote, or were not deemed 'worthy' of it: those who did not have their own home, did not pay their rates, and/or were 'on the parish'. In other words, the poor. Public discussion of poverty and the poor always made the distinction between the 'deserving' and 'undeserving'. In Glasgow, both the Presbytery Commission on the Housing of the Poor of 1890 and the Municipal Commission of 1903-4 made a three-fold distinction, which was, broadly:¹⁰⁴

1st. Decent, well doing people, kept down by poverty, but who would gladly be clear of their sordid surroundings, and of their bad neighbours. 2nd. Weak, shiftless, thriftless persons, many of whom have fallen into intemperance. 3rd. A certain proportion living in or on the borderland or crime.

The housing proposals of the Corporation were aimed primarily at the first group, with a further distinction drawn within group two, and the last totally excluded. This was a division which the Labour politicians appear to have generally agreed with - John Wheatley's £B Cottages scheme just as definitely excluded the "slum dwellers". (See Chapter Three.) Yet, what proportion of the population did the 'dissolute and criminal classes' represent? Booth and Rowntree's investigations attempted to come to terms with poverty as a social phenomenon, and Rowntree's estimation that 27% of the population of York lived in primary or secondary poverty may be taken as a general indicator of a national pattern.¹⁰⁵ As a proportion of the population the 'dissolute and criminal' would have been much less than this.

While we cannot fix upon a figure, either nationally or for Glasgow, we can point out the discrepancy between the likely proportion and the proportion of adult working class men without the vote. As we have seen in the previous chapter, the overall level of male enfranchisement in Glasgow was just under

54% and, with the massive differences between rich and poor areas, the working class level of enfranchisement would have been significantly lower. Nevertheless, the political leadership of Labour – just like the working class leaders of Liberalism before them – made no effort to reform the system. The only point at which any effort was made was in using the registration courts, mainly to get lodgers onto the voters' roll. It was even claimed that this put, "adult suffrage within reach – barring married women."¹⁰⁶ This, however, remained an essentially individual response, taking a single person's case at a time. Moreover, the lodger franchise was essentially a middle class vote since, "very few working class bachelors would have had a room to themselves."¹⁰⁷ The lodger vote did increase in significance during this period; in 1901 lodgers accounted for 6.32% of Glasgow's parliamentary electorate, while in 1911 this figure had risen to 14.70%.¹⁰⁸ More significantly, however, is the fact that the general level of enfranchisement had not risen but remained at the same level of between 53–54%.¹⁰⁹ What prevented any further steps on the road to democracy was the extent to which the franchise would have to have been granted. It would have been almost impossible to make any further alteration in the system that would have not have been based on universal or, at least adult male suffrage. None of the political parties, including Labour, were prepared as yet to take that final step. Labour's inactivity over franchise reform can only be explained through an attitude that did not regard the poor as part of the labour movement and which regarded the 'slum dweller' with a mixture of superiority and fear.

NOTES

1. H.F. Moorhouse, "The Political Incorporation of the British Working Class: An Interpretation", *Sociology*, Vol. 7 (September 1973), p 352.
2. Martin Pugh, *Electoral Reform in War and Peace 1906-1918* (London 1978), p 30, emphasis added.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid., p 4.
6. Quoted in M. Brock, *The Great Reform Act* (London, 1973), p 136.
7. Ibid., p 144.
8. "1867", in *The Poems of Coventry Padmore* (Oxford 1949).
9. Quoted in Moorhouse, op cit, p 345.
10. Ibid.
11. Figures taken from F.W.S. Craig, *British Parliamentary Election Results 1832-1885* (London 1977).
12. H. Pelling, *The Social Geography of British Elections 1885-1910* (London 1967), pp 400-1.
13. Ibid., pp 419-20; Moorhouse, op cit, pp 348-9.
14. Moorhouse, op cit, pp 349-52.
15. T.C. Smout, *A Century of the Scottish People 1830-1950* (London 1986), p 246.
16. Ibid., p 247.
17. Ibid.
18. H.G.B. Matthew, R.I. McKibbin, J.A. Kay, "The Franchise Factor in the Rise of the Labour Party", *English Historical Review* (1976), p 724, f.n. 4.
19. Smout, op cit, pp 248-51.
20. See Elizabeth Roberts, *A Woman's Place: An Oral History of Working Class Women 1890-1940* (London 1984), "Girls, perhaps even more than boys, grew up to accept the great importance of respectability, with its emphasis on cleanliness in body, clothing and language as well as in the home.", p 38.
21. Smout, op cit, p 247.

22. R. Smillie, *My Life for Labour* (London 1924), p 262.
23. J. Smith, "labour Tradition in Glasgow and Liverpool", *History Workshop*, XVIII (Spring 1984) p 34.
24. *Ibid.*, p 33.
25. *Ibid.*, p 49.
26. J.H. Treble, "The Market for Unskilled Male Labour in Glasgow 1891-1914", in I. MacDougall, *Essays in Scottish Labour History* (Edinburgh 1978) pp 115-142; also the same author's, "The Characteristics of the Female Unskilled Labour Market and the Formation of the Female Casual Labour Market in Glasgow 1891-1914", in *Scottish Economic and Social History* vol 6, (1986), pp 33-46.
27. Treble (1978), *op cit*, Appendix Table, pp 135-6.
28. *Ibid.*, p 129.
29. Presbytery of Glasgow, *Report of Commission on the Housing of The Poor in Relation to Their Social Condition*, (Glasgow 1891). "The Commission restricted their enquiry to the housing and social condition of working men and women whose wages are under 20s.", p 10.
30. H.F. Moorhouse, "The Marxist Theory of the Labour Aristocracy", *Social History*, Vol 3, No. 1, (January 1978), p 76.
31. J. Foster & C. Woolfson, *The Politics of the UCS Work-In* (London 1986), "What lay behind the prevarications of the boilermakers' union was quite simply that the Marathon agreement would effectively result in the disappearance of the boilermakers' traditional differential ..." p 350.
32. George Carson, Secretary of Glasgow Trades Council, gave examples of labourers' wages in 1903 and showed how builders' and plasterers' labourers (regarded as semi-skilled and earning higher wages than other labourers) earned 24s. per week during thirty-two summer weeks of fifty-one hours per week and 22s. per week fourteen winter weeks. After deducting six weeks without pay, he calculated their earnings as 20s. 8.25d. per week for the whole year. Glasgow Municipal Commission in the Housing of the Poor, *Minutes*, evidence of George Carson, p 549.
33. Figures in the above paragraph are taken from two Enquiries by the Board of Trade, *Cost of Living of the Working Classes (1908)*, PP 1908 Cd 3864, Vol CV11; *Cost of Living of the Working Classes ... 1912*, PP 1913 Cd 6955 Vol LXV1.
34. PP 1913, *op cit*, p 276.

35. E.H. Hunt, *Regional Wage Variations in Britain 1850-1914* (Oxford 1973), Table 1-5 pp 68-9.
36. The debate over wages and living standards in the central belt of Scotland is summarised in Smout, op cit, pp 113-4. On the side of the 'high-wage economy' are: Hunt, op cit, and R.H. Campbell, *The Rise and Fall of Scottish Industry*, (Edinburgh 1980). On the other hand, Richard Rodgers argues that real wages were lower than other parts of the United Kingdom, R.G. Rodgers, "The Invisible Hand: Market Forces, Housing and the Urban Form in Victorian Cities", in D. Fraser and A. Sutcliffe (eds) *The Pursuit of Urban History* (London 1980), pp 190-211.
37. James B. Russell, *The Vital Statistics of the City of Glasgow* (Glasgow 1885-6), Part II, p 75.
38. *Glasgow 1858: Shadow's Midnight Scenes and Social Photographs* (Reprint, Glasgow 1976, Introduced by J.F. McAffrey), p 15.
39. Figures extracted from *Report of the Medical Officer of Health 1901* (Glasgow), pp 18-19.
40. Chapter Four, Table 1.
41. Treble (1978), op cit, appendix, pp 135-6; figures relating to the Irish-born workforce extracted from the *Census of Scotland 1911*, Vol 3, A, Table III. by me.
42. Glasgow Presbytery, op cit, p 188.
43. Ibid, p 178.
44. Ibid., p 183.
45. Ibid.
46. Quoted in Howell, op cit, p 142.
47. Smith, op cit, pp 33, 50.
48. *Labour Leader*, 24 September 1898.
49. *Scottish Co-operator*, 23 April 1909.
50. Ibid.
51. John Maclean, *In the Rapids of Revolution* (London 1978), pp 60-68; Nan Milton, *John Maclean* (London 1973), p 32.
52. L. Campbell, "Retail Co-operation in the Greater Glasgow Area, c. 1860-1914", Ph.D. University of Strathclyde 1983, p 5.
53. William Reid, *Fifty Years of the St. George Co-operative Society 1870-1920* (Glasgow 1923); *Jubilee History of*

Cowlairs Co-operative Society Ltd. 1881- 1931 (Glasgow 1931); William Maxwell, *The History of Co-operation in Scotland - Its Inception and Leaders* (Glasgow 1910), p 318.

54. Maxwell, op cit, pp 149, 186.
55. Ibid., p 125.
56. *Historical Sketch of the London Road Co-operative Society 1872-1922* (Glasgow 1922).
57. Maxwell, op cit, p 116.
58. *Scottish Co-operator*, May 1894.
59. P.J. Dollan, *History of the Kinning Park Co-operative Society Ltd* (Glasgow 1923), p 57.
60. Quoted in James A. Flanagan, *Wholesale Co-operation in Scotland: The Fruits of Fifty Years Efforts* (Glasgow 1920), p 82.
61. Maxwell, op cit, p 368.
62. see H.C.G. Matthew, "The Liberal Age", p 481, in K.O. Morgan, *The Oxford Illustrated History of Britain* (Oxford 1986); Campbell, op cit, pp 10-17.
63. Dollan, op cit, p 67.
64. Ibid., p 64.
65. Ibid., p 56.
66. Ibid., pp 72, 79-80.
67. Clegg, Fox and Thomson, *A History of British Trade Unions Since 1889* (Oxford 1964), pp 466-7.
68. E.H. Hunt, *British Labour History 1815-1914* (London 1985), p 296.
69. R.H. Campbell, *Scotland Since 1707: The Rise of an Industrial Society* (Edinburgh 1985), p 237.
70. Hunt (1973), op cit, pp 331-2, this figure was given by the Webbs in their, *History of Trade Unionism*.
71. Moorhouse (1973), op cit, p 352.
72. Matthew et al, op cit, pp 723-4.
73. see Pugh, op cit, pp 8-10, on proportional representation in this period and Labour Party support.
74. Goran Therborn, "The Rule of Capital and the Rise of

Democracy", *New Left Review*, 103, May-June 1977, pp 3-41.

75. "Useful Work versus Useless Toil", in *The Political Writings of William Morris* ed. A.L. Morton (London 1984), p 89.
76. The 'purist' line could also be expressed through the desire to stand only socialist candidates on a purely socialist ticket. This was the nature of the debate in Glasgow in 1896, see Chapter Three. See Howell, op cit, pp 314-5, 393-4 on the debate within the ILP over 'socialist unity' with the SDF.
77. *Justice*, 4 August 1894.
78. *Justice*, 21 July 1894.
79. *Justice*, 18 August 1894.
80. *Justice*, 21 July 1894.
81. *Justice*, 18 August 1894.
82. Howell, op cit, pp 389-397.
83. *Forward*, 24 October 1908. Like the rest of the Labour candidates that year Armour was defeated. The SDF/SDP were particularly successful in Lerwick and the mining towns on the Fife coast. See *Justice*, 13 November 1909, for SDP victories in Buckhaven, Dysart and Lerwick. See also *Justice*, 12 November 1910, when the SDP came within five votes of winning a seat on Pollokshaws Parish Council - Pollokshaws being John Maclean's base.
84. *Forward*, 13 August 1910, reprinted in Maclean (1978), op cit, p 40.
85. BSP, *Annual Conference Report 1913*
86. Ibid. On Petroff and his role in the British Socialist movement and his relationship with John Maclean, see J. Smyth and M. Rodgers, "Peter Petroff and the Socialist Movement in Britain 1907-1918", in J. Slatter (ed), *From the Other Shore: Russian Political Emigrants in Britain 1881-1917* (London 1984); also biography of Petroff by the same authors in W. Knox (ed), *Scottish Labour Leaders 1818-1938: A Biographical Dictionary* (Edinburgh 1984), pp 224-230.
87. J. Liddington & J. Norris, *One Hand Tied Behind Us* (London 1978), pp 231-6.
88. *Statistics of census conducted by the ILP on the proportion of working and non-working women that would be enfranchised under the limited suffrage bill.* (1905), ILP Archive, Series 1, Part 2, Item 52. This was likely an over-estimate of working women who would get the vote

since the investigators did not define exactly what they meant by 'working women' but, even so, at least 80% of those likely to be enfranchised could be regarded as 'working class', Liddington & Norris, *op cit*, pp 180-1.

89. Thomas Johnston, *The Case for Women's Suffrage and Objections Answered* (Glasgow 1907), p 4.
90. Both the Majority and Minority Reports of the Royal Commission on the Poor Laws (the latter largely the work of the Webbs), were agreed on the use of punitive and coercive measures in regard to dealing with the destitute and the latter was even more concerned about the need to distinguish between the 'deserving' poor and the 'residuum', M.A. Crowther, "The Later Years of the Workhouse 1890-1929", in P. Thane (ed) *The Origins of British Social Policy*, (London 1978).
91. A pamphlet produced by the Glasgow Fabian Society for the 1907 Municipal Election was entitled, *How Glasgow Can Reduce the Rates by One Shilling in the \$1* (Glasgow 1907).
92. See Chapter Three on "The Ratepayers' Reaction". the Citizens' Union replied to the Fabians with their own pamphlet, *Fabian Squibs and Socialist Crackers: a hit back by a Citizen Unionist* (Glasgow 1907).
93. Bryan Keith Lucas, *The English Local Government Franchise* (Oxford 1952), p 77. The 1948 Representation of the People Act abolished plural votes and made residence the sole qualification for Parliamentary elections, but for local government elections, while all adult residents had the vote, so also did any non-residents who owned or rented rateable property of not less than \$10 yearly value.
94. *BSP Annual Conference Report 1913*
95. Pugh, *op cit*, p 4.
96. *Labour Leader*, 26 January 1895, quoted in F. Reid, *Keir Hardie: The Making of a Socialist* (London 1978), p 168.
97. Keir Hardie, *From Serfdom to Socialism* (London 1924) p 25, quoted in K.O. Morgan, *Keir Hardie: Radical and Socialist* (London 1975) p 208.
98. Quoted in Howell, *op cit*, p 334.
99. *Ibid.*, p 361.
100. Quoted in W.H. Fraser, "Trades Councils in England and Scotland 1858-1897", Ph.D., University of Sussex, 1967, p 291, emphasis added.
101. N. Blewett, "The Franchise in the United Kingdom 1885-1918", *Past and Present*, No. 32, December 1965, pp

27-56.

102. Chapter Six, Table 7.
103. The 'tracing' of George Seagars was achieved by the examining and linking of ILP Directories of Branches, Glasgow Post Office Directories and Electoral Registers.
104. Glasgow Municipal Commission on the Housing of the Poor, *Report* (Glasgow 1904), p 19. See also Presbytery of Glasgow, *Report of Commission on the Housing of the Poor in Relation to their Social Condition* (Glasgow 1891), p 11, for a similar categorisation of the poor: "They may be divided into (1) industrious and well-behave, though very poor; (2) the dissolute and drunken (many of whom are earning wages above 20s.) who work, but waste their wages, and who are poor by reason of their dissoluteness and drunkenness; (3) the criminal population and the waifs and strays, who pick up odd jobs and live by plunder."
105. Matthew, "The Liberal Age", op cit, p 316.
106. *Forward*, 15 November 1913, 18 October 1913.
107. Matthew et al, op cit, p 725.
108. *Parliamentary Constituencies (Electors &c) (United Kingdom)*, PP 1901; *Parliamentary Constituencies (Electors &c) (United Kingdom)* PP 1911.
109. The figure for 1901 (53.55%) which is for the seven parliamentary divisions of Glasgow was arrived at by applying the proportion of males aged over 21 for 1911 to the population figures for men in 1901 and relating this figure to the electorate. While not 100% accurate it is likely that any discrepancy will be minimal.

Conclusion and Epilogue:

Labour, War and the Mass Electorate

The object of this study has been to detail the political challenge of the Labour and Socialist Movement in Glasgow prior to the First World War. Attention has been focussed more or less exclusively upon electoral politics since this is where Labour and Socialism – most succinctly represented by the ILP – placed their efforts and their hopes. Both the achievement of particular reforms and the ultimate goal of socialism itself, were regarded as being realised only through the ballot box. The main effort was conducted at the local level and, each year, the ILP – independently or in alliance with other 'Labour' or 'Democratic' forces – stood candidates for Glasgow Town Council. This electoral challenge was hampered by 'external restraints' – lack of finance, limitations of organisation, problems of working class candidates finding the time to attend Council meetings, etc.¹ Hardly surprisingly, Labour's impact was a limited one: at no election did Labour ever contest a majority of the Municipal Wards, and at no time did Labour representation amount to even one fifth of the total elected membership of the Council. There was, however, a further and more crucial restriction upon Labour, which has been the second major theme of this study: the nature of the franchise system and the electorate it created. Given the disenfranchisement of women (wholly from the parliamentary franchise and mostly from the municipal) and poorer working class men, which meant that only between a quarter and a third of the adult population had the vote, and that Labour attached no priority to any further reform of the suffrage, the whole nature of Labour's electoral challenge, and its ambition, is called into question.

It has been our contention throughout that the electoral hopes of Labour were crucially limited by the restrictions of the existing franchise system. In order to 'test' this hypotheses we shall examine the political configuration of Glasgow in the years immediately after 1918 and the passing of the Fourth Reform Act. In order to remain true to the actual course of historical events we shall also have recourse to discuss the impact of the First War upon Clydeside. Before embarking upon this epilogue, which is intended to be read as an integral part of the conclusion, it is necessary to reflect upon the findings of the substantive basis of the study.

The 'modern' socialist movement emerged in the 1880s and can be seen as having developed out of the 'land' movement and radical dissatisfaction with 'official' Liberalism. As Socialism became more defined in ideas (it was resolutely marxist and revolutionary), and organisation (marked by the transition of the Democratic Federation into the Social Democratic Federation), it grew outwards from London and established itself in various parts of Britain. In Scotland, Edinburgh took the initiative ahead of Glasgow though. in time, it was the latter City which, "proved the most active centre of Socialist agitation in the Kingdom."² At this precise moment, however, the SDF split and the breakaway Socialist League was born. Although there were important differences of opinion within the London leadership these were not discussed by the general membership. In Scotland, mainly due to the influence of the Austrian exile, Andreas Scheu, the SL gained an early advantage over the SDF.

The major problem common to both organisations was that of political 'agency', i.e. what to do beyond the effort of propoganda and 'making socialists'.³ All Socialists were ambivalent, if not outrightly hostile, to 'politics', by which was meant electoral politics. Their emphasis was upon the social rather than the political, a position based upon their critique of the

social consequences of capitalism and a realisation that a democratic constitution was no guarantor of equality or justice. The SL expressed this anti-parliamentarian bias at its most extreme and refused to countenance any electoral activity or campaigns for specific reforms on the grounds that the 'dreaded palliatives' would only make the workers more willing to support the existing capitalist order. This non-involvement, however, created a great deal of tension among the League's membership, and eventually it collapsed.

The SDF did recognise the need for political work rather than simply waiting on a cataclysmic upheaval and it remained an active force. It would not, however, compromise over the demand for 'the socialisation of the means of production, distribution and exchange', and its actual electoral impact remained negligible. It was the Independent Labour Party which proved most able to work with and through the existing forces of the working class and it was largely through its efforts that a distinct labour electoral presence was formed in this period.

The movement for independent labour representation took concrete shape earlier in Scotland than in England, through the formation of the Scottish Labour Party in 1888. The SLP was an expression of the political development of Scottish Labour, but was also an indicator of the general weakness of the Scottish Labour movement. This was most clearly shown by the uncertain organisation of the Scottish miners, from among whose leaders - most notably Keir Hardie - the motivation to challenge the Liberal Party arose. Although a purely Scottish body and supportive of Home Rule, the SLP did not advocate a separatist path. While more aware of distinctly Scottish concerns than the Scottish Land & Labour League, the SLP did not offer any peculiarly Scottish perspective on Labour politics. The significance of the SLP lies in its providing the first step - no matter how uncertain or faltering - in the organised expression of the movement for independent labour representation.

That effort was conducted at both the Parliamentary and Municipal level, with limited success. The latter area is the more interesting since the annual elections to the Town Council permit us to detail more accurately Labour's electoral and organisational development. The SLP/ILP was successful in gaining influence over the Glasgow Trades Council which took the lead in establishing the Workers' Election Committee in 1896, in order to promote Labour representation on Glasgow Town Council. The WEC also involved the Co-operative movement and Irish Nationalist organisations who, along with the ILP (the socialist element) and the Trades Council, represented the 'combined forces of the democracy'.

This alliance was successful in getting Councillors elected - known collectively as the Stalwarts - and establishing a distinct Labour element in the Town Council. However, the coalition did not remain united for long and one by one the constituent parts broke away, leaving the ILP as the sole representative of 'Labour'. Although continuing to contest seats, the ILP was unable to prevent Labour representation plummeting by the mid-1900s. Out of this predicament the Glasgow Labour Party was formed which was able to reactivate the alliance of forces behind the original WEC, although minus the Irish. The Labour Party was more of a controlling body than the WEC had been, and Labour representation did increase in the years prior to 1914.

Of all the forces involved in the WEC and Labour Party it was the ILP which was the most important, since only it remained committed to continuously working for independent labour representation. ILP membership was not evenly spread throughout Glasgow, and its fortunes did vary in terms both of members and branches. Nevertheless, an organised presence was maintained in all the City's Parliamentary Divisions throughout the period, and every November at least some candidates would be run at the municipal polls. The membership of the ILP - as indicated by the occupations of Branch

Secretaries – was broadly representative of the major occupational structure of Glasgow: mainly skilled men (for the most part in engineering) and white collar, clerical grades. Although the actual membership likely had a wider social base than this, the occupations of the branch secretaries does indicate a lack of involvement by women and unskilled male workers.

Labour representation was largely dependent upon the ILP identifying other working class or 'democratic' elements with electoral campaigns. Indeed the Stalwarts tended to follow the lead of the veteran Irish Nationalist and radical-liberal, John Ferguson. The municipal poll of 1896 presented Labour with a fortuitous set of circumstances which it proved capable of grasping but, for socialists, there was a debate over the merits of working with non-socialists and whether or not there was any value in returning Town Councillors. This discussion echoed an earlier debate within the Glasgow SL over concentration purely on propoganda, or playing an active, if not leading role, in partial struggles by the working class. In 1896 the majority opinion within the ILP was clearly for a broad alliance of forces to secure labour representation. After 1900, in the face of a growing reaction against public provision and rising rates, the ILP proved incapable of maintaining this alliance, but its commitment to the principle of such a strategy remained.

Despite the fluctuating trends in the Labour coalition the issues pursued by Labour/ILP candidates remained largely the same: improved wages and conditions, and extended provision of publicly-controlled services. It was an approach which emphasised the power of the local state and became generally regarded as municipal socialism. Although specific elements of the Labour 'programme' changed over time – most significantly the taxation of land values was dropped as the basis of the financial underpinning of reforms – in terms of general priorities there was little difference between Labour's position by 1914 and the programmes developed by John Ferguson in the

early 1890s. A constant concern had been housing, with the accent gradually changing from control over rents to an emphasis on the actual building of good quality houses. Popularised by John Wheatley, Labour's campaign over housing was the single most important policy behind its increased representation on the Town Council in the years immediately before the War. Nevertheless, although by 1914 there were more Labour Councillors than ever before, Labour remained a small minority in the Town Council and, with only a limited electoral challenge (as at the Parliamentary level), could not have hoped to form a majority.

This recognition of Labour's permanent minority position leads us to consider more closely the existing political constituency and those excluded from it. The role of the Irish in relation to Labour and Socialist politics has been detailed at some length, an attention due to the great explanatory weight placed upon the electoral allegiances of the Irish. Our findings reinforce the view of the Irish as providing an element of support for Labour in Scotland, rather than as acting as a divisive force with a crippling effect upon Labour until after the resolution of the Home Rule question.

The Irish Nationalists in Glasgow offered only conditional support to Labour. Nevertheless, aware of the working class complexion of their community and aware that they were not strong enough to secure representation on their own, there was a clear tendency for the Irish vote to be cast in support of Labour candidates. Under the WEC the Irish were an integral part of the democratic alliance behind Labour. The denial of constituent rights for the Irish within the Labour Party was resented, but this did not negate the fact that Irish workers were continuing to vote Labour. Furthermore, the prominent positions taken by men such as John Wheatley indicated a more general involvement of the Irish within the Labour and Socialist movement. The perceived unity of the Irish vote has been seen as crucial to Irish political

influence, but not only is the unity of this vote questioned but so also is its actual strength. Overwhelmingly of the poorer working class, the Irish would have suffered disproportionately from disenfranchisement and, this being so, the Irish vote could not have had the determining influence so often attributed to it in the pre-1918 period.

The most notable exclusion from the suffrage was that of women - total in the case of the Parliamentary franchise, and extremely limited as regards the Municipal vote. Their role in the Labour and Socialist movement was extremely constrained as regards both actual participation and in the expectations of the part to be played by women. This was not a static situation, however, and women did make significant advances throughout the period under discussion. The women's suffrage movement in Glasgow enjoyed close links to the ILP which, of all the Socialist and Labour organisations, had the most supportive policy on votes for women and did most to encourage direct female activity alongside men. At the same time the suffrage movement did not involve working class women and did not become a 'test' question for Labour generally. Beyond the formal commitment to sex-equality lay male attitudes on women's inferiority and on an arrangement of domestic life that demanded that the wife and mother remain at home to provide 'comfort' to the male breadwinner. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that the domestic concerns of working class housewives did not rank highly among Labour's priorities, but there were indicators - particularly over housing - that such concerns could become live political issues.

While the exclusion of women from the vote on the grounds of gender is clearly understood, it is also the case that large proportion of the adult male population was also disenfranchised. Given this, it was necessary to examine Glasgow's electorate in some detail. Wide variations in enfranchisement rates

were seen to operate between different parts of the City, both among the Parliamentary Divisions and, even more clearly, between the smaller Municipal Wards. Using indicators of Housing and Health conditions at the Ward level correlations were made between social class and levels of enfranchisement, showing that the franchise system operated against the working class areas as compared with middle class areas, and also against the poorer working class areas in relation to the better-off, or artisan, areas. The differential within the working class was further shown through the enfranchisement levels of delegates to the Glasgow Trades Council, where it was seen that skilled men were more likely to be on the Electoral Register than unskilled or even semi-skilled workers.

Labour's position on the franchise was apparently contradictory – on the one hand it viewed the suffrage as no longer an issue, as though full democracy had already been achieved while, on the other hand, through its support for adult suffrage it recognised not only that women were disenfranchised but so also were many men. Our explanation of this position has emphasised the reality of divisions within the working class itself and how these divisions 'fitted into' the reformed franchise system as constructed by the Acts of 1832, 1867 and 1884/5 which, through all its modifications remained based upon a property-related concept of citizenship.

Apart from the SDF, no Labour or Socialist body proved willing to mount a serious campaign for full adult suffrage. Partly this was due to a genuine belief that constitutional politics were of little or no value to the working class, and that social issues were really what mattered. However, it remains the case that Labour accepted the divisions within the working class between skilled and unskilled and between 'respectable' and 'residuum' – and the basis of the British franchise system. As such Labour made its appeal largely to the organised working class, while remaining suspicious about the political

behaviour of the poorer working class. So long as this attitude remained Labour would never demand a complete reform of the suffrage. Yet, as in the case of the Irish, the poor generally, and of women, there were clear signs that these 'constituencies' provided a latent reservoir of support for Labour.

Labour's position by 1914 is thrown into sharper relief when contrasted with its political situation in the immediate post-war period, i.e. after the creation of a, more or less, democratic electorate.⁴ However, the passage of the Fourth Reform Act took place under exceptional circumstances which are impossible to ignore and it is, therefore, also necessary to discuss the radicalising effects which the First World War had upon the working class of Glasgow.

There now exists a substantial and growing literature on "Glasgow Socialism".⁵ The most commented-upon work, and that around which most debate revolves, is I.S. Mclean's, *The Legend of Red Clydeside*.⁶ This demolition job on the "myth" of the Red Clyde denies the significance of the revolutionary left in Glasgow and, more generally, the war-time struggles which gave birth to the "legend" of an intensely class-conscious City and a near-insurrectionary moment. The myth of a 'missing' revolution, however, was hardly a very robust one, based largely upon biography, if not hagiography.⁷ Other writers, particularly Joseph Melling and Joan Smith,⁸ accept the displacement the revolutionary left but still emphasise the importance of political consciousness and organisation. In this perspective it is the ILP which has moved centre-stage, as the largest and most influential of all the Socialist parties, and the creator of the Labour Party 'on the ground' in Glasgow.

The de-bunking of the myth has been taken furthest by Christopher Harvie.⁹ But to say, as he has done, "Forget Red Clydeside",¹⁰ is tantamount to creating a new orthodoxy, or myth about Glasgow which denies it any

radicalism and even regards it as, more or less, a-political. The most recent study of Scottish political and electoral history has clearly shown that the most significant development in post-WW1 Scotland was the size and stability of the Labour vote by 1924 in the Central Belt.¹¹ And the jewel in Scottish Labour's crown was Glasgow, where the Party won 10 of the City's 15 Parliamentary seats in the General Election of 1922.

Labour and the Mass Electorate 1918-1924

The 1922 Election stands as, perhaps, the greatest single landmark in Glasgow's electoral history; from having only one of the City's M.Ps. Labour suddenly held two-thirds of Glasgow's parliamentary representation. The results of this election and the phenomenal scenes of celebration as the successful candidates boarded their special train for London and Westminster are just as much part of the legend of Red Clydeside as the Rent Strikes or the 40 Hours Strike.¹² That the M.Ps. did not live up to the ambitious claims they made on their departure does not deny the significance of the moment itself. At the same time the result of the election can be seen as somewhat fortuitous, an over-estimation of Labour's actual level of support permitted by the first-path-the-post electoral system. Labour's share of the poll, in the 12 seats contested by it, was a little over 50%, a level it remained at, more or less, in 1923 when it retained ten seats.¹³ In the General Election of 1924, however, although Labour's share of the vote declined only slightly, it lost two seats, so that the representation of Glasgow was then a more equitable 8 seats for Labour and 7 for the Conservatives. In the elections of 1922 and 1923 Labour had benefitted from a series of split votes between Conservatives and Liberals. In 1924 this no longer operated and Labour had to stand in straight fights against Conservative and Liberal candidates. The two seats lost by Labour in 1924, Maryhill and Partick, had previously had anti-Labour majorities if the Conservative and Liberal votes were combined.

What 1922 represents is the Labour Party emerging as a major political Party in its own right, subsequently confirmed by the elections of the following two years. Table 1 illustrates this point by showing Labour's performance in Glasgow at the General Elections of 1918 to 1924.

TABLE 1: THE LABOUR VOTE IN GLASGOW; THE GENERAL ELECTIONS OF 1918-1924

YEAR	NO. OF LAB CANDIDATES	TOTAL LAB VOTE	LAB % SHARE OF VOTE	AVERAGE LAB VOTE
1918	14	89323	31.88	6380
1922	12	166637	51.23	13886
1923	15	180943	51.42	12063
1924	15	197406	48.59	13160

NOTE: In 1918 two independent labour and one British Socialist Party candidate are counted as Labour. In 1923 one Communist Party candidate is counted as Labour. In none of these cases did an 'official' Labour Party candidate stand.

In terms of its percentage share of the vote Labour's performance in the three elections of 1922, '23 and '24 was very consistent. Once the fewer candidates in 1922 are taken into account, then Labour's total vote and average vote also show little variation. It seems safe to assume that the basic level of electoral support for Labour was solid. What stands out from this pattern and is in need of some explanation is the Election of 1918. For I.S. McLean, Labour's poor performance in the General Election of 1918 is of fundamental importance in disproving the militancy of "Red Clydeside":¹⁴

The 1918 election result is the greatest obstacle in the way of those who over-emphasise the continuity between wartime and post-war radicalism.

For Mclean, it is the discontinuity pre and post-1918 which is significant and he attempts to locate the growth of the Labour vote almost exclusively in the years *after* 1918. The main reasons he adduces to have been the cause of Labour's development were housing and the Irish.¹⁵ The main objection to this approach is that it signally fails to see the wood for the trees. If Labour in Glasgow thought it could win five seats (though regarding only two as definite) this ought to be regarded in relation to Labour's position immediately prior to the war when, in the whole of Scotland, Labour had only three MPs. Had there been a General Election in 1914 it is extremely unlikely that this representation would have been added to or that any further breakthroughs would have been made in Glasgow or the Clydeside area.¹⁶ In the General Election of December 1910 Labour stood two candidates in the Glasgow area who polled 5,701 votes between them. In 1918 there were 14 candidates who can be regarded as 'Labour' who polled almost 90,000 votes and averaged over 6,000 votes. Although only one Labour MP was actually returned on each occasion, in terms of ambition Labour was operating on two completely different levels.

Moreover, the smallness of the Labour vote in 1918 relative to 1922 and thereafter, can be explained by other reasons which are, in fact, supplied by Mclean himself. The 'national' appeal of Lloyd-George and the Coalition for having 'won the war' would likely have produced a swing in their favour. More fundamentally, however, was the nature of the electorate itself in 1918. Mclean points out that since 1910, "the electorate had changed immensely; perhaps three out of every four voters were new",¹⁷ though he makes nothing of this in terms of analysing "The Growth of the Labour Vote." Apart from normal demographic developments there was the new reality of a mass, democratic electorate; simply put, the 1918 General Election was the largest (in terms of voters) and the most representative (in terms of class and

gender) that had ever been held in British history. As such is hardly surprising that Labour's vote should have risen so much. What was apparently surprising was that it did not increase by even more.

The intended enfranchisements of the Fourth Reform Act, however, did not come into effect immediately or completely. There were insufficient arrangements made for allowing servicemen to vote, and many servicemen and other non-householders 'lost' their votes due to the inadequate preparation of the electoral register.¹⁸ In consequence the actual poll in 1918 was comparatively low: a turnout of 56.79% in that year, followed by 76.31%, 68.73%, and 77.25% in 1922, '23 and '24 respectively. Glasgow's first register of voters under the Representation of the People Act included over one hundred thousand men who were on naval or military service, one fifth of the total electorate.¹⁹ It has always been regarded that these 'missing' voters, particularly the soldiers and sailors, would have been more likely to have voted Labour than any other Party. *Forward*²⁰ estimated that only a quarter of the "soldier electorate" actually voted, but that of those who did the majority supported Labour. Only in Hillhead, "a district from which the officer class would be drawn", was there a large soldiers' poll. There is no way that such a claim can be definitively proved but it can at least be examined more closely. Table 2 divides all the votes cast in the elections of 1918-1924 into a basic Left/Right categorisation. On the 'Left' are all the Labour candidates plus independent labour, independent socialist, communist. On the 'Right' are all Conservatives, Liberals, independents, and various Coalition candidates.

TABLE 2: LEFT/RIGHT DIVIDE IN GLASGOW PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS
1918-1924

YEAR	LEFT				RIGHT			
	TOTAL VOTE	AVERAGE VOTE	% OF VOTE	% OF E'TORS	TOTAL VOTE	AVERAGE VOTE	% OF VOTE	% OF E'TORS
1918	89323	6380	31.88	18.11	190838	13831	68.12	36.68
1922	171134	14261	52.61	41.07	154157	12846	47.39	37.00
1923	180943	12063	51.42	35.34	170983	11399	48.59	33.39
1924	197406	13160	48.59	37.53	208905	13927	51.54	39.72

NOTE: Only those seats in which there was an identifiable Left/Right contest are included: this means 14 in 1918, 12 in 1922, and 15 in both 1923 and 1924

Table 2 allows us to grasp the essential dichotomy of post-war Glasgow politics, which was essentially that between Conservative and Labour.²¹ Combining all 'left' votes together does not add much to the total Labour vote, but the addition of Liberal votes does add considerably to the Conservative total. Up to 1924 it is clear that Labour benefitted from a split 'property' vote, but in that year all of the contests were two-headed, with Labour v. Conservative in 13 seats and Labour v. Liberal in 2. The most interesting feature of this table is the lack of variation in the Right vote between 1918 and 1924; the fall of c. 45,000 votes from 1918 to 1922 would largely be accounted for by the fewer contests in the latter year. While the Right share of the vote fell by around 20% from 1918 to 1922 - and the Left vote increased by the same percentage - the Right vote, expressed as a proportion of the electorate did not vary but remained almost exactly the same at 37%. It would appear to be a fair assumption to make, that the Left, or the Labour Party, did not benefit from a shift in the electorate between

these two dates, but received an almost completely new source of votes. If the 1918 election had been fought on a turnout similar to that in 1922 (i.e. 76.31% overall) this would have given a total vote of 376,454 or, 96,293 votes more than were actually cast. This figure corresponds closely to the 81,811 'extra' votes Labour received in 1922 (though spread over two fewer seats). If these 96,293 fictitious votes are added to the Labour total in 1918, this gives an average Labour poll of 12,901, which is close to the 1922 Labour average of 13,886, and exceptionally close to the 1924 average (for 15 seats) of 13,160. (1923 is not such a good year for comparison because of the lower turnout than 1922 and 1924.) Hutchison has commented upon Labour's performance in the 1922, '23 and '24 General Elections that, "the remarkable feature is the stability of Labour's vote despite the shifting weight given to different issues in different places."²² If we are correct in our analysis of the 1918 General Election, i.e. in terms of the electorate, then Labour's vote can be taken as read from 1918. This suggests that Mclean's view of a major development in support for Labour after 1918 is essentially misplaced.

The results of the Municipal elections in post-war Glasgow also tend to contradict Mclean's argument. As a consequence of the extension of the City in 1912 there was an eventual re-drawing of the ward boundaries and all three seats in the total 37 wards fell for re-election in 1920. This presented Labour with a similar opportunity to 1896 - the last Municipal 'general' election - when the Workers' Election Committee (WMC) succeeded in forming a Labour presence on the Town Council. The first post-war elections actually occurred in 1919, although given that the successful candidates would only have one year on the council before re-election, rather than the normal three-year term, they were not so keenly fought as usual. Just as the ILP had taken advantage of the same situation back in 1895 and had managed to return two members, so 1919 was a particularly successful year for Labour.

There were ten contested wards and Labour candidates stood in them all, winning eight; three sitting councillors were returned and five new seats won. In addition four sitting members were returned unopposed.²³ This meant that the Labour group had reached an all-time high of 24, but in the following year Labour representation took a quantum leap forward when 44 seats (out of a total of 111) were won. Although this still meant that Labour was a minority, and remained so until the 1930s, it also meant that Labour in Glasgow could seriously consider the possibility of forming an administration. Furthermore, this success was achieved on a more restricted franchise than that which operated at the Parliamentary level. In the electoral register drawn up at the end of 1918 there were 77,697 fewer municipal voters than there were parliamentary.²⁴

It is extremely difficult to make any direct comparison between Labour's electoral performances pre and post-1918. This is partly because of the change in the franchise and subsequent rise in the electorate but also because, prior to 1914, Labour actually stood in such few seats. However, at the Municipal level Labour did mount an annual challenge and did enjoy some success in returning candidates and, despite the extensions and re-divisions of boundaries, this does provide a basic point of continuity. Table 3 attempts to permit a rough comparison on the basis of Labour representation in 1920, 1914 and 1896/7. The first column refers to the results of the Municipal Election of 1920 when the three seats in every ward were contested, column two shows Labour representation up to and including the Election of November 1914, and the final column shows Labour successes in the Elections of 1896 and 1897. In 1896/7 there were only 25 Wards, by 1914 there were 37 and, although there was no further increase, there was a re-definition of boundaries and the replacement of some 'old' wards by new ones in 1920.²⁵ Nevertheless, given that the wards are grouped roughly by

geographical area, comparisons over time are still valid.

TABLE 3: LABOUR REPRESENTATION IN GLASGOW WARDS 1920, 1914, 1896/7

Wards	No. Of Labour Councillors		
	1920	1914	1896/7
1. Shettleston & Tollcross	***	**	-
2. Parkhead	***	-	-
3. Dalmarnock	***	**	*
4. Calton	*	0	**
5. Mile End	***	**	**
6. Whitevale	0	0	0
7. Dennistoun	0	0	0
8. Provan	*	-	-
9. Cowlairs	***	*	*
10. Springburn	***	*	*
11. Townhead	**	**	*
12. Exchange	0	0	0
13. Blythwood	0	0	0
14. Anderston	*	*	0
15. Sandyford	0	0	0
16. Park	0	0	0
17. Cowcaddens	0	0	0
18. Woodside	***	*	0
19. Ruchill	**	-	-
20. North Kelvin	0	-	-
21. Maryhill	**	0	0
22. Kelvinside	0	0	0
23. Partick West	0	0	-
24. Partick East	0	0	-
25. Whiteinch	0	0	-
26. Hutchesontown	***	**	**
27. Gorbals	***	0	0
28. Kingston	**	0	0
29. Kinning Park	0	*	-
30. Govan	***	**	-
31. Fairfield	***	**	-
32. Pollokshields	0	0	0
33. Camphill	0	-	-
34. Pollokshaws	0	0	0
35. Govanhill	0	0	0
36. Langside	0	0	0
37. Cathcart	0	0	0
TOTAL	44 (40%)	19 (17%)	10 (13%)

NOTE: Each '*' represents one Labour Councillor; '-' indicates that the Ward, or an equivalent, did not then exist; figures in parentheses give Labour representation as a proportion of the total Town Council membership.

There are two significant points that emerge from Table 3. One is that Labour representation had moved onto a new level post-1918 - to a point where it held 40% of the seats on the Corporation - which had simply proved beyond it before the war. The second is that the pattern of Labour representation remained largely the same. Broadly speaking, Labour tended to be successful in areas in 1920 where it had previously enjoyed some success beforehand: thus the East End Wards (1-6), the Northern Wards (8-11, plus 19), South-Side (26-29) and Govan (30-31). At the same time, where Labour had previously drawn a blank it continued to do so: in middle class wards like Dennistoun (7) and Park (16), the business centre (12 and 13), the West End of Kelvinside and Partick (22-25), and the suburbs to the South (32-37).

Overall it remains the case that politics in Glasgow were transformed between 1914 and 1918. The straightforward or, classic, explanation of this transformation points to the social and political dislocations of the First World War leading to an increase in the role of the State in the economy and a rapidly developing and more assertive Labour movement.²⁶ In direct political terms Labour replaced the Liberals as the main opposition to the Conservatives, as party politics took on the parameters of a two-way division that reflected the division between Capital and Labour. However, the actual impact of the War has been seriously questioned.

The Effects of the First World War

Just as Iain Mclean discounts the impetus of war-time militancy as being responsible for the subsequent rise of the Labour Party, so Matthew et al also downplay the significance of the War in the process by which Labour 'replaced' the Liberal Party. They find that the claims of the "war argument" are unproven and conclude that, "the events of the war were only subordinate factors in this change."²⁷ The importance of their contribution is that it

focusses attention specifically upon the franchise and the electorate, rather than taking the 1918 Reform Act for granted or simply giving a cursory nod in its direction. And as such we agree with their statement:²⁸

We cannot say how many votes the introduction of universal franchise was worth to Labour, but we can say that it was a critical element in the emergence of the party as a major political force.

Nevertheless, can it be said that the Reform Act, *on its own*, explains the rise of the Labour Party? Despite some caveats, this is basically the view put forward by Matthew et al. When they say that the Labour *and* Conservative Parties were better able to, "exploit a fully democratic franchise", they also state that this would have operated equally prior to 1914 as it did post-1918.²⁹ At the same time they add the rider that, "to ignore chronological developments would be absurd",³⁰ but, it needs to be asked, can the passing of the Fourth Reform Act be separated from the War itself? The enormous movement of both civilians and soldiers quickly made existing electoral registers redundant and made the preparation of new registers almost impossible. The necessary period of residence for qualification became a nonsense during war-time but, since this had been the major obstacle to the poorer working class from registering, any shortening of the period of residence became tantamount to a major suffrage reform. Moreover, given the 'national' effort behind the War, mobilising all classes and sections of the community, including women, who then could be denied the vote, a basic mark of citizenship? Speculations on a special soldiers franchise were popular amongst Conservatives but foundered on the awkward likelihood of giving large numbers of men a temporary vote which would then at some point be taken away from them. It may have been that, by 1914, a further reform of the suffrage was likely but, it was only as a consequence of the

War that it became inevitable.

It is unfortunate, therefore, that there has been little attempt made at integrating the massive enlargement of the electorate in 1918 with an analysis of the radicalising influence of the war upon the working class. The most substantial treatment is that provided by Hutchison in his treatment of Labour's emergence in the decade 1914-1924.³¹ Without attempting a detailed analysis here we can offer some comment upon Labour's new-found electoral strength through continuing our discussion on women, the Irish and the poorer working class in general and the role of the ILP. This will also reflect back upon the position of the Labour Party prior to the War.

The Female Electorate

First among the new constituencies confronting Labour in 1918 was the female electorate which accounted for 194,332 or 37% of Parliamentary voters. At the local government level there were even more female voters, 219,743, who had, with over 49% of the votes, more or less parity with the men.³² All Parties, whether or not they had been hostile to women's suffrage, soon understood the necessity of appealing to the 'women's vote'. The Labour Party had the benefit of its pre-1914 commitment to female suffrage and close links with the 'constitutional' National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS), and in Glasgow close links had been maintained with the 'militant' Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU). (See Chapter Five.) However, it is unlikely that these previous associations were of particular benefit to Labour, electorally, from 1918 on. This is because - in Glasgow at any rate - the whole focus of women's politics shifted away from a largely middle-class dominated concern over equal rights, to the reality of working class working and (particularly) living conditions. The agent of this change was the famous Glasgow Rent Strike of 1915.³³

The major centre of the Strike were not in the poorer working class areas but in the engineering and shipbuilding areas of Govan, Partick and Shettleston. These were also areas with a strong ILP presence and where there was experience of female self-activity, mainly through the Co-operative Women's Guild. The Kinning Park Women's Guild, which covered Govan and was the first Guild established in Scotland, seems to have provided a significant number of Strike leaders, while the Co-operative Society itself had already produced a large number of Labour Councillors.³⁴ Pat Dollan claimed that the Strike actually began with the decision of Kinning Park members in South Govan not to pay demanded rent increases of 3/1 per month.³⁵ As we have seen, the independence of the Women's Guild was severely curtailed by male notions of women's proper place and concerns in the movement. Nevertheless the Guild did make progress in broadening the field in which their involvement and contribution was recognised and it did provide a basis for women to learn about organisation and to develop skills and self-confidence. In the years preceding the War women's activity in the Labour movement generally had begun to increase, with the formation of branches of the Women's Labour League and, most significantly, the Glasgow Women's Housing Association (GWHA).

Born out of the ILP's campaign over housing the GWHA quickly grew and, by the end of 1914, had an extensive network of branches throughout the City and a membership in the hundreds.³⁶ Although the overall housing campaign remained under the control of men such as John Wheatley and Andrew McBride who had more prominent places in public life and in key institutions, the GWHA was important in publicising Labour's case within working class communities and particularly amongst women and was crucial as regards the actual conduct and organisation of the Rent Strike itself. The GWHA was a purely women's organisation and its method of activity was geared to

reaching working class women, especially housewives. During the Strike regular meetings were held in local halls in weekday afternoons – the time being significant because men would be at work and unable to attend. In addition "Close" Committees were organised which held smaller more informal kitchen meetings amongst tenants to discuss the immediate situation and organise their defence; the movements of factor and landlord were easily monitored and each tenement close or stair quickly made impregnable.

If it was the threat of massive disruption in industry that was crucial in convincing the Government to act and pass the Rent Restriction Act, this does not mean that the Rent Strike was significant only as a sort of marginal contribution to the class struggle being fought at the point of production. For most women and, in fact, whether married or not, the home was their point of production and the class struggle waged over housing had as much, if not more, direct political significance as any industrial struggle.

Even before the Rent Strike the ILP was making the connection between Housing and female support for Labour. At the beginning of 1915 *Forward* argued that:³⁷

Housing is, above all, a woman's question. Women have enough votes and influence to turn the balance in favour of the Labour Party – which is the only housing party – in two-thirds of the wards in Glasgow.

Given that the female electorate accounted for less than a fifth of the total municipal vote this suggests that most emphasis as being placed upon women's "influence". With the extension of the franchise, however, women became an electoral force in their own right, and constituted a majority in eleven of Glasgow's 37 Wards.³⁸ Both by its policies and its method of activity, Labour was well-placed to appeal to this electorate. The intensely

local and direct nature of the organisation behind the Rent Strike was capable of being utilised for other purposes. The leading women figures of the Strike became prominent soon after in the peace movement. They joined the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WIL), a largely middle class body which was active mainly through large set-piece public meetings, but, in addition, they also formed their own Women' Peace Crusade (WPC) which carried on the spirit and style of the Rent Strike. Demonstrations of women and children were held, meetings took place in the afternoon (with organisation meetings closed to men), and with the main propoganda effort conducted at street-level in working class neighbourhoods. The adaptation of such methods to electioneering was quickly made and quickly proved effective. In the Municipal election of 1919 the sitting Labour Councillor for Woodside, George Smith, was regarded as in being in a possibly vulnerable position since he had been gaoled as a conscientious objector during the War. However, he won by the quite comfortable margin of over 600 votes, a victory partly attributed to.³⁹

Councillor Smith's practice for months past of regularly holding meetings during the afternoons in the back-courts, whence he addresses the housewives at their kitchen windows.

At the same time individual women began to take more prominent roles within the Socialist and Labour organisations. At the Annual Conference of the Scottish ILP in January 1919 Helen Crawford was elected on to the Executive, polling more votes than anybody else apart from James Maxton.⁴⁰ In the same month Agnes Dollan became Labour's first woman candidate for the Town Council (at a by-election in Partick),⁴¹ and at the Municipal Election of 1920 two women were elected as Labour Councillors, one of whom was Mary Barbour.⁴² All three had taken leading roles in both the Rent Strike and the WPC. This emergence of women into political life - as individual actors

and as mass participants – can be seen to have fundamentally altered the nature of elections and electioneering.

Labour's Electoral 'Machine' and the Irish

For Matthew et al the rise of Labour and the demise of the Liberals was primarily due to the extension of the franchise and the emergence of the new, mass electorate. While Labour *and* the Tories could appeal to this new constituency in "vulgar" ways, more at the level of rhetoric than policies, the Liberal Party needed, "an informed and intelligent electorate." Liberalism could only have survived under the nineteenth century franchise system.⁴³

with *that* electorate, one large enough to be responsive to particular legislative proposals, but not yet swamped by Bright's 'residuum'. The 1918 Act, however, did more than just treble the electorate: it transformed its character by significantly lowering its political awareness. Not only was the new electorate divided by class in a way that increasingly excluded the Liberals, but it was less likely to respond to politics that demanded a high level of political intelligence.

This national perspective finds an echo in Mclean's study of Glasgow politics in the immediate post-War years, in particular his emphasis of upon the creation of a Labour Party "machine" which was geared to, and successful in, turning out the working class electorate.⁴⁴ Whether or not these writers consciously attach pejorative meanings to their descriptions of the electorate, there comes across a very definite image of an ignorant, docile mass, responsive to subliminal-type appeals to its sense of common identity, which could be herded into the polling booths relatively easily. A different perspective is suggested by Hutchison who develops the discussion of the post-1918 electorate in a more interesting way in his comment that, "the very techniques of traditional political debate seemed ill-adjusted to new conditions." However, "Labour"⁴⁵

had developed techniques to reach the voters in, so to speak their natural habitat rather than the artificial context of large meetings,"

Labour candidates and propogandists addressed impromptu gatherings both at home and at the workplace, making it easier for people to actually hear what was being said and to ask questions in such a 'normal' environment. For women in particular, being spoken to in the security of their everyday surroundings and amongst their neighbours would have been much more likely to give them the confidence to express their own opinions than in the intimidating atmosphere of a public hall. Rather than see women and the poor as "ignorant", it should be understood that, having been denied a say in the political life of the country for so long, they were hardly likely to share the established views of how proper political debate should be conducted.

Although Labour undoubtedly benefitted most from the extension of the franchise, it still had to overcome its own ambivalences towards the "slum dwellers" and women voters. Mclean points out the continuing superior attitude of Thomas Johnston, editor of *Forward* to the inhabitants of the poorer working class areas. Even in 1921 Johnston continued to regard Labour's support as mainly based in the better-off artisan Wards while, "the slum areas are represented by Capitalists on public bodies."⁴⁶ Maclean sees the results of the Municipal Elections between 1919 and 1922 as evidence of:⁴⁷

how the Labour vote spread from 'labour aristocratic' districts to 'unskilled' districts to produce a recognisable forerunner of modern voting patterns.

For Mclean the agency of this "shift" was the Labour machine which in the extension into the unskilled areas, eventually encompassed the Irish

"machine".⁴⁸ As regards the Irish, Mclean cites their allegiance to Labour as occurring only after Labour began to downplay its anti-drink stance following the prohibition referendum in 1920.⁴⁹ The major flaw in this schema, however, remains Mclean's insistence upon locating Labour's development firmly after 1918. While he provides much interesting information on the disputes and arrangements between the Irish and Labour in a few Wards, Mclean's somewhat microscopic view fails to encompass the wider picture. As we have already shown, Labour already enjoyed support before the War in poorer areas like Hutchesontown and the East End, as well as in more artisan areas. And in the pre-1914 period the Irish electorate was constantly divided over the question of supporting Labour candidates at Parliamentary elections and showed an even stronger tendency to vote Labour at the Municipal polls. From as early as 1895 the UIL (or then INL) had actually been part of the then "Labour Party" - the Workers' Election Committee (WMC). Despite their opposition to the WMC policy of municipal control of the liquor traffic, the Irish remained an active part of the Committee and worked for all the Labour candidates, despite the Co-operators' refusal to support those candidates, all Irish, who had any association whatever with the drink trade. Even with the break-up of the Stalwart alliance Irish support for Labour did not end - as both the Blackfriars & Hutchesontown and Camlachie Parliamentary elections of the 1900s showed. The emergence of the Glasgow Labour Party and its replacement of the "forces of the democracy" approach to local Labour politics did threaten a more fundamental division as the Irish were denied any autonomous affiliation to the Party. However, the prominence of Irish-Catholics like Wheatley in both the ILP and Labour Party, and Labour's ability to win elections with or without 'official' Irish endorsement, pointed the way to the future relationship of the two - in which the Irish would be integrated into the Labour movement. This process was accelerated by the Easter Rising and the supersession of the Irish National Party by Sinn Fein.

Even before the General Election of 1918 the *Glasgow Observer* had thrown its weight behind Labour as, "Ireland's Only Hope".⁵⁰

At the same time the Irish were becoming aware of just what an impact the Representation of the People Act was going to have upon the electoral strength of the working class in general and their own community in particular. The Act was:⁵¹

certain to add vastly to the voting power of the workers, and should prove of immense value to the Catholics of this country, who are in the majority of cases in the ranks of the toilers. ... for the first time the Voting Power of the Irish in Scotland can become proportionate to their number.

Another article in the *Observer* in August 1918 referred back to previous sympathy offered by local Labour representatives to the Irish-Catholic community and looked with favour upon Labour's current programme.⁵²

What is in it to which an Irishman cannot subscribe? In each and every reform tabulated the Irish toiler is keenly interested, for is he not virtually - yes, actually - "the hewer of wood and the drawer of water"? As to Ireland, their platform is - "The right of self-determination for all peoples." Surely that is all-sufficient for anyone ...

Given expectations of a possible four-fold increase in the Irish vote it would have been surprising had there not been some thoughts of running independent Irish candidates⁵³ but, apart from a few Municipal contests, this was never attempted systematically. It was clear, even before the War was over, that the Irish would ally themselves with Labour. The emergence of Irish Nationalists as members of the ILP and Labour candidates after 1918 should not be regarded with surprise or suspicion, especially since most - if not all - of them appear to have been members of the Home Government Branch of the UIL, the most consistently pro-Labour of all the Irish

organisations in Glasgow.⁵⁴

It was the ILP which provides the continuous link between Labour as a political force in the 1880s to its electoral triumphs in the 1920s. Already dominant in Glasgow Socialism prior to 1914, the War only increased the ILP's strength and influence and it continued to grow after 1918. By 1924 the Glasgow Federation could boast that:⁵⁵

The Glasgow ILP is now the "People's Party". Its influence and usefulness predominates in every phase of public life of the City. We are stronger, numerically, than ever we have been. Our representation on Public Bodies is higher than at any previous period.

This was not mere self-aggrandisement. Even its enemies recognised the ILP's influence, even if they were hardly complimentary about it. The *Glasgow Herald* commented on the eve of the Municipal election of 1923:⁵⁶

The official 'Labour' candidates are almost, if not entirely composed of members of the Independent Labour Party, a Socialist organisation comparatively small in numbers but active and aggressive, and exerting an influence far out of proportion to its numerical strength.

Judged against the 'Capitalist' Parties the membership of the ILP appears quite small,⁵⁷ which reflects the higher cost that political activity demanded of the working class. However, compared to other Socialist organisations the ILP appears impressively large.⁵⁸ It is clear that the ILP was growing and was forming branches in new areas of the City, and that its ambitions had been considerably enlarged. As before, the electoral unit remained the basis of branch organisation and by 1924 the ILP had 34 branches in the City and was aiming for 37 - one for each Municipal Ward. The connection between Labour electoral success and ILP activity, which we saw in the pre-war years,

remained, summed up in the official Party comment on the 1923 Municipal polls, "the Wards in which we have continued successes have all strong ILP branches."⁵⁹

While many other sections of the Labour movement were involved in election campaigns it was the network of ILP Branches – and there were no Labour Party 'branches' as such – which provided the engine of the Labour machine. Unfortunately our information on the occupations of ILP activists does not go beyond the pre-war period but there is no reason to assume that it did not remain largely dominated by skilled and clerical grades. The expansion of Party organisation into the southern suburbs suggests a possible expansion of lower middle class involvement, though the formation of branches in the Gorbals and Cowcaddens suggests that semi and unskilled workers were also joining. Enthusiasm on its own, however, could not guarantee electoral success. Despite Govanhill's emergence as one of the largest ILP branches in the 1920s, that Ward remained stubbornly hostile to Labour at the polls as did the rest of suburban Glasgow. The 'slum' Wards of Gorbals and Cowcaddens, however, soon became bastions of Labour representation, the former at the Election of 1920 and the latter by the mid-'20s.

Towards a More United Working Class Politics

Just as fears of the reactionary tendencies of the slum-dwellers were proven to be basically groundless with the advent of a democratic franchise so, at a more general level, the very categorisation of 'slum-dweller' or 'residuum' became increasingly inappropriate when applied to what was becoming a more homogeneous working class. In the 1900s the wages gap between skilled and unskilled had, if anything, widened but, during the War the wages of labourers began to increase relative to those of tradesmen. The examples of three industrial groups in Glasgow show a marked reduction in differentials

between 1914 and 1920. In 1914, while labourers were on 60% of the wage of a turner or fitter, in 1920 they were receiving 80% of the skilled man's wage: Between bricklayers and their labourers the ratio of 62% in 1914 had risen to 84% in 1920: and for shipwrights and their labourers the gap had narrowed from 55% to 76%.⁶⁰ Even before 1914 wages had been rising faster than rents but under the Rent Restriction Act they rocketed ahead. The freezing of working class rents during the War had been of clear benefit to all grades and when restrictions were eventually lifted all sections of the working class felt the consequences.⁶¹

The expansion of the Trade Union movement which occurred between 1910 and 1914 was further accelerated by the War and by 1920 membership had doubled to a new high of over 8 million.⁶² The Co-operative movement also grew rapidly, if not at quite as fast a rate as the Unions. Between 1914 and 1918 membership of Co-op Societies in Scotland increased from 467,270 to 590,710.⁶³ The unequal treatment received by Co-operative stores in the distribution of food and treatment of personnel over conscription at the hands of the middle class dominated bodies set up by the Government, led to increased demands for political activity, culminating in the formation of the Co-operative Party in 1917,⁶⁴ which, in practical terms, operated as part of the Labour Party. As far as Trade Unions are concerned Scottish membership figures have not been separately collected or extracted from U.K. totals but it seems safe to assume that, as before, Scotland shared in the general trend. By analysing figures produced by the STUC in 1925, Hutchison indicates that trade unionism in Scotland was highly concentrated: 80% of male trade unionists were in 36 out of a total of 227 unions. Furthermore there was an apparent correlation between areas of high unionisation and areas of Labour electoral success and, since the majority of new members came from among the semi and unskilled, Hutchison points out that:⁶⁵

It was this section of the working class who had been most likely to be excluded from holding the franchise before 1918, and accordingly their mass accession to the electorate under the Fourth Reform Act had a considerable impact on the political balance in constituencies, especially urban seats.

Even with the return of unemployment in the 1920s, the fall in real wages and a sharp drop in trade union membership, the overall position of the working class stood at a higher level than it had done prior to the War. The experience of a total-war economy, with full employment, the virtual disappearance of casual poverty, and Government regulation of much of industry, meant that notions of respectability which had been divisive in that they had emphasised individual solutions to general problems had become less realistic. The attention of the working class became increasingly focussed upon the active role of the State.⁶⁶ Between 1914 and 1918 the political and social world of Labour had been dramatically altered.

It is impossible, therefore, to consider the political consequences of the Reform Act of 1918 separate from the effects of the First World War. Nevertheless, there are still some marked continuities between pre and post-War politics. Although in 1914 the Liberal Party was united and dominated its much weaker "ally", there was an identifiable trend towards a greater class polarisation in politics and a drift of the 'wealthy' classes towards the Conservative Party.⁶⁷ In Glasgow, local politics were becoming increasingly identified in pro and anti-Labour terms. It was Labour which was identified as bringing 'politics' into the essentially non-political world of municipal government, and this, in turn, stimulated the formation of middle-class pressure groups such as the Citizens' Union, the Vigilance Association, and Trades Defence Association.⁶⁸ After the War and inspired by fears of Bolshevism and the increased demands of Labour, such bodies received a new lease of life and coalesced into the Moderate Party, in which

Liberal and Conservative could unite in opposition to Labour at Municipal Elections.⁶⁹ The great worry of the "ratepayers" was that the profligate masses would enforce, "extravagant and ruinous expenditure" upon those with property, a threat made all the greater under the new, mass electorate. The Scottish Middle Class Union had a simple solution: since of the 20 million electors only 3 million actually paid income tax, the vote should be restricted to tax payers only.⁷⁰

Labour policies pre-War, e.g. the Eight Hour Day, Municipal 'fair wage' contracts, would have needed the active intervention of the State, either national or local, to be effective. All reforms aimed at improving wages, work conditions, health and housing, demanded public funding and each and every one, therefore, infuriated middle class opinion. Wheatley's argument to utilise the Glasgow Tramway surplus to pay for the construction of artisan cottages was still unacceptable, since it was yet another case of 'municipalisation' and a further inroad into the market, and the middle class view of the tram surplus was to use it to reduce the rates.

Even before the War housing had emerged as the major plank in Labour's local programme, and housing conditions provide a clear guide to Labour's support. As we have seen, those Wards with the highest proportion of 1 and 2 apartment houses displayed the greatest propensity to return Labour candidates, providing a clear indicator to Labour's future likely growth. Despite the fact that Labour's views on housing were aimed only at providing good quality housing for the 'artisan' class, and expressly excluded the 'slum dweller', the Wards where Labour actually returned candidates prior to the War were a mix of artisan and poorer working class. Housing provided the issue which, above all, the working class could be united around and indicated that the 'slum dwellers' were just as likely to vote Labour, given the opportunity, as the "respectable" artisans of Govan or Cowlairs. The pre-War

support for Labour amongst the Irish must also be viewed in class terms, i.e. as primarily a poorer working class vote. Similarly, the political behaviour of working class women during and after the War appears to contradict Labour fears that women would be more likely to vote Conservative.

At a formal level the Labour Party could be regarded as the true and consistent champion of democracy and, morally, as the true beneficiary of the extension of the franchise in 1918: Labour had, after all, constantly supported full adult suffrage. Yet, as we have seen, the adult suffrage resolution was principally a blocking manoeuvre against the demand for votes for women. Even the decision of the 1912 Party Conference to, "oppose any franchise bill that did not include women",⁷¹ did not mean that Labour was committed to achieving suffrage reform: from South Africa to conditions in the Postal Service there was always an immediate issue that demanded a higher priority.⁷² The Fourth Reform Act owed almost nothing to the Labour Party but was one of the consequences of the War. The inequities of the franchise system did not confront Labour as an external restraint which had to be overcome in order to realise its ambitions. Since Labour's ambitions were located within the existing framework of society it saw no pressing need to disturb the social and constitutional arrangements by which that society was governed. Labour's challenge - electoral and otherwise - was both limited and self-limiting.

NOTES

1. See H.F. Moorhouse, "The Political Incorporation of the British Working Class: An Interpretation", *Sociology*, Vol. 7, No. 3, (September 1973), pp 349-51, on the prohibitive "cost of politics throughout the nineteenth century." For a contemporary view of the practical obstacles in the way of the working class electorate and labour representatives, *The Voice of the People*, 20 October, 10 November 1893.
2. J.B. Glasier, *William Morris and the Early Days of the Socialist Movement* (London 1921), p 28.
3. David Howell, *British Workers and the Independent Labour Party 1888- 1906* (Manchester 1984), p 393.
4. The most obviously undemocratic element of the new franchise was that women aged between 21 and 30 were not permitted the vote, until further reform in 1928. See also f.n. 18 below.
5. Alasdair Reid, "Glasgow Socialism", *Social History*, Vol 11, No. 1 (January 1986). This review article provides a very useful and informative overview of recent work on Glasgow, and is also a valuable contribution in its own right, particularly on how to locate "Glasgow Socialism".
6. I.S. McLean, *The Legend of Red Clydeside* (Edinburgh 1983).
7. Biographical treatments of Glasgow include: Guy Aldred, *John Maclean: Martyr of the Class Struggle* (Glasgow 1932). Tom Bell, *John Maclean: a Fighter for Freedom* (Glasgow 1944). Tom Bell, *Pioneering Days* (London 1941). William Gallacher, *Revolt on the Clyde* (London 1936). William Gallacher, *Last Memoirs* (London 1966). David Kirkwood, *My Life of Revolt* (London 1935). Thomas Johnston, *Memories* (London 1952). See also, John Broom, *John Maclean* (Lothian 1973). R.K. Middlemas, *The Clydesiders* (London 1965). Nan Milton, *John Maclean* (London 1973). The best treatment of the 'revolutionary' element of British Socialism remains Walter Kendall, *The Revolutionary Movement in Britain 1900-1921* (London 1969).
8. J. Melling, *Rent Strikes: Peoples' Struggle for Housing in West Scotland 1890-1916* (Edinburgh 1983). J. Smith, "Labour Tradition in Glasgow and Liverpool", *History Workshop*, XVIII (Spring 1984), pp 32-56.
9. C. Harvie, *No Gods and Precious Few Heroes* (London 1981). Heavily influenced by the work of I.S. Mclean, Harvie argues that the conflicts on Clydeside, "were episodic and widely separated in time." p 17.
10. *Scotsman*, 18 April 1981, quoted by Helen Corr in her introduction to Melling, op cit, p V.

11. I.G.C. Hutchison, *A Political History of Scotland 1832-1914* (Edinburgh 1986), p 285. See also R.J. Morris, "Skilled Workers and the Politics of the 'Red Clyde': A Discussion Paper", *Journal of the Scottish Labour History Society*, No. 18, 1983, pp 6-17, which looks at the industrial struggles of the skilled men (and their families) of Clydeside in a much more positive light than Mclean, op cit.
12. See *Glasgow Herald*, 20 November 1922, for a description of the triumphant departure of the Labour MPs from St. Enoch Station.
13. Labour lost Cathcart but gained Partick.
14. Mclean, op cit, p 157.
15. Ibid., these are the subjects of Chapters Thirteen and Fourteen.
16. *Forward*, 4 January 1919, after the initial disappointment took a more positive perspective, by pointing out that the Labour poll in Scotland had been 323,899 - "Who, five years ago, would have dreamt that result possible?" James Maxton argued the same at the Scottish ILP Conference the same month, *Forward*, 11 January 1919.
17. Mclean, op cit, p 155.
18. Ibid. These very points are made with telling effect against Mclean's thesis by Reid, op cit, p 92. As regards the franchise generally, *Forward*, 8 February 1919, made the following points about the undemocratic elements of the Parliamentary suffrage: the "swindling' out of votes of millions of soldiers, the continuation of business and university votes, no votes for women under 30, "and a vast poverty house rent and six months residential barrage against qualifications for hundreds of thousands of poor men and women lodgers."
19. *Glasgow Herald*, 31 October 1918. The total number of servicemen was a, "remarkably large proportion of 102,739", which represented 31.16% of all male electors. This was the register on which the 1918 General Election was fought.
20. *Forward*, 4 January 1919.
21. The formal alliance of middle class forces occurred at the Municipal level first with the formation of the Moderate Party before the 1920 Election.
22. Hutchison, op cit, p 285.
23. *Glasgow Herald*, 5 November 1919.
24. *Glasgow Herald*, 31 October 1918. Although this gap subsequently narrowed, it remained significant.

25. *Glasgow Herald*, 25 February 1920.
26. James Hinton, *Labour and Socialism: A History of the British Labour Movement 1867-1974* (Sussex 1983), Chapter Six, for a recent statement on these lines.
27. H.C.G. Matthew, R.I. McKibbin, J.A. Kay, "The franchise factor in the rise of the Labour Party", *English Historical Review* (1976), p 736.
28. *Ibid.*, p 740.
29. *Ibid.*, p 723.
30. *Ibid.*, p 736.
31. Hutchison, *op cit*, Chapter Nine, "The Arrival of Labour: 1914-1924", pp 277- 308, see especially p 285.
32. There were significantly fewer men with the Municipal vote than with the Parliamentary vote.
33. For the most detailed account of the Rent Strike see Melling, *op cit*; also Sean Damer, "State, Class and Housing: Glasgow 1885-1919", J. Melling "Clydeside Housing and the Evolution of State Rent Control 1900-1939", both in J. Melling (ed) *Housing, Social Policy and the State* (London 1980); and David Englander, *Landlord and Tenant in Urban Britain 1838-1918* (Oxford 1983).
34. The leader of the Rent Strike in Govan, Mary Barbour, was a member of the Kinning Park Co-operative Women's Guild, as was Agnes Dollan. P. Dollan, *History of Kinning Park Co-operative Society Ltd.* (Glasgow 1923), p 86, provides a list of members of the Kinning Park Society, including himself, who became Labour Councillors before the War.
35. *Ibid.*, p 93. This is supported by *Partick and Maryhill Press*, 8 October 1915, which states that the Strike began in South Govan.
36. *Forward*, 9 January 1915. By November 1915, the Women's Housing Association had recruited 3,000 members. Melling (1980), *op cit*, p 149.
37. *Forward*, 16 January 1915.
38. *Glasgow Herald*, 1 November 1918.
39. *Forward*, 15 November 1919.
40. *Forward*, 11 January 1919.
41. *Ibid.*
42. *Glasgow Herald*, 3 November 1920.

43. Matthew et al, op cit, pp 747-9.
44. Mclean, op cit, p 163.
45. Hutchison, op cit, p 289.
46. *Forward*, 31 December 1921, quoted in Mclean, op cit, p 177.
47. Mclean, op cit, pp 177-8.
48. Ibid., p 201.
49. Ibid., pp 180-3, 241.
50. *Glasgow Observer*, 3 August 1918, title of an Editorial.
51. *Glasgow Observer*, 3 August 1918.
52. *Glasgow Observer*, 31 August 1918.
53. Ibid.
54. Mclean, op cit, p 199.
55. Glasgow ILP Federation, *Annual Report 1923-24*, p 2.
56. *Glasgow Herald*, 1 November 1923.
57. Hutchison, op cit, p 278.
58. Kendall, op cit, estimates a national membership of between 3,000 and 5,000 for the Communist Party in the early 1920s, see "Appendix 1: The Membership of the CPGB", pp 303-5. Hutchison, op cit, p 278, estimates the membership of the ILP in Glasgow in the early 1920s as between c. 1,300 and 3,000.
59. Glasgow ILP Federation, *Annual Report 1923-24*, p 13.
60. Hutchison, op cit, p 287, Table 9.3. Source: *British Labour Statistics, Historical Abstract, 1886-1968* (London 1971).
61. See Mclean, op cit, p 169, Table 13.5 on relative movements of wages and rents 1914-1923.
62. Hinton, op cit, p 98; Hutchison, op cit, p 285. The proportion of female workers in Trade Unions increased from 9% to 24% over the same period.
63. J.A. Kinloch, "The Scottish Co-operative Wholesale Society 1868-1918", (Ph.D., University of Strathclyde, 1976), p 376.
64. Ibid., p 375, and Chapter Fourteen generally.
65. Hutchison, op cit, pp 285-6. He also points out that Scotland had a higher disenfranchisement pre-War than

England, and that industrial areas like Glasgow and Dundee were lower than Edinburgh.

66. Hinton, *op cit*, Chapter Six, pp 96-117.
67. W.D. Rubinstein, *Men of Property: The Very Wealthy in Britain Since the Industrial Revolution*, (London 1981) pp 90, 95-6, 100, 163-9. W.D. Rubinstein, "Wealth, Elites and the Class Structure of Modern Britain", *Past and Present* No. 76, August 1977.
68. *Glasgow Herald* 6 November 1907.
69. Hutchison, *op cit*, p 231.
70. *Glasgow Herald*, 23 October 1919.
71. J. Liddington & J. Norris, *One Hand Tied Behind Us: The Rise of the Women's Suffrage Movement* (London 1978), p 247.
72. See *Forward*, 18 July 1914, for a list of Labour concerns that would take precedence over women's suffrage in the next Parliament.

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